

In This Issue

Page 1 Editorial	(Copied from 1962)	Brother Ernest Brady
Page 6 Is There A Supernatural Devil		Brother Russell Gregory
Page 9 A Great and Marvellous Sign		Brother O. E. H. Gregory
Page 13 Our Late Sister Minnie Allen Wrote.		
Page 16 Young Peoples Pages		Sister Dawn So

We are sorry to report Brother Julian has been unwell of late and unable to write the Editorial. Under the circumstances I have selected an Editorial by our late Brother Ernest Brady taken from our Circular Letter for March 1962 – a small ‘snapshot’ of our relationship with Christadelphia 60 years ago, soon after their so-called re-union in the hope of bringing some peace in their midst. But the Internet has encouraged greater tolerance and understanding which is to be welcomed. We would welcome correspondence from anyone who feels inclined to share their views. Love in Jesus to all our readers.

Brother Russell Gregory.

Editorial

Loving greetings to all. During the last few years it has seemed in this country as if we were up against a brick wall in our effort to forward the spread of the true understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God who gave Himself for sinners, in opposition to the Christadelphian view of Him as the unclean representative of an unclean race, whose death was required for His own deliverance from sin. Our successes - and they have been few enough - seemed to come from abroad. We have had many kind letters and enquiries from places like Australia, yet in this country where there are far greater numbers of people who should be concerned we have seen comparatively little response. It has often been said that Britain has declined in the world, politically and economically and is no longer a first class power. Whether this is so or not we need not concern ourselves with, but one can hardly doubt that it is no longer of much importance in the religious world, and it seems evident that the apathy and lukewarmness applies equally to those to whom we address our efforts.

However, it is cheering to be able to say that the picture has changed greatly in the past year. An active group has come into being in Lincoln, as a letter from Bro. Allen indicates, and larger one in Devon. For the information of those who are not in direct touch with any of those concerned except via this Circular Letter, the following account of recent development is given.

For many years Bro. Skinner and later his daughter were in isolation in Devon and were recently contacted by several members of Torquay Ecclesia who had had occasion to question the soundness of the Christadelphian doctrinal position. In due course they satisfied themselves that we had a better understanding and they were baptised - not into the Nazarene Fellowship, as Bro. Williams quite rightly reminded me in a recent letter - but into the true faith of Jesus Christ. Many people seem unable to face life unless they belong to a group and have a set of rules to observe, and while it is helpful and convenient to associate and work with those who think as we do, the only fellowship that

matters is that we are members of the Body of Christ. May God preserve us from the organization, the creed-making and the tradition which almost inevitably overtakes religious communities!

The Torquay members now number about a dozen and they have been making their presence felt to some purpose. They have circulated leaflets drawing attention to various of the doctrines we reject, and have made several approaches to the A.B. in the district suggesting discussions with a view to the enlightenment of the members of the ecclesias, but their advances have been studiously ignored. This is more than strange, as one of those actively concerned behind the scenes is T.J.Barling - a Christadelphian of considerable reputation whom one might expect to be in a position and anxious to defend his faith. I recall that many years ago as a very green convert to the faith I now rejoice in, I was invited to his house at Leamington for a discussion with about 15 or 20 Christadelphians. It seems evident that I was not able to shake his faith in an unclean representative whose death God required as the condition of our forgiveness, but one would have thought he should be capable at this stage of giving a reason for the faith he has.

The most recent development is that our brethren have taken the initiative and booked a meeting room and sent out an invitation to the local Christadelphians to come and discuss the subject and ask any questions they desired. This duly took place on March 8th and a copy of the circular sent me by Bro. Skinner - happily now fully recovered from his recent operation - put before them the proposition: "The issue is really a very simple one. Does it really matter what we believe? Then, are the Christadelphians right or wrong when they teach that the Holy One of God was basically unclean and needed to die just as much for His own salvation as for those He came to save?"

