

Christadelphian Standards

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Christadelphian Standards

*Comprising Extracts and Short Articles
restating the original Christadelphian
stand in Faith and Practice*

Designed for daily, meditative reading

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The Lord said to his disciples: “Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you”. Nobody likes to be hated. It is unpleasant and embarrassing to take the not-of-the-world attitude that leads to the hating, and so there is a liability to conform to the world in its principles, habits and ways. Many weary of the restrictions of the Truth and give in. The short articles sectionised under the above headings are designed to encourage in a “continuance of well doing” unto the end. Read them carefully and often, “searching the Scriptures” which are frequently quoted in confirmation of the principles set forth.

Foreword

The extracts that go to make up this book have been selected because they serve to express in pithy language the attitude of our pioneers in matters of precept and example. We feel that there is an urgent need to restate this today because of the widespread drift from the standards then laid down. It is obvious that the "perilous last days" foretold by Paul are now upon us (2 Timothy 3). On all sides we see the fulfilment of his words: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..."

Paul's words aptly describe the spirit of the age; the environment we must endure as we earn our daily living.

The danger is that the spirit of the age may affect the spiritual atmosphere of Ecclesias.

Many years spent in close active touch with the work of the Truth at home and abroad, including numerous world speaking tours has convinced us that the Christadelphian Movement stands at the crossroads of its existence. It stands where Israel stood, when the prophet warned the people: "Stand ye in the ways and see," or consider the direction in which you are drifting! Then he added the exhortation: "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

It was an appeal to individuals within the nation to earnestly consider their ways, to turn back to the well-worn and clearly defined path of righteousness in which the fathers of Israel had trod — rejecting the modernistic trend that was bringing calamity upon the nation.

But his warning fell on deaf ears. "We will not walk therein," was the reply (Ch. 6:16).

The result was tragic: Judah was attacked and destroyed by Babylon; overthrown because it rejected the counsel of Yahweh.

The history of a nation, or a movement, can roughly be divided into three main periods. Firstly the period of the pioneers, when foundations are laid down, and principles set forth. The path of action is clearly defined, the issues are all fundamental, for opposition is virile. At that stage, obstacles are so great, difficulties so immense, that little time can be spared for anything apart from essentials. The continuance of the Movement seems to hang by a thread, for its friends are few, and this

demands the complete dedication of those associated with it as “their reasonable sacrifice” if it is to prosper. The spirit of such a period is that of “no compromise,” for the demarcation between enemy and friend is unmistakable.

The history of the Christadelphian Movement entered that stage a little over one hundred years ago.

But pioneering days do not last forever. A movement establishes itself or goes out of existence. In the former case, it gathers to itself a little strength, and some results are seen for the heavy, exacting work expended and it then enters the second stage of its existence. There is time for things other than the mere essentials. It is the period of consolidation, when the principles established in the early days are given form and substance. Under wise administration, a nation or a movement reaches its greatest heights, and exercises its greatest influence, during this stage.

This is followed (inevitably as history shows) by a third stage — that of decline, when, as in Jeremiah’s time, the need for walking in the “old paths” is not so apparent. The line of demarcation becomes obscure; the complete dedication demanded in the early days now seems a little fanatical; the outspoken opposition then manifested now seems a little ridiculous. A more liberal outlook is urged in the attitude of members towards those who are not of the Movement or who oppose it, and impatience is manifested towards the pioneering spirit that at one time was responsible for its establishment. Desire for respectability, comfort and ease takes the place of hard work, self-denial and constant effort.

The Lord Jesus warned that the Ecclesia would drift into such a state. He declared that “as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37). The days of Noah were days of decline both for the world and the ecclesia (Genesis 6: 1-3). They witnessed a spirit of tolerance which proved fatal and ended in disaster.

Prophet and apostle both warn that this will be repeated in the “latter days” — the days in which we live.

Trends within the Body indicate that Christadelphia has entered this third stage. The period of decline is setting in. The pioneering spirit is fast fading out. Earnest contention for the one faith seems a little ridiculous to many in these enlightened, liberal-minded days. To be too much in earnest is to risk one’s popularity with some. Instead of close study of the Word (to prepare our minds to live and preach the Gospel) and hard work in extending its message, there is demand for more social evenings, for more respectable preaching of the Word (do not be too sure, too forthright, too outspoken in prophecy or doctrine), a blurring of the sharp line of demarcation between the world and Christ.

There is nothing wrong in a social evening, or the desire to be

respected, but too much of that sort of thing is not conducive to that self-denial which the true soldier of Christ is expected to manifest (2 Tim. 2:3-4). The well-trained soldier needs to deny himself some of the luxuries of life. Things that may be lawful are not always expedient for him if he is training. He needs to discipline himself that he may the more effectually campaign on behalf of Christ.

If the decline mentioned above is not stopped, Christadelphia could, in time, become but another sect manifesting a "form of godliness but denying its power." The antidote for the situation is supplied by the exhortation of Jeremiah to Jewry: "Seek ye the old paths". Let us revert to the spirit of the pioneers; let their uncompromising attitude to the world, their unceasing "contention for the faith," their repudiation of shams and evils, be emulated by us today. The appeal of Jeremiah was to the individual, and that remains the basis of appeal today. The individual can assist himself, his brethren, his ecclesia, by his personal attitude towards the Truth, and the Word of God on which it is based. In that regard "the old paths" can help him. Such works as *Elpis Israel*, *Eureka*, *The Ways of Providence*, *Nazareth Revisited* and so on can aid in the better understanding of the Word of God. The faith-invigorating first volume of "Eureka" packed full of warning and exhortation — its outline of the prophetic message, its tracing of the growth and decline of the early ecclesias — will well repay constant reading and meditation. The record is there, showing how the Truth was slowly but surely submerged by apathy and error in the early centuries until the lightstands of the seven ecclesias in Asia flickered out — and we live in similar days.

The Truth's literature is not to be despised. From a literary standpoint, the writings of brethren Thomas and Roberts are outstanding; from the standpoint of Scriptural exegesis they are incomparable. However, it is becoming popular to deride these writings today; much the same as the college educated descendant of a pioneer might ridicule and be contemptuous of his uneducated forefathers who, by self denial and long hours of hard work, laid the foundation of the family-fortune he has inherited.

Let not the reader imitate such an attitude! Rather let him "search out the old paths and walk therein", and despite all circumstances "he shall have rest for his soul."

This book seeks to set before the reader something of the spirit that moved our pioneers, a spirit we all do well to emulate in these closing days of the Gentiles when soon Christ will be in the earth again.

H.P. Mansfield (1961)

Christadelphian Behaviour in Public and Private Life

A True Christadelphian

The characteristic of a true Christadelphian is “the obedience of faith” and a “walk worthy of God”; in other words, he first understands the things of the Kingdom of God and Name of Jesus Christ; secondly, he believes what he understands, and loves what he believes above every other thing; thirdly, his “faith, working by love” causes him to be immersed into the Divine Name; fourthly, he walks in the Truth, and is careful to do nothing to its injury; and fifthly, *he will not fellowship those who do not so believe and do.*

J. Thomas

Real Christadelphians

Having heard and learned of the Father, of His own will begotten by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures, “to as many as have believed, to them gave He the power or privilege to become the Sons of God.”

Do we realise our Calling? A people separated unto God; a chosen generation; a royal priesthood; a holy nation; a peculiar people, that we should show forth the praises of God in the earth today, and also in the Coming Age?

What an honour! What a responsibility!

Do men see our good works? Are we walking worthy of God? Are we striving that God in all things may be glorified? Or, is the Way of Truth evil spoken of on our account? Are we holding forth the Word of Truth in all its greatness and purity, living epistles, embodiments of that Word?

Let the whole Brotherhood stand as one man, true to our motto:

The Bible True, Christ versus “Christendom”

The humble, contrite, God-fearing, God-honouring man alone will be numbered amongst His jewels in the day that is at our very doors.

C.M. Handley.

Watching our Affections

The guiding principle in this matter is indicated by Paul in Col. 3:2, “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” The natural mind is contrary to this command, (see 1 Cor. 2:14). The

affections forbidden by the Apostle embrace all that is not of God — companions outside of the Truth — worldly possessions — pleasures — and all that belongs to the present evil world. Upon such our affections are not to be set. Carelessness in this matter is faith-wrecking. Things with small beginnings grow; therefore let us watch the “beginnings.” Especially is this necessary in the matter of companions without the Truth; progress in the wrong way is easy — acquaintance, friendship, affection, ending, — alas! — how often in marriage with the alien and forsaking the Truth. Solomon’s experience is recorded for our admonition: “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20); “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

The true Christadelphian’s affections are set upon the things of God and of His Truth; his companions are those of “like precious faith” — the possessions he has set his heart upon are those of the “world to come” — and the “pleasures” he desires are “at God’s right hand for evermore” (Psalm 16:11).

W.J. White

Political Movements

The truth prevents us from taking any part in the political movements of the time, and shuts us up to the position of “strangers and pilgrims,” whose energy is all required for the work of preparing for the great administration of authority that is to come on the earth, in God’s appointed time, of which we shall have a share, if Christ accounts us worthy.

Forces of the State

“Where does the Bible forbid you to serve in the R.A.M. Corps, or any other non-combatant branch of the Army?” This question was usually put at the Tribunals to those who claimed exemption from all forms of Military Service on conscientious grounds. What is the Christadelphian’s answer? here it is: —

“I am in covenant relationship with God in Christ, Psalm 50:5; Gal. 3:16,17,19, through his death, Rom. 15:8. I am therefore not my own, I am bought with a price. I must glorify God in my body, 1 Cor. 6:19,20, and offer my body a living sacrifice to God, Rom. 12:1. I cannot be a bond-servant to the King, 1 Cor. 7:23, as I am already bound as a soldier to another King, 2 Tim. 2:4. It is thus impossible for me to enter any branch of the Forces of the State in any capacity whatever, without becoming a traitor to Christ, thereby treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the everlasting covenant, Heb. 13:20, by which

I am separated from the world and bound to God, an unholy thing Heb. 10:29.”

This is the only position a faithful Christadelphian can adopt, and it will absolutely prevent him from wearing the uniform of any of the Forces of the State — Naval, Military, Aerial, Constabulary, or otherwise. It will also preclude his joining any organisation, membership of which hinders or hampers him in carrying out the terms of the “everlasting covenant,” namely “All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient.”

W.H. Trapp.

Secret and other Societies

Ought Christadelphians be Freemasons?

To decide this question it is necessary to ask: What is Freemasonry, and what is a Christadelphian?

Regarding the former, we are told that about the close of the 12th Century — the churches throughout the northern part of Europe being in a ruinous state — the Pope created several corporations of Roman or Italian architects and artists — with exclusive privileges — and he sent them to repair those churches. The common appellation of this corporation in England was that of the Free and Accepted Masons claiming to hold exclusively of the Pope a right of Free-mason of being exempt from the regulations of the statutes of labourers.*

In 1598, at a meeting of Masters held in Edinburgh, statutes were compiled in order that they might be sent to all the Lodges in Scotland. No. 21 of these statutes reads: All Masters present at any meeting shall be sworn by their great oath not to conceal any wrong done to each other.

By the end of the 17th Century not only the representatives of the nobility, but of other trades were admitted into fellowship.

In the document known as the “Charter of Cologne” we find among the duties undertaken on oath are fidelity and obedience to secular rulers, and that he alone is acknowledged as a brother of the Society of St. John, or Freemason, who in a lawful manner is initiated into the mysteries, and is ready to prove his adoption by the signs and tokens practised by the brethren.†

From the above we get an idea of the birth and nature of Freemasonry.

A Christadelphian is a brother of Christ separated from the fellowship of the world, having responded to the divine call, “Come out from among them and be ye separate”; also that the command of his Master is “Swear not at all” Matt. 5:34.

Ought Christadelphians to join Freemasonry and similar Fraternities? Emphatically, No!

* Goulds “History of Freemasonry,” p.497.

† Ibid. p. 387

Marriage is Honourable

It is a great mistake to think that Paul discountenanced marriage because, upon one occasion, by reason of a certain distress, he gave exceptional advice (1 Cor. 7:26). To the Hebrews (Ch. 13:4), he wrote of marriage being honourable in all, and the word he used has been rendered “had in reputation” (Acts 5:34); “dear” (Acts 20:24); “precious” (1 Cor. 3:12); “most precious” (Rev. 21:11); and similarly in fourteen texts.

Besides, Paul expressly commanded “the young women to marry” (1 Tim. 5:14). Who were they to marry? Surely not old brethren — or the medically unfit — or the alien young men! No; marriage is honourable in all.

Brother Roberts was right in concluding as he did: “I always felt that marriage was something that lay in my path before I could enter upon the earnest work of life. And, now I see how serviceable it has been in every way for the work that has been done.” How many of us who have been Christadelphians practically all our lives can say Amen to those conclusions?

F.G.J.

A Partner Wanted

Are you searching for a partner for life, looking for one whom God would approve — one who would serve a nobler part than the mere providing of a comfortable home, or animal existence? Then turn your eyes in the way of those only who love the Bible, and who show their love for it by a regular and faithful reading of its pages... Marriage with the alien is sin, and marriage with those who are unfaithful to Bible teaching is akin to it.

In the matter of marriage, never be in a hurry. Avoid being led into an unwise arrangement by self-deception. A man or woman is not in the Truth (whatever their claims may be) who has no fondness for it, and fondness shows itself by a desire to read and talk about it... Marriage is a very serious matter — it means either help or hindrance in the fight for eternal life.

An Excuse for Disobedience

“There is no one in the ecclesia that I care for,” it may be said, and perhaps said in truth. But this would not justify union with the alien. Disobedience (which alien marriages are), is not allowable under any circumstances. Let us be careful lest we invent excuses for the purpose of evading plain and stringent commands. The one who talks as above

should see that his ideal of a partner is a Scripture-approved one; and, next, he should not forget to make his desire a matter of prayer. God gives husbands and wives, in answer to prayer, as well as daily bread. If God withholds a partner for a time it is for our good. Therefore let the one who has to wait be patient and trustful.

A.T.J.

Marriage With the Alien

God could not have expressed His mind upon the subject of alien marriage more emphatically than by marking, as He has done, disobedience in this matter in the earth's history. And these markings are not feeble scratches, but deep and indelible prints. To wit, the Flood, Israel's tributary position in relation to the surrounding nations, the division of Israel into two kingdoms. These events were divine visitations resulting from the sin of alien marriage.

And what about Christ? Do his views differ from his Father's? Let us hear him through one of his Apostles: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). Marriage is the closest of all yokings, and those who receive not and render not obedience to Paul's Gospel are unbelievers. Wilful ignorance, said Peter, was to be the characteristic of certain ones in our wicked times. Let us see to it that we are not amongst the number.

C.H. Jannaway.

Unequally Yoked

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" 2 Cor. 6:14. The principle here laid down unquestionably applies to marriage. Of all yokings, marriage is the closest and most binding; it is for life. It may be contended that as the yoking Paul refers to is an endorsement of and co-operation in evil, marriage with an alien cannot fall within his prohibition. But this view overlooks the object of marriage, which is not the mere living for self-gratification, but that husband and wife may assist one another in walking worthy of God, and showing forth His honour and glory. In this God-given object of marriage it is impossible for a believer to be equally yoked with an unbeliever — the two cannot walk harmoniously.

A.T.J.

Wife and Family the Primary Consideration

God first, Family second, and Neighbour third is the order divinely imposed in the Law of Moses and emphasised in the New Testament. In his new-born zeal the novice is apt to overlook this fact. So anxious is he to spread the Truth to the alien that he is found running hither and

thither, absenting himself from his home, to the detriment of the highest interests of his wife and family. If a wife is unable to attend the meetings, or children are deprived of a father's guidance and his instruction by his frequent absence from home, then he is neglecting a primary duty. Surely love to his wife and children should make the itinerant brother reflect? Is it not his dearest wish that his loved ones should be his eternal companions in the Kingdom? If so, he will see to it that they have his first consideration, and that in his duty to family and neighbour respectively the divine order is obeyed by him.

J.M. Evans

Home First After God

A right view is essential to prevent our running to extremes. Home ties demand our attention as well as our prayers. We must not neglect "Home" on the plea of preaching the Gospel. Surely this idea is involved in the words of Paul, 1 Tim. 5:8 "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith." The husband (Saxon — husbonda, housebond) is the natural foundation, pillar, or band of the house, holding the whole together; his presence is essential in the character building of himself and his household.

Some neglect home for public preaching of the Gospel, whilst others put home first and never preach the Word. These stand condemned (Matt. 10:37; Amos 6:1). Our wisdom lies in realising our duty in both aspects of our calling, for just as no man can love God who hates his brother, so none will neglect their home who say "Come" in the true sense.

F.E. Williams

So Ought Men To Please Their Wives

If our wives wish to wander through the fields and pick poppies and cornflowers in preference to walking along the seashore searching for shells and pebbles, let us yield to their wishes. What does it matter, even if it is not quite to our taste? Surely it is wiser to sacrifice a little for the sake of peace than to contend and contend?

Some of us are so selfish, or so unreasonably obstinate, that we upset ourselves, our homes, our ecclesias, and all over nothing. "Ah! but I fight for principle. I'm the master." Are you sure, my brother, that you fight for principle? May it not be for self, because to give way would mean interference with your enjoyment, or, worse still, cause you to give pleasure where you would rather give pain? Men who fight for principle (if fight is to count in the divine reckoning) are, as the Scriptures enjoin them to be, large-hearted and large-minded.

Read 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:13; Rom. 14:19. There is no selfishness and no wicked doggedness where these precepts are allowed to rule.

A.T. Jannaway

Having His Children in Subjection

This means that a man who is so soft and effeminate in his nature or principles as to fail in the application of a wholesome degree of discipline in his own family is therefore totally disqualified to act an administrative part in the house of God. Yes, spoilt children, unmastered, and therefore unruly, self-asserting, and “disobedient to parents,” are the best evidences of a brother’s unfitness to lead the children of God.

A man who can tolerate a stiffnecked and unbroken state of petty rebellion to the parental will at home is just the man to apply his maudlin principles at a time when an ecclesia is up in arms against the enforcement of Apostolic discipline towards the attitudes of doctrinal compromise and insubordination to the commandments of Christ.

Parental Training and Influence

One of the many “signs of the times” in our day is the great degeneracy existing in this matter as regards the higher things. Young people are allowed to take their own way and act for themselves very much more than used to be the case, many parents seeming to be oblivious of their responsibility.

This tendency is also apt to affect the households of the Truth, and must be guarded against, as the Scriptural injunctions on this head are as binding now as ever they were. Our stewardship, of which an account has to be given, relates to the care and upbringing of our sons and daughters, as well as to other things, and we want to be able to give it “with joy and not with shame.”

The parental example is more potent than is generally realised, and if this be not a worthy one, it becomes a much more difficult matter to lead the children into the love and obedience of God. S.J. Ladson

Christadelphian Fathers and Mothers

“The child is father to the man.” A child should be encouraged or restrained always with a view to that desired in its maturity. Be all you would have the child to be — children are born imitators. Let such confidence and sympathy exist between the parent and child that it should never through fear of punishment or uncontrolled anger stoop to lying or deceit.

Do not abstain from necessary correction, but suit the same to the child’s temperament. Direct the energies of the child into useful channels. Be particular to instil correct ideas of method and thoroughness as antidotes to slovenliness and laziness. Do not overlook

the necessity for recreation.

Inculcate loyalty to the name “Christadelphian” as the embodiment of true religion. Its principles rationally and consistently applied to the direction of family life will influence the young mind, with the result that Bible reading and prayer will in due course find their proper place

G.H Lethbridge

A Mother’s Duty

Mothers have been heard to say: “I intend to let my children see both sides”, meaning that, with the view to helping them make up their minds whether they will serve God or the devil, the young ones shall be encouraged to tread the devious paths of the religious and social worlds.

If these mothers were to apply this method to the training of their children in, say, honesty and virtue, where would they expect it to lead? Would the children choose to be honest as a result of being thrown into the company of thieves? Would they choose to be virtuous through keeping company with libertines and courtesans?

Well may Paul say: “Teach the young women... to love their children,” and with the love that springs, not from mere animal instinct, but from God. This love says: Do not easily banish your boys and girls into doubtful company. Keep them within earshot, and talk to them diligently — yes, diligently — of God’s ways “when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

C.H. Jannaway.

Our Childhood

In the words of Ireneaus to Florinus, “The instructions of our childhood, grow with our growth and adhere to us most closely.”

If the law of righteousness can be impressed on the mind of a child to a sufficient depth and with sufficient clearness, the impression will be clear in old age. Old people forget events of yesterday, but the instructions of childhood are still operative.

The noble work of parents, then, is to instil in the child a keen appetite for wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. To engrave the law of God upon their heart, to impress thoughts of holiness upon the mind, and to keep these impressions until the character is fixed. Then even in old age this character will remain (Prov. 22:6).

All parents fail to do this work perfectly, but the proverb is not disproved thereby.

Early training is essential. Therefore “chasten thy son while there is hope” (Prov. 19:18). It is a work of saving from eternal death, and of

securing the gift of eternal life. “Therefore withhold not correction from the child, and deliver his soul from sheol” (Prov. 23:13-14). It is dishonouring to the high office of parentage to be negligent, because “a child left to himself bringeth shame” (Prov. 29:15). The constant care in training will bring unending joy; therefore “Correct thy son and he will give delight unto thy soul” (Prov. 29:17).

Train up a Child

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” Prov. 22:6. We once chatted with a good brother who refused to accept this statement literally, because, although he had trained up his boy on Scriptural lines, the boy had turned out bad in the extreme. As evidence of his contention he said that once he found the boy (of 17) had gone to bed, secretly got up, and gone out with bad companions; and such was only discovered through the father accidentally going into the lad’s bedroom. He “waited his return, and thrashed him within an inch of his life!” And that he called training up the child!

Parents do well to meditate on the expressions, “His mother was his counsellor” (2 Chron. 22:3); and the pointed statement about “Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal” (1 Kings 16:31); Parents want to keep in mind Ezek. 16:44; Prov. 19:18; Deut. 6:7; and especially Eph. 6:4. F.J.G.

Christ Before Mother and Father

When Jesus said, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,” he could mean to call in question the duty of a man providing for “his own, especially those of his own house,” the neglect of which, Paul says, makes a man “worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). But he certainly does mean to assert that his final choice will rest with those only whose submission to him is so thorough as to set family claims aside where they conflict with his claims.

Such a conflict is possible sometimes. A man’s identification with the Truth is sometimes damaging to the temporal interests of a man’s family; or sometimes entirely opposed to his family’s wishes. In such a case, a man refusing the demands Christ makes upon him for the sake of protecting or pleasing his family would show that he loved his family more than Christ, in which case Christ says the man would not be worthy of him.

R. Roberts

It is Corban

“It is Corban,” says the young man (and the young woman) of the world.

“It is corban,” echoes public opinion. “He shall be free”, and they “suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother.” (Consider Mark 7:9-13).

God marks this wickedness, and will shortly punish the world for it.

But we turn away from the disobedience of these perilous and last days and look at the teaching of Scripture. How clear and beautiful is God’s will concerning duty to parents.

“Children, obey our parents” — “Honour thy father and mother” — “Let them (the children) learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents.”

But what if the commands of parents and Christ clash? Then Christ must be obeyed. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”

This does not free us from the divine command to perform faithfully to our parents that duty which is the will of God. A.H. Jannaway.

Childless

Yes, it is written, “Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:5), but it is manifest such cannot mean “full of” children who are indifferent or non-responsive to the instruction of their parents. Children are, indeed, a blessing when they are Timothy-like (2 Tim. 1:5). Were all children of that character, parents might regret being childless; but as things are, we can but endorse the ejaculation of a certain father: “Children are not always an unmixed blessing!” The writer, to whom that remark was made, at once realised “the skeletons” in that brother’s cupboard; and, alas! outside of his cupboard, too; for it was something known and read of all men that his children were a standing reproach to the fair name “Christadelphian”. They were mere worldlings, whose only prospect was that of being laid in their graves “like sheep”. True, the father claimed, “There is no vice in them, and they are very lovable!” — but so is my puppy, and so was my little pony — and, too, they had this advantage: they could not bring reproach on my high and holy calling.

So cheer up ye childless ones who may yearn for offspring. Read Rom. 8:28, and emulate Paul as pictured in Phil. 4:11. F.G. Jannaway

Daily Reading of the Word

Probably the greatest difficulty a Christadelphian experiences in his endeavour to observe the commandments of Christ is to “entangle not himself with the affairs of this life” (2 Tim. 2:4). The constant contact with the world in the performance of our daily duties naturally leads to a continual temptation to take an interest in its interests — to look at

things from the view point of those around us. This is the natural tendency of the mind, and outside influences increase the danger of becoming so absorbed in worldly affairs that Laodicean lukewarmness gradually takes the place of the original zealous love for the Truth.

The antidote is the daily reading of the Word. If the antidote is neglected the effect of the poison (worldly influences) will increase, with the inevitable result — spiritual death. To overcome (as the Spirit exhorts in Rev. 2 and 3), we must read the Bible daily — not mechanically, but thoughtfully with an earnest desire and endeavour to absorb its teaching. Only thus can we overcome the natural mind and bring it into harmony with the mind of the Spirit. C.F.Ford.

Something For God Every Day

Not one day should pass without our doing something for Christ — for the well-being of the Ecclesia, and the enlightenment of the stranger. Christ can be served in many ways, and by the busiest. We can materially forward his work by an exemplary discharge of the common duties of life. What better recommendation can the Truth have than for those who profess the name of Christ to be kind, courteous, upright, sober-minded, and virtuous?

But we can all do more than this. We can take steps to make ourselves strong in the Truth, so as to be in a position to impart instruction to the less enlightened, and otherwise form useful stable members of the meeting to which we may belong. Who is there that cannot squeeze in, however busy he may be, many minutes during the day for Scripture meditation and study?

The day will come when all of us will lament we did not put forth more effort for Christ. A.T. Jannaway

Why Late at Meetings

The brother or sister who sincerely loves God will endeavour always to be punctual in the observance of His requirements and appointments. (Unavoidable lateness is exceptional, and need not here be considered). To be late at the meetings when we could have been early is indicative of indifference and carelessness in regard to the things of God.

The meetings are of God's appointment for the benefit of His children. The late-comer not only himself loses much of this benefit, but hinders those who are punctual in receiving the good. Usually the meetings commence with collective thanksgiving to God; is it not manifestly irreverent, and consequently displeasing to Him, that the privilege should be disturbed by latecomers, who with a little thought and care could have been present to unite in prayer and thanksgiving?

Christ is our example in all things, and there is more than a suggestion of punctuality in the record that “when the hour was come he sat down, and the Twelve Apostles with him” (to eat the Passover, Luke. 22:14). “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40) is contrary to “avoidable lateness”. Unpunctuality at the meetings is a symptom of spiritual ill-health. God is not the Author of “Confusion” — neither should His children be.

W.J. White

Too Tired Sunday Morning

“I am too tired” — “I prefer to hear the lecture” — “Brother so-and-so is the speaker, and I never get any good from his addresses.” These are not justifiable excuses for absence from the Breaking of Bread. Christ’s command is this: “This do in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24), and for us to ignore the command is to imperil our salvation.

Was ever a divine appointment set aside without incurring disastrous consequences to ourselves and God’s displeasure towards us? Those who absent themselves from the Lord’s Table should think of this. To refrain wilfully from assembling together on the first day of the week is not only to display a shocking lack of appreciation of the importance and profit of the appointment, but it is a direct insult to Christ.

A.T. Jannaway

Giving Thanks At The Meal Table

Don’t mumble your thanks all to yourself at meal times, as if you were whispering out of the grave like a necromancer, but speak up in a benefiting and intelligent way, so that we can all say “Amen”.

Sisters and Dress

The Scriptures are not silent on this matter. Sisters are commanded to dress modestly and to eschew showy and costly apparel. They should be careful not to be led away by the example of the women of the world, who mostly aim at what the Bible forbids. Young sisters are especially prone to temptation in this direction, but a wise mother, whom many of them are privileged to possess, will check their natural weaknesses, and show unto them a more excellent way.

The great thing to remember is that fine clothes do not commend us to Christ (nor do they to the brethren and sisters who are of a Christ-like mind). He has told us what he looks for in his sisters — the inward adornment of “a meek and quiet spirit” and “good works.” Time spent in attending to this kind of adornment is time well spent, and will procure for us the beauty everlasting in the day of Christ’s coming.

M. F. Grant

Feet Washing

To insist upon “Feet-washing” as an ordinance of the nature of the Breaking of the Bread is to go beyond “what is written”; or, to reduce it to a ceremony, as the Pope does once a year, is to deprive the Lord’s example of its lesson.

Nowhere do we read of Feet-washing as an institution such as the “Breaking of Bread” Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-24.

Feet-washing was menial John 13:5, and the Lord’s lesson was that no duty is so menial that one brother should not be ready to perform it for another 1 Tim. 5:10.

Talebearers and Slanderers

The work of the talebearer is bad enough, but that of the slanderer is worse. To those engaged in either of these forbidden occupations we would say: Why do you do it? Is it merely to pander to an unworthy craving for news? Is it from spite? Is it from envy, from a wish to damage your brother’s reputation and add to your own? Is it to minimise your own deficiencies? If not, why do you do it, when it occasions so much misunderstanding, so much ill-feeling, provokes so much evil, and causes so much distress, and so many tears?

Of the slanderer we would ask: Why, when God has attached to the sin such terrible pains and penalties? You admit that a thief is an awful person, and that a murderer or a whoremonger is worse. Are you not aware that the evil speaker is similarly classed? Are they not all labelled by God as alike? From Lev. 19:16, Psalm 15:1-3, and Ephesians 4:31 must we not conclude that in His sight they are all equally sinful and condemned?

A.T. Jannaway

Blameless — Its Meaning

That brethren holding office in the Ecclesia should be blameless (1 Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6; 1 Tim. 3:2; v.7) means that they should be so in the sense illustrated in the case of Zechariah and Elizabeth, who were said to be “righteous, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6).

Thinking Evil

“Charity (love) thinketh no evil” (1 Cor. 13:5). Evil thoughts are the seedlings of evil words and evil deeds. Whence come they? Jesus says: “From within, out of the heart of man” (Mark 7:21). Unchecked in Noah’s times, evil thoughts and their fruit led to the drowning of all souls

save eight. "God saw the wickedness of man was great and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5; 1 Pet. 3:20). The Truth can purify the heart, providing incentive by its glorious Hope for the manifestation of mental discipline involved in bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).

The tendency to evil thinking is checked by constant Bible reading and meditation therein (Psalm 1:2). Avoid the vacant mind. Weeds grow apace on untilled ground. There is need for vigilance in order to discriminate between good and evil, "judging righteous judgment." We read: "The pure in heart shall see God" and "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" (Heb. 5:14; Matt. 5:8; John 7:24; Prov. 23:7). E. Pitt

"Report", Say They, and We Will Report

Oh! the unkindness of some men. They will search out, magnify, and publish to the four quarters of the globe the failings of their neighbours; but for their neighbours' good traits they have no eyes, no ears, no tongues. Why this unkindness? It may arise from envy, or spite, or the mere love of scandal.

But whatever the cause, the practice is utterly wrong, for God has forbidden it. "Speak not evil one of another" (Jas 4:11). "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people" (Lev. 19:16). It is wrong, for it is thoughtless and cruel. Have we not all failings? Is it not, as a rule, calling the kettle black? Who would wish their own weaknesses to be advertised to the world?

Let those who are given to the pernicious habit of scandalising break it off, for if they persist in it, they will unquestionably imperil their salvation.
A.T. Jannaway

The "Bishops" At Home

God has put responsibility upon the husband "to rule well his own house" (1 Tim. 3:4). To lead, encourage, and uphold in godly ways. Where he perseveres in careful, reverent reading of the Scriptures, thanksgiving and patient, helpful, considerate ways he is likely to have willing co-operation from his wife and family. The teaching of the word together with its good effect upon himself will influence the whole household. He will then be its respected and beloved Head.

The self-control, patience, and experience thus practised at home will fit him to discharge Ecclesial duties, for the Ecclesia may be likened to the family on a larger scale.

