

THE Gospel News

"To all nations"



Editorial | Frustration

The core essence of the Christian life is *“to be spiritually minded”*; and in that way of being and thought alone there is *“life and peace”*. Indeed, *“if any have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His”*. We are to have the Lord Jesus living in us by His Spirit, thinking and being as He was and is to this day. But we compare these high ideals with our moment by moment life lived in this world, and there seems a worrying distance. We drop something; and are frustrated and irritated. We take a wrong turning which results in a few minutes added to our journey, and we mutter unspiritual things in our mind or under our breath. The person in front of us at the supermarket checkout fusses around, can't find their debit card, asks the checkout cashier irrelevant questions she can't answer, and we roll our eyes and struggle not to think unpleasant things about them in our mind. We trip over a child's toy and again, tend to mutter things we ought not. The driver in front dithers at the traffic lights so that we can't slip over, and have to wait another turn before the endless red light, and we are frustrated and grumpy. And this can become the stuff of life, minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day. In all too rare encounters with Jesus, perhaps as we break bread, we can sense this apparently chasmic distance between our mind and His... and at best, throw ourselves upon His grace to make up the vast distance.

But all this need not be so. He has won, and He is eager to impart His Spirit to us. Not these days in terms of miraculous gifts, but as His mind, His way, His worldview, His Spirit within ours. *“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us”* (Rom. 5:5). We are *“sealed”* and have been given *“the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”* (2 Cor. 1:22). We are *“strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man... to know the love of Christ... according to His power that works within us”* (Eph. 3:16-20). A far different mental life to that described in our opening paragraph is really possible. I could simply exhort you to be more open to the Spirit, and to more fully allow the Lord Jesus to *“dwell in our hearts by faith”* (Eph.

3:17). But there are some practical thoughts we can reflect upon in order to aid that indwelling.

Don't Blame Your Nature

The Lord Jesus as our total representative bore our nature. He was fully human, of a certain blood group, either right handed or left handed, made mistakes at work and had to re-do things, forgot things, misheard, caught colds, dropped things and all the other stuff of daily life. And yet He was holy, perfect and undefiled (Heb. 7:26). There was no barrier between the Father and Himself. However we define human nature (and no quick definition of it is found in the Bible), He had it but did not find it a barrier between Himself and the Father. He *“did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth”*, nor in His thoughts, nor under His breath. Whatever we posit about human nature, we say about the Lord Jesus. We are not inevitable sinners, burdened unto sin and death by this *“nature”* we must carry. Every sin we commit is real and was avoidable. And therefore we rightly hang our heads for it. The Lord's perfect life showed us what human nature is capable of, the heights to which ordinary men and women can rise up to; and He challenges us to rise above the ties that apparently bind us to the mire of mediocrity when it comes to spiritual things. So let's not think that we have no other way in life than to live frustrated lives. We must beware lest an unduly low view of human nature leads us to reason as do those who believe in a personal Satan figure- *‘It wasn't my fault, I was overpowered by my nature, I am a victim of a power greater than myself’*.



John Steinbeck, who was hardly a Biblical Christian, was fascinated by the early chapters of Genesis, and his 1952 novel 'East Of Eden' is evidently his commentary upon them. And he finds no place for a 'Satan' figure in the orthodox sense. Instead, he is struck by the comment to Cain that although sin crouches at the door, "*do thou / thou mayest rule over him*" (Gen. 4:7). Steinbeck concluded from this that victory over sin and the effects of Adam's sin is possible; and therefore we're not bound by some superhuman Satan figure, nor by an over-controlling Divine predestination to sin and failure. There's a passage in chapter 24 of the novel that bears quoting; I find it deeply inspirational, and another example of the practical import of the correct understanding of early Genesis: "*It is easy out of laziness, out of weakness, to throw oneself onto the lap of the deity, saying, 'I couldn't help it; the way was set'. But think of the glory of the choice! That makes a man a man. A cat has no choice; a bee must make honey. There's no godliness there... these verses are a history of mankind in any age or culture or race... this is a ladder to climb to the stars... it cuts the feet from under weakness and cowardliness and laziness... because "thou mayest" rule over sin*". The practical inspiration ought to be evident; all further commentary is bathos.

Humility

The desire to be justified by works is very strong within our human nature. Much of our hour by hour frustration is because we have not yet surrendered to the simple truth that salvation "*is not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Eph. 2:9). One favourite Biblical term for idols is "*the work of men's hands*". Whilst we may not worship pieces of stone, the modern equivalent is to trust in the work of our hands. And so when we are going to be slightly late for that meeting, perhaps miss that train... because of the traffic jam, this too shall pass. We write a letter on our computer, and we lose it. And so what. We are not saved by works. It is all of grace. Whilst we would all claim to accept this, the reality is that we are wired to prefer an attempt at justification by works. And all sin is rooted in pride. Pride in our own appearance and works. Justification by grace hits at the very core of the way we naturally prefer to manage life, which is in our own strength. It is pride which militates against repentance. The Old Testament prophets confront God's people and Gentile nations with their sin- and it is pride which is their repeated criticism, rather than immediately seizing upon their idolatry or barbarism.

God is interested more in the process than the product; the road, rather than the destination. Our work for Him, and our work in daily life, is the path needed. And yet we tend to think that our works achieved are the significant thing. God requires not help from man, and can do as He wishes quite without our works. He looks at the heart rather than the achievements of the hands. Martha struggled to learn this lesson; and the Lord came down on the side of Mary, who was more interested in hearing His words than doing works for Him. We are as young children, painting their pictures or writing a few simple sentences to make a story. It's not the end product

which is particularly significant on a world scale. It's the process of development the child passed through.



We are to humble ourselves under the hand of God, that we might be exalted in due time (1 Pet. 5:6). It's a race to the bottom; only by the end of our lives will we have been humbled to the required extent. And that is why many lives feature a period at the end of declining faculties and ability to work. It's all gently and lovingly designed to bring us to the ultimate truth- that we are saved by grace. And even our faith is not of ourselves, but the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Paul doesn't just start writing about predestination in Romans. He does so in the context of talking about salvation by grace and not works. And he sees our predestination to calling, the very fact that some are called and others aren't, as the parade example of grace. This is also why we make mistakes; to humble us. And we are not therefore to be frustrated by them, but to realize that this too is part of a larger program to bring us to total trust. For the original words translated "faith" and "belief" essentially mean just that- to trust.

Peace with God

Every sin deserves eternal death. Each time, we are as Adam in Eden. For he there is every man. As Romans 1-8 demonstrates, we come before the throne of God and deserve to be sent to the left side. But the verdict is changed, and we end up actually justified, by grace, counted righteous, and are assured of salvation. Imagine coming before the judgment seat and being condemned. And then being told that it's been changed, all is eternally OK, and we have instead been moved to the right hand side. There would be gasping gratitude, forever. And we are there, now. For the essence of judgment day is now. This is why in God's bigger purpose, He allows us to continue sinning, and uses that experience; to regularly impress upon us the wonder of His grace and loving salvation.

We have been saved in Christ. We are redeemed. For these metaphors to have any meaning, we are to believe that if the Lord comes now, we shall by grace certainly be saved. And that means we live every moment in that peace with God, that deep gratitude for His saving grace. So when we trip over the carelessly abandoned toy, get delayed in traffic, have a computer blip, drop our phone and smash the screen... we go through those experiences under the umbrella awareness that far more importantly, we are at peace with God. I am saved, by grace. Someone loves me, more than I shall ever know. And loves me at that very moment of petty crisis, all the same. His arms are around you as the phone screen smashes; the love of God can be shed abroad in our hearts at that moment, by the work of the Spirit within us (Rom. 5:5); if we are truly open to it. I have "hope", and *elpis* means a definite expectation; it does *not* mean merely a hoping for the best. All this really does make a practical difference, it has as it were, cash value right now. It's not just a hope for the future, as we face death or struggle with illness. It means that in the here and now of daily living, moment by moment, we are enveloped in His saving love and grace. *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also..." (Rom. 5:1-3).

Duncan Heaster

News from Africa

NEWS FROM CONGO



We have greatly enjoyed having Bro Steve Weston from UK helping, encouraging and stimulating us and also baptised Bro Kim's son **Emil**. We have a problem regarding English literature as it is only Bro Kim and his children that understand some English, everyone else only speaks our native language. Postage here has been substantially increased.



Bro Kim, Steve Weston and Zambrotta



Kinshasa Sunday School, Also known as "ÉCODIM" (École Dimanche)



Above left | Bro Losah, left, together with Bro Zambrotta who was visiting the Kinshasa Ecclesia

Above right | some of the Sunday School children busy with their lessons

Bro Kim and Bro Zambrotta

NEWS FROM KENYA



TURBO | Bro Emmanuel Milimo



The booklets "*When will Jesus Return to the Earth*" have enabled me to distribute them amongst people and many are willing not only to read them but further seek the Lord and willing to attend the meeting. You can see from the picture they're waving and holding the booklets with other brethren and sisters. At the June Bible Camp I was very happy to witness the baptisms of Getrude Simiyu and Jonathan Wanjala now members of our ecclesia. All together at the camp there were 26 baptisms.

TURBO | Sis Getrude Simiyu

Thank you so much for the books that you sent for me. I also thank Bro Roger Beck for the help of postage expense. I'm very happy that I was baptised but I delayed to send my photo of baptism. I have included my photo here when I was in the water with brother who baptised me, Bro Martine Simiyu from Kamkuywa Ecclesia (pictured below).

Before becoming a Christadelphian I went with my friend to another church and they awarded us a certificate. Later I read the *Gospel News* and discovered many things I had not heard before and eventually joined the Christadelphians and was baptised. I have been discussing the things we formerly believed with my friend who now has also changed her mind and studies with the Christadelphians.

My request is that I need some more books of the title "*When will Jesus return to the Earth?*". I kindly ask if you have in your stock *New European Version Holy Bible* - I'm in need of it.