I cannot do better than quote from the letter Bro. Williams wrote me:-

"Some 18 members of Torquay came and with 2 from Exeter and our own members made about 30 in all - but NO Barlings although invited. Bro. Rowley outlined the origin of the controversy and showed the "natural" progress Dr Thomas made it evident from his reasonings in Eureka as compared with Elpis Israel. He demonstrated how at his death Dr Thomas had reached a spiritual maturity quite remarkable from his early days. He showed that whilst Dr Thomas was alive R. Roberts adhered to and subscribed to his later conclusions but that after his death he reverted to the earlier teachings in Elpis Israel and insisted on unclean flesh and sin as a fixed ingredient of flesh. He (Bro. Rowley) showed how the Statement of Faith was modified deliberately to include these nonsensical theories and that Edward Turney contended with R. Roberts for the truths brought out in the closing years of Dr Thomas's life. The result - the majority followed R Roberts and a minority Edward Turney.

I (Bro. Williams) followed with the doctrines as it comes from the source and showed how failure to understand is inevitable when people use the scriptures to re-enforce their own reasoning instead of allowing it to enlighten them. It is a folly to rear extracts from their setting and use them irrespective of whether or not they apply to the subject under discussion. This is the way of orthodoxy, leading to belief in a personal devil, heaven-going and the natural immortality of the soul, things they accept without proof and then set about justifying from the Bible.

I took apart Christadelphian "reasoning" in regard to unclean flesh and showed how they take 3 passages in Job 14:14, 15:14, 25:4 and strung them together and say 'to be born of a woman is to be unclean.' Hence, they say, since Jesus was born of a woman He must be unclean, etc., etc. This 'theory' I said was false and was 'father of the thought' that there must have been a miraculous debasement of Adam's nature from very good to very bad. I explained that flesh is neither clean nor unclean, but neutral in condition and that the flesh we possess to-day is identical in its construction to Adam's both before and after sin entered. When the Christadelphian theory was applied to Christ it contradicted all that is revealed concerning Him as Holy, Pure, undefiled, etc., etc. I explained that Adam died a moral and spiritual death on the day he disobeyed (perfectly true of course but perhaps

in relation to the Atonement the term 'legal death' applies more precisely - E.B) and lived out the predetermined life cycle of 900 odd years, later reduced by God to 120 and then to 70 years, on the same principle that a butterfly can only live so long or an elephant so long. I showed that spiritual death was the death that really mattered and so all Adam's posterity were dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the LIFE OF GOD by the ignorance that was in them and as the result of sin. Man's will was enslaved, his intellect beclouded, his natural feelings and emotions debased and prostituted and for these reasons he was separated from God and needed the cleansing and enlightenment from above. He was never estranged because he was flesh - this Christadelphian doctrine is an abortion of truth which would make God hideously unjust, for He made Adam what he was. The theory was a negation of the long-suffering, pity and love of God and none could understand it, whereas, on the other hand, as what we know is the truth we could understand it and by it are drawn to God, who stands in the shadows keeping watch over His own. I asked them which they preferred and there was a murmuring of assent to the obvious.

Well, we had a wonderful reception. Many questions were asked, and naturally some concerned other doctrines as e.g. present possession of Eternal Life, the sinlessness of believers from union with the clean and sanctified Saviour and so on. We tried to put the emphasis where it belongs – they must come to Christ with an honest and good heart. Christadelphianism is full of intellectual dishonesty and hypocrisy and there is woeful ignorance as the natural result. Christ does not reveal Himself to His critics. We hope and pray that having sown the seed and shown them the way to reason and the road to follow that God will overrule their circumstances and Christ will so quicken their hearts that they will receive Him as He was, God made visible in flesh, full of grace and truth. By starting from God downward, as opposed to from man upward, the mind is conditioned to accept the truths intended, viz. that the Lord Jesus was the agent of Divine self-expression - infinite love in corporeal and tangible form, as distinct from an abstract theory.” (end of quote).

I am sure all of us will commend this excellent effort and associate ourselves with Bro. Williams' prayer that the blessing of God will follow.

I thank the various writers of letters and articles for their work in supporting our Circular Letter and hope that it will interest and encourage us all.

Your brother in Jesus Christ, Ernest Brady.

Is there a Super-natural Devil?

While most churches teach that there is a supernatural Devil, or a fallen angel, we believe no such being exists nor is it taught in the Bible.