Gravity is sure to characterise the man who fears God and is truly enlightened by His Word. It is no enemy to cheerfulness, but the very

opposite of frivolous conduct, jesting and foolish talking, which are not convenient (Eph. 5:4).
E. Pitt.

Bishops Of The New Testament

Respecting 1 Tim. 3:1-8. The Greek word (Episkopos), rendered Bishop, signifies overseer, onlooker, or caretaker; hence it is rendered "looking diligently" in Heb. 12:15, and "overseers" in Acts 20:28, while as a participle it is rendered "oversight" in 1 Pet. 5:2. In the Apostolic Age this was a spirit-gifted function. For that reason there is nothing entirely parallel to it in our twentieth century experience. With us the nearest approach to it is the brother or brethren who both minister the word of exhortation, and exercise a managing control over ecclesial matters.

The Repentant Brother

An Ecclesia does wrong to debar a repentant brother from all Ecclesial offices because he has committed a sin, or sins, generally known. We remember that Peter was not so treated by the Lord, but just the reverse. The Lord seems to have concluded that Peter's experience and humiliation would make him all the better fitted for strengthening his brethren. Such a one would certainly have no room for boasting.

If the repentant brother pushed himself forward on the platform, the case would be altered, but we have in mind a truly repentant brother capable of and with the opportunity to serve the Ecclesia. F.G.J.

Hopelessly In Debt

A brother may find himself in this unhappy plight through accident, or miscalculation, or mismanagement. But whatever may be the reason, I advise such, without the slightest reservation, to at once stop payment and call together every one of his creditors, and frankly tell them of your unfortunate plight and place yourself and your assets unreservedly in their united hands. Or, what is better, if you have in your town or city a business-like brother of repute with the alien, get him to do the mediator business for you.

Call it "Bankruptcy" if you like, but it is far more honourable to pay ten or fifteen shillings in the pound (today: 50 or 60 cents in the dollar) by way of compensation than to go on trading from bad to worse, and ultimately "let in" your last resource, namely, some good-natured brother who has trusted you, firstly, because you are a brother; and secondly, because of your one-sided and optimistical tales. F.G.J.

Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre

This means that an overseer of the flock of God was not to be one who

might feel encouraged to take the oversight for the sake of carnal gain; but one who accepted the appointment in the spirit of shepherdly solicitude, and a willing service 1 Pet. 5:2.

Don't Push A Falling Man

When a man is on a dangerous downward course, don't push him, but lay hold of him and pull him back. Like an intoxicated man he may, perchance, use wrathful language, and shake you off; but let not this deter you from trying, if possible, to save him. Brethren who occupy positions as teachers should remember this.

Not every brother who is sliding on sin's incline is bound to reach the fatal bottom. With God wonderful things are possible. His eyes are on all "slippers," and there are different kinds of slippers. To some He comes to the rescue, and provides a way of escape. You and I may be used by God to save some such erring brothers. If so, it will not be done by our judging and condemning, but by modestly and lovingly speaking words of kindly counsel and warning. Tears of pity are more effective than tears of righteous indignation.

Let us learn to suffer long. Let us shoulder one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

A.T. Jannaway

Poverty Not A Virtue

Socialists would have us believe that Christ denounced the rich because they were rich, and praised the poor because they were poor. That is not so. Christ denounced the rich because they were unfaithful. In Christ's book some rich men have been praised.

By the silly way in which Socialists quote "The land is mine," one would think that God's people could not own land. They know not the Scriptures. In that Book we are told that Abraham, Lot, Job, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others had land. And, just so, when Christ commended the poor, it was not because they were poor, nor yet because they hungered and thirsted after other people's property but because they hungered after righteousness.

Socialists quote, "Blessed be ye poor," but they omit the remainder of the verse, which shows that Christ was speaking to his disciples. They quote James 2:5, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?" Why not finish the text? "Rich in faith." The poor who are not rich in faith are as obnoxious to God as the rich who are poor in faith.

F.G.J

Confirmed Grumblers

No doubt they serve some good purpose, as do bluebottles and flies; but they are not the more welcome for all that; in fact, they are really

what the Bible terms “flies” in the “ointment” (Eccles. 10:1). “One” such “destroyeth much good” (Eccles. 9:18).

The chronic fault-finder turns up at business meetings of the Ecclesia, with his vitriol, or axe, and destroys what he cannot improve upon; he meets us in the street, and we feel none the better, or happier, for having met him; we visit him, or he visits us, and during the whole of our interview his sole topic is himself and his own affairs; he writes us a letter, and the burden of his theme is that the hand of Providence is very heavy upon him. In brief, he seems to be spending his time in continually running counter to the command of Paul in Phil. 2:4.

What wasted lives. How much better to wake up and try to live for others, and shed rays of cheerfulness and happiness as we walk through life; and make our brethren court our company instead of shun it. F.G.J.

Secular Influences

It is to be feared that we allow ourselves to be influenced by the strongly secular spirit of the age, and our Christianity to be diluted with prevailing worldliness. Let us fear! For neither the worldly-minded nor the lukewarm shall inherit the kingdom of God. Let us guard against faint-heartedness. Let us strive to make our Christianity honest, straight-forward, and unblushing. We are apt to be over-ridden by the external circumstances of the time. Let it be otherwise.

Let our characters be known in our circles; let our light shine in the surrounding darkness; and so may we glorify our Father in heaven and receive His approval at last.

R.Roberts

Christadelphian Pastimes

What would Christ approve?

That is the only question we need ask ourselves, and a correct answer is the only safe guide. No violence of any kind can be called Christlike. No form of exercise which entails violence — call it pastime, recreation, or what you will — is Christlike.

If a brother feels the need of recreation there are pastimes such as swimming, rowing, running, cricket, tennis, and, best of all, walking, which can be enjoyed without risk of causing physical injury and pain to what the Apostle Paul terms “the temple of the Lord” (1 Cor. 3:16). We mean such “pastimes” as boxing, and the like.

It is very easy to persuade ourselves that what we desire is right. Let us be guided by the question: “Would Christ approve?” Read James 1:13.

C.F. Ford

Unforgivable Sins

A man is scarcely in a position in this age to commit what is styled as

the unforgivable sin. The Spirit is not manifested in our midst; and there are no visible evidences of Spirit to reject. The only work of the Spirit is the word spoken through prophets and apostles, and "written for our learning." The matter is open to question.

It is doubtful if a man can commit a sin "unto death" in the absence of the Spirit. We refer to the following testimonies in proof that forgiveness is a privilege accessible to those who repent: — Psalm 80:3,4; Prov. 28:13; Matt. 18:21,22,35; Luke 11:4; 2 Cor. 2:7; 12:21; James 5:15; Rev. 2:5,16.

R. Roberts

Are You Losing Faith?

Do you begin to doubt? Are you staying away from the meetings, and drifting from our hope? Well, beware of mere negatives. Seek out that which is true. Find some work that is noble and worthy. Discover a faith which can be the inspiration of your life.

If you no longer feel convinced that the Bible came from God, decide just where it did come from, and re-adjust your entire understanding of it accordingly. By such positive efforts your brain will continue to live; in all probability you will come back at last chastened in mind, with a better opinion of your early teachers, and a poorer opinion of yourself.

Islip Collyer

Deportment Exemplified By the Word

To be humble without being cringing; modest without being spiritless; rational without being prosaic; cheerful without being frivolous; respectful without being gushing; grave and dignified without being morose and chilling.

Alas! There is little of this combination to be seen anywhere just now. How could it be with the system of merely human education now in vogue? Man, humbled by judgment, and then educated under divine institutions, will be pleasant company everywhere when Christ reigns.

R. Roberts

Bible Teaching Concerning the Creator

*The first principle of true morality,
first to know God and obey Him (John 17:3).*

The God of Israel

Our proposition is that Moses and the Prophets teach that there was One Primary Creating Power and a multitude of Secondary Powers, as intimately connected with and dependent on the First as ten of a hundred are upon number one; and that this multiplication of the One Power in the relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was in existence before the Mosaic Creation. The Supreme Power has not only a Son, but a multitude of Sons, and all of them partaking of His nature, or spirit-substance hypostasis.

The Supreme Power, or Ail, is "the Godhead," or source, fountain, or sole spring of Power. Moses and the prophets do not teach that "there are three persons, three essences, three somethings or three anythings in the Godhead; and that these three distinct units, or unities, constitute only one unit or Unity — and that Tri-Unity is the God of Israel." They do not teach this. They teach the absolute oneness of the Power-Head. "Before me," as written in Isaiah 43:10-11, "Ail was not created, nor after me shall be: I, I shall be (anoke, anoke, Yahweh); and NONE WITHOUT ME A SAVIOUR."

J. Thomas

Only One God

Thus far Moses and Paul are in agreement. Now, Jesus of Nazareth is perfectly Mosaic in his teaching upon the subject. When a certain Scribe asked him: "Which is the chief commandment of all?" He answered in the words of Moses, so often referred to by the Jews of our day: "Hear, O Israel; Yahweh our Elohim, is one Yahweh. And thou shalt love Yahweh thine Elohim, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like; as Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these"... "Well, Teacher," said the Scribe, "thou hast said the truth; for there is one Deity, and there is no other but of Him" (Mark 12:29-32).

J. Thomas

The God of The Bible

The God revealed to us in the Bible is a Creator, a Father, and a Person — universal in His presence and power by the spirit, but still a located and Glorious Person whom we can contemplate, love, confide in, and adore. Jesus is His Son, begotten by the Spirit, and exalted to the Father's presence as mediator between God and man. This is suited to our mental constitution, which is God's own handiwork.

We cannot worship abstract power, but we can worship a glorious Person who possesses it. We cannot approach so glorious a Person in our own right; but we can come to Him in the acceptable name of Christ, whom He has given to us of His own kindness and wisdom. This is very different from church and chapel theology.

R. Roberts

God and the Fool

"There is no God." This is the statement of the fool, as David tells us. Fools are plentiful, and always have been. It is in their midst that we have to pass the time of probation. These men, although fools, are not simple enough to openly affirm their mind; they only do it, as the Psalmist adds, in their hearts. They disclosed their minds by their actions — by systematically omitting God from their arrangements. Let us take care, lest we fall victims to the folly of the fool. Unbelief is more infectious than any disease. To be surrounded by fools is no new experience for saints.

In Job's day the question of the fool was: "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto Him?" Job 21:15. In the Psalmist's time the thought of the fool was: "God hath forgotten; He hideth His face; He will never see it" Psalm 10:11. And read Isaiah 29:15; Jer. 17:15, Ezek. 9:9. In Apostolic days, and subsequent ones, down to our own, the fool has been scoffingly enquiring: "Where is the promise of his Coming?" God is not unmindful of the fool — for him a rod is in preparation. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Prov. 22:3).

A. T. Jannaway

A Real God

We learn from the Bible that the Deity it reveals has both body and parts. Paul teaches us this in declaring that the resurrected and anointed Jesus is the reflection of the glory and peculiar nature of the substance of the Theos (Heb. 1:3). In other words, he is what the Deity hath always been. The substance of the Theos is essentially living substance. It could not exist and yet be dead substance, for "the Father hath life in Himself,"

and that life is His inherent peculiarity. It is underived from any antecedent existence; nor can it forsake the Divine Substance, for in that event the Deity would be mortal. But Paul styles Him “the Incorruptible Theos,” and says that “He is the only One having deathlessness.” Hence, the essential qualities of the substance, which underlies all that is predictable of Him, are incorruptibility and life. J. Thomas

God the Creator

“There is one Deity, the Father, out of Whom are all things” 1 Cor. 8:6. The divinity of the schools gives us an idea contrary to this. By the schoolmen we are told that God created all things out of nothing! Where they got this notion from we know not, save from their own imaginations. The proverb says: “Take nothing from nothing and nothing comes”; but they have reversed all this, and taught the world that out of nothing something doth come, and that something the universe of God! But away with this foolishness. Out of Deity all things have proceeded. His free, radiant spirit is the substratum of every existing thing, from the star of the first magnitude to the minutest insect of the air. J. Thomas

The Work of Creation

He has revealed Himself to us as a Potentate, a King, a Lord, etc. Now, they who fill these stations commit to others the service of executing their will and pleasure. And thus it is with the Invisible and Eternal Potentate. His Kingdom ruleth over all. His angels, or Elohim, mighty in strength, do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His words. They are His hosts, His ministers, that do His pleasure (Psalm 103:20).

In the light of this revelation I understand the Mosaic record of the Creation. It pleased the King Eternal, nearly six thousand years ago, to add a new habitable province to His dominion; not by an original creation of a globe, but by the reconstruction of one already existing as one of the solar planets. He commanded His angels to go and execute the work according to the order detailed by Moses. They hearkened unto the voice of His words; and in six days finished all they were commanded to do. J. Thomas

God the Author of Evil

God is certainly the author of evil. He Himself declares it — Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:6; Jer. 45:5. He is the author of evil in a sense in which He is not the author of sin: for sin is the wrong use of independent power conferred upon a creature, and of this He is not the author. But of the evil inflicted in punishment thereof, He is the author direct. But then, says

the objector, James has said: "God cannot be tempted with evil." This is not out of harmony with the other truth. He does not deal in evil for the love of it. Evil presents no attraction to Him that He should inflict it for the mere sake of it, or draw men by temptation into the channel of it. He is good, and good only: But He inflicts the evil on rebellion, and this indeed is part of His goodness.

R. Roberts

God's Foreknowledge

God's foreknowledge of what a man's character will be does not cause Him to exempt him from trial. He rewards and punishes none upon foregone conclusions. He does not say to this man, "I know you are certain to turn out a reprobate, therefore I will punish you for what you would do"; nor does He say to another, "I know thee that thou would'st do well all the days of thy life; therefore I will promote thee to glory and honour, without subjecting thee to the tribulation of the world." His principle is to recompense men according to what they have done, and not for what they would do. Thus He dealt with the two Adams.

J. Thomas

The Greatest Insult to God

A man cannot "honour God" more than in believing what He promises, and doing what He commands; although to repudiate that belief, and to neglect, or disobey those commands, should highly gratify all his senses, and place at his disposal the kingdoms of the world and all their glory.

Not to believe the promises of God is, in effect, to call God a liar; and no offence, even to men of integrity in the world is so insulting, and intolerable as this. "Let God be true," saith the Scripture. His veracity must not be impeached in word or deed; if it be, then "judgment without mercy" is the "sorer punishment" which awaits the calumniator.

J. Thomas

God Never Thwarted

God has never been "cornered" or checkmated by man. Those who say to the contrary know not the scriptures nor the power of God. Often has God had to withhold His blessings on account of human perversity (Psalm 81;13-16; Isa. 48:18,19) but never has He been defeated, or His intentions frustrated in the sense of the unbeliever's objections. Whenever God has withheld good, it has been done, not through any weakness or failure on His part, but agreeably to His wise and almighty prerogative.

No man or men have ever been beyond the control or manipulation of God, and no event or events have ever taken Him by surprise. The Fall of man, the wickedness of the antediluvians, the rebellion of Israel, and the Apostasy of the Gentiles were all foreseen by Him, and His plans and promises made accordingly. Whatever failure has presented itself in human history has been on the side of man, and the failure, as already said, was foreseen and utilised by God for the accomplishment of the final issue — the salvation of the world. A.T. Jannaway.

God and Men of Science

“Men of science seek, in all reverence, to discover the Almighty, the Everlasting.” These were the words of Professor Ray Lankester, in his presidential address at an annual meeting of the British Association. The sentence has a pleasing sound, but what does it mean? What is it in relation to God that scientists wish to discover? Is it God’s abode? No, they are not quite so simple as that. Is it a knowledge of His greatness? Surely not, for this is a fact obvious to the man in the street... Is it a better acquaintance with the workings of God in nature that these savants are seeking? If so, the Professor should have said so plainly. But how limited must be our knowledge of God if we are confined to what Nature can tell us...

Why do men of science turn from God’s beautiful, reason-satisfying, ready-to-hand revelation (in the Bible), and spend their hours in stargazing and rummaging among the dust for knowledge which they can never get? The world by wisdom knows not God: “His ways are past finding out” (1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 11:33). A.T. Jannaway

“No Man Hath Seen God”

Exodus 33:20-23. This was not the personal Creator, both Jesus and Paul affirming that no man hath seen God at any time (John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16). It was His manifestation by Spirit in the angels of His power (see Acts 7:38, 53; Heb. 2:2). The impossibility of man looking in the face of the Being who appeared to Moses is not inconsistent with this, since such may be true in relation to the higher order of angelic manifestation on the principle that made it impossible for Israel to behold even the face of Moses when he came down from the Mount.

The Eternal, who is omnipresent by His Spirit, manifested himself to Moses in the person of the chief of the Elohim, on Sinai, who bore Yahweh’s name. The one self existent Eternal Ail hath never been seen by any mortal man. The Scriptures teach that in seeing God men saw embodiments of the Spirit of the Eternal Increate, not the Eternal Himself. R. Roberts

Paul and God

How vividly Paul realised the fact of God's existence and His closeness to us. The Apostle seems to have been quite unable to lose sight of God and the near and affectionate connection between Him and the experience of His children. His references to the matter are simply delightful. They are so homely and natural, and are made with such assurance that we must be dull indeed if, when we reflect upon them we fail to be encouraged and uplifted. As an example of the Apostle's artless, impressive, and confident way when speaking of God, let us read his letter to the Philippian believers. Here are a few quotations (and they might be doubled) from this very brief epistle: "I thank God upon every remembrance of you" (ch. 1:3); "God is my record, how greatly I long after you all" (ch. 1:8); and his statements in ch. 2:13; 4:6, 19,20.

A.T. Jannaway

Faithful Exhortation

Hold Fast To Truth and Wisdom

It is for the children of God to hold fast their integrity in the midst of a “crooked and perverse generation”. We know where the brazen-folly will end. We know who has proclaimed concerning the very epoch in which we live, “The harvest is ripe; their wickedness is great”. We know what came of a similar state of things in Israel and in the Roman Empire; disaster and evil swept over the face of society and laid the pride of man in ghastly ruin. We know what is revealed concerning the great finishing; “The lofty looks of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (Isa. 2:11).

It is for us in the midst of the general craze to hold fast to truth and wisdom. Hold on to the Bible; hold on to the daily reading of the Bible; hold on to the precepts of the Bible; hold on to the duties and assemblies commanded by the Bible; hold on to the spirit and maxims, and the principles, and the hopes and loves and practices of the Bible. And we shall have great peace, even now; now when iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold, and the brother with hatred stands ready to betray the brother to death. Even now, in times of evil and stress and affliction and dishonour, great peace have they that love thy law, but, oh, when the storm is past, when judgment has uprooted unrighteousness, when compassion has forgiven iniquities, when pity has wiped the tears from our eyes, when the God of Israel’s power and love shall have healed all our diseases and strengthened us with immortal life, and spread the Pavillions of His everlasting kingdom in the land of promise and peace, who then shall measure the peace that will be the portion of the loved of God? . . . “Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended” (Isa. 60:20). R.Roberts

The Benefit of Trouble

A man or a woman is worth little as a companion, either for wisdom or sympathy, who has not seen trouble. Those believers “living in pleasure are dead while they live”. Having a name to live, they are dead; they are not awake to the great and dread realities of existence that are in God. If God love, He will draw them into the furnace in some way. This is the word of Christ to the seven ecclesias. “As many

as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3:19). Again, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-8). It cannot be that this principle should apply to the sons of God in the first century, and not apply now. God changeth not; and if we are His we are as much the objects of His care as His children were in the beginning. Therefore when we suffer according to the will of God, let us commit ourselves unto Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator (1 Pet. 4:19). We have Paul’s assurance that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape.

The dullness of the time, the weariness of delay, the triumph of ungodliness, the uprise of affliction in our affairs, we may accept as the angels of Him who, through much tribulation, is purifying to himself a people who, with prepared and chastened hearts, will in the day of His glory “come with singing unto Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy; sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isa. 35:10). Only let us give diligent heed to things we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip; lest any man fail of the grace of God, and come short of the promise which has been left for those who believe and are faithful to the end. As new-born babes, let us desire the sincere milk of the word (in the daily reading thereof) that we may grow thereby; continuing instant in prayer, and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, in the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; redeeming the time, knowing that the days are evil; “being steadfast and unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord”

R.Roberts

We Are Known By The Company We Keep

We always speak like the company we keep. If we are all the while among the foul-mouthed gabblers of the flesh, we cannot expect to be free of their Sodomite brogue. If we read nothing but the literature of atheistical refinement, we shall never rise above that thin, proper, superficial, cold kind of talk in which a practically godless state of mind expresses itself. Give us the atmosphere of the Spirit and the company of the Spirit’s watchmen in the Word, and we are in altogether a healthier land. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1).

Another lesson affecting our ordinary life is contained in the words:

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us” (Heb. 12:1). Men on a journey do not unnecessarily burden themselves. A man running to catch a train puts up with the dust and discomfort of his hurried exertion. The principle is the same. In the race for life eternal, there are many things lawful enough in the abstract; but when viewed in relation to the object to be attained, are highly inexpedient, and to be “laid aside,” as Paul advises. It is a simple, and a safe, and a reasonable, and a wise rule, and one that will give us much cause for joy at the last, to dispense with every habit or pleasure, or occupation, or friend that hinders our progress in the narrow way. This is but another way of saying what Christ said: “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into the fire of Gehenna.” It is better to make our calling and election sure at the expense of worldly friends and engagements, and advantages, than to secure all these, in this present time, and find, at last, that we have cherished them at the expense of Christ’s approbation and have to pay for them with the loss of the Kingdom of God.

R. Roberts

The Coming Judgment

The causes that led to the judgment of Moab are operative today. Pride and haughtiness and arrogancy and contempt of Israel and all things divine; covetousness, avarice, indifference to right, the treading down of the weak, the disregard of the poor, and the ignoring of the commandments of God prevail in the Christendom of our times as much as ever they did in Moab, and it is an eternal truth that like causes produce like effects. That which brought judgment on Moab will bring judgment on the world at large. It is revealed that it is to be so. The work of Christ at his coming is a work of judgment. So we are informed in the apocalyptic words that speak of him as “treading the winepress of the wrath of God;” in the apostolic intimation, that when revealed from heaven, it will be “in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God;” and in the oft-made prophetic announcement of his arrival as the name of the Lord from far, “burning with anger ...” “His lips full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.” Seeing that this is the uncontradictable truth, what ought our position in the world to be? Ought we to be friends and partakers with a generation ripening for the judgment sickle of the Divine reaper? Ought we to be one and the same with the modern Moabites who despise God, have Israel in derision, and surfeit arrogantly in earth’s plenty, as if it were theirs? Ought we not to keep ourselves unspotted from the world? to walk “in wisdom towards them that are without?” as “strangers and pilgrims, to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear?” knowing that the friendship of the world

now will mean the enmity of God in the day when the thunders of the judgment-storm begin to peal throughout the world, when “the lofty looks of man shall be humbled and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day?” (Isa. 2:11).

R. Roberts

What the Truth Demands

“Consequences” may be often unpleasant, yea, worse than unpleasant — hurtful, even deadly. This the apostles found, who suffered the loss of all things, and paid the last tribute of faithfulness on the executioner’s block. But shall we shrink from submission to Christ because of the results? How, in that case, shall we be fit to stand with those Apocalyptically revealed in glory as those who loved not their lives to the death? Nay, nay, let us heed the Lord’s exhortation, who says, “Be thou faithful unto death” — not that we shall necessarily go to death; but be prepared for that in case of need. The mode of tribulation is graduated and diversified according to the endless variations of individual treatment. The Lord knoweth them that are his; and he knows how much and what sort of tribulation each case requires. Let us humble ourselves under his mighty hand with this confidence. “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of him.” This is the counsel of eternal wisdom; it is founded on the highest reason and goodness. Tribulation is a moral necessity. We cannot be brought into a reasonable state without it. Paul defines its mission thus: “Tribulation **WORKETH** **PATIENCE**,” and through much tribulation it is appointed we must enter the Kingdom of God. The wisdom of it is not difficult to see. Humility and patience are indispensable attributes of excellence of character. They are characteristic of the angels to equality with whom the gospel invites us, and who have known evil in their day. They only come with tribulation. They do not come with luxury and indulgence. The silver spoon usually generates pride and impatience. Tribulation drives those out of natural man, and helps us to come more and more into that state in which God will be able to find pleasure in us, and forgive us for Christ’s sake and give us an abiding place in the glorious household of His Son. Recognition of this will enable us to take trouble with a little more composure than if we supposed it were a pure and aimless evil. It is by no means such. It is pre-eminently among the “all things” which “work together for good for those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose.”

R. Roberts

The Truth Creates Courage

What a refreshing thing it is to see men and women ponder the power

of the fear of God. We need not fear men; we need not fear what brother this or brother that may say, because in a short time, in the order of Nature, all men will be in their graves, and there will be no reality in relation to us then except God, His mind, His purpose and His judgment. Therefore we need not vex ourselves, or encumber our spiritual operations with anxieties about the opinions of our fellows; let us be right with Christ. To be right with Him requires that we be in earnest, and all the time in earnest. Recollect his somewhat abrupt declaration to a young man who came to him saying, "Lord I will follow thee, but suffer me to go and bury my father," and to whom Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead; go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." What is the application of that saying, unless it be to suggest that the young man in question by proposing to do something else besides seeking the Kingdom of God, was as a man turning his hand from the plough? Christ's stern declaration is that such a man is not fit for the Kingdom of God. That implies that there are some who are "fit" and some that are "not fit", and it also shows who are they that are "fit". Those who are fit are those who lay hold with full purpose of heart and accept the calling of Christ in its entirety. That calling is a thing that is very exacting indeed; it claims absolute ascendancy with those of whom it lays hold. It is a very different thing from the religion preached from the pulpits of the churches and chapels. The clergy give the people to understand, though they do not say so in express words, that they need not be very much taken up with religion, that a sprinkling of it will be sufficient; whereas the truth of Christ demands to be the object of life, the principle of action, the subject of supreme affection — the engrossing thing.

R. Roberts

How Christ still Labours For Us

"My wedding must be furnished with guests," is the parabolic announcement by which the Lord taught the necessity for sending an invitation to the Gentiles after the Jews rejected it. But not only had the invitation to go forth; the people responding to the invitation had to be trained and fitted for the position to which they were called. This is Christ's present work; he is "priest over his own house," bringing his house to God. It was this that made his departure necessary, as he told his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:3) His present absence and his present work are necessary to the glorious consummation of "his appearing and his Kingdom." He is not idle or passive though unseen. He is at work in the preparation of his people. His messages to the seven ecclesias in Asia represent him as watchful and vigilant in the superintendence of the affairs of his house. His priesthood involves this; for mediation between God and men requires that he should

know the affairs of men. Paul tells us that having suffered, being tempted, he (Jesus) is able to succour them that are tempted. This indicates the active superintendence referred to. He is still the shepherd of his sheep. From behind the veil, he tends invisibly, but not the less really. "As many as I love," he says, "I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19). This is also what Paul says: "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32). It follows that, even now, we are under guidance if we sincerely aim at the doing of his will, and that in the affairs of our common experience, his hand intervenes for that direction of our steps which will be to our profit. What if those affairs are chequered and trying? What if trouble harass and evil afflict? Shall we say he regards us not? This would be a very illogical as well as a very unhappy conclusion. He himself has come through a time of trouble, he was, in the days of his flesh, a man of afflicted experience. Shall we say that God did not guide him because he suffered? Yea, rather his suffering was an evidence of his being guided. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered" Heb. 5:8. It is God's method of perfecting character and laying the foundation of lasting joy. We may be quite sure there is no mistake in it. We may be quite sure that God's way is the best. We may be quite sure that goodness will be all the sweeter and salvation all the more precious, and glory to God all the more fervent for the prelude of suffering and weariness and waiting that goes before. R. Roberts

Wisdom of Daily Bible Reading

A man realising the evil of the present day will see the wisdom of regularly setting apart at least 20 minutes a day for the reading of the holy oracles. This reading is the greatest antidote in the present dispensation for the heart hardening which is common to all men by nature. Next to it comes the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer — oftener, like David and Daniel, if the heart so frame, but at least thus often.

This, like a watering of the seed sown by the word, will help that bringing forth of the fruit thereof by which the Father is glorified. Then there are the assemblies of the saints enjoined by the Word, which are a great help in the same direction. Next, there is nothing like the actual performance of well doing for the quickening of the heart towards God, and keeping us in a right frame and attitude. Let a man accustom himself to doing good; let him ponder his daily surroundings in the light of the commandments of Christ, and aim to adapt himself to those surroundings in accordance to those commandments, and he will be wonderfully helped. The combined result of this mode of life will be realised in a state of continual mental sympathy for divine ideas and

things, otherwise expressed in apostolic phrase as being “conformed to the image of the Son of God.” It is in fact, the growth of the new man after the image of Him who has begotten him by the word, this inward man will be renewed from day to day, and manifest his increasing vigour by the increasing burden we shall feel with the present sinful state of things and increasing desire for the change that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

R. Roberts

True Love and Its Foundation

That which is commonly talked about as “love” is not the apostolic “love”. The popular love consists of an emasculated mind and honeyed words. The apostolic “knitting together in love” is on the goodly foundation “of all riches of the full assurance of understanding.” It is a love springing from identical convictions — a common love resulting from a common enlightenment; a mutual affection spontaneously generated by unity of knowledge and judgment, and this not in the scanty forms of “opinion” or the cold uncertainty of “views” but in the richness of a positive and pronounced “assurance of understanding;” enthusiastic convictions if you will, without which there can be no true discipleship of Christ. This is a state of mind that stops not short at “good words and fair speeches” but shows its faith by “works.” Without which, man, whatever his knowledge and understanding, or ability to speak with even higher than human tongues, is a “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” There be many fig trees fair and promising to look upon, which, when the Master comes to inspect them and find nothing but leaves, will wither up before his destroying curse.

The “full assurance of understanding” in which brethren are knit together is, of course, something higher than general intelligence. What is known as “general intelligence” will do nothing for a man as regards redeeming him from the power of the grave. “General intelligence” will land a man among the worms at last, and leave him in their everlasting company. The “understanding” that delivers from death, in full assurance thereof, is that of which John speaks when he says, “The Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true” (1 John 5:20). It is the knowledge of God that redeems, as Jesus saith, “This is eternal life, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

R. Roberts

Are We Feeding On Ashes?

The time is short. The scene will suddenly be changed in a short time; and all matters will appear in their true light to every one. Many will discover that they have been wasting their time and hurting their

brethren by bootless and embittering controversy, instead of redeeming the evil days by the consolation of the truth. They will see too late that instead of imbibing the sincere milk of the word, they have been feeding on ashes; that instead of dispensing a portion of meat to the household in due season, they have been giving them gall and vinegar; that instead of strengthening the hands of fellow-labourers, they have been casting stumbling-blocks in the paths of the weak, and discouraging the hearts of the strong; that instead of rejoicing in the Lord, they have been fretting their souls with barren contentions; that instead of filling up a good account with works of humility and mercy and faith, they have been sowing a harvest of envy and strife and every evil fruit; that instead of helping to purify a peculiar people, zealous of good works, their influence has been only mischievous, and that continually obstructing the work of the Lord, pulling down the work already done, and throwing clouds and darkness over the beacon intended to guide the feet of the stranger to life eternal. Let us aim to be out of the ranks of this number that the Lord, at his coming, may approve our faithfulness in small things and give us higher work to do.

R. Roberts

The Benefit of Contentment

To rich and poor alike, the exhortation of wisdom is, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" Heb. 13:5. Here is a promise made to the fathers directly applied, by the Spirit in Paul, to their children — believers in all ages who are sons and not bastards. It is a promise having reference to the present life, as the context shows. Godliness hath promise of the life that now is as well as that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8). And what is the promise? That we shall have plenty? No, perhaps that would be a curse. That we shall always be well off? No, perhaps that would blind our eyes to the wretchedness of our present lot, and dim the glory that is to be revealed. It is a promise that we shall not be left or forsaken; and this means a great deal. It means that come prosperity or come trouble, come plenty or come poverty; come health or come sickness; come honour or come reproach; come the couch of ease or the bed of thorns; come weal or woe; come what may, if we are called according to His purpose (which will be evinced by our obedience of His commandments in all things). He will be at the helm, to make all things work together for our ultimate good, even in such things as may incline us to say, "All these things are against us." And if God be for us, with Paul, we may say, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom.8:38-39).

