

*Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart
Toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest (Jer 31:21)*

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN WAYMARK

Volume 6

Issue 10

**Devoted to the Defence and Proclamation of the Way of Life
in Opposition to the Dogmas of Papal and Protestant Christendom**

<i>The Last Words of David</i>	2
<i>Strengthened by the Word of His Grace</i>	7
<i>Living Under the Shadow of Judgment</i>	12
<i>The Restoration of Israel—To God (1)</i>	20
<i>Lessons from the Life of David</i>	25
<i>The BASF—Its Importance and Teaching</i>	30



“I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev 6:2)

*“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable ...” (Jas 3:17)
“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)*

The Last Words of David

A revised rendering of the Last Words of David by Bro Thomas is instructive to consider by way of comparison with the AV:

“now these words of David, the last, are an oracle of David, son of Jessie, even an oracle of the mighty man enthroned concerning an anointed one of the gods of Jacob, and the pleasant themes of Israel’s songs. The spirit of Jehovah spake through me, and his word was upon my tongue. Gods of Israel spake to me, and the Rock of Israel discoursed, saying: “There shall be a just man ruling over mankind, ruling in the righteous precepts of the gods, and as brightness of morning he shall arise, the sun of an unclouded dawn, shining forth after rain, upon tender grass of the earth. Though my house is not perfect with the Mighty One, yet hath he ordained for me the covenant of the age, ordered in everything, and sure. Truly this is all my salvation, and all my delight, though he cause it not to spring forth. But the wicked shall be all of them as a thorn bush to be thrust away, yet without hand shall they be taken. Nevertheless a man shall smite upon Them, he shall be filled with iron, and a shaft of a spear, but with fire to burn up while standing, they shall be consumed”

*Bro J Thomas,
Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come,
Feb. 1855*

There are a number of most interesting changes from the AV in this passage, one of which is Bro Thomas’s rendering of “*Elohim*” rendered “God” in the AV as “gods”. His explanation for this rendering is as follows:

“three distinct words, *Elohim*, YAHWEH, and *Ail*, in five different places are used in the original, which are incorrectly rendered in the Common Version by *Lord* and *God*; and that two of the three being in the singular, and one in the plural, they ought to be so translated for the benefit of the English readers and this we did partially in our translation by rendering *Elohim* by “gods,”: *Yahweh* by “Jehovah,” and *Ail* by “Mighty One” ... Christ is one and the chief of ; the future gods of Jacob, who will be all equal to the angels, and associated with them; which angels were gods to Israel, but not objects of worship, under the law; and that David refers to both these classes of *Elohim* in his oracle”

(Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, 1861)

Another, perhaps more significant change is towards the beginning of the citation, from present tense to future tense: i.e. from “he that *ruleth* over men must be just” to “There *shall be* a just man ruling over mankind”. This change immediately brings to our attention the true import of the last words of David—that

they form a prophecy concerning David's greater Son, even our Master Jesus the Christ. Messiah is pre-eminently the "just" One who shall reign over mankind, and over Israel in particular. In speaking of how Israel rejected their Messiah, Peter said:

"Ye denied the Holy One *and the Just*, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you" (Acts 3:14).

Again, in a similar vein Stephen testified:

"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of *the Just One*; of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52).

Though rejected by his people, Jesus, as the Anointed one of Yahweh, shall yet rule over men Justly. Indeed, this Just aspect of Messiah's rule is picked up again in Isaiah chapter 11, where we are again told that he shall reign "in the fear of God":

"the Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor ..." (Isa. 11:2-4).

Here we find the Just one reigning over men—indeed, he is truly the Only Just ruler to govern the nations, for since the fall from grace in Eden, men have always sought their own ends, and not to the glorification of Yahweh. Even David himself trespassed in the matter of Bath-Sheba, despite being a man after Yahweh's own heart.

Yet Messiah shall not rule alone: his brethren, culled in the most part from the ages of times past shall rule with him. We have this on Apostolic authority, for Paul said: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world be judged by you are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor. 6:2). We would do well to heed this point in our relationships with each other—we must seek to prepare for judging the world in truth and wisdom; how much more then should we judge righteous judgment in the things pertaining to this life?

David continues to describe the "Just" one thus:

"he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ..." (2 Sam. 23:4).

This is a theme picked out many times in Scripture: the sun arising at the dawn of a new day. Malachi describes how "the Sun of righteousness shall arise with

healing in his beams” (Mal. 4:32). Again, the last words of Moses before his death also speaks in terms of the sun rising:

“And he said, Yahweh came from Sinai, and *rose up* from Seir unto them; he *shined forth* from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of his saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them” (Deut. 33:2).

Notice here, that Yahweh is said to *rise up* and *shine forth*—both images taken from the natural rising of the sun in the literal creation. Truly it is written that “Yahweh Elohim is a sun and shield” (Psa. 84:11), and it is his glory that shall shine across all of the earth, illuminating every darkest recess, dispelling every work and shadow of darkness.

Once again, in these things, we see the future role of Messiah’s brethren, for it is testified of those who do His will:

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mat. 13:43).

Living and reigning with Jesus their elder brother, they shall shine forth with the same glory as he, and collectively constitute the “sun of righteousness” that shall shine throughout the earth.

But notice David’s description of that day, it is “a morning without clouds”. The clear brilliance of the Sun shall be unhindered in that day. There will be no clouds of sin to obscure it, rather all of the earth shall be bathed in the glory of Yahweh covering all the earth as the waters cover the sea.

That day, however, is to be preceded by a night of blackness and darkness. Before the sun is permitted to so shine, there will be first the clouds and rain of Yahweh’s judgments upon the earth. David continues to describe that day as “as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining *after rain*”

Psalm 72 describes this rain:

“He shall come down *like rain* upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth” (Psa. 72:6).

Notice here, the grass is “mown” or cut down. “All flesh is as grass” (Isa. 40:6) was the message of John the Baptist, and prior to the establishment of righteousness in the earth, the nations will need to be cut down and blown away as chaff before the summer threshing floor. Then the rains will come to water the earth, providing for the “tender grass” that David prophesied would come its place.

Ezekiel 38 also speaks of reign, in describing the stormy judgments that shall come upon Israel, speaking of the Gogian confederacy:

“Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee” (Eze. 38:9).

How glorious it will be therefore, when the survivors of Israel who endure these judgments shall enter into a new age, even a morning without the angst of storm-clouds across the land.

Again, there are spiritual principles to be drawn out from these things. Messiah’s brethren are exhorted to carefully consider the foundations upon which they are built, when the stormy winds of life arise against them:

“whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Mat. 7:24-25).

Those who endure the stormy trials and afflictions of life are those who are most earnest in their yearning for the day “without clouds” yet to come. But the exhortation is plain: we must heed the words of Christ, and be built upon Him as the foundation of the ecclesia. Then, no matter how violent the rains and winds beat against us, we shall survive through the darkness of a Gentile Night, to the dawning of a new day.

David continues:

“Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he maketh it not to grow” (2 Sam. 23:5).