Sis Getrude left with her friend Joyce when they were awarded a Bible study certificate in a former church

Prayer Request | Kakuma

The food rations have been seriously decreased in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya causing serious malnutrition. Bro Isidore writes: ***“We thank our Heavenly Father for His protection - I and my family and the refugee brethren and sisters at Kakuma camp are alive. Kakuma camp is peaceful at the moment but still the refugees ration is reduced at 57% which means the starvation is ongoing”.***

WEBUYE | Bro Wanjala Evans Barasa

I received your book, *“When will Jesus Return to the Earth?”* from Sister Judy Wanjala and have read it with great keenness. The book is very elaborate, and as I was reading I could feel some power of Jesus coming very soon. To me now, Jesus’ coming will not be as a thief, but I am expectant as a bride waiting for the bridegroom.

My request is that you send me the modern *NEV Bible Version* which has commentaries, and if you have other books on the exposition of the Bible, I would also appreciate them.

Be blessed, and my wish is that we meet in the Kingdom.

NEWS FROM MALAWI



NENO | Bro David Liwawa

I went to the Malawi Government department of Mines and Mineral Act, to apply for a prospecting licence, which I now have.

I have not moved anywhere – I am still in Neno, which is my home. As I was near to retirement, I asked the Ministry of Health to post me to New District Hospital, and I had my retirement while working at home.

Here there are times when we use Western medicines, and there are also times when we use herbs as medicine – this depends on how you feel in your body. I will be 67 on October 15, and I am thankful to say I am enjoying good health. I rarely eat processed food, usually it is garden produced and home cooked.

I am very sorry for you, with all you have gone through. May the gracious Lord be with you. Read Psalms 20, 121 and 126; Isaiah 26:3.

NEWS FROM MAURITIUS



It is a pleasure for me to receive regularly *Gospel News* magazines and other books which you have sent me also. Many thanks for this spiritual help; I pray that Yahweh will bless you all for this great spiritual work that you do each day, to help us towards the kingdom of God, for which Jesus will arrive soon.

In Mauritius many responsible persons are anxious about trouble which increases everywhere at the moment. This relates to law and order, crime, burglary, the economic system, politics, swindling, drugs, love of money etc. Also dishonest people, not in security, move at night – and

even in the day. Many drug dealers have been arrested during this last month. The Government has appointed a Commission Enquiry against drugs this year.

The prophecy of II Timothy 3:1-5 is accomplished daily, and this shows that Christ will be returning soon. But we must prepare our 'spiritual oil', as in the parable of the virgins waiting for the Bridegroom in Matthew 25:11,3, and we must not 'sleep' but wait for the Bridegroom.

Many thanks for your spiritual work, and may you have many blessings. I send you the address of my neighbour, for a copy of *Gospel News* – he is very interested in the Bible and I wish to help him to learn more of the Truth. He is a young man about 35 years old.

| Bro Herold Lefrance

Many thanks for the books which I received. Now I will distribute them among the members of our ecclesia in order to share with others.

Many events are happening in the world and we have to preach to people so that they must repent to be saved. May God bless your contribution to share the gospel.

Bro Guy Jhureea

NEWS FROM NIGERIA



ENUGU | Bro Goddy Nwasu

I use this medium to thank you and all our Brethren who are working with you in our Lord's vineyard. I am grateful especially for the way you support our Ecclesia as well, in sending us the Bibles and pamphlets.

On 28th August we received one parcel of pamphlets and Bibles, etc. We have about sixteen different Ecclesias surrounding us who were not able to purchase even Bibles, or pamphlets, which I supplied to them. They all hope Enugu Ecclesia will supply them with these materials.

We don't have original preaching materials, only those you send us. We need your support for us by photocopying originals, as many as possible, to enable us to go forth and distribute them to this Ecclesia and to the remotest parts of the towns.

NEWS FROM RWANDA



I delayed replying to your letter as I was sick for one month suffering from blood infection, but the doctor said it could be hepatitis because I am very weak. However, our hospital doesn't have modern equipment to test for hepatitis so I was advised to go to Kigali where there are specialized doctors and modern machines to diagnose what is going on in my body. I am requesting your earnest prayers so that God will work miracles for my sickness.

I gave the booklets on the signs of Christ's coming to some of the teachers who are willing to study the Bible with me, and the rest of copies were given to my students. The booklet is stirring and has been cherished so much. The "*Wrested Scriptures*" and "*Bible Basics*" are the most eye-opening books I have ever read.

I am praying that there will be some of the teachers who will accept to be baptized. You will see the pictures I have attached here. We have a Sunday program in my home and my neighbors come to attend regularly and most of them do not know English or French except Kinyarwanda our local language, so I have to translate your resources when we are studying.

Further letter: It is a pleasure to write letting you know that I have received your letter and concern about my health.

I am planning to go to see the doctor on Friday and I am praying that things will go well.

The Gospel News is really uplifting and stirring. In fact, I will not forget Duncan and Cindy who introduced me to this great truth. I always remember the day I was immersed on my baptism. They instilled confidence and faith into me so I keep them on my heart.



Pictured above | Some of Bro Ndamutsa's students who received the booklets



Bro Omar Ndamutsa, front row left, together with the group of teachers with whom he is studying the Bible

Bro Omar B Ndamutsa

NEWS FROM ZAMBIA 

KALOMO | Bro Costa Kanembe

You have done very well in helping me to teach brothers, sisters and students. We teach all parts of signs of Christ's return, which cannot come quickly enough for us all, but everything seems to point forward to his coming – when our final number of those to be saved is reached. Please continue to help us, it is making our work easier.

NEWS FROM ZIMBABWE 

BULAWAYO | Bro Ambrose and Sis Rita Tanyepanda

We always enjoy *Gospel News* and trust you will be able to continue to send it to us.

CHIPINGE | Bro Farai Makandeni

First of all I would like to greet all Christadelphians worldwide in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I also need to encourage all members to keep on preaching the Word of God to all tribes and religions so that the seed may grow before the return of Jesus as we all see the signs that He is now near to come on this earth to judge all beings and to rule as our Mighty King.

Here in Chipinge a lot of work is being done as we are encouraging others in different beliefs to handle the Garment of Christ. Most people here, especially the Ndan tribe, believe in ancestral such that they brew beer, drum beating and dancing so that they may be kept safe from different life problems. So we are preaching the Word to them such that they will come to know the powers of God, before He sends His son Jesus to be our King here on earth.



Bro Farai Makandeni, right, with his friend Enfrance Masiwa in Chipinge Town

I and brother Moses Dhlakama visited other members who are in isolation and some other students who are taking their lessons so that they won't be left behind. Also in May and July brothers and sisters from Tongogara Ecclesia visited us at Christina Farm for the baptism of six new brethren for Tongogara Ecclesia who were baptised by bro Moses Dhlakama here at Chipinge in the Nhambwe river. We are very pleased with the work well done by Tongogara Ecclesia.

MUSHUMBI POOLS

| Bro Fanuel Mawoozeka

I want to thank our Heavenly Father this time of sharing with you and all the Brethren and Sisters on what happened in April. Here in Mushumbi Pools, the Lord added to us four whom the Lord has called and they have obeyed it in baptism. The Angels rejoice in just one sinner that repents, but we rejoiced with the Angels that not just one but four repented. We pray for God's guidance on their way to the Kingdom, soon to be established at Jesus return.

We thank Brethren Ambrose Tanypana from Bulawayo and Tapiwa Chipunya of Harare who conducted the interviews and baptism.



**The baptism of Bro Isaac Mvundika
Mushumbi Pools Ecclesia are pictured on the front cover**

News from the Americas

NEWS FROM TRINIDAD



Bro George Constantine tells us the recent appeal to the Privy Council for a reconsideration of all the lifer's sentences be reviewed, was rejected. However they have ordered that the individual inmates can individually face the 'Appeals Committee' on the 'Powers of Pardon', also called the 'Mercy Committee', who will decide if the inmates sentences will remain, or be reduced, or if they should be pardoned.

The lifers had hoped that the Privy Council judges would have recommended that a specific time be given for life sentence, as is the case in many other countries. They were all disappointed, but Bro George writes: *"I have accepted God's will, I will continue to keep my faith in Him, and keep working towards being a better person in His sight, as we look forward to our Master's return."*

Originally, some years ago, Bro George was sentenced to death by hanging, although dates were issued several times for the execution they were, in God's mercy, abandoned and eventually the sentence was reduced to life imprisonment. His case has been looked at several times and given a hope that he could be released, all so far to no avail and we pray that this new interview will be favourably considered. We all need to pray for him in these most trying circumstances and that God will grant whatever He sees best for him at the present time.

The Bible ~ Inspired and Infallible

"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

Psalm 119:18

Of the countless books that have ever been produced, and which are being added to daily, only the Bible can justify its claim to be inspired. Other books may set forth such a claim, but an examination of the evidence will reveal that their claims cannot be vindicated.

It would be incredible if God, having made man *“in His image and after His likeness”* (Gen. 1:26), should have abandoned man to his own resources. Instead, God inspired some forty-four of His servants to reveal His purpose, and to point the way to what is required of man. This, the Bible does.

The Bible does even more. It tells of Jesus Christ who died for man’s offences, rose again for his justification, and ascended into heaven to provide mediation for his glorification (Rom. 4:25). Moreover, he has promised to return to establish his kingdom upon the earth: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 6:23).

All Scripture is equally inspired, and is united together. Thus the Lord declared: *“The scripture cannot be broken”* (John 10:35). Thus, also, Paul wrote: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

The Bible, consisting of 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament, or 66 in all, was written over a period of 1,600 years, in different lands, by men of varied occupations and backgrounds. Each book is complete in itself, proving an amazing harmony. They are so interwoven one with the other, as to provide unbreakable evidence of inspiration. It would be quite beyond the ability of man to produce a book so different in its parts and yet so united in its teaching.

The inspiration of the Bible is further proved by fulfilled prophecy. Man cannot predict ahead; but the Bible presumes to do so, and its prophecies have been vindicated by events. Assyria and Nineveh (Zeph. 2:13) were overthrown completely as predicted; Babylon became heaps (Isa. 13:19-20); Philistia ceased to exist (Amos 1:8); Moab, Ammon and Tyre (Zeph. 2:9; Ezek. 26:3-5) were destroyed as prophecy required.



The Isaiah Scroll ~ dating from between 175-150BC

The life and death of the Lord Jesus were predicted in the Old Testament over six centuries before he was born. Isaiah predicted his atoning work (Isa. 52:13 - 53:12). The Psalmist spoke of the form of his death (Ps. 22:1,8,16,18).