R. Roberts

Make “Seeking God” a Habit

There cannot be genuine prayer till there is a genuine faith in God, and genuine faith in God cannot in our day be attained excepting and by a continual dwelling in the Word. It is in the Word we make His acquaintance, both as to what He has done, what He has promised, what He desires in us, and what He is in Himself. These things are not learnt by looking at the sky, the sea, the mountains, or any of the other features of Nature. God had to reveal Himself for us to know Him. He has done it, and we can only get the knowledge of Him by having recourse to the repository of this knowledge — the Word of His Truth written aforetime, very voluminously for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Having recourse to this — “watching daily at wisdom’s gates, waiting at the posts of her doors” — we make our acquaintance with God, and are moved to approach Him continually with the ascription of our adoration, the thanksgiving of our gratitude, the confession of our shortcoming, the petition for His help of which we stand in need, in the various matters related to us. This habit will grow, and become an increasing source of strength, comfort and enlightenment. It is a thing we are commanded to do. Jesus taught that “men ought always to pray” (Luke 18:1). He told his disciples to “pray always” (Luke 21:36). The apostles are frequent in their exhortations on this point. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). “Giving thanks always for all things” (Eph. 5:20).

R. Roberts

The World Cannot Satisfy

With all the fuss and the show of importance, with all the colour and apparent zest of pleasure-following, with all the display and honouring of one another, there is no true happiness in the world. Only the young are delighted, and they but for a short time. A cloud settles on all mortal things for the blithest and the most spirited. It must be so. Though disfigured, we are in the image of the Elohim as a race. We are mentally constituted for friendship with God. It is impossible we can have peace and joy in alienation from Him. “Vanity and vexation of spirit” must come of all attempts to employ existence without Him. The world is not happy; it cannot be. It is of the Lord that the people weary themselves in the fires of vanity. But in the Truth, we are reconciled to God, and if we are living in a state of reconciliation (that is, doing those things in which He has declared His pleasure), then we are living in a state of peace.

There may be, there is, much deprivation to be endured, many crosses to be carried, many present advantages to be sacrificed as the result of trying to live the lives of saints in the present evil world; but, with all the drawbacks, we are happier in our activity, have more interest in existence, and can indulge in a more effective manner in the pleasure of anticipation, than those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The World has all the chafe and fretfulness of an evil state without any of the alleviations that come with the Gospel. Therefore, let us realise that even now we are greatly favoured in knowing God, or rather in being known of Him, while as regards the measureless futurity of the ages that are to come, it is difficult to express, and impossible to exaggerate the glory of our standing as “fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). R. Roberts

Apostolic Warning Against “Enticing Words”

“Wherein”, says Paul, “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” Col. 2:3. Why does he say this? He answers: “This I say lest any man beguile you with enticing words.” This shows that “Enticing words” were being employed to draw the views of the brethern in a contrary direction. What was the character of these enticing words? We gather it from the words almost immediately following: “Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ” (v. 8). Here are two classes of teaching “philosophy” (the tradition of men), with which the Colossians as Greeks, were surrounded; and Judaizing (the rudiments or elements of the world). Both these turned away from Christ, as we see in our own days. The words in which they did so were “enticing” or pleasant words: “good words and fair speeches which deceived the hearts of the simple,” Rom. 16:18 as it is at this day. Philosophy taught that all men were equally important by reason of their participation in a common Divinity, and that absurd and unphilosophical — that Christ was all very well in his own place as a remarkable moral hero, but that to exalt him to the position of a fellow of the Creator, and assign him supremacy over men to whom every knee must bow, and to make human salvation dependent in every case upon his goodwill, was the outrageous freak of an over-heated enthusiasm. This was flattering to human vanity, and greatly liable to “spoil” those who gave ear to the enticing words. Judaism, on the other hand, contended that as the law of Moses was Divine, and had been the glory of Israel for ages, it could not be superseded, and that any goodness that appertained to the doctrine of the Nazarene has been borrowed from it, nay more, stolen from it, and made the basis of blasphemous pretences

on the part of the unlearned Jew of Nazareth, who, even if he rose from the dead, could never be admitted to come into competition with that which God spake by Moses. Against both classes of enticing words Paul places the declaration that "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9).

R. Roberts

The Standard Christ Set

Christ's testimony concerning his disciples, is that their part is to try to follow in the course he has pursued before them. "I have given you an example." "Ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world." "It is sufficient for the disciples that he be as his Master." "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "No man is worthy of me who loves himself or his friends more than me." Consequently, there is not room for the contention of those who are fain to think that Christ's case is no standard; and those who speak of it as too high, are speaking against the Word. There will be no standard in the great day of Christ which will shortly come upon us all. The so-called "churches" have so lowered and bedraggled the Gospel in the mire of human sentiment, that it has become almost constitutionally difficult with many to receive the truth to this point. Well, there were disciples in Christ's own day, who, when they heard him on certain topics, said, "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?" And from that day, turned back and walked no more with him. It is not wonderful if in our deserted day, there should be a similar resistance to the claims of the Eternal Spirit, speaking in the holy oracles. It will be found at last a terrible thing to fight against God. The only course of sane men is to receive and follow Christ without the least reservation, regardless of disadvantage to themselves or "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls unto Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator" 1 Pet. 4:19. They cannot do more than lose their life for Christ; and thousands have done this before them, concerning whom Christ says, they shall be saved in the day of his power when all merely human hopes and schemes and honours will be wrecked for evermore.

R. Roberts

Will Christ Recognise Us?

Brethren and sisters, it is a kingdom of Heaven that is coming; a kingdom founded upon the principles of God in contrast with those now recognised among men; a kingdom not of this world. Who will be admitted to it? Only those who belong to it in the sense of partaking of its principles, and being prepared by the present individual operation of these principles for the political enforcement of them, which is to

characterise the operation of the Kingdom of God. This fact is made abundantly evident in the New Testament. Jesus speaks of many who will come to him in that day, seeking admission, to whom he will say, "I never knew you." The reason of their rejection he discloses in the words, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father that is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. Hence the great question of the hour, when the Lord has come, will be "Have I acted in harmony with the principles on which the kingdom of heaven is to be set up?" The Lord will have no use for us, unless our wisdom be according to his standard. Many men are wise according to this world, whose wisdom will turn into great folly under the scrutiny of the Lord. Kings and captains, bishops and great men, professional men and merchants grown rich with their much honouring of each other, and their much provision for their own well being, and their neglect of the poor, and their despising of the Word of God, will appear, in the dread and confusion of that day as the greatest of fools; and so will all professors who have caught up and acted out of their worldly wise principles. The only men who will appear wise will be those who have made themselves fools and poor for Christ's sake, who have incurred reproach and poverty in the carrying out of the work he has given his servants to do in his absence, in the sounding abroad of his name, and the comforting of his brethren, and the succouring of his poor.

R. Roberts

The Privilege and Duty of Public Service

Our Duty and the Gospel

The call of the Truth demands self-surrender; it means the complete subordination of the individual saint to the claims of God. Wholehearted love for God expressed in selfless service is the divine requirement enunciated by the Spirit through Moses, and reaffirmed and illustrated by Jesus. Co-operation with God through Christ is the highest privilege of the saints, whether considered in its present probationary stage, or its ultimate perfected condition. It is our duty to say, "Come" (Rev. 22:17), to "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). Dare we neglect this? The Truth makes propagandists of all, and whether it be public or private work, we must never allow present comfort or personal prestige to stand in the way of our duty to God. It is with us today, as Paul told the Corinthian Ecclesia (1 Cor. 9:16), necessity is imposed upon us; and alas for us if we fail to preach it; but whilst we have this sacred duty to carry out, we need to remember other duties — our homes, our wives, and our little ones.

F.E.W.

Preach the Word

It is not enough to say the people have the Bible (although upon them is cast a fearful responsibility by this circumstance). They have the Bible, it is true; but is it not a neglected book? There might as well be no Bible in the world, as far as the great body of mankind is concerned. We have thus an exalted function to perform — a noble opportunity to turn to account; and shall we indulge in ignoble indolence? shall we shrink from the task of unfolding the Bible's blessed truths to the perishing, and unsealing its gushing inspiration?

To put the matter in another light; shall we refrain from giving a testimony for God in this conceited, hard-hearted, unbelieving generation?

R. Roberts

Tract and Lecture Bill Distribution

Tract and lecture bill distribution is an all-important item in an ecclesia's operations. Without it no meeting can reasonably expect to make headway. It is a work that should receive every encouragement; it

is arduous and trying, and calls for not a little moral courage and endeavour. Where this work is well and cheerfully performed, what pleasure it must give to God! God saves by preaching, and to place in the hands of our neighbours literature advertising or expounding the Truth is in these days one of the most efficacious forms of preaching. A.T.J.

An Essential For Public Speaking

It is quite right that brethren should attempt to equip themselves for the work of proclaiming the Gospel, and there are many lines of study which may tend to increase their capacity.

It will be well, however, to remember that the greatest quality in any speaker is to be thoroughly in earnest over the message he is delivering. If training tends to make him artificial he would be better to remain untrained.

The best instruction in Public Speaking I have ever read states that there is no best method for everybody, but it shows the student how he may find the method which is best for him. We need a method which will help us to speak effectively while not in any way tending to make us artificial. We desire to impress the minds of the hearers with the truth and value of the message, not to make them comment on the polish of our speaking.

There are a few rules that apply to all speakers:

Throw the voice up to the roof of the mouth, forming the sound as you do humming. If this, the proper way of speaking, is once properly mastered, even one with a weak throat can speak in public day after day without detriment.

Enunciate clearly. Many of the brethren render themselves almost useless as lecturers by slovenly pronunciation. I.C.

Ecclesial Shepherds

Exhorting and lecturing brethren are, to a large extent, the nourishers of the Ecclesia. Let them, therefore, study to make their dishes wholesome and nutritious — “meaty” as the Americans say. How can they do this? By following the teaching and example of Christ and the Apostles. Where this is done the Scriptures will not be given a second place in the preparation of addresses nor will the writings of Orthodox commentators be flown to for ideas and information in preference to standard Christadelphian works. What is more sad than to hear a brother set forth, with a flourish of trumpets, questionable thoughts gleaned from Bishop Brown, Canon Jones and the Rev. John Robinson, whilst displaying the grossest ignorance in regard to Bible truth?

The popular craving is to be “novel” and “original,” a craving which

is all very well if the gratification of it is confined to discovering new things in the Word, or new ways of enforcing old things in the same precious Book; but it is very dangerous otherwise. A.T. Jannaway

Our Present Warfare

Paul says: “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual” (2 Cor. 10:4). In his letter to the Ephesians (6:14), he enumerates them as the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the preparation of the Gospel of Peace for sandals, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This is the “whole armour of God” which “the people of the holies” are permitted to use. The two-edged sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon they are allowed to wield in combat with the Beast. The impulses of the flesh would lead them to crush the tyrants who have drenched the earth with their blood, and to bruise their heads like serpents, but their Captain has said: “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” The people of the holies are forbidden to act under such impulses; but to imitate Jesus, who resisted not, but committed his cause to God. Unresisting suffering is the law of their spiritual warfare. If persecuted, they must fly; if smitten, they must not smite again; if reviled, they must bless; but, withal, “fight the good fight of faith” with the Word of God, without favour, affection or compromise, with anything that exalts itself against the Knowledge of God.

J. Thomas

Novices

It is not wise to appoint a “novice” (one newly come to the faith) to the position of a leader, or to depute to such a one the important task of interviewing candidates for immersion. It is not wise to include among our speakers one who is uncertain in his convictions regarding the First Principles, nor one whose moral walk is questionable. No meeting can possibly prosper if sound doctrine and purity of character are lacking in its leaders. Let the brethren and sisters who have the choosing of leaders think seriously on these matters. Are we not careful and thoughtful in the engagement of an assistant or a servant as to their suitability? How much more painstaking should we be when we select for God men to fill important offices in connection with His Ecclesia!

Ecclesial business is God’s business, and woe to us if we carry it on negligently. We want to do our “voting” with God in mind. We must train ourselves to act from principle, and not from sentiment or mere fancy, in our choice of brethren to exhort, to lecture, and to manage the affairs of the Ecclesia. God asks this at our hands, and our well-being lies in our obedience. On the eve of an election, let us make it a point to

refresh our minds on this subject by reading 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, noting particularly Paul's comment "MUST BE." A.T.J.

A Laodicean Ecclesia

An Ecclesia may possess good speakers, a shrewd executive, a first-rate hall, plenty of money, and yet die! If these possessions are to be of profit, the brethren must employ them as God's gifts, and as in His sight. Let us not forget that an Ecclesia (if formed on the basis of the Truth), with all its privileges and abilities, is of God's creation, and that its life is in His hands.

If an Ecclesia is to survive — to last and prosper — it must (and the importance of this demands all the emphasis we can command) acknowledge God, and by sincere and fervent prayer incessantly solicit His help and co-operation. Without this blessing, collapse is inevitable. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain" (Psa. 127:1). "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7). A.T.J.

Exhort One Another

The word "exhort" is derived from a Latin term used by the Roman Centurions when their legionaries were faced with a difficult situation. It seems, therefore, a suitable translation of the original Greek.

The Truth is a warfare, and means a daily struggle with the enemy within and without. To overcome we need strength and encouragement. While this is obtainable mainly from prayer and meditation on the Word, an additional source is the help we receive from the exhortations of our brethren and companions in the Fight. Often do we feel cast down and dispirited, but a brother comes along with a word of cheer and exhortation, and gives us fresh strength for the contest.

Let it not be imagined that exhortation is the sole duty of the brethren appointed for the purpose. Each of us can administer words of comfort, edification, and, if necessary, warning, and very often this personal exhortation is far more effective than what is spoken from the platform. This service is not an optional one; it is a command, and if we keep our eyes and ears open we shall find ample opportunity to administer to the spiritual needs of each other. J.M.E

Need For Weekly Remembrance

"This do in remembrance of me," says Jesus; but as people in the far-off 20th Century, we ask — When? Surely in harmony with the Apostolic example, on the first day of the week. And what a day of remembrance

it is! And as the first day is also, in the economy of God, the eighth day, with a wealth of glory attaching to it, past and present, we say again, what a day of remembrance, to be sure!

But remember whom? Our absent Lord, "Who loved me and gave himself for me." Could we ever forget such love? Nothing is easier. The bustle, the cares, the whole of life's competing interests would crowd right out of our mind the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, and the reconciliation which is ours thereby. In the good providence of God we are invited week by week to deliberately face these great spiritual and eternal realities to which we have become related. Call to remembrance:

Once far off — now made nigh.

Once in darkness — now in Light.

Once strangers — now of God's family.

Heirs of God: joint heirs of Christ. And so, round the Table of the Lord we gather and listen afresh to his gracious promises. He is still saying to us — Remember me. Dare we ever forget? W.J.

A Real Christadelphian Standard

Brothers, I do not put myself forward as an authority, and never have done so, as you know. I put forward the Holy Oracles as an authority, and for them I shall fight so long as God pleases to continue life in this body.

I am not learned in the conventional sense. I know more of God's Book than any other document under the sun; and in this I am content and thankful. To cause men to know what it contains is a higher work than making them acquainted with the oddities and quaddities of human wisdom. I leave those who are content with husks to make their bows at the shrine of human wisdom. I am determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Shortly with him I hope to stand, when human learning and human pride, with all its nasty paraphernalia of parchments, papers, inkmarks, books, libraries, contradictions, disputations, bewilderingments, and general crase, shall have disappeared in the abyss of rottenness and eternal decay. R.R.

No Compromise

Do what is right, be valiant for the Truth, teach it without compromise, and all lovers of the Truth will approve you; for all others, you need not care a rush. J. Thomas

Let us Defend the Truth

I have said with sincerity, and will say, perhaps, many times over

again, because they are the words of sober truth — that God has revived the Truth in our age by Bro. Thomas, and that the best work a man can put his hand to, in this age, is to defend that work against all assaults, whether the open antagonism of those who call the Truth “blasphemy”, or the insidious attacks involved in theories that make the Word of God of none effect.

R. Roberts

Christadelphian Publications

It is to the “pestilent fellows” and their publications in all past ages, not to canting pietists and sickly sentimentalists, puling from morn to dewy eve about “charity” and a “Christian spirit,” that the world is providently indebted for the preservation of the Gospel from entire oblivion. The charitable and pious orthodoxy of “The Four Denominations” fills the pulpits of the land. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian clergy all recognise one another as ambassadors of Christ, and their sects as so many divisions of the true Church. But what have they done with the Gospel?

They have laid it in a sepulchre and walled it up, and have set to it their seal of reprobation. But God has raised it from the dead, and put it into the hearts of certain, whom it has freed from ecclesiastical servitude, to contend for it earnestly and fearless of authority, power, or denunciation of scribes, pharisees, hypocrites, or any other of this generation of vipers new revived.

This is our work, and by God’s grace we will do it heartily until the hour of His judgment comes, and the Lord Jesus appears to vindicate His own.

J. Thomas

True Christadelphian Magazines

The Truth would long ago have become extinct, but for such “pestilential” publications as the “Herald,” whose “mission” is to agitate the waters, that stagnation may not arise. They are like the great Teacher, in that they “come not to bring peace, but a sword.” As soon as they cry “peace”, their mission is at an end.

They preach peace to the righteous; but for the wicked, who make void the Word of God by their pious traditions, they have nothing but torment day and night. This is the philosophy of that cry against them of bitterness, uncharitableness, censoriousness, and severity!

Cry aloud and spare not.

J. Thomas

Reading

“Give attendance to reading” (1 Tim. 4:13-16). Paul’s great concern was, that Timothy should be devoted to the reading and meditation

upon the Holy Scriptures, through which alone he would be prepared, and qualified to exhort, and teach in the Ecclesia, and impart the Word of Life to those in darkness.

How necessary the above exhortation is in these days! We greatly fear that many among the Brotherhood are given to reading the light, trashy literature which abounds on every hand, whereas the Word of Life is either neglected, or else read in a careless and indifferent spirit of merely “doing” the Daily Readings.

If we are to profit by the Reading of the Scriptures, we must also meditate upon the things we read, and meditation is as the plough before the sower, to prepare the heart for the privilege and duty of Prayer, and the harrow to cover the seed when it is sown. W.Collard

Christadelphian Bookshelves

A Christadelphian is a Bible student. This should be reflected in his bookshelves. What should be there? Something must be left to individual choice, but the following may be a useful guide to the beginner. First, the expository works of Bro. Thomas, Bro. Roberts and other brethren should be there; these are invaluable. There should also be (1) a good Bible Dictionary — not a modern one full of the critics’ surmises, but one like Dr. Smith’s or Kitto’s; (2) a Hebrew and a Greek Lexicon, and (3) “Strong’s Exhaustive”, or “Young’s Analytical” Concordance. To these may be added a few reliable historical and archeological works. They will fill in the details of Apocalyptic interpretation and cast light on Old Testament references. There are a number of Zionist works well worthy of being included.

Use Orthodox writers with care.

W.B.

The Future of the Ecclesias

What is to be the future of the Ecclesias? If Christ delay his coming, are they to make headway or to lose ground? Our wish, of course, is for the former, but will our wish be realised? This will depend largely upon our attitude towards the Scriptures, and towards the writings of Bro. Thomas and Brother Roberts. The success that has attended the efforts of the brethren in the past has undoubtedly been due, first, to the recognition of the fact that the Bible is divine — that it has a paramount claim upon our obedience — and that it is a duty to daily and prayerfully read it. And, secondly, to the appreciation of the invaluable writings of the brethren mentioned — brethren who, in God’s hands, were instrumental in unfolding to us the way of salvation; brethren who, to their dying ways, were steadfast and exemplary. Why do we refer to these matters? Because of the growing tendency to under-estimate their

importance. Let us treat with righteous indignation any and every appeal to keep quiet as to our views respecting the infallible authorship of the Bible. Let us also treat with scorn any suggestion to hide or shelve the works of Bro. Thomas and Bro. Roberts... If our ecclesias are to advance — if they are to abound in God's work and favour — we shall have to keep our eyes and ears open, and wish God-speed only to intelligent, right-minded lovers of the Sacred Oracles, and readers and appreciators of the writings to which reference has been made. A.T.J.

The Truth In Opposition to Christendom

Odium Theologicum

The above means "hatred among theologians," and is generally used to deter people from acting with Scriptural injunctions in matters of principle in religion. Hatred has a place in this connection, however. Christ himself hated the doctrine and deeds of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2:6,15). The Psalmist hated every false way (Ps. 119:104).

This hatred is not directed against persons, as such, but principles and results, and actions which some may describe as the **odium theologicum** are intended to show the view taken of false principles and practices which would interfere with purity of faith and fellowship. Scriptural injunctions are precise. Christ's injunctions to his disciples indicate the idea in regard to the matter (Mat. 10:14). Upholders of heresy are to be rejected (Titus 3) Those who teach a different doctrine and consent not to sound words are to be withdrawn from (1 Tim. 6:3-6). To bid them God-speed is to partake of their evil deeds (2 John 9-11). The same thing applies to walking disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6).

Faithfulness to God's Word necessitates complying with these commands, and a wise man will not be scared away from them by considerations of a contrary character.

W.H.B.

Abominations of the Earth

Who, for two hundred years after the Resurrection of Christ, ever heard of Vicars of Christ, Papists, Catholics, Episcopalians, High, Low, or Evangelical, Presbyterians of any School, Calvinists, Methodists, Trinitarians, Unitarians, Universalists, Mormons, and so forth, with the special teachings heaped up to teach for hire the traditions lusted after by professors glorifying in these names? They were like the next crop of mosquitoes in the future unknown.

The term Catholic, as the name of a party, was not know till about A.D. 250. Yet during that two hundred years men and women, both Jews and Gentiles, turned from Judaism and idolatry by thousands, obtained the forgiveness of all their past sins, and a right to life eternal without the intervention of Popish Priests or Protestant Parsons, and were

Apostolically recognised as “the Brethren of Jesus Christ,” and the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. J. Thomas

Christendom as a Whole

The Roman Church is “the Mother of Harlots,” and the Papal dynasty, “the name of blasphemy,” seated on the seven hills of Rome (Rev. 13:1; 17:9) and the paramour of the Old Mother. Their harlot-daughters answer to the state churches of Anti-Christendom, and the “abominations of the earth,” to all the Dissenting names and denominations, aggregately styled “names of blasphemy,” of which the European body-politic, symbolised by the eight-headed scarlet-coloured beast, is said to be “full” (Rev. 17:3). J. Thomas

The Clerical Profession

The profession of a clergyman is mere “humbug”. The reader will, we trust, excuse the word, but we know of no other in our mother tongue so expressive of our sense of the imposition practised on the world by the clerical profession. Only look at it for a moment.

A boy is sent to a college or seminary to learn how to preach the traditions of his father’s sect so as not to offend its creed or hurt the feelings of his patrons. He is to thunder forth damnation against sins which they have no mind to; but to be exceedingly cautious, under pain and penalty of the loss of their patronage, how he questions received opinions, or rebukes sins which they approve. He goes, therefore, to the school to learn the art of trimming, or of navigating his craft between the Scylla of the Creed and the Charbybdis of their peccadilloes. J. Thomas

Apostolic Succession

Apostolic Succession is a mere figment of the carnal mind. The only succession of which any Scriptural idea can be formed is the following in the steps of the Apostle’s faith, which no one who understands the word of the Kingdom would affirm of the ecclesiastical guides of the people.

The power and authority of the Apostles died with them. Those who succeed to their faith are their successors only in this sense. Their word, which is also the Lord’s word, dwells in such richly in all wisdom; and where the word of the Lord is found, there, by the belief of it, he dwells in the hearts of men. When they work according to this word, they and the Lord work together. But this is not peculiar to a ministerial class, but is common to all the Lord’s people, for He is no respecter of persons.

J. Thomas

The Clergy

They speak one thing, and the Eternal Spirit another; and what they speak is point-blank contradiction and denial of the words of God; so that if a man believe their dogmas, he must of necessity make God a liar, which is to blaspheme Him, His truth, and all who heartily believe it. They scoff at the idea of some poor shoemaker, or mechanic, who may be a true believer, taking a position over the nations after the lapse of a few years to govern them for God in place of the Kings of the Earth, who now possess the dominion.

They assume the position of “laughter, holding both their sides,” at the very statement of so preposterous a conceit. No wonder they discourage and discountenance the study of the Apocalypse; and if any of them should venture upon an exposition of it, that they should invariably give the letters to the seven churches the go-by. The promises appended to each are anti-clerical, and find no counterpart in their systems.

J. Thomas

Human Learning

Paul purposely avoided all modes of presenting the Truth that had affinity with the meretricious lustre of human learning. “I came not unto you,” he says to the Corinthians, “with the excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God... My speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom...” “Christ sent me... to preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect... Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty — not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.”

Natural men may not sympathise with the divine policy thus formulated by Christ’s faithful servant, but it remains the unchanged policy of the Gospel to the present hour, and it may be that God will force us to recognise this more distinctly.

R. Roberts

Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing

We read the writings of the Prophets, and are quick to realise the dark and evil-mindedness of Israel’s religious leaders. We do the same in regard to the New Testament teaching concerning the corrupters of the Truth in Apostolic times. But when we come to the Apocalypse... which is in part God’s revelation respecting the true character of the Clergy for the past fifteen or more centuries... many of us are of uncertain mind, and therefore, fearful to take God’s estimate of the Clergy. We want more

study of the Apocalypse, more deep, earnest reading of "Eureka". This will safeguard us against being captivated by the Clergy. Are there not among us brethren who are competent and willing to write a few robust, bright, pithy articles on Rev. 17:5, with particular reference to its bearing on our times?

Yes, the Clergy have to be watched and shunned. They are the saint's enemies, and will remain so till Christ is again in the earth to destroy, once and for ever, their wicked Babylonish system. A.T.J.

Bro. Thomas and The Clergy

Bro. Thomas is said by some to have been unnecessarily severe in his handling of his opponents — the clergy in particular. It is saddening to hear brethren talking in this strain. It is the result of not perceiving to the same extent as did the Doctor, the terrible mischief wrought by false teachers. The Doctor was a man of experience, and knew, far better than most of us know, the naughty little ways of religious worldlings and the sad havoc they cause. He realised, and very keenly so, that men and women were everywhere perishing from lack of Bible truth, and that the great hindrance in the way of their receiving it was the "Reverends" of the Apostasy.

In regard to the dissemination of the truth, which has achieved the greatest results, the clear, robust, sledgehammer utterances of the Doctor, or the feeble utterances of his smooth-speaking critics? Whose writings are the most refreshing and upbuilding, the Doctor's, or those whose writers try to be nice with everyone — including the direct enemies of the Truth? If we take God's views of the leaders and upholders of error, we shall not find fault with the Doctor's trenchant strictures on false teachers. If in these perilous times, the Truth is to prosper in our hands, we shall have to exhibit the Doctor's qualities — fearlessness, outspokenness, clearness, conjoined with jealousy and love for the Scriptures. A.T. Jannaway

The Value of The Clergy

It is the fashion in these times to say that every man, and woman, too, has a mission. Speaking, then, according to this notion, "the Clergy," as composed of men and women, have a mission and so have we. Their mission is to deceive and by their deception to keep the devil in awe. This is upon the principle of "diamond cut diamond". This evil world is ruled by its fears, operated upon through the civil magistrate and the priest, the influence of the former being sustained by sword and staff, and that of the later by apprehension connected with the eternal unknown; which, in relation to the blind, is the more awful, as the darkness is profound.

Even Romanism has its use upon this principle. It would never do to leave flesh and blood without clerical restraint, for the “ministers of grace,” as they are styled, are the spiritual police of the Satan’s Kingdom, to the order of which they are essential, in some livery or other, and sheep’s clothing is better suited to the times. We would, therefore, not have the clerical orders abolished till the Lord come, an event which cannot be otherwise than nigh.

J. Thomas

Apostate Distinctions

The word “clergy” as the title of an order, is assumed by men who have no right to it. It is a word which comes from the Greek — “kleros” — “a lot or portion”; and is applied by the Apostle in 1 Pet. 5:2-3 to a single congregation of disciples; so that when he speaks of all the congregations of the flock, he styles them “the heritages” — “ton klerons” (v.3). But in after years, the ministers of the heritages, or clergies, disregarded the commandment, and set themselves up as lords of the heritages, which they fleeced and oppressed for lucre’s sake. They even made the clergies of God believe that they were nothing more than mere commoners; while they themselves, the usurpers of the believers’ rights, were God’s peculiar lot or portion, as the tribe of Levi was among the Israelites. This usurpation came at length to be regarded as legitimate; and the distinction was then set up of “clergy” and “laity,” from “the multitude”!

But the distinction belongs to the Apostasy and not to God’s oppressed and scattered sheep. When “clergy” get in among them, it is “as grievous wolves, not sparing the flock, but speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them” for their own worldly gain (Acts 20:29,30). They have nothing to do with the word of reconciliation except to pervert it, and to bring it into disrepute.

J. Thomas

Bro. Thomas No Trader in Religion

It is a gratification to the writer to be able to say that he has left his home, 4,000 miles in the south-west; that he has travelled twice through Britain; delivered 170 addresses to the people; sat up early and late conversing with them on the things of the Kingdom, and written this work (“Elpis Israel”), that he may leave a testimony behind him, and as yet he has received no more than four shillings over his travelling expenses. He mentions this that the reader may be able to acquit him of being a trader in religion, and that what he says in this book concerning the “scriptural merchants” may not lose its point under the supposition that he also is one of the wealthy and thriving firm.

J. Thomas

Protestantism

Protestantism is but a fashionable Demas, competing with Popery for the votes of Democracy, which at heart they both cordially despise. Soul-saving is the pretext; the loaves and fishes of the State, daily sumptuousness and power, the real end of the enlargement of their phylacteries before the people. The Protestantism of Luther, Calvin, and Wesley has doctrinally accomplished all it is capable of against Romanism in its Papal manifestation.

“The Reformers” all erred in supposing that Popery could be reformed, and in admitting that the Roman Catholic Church was ever a true Church. No independent mind, enlightened by Moses and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles, thinks of paying any regard to Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Methodist protest against Popery; for if the Papal Church be the “Mother of Harlots,” as they say, they are unquestionably “the daughters” — the “women” of Rev. 14:4.

J. Thomas.

New Testament Christianity

Christianity is the “Gospel of the Kingdom” for the obedience of faith, with the “all things” enjoined upon the baptised by the Apostles. This is the best definition I can give in Bible terms to a word which does not occur in the Scriptures.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is an invitation to Jews and Gentiles to become heirs of God’s Kingdom and Glory, on condition of believing “the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ,” and being immersed into the “name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:12). They are invited to separate themselves from the institutions of the nations, which are of no spiritual account in the affair of salvation. In believing and obeying the Truth, this separation is effected; and though believers live under the schismatic conditions of the Gentiles, as Jewish Christians in Palestine lived under the Mosaic constitution, they have no use for them as spiritual institutions. You may see from Acts 15:7-19 that God sent the Gospel invitation to the Gentiles “TO TAKE OUT OF THEM a people for His name”. J. Thomas

Theology Challenges Truth

It was the religious world that persecuted Jesus and the Apostles unto death; and for the simple reason that they testified the truth in opposition to that which was highly esteemed among men; for Jesus said: “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of Deity” (Luke 16:15). It makes a great profession of piety, pretends to be

extraordinarily conscientious; it strains enormously at gnats, and has a great zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. J. Thomas

Come Out From Among Them

The preparation of a people for the Lord; a people whose character shall answer to Rev. 3:18; 19:7-8 is the great desideratum of the age. "The churches" do not contain such a people, neither can their pulpit ministrations produce them. In fact, "the churches" are precisely what college divinity is alone competent to create. "The Truth as it is in Jesus" is not taught in the schools. They are mere nurseries of pride, professional religion, and conceit; and "the droppings of the sanctuary" which their nurselings are appointed to distil, wear away the intelligence of the people and leave them irresponsive to "the testimony of God." Nothing short of this, unmixed with the traditions of men, can make people what they must be if they would inherit His Kingdom. Other Gospels will make other kinds of Christians than those who believe the Gospel the Apostles preached.