Here we have words which are most comforting in their import. David compared this description of the “just” with himself, and saw that his own house was “not so with God”. And so it is with ourselves: when we compare our own lives with that of Messiah, it is quite evident that our houses are not so with God either. But the point made here, is that despite this, it had pleased Yahweh to make a covenant with David, the particulars of which are laid out in 2 Sam. 7. This covenant, said David is “all my desire”. Even so Messiah spake: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33). If all our desire is kingdomward—if we, like David, seek first the things concerning Yahweh’s Kingdom and Righteousness we, like him, shall be enter into the everlasting covenant—even though our houses be “no so” with Him. That which is our primary objective in life will determine our end, not personal sinlessness. Those who seek after the Spirit shall of the Spirit be rewarded with life and immortality, despite their personal failings. But those who seek after the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, and will be judged according to their deeds.

The rest of David’s words, according to Bro Thomas’ translation are as follows:

“But the wicked shall all of them be as a thorn bush to be thrust away, yet without hand shall they be taken, nevertheless a man shall smite upon them, he shall be filled with iron, and the shaft of a spear, but with fire to burn up whilst standing they shall be consumed” (2 Sam. 23:6-7).

In these closing words, we have the mutual antagonism between men of the flesh and the “Just” one who shall rule over men. They, it is prophesied, shall fill him with “iron and the shaft of a spear” - which we can readily see was applicable to Christ, whose side was pierced with a spear (Jno. 19:34). But they, as a thorn bush, were to be devoured by him with the flame of Divine Judgments, being taken without hand” Yet again, we have words of instruction for us: The writer to the Hebrews informs us:

“the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. ***But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected***, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned” (Heb.5:7-8).

We must give heed therefore, to our portion of Yahweh’s vineyard, ensuring that the weeds do not dominate it. The Master’s Parable of the Sower is instructive here: the thorns that can grow up are said to be “the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches” (Mat. 13:22). Things not immediately obvious that they are thorns, but which nevertheless choke the growing seed of the Word. Only those who permit the seed—which is the word of God (Luke 8:11)—to grow and yield it’s fruit in due time shall be granted an entrance into the Kingdom. Those whose manner of life is contrary to the Truth, whose hearts are filled with barbs of antagonism against the Truth, shall meet the same end as those who sought the destruction of Christ with a crown of thorns being placed on His Head.

What we find then, in considering the last words of David, are words which are prophetic of Messiah, but which also provide comfort and instruction for ourselves also, as we seek to pattern our lives on His. Though we may be rejected by the world around us as he was, nevertheless whatever the worst they might do to us, we can be confident that as David and his Greater Seed, we shall inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the World.

Christopher Maddocks

“There must be no reasoning upon the harmlessness of conforming to the world. Its enticements without, and sympathizing instincts of the flesh within, must be instantly suppressed; for, to hold parley with its lusts is dangerous. When one is seduced by “the deceitfulness of sin” “he is drawn away by his own lusts, and enticed.

Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, brings forth death” ; in other words, he plucks forbidden fruit, and dies, if not forgiven”

Brother John Thomas

Strengthened by the Word of His Grace

When Paul parted with the Ephesian brethren at Miletus, he said:

“I commend you to God *and to the Word of His grace*, which is able to build you up.”

Do we not find it so? The reading of the Bible is so up-building. It makes us feel so strong when we receive into the mind and heart the things it contains. Let us endeavour this morning to realise the truth of this in the consideration of the three portions that have been read. It must necessarily be a mere skim—something in the nature of the bee’s hurried visit from flower to flower; still it will give us strength.

We have first the case of Hannah’s prayer, and its answer. She was barren, and besought the Lord for a son, and received Samuel. This is among the things “written for our learning.” What do we learn from it but this, that God regards the prayer of those who fear Him, and that it is our privilege, in the spirit of faith and hope, to make our requests known unto God? Shall we say it does not apply to a time like ours, when “there is no open vision”? This was the very character of Hannah’s time, as we are informed in 1 Sam. 3:1:

“The Word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.”

Shall we say we sometimes ask and receive not? Perhaps there may be some mistake here. John says:

“We have this confidence, that if we ask anything ‘according to His will,’ He heareth us.”

Our requests in particular cases may not be according to His will. His will concerning those who please Him is that they shall have what is for their best interest in the ultimate sense. Of this we cannot be judge; but it must certainly be our desire that we should have this and this only. When, therefore, we ask a specific thing, it is because we think it would be for the best; but in this we may be mistaken; and if God withholds it, He is really answering our prayer in not giving us what we ask. We would not desire what might interfere with our relation to God. So we should reason fallaciously and do ourselves an injustice if we were to conclude that God disregards our prayer because He grants not what we request. We know how it is with our own children sometimes; they ask us to do this or that in their innocent inexperience. We have to say, “My dear, I could not possibly do it.” Why? Because we love our children not? Nay, but because we love them. Let us have this faith towards God, then, that the best answer He can give us sometimes is not to permit us what we ask.

But there are things He is willing we should have, things perhaps that He may be

purposing, and yet which we have to ask for. Samuel was in God's purpose; yet see the interesting method by which He is brought upon the scene—the agonized and tearful prayers of a beloved daughter. It is the principle expressed in His words to Ezekiel concerning His purposed favour to Israel:

“For these things will I be enquired of.”

The practical use to make of this principle would be here. Let us conceive to ourselves, from our acquaintance with the word, what God would have us to be and to do; and then submit this ideal in earnest and constant prayer to Him that we may be permitted and assisted to conform to it—for the glory of His name and the comfort of His people.

“If we ask anything *according to His will* He heareth us.”

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

So much we get from Hannah. Turning to Isaiah 47, the instruction lies in a different direction. The Word of God is in this case against Babylon. It was uttered at a time when Babylon was great and prosperous beyond measure. We all know how completely the prophecy of Babylon's overthrow was fulfilled. This is not the striking feature this morning, however. It is something else. It is the divine light we get upon a matter which has been set in a strongly human light in our generation. Not only have the remains of Babylon been recovered in our century, but her records and even her books have been exhumed and brought to light—records preserved through all these ages, through being written on burnt clay tablets. Amongst these are prominent the monthly observations of the Chaldean astrologers, by which modern astronomers are enabled to obtain access to valuable astronomical facts of ancient date. These monthly astrological tables are greatly prized, and their compilers greatly praised. They are had in far higher reputation than the Scriptures. The human learning in the case (which did not amount to much), is had in high human repute in an age that does not shrink to disparage the God of Israel. Well, in the chapter read from Isaiah, we have a divine allusion to the very class in question, in the very age when they were busy compiling their monthly astrological tables. The thing that strikes us, is the great difference between this allusion and the spirit of human allusion.

“Let now the astrologers, the star gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from those things that shall come upon thee.”

Babylon is said to be “wearied in the multitude of her counsels.” Reference is made to “the multitude of thy sorceries wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth.” Babylon is called on ironically to fall back upon these her wise men, who are thought so well of in times of prosperity: “if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.” The divine message continues: “behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured . . .

none shall save thee.” Thus we see how differently are human wisdom and human authorities estimated by divine and by human judgment. And the course of events has entirely borne out the divine estimate. Where Babylon has gone to all know; and where are her wise men, her star gazers, her monthly prognosticators? Swallowed up in the same oblivion. It is all very reasonable in everybody’s eyes as they look back; but see how the same mistake is made from age to age. The so-called great men of the day are allowed to run away with the public judgment in divine matters. People do not seem able to realise, till the great men are dead, how powerless and unauthoritative they are in those issues of destiny which are practically important to us all.