Today prophecy is still being fulfilled. Particularly is this the case in regard to the return of the Jews, the development of modern Israel,

the deliverance of the city of Jerusalem, and so on (see Ezek. 37:21-22, Joel 3:1-2).

Archaeology also underwrites the divine inspiration of the Bible. It confirms the truth of its statements, in every point where it touches. A few years ago it was claimed by agnostics that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible, for the art of writing had not then been discovered. But archaeology subsequently revealed that the claim was false. In fact, it is now conceded that Moses was a linguist of considerable ability, having knowledge of several different languages.

The story of Noah and the Flood was discounted. But archaeology has discovered records of the Flood apart from that of the Bible. In fact native people of all lands have their legends of such a disaster, indicating a central source of origin, strongly arguing the historicity of the Flood.



The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19) was discounted by many as entirely improbable. This is not the case today. Geologists now state that the area around the Dead Sea, where those two cities were located, is one where sulphur from hot springs exists abundantly in the clay. Bitumen oozes from crevices in the rocks, and earthquakes sometimes dislodge bitumen from the sea bottom. Pent-up gases explode, and red hot sulphur and salt are hurled high into the air, to rain down as burning brimstone. Boiling bitumen creates a smoke as from a furnace.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls supported the authenticity of the Bible. These scrolls were found by an Arab shepherd boy in the Spring of 1947 whilst searching for a missing animal. They include some of the oldest manuscripts of the Bible, revealing how authentic are the translations in our possession. These scrolls were stored in clay jars hidden in caves in a hillside on the north-western shore of the Dead Sea. The extremely dry condition of the area has preserved the scrolls against damage for two thousand years. They included fragments in ancient Hebrew of every book of the Old Testament (except Esther). One find was a complete scroll of Isaiah, dated between 175-150 B.C. This text differs very little from that of a modern Bible. This silenced critics who had claimed that vast changes had occurred in Old Testament text owing to its antiquity. God guarded His message to mankind so that it has come to him without being distorted by the passage of time.

The Bible has been assailed by scoffers for centuries, just as it is ridiculed today by agnostics and atheists. These doubters and unbelievers come and go, but the Bible continues to show those with hearing ears the way of salvation, and to tell of the Kingdom yet to be established on the earth.

The Persecuted People



*Scattered by God's almighty hand,
Afflicted and forlorn,
Sad wanderers from their pleasant land,
Do Judah's children mourn;*

*And even in Christian countries, few
Breathe thoughts of pity for the Jew.*

*Yet listen, Believer, do you love
The Bible's precious page?
Then let your heart with kindness move
To Israel's heritage;
Who traced those lines of love for you?
Each sacred writer was a Jew.*

*And then as years and ages passed,
And nations rose and fell,
Though clouds and darkness oft were cast,
O'er captive Israel,
The oracles of God for you
Were kept in safety by the Jew.*

*And when the great Redeemer came
For guilty man to bleed,
He did not take an angel's name,
No – born of Abraham's seed;
Yahshua, who gave his life for you,
The gentle Saviour was a Jew.*

*And though his own received him not,
And turned in pride away,
Whence is the Gentile's happier lot?
Are you more just than they?
No! God in pity turned to you;
Have you no pity for the Jew?*

*Go then, and bend your knee to pray
For Israel's ancient race;
Ask the dear Saviour every day
To call them by his grace;
Go, for a debt of love is due,
From Christian Gentiles to the Jew.*

Author Unknown

“Submit Yourselves to God”

The Epistle of James contains words of wisdom and sound advice: *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7). In other words, if we try to obey God, the things of the flesh will no longer have dominion over us. The Apostle doesn't spare words: *“Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”* (v8)

If we claim to be children of God, then we must continually examine our position before our Heavenly Father, for the whole creation comes under divine surveillance – and God cannot be deceived.

Humility is of great price in the sight of God:

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” (v10). We cannot elevate ourselves, but God can do it for us. There can be no place in our lives for ego or false attitudes, for all of us fall short in our emulation of Jesus Christ.

We all have need of greater contrition before our Creator. If we submit ourselves to Him in humility we shall be lifted up in faith and find the peace that passes understanding: *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”* (1 Peter 5:6).

DME

God’s Loving Kindness

Luv - ing - kind’nes (טוֹן, *hesedh*): “Lovingkindness” in the King James Version always represents this word (30 times), but of *hesedh* there are many other renderings, e.g. “mercy” (frequently), “kindness” (38), “goodness” (12). The word is derived from *hasadh*, meaning, perhaps, “to bend or bow oneself,” “to incline oneself”; hence, “to be gracious or merciful.” The English Revised Version has not many changes, but in the American Standard Revised Version “lovingkindness” is invariably employed when *hesedh* is used of God, and, as a rule, “kindness” when it is used of man.

When used of God *hesedh* denotes, in general, “the Divine Love condescending to His creatures, more especially to sinners, in unmerited kindness” (*Delitzsch*). It is frequently associated with forgiveness, and is practically equivalent to “mercy” or “mercifulness” (Ex 20:6), *“showing lovingkindness (R.V) unto thousands of them that love me”*; Ex 34:6 f, *“slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness”* (RV “plenteous in mercy”); (Ex 34:7) *“keeping lovingkindness (RV “mercy”) for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin”* (compare Num 14:18); Micah 7:18, *“He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness”* (RV “mercy”).

This quality in Yahweh was one by which He sought to bind His people to Himself. It is greatly magnified in the Old Testament, highly extolled and gloried in, in many of the Psalms (Ps 136 has the constant refrain, *“For his lovingkindness endureth forever”*). In Deut 7:12 it is associated with the covenant, and in 2 Sam 7:15 with the covenant with David. It was something that could always be relied on.

Being such an essential and distinctive quality of God, the prophets taught that it should also characterize His people. It is part of the Divine requirement in Micah 6:8, *“to love kindness”* Zech 7:9, *“Show kindness and compassion every man to his brother”*. The want of it in the nation was a cause of Yahweh’s controversy with them, e.g. Hosea 4:1, *“There is no truth, nor goodness (h es edh) (KJV and RV “mercy”), nor knowledge of God in the land”*; Hosea 12:6, *“Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep kindness (the KJV and the English Revised Version “mercy”) and justice, and wait for thy God continually.”* Cheyne (*Encyclopedia Biblica*)

regards *hesedh* as denoting paternal affection on God's part, answered by filial and loyal affection and brotherly love on man's part in the New Testament.

Bro Stephen Siamabi (Mazabuka, Zambia)

Uriah the Faithful Soldier of Israel

As we all know, Uriah was the husband of a beautiful woman who, because of her beauty, had attracted the attention of a well-known king of Israel – David. David's attraction to this woman grew into action. As a result he committed two sins – murder and adultery. All this reminds us of James' words, *"But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"* (1:14, 15). So David's later troubles in his kingdom were due to his sin with Bathsheba.



King David handing the letter to Uriah (2 Samuel 11:14)

Why have we entitled this article thus? Because of Uriah's very own words in 2 Samuel 11:11, *"And Uriah said to David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents, and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest, I will not do this thing."* The thing is that these faithful men teach us a very important lesson: they suffered for no apparent reason. The question is: Are we prepared to suffer for being faithful? Yes, true soldiers of Christ are asked to carry their own cross and follow their captain (Matt. 16:24). *"...And that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22).

In order to put more light on Uriah's words, let us quote Paul's words to Timothy, *"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"* (2 Tim. 2:4). With these words in mind, let us think: Was Uriah wrong to decline the king's request? I feel he was not wrong, due to the fact that he was a soldier on duty.

The Bible has several names of people, besides Uriah, who were faithful to their duties or their words; to name a few:

1| Joseph, in Potiphar's service in Egypt, was faithful, refusing to lie with his master's wife (Gen. 39:7-12).

2| Abraham did not withhold Isaac his son from being a sacrifice to God (Gen.22).

3| Jephthah was true to his words in his vow to God (Judges 11:39).

4| Jesus, the chief of all faithful men, was a man who was faithful and obedient unto death (Heb. 5:8).

To know the nature of the times is the best qualification for bearing them. The Bible view tranquilizes them all. It reveals the barren nature of the age now current upon the earth, and it comforts with the assured prospect of the feast of fat things which the Lord of Hosts will prepare - not only for his waiting and fasting children, but for "*all people that on earth do dwell.*"

Brother Robert Roberts

~ *Diary of a Voyage* ~

Bro Sylvester Tembo (*Mzuzu, Malawi*)

Evidence of the Crucifixion

In the closing events of the crucifixion day, fresh evidence was given of the fulfilment of prophecy. When the darkness had lifted from the cross, and the Saviour's dying cry had been uttered, immediately another voice was heard, saying, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*" (Luke 23:7). The words were said in no whispered tones – who has spoken? It was the Centurion, the Roman soldier. In the bruised, broken body hanging upon the cross, the Centurion recognised the form of the Son of God. At his birth, the star had known Him. The heavenly hosts had known Him. The sea had known his voice, and had obeyed His command. Disease and death had recognised His authority. The sun had known Him, and at the sound of His dying anguish, had hidden its face and light. The rocks had known Him – they had heard the cry "*It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.*" They had seen the rocks rent and had felt the mighty earthquake.

Bro Melusi Ndlovu (*Gweru, Zimbabwe*)

Bible Education Centre, Tembisa, South Africa

One of the many courses at the Bible Education Centre, is a 'Cake Baking Class'. Cake making requires one to select the right ingredients, blend and mix them together to get a nice cake and also to carefully decorate them, all requiring some skill. In a way the Truth is a bit like that, we need a balanced mixture of different doctrines and practices that then blend together, so that we have the whole Truth... but that's not enough. We need to decorate... by showing in our lives that we really believe and practice the principles of the Truth, adorning ourselves to make us attractive to God and others who come into contact with us, so that they too may taste and see that the Lord is good. (1 Peter 2:3; ch 3:3-4).

Sis Yvonne Dube of the Walton Ecclesia UK, who is a qualified cook, sometimes goes to South Africa to run this course of training, and, apart from benefits of becoming trained cooks, may also help some to get jobs.