In Revelation 20:1 to 3 we read. “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3. and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

Here is the key to who or what is referred to throughout the Bible and the first thing we note is that the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan are all 'one' who will be bound and shut up and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. 'He' - not they – is the enemy of all righteousness.

Genesis 3:1 tells us right from the beginning that God did not make the Serpent for we read “The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” Translators have thought this was a mistake and in almost all recent translations of the Bible we find they have added to the scriptures by telling us that “The serpent was more subtle than any other beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” The original scripture does not say this but that the serpent was more subtle than anything God made. So we ask then who did make the serpent? We can find the answer in the Bible.

So let us first go to the New Testament where we are told that we are all tempted of our own lust. In Mark 7:21-23 we read, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

James confirms these words of Jesus in chapter 1 of his letter, verses 14-15, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Again, in 1 John 2:16 we read the same “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” We do not find any mention of a supernatural devil or Satan in these references.

All human desire, when not desiring the things of God but rather the things of the flesh along with our pride of life, are not of God’s making but our own. Nowhere in the scriptures do we find any teaching of a supernatural Devil or Satan.

We conclude that references to the Devil, and the Serpent are personifications of man’s will whenever opposed to God’s will.

Temptation is a very human problem. We are asked to obey God but are tempted to do what we want instead. Jesus overcame all temptation perfectly – it was always “Not my will but Thine be done” – and so can we do the same as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, where he writes, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Temptation then only applies to humans and it can only apply where we have been given God’s Law to obey or disobey. Also temptation is essential for us in order to build good characters through being obedient. This is why we are here, and God’s reward is life for ever more. Is it worth it? We are told on many occasions what to expect so let’s see what we know. , ,

God gave Adam and Eve a law to obey. If they obeyed they would be building good characters acceptable to Him and would be rewarded with everlasting life. Disobedience would build bad characters and they would be punished and would never see everlasting life. Our response to temptation is our choice.

The idea that the Serpent or Devil is a personification of man’s will when opposed to God’s will may be a new idea to you but we are convinced that Genesis 3 verses 1 to 5 represents the dialogue between the Serpent and Eve, can best be understood as the reasoning within Eve’s own mind weighing up the pros and cons of disobedience.

This has to do with the development of character. We are asked to do God’s will and not our own. It is the testing of our will that builds our character. Being guilty of choosing to do our will rather than God’s will is wrong but we sometimes choose it and so build bad characters which alienate us from God.

But God is very merciful and does not wish us to perish and He has provided a way of forgiveness through Jesus Christ that we may be restored to Him through having faith in the New Covenant in Jesus Christ.

God encourages us to make good characters but He also gave us the choice; it is by our own subtility that we choose “The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, (which) is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2:15).

Nowhere in Scripture are we told that Adam’s nature was changed nor did it need to be. The guilt of sin does not make our flesh physically sinful; it is the guilt of or, brought on by, sin that alienates us from God. Jesus’ righteousness when applied to the individual by faith, in the symbol of baptism leads to our salvation.

May God’s blessing rest with us all.

Brother Russell Gregory

A Great and Marvellous Sign

A great sign was given to Pharaoh and his servants by God through His servant Moses, when he spoke God’s words to him, saying, “Thus saith The Lord, Israel is My son. My first born; I say unto thee, let My son go that he may serve Me. If thou refuse I will slay thy first born” (Exodus 4:22,23.) In due course the ten plagues occurred; they were God’s judgments upon Egypt that He had already told Abraham He would bring. They were acts of judgment upon Egyptians and deserving of the wrath of God.

Now let us turn to Revelation chapters 15 and 16 concerning the 7 last plagues. Chapter 15 opens by telling us of “another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. “

Bible students in the past have imagined these plagues referred to such events as the Spanish Armada or the wars of Napoleon? If they were intended to refer to warlike events such as these over the last two centuries or more, where do the last two great wars fit in? What plagues were these and what about Israel’s tragic loss in 1936-1945? Where any of these plagues? Would it not be more in keeping to first consider whether they may be like God’s plagues of old, and for a similar purpose, so that when given, they would be recognised as such, and would cause the world to see in their outpouring, the finger of God for an express purpose, and recognisable as such?

Now if these plagues are to be poured out by angels who have been clothed in white and girt with golden girdles, as the Scriptures record they shall be, who then are these angels?