God’s appeal to the Chaldean star gazers might well be made to the public leaders of our own day, who make light of Yahweh’s Word. Britain might be apostrophised as Babylon was: “Stand now with thy scientific speculators, thy professors, thy telescopic heaven-sweepers, thine analytic nature-triflers with instruments of all sorts, let them arise and save one of you from what I will bring upon them.” The appeal was vain in the case of Babylon, and it would be equally vain in the case of Britain. It is for us who have had our eyes opened to the wisdom of God to resist the elegant impositions of all sorts that are practised upon the public. God can save us if we are faithful to His requirements, which an arrogant and self-conceited age despises. To Him let us hold on: in Him let us trust, remembering the joy which we shall yet verify in our actual experience, the truth of God’s own saying, “they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me.”

JOHN IN PATMOS

From Isaiah we go to John in Patmos (Rev. 2), and receive by him a message from Christ, addressed in the first instance to the seven ecclesias in Asia, but also to “whomsoever hath ears to hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.” He says much more in the chapter that has been read than we can even glance at. But one or two features are very striking. His message to Sardis, for example.

“Thou hast a name that thou livest, *and art dead.*”

This is a verdict which only a divine discernment could pronounce, but the fact that such a verdict should be applicable to any ecclesia (especially one existing at the end of the first century) is suggestive of grave reflections for all, as intended. A name to live is a reputation for spiritual life. Men are liable to work for a reputation. This is in fact the very inspiration in our age of public life of all sorts, and it is liable to intrude into the realms of divine truth. To have “a name to live” is with some an object of ambition and a motive of effort. That there should be some susceptibility to reputation is legitimate, but it is a dangerous incentive, and should be kept in a very small place. Suppose you succeed in establishing “a name to live,” what then? You have in all likelihood only made a snare for yourselves—for it is a name or reputation with whom? Very likely with those who see on the surface; with those who cannot recognise genuine life; with those whose standing is false; for this is the character of the bulk of mankind, professing or non-professing. If this be the case, you are likely to be drawn to the kind

of things the doing of which will perpetuate it with them, and thus you will be held in the wrong line of things. Or, if it is otherwise, you will be led to act the part of the hypocrites in the doing of things for the reputation thereof, and not for the inherent character thereof. The best plan is, to be on the whole heedless of the name of the thing, and to be bent on the thing itself. What is this? Why, to be really alive, whether men know it or not; whether they acknowledge it or not. And this being alive is an affair of quickened understanding and affection towards God, as revealed in the Scriptures. This state of mind is not only independent of human recognition, but naturally shrinks from it, for the favour of God and the favour of man are on two such totally distinct foundations that they do not in their nature mix. How pitiable is the opposite state, in which there is feverish care to be right in the eyes of man, with little or no concern towards God. Jesus declares this to have been the case with the ecclesia at Sardis. He warns them, and in warning them, warns us.

“I have not found thy works perfect towards God.”

It is not, however, for the sake of fault-finding, or in the spirit of condemnation that he speaks thus gravely. It is that there may be reformation.

“Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.”

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die.”

Jesus would not speak in this strain if change and reformation were impossible. They may be difficult of achievement: but under the right pressure—the pressure of truth and wisdom arising from enlightened desire and fear—they can be brought about. The human mind is a flexible thing, and adapts to pressures. The result of education is the universal proof of this. Therefore, the pressure of the Truth, continually brought to bear will change a condition of the mental man. And bring him into the state which Jesus desired. The Truth, consisting of many things, includes this fact: that the eye of Christ is on communities professing his name; that “he walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” That he reads the heart, and will cause every man to find according to his own ways, even now (Rev. 2:1, 23). If men could but see it, there is reason to fear the judgment of Christ even now. He appeals to this in his message to Sardis.

“If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee.”

This statement, “thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee,” shows that the threatened retribution does not refer to the judgment seat at his coming, for that will be open and recognisable by all. It is a retribution in the ways of providence in which his hand is not visible. The wrecking of an ecclesia, or the separation of a body of people through some apparently human issue may be the result of this interference. There is always reason for an ecclesia being on its guard towards Christ. But an ecclesia as a whole may be dead, and a few in it

alive. This is shown by the words with which Jesus concludes the local part of his message: “thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.” Here is comfort for those living and true brethren and sisters who may find themselves in the unhappy position of being associated with dead professors whom they are powerless to galvanise into life. Remember that Christ’s approval of you will not be weaker but only all the more cordial that your souls are grieved from day to day with the insipidity and the death of the nominal professors of the Truth with whom you have now to mingle;

“Spots in your feasts of charity when they feast with you; feeding themselves without fear; clouds without water; carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea; foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

There may be on the other hand ecclesias where there is no redeeming feature at all, as in the case of the Laodiceans, who while on the best possible terms with themselves, and even bragging of their capital state, are so odious to Christ as to be fit only for indignant rejection.

“Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”

Wherever there is a tendency to boast, there is a bad state of things in a spiritual point of view: for in a truly healthy state men perceive that the very best state possible at a time when God is rejected on the earth, is necessarily a poor and an afflicted one, and that the only tolerable attitude at present is that of gratitude for so much mercy in the midst of so much sin, and a patient waiting for the good things promised when the earth is purged by judgment. But even in the Laodicean state, Christ waits with gracious intentions if men will but give him the attention that is reasonable.

“Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him.”

How does he knock? By all the instrumentalities he has employed to secure the attention of men. These all focus in the Bible. In this he is knocking, knocking always. To open the door is to listen to the knocking in the reading, and to open the mind and heart to the glorious matters he has to present. Even the Laodiceans received time to act wisely in this matter. “I gave her space to repent,” is characteristic of all God’s dealings. But there is a limit, and there comes a time when He “fights against them with the sword of His mouth.”

In all these things there is a comfort and warning. The time is hastening for the full issue of them all. “The way is long and weary,” but has an end for us all,

either in the consuming judgment that waits the disobedient and unworthy (which God forbid should be our portion), or in the favour and exaltation with which God will crown the course of a patient continuance in well-doing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

*Taken from: - "Seasons of Comfort" Vol. 2
Pages 153-158
By Bro. Robert Roberts*

Living Under the Shadow of Judgment*

In 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 and at verse 10 we read:

“we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

Whether we like it or not brethren and sisters we are all living under the shadow of the judgement seat of the Lord Jesus Christ our Master. His return is indeed imminent, as I am sure we would all agree. Yet just how much are we daily aware of this impending occurrence? Indeed does this future event shape our thinking, our speech and our actions, as it should?

Now this fact can affect us in one of two ways, negatively or positively. Firstly it can affect us negatively filling us with fear and foreboding about our current position before our Heavenly Father. Possibly even paralysing our faith altogether, rendering us completely self absorbed and unable to function within the body of Christ.

Or secondly and more positively it can provide a means of evaluating our daily lives in light of this future event. Spurring us to individually correct our lives in the truth, as we read elsewhere “for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” Surely this second means of looking positively at the judgement seat of Christ is the means the Eternal Spirit wishes us to take.