The photo shows the cooks admiring their work and Sis Yvonne (second left) congratulating them in their success.



On the Waiting List

There is a situation in life that comes to all men and women, old and young, high and low, rich and poor, and it can occur at any time. At some point we all suffer the pain of losing someone in death – a brother or sister in Christ Jesus, or a loved relative or friend. Even though we do not like talking about it, death is a constant phenomenon of life, and we are better if we learn how to accept and handle it, rather than try to hide from it. One of the most startling statements in the Bible is, *“It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting; for it is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart”* (Ecc. 7:2). *“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten”* (Ecc. 9:5)

Death should remind us that we are all on the waiting list. When we live healthy lives and enjoy the good things of the Lord in this world, it is not easy to believe that we are on this waiting list. Yet a visit to a hospital, being at the battlefield or at a funeral, will awaken us to the reality. Talking about the battlefield, some people, whose countries have passed through the valley of the shadow of death, speak of gruesome deaths and the frailty of human life. *“As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more”* (Ps. 103:15-16). Often we only go for the *“flourishes like a flower”*, but forget that soon, *“the wind blows over it, and it is gone”*. Yet that is the reality of life.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” Ecclesiastes 12:1

Since we know this, what kind of life should we live? We are all on the same waiting list of death and should therefore live with a lot of faith in our Creator, since we will all give an account of our lives to Him. We should have a lot of consideration for other people and share all our resources with them. Great people have passed through this life and are gone.

Those who lived by high principles and values left a more lasting legacy than those who lived by material gain. The temporary nature of life should jolt us to face our responsibilities toward mankind. Often people live wickedly and commit all kinds of evil towards one another, forgetting that they only live for a short time. They forget that in spite of their often mad rush for riches and possessions, they cannot take anything with them when they leave this world. When people flee for dear life in situations of war, floods or earthquakes, none remembers their possessions; material things are unable to stand the real test of life.

When we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, it is the Lord who will be with us, not any worldly possessions we may have. Instead of spending our time amassing possessions in this life (especially if at the expense of integrity or concern for other people), we need to lay up treasure in heaven, *“where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal”* (Matt. 6:20).

Death should not scare us; rather we should take the opportunity, while we are alive, to live good lives before our time comes to depart from this world.

Jesus said, *“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord... and the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”* (Mark 12:28-31). What, then, are we all waiting for in this world? Let us have faith in the Lord and obey his commandments. Jesus said, *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”* (Matt. 16:24-25). So let us get on the waiting list for *eternal life*.

Bro Joseph Oppong (Cape Coast, Ghana)

The Value of Family Worship



“And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:15). Hearing the Scriptures early in life contributes to forming right character. The Holy Scriptures have a life-giving and life-changing message that preserves true moral and spiritual values for our families. They will turn our hearts and minds to God. They are life and food for the soul. They influence the minds and attitudes of children, moulding their character into obedience and honesty, which prepares them for serving, loving and forgiving others. God designed the home to teach and train our children for responsibility and usefulness. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 teaches parents how to conduct worship in the home.

1. *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.”* (Deut.6:6)

Our heart is where our memories, our thoughts and our aspirations originate, and are stored. Expressions of devotion, praise, prayer and worship flow from a heart free from sin. *“Keep thy heart with all diligence.”* (Proverbs 4:23). If we cannot concentrate on God and remain focussed on our prayer and the songs we sing, how shall God be praised? A father's love of the Scriptures is a deeply important testimony to children and youth. Do they know that father is more interested in spiritual reading than in business magazines or newspapers? This is an unspoken message that will greatly affect his children. Worship is an attitude of reverence, awe,

admiration, adoration and profound respect – prayer, praise, singing and witnessing for Christ are all expressions of true worship.

2. *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”* (Deut. 6:7)

God has commissioned fathers to lead out in family worship and teaching in the home. Abraham is an example of a worship leader.

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Gen. 18:19). God had a good testimony of Abraham as a father. Abraham instructed his children in everything the Lord taught him. The account of Abraham offering Isaac tells us how he involved his children in his worship. Isaac asked, *“Where is the lamb?”* He knew what was needed to come to God. Faithfully fathers call their children to worship. This is vital. Neglecting worship in the home is an offence against God and our children.

Do we have the compassionate interest and godly concern that is exemplified in Abraham’s example? As parents, we can help our little children say their bedtime prayers and help them establish good worship patterns – it will aid them as they face their own crises. Children can be taught prayers to memorize: they can be nurtured to mention special needs to God. Reading the Bible stories to them is an excellent way to teach them the ways of God.

3. *“Thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house.”* (Deut. 6:7).

Daily worship will encourage our children to acts of devotion. As we gather our family for worship, our children can join in the songs. They can take their turn reading a verse in the Bible. An occasional Bible quiz may be also inspiring. This time of sharing will help them to establish their personal devotions.

Thoughtful daily reading of the Word is a powerful influence in a Christian’s life. Coupled with prayers, it becomes an anchor of the soul and contributes to the fruitfulness of the home. Prayers must be sincere and from a heart of faith resigned to God’s will. This is born out of being attached to the vine (John 15:1-10). The need for prayer extends into all of life. When the apostle Paul was leaving his friends at Tyre, they knelt down on the shore and prayed (Acts 21:5). Whether on the seashore, in the barn, in the garden, or when the three-year-old is very sick, father calls the family together for prayer. When prayer is a part of life throughout the day, it will leave an indelible imprint on all in the home who make God their hope. It is important to have a regular time and place for family worship: it should be a place that will enable each participant to contribute undivided attention to this all important means of spiritual nurture.

4. *“You shall teach them diligently to thy children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.”* (Deut. 6:7)

Family worship is not an end in itself – it prepares us to meet the needs of the day, it helps to set a proper course when difficulties arise, it influences our daily decisions, it provides profitable meditation for the day. The songs we sing give inspiration and purpose for our tasks.

5. *“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.”* (Deut. 6:8)

This is a figurative expression of a spiritual reality. As a disciple of Christ, we carry this commitment to represent him faithfully whatever may come. God does not bless us just to

make us feel good, but so that we may also bless and serve others. Bible reading and prayer give us spiritual vision.

6. *“You shall write them on the door posts of your house, and on your gates.”* (Deut. 6:9)

This will be as a monument, a pillar, and an altar foundation for our children. It will help to keep alive a principle of truth. If we neglect the important things of life, wrong choices will show up in the next generation. God will hold us accountable for failing to maintain scriptural practices. If fathers and mothers do not maintain this habit of family worship, who will? God’s voice of instruction comes through family worship, through His Ecclesia (Church), and through His word. May we bind them continually upon our hearts and write them upon the table of our heart (Proverbs 6:21, 3:3). It is good to have Bible verses written on the posts of our houses and on our gates. But may our houses and our gates ring with the virtues and graces of Christ in the conversations, manners and spiritual values of our families. Then our hearts will truly reflect the goodness of our Lord and give the sweet perfume of love, peace, harmony and spiritual strength.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

Bro Gaius Egwu (Ohafia, Nigeria)

Jerusalem Which Killeth the Prophets



In a voice choked by deep anguish of heart and bitter tears, Christ exclaimed, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee.”* In the lamentation of Christ the very heart is pouring itself forth. But Israel as a nation had divorced herself from God. The natural branches of the olive tree were broken off. Jesus said with mournful pathos, *“Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord’”*.

Hitherto he had called the temple his Father’s house, but now, as the Son of God should pass out from inside these walls, God’s presence would be withdrawn for ever from the temple built to His glory. Henceforth its ceremonies would be meaningless, its services a mockery.

Mighty were the results following from the words of the Saviour to that wondering, awestruck crowd in the temple at Jerusalem.

Bro Melusi Ndlovu (Gweru, Zimbabwe)

Arise Above Your Difficulties

Two courses of action were open to the paralyzed Aeneas when Peter spoke those words to him. Either he could have scoffed at this blustering ex-fisherman and so remain a bedridden cripple for the rest of his life; or he could respond in faith, and putting his trust in the power of Jesus' Spirit, rise up a healed man – able to live a full and normal life. The record of events in the Book of Acts show us that Aeneas chose the latter course and his faith was rewarded as he received complete healing in the Name of Jesus Christ, after having suffered affliction for a period of eight years.

There is a lesson in this for all of us, as we encounter problems, difficulties and setbacks in life. When these occur, we too are faced with two choices. Either we can resign ourselves to the situation and wallow in despair and self-pity as we allow our lives to be robbed of zest; or we can hand our problem and ourselves over to Christ, believing that He is in control of the situation. Then, in faith, we wait upon Him for His guidance and leading in our particular circumstances.

The choice is yours! Why not show the same degree of faith as did Aeneas? For if you do, you may be sure that Jesus will not let you down, and His answer to your prayers will be in keeping with His perfect will for you and your well-being.

Bro David Banda Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)

The Acceptable Gift

Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God account most precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the gifts which make a show and which to humble eyes may appear worthless, often stand highest in God's sight. A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living when she gave the small sum, but she deprived herself of food in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith, believing that her heavenly Father would not overlook her great need. It was this unselfish spirit and child-like faith that won the Saviour's commendation.

Among the poor are many who long to show their gratitude to God for His grace and truth. Let them lay up their mites in the bank of heaven. If given from a heart filled with love for God, these seeming trifles become consecrated gifts, priceless offerings, which God smiles upon and blesses.

Bro Melusi Ndlovu (Gwevu, Zimbabwe)

The Positive Life

*We know all the things that we shouldn't do;
Temptations that must be withstood;
But after we've shunned all the evil things,
Do we overcome evil with good?*

*It isn't enough to say, "Thou shalt not,"
And cease from contention and strife;*

*We must fill our lives with some worthwhile work;
Or it's only a negative life.*

*There's plenty of work for us all to do,
If we would be pleasing to God,
And our years on earth will be busy years,
If we follow where Jesus trod.*

*Let us not sit back feeling smug and content
Because we have done no wrong,
But let's make sure we have done some good
On the way – as we journey along.*

Marguerite C. Curry

Think Right

James observes that evil deeds result from allowing the desires of the flesh to govern instead of the commandments and precepts divinely given.