If a correct answer can be found to this question, it may help to determine when these plagues begin. It may be helpful first of all to draw attention to what was written over one hundred years ago, and well expressed by the writer who wrote in volume three on page 459 of “Eureka”. There we have

in no unmistakable words the writer's opinion, that they - the seven angels - are the Immortalised brethren of Christ, and that they will be immortalised before they pour out the seven last plagues; and I am persuaded this can be well supported from Scripture; but such a conclusion does leave what at first sight, appear to be a difficulty but on careful investigation the difficulty can be overcome.

The following quotation is from an article published Sept: 1967, and it reads as follows - "May it be that the seven angels clothed in white and girt with golden girdles are none other than the immortalised saints - The Bride of Christ - White clothing is symbolical of righteousness, and golden girdles could represent faithfulness; is there any reason to reject such an interpretation? If this is correct, then we should expect the vials to be poured out in the future by Christ's immortal brethren."

Now what do we know of the order of events from now onward from the prophets? Let us briefly summarise them here; they are twelve in number and are likely to occur in the following order : -

- (1). The taking away of the saints to be with Christ.
- (2). The invasion of Palestine by the northern confederacy.
- (3) Their destruction by an act of God
- (4) Israel's salvation.
- (5) Israel's conversion.
- (6) Israel's exodus from Jerusalem and the land.
- (7) The continuance of Elijah's work with Israel.
- (8) Israel's return to the Promised Land.
- (9) The building of God's House of prayer for all nations.
- (10) The Day of The Lord, it being the war of the great day of God Almighty, of which the battle of Armageddon is a part
- (11) at which time the sign of The Son of Man in heaven occurs
- (12) its effect being - "all the tribes of earth shall mourn,"

Now just where do the seven plagues come in? The answer to this question largely depends on what are the plagues. By analysis this is what they look like - (1) noisome and grievous sores (2) Sea becomes as the blood of a dead man. (3) rivers and fountains of water turned to blood. (4) sun scorches men with fire. (5) the beast's seat and kingdom in darkness. (6) the drying up of the river Euphrates for a purpose. (7) thunders, lightnings, earthquake, etc. In some of these plagues are seen resemblances to God's acts in the days of old. Some may think that such a conclusion as this will leave us in a dilemma in view of what we read in the sixth vial - "Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments... Are we positively sure that these words are spoken to the Bride of Christ? Or shall we take another look?"

Remember the order of events pointed out - The saints having gone, - the invasion over, Gog and his followers destroyed, Israel redeemed, forgiven, converted, so also are the faithful Jews throughout the world converted, and probably in the matter of days only. The preaching of the Everlasting Gospel commenced, it being accompanied by God's gift to them of The Holy Spirit: the Gentiles in great numbers flocking to them for enlightenment, so fulfilling God's promise - 'Ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying - 'We will go with thee for we have heard that God is with thee:' their converts forming the multitude that no man can number of all kindreds, nations and tongues. At this time all the world will be suffering under the time of trouble such as never was; all converts praying 'Thy Kingdom come.' All men witnessing God's judgments made manifest in the earth; and all converts confident of Christ again appearing at the opening of the temple, for the Jews will have told them so" All true converts diligently keeping their garments lest they walk naked. Such as these, may anticipate Christ's gracious invitation into the golden age, there to be fed by Him and to be led by Him to living fountains of water, and hear His gracious words, saying - 'Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the

world.’ These were converts, having befriended the Jews in the time of their persecution, when they were preaching the Everlasting Gospel, will be recognised by Christ; He saying, “In as much as ye did it unto the least of one of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me.” With these thoughts in mind we may now expect the plagues similar to those of old, they will not be given in vain. When the world has experienced such plagues, then may be fulfilled the prophecy concerning Israel being brought to The Lord:-

Isaiah 18:7. This could be done by the ships of Tarshish for it is written – “The ships of Tarshish first shall bring My sons from far, their silver and their gold with them”. It will be the time of the final ingathering of Israel from all over the world.