Indeed in our New Testament reading in the Epistle of James and in the second chapter we read:

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty”

Consistency in thought, speech and action is what the Eternal Spirit is here reminding these first century brethren and ourselves. Specifically consistency in our dealings one with another, learning to treat everyone alike, without any manner of partiality, whether good or bad.

We are therefore being exhorted here to be like both our Heavenly Father and our beloved Master who treated all after the same manner. To be no respecter of

* *From an Exhortation given on 8/06/2008*

persons, a thing, which is very easy to say, but extremely difficult for us to do, because of the nature we bare.

only the same is true concerning the possibility of our falling asleep in Christ.

The first half of this second chapter concerns this problem of respecting persons, which is a work that negates rather than reflects faith. Because our faith is energized by love and when we are partial there is a lack of love manifesting that our actions are fleshly. Whether we perceive them to be or not, thus this sin of respecting persons is incredibly subtle and easy to fall into.

Yet how hard this is for us brethren and sisters to consciously live aware of this great foreshadowing event.

In order to avoid this problem of partiality in respect of persons we are exhorted to live as those about to be judged by our Lord.

The verse goes onto speak of the standard of judgement by which we are judged being “the law of liberty”. A law no longer based upon the legal commands of the Mosaic code, but upon moral principles, which were the very spirit of those legal commandments. Thus the moral precepts, which our Master taught in the Sermon on the Mount, become our code of practice and our rule for life.

In verse twelve the later half of the verse reads, “as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty”. Now the phrase “*shall be*” in the Greek, is a strengthened form of a word, which means to personally “*care about*” something. In this context it means to have the context of the judgement always in our mind, because we care about the outcome of it. This phrase also implies that this judgement being considered is indeed imminent.

Now liberty does not mean we can live as we please, because if we were to do so, we would quickly find ourselves slaves once more to our sin. That is the illusion of freedom, which the world tries continually to beguile us with. No brethren and sisters the liberty is the freedom from sin to act as our Heavenly Father designed for us in the first place to manifest his character and glory. Liberty then is the choice to follow that, which is right in the sight of our God.

The Greek for this phrase “shall be” is a present active participle, which indicates to us brethren and sisters that this is a principle that we should all live by. More than this brethren the use of the participle here indicates that each one of us has consciously, freely and joyfully chosen to live under this shadow of judgement.

Now in the Greek the word “judged” in verse twelve is a present passive infinitive, which means that this law we are called upon to live by in Christ is presently judging us day by day in our walk in the truth. Since this judgement is passive, it is happening to us, actually as a direct outcome of our thoughts, speech and actions as is outlined in the first half of verse.

Thus we are to be living each and every day as if we are about to be judged. Indeed there is a truth to this on two counts, firstly we know not the day or the hour of our Master’s return and sec-

We could explain it in this way imagine you are walking across country following a map with a compass, then de-

pending on a number of factors (terrain, visibility etc) and your ability to read the two instruments. You will either, be on course to reach the destination or off course, which will require continual adjustment.

Apparently one of the Apollo rockets that travelled to the moon a journey of around a quarter of a million miles was only on course for around 7,500 miles of the journey. If we convert that distance to time, it may be easier to grasp – for every half an hour that it was in flight, the rocket was only on target for one minute. Yet because of its instruments constantly correcting the missions course it still safely got to the moon.

The same is true of our every day lives we are either on course manifesting our Heavenly Father after the example of the one we are here to remember or we are not. Yet how are we to achieve these necessary course directions day by day like that Apollo rocket?

In Chapter 1 and at verse 25

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

The law of liberty is also our manual for course adjustment, as we walk forward in faith. Those two words “looketh” and “continueth” are both Aorist active participles in the Greek, meaning they are principles that we should daily live by. That first word “looketh” means “a careful and close inspection” and the second word means to “abide, remain in or near”. So we are then brethren and sisters to observe the

principles of the word then stick by them as our rule of life.

For by this law of liberty we are able to evaluate our lives day by day and see what corrections are necessary. Thereby judging ourselves so that we should not be condemned with the world.

Returning to this twelve verse in the first half we read “so speak ye, and so do”. The idea here is of fulfilling the royal law and so doing well. In other words applying the law of liberty in our lives as best we can with respect to our dealings with one another. For the royal law was “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”.

Our Heavenly Father wants us brethren and sisters to follow in the footsteps of our Master and practice what we preach in our daily lives. For the two occurrences of the word “so” in the first half of verse twelve indicate how our Father wants us to apply the principles of the first eleven verses in our daily lives.

We are to “so speak” and “so do” in accordance with this royal law for in loving our neighbour, as our self there will be no partiality shown on our part towards others. Now both the words “speak” and “do” are present active imperatives in the Greek. They are commands given to us so that we each might be continuously speaking and always acting in accordance with the moral example of our Master.

When we examine the uses of this word “speak” in this particular form in the Greek we learn that in most of the cases it is concerned with being always truthful and communicating the truth of the gospel. Thus our words are to be only “that which is good to the use of edify-

ing, that it may minister grace unto the hearers". Let us remember for do we not read elsewhere:

Matthew Chapter 12, verses 36 & 37:

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

The same is to be likewise true of all our actions, our labour with regards to one another, "whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God". The Master in the Sermon on the Mount and that seventh chapter, which is particularly strongly linked with this chapter James two, records:

Matthew Chapter 7 and at verse 12:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

The problem here in James chapter two was one of judging one's brethren and treating them practically in the light of that estimation. We find a similar situation in the Epistle to the Romans.

Romans Chapter 14, verses 10 – 13:

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an

occasion to fall in his brother's way."

Now let us remember brethren and sisters, that Romans, chapter fourteen is a chapter that delineates what to do with regards to secondary or non-fundamental matters of personal conviction. That final verse from this quotation in Romans presents us with two great evils, which we can personally place in the way of our brethren and sisters.

1. Stumbling block is an obstacle (following our example).
2. Occasion to fall is a snare or trap (violating their conscience)

So when we "speak" and when we "do" in relation to one another we must judge and ensure to the best of our ability by looking carefully into the law of liberty that we are not causing either of these two problems.

No one was able to convict our Master of sin, even though they tried relentlessly to perform both these evils by putting obstacles in his path or through trying to trap him in his words. Now we have a high priest brethren and sisters who was tempted in all points, as we yet without sin from whom we are able to find grace to help in time of need to overcome our sin.

Interestingly in the first Epistle of John there is a very similar exhortation to what we find here in James.

1st John Chapter 3 and at verse 18

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

You will notice that the practical illustration in John occurs before, but with

James the exhortation appears first. As it is the finish of one section and the bridge into the second half of the chapter. Now these two similar illustrative tests are means to test whether we indeed have faith and whether our faith is energised by our love one for another after the example of the Master, as we see in the emblems before us upon the table.

Returning to James chapter two we are given this simple and seemingly insignificant passing situation to assess whether we are individually manifesting the law of liberty by loving our neighbour as our self and so fulfilling that royal law.