The desires of the flesh have their beginning in the mind, as influenced by the abilities of the body. Thoughts, whether good or bad, are therefore the first thing to be considered. It has been truly observed, "*As a man thinks, so is he.*"

Paul, therefore, in writing to the very faithful brethren at Phillipi, indicates that the best way to overcome the tendencies to evil that exist within all of us is to think right. Speaking of the "*peace of God,*" he tells us that it will keep our hearts and minds. By "keep," he means "preserve" or make worthy of permanence, i.e., of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

So he goes on to indicate how we think right. He says it is the *final* thing, by which we can see he means most important in our conduct.

*Think on things that are **true** ,
things that are **honest** ,
things that are **just** ,
things that are **pure** ,
things that are **lovely** ,
things that are **of good report** . Phil. iv. 8.*

Then the result will be virtue, and the life of the believer true praise to God.

Let us then govern the body by thinking of good things and leaving no room for evil ones. Good reading and meditation thereon is one of the best ways to develop right thinking. As we think, so we act.

Bro G H Denny (United Kingdom)

Questions and Answers

“A sin unto death” (1 John 5:16)

Q. John teaches that there is a *“sin unto death”* for which prayer would be unavailing. What is that sin?

A. John gives two definitions of sin: one is lawlessness (1 John 3:4) which a true believer never commits; the other is wrongdoing (1 John 5:17), which all are guilty of doing. For the former there is no forgiveness so long as the sinner continues in his lawless state; but for the latter there is forgiveness if the sins are confessed before God with that objective in mind (1 John 1:9). He will *“cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* but He will not justify lawlessness.

“My Father’s house” (John 14:2-3)

Q. A friend of mind quotes these verses in John to support his contention that the righteous are rewarded in heaven. I do not accept his theory, of course, but am unable to satisfactorily explain this passage. Can you assist?

A. Your friend relies on the words: *“In my Father’s house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you Where I am there ye may be also.”* The key words in this passage, however, are the ones usually omitted: *“I WILL COME AGAIN”*, which clearly show that whatever reward is offered, it is associated with the second coming of Christ, and the notion that the believer enters into his reward at death is instantly destroyed.

Notice that Christ makes no mention of heaven as the place of reward. This is something most people read into the passage. He declares he is going to the Father to prepare a place for us in his Father’s house, and he will “come again” in order that he might bestow that reward.

What constitutes the Father’s house? Paul answers this in Hebrews 3:2-6. He speaks of Moses as a servant in God’s house, and Christ as the son of this house (vv. 5-6), and then he adds: *“Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.”* The “house” in mind, therefore, is the perfected Ecclesia, likened by Paul in Ephesians 2:19-21 as the *“household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.”* The Lord ascended to the Father to prepare a place for his faithful followers in this “house” to be revealed in the earth in due time. He does this by interceding on their behalf, by mediating between God and the members of his ecclesia, and thus helping them to perfect their characters fit for an “abiding place” (the word “mansion” can be rendered “abiding place”) in the Father’s house when it is completed.

“We shall judge angels” (1Corinthians 6:3)

Q. Please explain this verse in Corinthians.

A. The term “angels” does not relate exclusively to immortals who have been elevated to official positions. For example, the word “messengers” in Luke 7:24 and 9:52 is the same word rendered “angels” in the Greek. In James 2:25, the spies who were sent into the promised land are termed “angels” in the Greek.

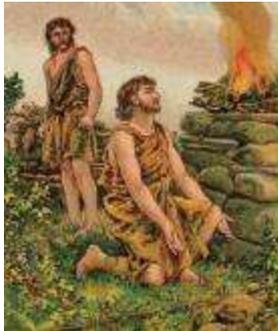
In view of this, the term “angels” can apply to mortals placed into positions of authority; and in 1 Cor. 6:3 Paul reminds the brethren of Corinth that inasmuch as they will be placed over such

people in the age to come, they should demonstrate their ability to exercise such authority by skill in handling the present things of this life.

Cain's Offering

Q. Why was not Cain's offering accepted? (Genesis 4:5)

A. Because it was not offered in faith: *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh"* (Heb. 11:4). On the other hand, Abel, in faith, looked forward to the offering that God would provide, and which had been promised in the declaration of Genesis 3:15. He recognised that *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission"* of sins (Heb. 9:22), and being conscious of sin, he carefully sought out what God required of him. Cain did not do this, but apparently felt that God should be well-pleased with the religious worship he condescended to give unto Him. If it were otherwise, he would not have become jealous of his brother and would not have murdered him. He did not mind shedding blood when it came to satisfying his own feelings of anger, but did not see the need to do so in offering to God. There are many in the world like Cain today.



"The spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:18-20)

Q. Peter says that Jesus by the spirit went and preached unto disobedient spirits, and he links this disobedience with the days of Noah. Who were these disobedient spirits?

A. The Scriptures never refer to disembodied spirits; it refers to the angels as spirits and to men as spirits. In 1 John 4:1 John tells the believers to try the spirits because false prophets were in the world. Here, clearly, is a reference to teachers of wrong doctrine or *"seducing spirits"* (1 Tim 4:1).

Now such were both disobedient and in prison (or in bondage to sin - Romans 6:16) just as all in Adam are in the *"bondage of corruption"* (Romans 8:21) and *"through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Heb 2:15).

Christ came to *"preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound"* (Isaiah 61:1). Not, of course, to enter into prisons and release malefactors and evildoers, but to bring salvation from sin and release from death. Did Christ do this in Noah's day? Christ did not exist then, except in the purpose of God, nor does Peter say that he did. Peter says, *"By the spirit Christ preached"*. Since Christ could not personally preach to disobedient men of Noah's day, either during his ministry, nor during his three days in the heart of the earth, not after his ascension, there must be an analogy between Christ's preaching and Noah's preaching. Noah preached, but his generation were disobedient spirits and perished in the flood. Christ preached and his generation were mainly disobedient - they were scattered,

sold as slaves, and finally died an eternal death. The same spirit was the witness to the disobedient in both ages.

“Present with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8)

Q. Do Paul’s words in Corinthians support the teaching of an immortal soul? *“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”*

A. Peter says that Paul wrote *“things hard to be understood”* which may easily be misunderstood (2 Peter 3:16). Misunderstanding often comes when a sentence or verse is taken out of its context or when the passages of scripture are not brought to bear upon it.

“Absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” is often quoted to support the doctrine of immortal soulism. But the setting of this saying shows that Paul taught something quite different. He says (5:10) that we must be judged and as a result of this be rewarded *“in body”*. The reward in body which Paul desired was to be *“clothed upon with our house which is from heaven”* (v2) - to be clothed upon *“that mortality might be swallowed up in life”* (v4).

However, he had already taught the Corinthians that this change would be when Christ comes (1 Cor 15:23), so that being *“present with the Lord”* must wait until the second coming. Nevertheless, he desired earnestly for the time to come when this body wherein he groaned being burdened (v4) should be changed, for then he would be present with Christ. For this he laboured so that he might be accepted (v9).

“God was in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Q. *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”* Does this verse support the doctrine of the Trinity?

A. This verse is often taken from its context to support the trinity, but if God were actually in Christ how was it possible for Christ to say, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* or for it to be said that *“he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared”*? (Heb 5:7). There are two persons here, and one (the Son of God) wholly dependent on the other. It therefore means that God was working in and through Christ so that the world might be reconciled to Him.

“...without repentance” (Romans 11:29)

Q. Please can you explain what is meant by “without repentance”.

A. The word ‘repentance’ often means ‘a change of mind’ but sometimes another word is used (also translated ‘repentance’) which really means ‘without carefulness’, that is, without ‘limit or meanness’. When Paul wrote in Romans 11:29 that *“the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”* the second word is used, and in verse 10 of chapter 7, both words are used, so that the verse could read: *“For godly sorrow worketh a change of mind to a salvation - without limit.”*

The Unexpected

Throughout the world men's hearts are failing them for fear, and looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. They see the triumph of might over right, and many predict the passing of our civilization, with all its triumphs and limitations, and a return to ancient poverty and barbarism. They have no knowledge of the divine purpose, no understanding of the unfolding of the plan of the ages. But what is to them so unexpected is that which will yet come to pass. The power of the tyrant will be curbed, the evil devices of men will fail, and evil doers shall be rooted out of the earth. Then will be answered the prayer that has so often and so fervently been sung ~

*Come, thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.
Born thy people to deliver:
Born to be their future king;
Come and reign on earth for ever,
Soon thy gracious kingdom bring.*

A New Year's Message



Since last we sent our salutations, twelve months have been added to our lives; and it is important to pause and consider whether that twelve months have been a period of Christian activity and holiness, or a time of worldliness and indifference. Let us never forget that Jesus, our Lord and Master, has sent this Message to the Churches: *"I will give to every one of you according to his works,"* (Rev. ii.23), and has issued the inexorable decree *"The unprofitable servant shall be cast out"* (Matthew xxi.30). Are we fully alive to this? Are we adding yearly to our stock of good works – of profitable service? We cannot, it is true, do all that we could wish – we cannot altogether get at that blissful perfection which, in our hearts, we may desire to attain; but do we give ourselves as much ordinary concern to be profitable servants of Christ as we do to be prosperous and respected in worldly matters? Are we equally good Christians as we are good tradesmen and men of business? Are we as much interested in the future as we are in the present? Do we love Christ and his precious promises as much as we do this world and its concerns? It is to be feared that if these questions were very truthfully answered, most of us would be found lamentably shortcoming. Most of us can understand, argue, and perhaps preach about the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Most of us can give a reason for the blessed hope of life that is within us; but it is to be feared that in too many instances we carry our faith more in our heads than our hearts – having our understandings enlightened but our affections little softened by that gracious love of Christ which passeth all understanding. It is

perhaps but too true of most of us that while we may know sound doctrine, we fail in the practical part of Christianity, being but superficially acquainted with the precepts, as affecting our everyday behaviour, and still more backward in obeying them when we know them. In a word, the good seed may have been sown in our hearts, and yet the fruit may be of tardy growth on account of the abundance and vigour of those other plants which find but too ready a vegetation in its soil. 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, straightforward and unblushing. We are apt to be overridden 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.