We must forsake the pulpits and devote the time usually spent in dozing over their mar-text expositions to the Berean scrutiny of the Scriptures for ourselves. These alone are able to make us wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. J. Thomas.

Sneering At Learning

As to "sneering at learning," with which I am charged. It is impossible I could sneer at learning in the sense of a knowledge of the original languages in which the Bible was written. But I do say that a brother of Christ, who rejoices in the knowledge of the Truth, can have no respect for a class of interpreters (however philologically expert) whose ignorance of the Truth unfits him for the work of interpretation. Their efforts are the futile struggles of men with an insoluble puzzle. As Sister Roberts said this morning, they are like men at a locked door with a bunch of wrong keys, trying first one and then another, in vain. Sometimes one seems to fit, and they think that must be it; but the door does not open. R. Roberts.

Too Much Denunciation?

With all his meekness and gentleness, Christ could address his pious and pompous antagonists as "whited sepulchres," "hypocrites," "fools," "blind guides," "blind leaders," "children of hell," "serpents," "vipers," and so on. He could describe Herod as "that fox"; and Peter, James and Jude, in perfect imitation of Christ's "style," could speak of

the false teachers of their time as “natural brute beasts,” “wandering stars,” “clouds without water,” “lovers of the wages of iniquity,” “evil beasts and slow bellies,” and a good many other terse things.

We, therefore, do not sympathise with the squeamish objections of popular “Christianity” on the subject of style.

Honesty of utterance, even if erring on the side of severity, so far from being incompatible with true Christian character, is a distinguishing feature of it.

R. Roberts

To Professed Christadelphian Leaders

Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show the people their transgressions, and the sons of Belial their sins!

I have never heard a man yet, thoroughly imbued with the Truth and love of it, cry out against a hearty and uncompromising castigation of error, as bitter and too severe. Where men’s faith is weak, and their minds are full of uncertainty, and they are conscious that their own deed will not bear the light, you will find them full of “charity,” and sensitively fearful of the Truth being too plainly spoken. All their sympathies are with the feeling of the corrupters and transgressors of the Word. They don’t want their feelings hurt lest it should do harm! The fact is they don’t want the Truth too plainly demonstrated, lest it should make them unpopular; or they should be themselves obliged to defend that of which they were not fully assured.

J. Thomas

Quasi-Christadelphians

They accuse you of rudeness and reviling. They would have you adopt a style as if you were pleading a case in Court in which you had no more interest than the fee you had got through your otherwise irksome task. They would reduce you to the cold, unimpassioned style of a clerical reader of sermons, purchased in Paternoster Row at so much per dozen.

Whatever they may think, they dare not accuse Paul, Peter, John, Jude, and Christ of reviling; but they condemn their words in the mouths of Christ’s brethren. “Oh,” say they, “Christ was inspired and infallible, but you are not, and have no right to do as he did.” But Peter exhorts us differently. He tells us that Christ left us an example, that we should follow his steps; who did no sin, *neither was guile found in his mouth*; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again (1 Pet. 2:22). Now it is well to follow his steps in speaking as well as in action. No better model for style than this can be found.

J. Thomas

Christ’s Meaning of Reviling

Christ was a guileless enunciation of the Truth in word, tones, and

gesture, which left his hearers unmistakeably impressed with his meaning.

He has not left us to the dictionary for the definition of the word "revile." Matt. 5:11 clearly shows that to revile is "to say all manner of evil against a man *'falsely'*". To say evil of a man, or a body of men, truly is not reviling. All said against Jesus reproachfully was false, and therefore reviling; but all he said of his foes was true, and therefore not reviling, else to earnestly declare the Truth is reviling.

Now, it is not necessary to be inspired, nor infallible, to qualify for discerning the Truth in relation to modern teachers as surely as Jesus did in relation to the Scribes and Pharisees. When, therefore, men ascend a pulpit and proclaim themselves to be the "ministers of Christ," and "successors of the Apostles," we are as infallibly certain that they are the ministers of Satan as Jesus was that the Scribes and Pharisees were a generation of serpents, because they neither know the Gospel, nor have they obeyed it, and it is not reviling to proclaim this truth upon the housetops.

J. Thomas

Words Of Warning

Neutral Christadelphians a Danger

In this spiritual warfare, whose weapons are neither lead, nor steel, but more effective than either for putting to flight the alien, there are neither truce, armistice, neutrality, nor peace. He that is not with us is against us; and he that gathereth not with us scattereth abroad.

I, for one, know no man in this warfare as a brother and a friend who is neutral or not gathering. A man who is neutral stands by with arms folded and sees the enemy crushing me to death! He believes in the cause I am fighting for, but he calmly views my destruction without any sign of help. Is such a man my friend and brother? Is he not rather a sympathizer with the enemy? If he helped me, we might prove too strong for the foe; the enemy, knowing this, cannot look upon neutrals in any other light than as his friends. And this is just where Christ puts all neutrals in the good fight of faith.

J. Thomas

Perils of the Last Times (2 Tim. 3:1-7)

These are not new, but *old perils intensified*. They spring from *one root — namely, Bible neglect*. Lay your axe to that root, and you bring down trunk and branches.

Read the Scriptures daily — aloud, if possible. Take time to grasp the sense. Consult sound expositors, as Bro. Thomas and Bro. Roberts. Persevere thus, and you will be safeguarded against the unbelief in Moses and the Prophets rampant in the world, and — shame to say — not altogether unknown among professed friends of the Truth.

Rigorously exclude company and habits that “choke the Word and make it unfruitful.”

Let neither cares nor pleasures crowd God’s truth and Word from your mind. Prayerfully persevere thus, and you will grow in Christ and be enabled to “keep unspotted from the world,” “fruitful in every good work,” to endure to the end,” and sweetly realise at last that “the Holy Scriptures have made you wise unto salvation” (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim. 2:15-17; Psalm 119:97, 130; Mark 4:19; James 1:27; 2 Tim. 3:15-17).

E.P.

Modern Dangers

One of the dangers of the present day, which are the “last days” of the

apostle's allusion in 2 Tim. 3, is to yield to the temptation, of which we are susceptible, and to become, along with our contemporaries, "Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God."

The apostle's exhortation is "from such turn away." The reason for this is obvious, because of what God said by John (1st Ep. 2:15). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We are all liable to be influenced by the all-pervading spirit of worldliness, but especially so the younger members of the Household. In every walk of life, they are in contact with those "who live after the flesh," and hence the need of recognizing the danger, which thus may be avoided, if they "from such turn away."

J.W.S.

Contend Earnestly

The night is far spent — the Day is at hand.

Very nearly fifty years of waiting, believing, and hoping for that — and the hope brightens, the belief deepens, and the waiting seems short.

The time has been one of the varied experiences. Much labour, many griefs, much experience of goodness, many errors and a continual experience of the love and mercy of God.

One's recollections go back to many good and noble men and women, who need not be named, but whose names are written in heaven. The finest characters and the most devoted lives have been amongst those who held most devotedly to the purity of the Faith, and stood unfalteringly for sound doctrine.

Don't be carried away with the absurd outcry against "contention" and the "fighting spirit." That spirit properly controlled is a constructive spirit, and very little constructive or helpful work has come from the smooth speaking and placid contentment school.

A *mere* fighting man is useless: he destroys without creating — there are such. But a fighting man of Bro. Thomas' type creates more than he destroys. His creative work was magnificent, and it was a positive necessity with him to clear the stage of the corrupt lumber of churches in order to manifest the whole counsel of God.

G.F.L.

Live With Vision

The "last times" of every dispensation have been difficult for the people of God. Ours are no exception. The general tendency of the age is evil and adverse to faithfulness to the Truth. Foundations are questioned; zeal is the object of surprise, almost pity. What, then, shall the righteous do? First of all, be assured of the foundation — the inspiration and infallibility of the Word of God. Be clear in doctrine. Let

your testimony to the Truth be definite and uncompromising. Speak as the oracles of God.

In exhortation, whether public or private, remember that the object is to fit others for the Kingdom. Do not discourage by dwelling only on the hardships of the way; point also to the joys ahead. Do not be content with the elementary things of the Truth; try to fathom some of the deeper things.

Above all, remember the saint's duty is to be like Christ — "holy, harmless, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26). W.H.B.

Our Perilous Times

We are living in "perilous times" — perilous not only for the world, but for the ecclesias.

The allurements of the world, the seductiveness of modern life — its pleasures, fashions and follies — prove an easy snare for many, especially the young.

Indifference, lethargy, lukewarmness, are the curse of our time.

There is far greater likelihood of becoming lukewarm than of allowing our zeal to eat us up.

What is the remedy?

"Give more earnest heed" to the things of the Truth. Life is too short to be frittered away; the issues too tremendous to be neglected.

"Now is the accepted time," the time for the buying up of opportunity. "The things which are seen are temporal" — they will soon be gone. We are related to things unseen, eternal. Let us turn ourselves from the tyranny of the present, and view the matter from the standpoint of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

That is the true perspective.

Let the remainder of our lives, whether long or short, be dedicated wholly to Him who has called us. This alone can give us peace and tranquility in the life that now is, and assure us an abundant entrance into that which is to come. M.A.

Our Most Dangerous Enemies

The greatest and most dangerous enemies to Christ are those who pretend to be his friends but are not faithful to his doctrine; and they are unfaithful who, from any motives of personal interest, would weaken the point of doctrine, or soften it for the gratification of their natural feelings, or for fear of hurting the feelings of the enemy, and so affecting their popularity with him. J. Thomas

The Name "Christadelphian"

The name of Christadelphian came into existence when it was

necessary to distinguish the brethren from other so-called Christians. Ever since, that name has stood for the One Faith and for separation from the present evil world in its Religious, Social and Political aspects.

“Brethren in Christ,” a high and noble calling, an honourable name! Has it lost its meaning since it first came into being? The Ecclesia at Sardis had a “name” that it lived, but it was dead. They called themselves Brethren in Christ, and they had a high reputation, but in Christ’s estimation they were like the Pharisees, “whited sepulchres,” outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of dead men’s bones. The salt can lose its savour; the name Christadelphian can become a misnomer; borne by a people who have become false to the Truth it signifies, lax, latitudinarian and worldly. Let us remember our proud and exalted appellation; see that it never becomes tarnished, dishonoured, meaningless. It is *the fact* that is important; not the name. If we call ourselves Christadelphians, then let us be Brethren of Christ in that we hold his Truth unimpaired, and follow his example of holiness.

"For Christ's Sake"

This article was issued many years ago, and whilst some of the matters raised may be somewhat "outdated", and more modern trends not included, the basic principles concerning God's way still apply. It is therefore included in this volume as a valuable assistance to the Truth's standards.

Introduction

An earnest appeal to those who, having accepted God's Truth, have been united with Christ in baptism and profess to follow him as their example in daily life.

The object of this is to consider evil habits which are to some extent current in the household of God, practised secretly and openly, and tolerated by some who do not practise them. It is true that occasionally an article appears in print, and that words of exhortation in a mild way draw attention to evils, but there remains yet more that is needful.

No visible Master is in our midst; no Paul, John, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. We accept the words spoken and written by all these as the basis of our religion, and thereby consent to them as authoritative. Thus the words of God uttered through Isaiah (58) apply to us:- "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins." We sadly need a modern Isaiah to break in upon the household of God in these days, telling out the sins and delinquencies of His people, and reminding them as the prophet did Israel that, in the day of their fast they sought and found pleasures and exacted things wherewith they grieved others.

Jesus informed the disciples that when the bridegroom was taken away they would fast. He is still away. Of what should our fast consist if not to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness? How forcibly the Preacher in Ecclesiastes warns God's people against seeking and being with the vanities of daily life.

The writer of this would rejoice exceedingly if it were even doubtful that the evils or vanities mentioned existed in the household. That they do exist has been confirmed by considered observation, experience, hearing, and by actual confession of those who indulge in them, and who, let it be candidly admitted, do so without realizing the danger attending their habits. And because blame is due to some one, it falls perhaps more justly on senior brethren, who have permitted the meetings to be chiefly

spent in doctrinal upbuilding, thereby largely excluding attention to moral advancement. The reasons for this negligence or oversight is due to the opinion that Bible Class functions consist in studying the doctrinal word, and exhortation time is not quite suitable for upsetting any brother's or sister's mind by propounding opinions upon some problematic habit! Hence, no other time is available. The reading matter of the Truth's library contains but little, and current literature rarely adopts a bold policy, on this subject, taking it for granted, possibly, that acceptance of the Truth will have sufficiently enlightened the believer of its doctrinal truths as to his or her moral obligations. And to a great extent this occurs, although it is no reason why nothing further should be done. Hence this warning.

Sometimes we sing, "the very bride her calling, and portion hath forgot, and seeks for ease and glory where Thou her Lord art not." It has been thought that this indictment is too severe, and some have deleted the words, while others have altered them. And yet, apparently, much truth underlies them.

Paul the Apostle asks: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial (worthlessness), or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (2 Cor. 6:14). Let us not read these words with an application to bygone days, nor with the idea that they bear a doctrinal but no moral significance; for if they have meaning it is both doctrinal and moral, for our present time. Let us now examine ourselves searchingly and closely to see if any of these comparisons are applicable to any practice or habit of daily life. To the extent that we reach the standard we are becoming the undefiled temple of God, and have obeyed His commandment to "come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean," and then, "He will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." Such, then, is the standard set by our heavenly Father, and to which He asks us to conform. It is the standard by which we may simply test ourselves to see whether our profession of sonship is quite genuine.

Let us also remember that we live in the times of which the prophets wrote, and the angels desired to look into. These are the last days, and we therefore need to gird up the loins of our minds in every possible manner, "and be sober and obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts of our ignorance." So the Apostle Peter wrote, continuing with the admonition to "be holy in all manner of conversation [behaviour or conduct]." We may rest assured that if such advice and admonition was necessary in those days, it was because practices and habits of an unworthy nature were indulged in by the early

disciples. Having been foretold that in the last days things would be worse, and "men would be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," how much greater becomes the necessity of watchfulness, lest we unconsciously drift into the habits of the evil world. In the absence of an Isaiah, let the elder brethren "Cry aloud and spare not."

And, further, because we claim to know the Truth, to have found the Way and to hope for the Life; in short, to have chosen Christ and his unquestionable ways in preference to the ways of the world, shall we not receive with approval every appeal which is made for the abolition of the works of the flesh? When we stand at the judgment there need be little fear of condemnation for our not *knowing* the truth, but there is great fear of being banished, as Jesus said, because "*Ye did it not.*"

The Smoking Habit.

A very common practice existing in the household among brothers, which may in due time extend to the sisters, as it has in the world, is the smoking habit. None would say it is wicked, but it is considered a degenerate habit, degrading and undesirable in its nature. After listening to numerous attempts by smoking brethren to justify it, there has not one of them been prepared to admit that in Christ's presence they would practise it. In some cases there may be real or imagined physical benefits, usually discovered after the habit has been acquired. Much sympathy might be extended to elder men who, coming into the body, find the habit so severely possessing them that, as they say, they "cannot knock it off." Dear brethren, allowing that to do without is indeed a great trial, is any sacrifice too great "for Christ's sake" and for the sake of those young disciples who, entering the ranks have learned to believe that we are separated from the world alike in belief and habit? Failing abstinence by the seniors what can be expected of the juniors? They quickly follow the example of the older brethren. Surely none will contend that it is the example of the Master. Answer is frequently made that "there is no harm in it." Let it rather be asked whether there is any *good* in it, for we profess to be, to seek, and to secure, good. Smoking is either a godly or an ungodly practice. If the former we may adopt it; if the latter, we should not. In saying this it is not the smokers who are condemned; it is the habit, which cannot be included in the category of godly things enumerated by Paul: "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy, think on these things . . . those things which ye have learned, received, heard, and seen in me do." (Philippians 4:8). Such is the very excellent advice of Paul, whom we admire so greatly. Things which are unharmonious to those embodied in the list we can well afford to leave alone. On the score of the smoking

habit, this appeal goes forth to plead with smoking brethren to make the sacrifice of selfdenial for Christ's sake and abandon the practice. He will recompense.

The Liquor Habit.

A more serious thing which in the world is a colleague with the former is the liquor habit. To an alarming extent this is practised in the household. Brethren may be found who indulge in convivial drinking in public houses and elsewhere with the alien with whom they will not have any religious association. Is not the friendship of the world declared by the Apostle James to be "enmity with God"? "Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." Surely no defence exists for this practice. Yet how terribly hard it becomes to desist. Only the grace of God seems able to turn the drinker from the error of his ways. Advice, admonition, and interest alike seem incapable of curing him. And in the end one takes too much and too often, until faith is shipwrecked.

The lesson arising from these cases is the evil of the first beginning. By separating ourselves from the world by baptism, we have denied ourselves the liberty of keeping company with those who, "practising such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The free use of intoxicating liquor is practised in homes of some brethren. And sisters take their share. Much excuse and plausible argument is advanced in its favour. No evil is so terrible as that which smothers self-responsibility. Any doubts may be readily solved by asking the question: "Would Christ commend or condemn it? Is it a worldly or godly practice? When we remember our deep concern for exemption of brethren from military service, it surely is not too much to claim exemption also from the evil ways of the flesh. What shall be answered before a military tribunal if the question were put regarding our habits of daily life? Would consistency answer in our favour? We can give these degrading habits up, and we should "for Christ's sake." Let the power of example influence us.

Stage and Pictures

But there is another and quickly developing evil making itself familiar among the members of the body. Formerly, the playhouse and theatre of pantomime were considered to be unfit places for Christ's brethren. Perhaps this is the general opinion at the present time, and yet there are those who see no harm in opera, pantomime, or theatre, and who patronize them. When the world sees, as it may, some prominent worker in the Master's vineyard attending these places, it raises the question of consistency and example; for do we not boldly claim that we have come

out and separated ourselves from the world? We make this clear from our platforms. He would be of doubtful wisdom who would be found in any of these places at the appearing of Christ. The Master cannot be imagined seeking his brethren in the company of those who waste their time and opportunity in such vanities. For while there may be no harm there certainly is no good of the right sort attached to the footlights.

While many brethren stand aghast at the beforementioned places of amusement, some indeed of the objectors enjoy the habit of regularly spending certain evenings at the popular picture palaces! This is no less than an anomaly, even if it be not truly inconsistent. The picture screen is but a reproduction in degree of the footlight play, which requires to be staged for the purpose of the cinematograph. Some pictures may be instructive, the majority are “pleasant to the eyes,” so doubtfully pleasant that even the worldly authorities consider it wise to censor certain pictures in whole or part. Is there not enough human nature and its doings before our eyes in daily life that we need to pay for sensational reproduction on the stage or screen? Those actively engaged in the Master’s work will not have desire or time to yield to this fastgrowing evil. To such an alarming extent has this form of evil crept into the household that the propriety of it is scarcely questioned. Picture palaces are among the world’s present-day idols, and “what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for we are the temple of the living God”. Brethren and sisters, in these days we need to spend the time of our sojourning in fear. The Master is at hand. It will take all our time and attention to fit ourselves in readiness to meet him. If he should come while we were engaged with the frivolities of life in a picture show or elsewhere, would he seek us there? “Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” has its meaning for us who are of the day as well as for those who are of the night. We are admonished to “deny worldly desires and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ,” and to “always follow after that which is good.”

The Up-to-Date Mind.

Another pleasant evil is protruding its presence in the body. Not that sisters intend to disregard what is written in Scripture, but they err most likely for the same reason as their prototype Eve. In Genesis 3:6 we read: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes . . . she took of the fruit thereof and did eat.” There is no necessity to discuss the “pros and cons” of Eve’s misfortune which ended in failure; it is sufficient for our purpose to note the causes. The fruit was pleasant to the eyes, it was pretty and yet to remain untouched; it was good for food yet not to be eaten.

The fashion of the world is ever changing, but that does not permit us the liberty of setting our affections on the changing world and its fashions. Nor is it to be denied that in recent years the pendulum of dress and style swung toward the borderland of vulgarity, bringing blushes to the cheeks of the prudent. There is an attempt to cheat the truth by dressing so as to disguise age, and mothers have externally spurned their matronage and bedecked themselves as their daughters! There is an excess of time and thought devoted to personal adornment, making it apparent that many opportunities are bestowed on that which is "pleasant to the eyes." If senior sisters take advantage of the world's goddess, what can be expected of the younger members? They promptly annex the licence exhibited by the elder sisters. And, again, how much observation and no small amount of comment is sometimes expressed regarding the new attire of sisters present at the breaking of bread meeting. The memorial feast tells that these are the days of our fasting in the Master's absence, and we need to remember that Israel was rebuked by God for finding pleasure when they professed to be fasting. All these things were written for our admonition and learning, on whom the ends of the ages are come. Often and often the prophets were directed to condemn the excess of external beauty which the women of Israel indulged in, and the Apostles declared how the holy women were to adorn themselves. Sisters have great powers for good, and in view of the Lord's approach, we believe it would be acceptable to him if they abandoned the world to its own follies and study that separateness or holiness without which none shall see the Lord.

It is a hard and somewhat unpleasant duty to break in upon the apparently harmless enjoyment of the sisters in Christ, but "for his sake" they will not object to a rebuke which will not hinder them in securing his approval. Realizing that the motive of this appeal is not an attack upon the individual, but an effort to keep the body up to the standard of holiness, both brethren and sisters will endeavour to adorn themselves with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price." The fashion of that spirit remains unchanged and abideth for ever.

Marriage

There remains to be considered another growing evil. This is the violation of direct example and command which has brought disappointment, unhappiness and despair into the lives of many. This is companionship, betrothal, and marriage by believers with unbelievers. Many good brethren and sisters have wrecked their course to the kingdom upon this shoal, and, like the rich man in Hades, would have it testified lest their brethren should fall into the same error and terror.

Strict regard to the requirements of God will prevent both. Too much confidence in promises made by the unbelieving companion; too much hope in the assurance of later acceptance of the truth, have caused many to become unequally yoked in marriage. The result, instead of joy, has been abiding regret that the experience of other brethren, and the examples in Israel, did not serve as a loud warning against the intention to enter life's union under unequal and unholy conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to raise the alarm to those who are in this manner consorting with unbelievers. Necessary too, that brethren who have been entrusted with the care of the ecclesias, like faithful stewards, should "cry aloud and spare not" in exhibiting this violation of Divine requirement. "Only in the Lord" is the essential condition for companionship and marriage of those in the Divine family. From this condition there is no escape, and although violation of it may bring, and has brought, its penalties, it behoves those "who watch for their souls as those who shall give account" to make it clear by precept and example that God has declared our duty even in this matter.

General

There are other phases of pleasure and vanity which are practised in our midst. The active association of brethren and sisters with various "outside" organizations, such as political, municipal, philanthropic, social, and other matters is not "of the truth" and will make the last state of brethren more difficult than the first. We need to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We are to let our speech be seasoned with salt. And in conclusion let attention be drawn to the very frequent habit of speaking to and of, brothers and sisters, as "Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Miss." There are times when it is an indiscretion not to do so, before strangers; but these remarks apply to conversation with those in the household. The expression of "brother" or "sister" is that which has been recognized by our Head as being appropriate to our calling in Christ Jesus as "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." It will be a great evil if the household reverts to the commonplaces of daily life. Any indignity suffered now on this score will be compensated in the age to come. If we are brethren and sisters in Christ we should not fear to address each other as such.

This pamphlet might be much extended, but it is questionable whether argument will produce conviction where the desire for such is absent. It is sent forth on its mission without apology in the name of Christ, for his sake and that of his household. Knowing our duty it should be our aim in life to do it. The pathway to the kingdom is an onward and upward one. The ideal of Christ is lofty; to him we have to look as the beacon light. He would have each of his servants set their

affections on things above (high), and not on things beneath (low). By God's mercy we have seen the light, and it will be our wisdom to walk as "children of light."

It is allowed, and believed, that brethren and sisters who might be affected by this appeal are earnestly striving to seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness. To that end the pamphlet will be no deterrent; it is hoped it will be an incentive. To any who may resent interference with individual right and privileges, it will be sufficient to remind such that "none of us liveth unto himself" (Rom. 14:7). We are all members of one Body, and are interdependent. The sole motive of this is to arouse ourselves to the fact that the midnight hour is at hand, and with it Christ's return. He has forewarned us that his household will be slumbering at such a time, some prepared, and others unprepared and sound asleep, but when awakened unable to enter into the marriage feast.

No apology for this publication will be expected from the writer by those who realize the momentous days in which we live. What shall separate us from the love of Christ? What sacrifice shall we withhold "for his sake"?

Let us "abstain from all appearance of evil." — C.P.W.

*Pleasure and
Profit from
Bible Study*

By H.P. Mansfield

This section of “Christadelphian Standards” examines some of the practical ways in which we can grow in the Truth, and increase our understanding and appreciation of the Word of God.

Originally these articles appeared in *Logos*, between September, 1958 and March 1959. Thus the advice contained herein is now more than 30 years old. But that does not make the advice any the less valuable or relevant. In fact, upon re-reading the series we have found the content to be as alive and refreshing as when we first read them so many years ago.

Instead of editing the series, in a general sense, we felt there was great value in reprinting them as they originally appeared. Where it has been thought to be beneficial, we have added appropriate footnotes.

We feel sure that readers of all ages will find these chapters helpful and informative.

Setting an Objective

Do You Find the Bible Dull?

The Bible is not an easy book to understand. In fact, it is among the most difficult of books. Many who have commenced to study it with keenness and enthusiasm, soon find their interest wanes and dies, as they fail to make the progress expected, and the task seems to be beyond them.

But the task is not beyond them. It is only that they have not approached it methodically. They may have attempted to read portions of it, or, perhaps, have made a few notes upon its teaching; but there has been no system. They soon begin to wonder what the few notes jotted down on bits of paper refer to; and the reading of the Bible becomes for them increasingly dull. If they follow the daily reading chart, that takes them through the whole Bible during the course of a year, they are soon stumbling among parts of the Word that are completely beyond them; and their boredom with these sections increases the number of times they are read without understanding.

Yet we read: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3). Is this statement true? Does any special benefit accrue from the reading or hearing of the Book of Revelation? Let the reader put the matter to the test. Let him read this section of the Bible without understanding, and see if he is blessed in so doing. He will find himself cursed with a confusion twice confounded! And when we search into the matter a little more closely, that is really what this statement from the Book of Revelation is saying. The word "hear" in the original language implies "one who gathers *exact* knowledge of a matter", "one who knows accurately", or "observes narrowly" (*Eureka*, vol. 1). It is not to those who merely "read and hear", in desultory fashion, that the blessing is given, but to he who reads, and closely considers what he has read, that he might understand its true meaning. And that requires effort, and system.

In fact, many hours of study will be needed before we can say that we understand what is contained in the Book of Revelation, and can claim the blessing offered. And as one who has made the sacrifice of time, and has studied closely "the words of this prophecy", let me assure the reader that real and concrete blessings are to be obtained in so doing. Further: one does not have to await the "blessing" until the whole book is thoroughly understood; on the contrary, one only has to commence the

study in a systematic and efficient manner, to receive at once the benefits that he will find increases as he tackles the problem in a workmanship manner.

But, in passing, notice how a better understanding of the word “hear” alters the significance of the verse before us.

The Correct Approach Required

Two friends were discussing whether the Bible really was the inspired Word of God. One strenuously maintained it was; the other just as firmly contended that it was not. He asked his friend: “Did Paul need inspiration to write and tell Timothy to bring him his overcoat?” He was referring to 2 Tim. 4:13: “The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.”

But his friend, the believer, could see more in this reference than a request for an overcoat. What were the “books” and the “parchments” wanted by Paul? The first word comes from the Greek, *biblion*, and signifies a roll of papyrus, such as was used for recording notes, or writing letters in those days. The word “parchments” comes from the Greek, *membrana* and relates to an animal product more costly and permanent than papyrus; and upon which were recorded the Old Testament Scriptures. So we have the picture of Paul, imprisoned at Rome, requesting Timothy that he should bring his cloke, a roll of papyrus, and the parchments — and the Spirit thought such a request of sufficient importance to record for posterity. Why? Because, when the verse is analysed, it presents a powerful lesson for all time. It shows, by example, that whilst the comfort of the body was not to be neglected (“bring the cloke with you”), the occupation of the mind was the main thing. Paul asked “especially” for the parchments. The Scriptures were a comfort to him in his trials, in the prison-house in Rome. They provided mental food upon which he could meditate, and extract strength to sustain him in his hour of need. The roll of papyrus was also needful. It would permit Paul to continue his ministrations on behalf of his brethren. From the prison-house in Rome there would continue to issue forth to the Ecclesial world those Epistles which have constituted such a comfort and an instruction to so many since. And the cloak would give him a little additional bodily comfort.

Paul’s request “especially” for the parchments, shows upon what he placed the greatest emphasis as to his real need. The verse thus becomes an outstanding exhortation to us. Under similar circumstances we may forget all about the parchments and notepaper, and concentrate upon the cloak, or call only for those things that would provide bodily comfort. With a little thought, the verse becomes charged with meaning, and

provides an index to the character of the great Apostle.

It was thus used by one man to ridicule the inspiration of the Scriptures, but by the other for just the opposite purpose.

One read it and saw nothing in it but an idle request for an overcoat; the other read it, and found a wealth of information.

Both were intelligent; both read the same Scripture; one saw much more deeply in it than the other did.

Why was that?

It was all a matter of perspective.

The second person had reverently sought the meaning of the verse, and found it.

He derived pleasure and profit from his study of the Bible.

Is the Effort Worth While?

It is not my intention to bombard you with a series of quotations advocating the study of God's Word, but I do want to place before you one or two references that particularly appeal to me. I do so, because it has often been said to me, that the important thing is to LIVE the life. I quite agree that we must do that, but where will we derive the necessary strength to do so? If we think we are going to do it in our own strength, we will soon find that we are abject failures; and, in fact, that is the reason why so many have made shipwreck of their faith. They have attempted "to live the life", without availing themselves of the means that Yahweh has provided whereby this may be done. Paul declared: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). The great Apostle found daily the need of Christ, and he found Christ in the things that Christ revealed for him. We, too, can find Christ. Paul tells us that. He wrote: "Let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:7). But how do we get faith? The answer comes: "Through hearing the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Christ told his disciples, "Ye are clean through the Word I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). He prayed unto the Father: "Sanctify them *through Thy truth*; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The Word of Truth is the means designed by Yahweh for the sanctification of His servants. By heeding that Word, by making it part of our mental selves, we can bring Christ into our hearts, and when the process is complete, we will reflect him in our lives. Our thoughts will be guided along the channel of Divine ideas, and will be elevated above those thoughts that are merely fleshly.

I quite agree that we can look upon knowledge as an end in itself. We can acquire facts, and store them up as a miser does his gold. And like the miser's gold, these stored-up facts do no good to the possessor or anybody else. But gold is of great value when used aright; and so is the

accumulated knowledge of God's Word. It will create the power to surmount the trials and difficulties of life; it will reveal a clearer, more vivid picture of the future, and thus arouse the incentive to strive to imitate Christ. Whatever our life was before, it will be a better, a more enriched and enriching experience, when salted with the Word of God. And, in addition, the Bible declares: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Ponder these words, reader. If they are true, what of the man or woman who is "living the life", or, rather, is trying to live the life, independent of the Word? What of those kind and considerate persons who are ever seeking the peace and good of others, who are of a friendly, generous nature, and yet are destitute of faith? Do not tell me that they do not exist, for I meet them every day. But, if Paul's words mean anything, they teach that in spite of all these good qualities, such charitable souls are not pleasing to God because they are destitute of faith. And faith comes from "hearing the Word." "To this man will I look", declared Yahweh, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and *trembleth at my word*" (Isa. 66:2).

This being the expressed Mind of God, how can anybody "live the life" if they continue indifferent to that which gives Him pleasure?

The importance of Bible study was impressed on Israel in a very graphic manner. Moses told the people: "Yahweh humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna ... that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh* doth man live" (Deut. 8:3).

We will only appreciate the power of these words if we study the experiences of Israel in the wilderness. Yahweh provided for their *needs*, but not necessarily their *wants*. He brought the people into the direst extremities of hunger and thirst before relieving them, to teach them to have reliance upon Him. Their daily bread was the manna which they had to gather day by day, each man for himself, and which is a symbol of the Word of Truth. They learned by experience to appreciate the significance of the petition: "Give us each day our daily bread". A true Israelite would see that Christ was not concerned merely with the bread which perisheth, but that spiritual nourishment that will strengthen unto life eternal.