James chapter 2 and verses 15 – 16:

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

Let us firstly note brethren and sisters that the particular context here of this divine sacrificial love is in having mercy. Remember the key thing about the practice of “agape” in our lives is that it requires a decision of the will in choosing to love another sacrificially. It is this decision of the will that these first brethren and sisters and indeed we today need help with brethren and sisters, “for our spirit is indeed willing, but our flesh is weak”.

Now this need of practical provision was a very real issue for these first century brethren. We must remember that the early Jewish brethren were being persecuted and had to flee from Judea

to elsewhere in the Roman Empire. This meant that they often arrived, elsewhere destitute and required immediate help from their brethren.

Now when the gospel was first preached and then persecuted under Saul many of the Jews refused to help the early brethren and so they left and moved elsewhere within the Empire. Which was exactly what the Eternal Spirit wanted of them in the first place. Later those Jewish brethren, who were now established outside Judea, resented helping those later converts from Judea, because some of those same Jews had refused them help earlier.

Thus one would say to the needy “depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled”. Apparently this was a common benediction of the time, but what is fascinating about it is that the words “depart”; “warmed” and “filled” are all commands in the Greek. Indicating that person speaking these words thought themselves to be spiritual and only concerned themselves with spiritual issues. This can be another subtle error we can make like these Jewish brethren in the first century; to negate temporal concerns altogether.

In Matthew Chapter 23, verses 3 & 4

“All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”

Here then in this illustration we see the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who regarded themselves as righteous and

entirely spiritual. Faith to them was more theoretical than practical and this is a criticism that is often aimed at brethren of our persuasion and sadly more often than not I think with some justification.

So the Eternal Spirit through the Apostle asks the question (end of verse 16) if you fail to provide those things, which are necessary, then to what profit is your faith?

Indeed brethren and sisters who can dismiss that our Heavenly Father indeed provides such opportunities in our lives, so that we would become a conduit of his love and grace to the individual in need? How often have you reacted after a situation and said I should have said this or done that, but you were either distracted or unable to perceive the issue clearly enough at the time.

Thus how many opportunities do we each miss to be such conduits of mercy in the lives of one another and so equally miss out on the transformation in our lives those opportunities would bring. Let us not be as the Pharisees who said, but did not, but let us be truly godly brethren who “so speak and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty”.

The Eternal Spirit through the Apostle Paul gives the following exhortation:

Philippians Chapter 3, verse 17:

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”

This is an exhortation to be observant and to locate faithful brethren who so

speaking and who so do. When you have found such examples then carefully observe their behaviour, their speech and their manner of life and model your speech and actions upon it.

In verse seventeen the Eternal Spirit through the Apostle states clearly that the faith of the one who said those things to the needy brother and who helped him not was dead, totally lifeless. Now verse eighteen brethren and sisters provides us with the proper contrast.

Verse 18

“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”

Now it is thought that the “a man” here is actually a reference to James himself, as a faithful brother in Christ. The Apostle then continues to show the necessary interplay between faith and works with the examples of Abraham and Rahab. As brother Thomas clearly shows Abraham was firstly justified by faith and then confirmed that justification by his subsequent works through, which his faith was matured.

The same is equally true of us in terms not only of our faith, but also with regards to the atonement in the Lord Jesus Christ we are here to remember in the emblems before us upon the table. Our faith in the efficacy of the Master’s sacrifice and our faith in the faithfulness of the promises of Almighty God related to that sacrificial work. Must then develop into a faith that is active in each of our lives faithfully living the implications of our beliefs concerning the event we are gathered to remember. Our faithfulness does not add to the

efficacy of the Master's work in any shape or form that is why we can never be saved by our works, rather our works are a visible witness that our faith is indeed real and has substance. Thus by our works we prove the efficacy of the Master's sacrifice in becoming participatory representatives in the outworking results of the atonement.

In faithfully manifesting our faith by our works in all that we say and do, as verse twelve exhorts us; we likewise become examples to one another and by that example we influence others for good or ill. Thus our witness then has a much wider ripple effect than just our own judgement. No brother, sister, family or even an ecclesia is an island, but we are all interconnected and none of us have any idea just how broad our individual witness and influence can be?

Brethren and sisters our speaking and our doings are meant to edify one another. So that our influence will be positive not only for today, but also more importantly that our edifying witness will stretch unto the judgement seat of Christ.

In 1st Timothy Chapter 4, verse 12:

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

The word for “example” in this verse carries the idea of being the substance a living embodiment, a pattern to follow. Notice again that we have highlighted for us, both speaking and doing with the two words “word” & conversation”. This exhortation carries a command at the beginning of it to make our exam-

ple so faithful that no man is able to “despise” our witness. That nothing can be laid against us to nullify that witness and limit its influence upon one another.

Now if we all think carefully and observe one another we could all find something that if we dwelt upon could lead to us despising the witness of one another. Because in close relationships our nature will spill over from time to time brethren, but rather than despising one another we are to extend mercy.

Think for a moment about the three examples the Eternal Spirit through the Apostle speaks of here in this chapter. The first two are Abraham and Rahab and if we were to manifest that fleshly mind we could easily find something to despise both of their examples (Abraham had lapses of judgement and Rahab's background). The third witness is one that is only alluded too and that is to David in verse eleven.

Verse 11

“For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.”

Now how do we know this is the case well in the way these two commandments from the ten given at Sinai are reversed, for they should be the other way round? Yet they are given here exactly as David committed them. David failed terribly to uphold the royal law in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah.

The Eternal Spirit is exhorting us not to display the mindset of the Pharisees held by some first century Jewish brethren who were overtly judgmental

of their brethren and sought to uphold their own righteousness. None of us would place our selves on a par with any of these three worthies from the Old Testament. Remember what we read earlier from Romans “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ”.

We are constantly being brought back to this principle of the judgement to come must regulate our conduct now. It has a regulatory force in our lives brethren and sisters not because of fear, but rather on account of love. On account of our love for our Heavenly Father for what has been accomplished in our Lord, as is evident before us upon the table in the bread and wine. On account of our fervent love one for another, because we are aware that we are unable on our own to overcome.

Fear as a motivational principle will only take you so far, but love is the greatest means of motivation and that is able to cover a multitude of sins. We must learn the lesson of verse thirteen.

Verse 13

“For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment”.

Let us then learn this fact expressed elsewhere by our Lord “blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy”. David’s sinned greatly affected him, as did Yahweh extending mercy to him. So that he became a very compassionate man who cared deeply for his people seeking to teach others our Heavenly Fathers ways. We likewise are to consider ourselves like David did and learn to balance these two characteristics of mercy and judgement.

Now we shall not always get them in the correct balance, because of our nature and our finite ability to understand circumstances. Yet we must try and if we are honest it will be safer for us to fall on the side of mercy if we are unsure of an issue.

In Zechariah Chapter 7, verse 9:

“Thus speaketh Yahweh of armies, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother”.

Now brethren and sisters as we come to contemplate the one who will shortly execute true judgement and show mercy and compassion to every man his brother. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren”, as we read in Hebrews.

In our Lord then we see the bread, which speaks to us of the word made flesh and as such he is able to execute judgement in relation to us. Then in the wine brethren and sisters we have the out working of his faith in the pouring out of his life desiring to open up that way to life that mercy and compassion might be shown to us his brethren. Proving himself to be “a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people”.