With regard to the affairs of this life, hear the words of our beloved Master: *“Take no thought for tomorrow, saying, What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things the Gentiles seek), for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things; but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all those things shall be added unto you.”* (Matt. vi.31-33). How very few of us act in this spirit? Are we not apt to worry ourselves about the affairs of this life? Are we not apt to make them the chief subject of our thoughts, and the supreme object of our efforts, instead of throwing our heart and soul into the Christian life and cherishing the love of Christ, the love of the brethren, and the desire for the spread and triumph of the Truth, as the passions of our souls? Are we not apt to lose sight of this blessed assurance of our Master, and to make our secular business the chief concern of existence, when it ought to be altogether secondary and subordinate?

Brethren, let us take heed lest *“the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.”* Let us not weary in well doing. Many have run well for a time and have at last made shipwreck. Several lamentable instances of this have occurred during the past year. Let us take warning. Let us give diligent attention to the precious Word of God, which is able to build us up in our most holy faith. This is a most important exhortation; for if a man neglect the reading of the Scriptures, or if he only attend to it in an occasional manner, his spiritual life will fade, and his mind will be gradually but certainly leavened with the deceptive principles around him.

In regard to our own personal condition, *we know* whether we are warm in our hearts towards Christ, his truth, and his brethren, or no; for *“where the treasure is, there will the heart be also,”* (Matt. vi.21), and *“out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”* (Matt. xii.34). There cannot be any mistake. Are we doubtful? Have we qualms of conscience? *“God is greater than our heart,”* and will disapprove what it condemns. Are we pleased with ourselves, and looking forward with confidence to the coming of our Lord and Master? Only one thing can justify that confidence – the consciousness of a holy Christian life – the answer of a good conscience toward God. *“Not everyone that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my father, that is in heaven”* (Matt. vii.21). *“He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me”* (John xiv. 21). *“Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you”* (John xv. 14). There can therefore be no mistake about the terms of friendship and ultimate acceptance. Mere sentiment is idleness; unwarrantable self-complacency is delusion. *“The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day”* (John xii. 48). *“If a man love me, he will keep my words”* (John xiv. 23). Let us measure ourselves by this standard. We have believed the glad tidings of the kingdom of God and eternal life; and have

been baptised into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That is the first act of obedience – the first act of consecration, but what a work remains to be accomplished! “*All things WHATSOEVER I have commanded*” (Matt. xxviii.20). That is the measure of our duty, of our goodness. Have we filled it?

Brethren, let us devoutly study the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his apostles, and be careful to obey them *all* in our lives, for upon *that* depends our ultimate salvation. If we do so, we shall be patterns of excellence – beautiful characters – noble men and women – glorifying the name of our Father in heaven.

A few words in conclusion in regard to the spreading of the Truth. We have come to *know* God’s blessed word; and hereby has been given to us a most precious talent. Are we alive to its true value, and to the obligation that rests upon us to increase it? It is to be feared not. Some altogether neglect the duty of helping to disseminate the glorious gospel among their perishing fellow men; and it is to be regretted that some even go further, and discourage efforts in that direction. This is a misfortune; for our common benevolence prompts us to proclaim salvation to our fellow men, and to place within their reach the same opportunities of obtaining it that we ourselves enjoy. Moreover, does not imperative duty call upon us to do so? “*Let him that heareth say, come.*” What higher commission do we require? Have we not heard? And shall we not then say “*come?*”

It is not enough to say that they have the Bible, (although upon them is cast the fearful responsibility by this circumstance). They have the Bible it is true, but is it not a sealed book among the people; and more, is it not a neglected book? There might as well be no Bible in the world as far as the great body of mankind are 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?

The common instinct of the brethren will supply the right answer; and if in the estimation of some that answer be a wrong one, we put it to them whether such an occupation for brethren would be displeasing to Christ, or altogether unprofitable to themselves? Or whether the retrospect of their lives is likely on a death-bed to be any the sweeter for having acted otherwise?

Bro Robert Roberts

Aim at Efficiency

Our duty is to go on and not to rest content with the amount of knowledge possessed at baptism. All scripture has been given for our learning, not merely the few texts which opened our eyes to the first principles. Quite as essential is it to pursue our Scripture studies as before. In no other way can we possibly obtain the necessary strength to overcome the many and varied faith-testing experiences of our probation. Whether we recognize it or not, brethren, it is only a growing familiarity with the prophecy, history, and general teaching contained in the books of God’s library that will enable us to stave off our native unbelief, and acquire courage and

wisdom enough to keep at a distance “Mr. Bad Laugh,” “Mr. Lover-of-the-present-world,” and “Mr. Sinwithin,” with their unsound reasonings, attractive invitations, and criminal suggestions.

Is proof wanted in regard to this? Then a look at yonder brethren will supply it, brethren who, as we know, grew negligent of the divinely-appointed means of securing knowledge, became careless in their daily readings, indifferent to the up-building meetings, hypercritical and scornful over the works of others. Are we “going on”? Yes, if we have willed it so, but not if we are treading the path of the lax ones, or hoping that by the mere association with the brethren and sisters, apart from earnest, personal study, things will be all right. No; apart from an incessant reading, marking, and inwardly digesting, no headway can be made.

A.T.J

“Be Not Ye Called Rabbi”

“Be not ye called Rabbi, neither be ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ. The head of every man is Christ.” God who put all things under the Saviour’s feet, gave Him to be the head over all things to the ecclesia, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

The ecclesia is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man. The Saviour declares, all ye are brethren. All are exposed to temptation, and are liable to error. The Rock of faith is the living presence of Christ in the ecclesia. Upon this the weakest may depend, and those who think themselves the strongest, will prove to be the weakest – unless they make Christ their efficiency.

“Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. The Lord is the Rock, His work is perfect. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

| Matthew 23:8, 10 | 1 Corinthians 11:3 | | Ephesians 1:22-23 | Jeremiah 17:5 |

The Rock! Perfect is His work, For all His ways are just; God of steadfastness, and without iniquity: Righteous and upright is He.

Deuteronomy 32:4

Bro Melusi Ndlolvu (Gweru, Zimbabwe)

Carelinks | China



Bro Donald reports: I baptized Bro Jian (above left) at the swimming pool, below is his personal testimony in short.

“I knew God from my mother, who become a devout Christian at the age of 57. I saw the change that happened in her, it was really so amazing. Jesus slowly changed her life trajectory. For example, she used to have a bad temper, but after she converted she even told me the Bible says the importance of controlling one’s temper. As children of God, we are called to love others and to be at peace, love your enemy, she really came to live like that. But at that time, I was studying very hard for my university entrance exams, and my mother did not deliberately guide me, so that my students life goes like the rest of Chinese students. What really touched me is a series of things that happened later, as I grew up. People I loved become older and their death caused me to think and reflect. I had felt the sadness of my grandfather’s death, and my mother had a big surgery in hospital. My father signed a consent form for the operation with shaking hands. My mother lay on the operating table, having been in prayer, her confidence to God showed on her face, without a trace of fear. Finally everything went well, thanks God. Mother told me it was a blessing from God. Our God always has open arms, and I was very late in coming before the Lord. So I am from the deep desire of my heart to come close to our God, and therefore decided to learn the message and be baptized. Jesus come soon!”

Carelinks | Georgia

Bro Steve Gretton went to Georgia to baptize an Iranian couple and he reports: *“Georgia is a small country sandwiched between Russia and Turkey. To the west is the Black Sea and to the east is the Caspian Sea. There are the spectacular Caucasus mountains to the north, significant to Bible readers as the location of Mount Ararat - the resting place of Noah’s ark (pictured right). It is a country which is very welcoming to visitors and tolerant of different religions. Georgians are basically Christian (Orthodox), but in the capital Tbilisi, one street houses a church, a mosque and a synagogue peacefully! It is only one hour flight from Tehran. Visitors from Iran can come here easily and there is no requirement for a visa. This is how I met a couple in their early 30’s who have been seeking baptism for some time.*



B is an expert welder and his wife **M** works at a pharmaceutical factory as she studies for a higher degree. **M** is a friend of Sis **M** and her husband, Bro **M**, who are asylum seekers in Germany and it is they who have been teaching them and encouraging them to come for baptism, making the suggestion that we meet in Tbilisi. **M** told me that she had read parts from the Bible as a teenager, although it did not make a deep impression on her at the time. However the desire to know more had led her and her husband to find the Lord. Using a relatively secure internet App, they have been talking with Bro **M** and they decided to take the risk of coming to a safe place to be baptised. Meetings with people like this always take my breath away by their

sheer enthusiasm for our God and for His promises, and their determination to defy the rules of man to follow their Lord. Within minutes of meeting they were telling me about the wonders of the love of God, about the joy of having sins forgiven, and about the opportunity to have a new life – eternal life. They know that Jesus is in heaven, but that his return is imminent and that they will meet him. He will rule in the kingdoms of men and bring love and peace to this world. All this came from them before we had had a cup of coffee! During the previous week I had been sending them a few pages from Luke’s gospel by email – encoded for a degree of security, and they have been reading it with great enthusiasm in their own language. This is always a risky thing to do because all internet activity can be intercepted in Iran and the punishment is severe. This couple are certain they are not on the government’s list of suspects and so are very determined to continue learning from us. However, rather than risk taking a Bible with them into Iran, we spent time downloading the App YouVersion onto their phones and then the Farsi translation of the Bible so they can take the Bible with them electronically without it being noticed. To download this in Iran would be asking for trouble. In the hours we talked together we covered many subjects. I was able to quickly determine their understanding about the humanity of Jesus. I warned them that others had other ideas about the nature of Jesus, but they found the concept of the Trinity quite astonishing and irrational! I found that all that I was teaching them was fully in line with the ideas that they had already developed by themselves. The Lord is at work with the people from Iran and it is such a joy to find that the gospel we teach finds such willing hearts to accept the saving truth. I think we sometimes forget the hand of God in such lives and think it depends on us. But we are small cogs in a much larger machine. Jesus said, “And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone who has heard and learned of the Father comes to me.” (John 6:45). The internet connection at the hotel was quite good so we were able to make a video link with Sue back in the UK who was therefore present at the baptism and the Breaking of Bread the next day. She managed to take photos with her camera of the computer screen. She captured two very moving moments - as Bro B rose from the waters he knelt in prayer, as his first response, even before meeting my eyes or taking the towel I offered him.