Analyse This Verse

Moses commanded the people of Israel to feed constantly upon the Word as one would normal food. There is, of course, a ready-made appetite for normal food. The demand for it is governed by a law of nature, which asserts itself if the body is denied nourishment. But there is no law of the flesh which would drive us to spiritual food — and therefore the appetite for it must be cultivated. Moses declared: "These

words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates ..." (Deut. 6:9).

In my Bible, these words are so marked that they stand out from the surrounding text. There are five important points of instruction in them, and the reader might find it helpful to mark his Bible with them. They are:

1. "These words shall be in thine heart." They were not to remain engraven upon stones, or merely written in a book, but found written *in the Heart*. Another Scripture tells us why. Proverbs 23:7 declares: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." We must not allow the revelation of Yahweh to remain in a book which we call the Bible, but must take it out of that book, and inscribe it upon our hearts. To the Jew, the heart was the seat of intellect, so that Moses was really instructing the people that they must become mentally impressed with the Words of Truth set before them (Rev. 14:1).

2. "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." This was before the days of Sunday schools when parents might try to put the responsibility of educating their children on to others. In Israel it was a family responsibility, and it should be so today. Sunday schools and Instruction classes should be supplemented by the study of the Word in the home. There is no substitute for that.

3. "Thou shalt talk of them ..." The Truth was to be the common topic of conversation. Some people seem to think that such talk should be reserved for the "meetings", but in Israel, Divine worship was interwoven with the very fabric of everyday life. And so it should be for spiritual Israel today. It should be our delight, and our constant exercise, to talk upon these matters.

4. A sign upon thy hand ... frontlets between thine eyes." These are symbols expressing what one does, and how one should walk. The Truth must direct us in the practical issues of life, as well as in moral and spiritual duties. Unfortunately, the Jews took these instructions literally, and bound copies of the law upon their arms and between their eyes, thus defeating the spirit of the command.

5. "Write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." The home must become the very centre of a religious life — the place where the Truth is discussed and considered without let or hindrance. Here, again, the Jews destroyed the spirit of the instruction, by literally writing upon the gates of their homes, and upon the lintels of their doors, inscriptions from the law, and yet, so frequently, forgetting the implication of the words of Moses. The home should be as a refreshing oasis in the desert of life, where the water of life can always be obtained.

Analyse a verse like this, extract from it the maximum teaching, apply the instruction given, and the greatest amount of pleasure and profit will be derived from Bible study.

The First Essential — An Objective

Success in any undertaking is not difficult if one or two factors are taken into account. The first of these is Yahweh's blessing; if that is withheld, then all effort is in vain. The Bible should not be studied without first petitioning the Father that He might bless the effort: "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith ..." (James 1:5).

But it is possible for the blessing of Yahweh to be present, and yet be rendered ineffectual, because of our lack of application of the means He has placed within our reach. The really successful man, in any realm of life, must use the means available to the best advantage; and in clearly setting before himself an objective, aim for it. In doing so, he must be prepared to ruthlessly sacrifice anything that might hinder the attainment of his objective. Paul sets the ideal. "This *one thing* I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize" (Phil. 3:13). He was prepared to sacrifice all things to obtain that which he had clearly set before him. That is the secret of success, not only of the life in Christ, but in any other direction as well — and not the less in Bible study. Paul was what men call "one-eyed." He was moved by a single objective, and permitted nothing to hinder him obtain it. Success in anything demands the sacrifice of time, it requires painstaking effort, and close concentrated attention to detail. The Truth is no exception. We cannot just drift into the Kingdom of God.

This was emphasised in an exhortation that Barnabas gave to the Ecclesia at Antioch. The words he spake on that occasion are not recorded in detail, but the crux of them is given. We are told: "He exhorted them all, that with *purpose of heart* they should cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). "Purpose of heart" implies an objective. Barnabas exhorted the brethren of Antioch that they must set before themselves a goal and aim for it. How many merely "accept" the Truth, and lacking any purpose or directive, drift along as nominal members of an ecclesia, without any clear-cut idea of what to aim for! Their attention is easily diverted to other things at the expense of the Truth.

Moses exhorted the people in similar fashion to Barnabas. As he came to the end of his life, he recapitulated to them the experiences he had gone through on their behalf, and showed them the value of "cleaving unto Yahweh." Among his last words were these: "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your Life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land ..." (Deut. 32:46-47).

To “set your hearts” is to have an objective and to aim for it. Moses, like Barnabas, reminded the people they could not just drift along in the things of God. His advice is of the greatest importance, not only to Israel, but also to us. Thus, in my Bible, I have the words “set your hearts”, and “it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life”, heavily underlined in red ink. As a result, these words stand out boldly from the other print on the page, and I only have to quickly turn over the pages of Deuteronomy at this place, to be instantly reminded of the instructions of Moses — without stopping to consider the verses in detail.

Setting an Objective

The same principle set forth by Moses, Barnabas and Paul must be adapted to the study of the Bible if we would extract the greatest amount of pleasure and profit from it. In other words, we must have purpose in our reading. So many read the Bible aimlessly. They do it as a duty, or, perhaps, because they love the Book. But they are not seeking for something as they read; they have no plan in mind. They do a lot of reading, but they gain little knowledge.

For years I have adopted a practice in Bible reading that I have found to be of great help. I follow the “Bible Companion” reading chart, but I am always searching for references to support other subjects. Each year I decide upon a subject, and any time I come upon a reference to it in the daily readings, I note it in a book that I always have with me. In addition, when a new book of the Bible is commenced, I might set myself the task of looking for references that show how that particular writer treats with a specific subject. This task has a twofold effect: (1) I dare not miss a chapter in the daily readings in case it contains a reference to the subject I am following; (2) The reading becomes intensely interesting, like a treasure hunt, for I do not know what each day will bring forth. No longer does my mind wander on to other things; I read with a purpose in mind, and thus have to concentrate on the matter in hand.

One year, I set myself the task of noting all the places in the Bible where reference is made to the House of Prayer to be erected in Jerusalem, in the Age to Come. Each verse was carefully scrutinised for hidden or open references to this subject, with the result that I not only found many references to the Temple that previously I never knew existed, but I also derived much more pleasure and profit from every verse I read.

I next wrote all these references out in full in a book (there were well over a hundred of them), ready to sectionise them; and as I did this, my knowledge of the subject was advancing all the time. Instead of the Temple being something vague and indefinite, it assumed shape and substance in my mind, and became a thrilling subject to think upon.

On another occasion, when commencing anew to read the Prophecy of Jeremiah, I decided to take note of all references made therein to the future of Israel. Again the result was a revelation, as I pondered verse after verse. As an example, consider Jeremiah 3:21 to Ch. 4:2. This Scripture undoubtedly refers to the future redemption of Israel as the context clearly shows. But when these verses are carefully considered, what a revelation they give. Notice v. 22, and the invitation of Yahweh: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Notice the response of Israel in that day: "Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art Yahweh our God" (v. 22). Notice the recognition of past blindness, and the humbling of themselves before Yahweh, and confession of sin in vv. 23-25. Notice the conditions then set before Israel for their acceptance again into favour, contained in Jer. 4:1-2. So there is built up in the mind a graphic picture of how Israel will be grafted in again, at the appearing of the Messiah; a picture that when linked with other Scriptures becomes bolder and bolder in outline.

Recently, in reading the book of Malachi, I decided to take particular note as to what that prophet has to say concerning Yahweh. As I read the chapters, I noted in my notebook any references to the subject, and later collated them together. I found that Malachi sets forth Yahweh as (1) A Lover of Israel (Ch. 1:2); (2) The Avenger of His people (Ch. 1:5); (3) A Father (Ch. 1:6); (4) A Master (Ch. 1:6); (5) Gracious (Ch. 1:9); (6) Jealous of His honour (Ch. 1:10); (7) Omnipotent (Ch. 1:14); (8) A Great King (Ch. 1:14); (9) One who punishes (Ch. 2:9); (10) The Creator (Ch. 2:10); (11) Holy (Ch. 2:11); (12) All-seeing (Ch. 2:14); (13) The Hater of evil (Ch. 2:16); (14) Judge (Ch. 3:5); (15) Immutable (Ch. 3:6); (16) Omniscient (Ch. 3:16).

Having noted these points in my notebook, it then became necessary to mark them in my Bible, so that they might be readily accessible. This introduces the subject of Bible marking, upon which we hope to have more to say.

Meanwhile, the first essential in the pleasurable and profitable study of the Word is to have an objective, and to aim for it. Do not read this wonderful Book aimlessly. Always have a subject in mind when you turn to it. Always have a notebook and pencil at hand as you read. If you find a verse you do not understand, make a note of it, and do not be satisfied until you have an explanation of it. Set out to cover a subject, or to study in detail a whole book. By these means your pleasure and profit from Bible study will grow, and you will come to delight in that which previously may have been a boredom to you.

Making the Bible Come Alive

Why is the Bible so Difficult?

I have often been asked the question: Why is the Bible so difficult to understand? Why did not God state His plan and His requirements for salvation more simply, so that men could easily grasp them? We have an answer to these questions in the statement found in Isaiah 55:8-9: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Yahweh. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

When we treat with the Bible, we are treating with Divine ideas and thoughts, and they are so much higher than man's thoughts as to be almost beyond his power to grasp. That is why comparatively few are drawn to the Truth. Before they are able to accept the things taught therein, they must be prepared to empty themselves of their own ideas and preconceived notions, and with the teachableness of a little child, accept in faith the teaching and instruction of the Word. And, strangely enough, to the trusting mind of those who are prepared to accept the teaching of Scripture, as a child accepts the word of its father, many of the difficulties of the Bible are instantly resolved. The "wise and prudent", in their superior "knowledge", cannot grasp the intricate truths of the Word. Their thoughts are cluttered with the "learning" of the schools, their minds are twisted with the overwhelming desire to "succeed" in this life, that they cannot see the value or the purpose of spending hours in the search of that which does not make an immediate return of profit. Therefore their reading is perfunctory, and their study of the Word superficial. And because this is a materialistic age, in which worldly success in business or university is held in higher esteem than the cultivation of the mind of the Spirit, and because success in these realms represents tangible results in material things, the emphasis is often placed upon the former at the expense of the latter.

The Bible is more difficult to understand because of the many different ways in which the Divine will and purpose is set before men. The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that "God spake in divers manners in times past unto the fathers" (Heb. 1:1). He did so in "divers manners." He employed a great variety of means. He used Psalm, Song, Prophecy, Exhortation, Sign, Symbol, Metaphor, History, Parable, Type, Example. He set forth His purpose, not in the dry and sterile form of a creed, or a set of rules and propositions, but in promise and by covenant, illustrating His intentions by the rise and fall of nations, in the

experiences of persons and peoples, in types and shadows. He employed all these means to set forth in enigmatical fashion His great purpose. And whilst they add to the interest and beauty of the Scriptures, they also make it more difficult to grasp the salient truths contained therein.

The Book of Proverbs sums the whole matter up by stating: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter"* (Prov. 25:2). As kings in prospect (Rev. 5:9-10), it is our honour to search out the deep things of Yahweh. His Word is compared with gold, and one must seek its meaning as he would treasure. Men recognise the need to sacrifice to obtain gold, to expect and endure hardship and privation in seeking for it. And, in measure, the same is true of the Bible. God has concealed therein matters of supreme importance, and it is for us by "patient continuance" to seek out His meaning. He has promised us guidance and help. "The meek will He guide in judgment, and teach His way" (Psa. 25:9, 14). And we will not be long engaged in the profitable and pleasurable task of studying the Bible before we will be constrained to say with Paul: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!† For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? ... (Rom. 11:33).

Why Conceal Truth?

There is a very important reason why Divine truths should thus be concealed. For one thing, we are forced to work in order to gain this knowledge, and we always value more that which we have to pay for in some way or other. And secondly, as we attempt to unravel the mystery, as we sink more deeply into the meaning of symbol, metaphor, type and allegory, as we string Scripture together with Scripture, and compare spiritual things with spiritual things, we are mentally exercised in the ideas and ideals of God; and such mental exercise is of the utmost benefit to us in the development of character.

The brain is but a muscle, and when constantly exercised in a certain direction, will become alert and adept in that way. The musician, by constant practice, will become skilled in music, but may find that he cannot exercise the same brilliance towards business. The man of business becomes quick in the matters that engage his attention because his brain has been trained to that end, but he may find mechanics completely outside his ability to grasp. The mechanic becomes expert in the intricacies of the internal combustion machine, but may find the complications of accountancy beyond him. It is all a matter of education, of training. The expert mechanic could have become a good accountant

* In Hebrew, the words 'glory' and 'honour' are identical.

† That is, apart from the Divine revelation contained in the Bible.

skilled in business if he had lifted his mind from his music to that field. The business man could have become a musician if he had sacrificed his time to that end.

And on the same basis, all could have become fine Bible students if they were prepared to give their time and mind to it.

Many times I have been told by young people that they have “no time for study”; but I find they have ample time to tinker around with a motor-car; to give time, money and thought to a hobby; to spend hours of time hitting a ball over a net.

Let any young person, of normal intelligence, give thirty minutes of concentrated thought a day upon the study of the Bible, and he will be amazed with what is covered by the end of the year.

But that thirty minutes must be ruthlessly extracted from every day; it is no use giving it for a week or so, and then dropping it until the mood captures him again.

Thirty minutes a day — and by the end of a year the student will be on the road to being really good in certain aspects of Bible knowledge. It is a challenge that faces every brother and sister.

Why Talk in Riddles?

Meanwhile, have you ever pondered the frequency in which the word “mystery” occurs in the New Testament? * Paul described his preaching of the Gospel as “The revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:25).

Is the Truth a mystery? It is to most people. And to us it is a “mystery” how people cannot “see” the Truth, for it appears so crystal-clear to us!

Actually the word “mystery” should be translated “secret.” The Gospel is a “revealed mystery”, hence the title used by Brother Thomas in one of his books. The Truth is a Divine secret, as it were whispered in the ears of mankind.

That secret is contained in the Scriptures, but it is covered over by many enigmatical expressions, clouded by types and apocalyptic symbols. To understand it we must be prepared to “uncover the ear”, and hearken to the Voice of God. This takes time, patience and persistence. Like all mysteries, there are clues provided that will help unravel its meaning. And if we are prepared to use those clues, as a detective might, we will not only make wonderful discoveries, but will enjoy all the excitement and thrill of a good mystery story.

In fact, the student, opening his unmarked Bible, is like a detective engaged upon a case, or an explorer about to discover new lands. As

* Matt. 13:11; Luke 8:10; 1 Cor. 2:7; 4:1; 15:51; Eph., 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3; 1 Tim. 3:9, etc.

times goes on, he will become more adept at using the clues he will find and which will open up to him grand and exciting discoveries. "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psa. 119:18).

Let me give you an example.

Unravelling the Mystery

I was pondering the meaning of Col. 1:15 which teaches that "Jesus Christ is the first born of every creature." How could this be so? I wondered. True, in v. 18 he is styled "the firstborn from the dead", and one could reason that the term had relation to his resurrection, which was the vindication of his Divine sonship (Rom. 1:4).

But the explanation did not seem complete or satisfactory to me.

I am familiar, of course, with what the churches teach — that Col. 1:15 proclaims the pre-existence Jesus. But obviously that is wrong, for "firstborn of every creature" is really a contradiction in terms. If the Lord were literally "firstborn of every creature", who gave him birth? He must have had a mother to be "born."

It was a "mystery", and I decided to seek the clues to solve it.

Instead of the magnifying glass that the detective of fiction is said to use, I turned to my Concordance. I looked up all places in the Bible where the word "firstborn" appears, and these I wrote in a notebook. And I began to make exciting discoveries.

My attention was drawn to Psalm 89:27: "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." What do these words mean? How could God "make" His son His firstborn, if he were not literally so? Another illuminating passage was 1 Chron. 5:1. This states that whilst Reuben was the firstborn of Israel, this position was taken from him and given to Joseph!

Here was a case of a literal firstborn being deposed, and the position being given to a younger son.

Gradually it dawned upon me that the term "firstborn" does not necessarily apply to the eldest son, but is a legal term denoting one elevated to the head of a family.

Thus Isaac assumed the birthright over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Ephraim over Manasseh, though each was a younger son!

I began to see how the title could apply to the Lord Jesus the "second Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), even though he were a younger son (for the "first Adam" was also a "son of God" — Luke 3:38).

Deuteronomy 21:15-17 was a significant passage providing an important clue. It teaches that if an Israelite had two wives, one more beloved than the other, and the firstborn be the son of the latter, "It shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may

not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn ...”

This showed that it was possible, under certain conditions, to “make” a younger son firstborn, though the Law guarded against abuse in the appointment. On the other hand, the reference in 1 Chron. 5:1 showed that the position of “firstborn” could be forfeited through misconduct. So, gradually, the significance of Col. 1:15 was becoming apparent. I could see that mankind, as represented by Adam, has been deposed from its position of privilege, and this has been conferred upon the Lord Jesus, the federal head of the new creation. The title had nothing to do with pre-existence, nothing to do with age, but related to a position of privilege in the sight of God.

As the passages of Scripture multiplied, I set them in order, and noted them in my Bible under the heading:

The Law of the Firstborn

1. The firstborn was consecrated to God — Exod. 13:2, 22:29.
2. The firstborn had a legal right — a double portion of his father’s inheritance — Deut. 21:15-17.
3. The firstborn was held in honour next to his parents — Gen. 49:3.
4. The firstborn succeeded in the government of a family or kingdom (2 Chron. 21:3). Had the right of priesthood within the family (Num. 8:14-18 — thus, later, Levi was taken “instead of the firstborn.”).
5. The firstborn could forfeit his position through misconduct or incompetency (1 Chron. 5:1; 26:10; Gen. 25:31; Gen. 48:5, 13-14).
6. The Law of Moses legislated against abusing the privilege of appointing younger sons as firstborn (thus showing that it was possible to do so) — Deut. 21:16-17.
7. Christ is appointed firstborn to the human race (Psa. 89:24-28; Col. 1:15-19; Luke 2:22-23). He was (1) consecrated to God — Luke 1:32-33; (2) given a double portion of the inheritance — Heb. 1:3-4; Phil. 2:9-11; (3) is held next in honour to the Father; (4) assumes the position of King-priest — Rev. 3:21.

8. The saints are described as an Ecclesia of Firstborns — Heb. 12:23 (Diaglott), James 1:17-18. Thus the privileges resting on the Lord, rest, in a minor degree, on them.

As I studied this subject, multiplying the references relating to it, I found that Colossians 1:15, instead of being a “difficult” and “awkward” verse, was really a very beautiful enunciation of a truth that previously I had not appreciated. I had received both pleasure and profit from my study.

What is the Difference Between a Good Man and a Righteous Man?

How often have you read the 5th chapter of Romans? Have you

noticed v. 7: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Paul says one might die for a "good man" but would not for a "righteous man."

What is the difference between a "good" man and a "righteous" man, that one might die for the former but not for the latter?

Here is another "mystery," and like good detectives we want to solve it.

We need first to gather the clues, and see where they lead.

Obviously there is a difference between a "good" man and a "righteous" man.

But what is the difference?

Here is where a good analytical Concordance is helpful. An Analytical Concordance, unlike such as Cruden's, not only shows where any word can be found in the Bible, but also gives the original word in Hebrew or Greek. The two most popular analytical concordances are Strong's and Young's, and in my opinion the first is better than the second*.

Such a Concordance revealed to me that the words "just" and "righteous" in the Authorised Version were used interchangeably for the same Greek word. So that a "righteous" man is also a "just" man. I found, too, that "righteousness" and "justification" were likewise interchangeable terms.

The term "righteous" thus means one who is "justified."

The "clues" were drawing me nearer to the meaning of this verse.

How is one "justified"? The answer is by faith in the offering of Christ. Thus a "righteous" man is a "justified" man, one who is not in need of a sacrifice. I could thus understand Paul's words: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die." Of course he would not, for there would be no need to.

But a "good" man, a man who commends himself to us because of his deeds, might yet be in need of a sacrifice, and for such a man we might die in order that he might be saved. There can be "good" men who are in need of being justified, for "all sin and come short of the glory of God."

And so the verse became clear to me. I could see the difference between a "good" man and a "righteous" man. One is in need of justification before God in spite of good works, the other has already been provided with the requirements. One was in need of a sacrifice; the other was not.

My concentration on this verse made the whole argument of the Apostle clearer. He is showing that if the scheme of salvation had been left to us, we would have been so selective in those for whom we would have died, that few would have been saved. Christ, on the other hand, died for the ungodly, for sinners, for those classed as "enemies" of God;

* This applies with greater force now that so many other reference books have been tied to Strong's numbering system.

and not merely for the “good.” That is the measure of the Divine love, and that love is “commended towards us” (vv. 6, 8, 9, 10).

Thus we are able to concentrate upon a subject (like that of the Firstborn) which takes us throughout the Scriptures; or on a verse (like that of Romans 5:7); and gain both pleasure and profit from the exercise. Believe me, as the clues multiply, and one realises that he is on the right track, the search becomes as exciting as any mystery.

Seek for Key Words

There is a very interesting statement in Neh. 8:8. It relates to the time when the regathering from Babylon had taken place, and Ezra was intent upon instructing the people. He called the people together that they might hear the Law read by certain Levites appointed for the purpose. Concerning these, we read: “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

This can provide an excellent ideal for us: (1) Read distinctly; (2) Give the sense; (3) Cause to understand the reading.

We will be helped to that end by seeking the dominant words in any statement or sentence. Take, for example, Galatians 5:19, 22. Here there are two dominant words in contrast: the “works” of the flesh are contrasted with the “fruit” of the spirit. “Works” come naturally; they are the outcome of the flesh. But “fruit” must be cultivated before it can be reaped. And this contrast is set side by side in this chapter.

Consider the contrast in Hebrews 10:11, 12. The priest “standing” to minister is contrasted with Jesus Christ, who “sat down on the right hand of God.” The standing priest implies work that is not fulfilled; the attitude of the Son of God implies a completed work.

See the same contrast in Ephesians 4:22-24. The “old man” is put off, but the “new man” must be put on. It is useless putting off one without replacing the evil with good.

The key words of any verse or sentence will assist greatly in the better understanding of the meaning.

Create a Mental Picture

We can make the Bible a living book if we seek the background of any historical or descriptive accounts given therein. Hebrew is perhaps the most vivid and direct of all languages. Yahweh has not made Himself known by philosophical propositions, but by controlling and intervening in the course of history, and He has used a language to reveal Himself to man that is both concrete and picturesque. It is made all the more so if we take the trouble of creating a mental picture of that which is set down,

and this is only possible by attention to detail, by searching out the facts of geography and history as they affected the incidents recorded.

A typical example is the prayer of Hezekiah recorded in Isaiah 37:16-20. It is well known how that Hezekiah appealed to Yahweh in the face of the threat of Sennacherib, and the remarkable deliverance effected by the angel of Yahweh, who smote 185,000 of the encamped Assyrians. But how much more vivid the account becomes when we think upon the incidents leading up to his prayer and deliverance.

Sennacherib was bent on world domination. All the nations of the north were subject to his control. Egypt in the south continued to defy him. Judah remained a buffer state between the two powers, and in face of the threat first from the north and then from the south, vacillated between the two, but with a definite preference for Egypt (Isa. 30:2). Sennacherib determined to rid himself of this troublesome buffer state, and then to sweep south against the traditional enemy of Assyria. The conquest of Palestine presented no problem to him. He swiftly descended south, city after city falling to him. As the news of the successful invasion reached Jerusalem, fear swept the city. The Assyrians were known as a ruthless, barbarous foe. The Jews knew full well they had no arms to match against the enemy. Bulletins were constantly being received, of cities falling to Sennacherib, with all the horrors of conquest that are heaped upon the conquered. Lachish remained the only fort between the enemy and Jerusalem. And as the Assyrians laid siege to it, a messenger was despatched to the capital calling upon the king to capitulate. Many in the city urged him to do so. The people were fearful; dismay and despair gripped the hearts of the leaders. They appealed to Hezekiah to seek the help of Egypt. And it was in this atmosphere of panic and storm that the man of faith turned to Yahweh and poured out a prayer that is sublime in expression and meaning.

And so the dramatic story is continued. We read of the contemptuous answer that Jerusalem returned to the haughty, and, no doubt, astonished Assyrian; the statement that the city will be defended, not by horse, or weapon of war, but by Yahweh Sabaoth; and graphically, in few words, as though almost beneath the notice of the Divine historian to record it, the disaster that overtook the Assyrian army and its king.

The whole account is dramatic, and exciting. The prayer of the King is outstanding in the expressions used, the descriptive titles of Deity employed, and the meaning they have in view of the circumstances.

And the graphic picture thus built up in the mind is worth creating.

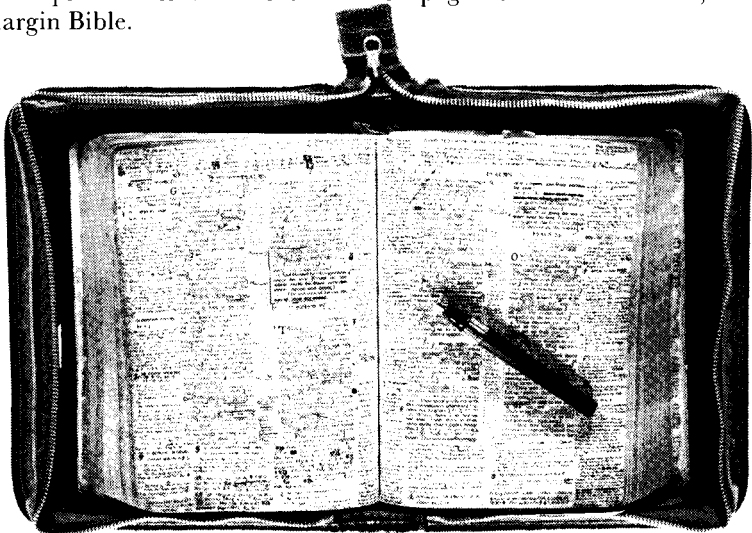
There are a thousand similar pictures that we can paint if we seek the details necessary: (1) Think upon the words we read; (2) Seek out the descriptive expressions employed; (3) Go to the trouble of ascertaining the geographical and historical background of the passage.

Bible Marking

Having gone to all the trouble suggested in the notes above, we will be foolish if we do not place our research on paper, that it might become a permanent record. You will find that the very exercise of committing a matter to paper will record it better in the mind. The finest place to record these matters, in my opinion, is in the Bible itself. There are several kinds of Bibles obtainable which provide space for this. They include: (1) the loose-leaf variety; (2) the interleaved Bible; (3) the wide-margin Bible.

I have had all these kinds in my time, but I have found the last by far the best. Other students will differ from me in that regard. I found, however, that the loose-leaf Bible, whilst giving more space, did not stand up to hard work, and in a comparative short time fell to pieces. When one has worked long hours upon a book that is a tragedy! The interleaved Bible provides good space, but makes a very big book and is usually combined with very small print, which makes for difficult reading. Such a Bible is not the best for constant reading or platform work. The wide-margin Bible, as issued by the Oxford Press, is printed on special paper designed for comments in ink. The print is a good size, the book is not bulky, and the margin is sufficiently wide to take sufficient notes to provide a brief commentary upon the text of Scripture. With the notes that I have included in the margin of the Book of Revelation, I have been able to give a detailed exposition of the whole book, including all historical matter without looking up a single text-book. It thus becomes the complete help to the memory both of Scripture and its fulfilment.

We present herewith a facsimile of a page from a well-marked, wide-margin Bible.



A Method for Bible Marking

The Tools of the Student

In our last chapter, we recommended the Oxford Wide Margin Bible as being the most useful for the Bible student. The type is large and clear, the book is not bulky or unduly heavy, the margin is sufficiently wide to provide adequate space for notes, the paper is specially manufactured to take ink, and in this differs from most other Bibles.

Such a Bible costs between £7 and £10* according to binding, and in view of the fact that it is (or should be) used every day, is well worth that amount of money. If you can afford the better binding, you are well recommended to go to the extra cost — for the value of the time you will spend in marking your Bible will soon be in excess of the original cost of your copy. I have an old Bible, with covers worn, with spine loose, with pages torn and stained — but it is very well marked up with original notes — and I have been offered £50§ for it, plus a new Bible in the best binding. I have refused the offer because the time spent on this Bible is worth far more to me than £50. It would cost me much more than £50 in time merely to transfer the notes out of the present book into the new one! I often regret now, that I did not pay a little more originally to obtain a better bound copy.

So, when purchasing your Bible, do not make the mistake of stinting the money. A young girl was once given £10 as a birthday present, to spend as she would. She wanted a Bible, and on recommendation, decided to purchase a good wide-margin Bible. Instead, under pressure from her parents, she bought a cheap Bible, and spent the balance on clothes. Within twelve months, both the clothes and the Bible were the worse for wear, and the £10 was virtually wasted. What was even sadder, was the fact that the young girl had lost the incentive to own a Wide-margin Bible, and to make her own notes therein. The indifference to the value of a good Bible shown by her parents, their obvious lack of interest in whether she studied it or not, had had a disastrous effect upon her attitude to the Scriptures as a whole. She had become discouraged and never recaptured her earlier enthusiasm.

If she had followed the recommendation to buy the wide-margin Bible, and had pursued her studies and Bible marking, she would have found that the Book would have increased in value the older it became, and would daily become a greater delight to her.

* \$14 and \$20, considered a substantial sum 30 years ago.

§ \$100.

Having selected our Bible with care, we need to exercise the same thought upon the way in which we mark it. I hate to see a good Bible mutilated. It is a very precious volume to me, and I like to see the greatest care and thought put into it. I well remember inspecting a hand-written Bible in Ryland's Library, Manchester, England. Every letter was beautifully formed, the scribe having taken incredible pains to see that the quality of his work was worthy of the Book. Not only was every letter perfectly formed as far as I could see, but every page was beautifully adorned around the margin in colour — the whole providing a work of art. As I gazed upon this Book produced by an unknown hand, I realised that something of the scribe's own being had been poured into the Book, and I could understand better what the Bible would mean to him.

We can exercise similar care in our annotations.

Ballpoint pens should never be used under any circumstances. Ordinary ink will fade, rub, and sometimes work through a page and become difficult to read. The best ink for our purpose is Indian Ink. Even here there are differences in quality, and my experience is that "Pelikan" waterproof drawing ink is the best for our purpose. It is really more economical than a cheap ink, for the first cost is the last, and it will stand up to the test of time. You will spend many hours over your Bible, and you want the work to be permanent.*

What pen should be used? This also is important. You will find it necessary to economise on space, and to that end, you will have to learn to print your comments in small letters, as neatly as possible. Mapping pens are the answer to our problem, and they are obtainable for a few pence from any stationers. The ordinary mapping nibs which cost about 3d.,† are quite effective, but there is a better type (which, incidentally, will last much longer, and write much better), called a "Tridinoid" nib, No. 505. Such a pen will cost perhaps 9d‡. When you have finished writing with it, it should be carefully cleaned with a piece of cloth. This will not only ensure longer life for the nib, but also better results from your writing.

There are also special fountain pens designed for Indian Ink, and which will write even more finely than the mapping pens. There are several brands. The ones I have are called "Rapidograph" No. 0, and cost about £2§ each. They give excellent service if washed out occasionally, and certainly facilitate Bible marking. As I use three colours for this purpose, I have three of these pens, and can thus carry my utensils for Bible marking around with me.

* Nowadays, we have a much wider choice of good quality pens and inks.

† Three cents!

‡ 10 cents

§ Readers will not need to be reminded of the effects of inflation!

Why Different Colours?

The use of various colours will help you to use your marginal notes more quickly and effectively. If only one colour is used, the notes will appear as a solid unbroken mass of writing, and it will become difficult to pick up one comment from another.

I use three colours as follows:

Green: To underline the portion of Scripture upon which I wish to comment, and to identify it with the notes in the margin, I give the portion of Scripture underlined a number, commencing the numbering anew with each additional chapter. In the margin I write the corresponding number likewise in green. This enables me to see at a glance upon what specific Scriptures I am commenting upon, and link them up with the comments in the margin.