Now as we come to partake of these emblems brethren and sisters let us faithfully endeavour to “so speak ye, and so do, as they that are about to be judged by the law of liberty”.

Wayne Marshall

The Restoration of Israel —to God (1)

In recent years the ugly face of anti-Semitism has reappeared, particularly in Europe, with the burning of synagogues, defacing grave stones and attacking individual Jews. The strident attitude of Israel towards the Palestinians, and their ‘shoot first and talk later’ policy of dealing with car bombers and stone-throwing youngsters on the West Bank has not endeared them to that family of nations. They are, as Scripture clearly indicates, in spiritual darkness—that is, the nation as a whole. Although there are now ecclesias in Israel, for which we greatly rejoice, we are at the present time “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Pet. 2:11) awaiting the coming of our Lord to “restore again the Kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6). We are expressly told by Paul, “... we are saved by *the* Hope (Greek)” (Rom. 8:24) - that “hope”, of course, being “the Hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20)

However, in our public and private witness it is essential that we are seen to be separate from the present attitude of the nation of Israel. Yes, we do see the Jews as God’s people (Ezek. 38:16), like Paul we do yearn for them (cp Rom. 9:1-2). Their return to the land of promise in recent years is indeed a “sign of the times” (Isa. 9:1-2, Ezek. 38:8). But, the weight of our message is on the Return of the Jews to their God through the Lord Jesus Christ. The inhabiting of the land of promise today is but a forerunner of a greater regathering, accompanied by a spiritual revival based upon the “New Covenant” in Christ Jesus (Jer. 31:31-40 - compare Heb. 10:12-18). This aspect of the Gospel appears to have been neglected at times in our preaching. The misunderstanding by the general public of our real attitude to the Jewish problem, or indeed their strong objection to God’s answer on this matter may bring, as indeed in some parts of the world it has brought, a violent reaction. We must now water down the message, but care should be taken in our advertising, subject titles and talks.

The subject of the repentance and spiritual renewal of Israel is one which delights our Heavenly Father. He feels very keenly their departure from him, and he yearns for their return to him, and when accomplished will resound with Heavenly Acclaim. If God rejoices over “one sinner that repents”, how much more Israel, the natural “olive tree” at long last, partaking of the “root and fatness” (Rom. 11:15-18) at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This concept involves promises to the Patriarchs intertwined with the work of redemption in Jesus, the necessary lesson for us Gentiles is to appreciate the “goodness” of God, or else we could also face his “severity”. God speaking to Jeremiah in a vision questions: “Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord” (Jer. 31:20) or as it is put in the NIV “have great compassion for him”.

Jeremiah deals in depth with this dynamic theme of the Jews return to Yahweh, and the best way to appreciate chapters like this is to privately muse upon them, using a concordance, Bible marginal references, and a variety of translations.

Praise to God should issue from such reflections. The moving words of God through the prophet Hosea again clearly illustrate His loving concern for Israel:

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not excite the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man (Hos. 11:8-9).

The words in these verses are the same as the expression used of Joseph when he saw Benjamin in Egypt: “And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother” (Gen. 43:30). In the heartfelt feelings of Joseph and his repentant brothers, we have a delightful type of the innermost yearnings of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentant Israel. When we come to the time of the “restitution of all things” we should discover in the Scriptures the joy experienced by our God. Zephaniah records: “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3:17—Amplified Old Testament). Of course, these words will apply to the Lord Jesus Christ and the redeemed, but in applying to them, it is surely applicable to Yahweh their God. Isaiah adds to the “wondrous story”, speaking again of the Jewish people in the Millennium: “for as a young man married a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isa. 62:5). This is in a context of the marriage of Hephzibah to Hezekiah (see verse 4). As the margin indicates, the name “Hephzibah” signifies “my delight is in her” - when Israel bears spiritual fruits to God then the meaning of that name will be fulfilled and the natural benefits of “basket and store” will flow.

ISRAEL THE GREAT NATION

An important element of the promises made to Abraham was that of Israel becoming a “great nation” (Gen. 12:2). This “greatness” is again spoken of by Moses, obviously drawing the minds of his hearers back to the above Scripture: “Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this **great** nations is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so **great** who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so **great** that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deut. 4:5-6).

Notice that as indicated, the word “great” is used three times in connection with the reaction of Israel by the surrounding nations. They were to be an example of Godliness, a beacon in the midst of Gentile darkness, through which they would attract the nations to turn to God and “live”. This has rarely happened in Bible times, but it will happen, because a remnant of the Jews will turn to their Saviour and be a spiritually dynamic force on this planet. Jerusalem will not only be the

hub of the nations, it will also be the centre of spiritual attraction in the glorious time of Messiah's reign. Very importantly, God will be glorified in these matters, as Isaiah records: "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21—see also 61:3). We read in a range of Scriptures the reaction of the nations to this spiritual jewel in the Middle East, which the Lord has chastened, humbled, and brought under his wing. Zechariah writes:

“thus saith the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech.8:23).

Note how widespread is this influence “out of all languages”. The beautiful description by Hosea of Israel as a “lilly ... his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return ... grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon (Hos. 14:5). In that day:

“all the trees of the field (the nations) shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I Yahweh have spoken and have done it” (Eze. 17:24).

In other words, they will understand Israel's history—their “low” and “high” periods, being instructed by both the righteous remnant of Israel and the saints. May we be there for that amazing revelation to the Nations! At the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15), where the Apostles endeavoured to solve the dispute over whether Gentile converts should be circumcised, and other matters in connection of the Law of Moses, the Apostle James quotes from Simon Peter and a range of Old Testament reference to establish the purpose of God both with Gentile and Jew as follows:

“Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name. And to this agree the words of the Prophets; as it is written: After this, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after ther Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called saith Yahweh who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His Works from the beginnings of the world” (Acts 15:13-18).

In this passage, the Apostle James sets out the ordered plan of God:

1. Call of the Gentiles
2. Return of the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e. “I will return”)
3. The restoration of the kingdom to Israel (i.e. “build again the tabernacle of David”)

4. The influence of this restoration causes Gentiles to seek Yahweh and be part of His Name (i.e. that the residue of men might seek after the Lord)

Points 3 and 4 above are taken from Amos chapter 9, verse 11, where we read:

“in that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this.

Israel will “possess” the affections of the nations and through their example will inspire those peoples to serve God. A clear indication of this is seen in the well-known words of Isaiah chapter two, and verse three:

“And many people shall go to [Jerusalem—verse 2] and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem”.

THE DIVINE NAME LINKED WITH THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

When the Name was revealed to Moses (Exo. 3:13-15), God said:

“Yahweh Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob hath sent me unto you ...”

By linking this Name with the patriarchs, God was stressing to Moses that the promises made to these worthies in connection with Israel are closely bound up of the purpose and character of the Yahweh name. Sadly, for much of Bible History Israel have not been worthy “name-bearers” - but they will be in the Kingdom of God—they will be a “great nation” then. God’s Name is a guarantee that he Jewish people will not be destroyed: “For I am Yahweh, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not destroyed” (Mal. 3:6).

In Leviticus chapter 26, the judgements to come upon Israel are described. But in verse 44, we have these wonderful words: “and yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I AM YAHWEH THEIR ELOHIM”.