For long ages have they been a “people scattered and peeled a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled” but then will they be brought to the place of the Name of The Lord of hosts, the mount Zion. In the days of Moses, God revealed to the world, by means of the plagues that He reigns supreme. In days yet to come the plagues will be unmistakable evidence from God of His righteous judgments and supreme power then will the whole world know that He has set His king upon His holy hill of Zion.

A great and marvellous sign it will have been, it will have been read and understood by all then living, and it will figure among the greatest signs that have ever been given by God. Truly a great and marvellous sign.

Brother O. E. H. Gregory

Our late Sister Minnie Allen wrote:

All true Christians take comfort and courage from the words of Paul in Romans ch.8 v 28 when he writes, “we know that all things work together for good; to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose”, and I suppose we realise in all the issues of life and our varying experiences there is a lesson to be learnt, if only our minds are exercised thereby.

This may apply perhaps only to the things that loom so large upon our own horizon - those vital decisions we have to make at times, those trials and sorrows which bring sadness and grief and from which we cannot escape. Yet so many things can happen which pass unheeded, perhaps through lack of concentration or just familiarity. This I suppose is so often the case where housewives are concerned.

A sister who is wife and mother has so many duties to perform – cooking for the physical needs of her family, washing, mending, cleaning, and shopping and the important feeding on the Word of God, so necessary for spiritual sustenance - all calling for her constant attention, and the days seem hardly long enough at times to pull all things into place. Added to this perhaps a visitor arrives or a caller at the door who will not be said ‘nay’, and she finds it difficult to dispose of such without being rude - and just when busy preparing dinner. So she returns at last perhaps to finish peeling the potatoes, flurried and anxious. The children and husband will be home and now the meal will be late, and this thought together maybe with her aching fingers is all that can occupy her mind. Yet in less trying moments perhaps, a remembrance of life’s true values would help to find peace in the daily round. As one writer put it:-

Although I must have ‘Martha’ hands, I have a ‘Mary’ mind, and when I black the boots, I try Thy sandals. Lord, to find. I think of how they trod on earth, what time I scrub the floor, accept this

meditation when I haven't time for more! Remind me of the things I need - not just to save the stairs, but so that I may perfectly lay tables, into prayers.

Warm all the kitchen with Thy love and light it with Thy peace, forgive the worrying, and make the grumbling words to cease.

Lord who laid breakfast on the shore, forgive the world which saith, can any good thing come to God, out of poor Nazareth?

So in the simple task of preparing vegetables for the family meal, what can we find to help us in the development of characters worthy of God's children? A bowl of potatoes all shapes and sizes, some smooth, some rough. Some of the former are easy to prepare and very soon ready for the pan, but oh! the latter, how long they take – a crevasse here difficult to probe, a black spot there needs cutting out and sometimes there is very little left when all that is superfluous or unfit for consumption has been removed, for all must be clean and wholesome for the family needs. We think of the family of God and how these simple things can have a lesson if applied to us in our relationship to the things of the One who has called us with a holy calling.

We to, must be clean to be fit for the Masters use, and even the lowliest and the sinner can be made so in His sight if we are pliable in His hands. Unfit we may have been, but His mercy and love provided the means whereby we have been cleansed with the washing of water by the Word. (Ephesians 5 v 26).

We may need a lot of pruning to remove the blemishes, and this can be a very painful process. We may need the Master Surgeons knife to remove the canker of bitterness, envy and jealousy which perhaps is not always obvious to those with whom we come into contact. Yet nothing is hid from the Lord of heaven and earth, for He says through the prophet Jeremiah, "I the Lord search the heart", and again in Samuel, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart".

Perhaps we have been stubborn, proud, and like Israel of old sometimes rebellious, and the way of the Lord may mean much self-denial, but the Lord who bought us did so with His own life's blood, after years of self-denial and loving service in complete obedience to the Fathers Will.

If our vision is restricted and we lack understanding, our God will teach us in the right way if we seek humbly, for He is merciful and long suffering, not willing that any should perish. He gave His only beloved Son that all who would follow His example might have everlasting life. God is the Saviour of all men. Christ the head of the Church. He gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish that He might present it to Himself a glorious church. These are the days of preparation for us.

We may not be called upon to do great things remember Naaman, captain of the host of Assyria, to whom the prophet Elisha said, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean". Naaman was proud and went away in wrath saying, I thought he would surely come out to me and call on the name of the Lord his God and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper. "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing wouldest thou not have done it, asked his servant?"