Black: As this stands out on the white paper better than any colour, I use it for my comments in the margin.

Red: This I use when I include among my comments any supporting quotations from other parts of the Bible.

The advantage of all this is instantly apparent if you could see my Bible. The corresponding green numbers allow me to quickly pick up exactly the portion of Scripture upon which I am commenting. The supporting references, given in red, cause them to stand out above the comments in black — and my experience has been, that frequently in debate, or discussion, one requires a supporting quotation rather than the actual comment. The use of red allows one to pick up such references at a glance.

When a Bible is neatly marked up in colour it adds to the attraction and interest of the volume. I once had an unconscious tribute paid to me in that respect. I was working in my sunroom, which overlooks the waters of St. Vincent Gulf, when I noticed a young man with earnest, eager countenance coming up the path leading to the front door. With a groan I recognised that I was about to be interrupted. Sure enough, I was soon being pressed to contribute towards a copy of the “Jehovah’s Witness” magazine, “Awake”. I explained politely (for I did not want to be held up by a protracted argument) that I did not desire to purchase it as I had found by experience that it was not sound in Scriptural exegesis. When pressed by my earnest and conscientious visitor to indicate a specific example, I advanced the subject of the return of the Jews to Palestine. I pointed out to him that one time the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” used to teach this as fundamental to the Divine purpose, but today they repudiate such teaching.

“Oh”, exclaimed my visitor, “We look upon the restoration of Israel in a spiritual light. We consider ourselves as Israel returning to Zion. The existence of the Jehovah’s Witnesses organisation is the fulfilment of the prophecy.”

“If that be the case”, I replied, “I am heartily ashamed of you.

Scripture declares: 'I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye went' (Ezek. 36:22). If your sect claims to be fulfilling these prophecies, then it stands condemned as having 'profaned the holy Name' wherever it has gone!

My visitor doubted that these words appeared in Scripture, and not having a Bible with him (apparently thinking the copy of "Awake" was an adequate substitute for the Sword of the Spirit), I loaned him my own copy. His amazement when he saw page after page of notes in the margin was profound. "Is this a specially printed Bible?" he asked.

He had thought that the glossy black Indian Ink in the margin was print! A better compliment he could not have paid me! I thanked him for it, but assured him that they were my own notes, culled from independent study of the Word. He decided that he had disturbed a hornet's nest, and now his desire to cut short the conversation and remove himself from my presence was obvious. But having been interrupted in my work, I was determined that he should be in his, and so I gave him a thirty minutes' discourse upon Bible truth. He left without having sold his copy of "Awake", but having given me his name and address that I might send him further literature upon the Bible!

So here is another advantage of a well-marked Bible — it can be an aid in more quickly disposing of unwanted visitors!

The Advantage of Bible Marking

Bible marking should be designed, not merely to provide explanations of difficult portions of Scripture, but that the Book as a whole might become a more personal, intimate record; and thus speak to *you* in time of need. My old Bible is of greater help and comfort to me than the most elaborately printed Bible could possibly be — no matter what additional "helps" the latter might include. In the margin I have included the explanations and thoughts that I have derived from personal meditation and study — supported by references that take me to many other parts of the Book. As I have laboured over it — and it requires effort, toil and attention to detail to really succeed as a student — I feel that I have gained a degree of pleasure and profit such as I find impossible to convey in print or in words. One feels the power of Jeremiah's exhortation, to search for the "secret of Yahweh"; to "perceive", "hear", and "mark" His word (Jer. 23:18).

Moreover, as kings in prospect (Rev. 5:9-10), we are only doing that which was commanded the Kings of Israel. Moses commanded: "It shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites: And it shall be with him all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God, to keep all the words of this law; that his heart

be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandments, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children in the midst of Israel" (Deut. 17:18-20).

This was the first duty of the king on coming to the throne. He had to personally write for himself a copy of the law. He could not command his scribes to do it for him. It had to be his own work. And he had to continue to read from that book, that he might be impressed by its teaching. Thus he would learn to "fear Yahweh," to "obey His laws," to avoid the folly of conceit; and, in so doing, prolong his days in the kingdom.

These words have an application to ourselves. We must be prepared to study the Book, to give our time to its research, that "our profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15). And as the king was required to write his own copy of the Law, so we will benefit greatly if we are prepared to expend the time and labour involved in properly marking up our Bible.

That Notebook!

Having purchased Bible, ink and pens, where do we start?

We might decide to study a specific book of the Bible — such as Daniel, the Revelation, Malachi or Galatians*. This is an excellent procedure. If we have a sound understanding of only one book of the sixty-six books of the Bible, we will become a specialist in at least one phase of the Scriptures; and as the whole Bible is really united as one, this must play a part in our general understanding of all other subjects.

We commence our investigations, using a teacher like Bro. Thomas or Bro. Roberts to help us, limiting our comments upon each verse, phrase or word until the briefest possible notes are made. At the same time we must be careful to see that they are not so brief, that in six months' time we will wonder what the comment means. We must bear in mind that we are writing for the future, and our comments must be sufficiently complete to give us an explanation or amplification of the verse or word at any time in the future, when we are not specifically engaged upon the study of its context.

The best way to do this is to jot these notes first in a notebook, and then a week or so later, transfer them into the Bible. The few days that elapse between noting them, and transferring them to the Bible, will not only permit one to more thoroughly "masticate" the matter, but, in addition, determine if our comment is sufficiently clear to be instantly understood in the years to come.

The notebook is a most important "tool" of the student, and should be constantly by his side.

* Verse by verse notes on numerous books of the Bible are available from Logos Publications, or their Book Agents.

As an indication of the system adopted by myself, I submit the following verses. I do so, not suggesting that my system is the only possible one, but merely as a suggestion for others to follow, or amend, as they see fit.

To illustrate it, consider the Song of Solomon (Ch. 2:1-2): "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." What does the reader make of those verses? Possibly he has never given them any thought. But my Bible is so marked that I instantly see that these two verses provide a statement and a reply. It shows me that two parties are speaking: (1) — The Bride (or Ecclesia), and (2) — The Bridegroom (or Christ). Verse 1 is the statement of the Bride: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." Verse 2 is the reply of the Bridegroom: "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

The margin of my Bible comments upon these words as follows:

1. I am **the rose of Sharon**¹ and the lily of the valleys.

2. As **the lily among thorns**,² so is my love among the daughters.

1. The Bride who is a model of modesty deprecates the praise of the Bridegroom, stating she is but a wild rose on Sharon's plain or a lily of the valley. They grew in profusion, and though pretty are but common flowers.

2. The Groom's rejoinder. To him the Bride is an outstanding flower. For thorns see Heb. 6:8.

Take the opening verses of the prophecy of Daniel:

THE BOOK OF DANIEL¹

Chapter 1

1. In the **third year**² of the reign of **Jehoiakim**³, king of Judah, **came**⁴ Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

2. And **the Lord gave**⁵ Jehoiakim king of Judah **into his hand**⁶ with part of the vessels of the house of God; which he carried into the land of **Shinar**⁷ to **the house of his God**⁸; and he brought the

1. Sig. "Judgment of El" (Jud. 11:27; Acts 17:31). His book reveals this coming judgment (Dan. 2:44; 12:2). A man of high position (v. 3), well known to his contemporaries for his wisdom and righteousness (Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3). Christ commends the study of his book (Mat. 24:16. See also Dan. 12:10).

CHAPTER 1

2. cp. Jer. 25:1, 8-11. Nebuchadnezzar's invasion commenced latter portion 3rd year, completed in the 4th. The first of 3 attacks. The final one, in Zedekiah's day was decisive.

3. He was deposed, taken to Babylon and his son made king in his stead (2 Kings 24:1).

4. This seems to conflict with Jer. 25:9, which gives 4th year. Hebrew "bo" rendered "came" signifies "to go" or "send." He set out in his 3rd year, but was delayed by fighting the battle of Carchemish with Pharaoh-Necho (Jer. 46:2).

5. To the Babylonians, Neb. was king, to faithful Hebrews he was only Yahweh's servant (cp. Jer. 25:9; Dan. 5:19).

6. 2 Kings 20:14-18.

7. The word signifies "enemy's tooth" — it was the land of the serpent power of sin.

vessels into **the treasure house of his god**⁹.

8. To demonstrate the superiority of Babylon's gods over Yahweh (cp. Isa. 36:19-20). But consider the reason of impending judgment (Jer. 50:28).

9. Bel, the main god of Babylonia, for whom a most beautiful temple was built. But see Isa. 46:1.

Here is a chapter from the Book of Revelation (Chapter 6):

1. And I saw when **the Lamb opened**¹ one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the **noise of thunder**², one of the **four beasts**³ saying, **Come and see**⁴.

2. And I saw, and behold a **white**¹ **horse**⁶; **and he that sat on him**⁷ **had a bow**⁸; and a **crown**⁹ was given unto him; and he went forth **conquering and to conquer**¹⁰.

PERIOD OF 1st SEAL — 96-183

Emperors — Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, the two Antonines, the first three years Commodus.

1. Christ supervises national affairs (1 Pet. 3:22).

2. Trouble (1 Sam. 2:10; Zech. 9:13-14). Domitian, the great persecutor of the Ecclesia, is assassinated. Nerva ascends throne. The way opened for a change in human affairs.

3. The Saints (Rev. 5:9-10). Events in political heavens are guided to their ultimate benefit (Rom. 8:18).

4. The attitude of saints in all ages — watching the signs.

5. Righteousness or peace.

6. The horse was a symbol of Rome — dedicated to the god Mars. Indicates a period of peace for Rome.

7. Those who guided the destiny of Rome. At this Epoch Christianity was influencing its affairs.

8. Used to represent a multitude in Zech. 9:13-14 and speech in Psa. 64:3. Thus a multitude conquering by power of speech.

9. A coronal wreath. The symbol of victory after striving for mastery. Though this was a period of peace and prosperity for Rome, it was a time of tribulation for the Ecclesia, but the ultimate victory was assured.

10. The growth of Christianity throughout Rome.

I have so marked up the Book of Revelation — using “Eureka” as my authority, that I have been able to conduct a series of talks upon it, covering the whole book, and dealing with the history of the times, without looking up a single text book. “Eureka” has been a wonderful guide, not only in relation to the Apocalypse, but all parts of the Word of Yahweh. And the value of it is this, that having once mastered it, having made it part of our mental selves, we do not become slaves to it. It draws us to the Word itself, underlines that which is outstandingly significant and important, and educates us into methods of Bible study and research that provide both pleasure and profit. We honour Brother Thomas for his grand help in that regard (see 1 Tim. 5:17).

The Bible: Living Drama

Seek the Drama of the Record

The Bible is a vivid record, set in dramatic scenes. Its Hero is Yahweh, and it reveals how He overrides the plans of men and nations to accomplish His purpose. Do not read this wonderful Book as a mere recital of stories designed only to express moral lessons for children; make it live before your mental vision as a vital message based upon facts of Divine history.

Correct Bible marking can greatly aid to that end.

In the last chapter, I discussed the systematic marking of chapters of the Bible verse by verse. In my Bible, many chapters and books are thus marked up, and greatly help me to understand better the more significant features of the record. The notes in the margin comment upon words and phrases contained in the verses, and link them with other parts of the Scriptures.

In addition to this, however, I frequently set out a chapter in sub-headings, so that by running my eye briefly down the margin, I have an outline of the whole chapter.

I try to make these sub-headings as dramatic as possible.

The Bible lends itself to such treatment.

Consider some of the world-shaking events recorded therein.

It describes the mighty work of Creation, the tremendous catastrophe of the Flood, the epic of Israel's triumphs and disasters, the sad tragedy of Jewry's rejection of its Messiah.

These are not commonplace incidents. They are of vital universal consequence. If reported in the Press as contemporary happenings, what dramatic headlines would be used to describe them! Every attempt would be made to focus world attention upon the tremendous significance of each incident.

We need to capture the same dramatic import in the Inspired Record.

Read the accounts as though you were an eye-witness of them. Imagine you were present at the dividing of the Red Sea. You heard the noise of the approaching Egyptian chariots. You shared with Israel the fear of despair as hemmed in by precipitous cliffs on every side and with the sea in front, escape seemed impossible. A feeling of awe and wonderment gripped you, as you saw the white cloud that had led the nation to this part, suddenly change its position from the front to the rear, and, as a barrier of fire, hold back the enemy. Your amazement increased as you saw Moses raise his rod, and witnessed the terrible

storm that broke out as night came on. You trembled at the awful peals of thunder that shook the earth, and at the angry flashes of lightning that showed up the storm-tossed sea. As you cowered in the shelter of the ravine, a tremendous hurricane swept down upon the ocean, turning its waters into a raging inferno, driving a pathway between its waves, along which Israel ultimately walked to safety. Later, with wonderful sense of relief at the miraculous deliverance, you stood with Israel safe on the other side; you saw the approach of Pharaoh's chariots, you watched your leader again extend his rod, and heard the tremendous roar as the mighty waves crashed over the advancing enemy. And in the silence that followed, as you realised that the army of Egypt had been completely destroyed, all your fears were swept away in the joy of salvation.

If you were writing an account of what you had seen for the benefit of a friend, would you not seek to express it in language designed to convey the full dramatic significance of the awe-inspiring experience?

I hardly think you would fill up such a letter with gossip about non-essential matters, and reserve your description of the deliverance for a postscript as follows: "P.S. — Incidentally some Egyptians were drowned yesterday; Moses is quite pleased!"

You may think that I am a little irreverent in writing thus, but, really, it characterises an attitude to the Word of God into which it is easy to fall. We can read it with our thoughts on other matters, so that the events it records appear mundane; or else in a manner that will excite the curiosity of anyone reading the chapter.

A Chapter Set in Sub-Headings

Let us take, as an example, the 19th Genesis. A most exciting happening is there recorded — the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. It opens with the picture of Lot, unsuspecting the impending fate of the city, seated at the gate of Sodom, and welcoming the Angels of Vengeance, who have arrived on their terrible mission. The opening verses set off a train of events that occurred during that terrible night, and found, early next morning, those one-time beautiful cities of the plain, smouldering ruins, to be ever remembered as examples of Divine wrath. A growing crescendo of excitement and fear runs through the whole chapter, and is expressed in the sub-headings I have set out between comments on individual verses in the margin of my Bible. My sub-headings are as follows:

Genesis, Chapter 19

The Last Terrible Night of Sodom (2 Pet. 2:6-9).

Visitors at Even — vv. 1-3

Extreme Wickedness as Night Draws Out — vv. 4-11

Fear in the Night — vv. 12-14

Escape in the Dawn — vv. 15-22

Destruction in the Morning — vv. 23-29

The general title and its sub-heading would make exciting headings for any novel. Here they emphasise the drama of Sodom's tragedy.

I have a different type of sub-heading for Joshua 22. This chapter records the incident when after the conquest of the land the 2 tribes who had elected to remain east of the Jordan, returned home. On their way, they built a pillar of remembrance, and the rest of the tribes, mistaking their intention, angrily accused them of sedition. A deputation was sent to the trans-Jordan tribes, and an army was also raised to invade the country if necessary. For a moment Israel trembled on the brink of civil war, but after expostulation and explanation, the breach was healed and reconciliation effected. In the margin of my Bible is found the following heading and sub-headings:

Joshua, Chapter 22

Crisis In Israel!

Civil war threatens when it is learned that the trans-Jordan tribes have erected a strange altar on the border of their territory. It is avoided by an explanation of motives — illustrating the principle commended by Christ in Matt. 18:15.

Commendation — vv. 1-4.

Exhortation — vv. 5-6

Anticipation — vv. 7-9

Commemoration — vv. 10-11

Indignation — vv. 12-14

Deputation — vv. 13-14

Expostulation — vv. 15-20

Explanation — vv. 21-29

Reconciliation — 30-34

The setting out of a chapter in its appropriate sub-headings will make for more interesting reading, and provide both pleasure and profit.

How to Study a Chapter

There are many methods of study, all of which are good. I propose to put forward one or two ideas that you may take up or leave as you desire. You might decide to take up a book such as "Elpis Israel," "Phanerosis," "Christendom Astray," or "Eureka" and use that as your basis. That is an excellent medium of study, and in my younger years I adopted that procedure, reading these books very thoroughly. As I read each paragraph, I jotted down in my notebook, or in the margin of the book I was studying, the main thought in that paragraph. This forced me to concentrate upon the matter before me, to analyse what I was reading, and to ask myself what was the point of each word and sentence before

me. It slowed down my reading considerably, but what I read, I understood and retained.

I well remember, though it is a quarter of a century ago now, the illumination I received from reading "Phanerosis." I found it difficult to absorb the matter of this book at first, and it was only by reading and re-reading that the beauty of the exposition gradually made itself felt. And then it seemed as though, for the first time, I had really understood the Truth. I saw that there were far wider horizons in the Truth than I had ever believed possible, and the whole Bible seemed to me a more beautiful and understandable revelation. In those early days copious notes from "Phanerosis" found their way on to the margin of my Bible, and though I have not read the book for many years (except to prepare it for print — which is a different matter), the influence of my early studies still remains with me. On the basis of "Phanerosis" I have been able to pursue my investigations still further. My constant regret is that Brother Thomas is not alive today that I might address an air-letter to him, making suggestions and seeking answers to questions.

The Truth's literature, then, is a "must" for all who would seek true pleasure and profit from their study.* If such works as "Elpis Israel" and "Eureka" are neglected an essential foundation for individual research and investigation is lacking. These books help us, not merely upon the subjects they are specifically dealing with, but with the whole range of Scripture.

A few years ago, however, I received a request from America, that the "Logos" should write up the story of the Bible. There was already in existence such a work, but it was out of print, and the copyright was held by a brother who refused to give us permission to reprint. Having promised to do something in the matter, and subscriptions already having come to hand, we were forced to proceed with the venture, and write the matter up ourselves. We thought we knew sufficient about the history of the Bible to do this — until we came to examine it closely. Many difficulties had to be solved. There were problems we had previously given no attention to; there were apparent discrepancies that had to be reconciled; there were statements that critics had contested. And though we were writing primarily for young people, we wanted the record to be as sound and authentic as possible.

* Brother Mansfield's remarks here were primarily with regard to the Pioneer works, although we acknowledge that there are other very good works available which have been written by other Brethren. However, we would sound a note of caution. During the years since Brother Mansfield penned the above words, many works have been offered to us by an ever-increasing number of writers. Experience has shown us that many of these works are of doubtful value; others, paraded as Christadelphian literature, will prove quite dangerous to the unwary. Exercise care in this regard.

We were forced to independent study and research.

We have never regretted the long hours involved doing so.

I found Christadelphian writings largely silent upon the historical portion of the Bible, and the comments by outside “authorities” often quite unsatisfactory and misleading.

Gradually I developed a system of my own. This is what I do now:

(1): I take a specific incident of history, and I try to methodically study it as an archaeologist would the ruins of a city he has unearthed. I gather the clues together from all parts of the Word in order to create a composite and complete picture. To that end I use a Concordance. Through its means I look up every occurrence of an incident, and list them in a notebook, carefully setting out any additional features that other references might make. I found, for example, that there are no less than 17 accounts of Moses smiting the rock as recorded originally in Numbers 20. Some of these subsidiary records provided me with additional details that helped me to make my concept of what happened on that occasion more complete.

This idea can be extended to any subject. Take the words “love” and “hate,” for example. Open the Concordance and see how they are used throughout the Word. Use an Analytical Concordance and you will know if it is the same word being used in each occasion (for sometimes a similar English word has been used indiscriminately for several Greek or Hebrew words). Having traced the use of the word, you are in a better position to know exactly what it means.

A lot of work? Of course it is! But it can become very absorbing, providing much pleasure and profit.

(2): Next I will go to no end of trouble to try and create the exact background. I am referring, of course, to the historical portions of the Bible. I will look up an atlas to see the position of a town or a battle; check on a book of reference to find out something of the geographical conditions of the place, and how this might have a bearing on the narrative; look up the meaning of a man’s name or a town to see whether this might provide something to better illustrate an incident in his life (this has been most prolific in clues).

(3): If there are words in a verse I do not understand, or reference to customs or implements that are unknown to me, I will go to the Bible Dictionary or Analytical Concordance for a clearer explanation, often counter-checking the Dictionary or Concordance, and constantly asking the question, “Why was this incident recorded in Scripture?”

(4): When all this has been done, and my notebook is filled with untidy scribble, I will try to gather all the matter together, and note it in the margin of my Bible.

All this takes time, but it helps make the Bible live. It becomes an absorbing and profitable hobby. As I have stated before, the seeking of clues, the gathering of material, the setting out of the final answer or picture, has all the excitement of a mystery — whilst, at the same time, it brings us nearer to the great Author of this the greatest Book we possess.

Uncovering Hidden Truths

Little-known Facts Concerning Familiar Incidents

I never cease to wonder at the tremendous interest that is aroused in any incident recorded in the Bible, when all the facts are drawn together to illustrate it. Then that which may have seemed dull and uninteresting, through constant reiteration, becomes of absorbing interest, and really lives in one's mind.

Let me give you an illustration of this.

Some time ago, I was invited to conduct a campaign with an interstate Ecclesia, during which, it was suggested, I might give a verse by verse exposition of Genesis 49. This chapter records one of the last acts of Jacob prior to his death. He gathered his sons about him, that he might set before them, that which the Spirit revealed concerning the tribes that would spring from them, and the Messiah who would be given the rulership over them.

The study proved a most absorbing one. The words of Jacob assumed new meaning to me, until I was left in wonder at the marvel of it all. Surely the Hand that designed such a chapter in such a Book is Divine! I had previously a vague idea of the significance of some of the prophecy gathered from that portion of it briefly considered by Brother Thomas in "Elpis Israel," but the commission set me, required a complete exposition, and I was forced to some independent research upon it.

I have never regretted the challenge.

This familiar chapter revealed many facts of which I had previously little or no knowledge.

I was drawn to consider the significance of the names of the tribes in the order in which they are set in this chapter. The tribes of Israel are frequently enumerated in Scripture, but seldom in the same order.

Why?

Is there any significance in the names?

I set the meanings of these names down on paper, as follows:

Reuben (See a Son); Simeon (Hearing); Levi (Joining); Judah (Praise); Zebulun (Dwelling); Issachar (Reward); Dan (Judgment); Gad (Company); Asher (Blessed or Happy); Naphtali (Wrestling); Joseph (Adding); Benjamin (Son of my right hand).

I found that I could join those meanings together and form a sentence expressive of the Gospel message, thus: "See a Son (the Lord Jesus), hear him, join him, praise him, dwell with him, he will reward, at the

judgment, with a company, of blessed or happy ones, who will wrestle (with the world), adding, to the Son of My right hand."

Other combinations of the tribes throughout Scripture, provide a variation of this sentence, emphasising other aspects of the Divine purpose.

Thus, in the very titles of the tribes, there is set before mankind the purpose of Yahweh in Israel.

This was but the beginning of wonders for me in this remarkable chapter of the Bible.

So You Think You Know all about Abraham

I was once asked to conduct an extended study upon a section of Scripture, and I chose the life of Abraham as my subject.

The suggestion was not accepted too enthusiastically. To Christadelphians, Abraham is a familiar subject; they think they know all about it.

But the study continued for well over twelve months, and revealed some remarkable features which would make an excellent series of articles for "Logos" if we had the time to write them, or the space to print them.

There are many "mysteries" contained in the life of Abraham, and as we continued further and further with the subject, we were kept busy searching for the clues that unravelled them.

Genesis 14 is a case in point.

It records the occasion when Chedorlaomer at the head of his confederate forces swooped down upon the land of Palestine which had risen in open revolt against this rule. He advanced Southward on the east of Jordan, to the head of the gulf of Akaba, then north-west to Kadesh, then north-east to the Dead Sea depression, where finally he took captive the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and among them Lot the nephew of Abraham.

This circuitous route was once thought so unlikely as to indicate that the account was legendary. But in 1929, the archaeologist, Albright, discovered a line of mounds in Hauran and along the east border of Gilead and Moab of cities that flourished B.C. 2000, indicating it to be a well-settled country, and the direct route between Damascus, and the gold, copper and manganese regions of Edom and Sinai. This immediately showed, as one critic of the Bible wrote: "The general setting of the story is consistent with the political situation of the East as disclosed by the monuments, and it contains data which cannot possibly be the fabrication of an unhistorical age."

But there is something in the story more difficult to explain than the circuitous route taken by Chedorlaomer. We read: "And there came one

that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre an Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan."

What a number of questions fly to the mind in reading these verses! What is the significance of the word "Hebrew"? Why was Lot called Abraham's "brother"? and what an insight there is given of Abram's encampment when we learn that he could muster 318 servants, born in his own house! This conjures in the mind something more than a few tents scattered about!

But in addition to these questions, the answers to which our study revealed, there were also a few more difficult ones. For example, these Amorite friends of Abram helped him attack Chedorlaomer and recover Lot, from which the question arises: Why did they help Abram, and yet did not raise a finger to help their own countrymen when the latter had been attacked (v. 7)? Secondly: Why should Abram be "confederate" with these Gentiles. Thirdly: How could Abram muster a "trained" army of 318 — what was he doing teaching them to war?

These were mysteries which a little research helped to answer. The three Amorite chieftains were "confederate with Abram." The Hebrew is more explicit. It records: "They being possessors of the covenant of Abram." These Gentiles apparently accepted the God of Abram, and had embraced his hope. They thus stood apart from the general insurrection against Chedorlaomer. Having embraced the covenant of Abram, they had no great affinity with their own tribe, and therefore refused to be involved in the war that took place between the Amorites and the invaders. On the other hand, they willingly assisted Abram in his God-directed campaign to rescue Lot.

As to the "trained" men in Abram's camp we learned from Strong's Concordance, that the word in the Hebrew signifies "initiated," or "instructed." The same word occurs in Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go ..." These men were trained, not in the arts of war, but in the knowledge of the Truth; they were initiated therein, and as men of faith (see Gen. 18:19), they went forth in the strength of El Shaddai (God Almighty).

But did not Abram "arm" them? Certainly he did; but not with fleshly weapons of war (though we do not doubt they would have these as well). Abram armed them by teaching them to have confidence in God. In this case, he showed his confidence in God by "leading them forth," as the margin renders the passage.

Our research into these verses enabled us to appreciate far better the household of Abram, his relationship with those in the land, the manner

in which he brought up those under his care, as well as giving us an indelible picture of this most wonderful chapter.

And what a chapter it is! Read it, and see if a score of similar questions as the above do not come to mind! Who is Melchizedek? What does the bread and wine he offered Abram signify? Did the Amorites take their portion (v. 24)? What do all the hard names of the chapter signify?

There are wonderful answers to all these questions.

Remember this Sunday School Story?

Moses was dead. He had been conducted to the top of Mt. Nebo from whence he had a magnificent vista of the Promised Land, seeing it "afar off," and then passing to his rest.

The leadership was now conferred upon Joshua. The tribes of Israel were congregated on the eastern bank of the Jordan. Before them was a deep and rapid river about 60 feet wide, then in flood. How were they to cross this first barrier to the Land of Promise?

The instructions were explicit.

The Ark of the Covenant which was previously hidden in the centre of the marching tribes, was to be conveyed by priests to the forefront of the nation, and separated from it by a distance of "about 2,000 cubits"; was to be carried by the priests to the midst of the river, and there held by them until all the people had gone across.

This happened. As soon as the priests bearing the Ark entered the river bed, the waters ceased, and there was a pathway for Israel to pass over.

Here was a miracle greater than the passage of the Red Sea. There was no natural agency whatever employed on this occasion: no mighty wind to drive the water back; no reflux of the tide upon which doubters might fix to depreciate the miracle. How did it happen, and what was the purpose of it all?

Some attempt an answer on natural grounds. Keller in "The Bible as History" speaks of an earthquake that caused the banks to cave in and dam up the river. But this does not answer the needs of the record. It would require two earthquakes. One to dam up the river when it is in flood, and the other to remove the wall of earth as soon as the priests stepped out of the river bed! and even granting all that, the full extent of the miracle is not explained.

For, miracle of miracles, this swiftly flowing stream which descends so rapidly from its source in the north, not merely opened a way for Israel to walk through, but was actually caused to flow uphill in reverse! It was "driven back" towards the Sea of Galilee. Such is the record of Psalm 114:3-5.

Keller's hypothetical earthquake thus fails to answer the requirements of the record.

From the record in Joshua 3:16, we learn that the water of the river "rose up upon a heap" from a place called Adam about 16 miles from where the tribes crossed. At that spot, the river banked up because the waters that were being "driven back" met those still flowing down.

This is the plain teaching of the Scriptures when all the facts are drawn together. It is an amazing miracle. We can accept it or reject it as we might, but it defies explanation from natural phenomena.

What is the purpose in recording this miracle? I believe it is in order to present an amazing type.

The word "Jordan" means "Descender." It enters two seas: the Sea of Galilee which is a fresh water lake, and the much larger Dead Sea, which is heavily impregnated with salt. En route it passes the city called Adam (Josh. 3: 16). Thus this river descends from out of the Sea of Life through Adam to the Sea of Death, and as such, it stands as a type of humanity.

But on this occasion, the Ark of the Covenant, previously hidden in the midst of Israel, stood openly in the River, by means of which, the waters that previously flowed through Adam to death, were now caused to flow back to life.

Here is an amazing type, telling the story of redemption through Christ. The Ark of the Covenant foreshadowed Christ, and until this time it was hidden in the midst of Israel even as the promise of Christ's first advent was bound up in the prophecies of the Old Testament. But "about 2,000 years ago" (answering to the "about 2,000 cubits" of Josh. 3:4), the Lord was openly manifested in the midst of mankind, and through his sacrifice, the waters (or people) which swiftly flowed through Adam to death, were caused to flow in reverse — back to life.

An inner meaning is therefore given to this miraculous event that invests it with great significance and purpose. The Ark in the midst of the river provided an incentive for Israel as the work of Christ does for us. They were told to "go after it" (Josh. 3:3), as we are Scripturally encouraged to go after him. They were told that by looking at what was done they would "know the way by which ye must go" (v. 4), and is not this the lesson we likewise learn from "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12)?

I have only briefly touched upon this "Sunday School story," but given the space and time, we would see that every verse is pregnant with meaning, and the whole account becomes an absorbing and amazing record of Divine providence and care in the work of redemption.

How Righteous was Lot?

How often have Christadelphians quoted Genesis 13 in exposition of

the Gospel message? The story of Abram's unselfishness, and Lot's foolish choice, and the promise made subsequent to the parting of the ways of these two men, has been the subject of thousands of addresses. Surely nothing new remained to be discovered in it.

We thought so, until we had cause to study it closely.

The record is specific as to where the two men stood when they came to their decision. It was "between Bethel and Hai." They were thus on the heights overlooking the Jordan valley. In the distance they could see the southern portion of the Salt Sea which was then, before the catastrophe of Sodom's overthrow, a green and flourishing plain, noted for the prosperity of the cities contained therein.

But looking upon this distant view of seeming prosperity and peace, they had to gaze beyond the town of Hai. For Hai was on the slopes that led downwards to the plains beneath; whilst Bethel was on the heights above. To get to Bethel one had to climb the harsh, rugged hills, and endure the privations of isolation. But one went easily down the slopes to Hai and Sodom.

And the word "Bethel" signifies "The House of God" (El), whilst "Hai" signifies "ruin."

These two men stood at a point between the House of God and Ruin when Lot made his unfortunate choice!

The chapter seems to carefully mark the steps in the decline of Lot. First there was "strife" with Abram (Gen. 13:7); next he looked longingly on the prosperity and companionship which Sodom offered (v. 10), then he "chose" that way (v. 11). Leaving Abram he "pitched toward" Sodom (v. 12) possibly, at that stage, determining in his heart he would keep separate from those wicked cities. Instead, we next find him "dwelling in" Sodom (Ch. 14:12), and finally, sitting in the gate as citizen and ruler (Ch. 19:1).

Then the mercy of God was extended to Lot in the catastrophe that overcame the city, for he was rescued therefrom.

How is this consistent with the statement of the New Testament that describes Lot as "that righteous man"?