The existence of the Jewish people is not just to prove that there is a God, and that the Bible is the Word of God, important though these matters are. God is yearning for the day when they will be “in spirit and truth” true worshippers of Him, and a LIVING witness of him. After all, the words “spirit and truth” used by the Master in connection with worshipping God (to the woman at the well—Jno. 4), were first spoken by Joshua to Israel (see. Jos. 24:14). As Jeremiah writes: “in his days (the kingdom age—see v. 5) Judah shall be saved, and Israel

shall dwell safely: and this is the name whereby he shall be called: "Yahweh our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:6).

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

It was stressed at the beginning of our considerations that "the Hope of Israel" is a vital plank in our understanding of the Gospel. However, along with these glorious promises, Yahweh is termed "the Hope of Israel" on two occasions in the prophecy of Jeremiah: "O Yahweh, the Hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth ..." (Jer. 17:13).

And again:

"O, the Hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble ...".

The great danger is of us enjoying the academic side of Bible Study and not treating it as a means seeing our need of God and His Salvation, and using the Word of Life to draw closer to Him. As Jeremiah exhorts, we must see God as "the saviour thereof in time of trouble". The New Testament brings out the same exhortational concept:

"the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). This combination of the influence of the Word of God and real fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ is something we shall proceed to consider in our next article in this series, if the Lord permit.

Brian Woodall

Thank God for the blessed Hope that the cankering political and social diseases which afflict the world will be cured by the Great Physician whom He has raised up for the purpose.

Thank Him for the prospect of his coming to "destroy them that destroy the earth," to redress the grievances of this misgoverned world - to satisfy the hungering wants of oppressed humanity.

All praise to God that a ruler will arise whose power will be equal to the forcible repression of arrogance and despotism on every shore, whose wisdom will be sufficient for the exigencies of universal dominion, and whose sympathy will distill to the ends of the earth, healing every wound, drying away every tear, and filling the earth with joy and gladness.

Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning! Joy to the lands that in darkness hath lain; Hushed be the accents of sorrow and mourning, Zion in triumph begins her bright reign.

Robert Roberts

Lessons from the Life of David*

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:1-3).

This is our position my beloved brethren and sisters. We are running the race set before us, but have not yet attained to the prize. Hence the Apostle Paul’s words in Philippians 3:13-15:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”. Let as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal it unto you”.

This principle is brought out in our readings for to-day and was particularly shown in the Master as we see from Philippians 2:5-8:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, (R&V) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

We see it in the attitude of David in our Samuel reading and in the attitude of the Master in our Matthew reading. Let us go back to our readings in 1 Samuel 26 and 27. The situation had now arisen that David was in danger of being killed by Saul as we see from chapter 23:14:

“And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.”

The Ziphites, where he dwelt, were a distance from Saul, yet they travelled great lengths to betray David to him. There is a lesson from this, which we see from Proverbs 6: 16 & 18:

“These things doth Yahweh hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him. . . . An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, and feet that be swift in running to mischief”.

* Taken from an exhortation given on 13 July 2008

We should rather be swift to hear God's word, and if we are, we shall minister to our brethren and sisters and not betray them (Jas.1:19, 22-27, 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

As a result of this betrayal, Saul pursued David with 3000 chosen men as he had done when David was at Engedi. This unwarranted number is summed up in David's words in chapter 26: 20:

“Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the face of the earth before the face of Yahweh: for the king of Israel is come to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains”.

But David found where Saul lay. This was the second opportunity he had of avenging himself on Saul. On the first occasion recorded in chapter 24, Saul came into the very cave where David was hidden. This could have seemed providential, and David must have had great difficulty in restraining his men. His heart even smote him because he had cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. This demonstrated to Saul the harmlessness and innocence of David. Yet he still pursued him with this great number. Saul was like the Ziphites. His heart devised wicked imaginations and his feet were swift in running to mischief. On this second occasion David went down to the camp with Abishai who had volunteered to go down with him. Let us read verses 8-11:

“Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day:

now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth this once, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against Yahweh's anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, As Yahweh liveth, Yahweh shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. Yahweh forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against Yahweh's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go”.

In this he was a type of his greater Son. Although he had been anointed king he did not think the throne was a thing to be grasped at. Moreover David had learnt a lesson from Nabal. When Nabal refused to help David and he would have avenged himself upon him, David was restrained through the wisdom of Nabal's wife, Abigail. Shortly after this Nabal died of drunkenness and shock and David learnt from this that he was right in not lifting up his hand against Saul. The Almighty would deal with Saul as he saw fit. When David revealed to Saul that he had been into the camp and taken Saul's spear, he answered Saul with these words:

“Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If Yahweh have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, (we know it was the Ziphites) cursed be they before Yahweh;

for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of Yahweh, saying, Go, serve other gods”.

These words are very searching brethren and sisters. Saul was not a true shepherd. He was driving the faithful away instead of encouraging them. This was in contrast to what king Asa did. After the division of the kingdom between Judah and the ten tribes and after Jeroboam had set up false worship in Bethel and in Dan, Asa sought to draw the ten tribes away from this false worship to Jerusalem, after the prophet Azariah had said to him, “Yahweh is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you”(11 Chron. 15:2). Asa did seek Yahweh so we read in 11 Chronicles 15:9:

“And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel (the ten tribes) in abundance, when they saw that Yahweh his God was with him. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem ...”

But Yahweh had forsaken Saul, and not only was he driving faithful David and his men from their inheritance, encouraging them to serve other gods but through Doeg, the Edomite, had slain 85 of the priests from the city of Nob. David was the true shepherd. As he had slain the lion and the bear to defend his flock, so he had slain Goliath to save the flock of Israel. Yet Saul was driving away the very

one who had saved Israel from his inheritance.

David’s words brought Saul temporarily to a right state of mind and he recognised that he had done wrong. David returned his spear, and then we read his words in verses 23-24:

“Yahweh render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for Yahweh delivered thee into my hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth my hand against Yahweh’s anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of Yahweh, and let him deliver me out of all travail”.

These words were reflected by David in Psalm 18: 25-26:

“With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward”.

How true these words were brethren and sisters. David’s life was much set by in the eyes of the Almighty so that even when he sinned with Bathsheba, his sin was put away and his life was spared.

Saul’s response in 1 Samuel 26:25 is very significant:

“Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also thou shalt still prevail. So David went on his

way, and Saul returned to his place”.

It is noteworthy that Saul said this and no doubt he knew in his heart that it was true. The same word “*prevail*” is used of Jacob in Genesis 32:28. It was after he had wrestled with the angel, who must have only exercised human strength. But Jacob held on to the angel, as he held on to his brother’s heel in the womb. So we read in verses 28:

“Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed”

Let us turn to Hosea 12:3-5:

“He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he (the Almighty) spake with us; Even Yahweh Elohim of hosts; Yahweh is his memorial”.

The angels had led David into this situation where he had opportunity to kill Saul, as urged on by Abishai. He had to wrestle with his conscience as Jacob had wrestled with the angel. He knew that he would prevail as we see from verse 10 of chapter 26, and Saul’s words reassured him. So although David had been anointed king, he did not think the throne was a thing to be grasped at but had to wait until the time when he was given power with God. But even when he

became king he still had to continue wrestling with the angel, which involved many tears and supplications for power with God enshrined in the name Israel will not be realised until the kingdom.