Oh! how vain is man! and all such must be humbled to be acceptable to God, the creator of the universe, for He says through the prophet Isaiah, "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembleth at my word." Let us then humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that we may, in His mercy, be exalted in due time.

Sister Minnie Allen

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGES

Hello everyone! Doesn't time seem to fly! Here we are again - and things in the world look worse than ever! This means that the return of Jesus must be getting near! He told us that things would be dreadful, just before he comes back! Read Luke 21:25-27. We don't need to be afraid that the world will be destroyed by humans because Yahweh has a plan in place, which He has told us about in the book that He helped many people to write, by His Holy Spirit! This book is called the Bible. It is actually a collection of 66 books and letters, written by many different faithful believers over a long time - from around 1430 BC to around AD 94-96! (BC means Before Christ was born, and AD means after Christ was born). So it is actually a miracle that from beginning to end, the Bible - the written Word of Yahweh - all the books and letters, are in agreement with each other! There is no other book like it!

Anyway, I do pray that you are all well, and looking forward to hearing more about Joseph!

Remember that last time, we ended up with him in prison - and he was there for 3 long years! Remember though, that Yahweh was still looking after him, and preparing him for something great - although he didn't know it at the time!

The king of Egypt - Pharaoh - at that time (Senusert the 2nd), had put two of his officials in the prison where Joseph was, because they had both done something to annoy Pharaoh. One was Pharaoh's chief Butler, and the other was Pharaoh's chief Baker. One morning, they were both looking a bit puzzled and sad. As it was Joseph's job to serve them their food, he couldn't help noticing. He asked them, "Why do you both look so sad today?" They explained that they had each had a very strange and vivid dream while they had been sleeping, and they knew that they were no ordinary dreams, but they couldn't understand what they meant! Immediately Joseph told them that Yahweh may have sent them these dreams, and if that was the case, He might allow Joseph to understand the meanings! Joseph was keen to give Yahweh the credit for any interpretation that he might receive. He did not pretend to be clever and do it all by himself.

The chief Butler told Joseph his dream. He said that he had seen a grape vine in front of him, with 3 branches, which immediately grew buds, then blossomed, and straight away had ripe grapes on them! He said, "In my hand I was holding Pharaoh's cup, and I pressed the grapes so that the juice ran into the cup - and then I gave it to Pharaoh! Oh whatever could this dream mean?" Joseph was right - Yahweh allowed him to understand the meaning of the dream, so he was able to tell the Butler, "The 3 branches are 3 days! Within 3 days, Pharaoh will have you brought out of the prison and restored to your position as chief Butler, and you will serve Pharaoh as you did before!"

Of course, the Butler was delighted with this news! But Joseph asked him to please mention him to Pharaoh, when he got the chance, and see if Pharaoh could arrange for his release, because he had been falsely accused, and put into prison, even though he had done nothing wrong! Not only this, but he had been stolen away from the land of the Hebrews - Canaan - the land which Yahweh had promised to Abraham's descendants.

Then, when the Baker saw that the Butlers dream had a good meaning, he was very eager to tell Joseph his dream too! He told Joseph, "In my dream, I had 3 baskets of white bread, which I was carrying on my head. The top basket was full of baked food for Pharaoh - but then a lot of birds swooped down and ate it all!"

Unfortunately for the Baker, the meaning of his dream was not a happy one! Once again, Yahweh gave Joseph the meaning, and he told the Baker, "The 3 baskets are 3 days. Within 3 days, Pharaoh will have you brought out of prison - to be hanged!" What a nasty shock for the Baker!

In 3 days' time, it was Pharaoh's birthday, and he made a feast for all his servants. Just as Joseph had said, the Butler was released from prison and restored to his position to serve Pharaoh with his cup. But the Baker was brought up out of prison - and hanged - just as Joseph had said. But - the chief Butler forgot all about Joseph, and so he said nothing to Pharaoh about him, as Joseph had asked. Oh Dear - poor Joseph! His hope of perhaps being released, was dashed. It seemed that everyone had forgotten about him! And two whole years passed by.