The answer is in the word "righteous," which really relates to a state and not necessarily a moral condition. A "righteous" man in Scripture is one who is justified (in the original Scriptures it is the same Greek word), or vindicated by his sins being forgiven. That was the case with Lot. He was not happy under the conditions he chose. It was against his principles. He had been led into circumstances that brought him distress — possibly through the influence of his wife. He obtained forgiveness and was saved, not merely through his own efforts, but the mercy of God, and the intercession of Abraham. The record declares: "God remembered

Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt (Gen. 19:29)

The Shepherd Boy who Slew the Giant

What a glorious little fable is presented in 1 Samuel 17! That is how many people view it. A good moral story showing the triumph of righteousness over the wicked giant; excellent as a graphic story of faith and courage — for children. A “must” in our Sunday School lessons!

That is the general treatment.

Actually it is a remarkable record of history and type setting forth the ultimate triumph of Christ, here personalised by David.

I have spent some hours of pleasurable and profitable study around this incident.

Notice how explicit the record is as to where the incident took place (1 Sam. 17:1). I took some time ascertaining where this was on the map, and then went to a book in my library that describes the geography of the Holy Land.

I found that the valley of Elah (v. 2) is a long winding depression that extends from the Philistine plains just north of Ashdod to the heart of Judea. About 16 miles south-west of Jerusalem there is a junction formed by two other narrow valleys. At this junction there is a level plain, a quarter of a mile broad, cut by two brooks which combine to form the stream which flows down the vale of Elah.

The Philistines came up this winding valley, and Saul and his army descended from the hill country down the converging valley that formed the junction. Saul thus defended the gateway to the eastern portion of the land, and the Philistines that to the west. Saul was in a very strong position. If the Philistines wanted to attack him, they must cross the level plain as well as the main stream and two other smaller streams. They were thus at a disadvantage, and there was a stalemate in the war. That is one reason why Goliath tried to incite the Israelites to battle daily “for forty days” (v. 16). We gain thus a picture of a great and natural amphitheatre. On the opposing hills rested the two armies, so placed that they could see all that happened on the small plain below. They saw and heard the challenge of Goliath, they witnessed the contest that took place later.

One can imagine the hush that would come over the two armies, as the two contestants approached one another for the battle. The mighty Philistine, at least 9 feet 9 inches tall, heavily covered with brazen coat of mail, formed of brass overlapping like the scales of a fish, possibly in imitation of his god, Dagon, opposed by the lightly clad, agile, fresh-faced, bright-eyed shepherd boy with sling and stones.

There is interest in every detail of the encounter, if we take the trouble

to search it out. The Philistine cursed David “by his gods,” so that the contest entered a new field of enquiry. It was more than man to man; it was Dagon versus Yahweh.

David’s confident answer was a calm statement of his faith. Victory would be his, and would be granted him in order that: (1) — “all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,” and (2) — “all this assembly shall know that Yahweh saveth not with sword and spear.”

The word “assembly” in Hebrew is “qahal,” and is a word that has a similar significance as “ecclesia.” It comes from a root that means “to call or summon.” In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, this word is replaced by the word “Ecclesia.”

Thus David declared that the purpose of victory was to demonstrate to all the world that there is a God in Israel, and to vindicate the power of faith to His ecclesia.

There are two Psalms connected with this incident. According to the Septuagint version, Psalm 144 relates to the victory over Goliath, and the inscription given to Psalm 8 identifies this Psalm also with the same incident. It is dedicated “To the Chief Musician upon Muth-labben.” In our version, this is given as introductory to Psalm 9, but the latest research shows that such inscriptions really relate to the Psalm previous.

“Upon Muth-labben” signifies “To praise, regarding the death of the man who went out between the camps.” The word “labben” is from the same Hebrew root as the word translated “champion” in 1 Samuel 17, and which also means, “The man between the two.” Goliath was like a duellist, between the two hostile camps — thus the title given him.

The two Psalms thus associated with this well-known incident are charged with additional interest when linked with the victory of David. Psalm 144 can well represent the prayer that must have been on David’s lips when he stepped out from the ranks of Israel to meet his formidable antagonist. He had rejected the armour of Saul, and leaned upon Yahweh from whence he derived the skill to war (Psa. 144:1). He speaks of his weapons of war (v. 2), man’s vain show as exemplified in the boasts of Goliath (vv. 3-4), his prayer that Yahweh might give him victory (vv. 5-7), his praise of Yahweh (vv. 8-9), his confidence that Yahweh would deliver him from the sword of Goliath (v. 10), his indignation at the impious blasphemy of the Philistine (v. 11), and the reason why he desired victory: that Israel might dwell safely and worship Yahweh in truth (vv. 12-15).

Link this prayer with the narrative in Samuel, and see if you do not extract pleasure and profit from the exercise.

Psalm 8, I believe, represents the rejoicing of David after victory. Yahweh’s name is now exalted in the earth. His strength has been revealed through the victory afforded one who was previously decied as

a mere stripling, a baby in comparison with Goliath. The boasts of the enemy have been silenced thereby. In David, God had visited His people. He had crowned him as king over all his works. His triumph, even seen over the beasts of the field (the lion and the bear — see 1 Sam. 17:34-35), foreshadowed his rule over Israel and the surrounding nations. In that rule, Yahweh's name would be exalted.

Thus these Psalms have a historical background, but they also act as a bridge from the historical to the prophetic. For Psalm 8 is Messianic in its scope (Heb. 2:6-8; Matt. 11:15); it is prophetic of the future. David's triumph over Goliath typifies the triumph of the Christ and his brethren over Gogue and the world, when a greater than David shall rule Israel and the nations. Then the shadow shall become the substance, and in the elevation of those styled by Christ "babes and sucklings" (Matt. 11:25) there will be seen the fulfilment of Paul's words: "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty... that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:28).

So by research and study these subjects that may be thought beneath the consideration of adult minds, are revealed as outstanding incidents in the revelation of Yahweh calculated to provide the greatest pleasure and profit.

Importance of Fundamentals

The Diversity of Bible Subjects

In previous articles, I have made suggestions for Bible study which the student will find profitable to take further. They have related to Bible history, prophecy, types and shadows, ethics; and have concerned isolated verses as well as entire books considered verse by verse. As the student develops ideas of his own, he will find that there is no end to the way this marvellous Book can be studied. Day by day new features of it come to mind.

For example, I had cause recently to study one or two of the Psalms of David, and in preparation for this, read up something on Hebrew poetry. Immediately there was revealed for me a new and marvellous vista of the Word of God. From considering the construction of the Psalms, I was drawn to study the background of some of them. It is common knowledge that many of the Psalms are prophetic of Christ, and breathe forth his feelings as he was surrounded by enemies or as he trod the path that led to his crucifixion. Yet they are based upon historical events in the life of David, which are themselves typical of the work of Christ.

As I searched out some of the events that helped to give birth to these glorious songs of Zion, I discovered a new meaning, and a new beauty, in that in which I had already found pleasure and profit. I was lost in wonder at the new vein of gold that had opened up, and would have loved to put away other, more necessary research, to pursue this new treasure. It is a pleasure that I reserve in store for the future.

There is no end to the variety of Bible study.

The greatest student among us has not fully plumbed its depths.

I once decided to study exhaustively a particular prophecy in order that the last word might be said upon it. Minutely I examined every word, and phrase, and section of it. I went to no end of trouble to ascertain the exact meaning of parts of it. I read extensively and at length upon it. I filled up notebooks with comments. I gave time in order that I might properly absorb the matter I had gathered together. Books of history, geography and archaeology were consulted to determine the background of the prophet himself. And when all was ready, I entered these notes in the margin of my Bible.

I felt that here was a subject I had thoroughly mastered; I could be a teacher on this book of the Bible at least.

But I soon had a lesson teaching me that the "last word" has never been said upon any section of the Bible. A brother, in an exhortation,

made brief and passing reference to this prophecy, in a way that opened up a new and additional thought to that which I had set down — one which delighted me so much that it found a prominent place in my notebook.

The moral of that is: No matter how advanced we may imagine we are, we can always learn from others.

A humble, childlike disposition; a willingness to learn; is the first essential to a student.

And this mental food will bring growth. The study of the Word is like the eating of manna which Israel was commanded to seek and eat day by day. It will provide spiritual strength and stature, and bring us to maturity of thought in the things of Yahweh.

The Plain Necessary Food of the Gospel

Whilst we must seek a balanced diet, there is some food more essential than other.

That is as true of the Word of God as our natural diet.

The explanation of types and shadows in the narrative of the Bible, a knowledge of the historical, geographical and archaeological background of men and incidents recorded therein, or a detailed explanation of verses, is both interesting, profitable, and helpful. But it must be studied upon a foundation of knowledge that is absolutely vital.

I refer to the fundamental doctrines of the Truth.

This other knowledge is like condiments to a normal meal — it adds spice and flavour, it helps in digestion, but it requires the good, solid, plain food of the Gospel to make it really valuable.

No true workman will neglect the plain food of the Word, if he is to be among those who “needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

His knowledge of the Word, and of these fundamental doctrines, can be advanced by proper Bible marking. Those who possess Wide Margin Bibles, will find in front a number of blank pages, suitably indexed or numbered. Here there is space to list an index of Bible references that will help support any doctrinal subject.

Appropriate references can be listed under such headings as “God is one,” with those references which are valuable in refuting the errors of the Apostasy set out in different colour. Sometimes it is helpful to state in the margin at such references the particular reason why they are quoted.

For example, I have often quoted Acts 19:2 in refuting the Trinitarian theory. The verse reads:

“Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy

Ghost (Spirit) since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost (Spirit).”

What is the point in quoting this verse in refutation of the Trinitarian concept?

Simply this: Trinitarians believe that the Holy Ghost is the third person of God. Here were “disciples” who “believed,” yet confessed that they had “not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost”!

Obviously they did not believe in the Trinity!

In debate, I have pressed this point home successfully, as a sort of “softening up process” prior to bringing forth those Scriptures that plainly and affirmatively express the Truth.

It is necessary, however, at such places as Acts 19:1-2 to briefly write in the margin the reason why you would quote them in such circumstances. I have known such passages to be quoted disastrously, without point, simply because the one quoting them has forgotten the purpose he originally had in listing them. It is also a good idea to include at such places connecting references that explain the use of the term “Holy Spirit,” such as: “The Holy Spirit is the power of God — Rom. 15:19.” Then, after showing by a process of deduction upon the passage itself that the Holy Ghost or Spirit is not the third person of a Trinity, one is readily able to affirmatively reveal, by a comparison of Scripture, just what is meant by the term.

In opposing the orthodox concept of Satan as a fallen angel, I have quoted 1 Tim. 1:20:

“I (Paul) have delivered (Hymenaeus and Alexander) unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

Where is the point in quoting this verse?

In debate I have asked the question, “Is it logical to believe that Paul would deliver up anybody unto such a diabolic monster as the Satan of orthodoxy is represented to be? Would he use him as an ally? And finally. Would Satan (if Satan be as orthodoxy represents him) teach anybody not to blaspheme? Would he not rather teach them how to blaspheme? Is not that his function?”

This usually causes much embarrassment in those holding the orthodox view, and they generally ask, Who is the Satan referred to?

Even if they don’t ask, I usually proceed to explain what is meant by the use of “Satan” in this verse.

I show that the word signifies “adversary,” and here relates to the world which is the great adversary of the Truth. Paul had excommunicated Hymenaeus and Alexander, had driven them from the Ecclesia, had disciplined them, that “they may learn not to blaspheme.” When that lesson had been learnt, the way was open for their return. In support of this, I quote 1 Tim. 5:15: “For some are already turned aside after Satan.” They were not found following the fallen angel of a

paganised-Christianity, but had drifted back into the world, and were following its ways (1 John 2:15-16).

Logical, clear, Scriptural explanations of such references usually make a good impression on those who are anxious to learn, and therefore, at these key references, our Bible should be so marked as to clearly set forth the reasoning to be adduced therefrom.

The Bible is Divine, it never changes — but human memory is a very fickle thing. Bible markings are an aid to memory.

Where to Obtain the References

Whenever we read the Bible, our minds should be keenly alert, to note any reference that might assist us in confirmation of Truth, refutation of error, or extension of a particular subject that may be engaging our attention. Many helpful references will then be found, to be included in our list of subjects, in the front of our Bible, which will soon assume for us the importance that a business places upon a "Ready Reckoner."

But more valuable still, it is good to take a work such as "Elpis Israel" or "Christendom Astray," and list the references advanced by their respective authors.

The full point and power of the reasoning advanced in these books, and the significance of the references quoted, will be better appreciated if, as you read, you reduce them down to their basic foundation.

You can do this by listing the points dealt with in the notebook which, as I have stressed time and again, the student should ever have at his side.

For example, here is the basic reasoning of "Elpis Israel," Chapter 1:

The earth is peopled by a race that following the wisdom of the flesh, has filled it with crime and bloodshed — (James 3:14-16; Gal. 5: 19-21).

This does not express the ultimate purpose of God which He has revealed for the guidance of man — (1 Cor. 2:9-10).

God's revelation alone is capable of providing true wisdom (1 Cor. 3:18-21), and bringing purity and peace (James 3:17).

The fullness of this wisdom was revealed when the Gospel was preached in the name of Jesus Christ. It then comprehended the revelation of that which was previously not fully understood (Rom. 16:25-26).

The religious world does not grasp this revelation, and has obscured it by embracing that Scripturally styled "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:7-12).

The Truth is as a tree of life, a crown of glory, greater than the rewards of silver and gold (Prov. 3:14-18).

The Bible alone is capable of revealing the Truth (2 Tim.3:15-17).

We must search the Bible for ourselves (Acts 17:11-12; Isa. 8:20).

Bible study is opposed by men of the flesh because they fear its power.

All that claims to be religious is not necessarily truth (Col. 2:16-23).

The comparing of Scripture with Scripture must be the basis of our understanding and beliefs (1 Cor. 2:13; Acts 28:23,31).

To the Bible we must turn as to a light standing in a dark place (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

Read "Elpis Israel," chapter 1, with these paragraph headings before you, and see if you do not appreciate better the arguments and reasonings advanced by its author in explanation and exposition of them.

Having done so, read chapter 2 with the object of breaking it down in similar fashion, and then, with the paragraph headings before you, re-read the chapter.

You will find that having read "Elpis Israel" in that way you will absorb it better, and appreciate in greater degree the references Brother Thomas advances in support of his exposition.

By this means you will gain many more references for your index in the front of your Bible, and marginal comments to be included alongside the actual quotations.

But no reference should be included unless you know exactly why you quote it, and are capable of clearly explaining it if necessary.

For example, in the above epitome from "Elpis Israel," 2 Peter 19-21 is quoted. Can you explain these verses? We there read: "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." What is meant by that? I have heard Christadelphians quote these words to those of other denominations as though they relate to the interpretation, or explanation, or understanding of the Bible as we have it. Given that meaning, we would be forced to the conclusion that the only legitimate "interpretation" is that done officially, by what men call "the church." If that be the case, then laymen should not attempt to understand, or interpret, Scripture for themselves, and the Bereans were wrong in so doing (Acts 17:11-12).

It is important, therefore, that we understand such references. In this particular case, an alternative rendering of the original helps. Weymouth's translation of the New Testament renders this verse: No prophecy of the Scripture is of the "prophet's own prompting." In other words, prophecy came from God and not from man, as the context shows (see v. 21). Another translation renders "private interpretation," as "prophet's own invention." Brother Roberts renders "interpretation" as "origination."

Thus the quotation shows that Bible prophecy is Divine and Inspired, it came from God and not the flesh. With this clearer understanding in mind, we can quote the verse with all confidence.

Thus the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) is burnished and sharpened, and ready for use at a moment's notice. We will be equipped, not only to do battle with the enemy, but to pursue our own individual studies with the greatest profit.

Peter exhorts us:

“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Sanctify (or set apart) God in heart, be ready, express your reasons with meekness and reverence (fear).

Here are a trinity of virtues for the Bible student to aim at.

Deeper Subjects

The Index of Subjects in the front of your Bible need not be limited to first principles. Indeed, the Apostle exhorts us to advance beyond these, and go on to maturity of thought and understanding (Heb. 6:1).

One year, in the course of the daily readings, I listed all the altars referred to in the Bible, including the instructions given for the way in which they were to be made, and the significance of them (Heb. 13:10). I found it a most profitable source of study, for every altar had a background of the highest significance and meaning.

Now they are all listed in my Index for easy reference.

I did the same in relation to the many composite titles of Deity found throughout the Word — with great profit to myself. And the list is always there as a “ready reckoner” to be referred to when required. You would be surprised to know of the many times these lists have proved helpful.

So I suggest, start with the first principles, but in the words of Hebrews, “go on to perfection.” The Apostle rebuked the Hebrew believers because of their backwardness in that regard. He declared: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb. 5:12).

The Importance of Understanding Words

The Value of Words

Some time back, a book was published entitled *The Tyranny of Words*. Its author stated that semantics (the science of the origin and evolution of language) fascinated him. He claimed that it had revolutionized his thinking, and altered the style of both his writing and speaking.

I can quite believe it.

There is no doubt that if we take the trouble of consulting a Dictionary to find out the exact meaning of words, our reading will become charged with greater power.

That applies to any book; but it applies in greater measure to the Bible, the Book of books. The more one applies the science of semantics to the Bible, the more one becomes convinced that the Spirit was careful to select the exact words required, and by the very use of them has charged them with new power. So much so, that men have been amazed at the added significance of Scripture when the exact meaning of words has been revealed. One writer has written: "It is a safe rule to let no word, not even the simplest, in the New Testament pass unchallenged."

The same rule applies to the Old Testament.

A wealth of exciting spiritual treasure will open out to the student-explorer when he commences his voyage of discovery in search of the meaning of words.

And with the fine helps available today, it is possible for the simplest reader to be able to pursue such an investigation — and derive great pleasure from it — even though he is completely ignorant of Hebrew and Greek.

How to Go About It?

There is an abundance of books available devoted to the exposition of the words of Scripture, most of which are extremely helpful if used with care. Such works as Young's and Strong's Analytical Concordances, Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, a good conservative Bible Dictionary, as well as lesser works such as C.A. Anderson's "Words," are in this category.

Valuable assistance can be gained from alternate translations of the Bible such as the Revised Version, the Diaglott, the Concordant

Version, and a reliable modern language translation. The Revised Version (more so than the Revised Standard Version) is most helpful. It is perhaps the most exact translation available in English.*

An Analytical Concordance is of immense help, particularly in view of the system adopted by the translators of the Authorised Version in using different words in different places of Scripture to do duty for the same Hebrew or Greek word in the original; or, on the other hand, using the same English word in various places for different Hebrew or Greek words.

Many feel that this is a bad fault with the Authorised Version, and it has come in for heavy criticism because of it; but I have found it an incentive to study, and as far as I am concerned, it has helped emphasise the significance and meaning of Scripture.

An Analytical Concordance enables the student easily and quickly to ascertain the particular Hebrew or Greek word used in any place, and the manner in which it has been translated in the English Version.

Let me give you a practical illustration.

Consider these statements of Scripture:

“What is the sign ... of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3).

“This gospel shall be preached in all the world” (Matt. 24:14).

“Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time” (Matt. 24:21).

“All the world wondered after the beast” (Rev. 13:3).

You will notice that the single word “world” appears in all four quotations; yet in the original Greek, the words used are different in each place.

The word “world” in the first quotation is “aion” in the Greek, and signifies “age.” The disciples were not asking regarding the end of the world in a physical sense, but the end of an age, or epoch, when the

* During the past 30 years we have been able to discover more books (in addition to those listed above), which we like to call our “Workman’s Tools.” The most important of these, not necessarily in order of importance, are as follows:

A Critical Lexicon and Concordance, (E.W. Bullinger);

Unger’s Bible Dictionary (Merrill F. Unger);

Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance (Bagster);

Englishman’s Greek Concordance of the New Testament (Bagster);

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (R.A. Torrey);

Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (Gesenius);

The Times Atlas of the Bible (Bay Books);

Theological Word Book of the Old Testament (Harris, Archer, Waltke).

Among translations, the ones we find most helpful, (again, not necessarily in order of preference),

New International Version;

The Emphasised Bible (Rotherham);

The Twentieth Century New Testament (Original Edition, Marshall & Son, 1901);

The New Testament in Modern Speech (R.F. Weymouth, first, second or third edition, the latter: 1914).

Mosaic order would pass away. They thought that the Kingdom would immediately appear (Luke 19:11; Acts 1:6; Mark 8:33), and were desirous of knowing when the current age would terminate. You find the same phrase, "end of the world" used in Hebrews 9:26 with relation to the termination of the Mosaic Age at the first advent of the Lord, so that the Bible teaches that the "world" came to an end 1,900 years ago! The word "world" in this place is the same as that used in Matthew 24:3, and relates to the Mosaic Age.

The word "world" used in the second quotation above (Matt. 24:14) does duty for an entirely different word. In the Greek it is "oikoumenee" and signifies "the habitable." The prophecy of this verse was fulfilled in the days of the Apostles as we learn from Colossians 1:23. They preached the gospel throughout the Roman Empire, the then known world, which constituted the "habitable" as far as they were concerned. They did not preach in China, America, or Australia, and the verse does not say they would do so. The same Greek word is again translated "world" in Luke 2:1: "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." It is quite obvious that here the "world," or "habitable," is limited to the Roman Empire, for beyond the borders of the Empire the decree of Caesar did not extend.

In the third quotation (Matt. 24:21), the Lord Jesus was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He declared that the tribulation of those times would exceed anything that had occurred "since the beginning of the world" or "ever shall be." Did the destruction of Jerusalem exceed the catastrophe of the Flood in tribulation or affliction? Did it exceed what we might expect in the calamity of the last days when "the slain of Yahweh will be from one end of the earth unto the other" (Jer. 25:33)? The answer is in the negative. The destruction of Jerusalem was minor to these other terrible catastrophies. What then are we to make of Christ's words that it would exceed anything "since the beginning of the world?" Our Analytical Concordance again helps us. We learn that the word translated "world" is "kosmos" in the Greek. "Kosmos" signifies "order," or "system of things." It is frequently used to define the Mosaic order or system of things, though it is also often used to define the Gentile way of life. Using it in the former sense, however, we can instantly see the force of Christ's remarks. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 brought greater tribulation upon the Jewish people than they had ever before experienced "since the beginning of the (Mosaic) world (kosmos or order) to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Armageddon will witness greater trouble, and more wide-spread tribulation than A.D. 70, but that will be for Gentiles, not for Jews who will find their State restored, and themselves gathered back from dispersion to inherit the land in power. Christ's words limit the

tribulation to that experienced by the Jewish “kosmos,” and compares what had gone before in relation to the Jewish order of things, and what was due to be experienced in the future by the same order, with that which came upon that particular generation.

Our Analytical Concordance has not only helped us to gain a proper understanding of Christ’s words, but has removed insuperable difficulties and apparent contradictions from the verse.

The word “world” in the fourth quotation (Rev. 13:3) does service for the Greek “ge” which signifies the physical earth, or a region of it. In Revelation 13:3 it relates to the Roman “earth,” or region where Roman Catholicism reigned supreme, and is used symbolically for the people of that region.

Thus you can thus see that an Analytical Concordance is not used merely to parade knowledge, or to reveal some curiosity of language, but rather to understand better the Word of Truth, and to be more equipped to expound it.

I have heard many mistaken expositions given because brethren have failed to avail themselves of the helps they can obtain. I have doubtless been guilty of this myself.

But Analytical Concordances are bulky books, and we cannot go marching around the meetings with one under our arm. What are we to do? The best idea is to so mark your Bible that you can instantly detect the particular word used in the original.

This, of course, will only be necessary where it is important to justify it.

The word “world” is in that category, and your knowledge of the Bible will be greatly enhanced by the following simple suggestion:

In the front of your Bible set out the four meanings of these words translated “world,” and give each a distinguishing colour. Then go through your Bible with the Concordance, and distinguish the various words by marking them in the colour you have selected.

Your Bible will begin to talk to you in more intimate fashion.

Strive for the Mastery

Let me give you another example of how the meaning of words enhance Scripture. In 2 Timothy 2 there is an apparent contradiction. In v. 5 Paul exhorts us to “strive for the mastery,” and yet in v. 24 he warns us that “the servant of the Lord must not strive.” On the other hand, Christ declared: “Strive to enter in at the straight gate” (Luke 13:24).

In these three quotations you have one English word, but in the Greek there are three entirely different words.

In the Greek, the word “strive” of 2 Tim. 2:5 is “athleo” from whence is derived our word “athlete,” and it means “to strive as a champion.”

The same word occurs in Phil. 1:27, where the Apostle writes hoping that the Ecclesia may be found “striving together for the faith of the gospel.” Paul had in mind the co-operation expected in a team of athletes, the one aim motivating the whole ecclesia.

But in 2 Tim. 2:24 the word is different. There the Greek word is “machomai,” and it signifies “to fight” in a physical sense. So we learn that whilst the servant of the Word, disciplining himself as an athlete might to that end, yet he must not be a brawler, must not fight, “but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.”

What of our third quotation — the exhortation of Christ, “strive to enter the straight gate”? Does that mean to strive as a champion?

By no means. In this place the Greek word signifies “to agonise” (see also 1 Cor. 9:25). Agony enters into our efforts to gain the reward. We must put all our energy into attaining the hope set before us, figuratively straining every nerve and sinew to that end. What a wealth of exhortation is found in the single word “agonise” when the speaker of it (the Lord Jesus) is brought into view. He exhibited true agony to do the will of his Father.

In the margin of my Bible, at each place where “strive” occurs, I have found it worthwhile to write in the meaning of the word in the original.

How do you Love?

There are various words used for “love,” and each of them is different. When the Lord Jesus after his betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection asked Peter: “Lovest thou me more than these?” the word he used for “love” was “agapao.” It signifies a sacrificial love. But when Peter replied, “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee” (John 21:15), he used an intirely different word. It was the word “phileo” which signifies a tender, affectionate love.

Despite the fact that Peter had denied his Lord, he had a tender, affectionate love for him, though, in view of the manner he had acted when the Lord was under trial, he felt he could not claim that greater quality of love such as the Lord indicated in the word he used.

Christ asked the same question twice in exactly the same words, and received the same reply. And then, on the third occasion, he used the word Peter selected. “Lovest (phileo) thou me?” (John 21:17), and when the Apostle showed grief at the repeated question, and broken-heartedly answered: “Thou knowest that I love thee,” he was shown by the Lord how he should manifest this tender affection that he had for Christ: “Feed my sheep.”

It is also significant that in this short conversation the word “feed” occurs three times, but again, in the Greek, a different word was used by the Lord on the second occasion when he answered: “Feed my sheep.

Previously, the word used, means "to teach;" but on this occasion the word signifies "to shepherd." "To shepherd" signifies not merely to teach, but to be an example, to lead, guide, discipline, correct.

Thus the Analytical Concordance, plus ample thought and meditation, will reveal a deeper, more beautiful meaning in Scripture.

How Often do you Sin?

The word "sin" usually conjures up in the mind some dark and evil action, revolting both to God and man. The classic answer to the question, What is sin? is "Transgression of Law."

If you want a profitable exercise, look up the many ways in which the original word in the Hebrew has been translated. It will not only be found interesting, but will reveal a new conception of what constitutes "sin."

Take, for example, the following passage:

"Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men left-handed; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss" (Jud. 20:16).

What has that to do with the subject of "sin," you might ask?

Strangely enough it has much to do with it. In the Hebrew, the word translated "miss" is the word usually used for "sin." These skilled slingers could throw stones at an hair breadth, and not miss, or sin. The verse actually shows the real meaning of the word "sin," for it comes from a root word signifying "to miss the mark."

We sin when we "miss the mark," and the mark that we should aim at is the ideal set forth in the life of the Lord.

When we fall short of the excellence revealed in Christ, we miss the mark. To our contemporaries we might appear very worthy examples, but as far as the true target is concerned we have "missed the mark," and therefore sinned.

Our lives may not reveal any particular revolting actions against God or man when compared with our contemporaries, but they can be lives in which we are constantly found sinning — that is, falling short of the mark set before us.

Thus by seeking into the meaning of the word "sin" we come to appreciate more how needful the covering of Christ is for us; we become more conscious of our own sins, and come to realise better our need for a redeemer.

Having determined what "sin" implies, we might ask, What is Law?

We find that it comes from a root word that signifies to point to the mark.

Law, therefore, sets before us the target; obedience is when we hit the target; sin is when we miss the target.

When Do You Worship?

Perhaps the most profitable study of Bible words is found in the Names and Titles of Deity. Christadelphians are Scripturally defined as a people whom God is taking out of the Gentiles “for His name.”

As such, surely we should be interested in what that name reveals.

Yet, occasionally, the subject of the Names and Titles of Deity arouses antagonism.

Why does it?

The answer, undoubtedly, is because of ignorance and bigotry.

Yet in this subject there is a beauty unparalleled in Scripture.

It can also help greatly in the better understanding and defence of the Truth.

On one occasion I was called upon to debate upon the subject of: “The Godhead: Trinity or Unity?” My opponent was well tutored in Scripture, and was familiar with the Christadelphian stand. He was also very skilled in debate, and knew full well that offence is the better form of defence. He therefore attacked with the very quotations that he knew Christadelphians generally use to support their teaching concerning the Godhead. He quoted Deut. 6:4: “The Lord our God is one Lord,” and stated that he based his belief in a Trinity upon such statements.

He then proceeded to amplify his statement. He pointed out that the Hebrew words for “The Lord our God” are “Yahweh our Elohim” and that “Elohim” is a plural word, elsewhere translated “Gods.” Therefore, he declared, we are justified in reading Deut. 6:4 as “The Lord our Gods,” which he maintained taught the unity of the Godhead manifested in a Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

He was correct in his understanding of the Hebrew names, but wrong in his application of them. Fortunately, my Bible was well marked up on this subject, and I was able to satisfactorily answer and rebut his contention.

It was an understanding of the name and titles of Deity that enabled me to do so.

In addition to such occasions, this subject also enables one to appreciate better He whom we worship. We grasp better the significance of Christ’s statement in the prayer he dictated for his disciples: “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.”

For example, how do you understand the statement of Joshua 22:22: “The LORD God of gods ...?” Is Deity the Lord God of heathen gods? Our Analytical Concordance tells us that the words in Hebrew here used are Yahweh El of Elohim, and the study of such an exposition as “Phanerosis” reveals the significance of these words. Yahweh is the covenant name of Deity and signifies “He Who will be”; “El” is a Hebrew word signifying “might” or “power;” “Elohim” is a plural word

meaning “mighty ones.” The three words in conjunction thus signify: He Who will be the Strength of the Mighty Ones. The “mighty ones” referred to, the “gods” of the Authorised Version, relate to the glorious saints who are dependent upon Deity for their strength. In this statement, Yahweh promises to be the strength of those whom He calls to glory. Thus we make sense of a statement that is an embarrassment as it stands in the Common Version.

There are several different Hebrew words relating to the Deity which have all been indiscriminately translated as “Lord” or “God.” In some instances, the translators have indicated the word used in the original. We have an example of this in Psalm 110:1: “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” The statement relates to the Lord Jesus Christ. But in our translation, no discrimination is made between the Father and the Son with the exception that the word LORD as applied to the Father, is printed in small capitals. If you turn to Psalm 110:1 you will see what I mean. Notice how the first “Lord” is given in what printers call the “lower case.” This is the translators’ indication that the first word is Yahweh in the original. Wherever you find “Lord” or “God” printed in small capitals (except occasionally at the beginning of a Psalm) the word in the original is Yahweh — the covenant name of Deity. You have further examples of this in Ezekiel 37:27 and Ezekiel 38:1-3. Notice the difference between the printing of the word “God” in Ezekiel 37:27 with the way it is found in Ezekiel 38:3. In the latter place the word is “Yahweh.” Notice also how “Lord” is printed in Ezekiel 38:1 and compare the printing of the same word in v. 3. In the former place the word is Yahweh.

In Psalm 18:31-32 there occurs several different titles of Deity: “Who is God (Eloah) save the Lord (Yahweh)? Who is a rock save our God (Elohim)? It is God (El) that girdeth me with strength ...” Here there are three words: Eloah, El and Elohim all translated “God.” The meaning of each of these words is different. “Eloah” signifies “Mighty One.” Yahweh alone is such. There are many “Gods” beside Him, but they are not accounted Mighty — they have no underived power. He, alone, is the Mighty One, and that is what the Psalm is stating. “El” signifies “strength” or “power,” and frequently is used in Scripture for the Power of Deity, the First Cause of all creation. It was that Power that girded the Psalmist with strength. The third word “Elohim” is a plural word, and signifies “Mighty Ones.” It is a word that is frequently used for Deity in manifestation, and is thus appropriately a plural word, because He has revealed Himself unto men through a plurality of agents and angels. Upon that One, who had thus manifested Himself, the Psalmist could rest as on a rock.