We must pray for this couple who are very determined to share the news of their re-birth with their friends in Iran who would also like to be baptised. It is clear that there are many of this generation who are resentful of the state religion being imposed on them. They are prepared to take huge risks to share the gospel of Jesus. I am reminded of Daniel and his friends who were captive in a close-by country. They were equally determined to remain faithful to their God despite the obvious risk to their lives. I feel humbled by their act of faith and it has been a privilege to be part of their transition from darkness to light, from death to life”.

Carelinks | Italy

We really want to thank all who prayed and donated so that two weeks of wonderful work could take place in Italy during August with the migrants. Without the Lord’s special empowerment and your support, as ‘the backroom boys’, those of us on the ground could not have done it. It was a super team of dedicated, hard workers - Dave & Liz, Russell & Dawn, Duncan & Cindy, Steve & Robin and Roy & Jane were really all just supporting our absolutely dynamic brothers Tony and Joseph who are permanently in Italy. We taught many hours of Bible truths to attentive audiences of up to 40 migrants, as well as many one to one sessions. The teaching was very capably shared with Joseph and Tony. Joseph is so solid in the Truth and utterly dedicated to

taking the true Gospel to the many migrants who have ears to hear, and benefitted much from coming to the UK for the Carelinks Conference. Tony was badly beaten as we reported in the last *Gospel News* and has lost most of the sight in one eye; we gave him funds to get some more attention to it.



Very many *NEV Bibles* and *Bible Basics* were distributed, and over the period there were 27 baptisms, including brothers: ***Destiny, Odion, Geoffrey, David, Wisdom, Frank, Philip, Peter, Sunny, Shadrack, Iyare and Edos***. It's not that we are waving some large and irresistible carrot to the migrants which makes baptism attractive. All we're doing is giving some food and Bible literature. The food is only basic, and the only nice extra we sometimes offered was Evia pouring them a cup of cold coca cola, or yams – which were cooked by Cindy, with Dawn reading out internet recipes to her from her phone (they are rather hard to cook).

We can make no promise of helping them very much materially. They are stuck in Italy with no work and only short stay accommodation in the camps, after which they must make their own way with no further support. All of them gave the same story - of horrible experiences on the journey across the Sahara and in Libya, seeing death close up during the sea crossing, and vowing to God to give their lives to Him if they survived. And these who did survive arrive on the shores of Italy deeply impressed with God's grace and wanting to know more about Him, and then they encounter us, with our food and free Bibles and Bible teaching sessions. It's no wonder they are eager to join the dots and get baptized once they grasp the message, and they all say that their experience of God's grace motivates them to return to the camps and spread the message further.

There is much anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy. They find with us that we treat them as persons and genuinely care for them:

You can see a video of our preaching, teaching, feeding and baptizing at: <https://tinyurl.com/italy-feeding>

And a more lengthy video of Liz and Duncan explaining the Truth, doctrine by doctrine, to a group of Muslim migrants at: <https://tinyurl.com/italy-teaching>

We are not Pentecostals, looking for miracles; as brother Robert Roberts put it, we look for “the ways of providence” rather than the “visible hand of God” in terms of miracles. But just consider some of their accounts of God’s hand. We put all the testimonies together in one single video at: <https://tinyurl.com/testimonies-italy>



Bro Wisdom, right, describes Bro Tony, left, as a Godsend having saved his life in the sinking dingy

Wisdom nearly died on the boat crossing. Bro Tony saved his life by heaving him up out of death, when his eyes were already rolling and very close to death. Some time later, Tony was walking along a street in Italy when a man came up to him and hugged him as his saviour. It was Wisdom, the man he had saved. And so Tony lost no time in telling him the true Gospel, introducing him to Joseph who taught him further, and then it was such a joy for Tony to help us baptize Wisdom.

Another brother spoke of how he left Libya on a boat with 440 migrants on it. Their compass broke, then their engine, and the boat started leaking. They were adrift for four days. The Libyan Arab smugglers then said that the boat was cursed because of the sins of the people on board, exactly the situation with Jonah in the storm. Over the course of two days, the smugglers threw overboard the migrants in groups of 10 or 20 to lighten the boat and because they didn’t want to have to return to Libya with them. Of the 440 migrants, only 40 remained, and our brother was amongst them. Another brother speaks of being hijacked at sea by pirates, another gang of smugglers, who then put them in a prison and tried to torture them to get them to call home and get money sent by Moneygram. Another brother has a similar testimony, but explained how he was seated on a boat which was one of three boats which set off. The Arab smuggler for some reason at the last minute told him to move onto one of the other boats. He did; and the other two boats didn’t make the crossing, one they saw capsize with the loss of everyone on board, over 200 people.

And finally another brother reveals the wounds he received at the hands of the smugglers as they tortured him to get money sent to them before they would release him, and he makes a wonderful testimony to God’s grace and his commitment to it. Without doubt God is at work.

Please pray especially for those who are now out of the camps. We found brother Austin sleeping behind a railway station, very hungry, weak and with a fever. We gave funds and did what we could to help, including giving him the first hot meal he had had for a long time.

Carelinks | Sicily

The situation in Sicily is significantly worse than in mainland Italy. Many thousands of Africans are roaming the island, homeless, penniless and destitute. It's mainly just women and children (a minority of the migrant population) who get a place in a camp. And the mafia are clearly using those camps as a source of sex workers, drug peddling and other criminality. We continued to support brother Godson in the rental of a small hall which is a place where he can distribute food and clothing to the migrants, and frankly where the women can come in the day time and be safe. We have funded hospital fees, medicines, emergency shelter, clothes, food and the expenses for children for the single mothers. Like brother Joseph, Godson has a wonderful heart for people.



Bro Moses' baptism with Bre Godson and Duncan

We gave support to enable the work here to continue in this way. He also distributes our literature to the migrants, and this visit we were able to baptize brother **Moses** and five sisters: **Juliette**, **Blessings**, **Happy**, **Julie** and **Victoria**, all baptized in a painfully rocky inlet near Syracuse.

These are all Godly, conservative African women who passed through really terrible experiences at the hands of the traffickers in Libya and are now in a similar vulnerable position in the camps. No wonder they are turning to the Lord with all their hearts and gratefully reading His word from the *NEV Bibles* provided. Some are pregnant, not from their choice but because of these experiences.

We also bought a lot of food and also many cans of Malt drink which is full of vitamins. You can see a brief video of the various baptisms at: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-sicily>

We appealed earlier for your prayers for a young lady from a Christadelphian family in Nigeria who had got to Sicily. Her parents and brothers are all Christadelphians and she grew up attending Sunday School and CYC and has a good knowledge of the Truth. The journey through the Sahara and the abuse in Libya is really awful. The Italian Government are doing what they can for vulnerable female migrants, but at best it means sending them to live in dilapidated buildings in some remote spot. She has been for a year in a very remote village in central Sicily, living with other vulnerable African women. The area is very poor, with many houses deserted and people just buying things from visiting mobile traders as the shops have largely closed. It's really a ghost town.

The conditions in the camp are so bad they have attracted attention from an NGO which tracks the abuse of migrants. Their reports claim that only 1000 people live in the area, and that the statistics office reports that the average age is 70. Anyone younger has gone to the towns or emigrated. If the women just leave the camp, then they are outside the system and will never again get any help at all from the Government. Those who have done so are left on the street, and can be seen working as prostitutes or peddling drugs, which are about their only options in

an economy which is so weak anyway. Happiness says they have been fed only white rice and water for weeks. So the women plait braided hair for each other, and sit and talk. The total boredom with nothing to do is enough to send anyone into deep depression and psycho problems. But from a spiritual perspective, they have time - and Happiness has shared the Truth with another woman, and it was a joy to baptize **Happiness** and **Faith** in a huge lake situated a further 15km along tracks from the camp. The manager of the camp accompanied us. We left significant welfare for our sisters, not least to buy food. The NGO claims the mafia control the camp finances and the funds given to run them suffer major leakage. And central Sicily is indeed in mafia control. The sisters were so happy, it was indeed their happiest day since arriving in Sicily from the indescribable traumas they suffered from the traffickers in Libya.



Sis Faith, left, with Sis Happiness after their baptisms

So please pray for them. They have one phone which the women share and there is internet there, so they get some limited access to email. Let us know if you'd like to contact them, or better still, go to Sicily and visit them and spend some quality time with them, teaching further and breaking bread. Central Sicily is very beautiful and untouched by tourism, the large lake we found was not mentioned on the internet much at all, and was a breathtakingly beautiful setting for the baptisms. But please do not encourage the sisters to leave the camp system, because otherwise they will be on the street and without any possibility at all of even basic state involvement in their lives. There is huge cause for prayer in all these things.



The ruins of the commune of Poggioreale where Happiness and Faith and the other female migrants live. The village was destroyed by earthquakes in 1968

Carelinks | Latvia



The daily feeding scheme is now in full swing, with very good attendances of between 50 and 90 every day. We begin each session with an hour where the hall is open for coffee and where the visitors can chat and some read *Bible Basics*, copies of which are freely available; and then a one hour Bible study, followed by the meal. We're also distributing clothing and firewood and assisting with heating bills.

We had Bro Norman Stock and Sis Jackie Sprigg with us, and also Bro Maxim from Ukraine whose help has been invaluable. We have the schedule more or less covered until the period Feb 10 – March 10 2018 God willing, and we'd appreciate anyone moved to come over and help then. The work isn't heavy but there's plenty of it. We invested 135€ in a wall mounted dicer which is a great help - there's been so much cutting and chopping of vegetables that it's by God's grace that we all still have our fingers intact.



Bro Maxim busy chopping onions with the new chopper

Nothing much has changed for the large Russian 'minority'. Even if they worked all their lives, they receive no pension if they worked in Soviet times, and the Soviet idea that the state would provide for you has ended now that 'the party's over'. So elderly Russian folks with no family to care for them are left living in the dreaded night shelters, where they can stay only about 300 days / year. They must be out by 8 a.m. and only allowed in around 7 or 8 p.m., and have to carry their few belongings with them. It's a sad way to have to end your life, especially if like some of them, you have decades of work behind you in your earlier life. But to the poor the Gospel is preached.