Then one day, Pharaoh himself had some strange dreams! In the first dream, he was standing by the river, when all of a sudden, seven lovely fat cows came up out of the water and fed in the meadow. Then seven thin and ugly cows also came up out of the water and they ate up the lovely fat cows, but even afterwards, they were still thin and ugly! How strange!

In the second dream, Pharaoh saw seven lovely big ears of corn, come up on a stalk. Then after them, seven thin and wind scorched ears of corn sprang up. The thin ears of corn ate up the fat ears of corn!

Pharaoh immediately called his magicians and asked them to explain these dreams. But they couldn't do it! Pharaoh was at a loss! Then, the chief Butler suddenly remembered Joseph! He told Pharaoh about the strange dreams that both he and the Baker had had, while in prison, and how Joseph had told them of the correct meanings - how everything had happened just as Joseph had said. Pharaoh immediately gave orders for Joseph to be brought out of the prison, and allowed him to wash and change his clothes and shave, ready to be brought before him!

Pharaoh then told Joseph his dreams, and explained that none of his wise men could tell him their meaning, and that he had been told that Joseph could. Once again, Joseph was quick to give Yahweh the credit for what he was able to do. And once again, Yahweh allowed Joseph to understand what the dreams meant. "The two dreams are really the same" said Joseph. "Yahweh has shown you what He is about to do." The seven fat cows, and the seven fat ears of corn, are seven years which are coming, with plenty of food, throughout all the land of Egypt. But after this, there will be seven years of famine, when food will be scarce, and it will be very severe!" Joseph gave Pharaoh this advice - "Choose some wise men during the years of plenty, to store up grain in big storehouses, so that when the seven years of famine come, there will be enough food to keep all the people supplied." Pharaoh thought this was an excellent idea - and was very impressed with Joseph! He could see Joseph had some special qualities and that his God, Yahweh, was powerful! "Where can I find a wiser man than you?" he said to Joseph. He straight away promoted Joseph to be in charge of the whole scheme, and also in charge of the whole land of Egypt - second in charge to the Pharaoh himself! Joseph was given Pharaoh's special signet ring, royal clothing, and a gold chain round his neck - and he was allowed to ride in a royal chariot, and people were commanded to bow, when they saw Joseph coming!

Wow! What a change! One minute a prisoner - the next minute, the second in command of the whole land of Egypt! Pharaoh commanded that nothing could now be done by anyone without Joseph's permission! Pharaoh changed Joseph's name to Zaphnath-Paaneah, and gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, as his wife! So Joseph was now married as well! Joseph was now 30 years old.

However, there was a lot to get done! Joseph had to organise many reliable people to make sure that a lot of the grain produced in the good years, was constantly stored away properly in huge storehouses, over the next seven years, to prepare for the seven more years of severe famine which would follow. And during this time, Joseph and his wife had two children - two boys, one called Manasseh (the name means 'making forgetful') because Joseph was so happy now in his new life with

Yahweh's blessing, that he was beginning to forget all the bad times he'd been through; and the other was called Ephraim (meaning fruitfulness) because as Joseph said, "Yahweh has caused me to be fruitful, even in this land of Egypt where I've had so much trouble and pain."

When the seven years of plenty were ended, then began the years of famine. This was when all those years of storing food began to pay off. At Joseph's command, the storehouses were opened, and everyone in Egypt was able to buy grain, when they needed it. So Pharaoh, Joseph, and many other people, were very grateful to Yahweh for warning them beforehand, by giving Pharaoh those dreams, and for telling Joseph the meaning, allowing them to be prepared, so that many many people did not starve! In fact, the famine affected other lands around Egypt also, and when people from those lands heard that there was plenty in Egypt, they travelled there to buy some for themselves and take it back. All this was able to happen because of just one man - Joseph! Yahweh had arranged his life, and prepared him for this, over many years, so that many lives would be saved! Yahweh always has a plan, and many people have found themselves becoming a part of those plans, often not knowing what was happening until much later!

We will pick up this story again, from Genesis chapter 42, next time, and you will be surprised at what happens next!

I pray Yahweh's protection over you all!

With love from Dawn ♥

Matthew 22:37 to 40

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