These various titles help to enrich the teaching of Scripture. They show there is much more in a verse than appears on the surface. Indeed, they help to reveal the full power of the Word.

In my Bible, I can instantly pick up these names and titles because I have coloured each one with a distinguishing colour. In the front of my Bible I have included a glossary of the various names, giving the meaning of each one, and listing passages of Scripture that help to illustrate their meaning.

The subject of God-manifestation, which surrounds these various titles, is a most absorbing and profitable one. It was “Phanerosis” that first opened my eyes to some of the breadth and beauty of the Word, and enlarged my spiritual vision to an extent that I had previously thought was not possible. That is why I hate to hear the subject ridiculed, or its study deprecated. I have seen the influence for good that it has on so many, that I would like to see its study extended. This is best done by firstly going through the Bible with the aid of a Concordance, and colouring in the various titles so that they are distinguished the one from the other, and then reading and re-reading a book like “Phanerosis” or volume 1 of “Eureka.” Let this be done prayerfully and carefully, and I am confident that the profiting of such an exercise will be instantly apparent.

Concluding Comments

In the study of the Bible we must exercise patience. Some get discouraged because they feel that their progress is slow. I have had young people come to me in despair because they “don’t seem to be getting anywhere.” They expect to cover in a few months what it has taken others years to accumulate. Such is impossible. But given time, and blend it with prayer, patience and persistence, and much will be accomplished.

We are a privileged people in that we have the Truth and the Scriptures of Truth. The Truth will not exempt us from trouble and difficulty, but it provides an understanding that enables us to live hopefully in spite of them.

The Scriptures, on the other hand, comprise the Voice of Yahweh in our midst. We honour Him by seeking to understand Him more perfectly. Therein we have the commandment of our Father, and the law of our Mother — spiritual Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26). And concerning these matters, the voice of Wisdom speaks to us thus:

“Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Prov. 6:20-23).

I do trust that the few suggestions set forth in this series of articles may help and encourage you to the study of Yahweh's wondrous Book, and that in doing so you will accrue to yourself much pleasure and profit from your study.

Commence A Course of Daily Reading

In addition to the daily reading of the Bible which is essential, we recommend the home reading of the following books in the order set down: "Christendom Astray," "Elpis Israel," "Phanerosis," "Eureka," "Law of Moses," "Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy." Intersperse these books with such works as "Ways of Providence," "Nazareth Revisited," "Invisible Hand of God," etc. These additional books will give you a broader grasp of the Scriptures, and will help to widen your spiritual horizon. Thus you will read yourself rich in the things of God.

"Follow Me!"

*Meditations on the example
of the Apostle Paul*

Divine Credentials

What! Question the teaching of Paul! May we be preserved from the men who would be guilty of such consummate folly. Has not Christ introduced the apostle to us in words which guarantee his absolute reliability? Listen. "He is a chosen vessel unto me." And again, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

There is a growing tendency to lower the authority of Paul and to challenge his unerring testimony. Let us fortify ourselves against this sin by refreshing our minds from time to time with the apostle's own references to himself. Paul informs us that he was set for the defence of the gospel (Phil. 1:17), and that he was an apostle by the direct appointment of Jesus Christ and God (Gal. 1:1); that he was such in "faith and verity" (1 Tim. 2:7); that the proof of his apostleship lay in "signs and wonders and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12:12), such as the blinding of Elymas (Acts 13:9-11), the raising of the dead (Acts 20:9-10), and the imparting of spiritual gifts (Rom. 1:11); that what he officially spoke and wrote was to be regarded as the word and commandment of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 4:2,15); that his teaching was to be held fast (2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13), and the men withdrawn from who would not submit to it (2 Thess. 3:6,14); that the Spirit was with him to guide his tongue and pen (1 Cor. 2:13); making his letters powerful, and his presence a terror to the disobedient (2 Cor. 13:2,3); that his authority extended to the ability to hand men over to the adversary (1 Tim. 1:20). Let us not whittle away this true testimony! A.T.J.

A Soldier of Christ

Paul was a great warrior — a fine example for all who have joined the ranks. On every occasion he gallantly acquitted himself. The apostle sacredly observed all the duties pertaining to a soldier. He was **OBEDIENT**. He never deviated a single iota from the orders of his Captain (Acts 26:19; Gal. 1:16). He was **COURAGEOUS**. If duty required it, he was ready to die anywhere and in any way (Acts 20:24; 21:13). He was **ENDURING**. For the Truth he was willing to undergo hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, imprisonment, and cruel mockings and scourgings (2 Cor. 11:23-27). He was **HOPEFUL**. Though "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair" (2 Cor. 4:8). He was **SKILFUL**. He knew wherein his ability and strength lay, and these he was masterly in employing (Phil. 4:13; Eph. 6:10-17). He was **TRUE**. He was staunch to the last, and died fighting.

A "well done", and a crown of glory await this illustrious man. Paul has said, "Follow me." Are we doing so? Our circumstances may differ,

still, we are engaged in the same fight, and have much scope for exhibiting his estimable qualities. Obedience is necessary, or we shall neglect the dissemination of the good news of salvation. Courage, too, or we shall be deterred from letting the light shine through the ridicule or bitterness of the world. Endurance also, or our first love will wane. Hope we must cherish, or we shall grow dis-heartened and drop out. Skill we must possess, or we shall bring shame on our cause. Faithfulness also, or we shall turn traitors.

Let us fight the good fight, and lay hold on eternal life.

A.T.J.

Divinely Approved Example

“Follow me”, said Paul, and he said so repeatedly (1 Cor. 4:16; 2 Thess. 3:9). He did so not boastfully, but with the best of motives. The apostle’s leading was safe and sure, and he knew it. The ways in which we are to follow him he tells us! “Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do” (Phil. 4:9). To help the brethren to be faithful in this matter, Paul expressly commissioned a brother to publish abroad his words and works (1 Cor. 4:17). “Mark them”, said Paul also, “which walk as ye have us for an example” (Phil. 3:17).

Brethren, are we sufficiently alive to our duty? Do we study Paul’s life and teaching as containing the sum total of our duty towards God and His truth? Is our perception as keen as it ought to be in our discernment of men who are like Paul? And do we, as his manifold counsels require, “mark” those men; and support them, encourage them, love them, pray for them?

If not, we are lacking in our duty, and we ourselves shall suffer, and so also will the community to which we belong. As our dying, apostate dispensation advances to its death — as it increases in its unbelief, religious indifference, and perverse handling of Scriptures — we shall do well to give more serious attention to Paul, our divinely approved, and appointed pattern, by familiarising ourselves with his unwavering faith, his untiring zeal, his preparedness to make sacrifices in any direction to further the work of Christ, and, above all, with his conviction as to the divine character of the Scriptures, and his way of employing them.

A.T.J.

An Enterprising Leader

Paul laboured to bring men and women into the Truth, and to secure this object he adopted ways and means which, perhaps, to some of us poor, timid ones, seem audacious, and even a trifle questionable. The apostle did not confine his activities to his own “hired house,” but went

forth into the open, invading synagogues and the public places, and wherever else he thought he could obtain a hearing. For Christ's sake he aimed at publicity. He addressed himself to both unfaithful Jews and dark-minded Gentiles. He hesitated not to agitate the minds of thousands. He threw his big heart into the cause, and his enthusiasm inspired his colleagues. He was accused, and not altogether wrongly, of having "turned the world upside down." Like his divine Master, he had compassion for the perishing, opening widely his eyes to the greatness of the harvest, and genuinely lamenting the fewness of the labourers (Matt. 9:36-39).

With our resources and opportunities, with the advertisement columns, the street hoardings, the printing press, available, what would not Paul have done, or have called upon us to do, to further the work in which he was so zealously and so self-sacrificingly engaged? By these remarks we are not suggesting — far from it — that we should embark on, or countenance, any foolish, or reckless expenditure, but that we should, individually, as well as collectively, try to emulate the apostle in his activities and anxiety to push the Master's business. Paul was a bold, noble, large-minded ambassador of Christ — an ideal Christadelphian leader.

A.T.J.

Consistent and Thorough

Paul did not allow his work to cease by bringing people into the Truth. Having enlightened them, he still toiled on their behalf, to root and establish them in all things pertaining to their new position. To this end, he gave his brethren and sisters "much exhortation". He put himself about to warn, encourage and instruct. The extent of his concern for them is shown in his earnest prayers (Phil. 1:4; Col. 1:3,9); his loving parent-like ministrations (1 Thess. 2:9,11); and the many sleepless and tearful nights and days he experienced on their behalf (Acts 20:19,31; 2 Cor. 2:4). To ensure success he was careful in his general behaviour — he was courteous, patient, tactful — never rude, haughty, or aggressive. He was ever ready to "spend and be spent" for the well-being of his brethren and sisters, and this even when his services were cruelly despised (2 Cor. 12:14-15).

To imitate the apostle is our duty. Are we trying to fulfil it? For more reasons than one, we cannot reach Paul's degree of excellence, but we can push forward in the path of his noble example. According to our abilities and opportunities we shall be judged. What made Paul the man he was? — so warm, so unselfish, so untiring? Many things. His deep-down convictions (he allowed the Truth to grip him, and was positive that he was following not will-o'-the-wisp), his unbounded appreciation of the promised reward (he sensibly appraised this reward as of greater

worth than the present life, and all that it can give), his stern and studied resolve to be faithful to Christ (taking wise measures to prevent failure, by indulging in close and constant communion with God and the Scriptures).
A.T.J.

Ennobling Company

There is safety in Paul's company. Every thoughtful man must feel this as he calmly peruses the apostle's earnest, logical, noble-minded utterances. Take, for example, his letter to the Galatians. After reading this through a few times, try to imagine that it is the work of a cheat, a deluded man, or a well-meaning impostor — one who romanced and lied to advance the morality of his fellows! You will find that a little of this exercise will go a very long way. So far as one and all of the irrational hypotheses of the sceptic are concerned, the letter itself contains ample material to confute them completely.

Consider Paul's many appeals to known facts, his persecution of the ecclesia and his faithful labour towards it afterwards. Consider his encouraging and forcible inculcation of righteousness, and his solemn warnings against apostasy and wickedness. Particularly consider the way in which the letter is interwoven with his other letters, and how it and they elaborate and enforce Old Testament teaching, that Christ was a reality, and his death and resurrection a necessity; that justification comes through faith; that the law was merely provisional, and a ministration of condemnation to all. Yes, there is a safety in Paul's company. He was in truth an apostle of Christ, and one who received his authority direct from heaven (Gal. 1:1,12,15-16). What unspeakable comfort springs from the fact that such a guide has been provided! How reassuring for poor, hesitating, fallible man! What a contrast between these writings and the productions of an ordinary man!
A.T.J.

On Mars Hill

How instructive is the account of Paul's visit to Athens! What an evidence is it of inspiration! Would man (uncontrolled by the Spirit) have passed over in silence all those interesting and engrossing discussions that must have taken place between Paul and the Athenian philosophers? Impossible. The sacred historian has not burdened us with the quibbles and vanities of these men, but has confined himself to what has been pre-eminently useful for all generations. Let us aim at keeping to the front in our teaching that which is edifying and pre-eminently useful — shunning vain babblings and useless strifes of words (2 Tim. 2:14-16).

Paul preached to the Athenians "Jesus and the resurrection", and he

would adopt towards them the same attitude that he adopted towards the Corinthians: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Let us follow the apostle in this. The wise, cultured, and philosophic Athenians could only rail and ridicule, their pride and learning blinded them to the simplicity of the gospel. Their case is useful to us, inasmuch as we are sometimes perplexed at the refusal of the great around us to receive the Truth. It is important to recognise that the intellect as well as the lower faculties of man's mentality can be wrongly employed under the influence of the flesh. Ability is of no help if the mind is dishonest.

Paul's act and courtesy in proclaiming the Truth on Mars' Hill are also matters deserving of thought and imitation. A.T.J.

Faithful Under Difficulties

With a sad and heavy heart Paul wended his way from Athens to Corinth. How he accomplished the forty miles' journey we are not informed. But this we know, that when he reached this immoral and benighted city he was without a companion, depressed and anxious in mind, possessed of little means, and in poor health (Acts 18:1; 1 Thess. 3:1-7; 2 Cor. 11:9; 1 Cor. 2:3). Poor Paul!

However, nothing daunted, the apostle at once renews his efforts to spread the Truth. His mission was to preach the gospel, and he was determined to fulfil it (Acts 26:16-19). "I am ready not to be bound only", said the apostle later, "but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus". Faithful Paul! Let us watch the apostle in his up-hill labours. Some of us are too faint-hearted, too despairing, too supine, in the Truth's service. What an example is Paul to us! In spite of bodily weakness and much discouraging experience at Athens, he renews, as we say, his operation in Corinth. He chooses first the most likely spot, the synagogue (Acts 18:4). Wise Paul! When this opening is closed to him he quickly finds another, the house of an interested friend. Persevering Paul! As opposition increases he stands his ground, willing, as occasion requires, to suffer for Christ. Courageous Paul! He fights on, and God encourages and prospers his efforts. An ecclesia at last is formed: "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptised". From the ranks of the respectable and the disreputable, a people for the Lord is taken. Is it any surprise that Peter should speak of Paul as "our beloved brother"? Who would fail to esteem and love him? A.T.J.

Superior to his Environment

Depraved as were the Corinthians, they were not successful in corrupting Paul. For over eighteen months he stood the test of their

immoral and defiling influences. And the reason for this was — what? The question is more than interesting, seeing that so many in our days fall victims to Gentile environment.

The apostle's safety was certainly not due to any superiority of nature (1 Cor. 9:27), nor to any divine protection which is not available to us (1 Cor. 10:13), nor to any blindness on his part to the allurements of this unrighteous people. Then why was it? Shall we say that it was the result of that strong resolution to be faithful, which he made at the commencement of his probation, coupled with his great wish to reach the kingdom? Partly, but this will not wholly explain the matter. Demas, the apostle's once companion, made his resolution, and also hoped to reach the kingdom, but he allowed the attractions of this present world to conquer him (2 Tim. 4:10). Then, again, we ask, why Paul's safety in wicked Corinth? Not only so, but why should his sojourn there have made him (as his writings show that it did) a better and more perfect man? Are we not right in saying that it was the way in which he voluntarily, studiously, and unceasingly kept himself engrossed in the work of the Truth? All his arrangements were carried through with that in view. There is no better spiritual antidote to the fatal allurements of Satan than a good, honest application of the mind to the calls of the gospel. A high standard was Paul's, and safety in our respective Corinthians depend upon our efforts to reach this standard. A.T.J.

What About Paul's Failings?

What about the failings? Are we to copy these? But here we are assuming. Paul had failings undoubtedly, but what are they? Are they recorded? The evidence justifies us in saying that they were not grievous, and are not recorded.

The evidence is as follows: "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16-17) — "Ye ought to follow us" (2 Thess. 3:7) — "Mark", with the object of imitating, "them which walk so, as ye have us for an example" — (Phil. 3:17) — "I have lived in all good conscience before God" — (Acts 23:1; 24:16) — "Ye (the Thessalonians) are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:10).

Such, then, indicates the character of Paul. Let us be slow to charge the apostle with unrighteousness. The ground on which some are prepared to do this is flimsy in the extreme. Paul is said to have acted presumptuously when before Ananias — to have resisted evil — to have threatened (Acts 23:3). But those who set forth this idea are indifferent to Christ's words in Matt. 10:18-20, which make the Spirit, and not the apostle, the author of the denunciation in question.

Unless used by God for a contrary purpose, Paul's habit was to bless and not revile — (1 Cor. 4:12).

Paul and the Scriptures

If Paul were more faithfully followed there would be less hesitancy in accepting the infallibility of the Scriptures. "I confess", said the apostle to Felix, "that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which were written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14).

The same thought arises out of Paul's statement to Agrippa: "I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come" (26:22).

Deluded, indeed, must the man be who affirms that when Paul said "all things" and "none other things" he did not mean what he said! And that when he appealed to Moses and the prophets, he did not appeal to them as an unerring authority! Yet how many today endorse this indefensible position. If Paul is worth following, let us follow him wholly. Let us contend, as he did, that the Scriptures are "the Oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2), and are all profitable (2 Tim. 3:15-16). Paul was not double-minded, with him it was not an attitude of Yea and Nay.

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13-15).

Forsaken By All

"At my first answer," said Paul, "none stood by me, but all forsook me". To have no friends is sad, but to have them, and to be forsaken by them, when their assistance is needed, is painful indeed. What a refreshing contrast does Onesiphorus present to these turn-tail friends: "When he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently, and found me," "he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains". There were reasons, though not justifiable ones, for deserting and being ashamed of Paul. Nero, the bitter enemy of the Christians, reigned. Paul was a leader of the Christians; hence, to openly side with Paul was to risk vengeance of that inhumane pagan monster. Paul boldly stood alone. Let us emulate his courage and fidelity, and let us maintain a conscience void of offence in regard to the sin of which Paul's brethren in Rome were guilty.

Let us likewise emulate Onesiphorus. The circumstances of the Truth in the twentieth century afford many an opportunity of doing the one and shunning the other. To hesitate to ally oneself with the friends of the Truth, because of their unpopularity, is to show oneself unlike Onesiphorus. To give a brother the cold shoulder, or to be backward in befriending one, who, through zeal and love for the Truth has become the object of public hatred, is also unlike Onesiphorus. To cower under the influence and action of the adversary — to fail because no man helps

— is unlike Paul. Let us learn to stand alone. The secret of Paul's and Onesiphorus' bravery lay in this; they realised that the day of the adversary was short; that, as far as they were concerned, it ended at their death. After that there would come a time of praise and eternal glory.

A.T.J.

Follow Me!

How much depends on wise and faithful counsellors. How apparent is this in the case of the ecclesia at Corinth. When Paul was in the midst of this ecclesia, guiding affairs, and setting a Christlike example, it flourished, and was an influence for good in the brotherhood; but when he left, and his place was filled by unworthy men, worldly-minded brethren, tinged with pagan theology and human philosophy, the ecclesia fell at once into a state of all-round apostasy. In less than six years from the date of the apostle's departure this ecclesia had become, in miniature, like modern Christendom — split up into factions, loose in morals and astray in doctrine. This seems incredible, but it is true. "Ye are carnal," "Ye are puffed up," "I speak to your shame," "I praise you not," "Awake to righteousness and sin not," are among the things penned in sadness by Paul to the members of this once thriving and useful meeting. Let all this be a lesson to us, brethren.

Let us be very careful in our selection of brethren to whom we look for advice and exhortation. A great responsibility rests upon us in this matter. Let judgment and not mere feeling move us. Let not the fear of giving offence, or any unworthy consideration, deter us from doing our duty. Let the principles that govern our choice be not the admiration of fluency of speech, attractiveness of person, or genial manners, but those set forth in Titus 1:7-9. Our exemplars must be well-grounded in the Scriptures, and irreproachable in character, men who not only know the way of the Lord, but who themselves walk in it.

A.T.J.

Copy The Apostle

"Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). This was Paul's counsel to Timothy, and indirectly to all who essay to preach and expound the Word.

If we wish to be included in this number let us heed what is said, together with the more detailed instructions given by the apostle to his "beloved son". There is pressing need for this in these days of ignorance, uncertainty, and laxity. The qualifications of efficient and acceptable service are humility, courage, self-effacement, and above all a love of the Scriptures. God does not invite foolish or wicked men to engage in His

work, men who, for the sake of popularity, worldly pleasure, or any other lust, are willing to sell or betray what He has caused to be written (Psalm 50:16-20; 1 Pet. 4:11). Let us never forget that all the sermonizing in the world, unaccompanied by sound doctrine and good example, is mere hypocrisy. Paul must be our example (Phil. 4:9; Acts 20:27).

"... but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27).
A.T.J.

Paul And Timothy

Both old and young have faults. In each there is room for patience and forbearance. Faults, however, can be reduced to a minimum by the application of the Word. But some seem to make no effort to conquer their defects. How often do we see unreasonable severity in the old, and disrespect and unseemly bumptiousness in the young. This ought not to be. What is more pleasing than to see age and youth in harmony — walking together according to the great principles of the Truth. What an edifying illustration of right conduct is to be seen in Paul and Timothy. What deep-down affection these two men had for each other. What gentleness, solicitude, love, in speech and action, were shown by Paul towards Timothy; and what reverence, admiration and devotion were shown by Timothy towards Paul (2 Tim. 1:2-6; 4:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:20). Why was it?

Because both were enamoured of the things of God, and were determined that these should have first place in their minds. It was this that commended the one brother to the other. Paul, "the aged," was revered, listened to, his counsel valued, and example followed, on account of his uniform and consistent faithfulness; and Timothy, the "dearly loved" was a joy to the apostle on account of the young man's warm-heartedness, and manifold wish to live a righteous and useful life. Paul spoke and Timothy hearkened. There was no keeping back of anything profitable, no resentment on the part of the son.

To hear Paul is an exhortation to all — "Be thou an example of the believers" — "Take heed unto thyself and the doctrine" — "Shun profane and vain babblings" — "Flee also youthful lusts." A.T.J.

Many Cruel Enemies

Paul had many cruel enemies, and they worked in various ways for the destruction of his influence. These enemies, alas, were to be found largely among the brethren. A shocking fact, but a fact none the less. Paul the capable, the upright, the kind — the man ready to spend and to be spent in Christ's service, yet incessantly maligned and hated, and that

by his own brethren! There is consolation in this for any in the brotherhood who may be the victims of a like experience. If Paul was permitted to suffer, why should not we suffer? If Paul was unable to silence the tongue of the slanderer and escape the persecution of enemies, should we expect to be free from these things?

Let any who suffer copy Paul's example, and without retaliation, patiently endure. "Being reviled", said the apostle, "we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat". The apostle was a true follower of Christ. What a happy reflection it will be for Paul, when the Kingdom is reached, to look back and see the good that was the outcome of faithfulness and fortitude — his doctrination to uphold the Truth and continue in well-doing even at the cost of cruel and unrighteous torment from those who ought to have known better. "I endure all things", said Paul, "for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal joy". "We were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls".

What an example! If we let this spirit animate us, we shall most assuredly discover that our course has been a wise one. A.T.J.

His Realisation of God

How vividly Paul realised the fact of God's existence and His closeness to us! The apostle seems to have been quite unable to lose sight of God and the near and affectionate connection between Him and the experience of His children. His references to the matter are simply delightful. They are so homely and natural, and are made with such assurance, that we must be dull indeed, if, when we reflect upon them, we fail to be encouraged and uplifted.

As an example of the apostle's artless, impressive, and confident way when speaking of God, let us read his letter to the Philippian believers. Here are a few quotations (and they might be doubled) from this very brief epistle: "I thank God upon every remembrance of you" (ch. 1:3); "God is my record how greatly I long after you all" (ch. 1:8); "Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke" (ch. 2:15); "Let our request be made known unto God" (ch. 4:6); "My God shall supply all your need" (ch. 4:19); "It is God which worketh in you" (ch. 2:13); "God also hath highly exalted him (Epaphroditus)" (ch. 2:27); "Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever" (ch. 4:20). How helpful and encouraging is all this to us — especially in view of the atheistic tendency of our times. Let us remember that Paul derived his knowledge and conviction concerning God not only from the Scriptures, but also in other ways. The apostle conversed with the risen Christ, he saw angels and was the recipient of many tangible favours

which were beyond the power of man to bestow.

Paul was not a fool in placing belief and trust in Israel's God. Let us follow his example.

Solicitous For Others

"Brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (Phil. 4:1). Ponder these words, brethren. They are the expressions, not of a flatterer, but of a sincere and noble man — one who had, as well as all should have, the salvation of others at heart. But why this affection on Paul's part, this earnest entreaty? Many things were at work in the apostle's mind. In the first place he had determined to be true to his apostolic mission, and this enjoined solicitude for others. He appreciated, too, as the result of his own bitter experience, the nobility of his brethren and sisters in their struggles to conform to the calls of the Truth. He had, also, strong faith in the judgment; he was positive that it would take place, and that acceptance and reward would be for those who endured to the end.

He had likewise a keen realization of the pleasure which he would then enjoy in seeing many approved and glorified as the outcome of his much unselfish, though at times much misunderstood labour. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming" (1 Thess. 2:19). With Paul the future was a real thing. Was he wrong? You know he was not. Do you aspire to be like Paul? It is to be hoped so. Pauls are needed, more ecclesias than one are pining and dying for want of them. Are you like Paul? If you are, then you are not selfish, but willing to think of others, and means whereby they may be helped, and not hindered in their strivings to reach the kingdom.

A.T.J.

His Love For Christ

Paul was animated by love — by a genuine deep-down affection for Christ. It was this that made the apostle anxious to discover his duty, and equally anxious to perform it. It was this love that made his service in the truth a pleasure, and his sacrifices a light thing. How great is the power of love? Truly, it is a force which is greater than all other forces — which succeeds when every other influence fails. Are we imbued with a similar love to the apostle's — a warm and real affection for Christ — with a love for Christ strong enough to change and control our lives?

Can we exclaim: "The love of Christ constrain us"? If so, our mind will not be troubled with the question — "How much or how little need we do to secure salvation?" We shall do all we can for Christ. We shall watch for opportunities, and make them so that we can give him pleasure. We

shall not stay to consider the question — “Will the Truth pay?” Perfect love not only casts out fear, but soon leaves the commercial aspect of service behind. But how is such love to be got? It is purely a mental acquisition. Knowledge, memory, imagination, all enter into it. It comes and grows by keeping Christ in mind, his fearless excellencies; his amazing solicitude for us; his cheerful and willing endurance of the shame and agonies of the accursed tree for our sakes; God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven our many sins, and constituted us heirs of eternal life (Eph. 4:32). The right point of view is indicated in Rom. 8:35-39. May God help us to reach it! But we shall never do this unless we think of Christ, as did Paul, often, and much.

A.T.J.

Glories in Tribulation

Paul, like his Master, was a man of sorrows — he wept often (Acts 20:19,31; 2 Cor. 2:4; Phil. 3:18). His tears, however, were invariably mingled with joy (2 Cor. 6:10). The reason for this he explains in his writings.

The Apostle recognised what the Scriptures so plainly reveal, that evil is of God (Isa. 45:7; Ecc. 1:13; Heb. 12:11) and is an experience that works great good to the upright. So positive was Paul on this point that he could say, “We glory in tribulations” (Rom. 5:3) — “I take pleasure in them” (2 Cor. 12:10). In suffering evil, let us strive to be Paul-like. Let us exhibit his patience, fortitude, and strong conviction as to the Author and object of evil. Whatever form our troubles may take, we shall discover that they find place in the apostle’s life. Are we in grief through personal shortcomings? through bodily infirmity? through the sufferings or loss of loved ones? through the lukewarmness of many in the Truth? through cruel and infamous treatment received from others? Then let us turn to Paul, and observe his faithful and divinely-philosophical way of viewing matters, and take to ourselves the comfort which he advances.

Here are a few of his many cheering and satisfying utterances: “Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” — “All things work together for good to them that love God” — “Whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation” (2 Cor. 4:15,17; Rom. 8:18,28). Thus, sorrow is good. Of course it must be so, or God would never have devised it as an essential part of our experience. To grumble is to forget this.

A.T.J.

A Telling Rebuke

Is it necessary for me, said Paul to the ecclesia at Corinth, to carry a letter of commendation? (2 Cor. 3:1). What pardonable irony is contained in this question! How it must have caused both his enemies

and his friends in the ecclesia to think! The apostle was never slow to assure genuine truth-seekers as to his divine authority and reliability, but often was he grieved and righteously angry with brethren, who, through perversity or thoughtlessness failed to trust him. Oh, foolish Corinthians! Why did you hesitate in your acceptance of Paul? Was forgetfulness the cause? Or had your minds been poisoned against this noble man by the wicked and plausible chatter of his envious calumniators? Were you not aware of his miraculous conversion, and the facts relating to his apostleship? Had you not seen, time and again, proofs of his claim to be a true ambassador of Christ? Had he not worked signs and wonders in your midst? Did he not bring your meeting into being, and watch over it with the anxiety and love of a parent? Then why did ye distress this good man, and move him to ask in terms of rebuke, if it was needful for him to carry a letter of commendation? In the folly of these Corinthians is contained a lesson for us. Paul, as a God-sent apostle, is as precious to us as to our brethren in the first century, and it is equally essential for us, as it was for them, to keep our minds fresh and healthy as to his credentials. Let us not grow forgetful, nor lend our ears to Paul's enemies, however high may be their status in the world of letters.

A.T.J.

Prepared to Die

"Who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (Acts 21:4). This does not imply, as some have thought, that Paul visited Jerusalem contrary to the Spirit's command. There is an important difference between a revelation from the Spirit respecting what should happen at Jerusalem, and a command not to go there. It is in this difference that the explanation of the passage lies. The context justifies this explanation: that certain brethren sought to dissuade Paul from visiting Jerusalem because the Spirit had revealed that hurt awaited him there. This interpretation is in harmony with the apostle's statement to the elders of the Ephesian ecclesia (Acts 20:22,23). Had Paul been influenced by the Spirit's revelation in the way that his friends apparently were, he would have had to cease from the work to which he had been divinely appointed! Paul's mission was to be accomplished through suffering. This Paul knew from the beginning. The apostle upon a subsequent occasion was very desirous that the brethren should know the good that resulted from this evil experience (Phil. 1:12). Paul went on while his brethren trembled. Their intreaties to halt were met by that grand reply — "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." How unanswerable was this! All that the brethren could say — "The will of the Lord be done." This they could not have said had they thought that Paul was going in

opposition to the Spirit's command. Paul was not disobedient — banish the thought.

A.T.J.

A Prisoner

Paul a Prisoner! See where this leads! Why did Paul describe himself as such? It is the worst thing a man could say of himself in ordinary circumstances. If you hear that a man otherwise favourably introduced to you has been in prison, what is the effect but to produce a strong feeling of painful surmise and aversion? Your suspicion is stirred: your antipathy excited. Explanation may alter the feeling: but that is the first feeling produced. Why did Paul call himself a prisoner? Because he was a prisoner. He was often a prisoner, as he said elsewhere: "In prisons frequent", "suffering bonds as an evil doer." He foresaw it would be so, as he said in his farewell speech to the Ephesians. What was the cause of these bonds and afflictions? Christ himself stated the cause in the communication he made to Ananias at the time of Paul's being chosen: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake". It was his testimony for Christ that led to his acquaintance with the inside of prisons. For declaring what he personally knew to be a fact, namely, that Christ was alive, Paul was a prisoner. We have to consider whether this does not prove the truth of his declaration. Who goes to prison for a lie? Who carries on an imposture that brings no benefit, but lands a man in constant "bonds and afflictions"?

Where then do these words "Paul a prisoner" land us? They land us in the conviction of Christ having risen, of his being now alive, and of his having human destiny in his hands. Therefore we have a light brought into our life, and a power into our motives that men lack who have no faith in Christ's resurrection.

R.R.

Stay With Paul

Let us brethren, get as close to Paul's mind and Paul's ways as possible, for they are according to the mind and the will of the Lord. He said to Timothy: "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience."

We cannot so fully know these things as Timothy who had the advantage of personal intercourse. But we may know them with wonderful fulness if we act on the advice he gave to Timothy. "Give attendance to reading — meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them." What we have to do is to transfer the ideas that are enshrined in Paul's letters to our own minds. This is what he enjoins: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." "Put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

We shall have to be very determined in following this bent, for we shall have very little help from the people around — even from many who are called brethren.

To those who “judge after the flesh”, whether they profess the truth or not, the principles exemplified in Jesus and Paul, will always appear impracticable and inapplicable to modern life. We must not consider this class too much. If we cannot take them with us, we must leave them as Lot did his married daughters. We must not go with them. If we do, we shall get into their state of mind, in which the words of Paul will have so little meaning, that they might as well have never been written. R.R.

“... Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you ...”
Philippians 4:9.