The folks who come attend regularly and faithfully and many have already been baptized by us. Hearing one hour of Bible teaching every day, they have good exposure to the teachings of the true Gospel. We were pleased this week to baptize **Maris** who has been attending for over a year. He was raised as homus sovieticus, and was an enthusiastic Communist, going into the Red Army and still has the tattoo of his regiment visible. When burying his mother a few years ago, he says he reflected how the USSR was taught to be ones' mother, and how biological mothers were just a physical channel through which we entered the world. He recounts a bit on the video how looking at his mother's dead body he saw how wrong this was, and began searching for God. Like many ex-professional soldiers, he feels not much welcome in the new Latvia, and so was glad to attend our meetings and have the Bible explained.



No food is ever wasted, any leftovers are all taken away by the brothers, sisters and visitors in plastic containers to eat later



Sis Jackie congratulating Bro Maris following his baptism

There are some wonderful success stories of people whose lives really changed. Soon after we began our present soup kitchen about 8 years ago, we encountered Yuri, a hard core, on the street alcoholic. He was baptized, and quit drinking. He then met Rita, who is a German Jewess, born in East Berlin in 1945, a real survivor, and who had been a regular attender at the Riga synagogue. After her husband's suicide she found the Rabbi's explanations not satisfying, and heard there was a group who studied the Bible for an hour every day. So she attended, for the teaching not the food, and was baptized - and married Yuri a few years ago. They are a great example of the radical transformation of human life in practice by the power of God's word and Spirit. Sister Rita and brother Yuri are pictured at the top of page 29 at the front of the queue, following the Sunday meeting.

We put together a brief video of the food purchase and preparation, Bro Maxim using the wonderful dicer, the baptism and clothing distribution at: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-latvia>

We really would appreciate donations for this work in Latvia. The heating bills for the hall are major, up to 800€ a month in the coldest parts of Winter, not to mention water, breakages, the required hygiene inspections and the roughly 2000€ a year land tax which is due in January, together with plenty of other expenses. Please pray for the great work ongoing.



Carelinks | Rwanda

We're pleased to report the baptism of **Jeremie**, a French speaker from Rwanda who has studied our material for a long time and is fully convinced of the Truth. If you can write in French and would like to email encouragement to him, do let us know.

Carelinks | United Kingdom



Our recent "Free Bible" advertisement appeared on 30 London buses during the Autumn and, by God's grace, continued to be displayed on the buses for some time after they should have been removed!

Requests came in throughout the day every day - including some from people in Europe and Africa who noticed the adverts, presumably whilst visiting London.

Please do pray for all the many thousands of eyes who have viewed them. We hung around the bus stops distributing literature and then recorded any of "our" buses we saw displaying the advert. It's great to know that throughout London, the offer of God's word was made. You can view the brief video of the buses with the adverts at <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-buses>. Thank you to all who donate to enable these initiatives.



Bro Mo following his baptism

We're also pleased to tell you of the baptism of **Mohammed**, an Afghani who has been already 8 years in the UK and like many, will not be deported but is also not being given permission to work. Such people are in a very depressing situation, as they are trapped and can't move forward in life. No wonder the Gospel of the Kingdom is so attractive to them. Mohammed is not from the bus adverts, but more fruit of our outreach at a migrant centre in central London.

The bus advertising produced not only many replies but also a high level of subsequent follow up. Commuters noticed the advert and then spent their commute reading our material on their phones. We have personally met up for coffee with around 10 people who saw the advert and started chatting with us online. It seems that commuters on public transport are a good target audience as they have a period of time each day to read or view on their phones. A few have already gone right through *Bible Basics* after first engaging with us from the bus advertisements.

Mo, pictured above and below, is a high school teacher in Croydon who first saw our adverts soon after they began. After graduating from Oxford University, unlike many young professionals, Mo began to search for the meaning of life rather than totally focusing on his career. He read the New Testament, again and again, until he came to really know the Lord Jesus and seek a relationship with Him. He then read the Old Testament. He attended some churches but quickly perceived problems with their doctrine and practice. But his personal encounter with Jesus through the pages of scripture... is just wonderful, and best told by him in his own words in the video. He emphasizes that contrary to the claims of many, he had no supposed vision of Jesus, no words whispered in visions - but he has learnt what he has learnt from the written word. He really emphasizes this in his testimony. He really felt he had encountered Jesus, and started buying New Testaments to distribute on the streets on his way to and from work. He noticed that the various churches he attended seemed more interested in getting attenders and members, than in reaching out simply with the message of Jesus to people on the street.



With this in mind, and also wanting more knowledge and teaching, Mo exited a petrol station one evening in Addington and noticed a bus bearing our advert for a totally free Bible for "whosoever will". He pulled out his phone and snapped a photo of the bus with the advert, and later contacted us by phone. We met up immediately, and continued meetings. He quickly accessed our material online and viewed our YouTube videos and read our *Bible*

Basics material. In the old days, one learnt the Truth through attending weekly meetings for months. Now, you can read all the material, listen to it or view it on your commute to work, and grasp the Truth quickly. This is what happened with Mo. It was really a wonderful and emotional moment when Mo was baptized into the Lord Jesus in a small lake near Croydon, covered in autumn leaves. The video of his testimony is really worth viewing; it's at: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-uk1>

Mo is really an inspiration. He says: *"The more I acknowledge that this is the Truth, the more I have that fire, that yearning, to tell it to others"*. Mo's sister is preparing for baptism now and she and Mo regularly go out together distributing our *NEV New Testaments* on the street. They distributed around 100 in just one week. Our prayers are with them as they grow in grace and knowledge.



Carelink readers will remember the annual adverts we place in the Daily Mail UK newspaper. We received the following email from a lady called Ann, living in a well heeled village in South East England:

"I was handed a cut out from a paper by a gentleman named James who is homeless and sleeping under an old railway bridge near to our property. He is well read and his current bible is very scruffy. If you send it to me at the above address I'll make sure he gets it. Many thanks."

It wasn't difficult to locate her property and the railway bridge through Google Earth. Immediately on receiving the email we went to the location. And there was James, sleeping under the bridge, which is over a disused railway track now turned into a rural cycle track. We woke him up, asked if he was the James who wanted a Bible. He was most touched we had made the effort to dig him out, observing that most churches don't really want homeless people as members. He had a large number of sleeping bags and was well set up and not willing to accept any help apart from food. He explained, in the Queen's English and revealing an intelligent and highly educated mind, that he reads the Bible much of the time, but his Bible was wearing out. Whilst in a library in January (that's 10 months ago) he had noticed our advert in the Daily Mail and cut it out, keeping it carefully in his Bible. He has really no money and survives just by what food he is given. Ann, along with other middle class ladies in this rather nice area, bring him food and drinks in a kind of unconsciously devised rota between them. He says he gets three great meals some days and none the next. So realizing his Bible was falling apart, he asked Ann if she could post the coupon to us and get the Bible sent to her home. She agreed, but emailed us instead, as the advert had our email.

He accepted the Bible with gratitude, but when we started chatting about what the Bible meant, he said he needed to ask some questions, as he was sick and tired of Christian 'do gooders' (even though he depends upon them!) who don't really read or know their Bibles. And he would only discuss with people who do. So he fired a series of questions, such as *'Who was the father*

of John the Baptist?, *'When is Tyre first mentioned in the Bible'* and most interestingly, *'Does the word Trinity ever occur in the Bible?'* He was impressed with our answers and apologized for his arrogance and listened to us explaining our doctrines for about 30 minutes. It would've made a fine photo - a homeless man wrapped in sleeping bags intently listening to our preaching, clutching his new *NEV Bible* in his hand, nodding agreement or shaking his head at times in disagreement. But it is somehow inappropriate to point a camera at a destitute man who is very sceptical of his more 'normal' helpers and visitors. On returning home, we emailed Ann and told her. She was most touched we should care so much for a homeless man, and asked if she could be sent the Bible and our literature as she'd be interested to read it, as we seemed very sincere. We marvel at the ways of providence, which reflect the passion and active device of the Father and Son to work with His servants to, by all means, try to save some. So... please pray for Ann and James.

Carelinks | Ukraine

The miserable situation continues for the average Ukrainian. The economy continues in free fall and there seems no hope of any easy end to the war in the east nor the loss of Crimea to Russia. We snapped a video of an old man and woman rummaging for food from rubbish bins, the woman had a knife with which she peeled off rotten parts of vegetables and put what was edible in a plastic bag. It's at: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-ukraine>

One of the many refugees created by the conflict was Andrej, who fled to Russia and lived there for a bit. He found the true Gospel online and was baptized in Russia as previously reported. He has now returned to Ukraine, has got a job and is trying to rebuild his life from nothing. Our brother is a great reader and Bible student. His wife left him and he raised their son, **Bogdan**. But this young man followed his father's passion for the Bible, reading with him the daily Bible Companion readings and a more suitable candidate for baptism it would be hard to imagine. In an age where youth spend their time glued to screens, this young man isn't even interested in Facebook, and has devoted himself to the Lord. We spoke at length of how youth needs radicalism, a challenge to touch the sky, and how devotion to the Lord's cause is the intended channel for that. We reflected how Amos records that God raised up young men as prophets and Nazarites, and how many references there are to young men devoted to the Lord. So it was with joy that we baptized him and afterwards strolled around the historic city of Lvov talking of how to channel his enthusiasm for the Lord.



Teaching Bible Stories to Children



Bro Duncan writes: *How can we teach young children the basic stories and message of the Bible? For a few years now I've read the Bible to my children morning and evening, explaining things as we go along and answering their questions. Sometimes I've recorded them and put them on YouTube. In the evenings after we've read and prayed, I leave them to go to sleep listening to the old recordings.*

I've arranged them as two playlists. Just hit "Play All" and it keeps going... until they fall asleep. I just thought others might like to make use of it. Putting children to sleep with Bible readings playing seems a good way to get them familiar with the basic stories and themes of the Bible.

The New Testament is at: <https://tinyurl.com/bible-stories-new-testament>

The Old Testament is at: <https://tinyurl.com/bible-stories-old-testament>

Bro Duncan Heaster