We see this with the Master in our reading in Matthew. Jesus had just heard of the death of John the Baptist. He must have felt more alone. Yet as John had decreased he had to increase. So followed the wonderful miracle of the feeding of the 5000. But at the end of the miracle, we read in verses 22-23:

“And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was alone”.

The word constrain means to compel. Why did Jesus do this? The answer is in the John account in John 6:14-15:

“Then those men when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone”.

This was similar to the Master’s temptation in the wilderness, showing that these temptations followed him throughout his ministry. They actu-

ally recognised that he was the prophet like unto Moses and were going to take him by force to make him king. The Master therefore had to extricate his disciples from this situation, lest they should be drawn away by the multitude. Hence the words in verse 14, “straightway Jesus constrained (compelled) his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him”.

As one brother commented, it must have been a miracle, how the Master extricated himself from the clutches of the multitude. How he needed to go up apart into a mountain to pray and we read, “when the evening was come, he was there alone”. Jesus had been sorely tempted to grasp at kingship and he had to resist it with an iron will and at the same time to control his disciples who could have been easily carried away by the multitudes. How he needed a time of solace with his heavenly Father.

At the same time the disciples were experiencing the storm on the lake. Jesus compelled them to leave a situation in which they could have achieved fame with him, to experience this terrible storm and the contrary wind. They had to learn that kingship could only be attained through much tribulation.

But Jesus would eventually overcome and still the nations, as represented by his walking on the sea, and they would eventually rule with him, sitting on twelve thrones and judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But they had to have their eyes at all times fixed on Jesus, as Peter learned when he attempted to walk on the sea.

Adam and Eve failed to see this principle when they were tempted. They wanted equality with the Elohim. Our faith has to be tried as their faith was tried. The great danger is that we can be tempted to seek a high position in the world, even in the ecclesial world. The words of John are very relevant:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”.

So we come to remember our absent Master brethren and sisters. Rather than achieving equality with God, he chose to lay down his life in obedience to the Father and in love for his friends and suffer that cruel and shameful death on the stake. May we follow his example:

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Heb.13:12-14)”.

Carlo Barberesi

The BASF—Its Importance and Teaching:

Doctrines to be Rejected:

1— *That the Bible is only part of the work of inspiration—or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed.*

Having carefully examined each of the positive aspects of the “truth to be received”, we now turn in our considerations to the “Doctrines to be Rejected” section of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith.

There are those who maintain that an affirmation of Truth is itself sufficient, and that there is therefore no need to also detail doctrines which are incompatible with the Truth. However, Bro Robert Roberts gives good reasons why false doctrine be specifically denied as well as the Truth affirmed.

“At first sight, it might appear superfluous, and even unwarrantable, to set forth points of non-belief as a basis of faith, but a moment’s reflection will dissipate this impression, and reveal the negative side of faith to be of equal value with the positive. Every affirmative proposition has a converse. Every “yes” has a “no”; and if a man is not prepared to boldly accept that “no”, it shows his “yes” is not worth much. For instance, if a man professed to believe in the God of Israel, he is bound to be able to say that he does not believe in the gods of the heathen. If he were to be timorous about affirming the latter, would it not show that his belief in the God of Israel was no belief in the real sense, but merely a fragment of ancient polytheism, which recognised different gods for different nations? Is it not part of a true profession of faith in Jehovah to be able to say boldly that we do not believe in any of the deities of heathen imagination? Would any even “Christian” community recognise the faith of a man who hesitated to commit himself to his negative? Does not the acceptance of any truth involve the repudiation of everything opposite to it? And would not hesitancy to repudiate the opposites, show uncertainty and indecision with regard to the positives? There is but one rational answer to these questions, and that answer falls in with Paul’s exhortation, that in maintaining the Truth, we must “refuse profane and old wives fables.”

Now in the present day there are many profane and old wives’ fables abroad in the earth in the name of the Gospel. Paul predicted that such would be the case—that the time would come when men, professing the Name of Christ, would turn away their ears away from the Truth, and be turned aside unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Now, is it not of the first importance that these fables should be repudiated? Can anyone hold the Truth without rejecting them? Is it not a part of a true profession of faith in our time to reject the traditions that make the Word of God of none effect? Common sense will supply the an-

swer. There is a negative as well as a positive side to the faith in our day, for the simple reason that there is a spurious faith to be destroyed before the true faith can enter the mind. In the Apostle's days, the work was more simple. There was no counterfeit Christianity to obstruct the operations of the Truth. The apostles had only to propound their doctrines constructively. There was no necessity to go out of the way and deal with the dogmas of Paganism. Paganism was paganism, and the gospel was the gospel. They did not stand on the same ground. There was no competition between them. If Christ was received Paganism was rejected as a matter of course, but it is a different thing now. We have to deal with Paganism in the garb of Christianity. We have to deal with another gospel preached in the name of Christ and His apostles; and it therefore forms one of the first duties of intelligent and faithful testimony to protest against and expose the imposture. One of the first acts of a valid profession of the Truth is to repudiate "the profane and old wives' fables" which abound in the guise of Truth. In fact, in times like these, the repudiation of false doctrine is almost a criterion of the reception of the Truth. If a man shrink from the rejection of the fictions of so-called Christendom, it is a sure sign that his appreciation of the verities of the Gospel is very weak, if it is not altogether *non est*. Positive belief—(that is full assurance of faith) - on one side necessitates and produces positive non-belief of the other. A man heartily believing the Truth will heartily reject error; and if he does not heartily do the latter, it is an infallible proof that he is incapable of heartily doing the former. Hence the propriety and necessity of exacting the non-belief of truth-nullifying fable as a corollary to the reception of the Truth in its positive form. On this foundation, the Birmingham ecclesia take their stand, and will have fellowship with none who are not prepared with themselves to maintain the purity of the Truth.

*R Roberts, The Ambassador
of the Coming Age, 1866*

The first "doctrine to be rejected" is symmetrical with the first Truth to be received, called "The Foundation" clause—namely that all Scripture is wholly inspired by God. In addition to the frequent "Thus saith the Lord" of the prophets of old, there are two key passages from which this clause is derived:

"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, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16)

"... no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

In our age, it is not just the case that there are those who outrightly deny the inspiration of the Scriptures. As time goes by there is increasing wooliness of thought that obscures this simple Truth with the reasoning of men. For instance, it is sometime said that John “had a deeper understanding” than the other gospel writers on the basis of what is contained in both the Gospel and the Epistles which bear his name. Again, it is thought by some that the writer to the Hebrews must have been the Apostle Paul, because of his style of writing being similar to other epistles that bear his name. And again still, it is said in the context of David, that he often drew upon his own experiences as a shepherd for inspiration in order that he might pen the Psalms that bear his Name. All of these ideas miss the overall theme of Scripture that “all Scripture is given by inspiration”. The themes of the Gospel and Epistles as recorded through John are not expressive of his own mind, or depth of thought—they are the product of the operation of the Spirit, and teach those things that Yahweh wishes to teach, in the way in which it Pleases Him. The Epistle to the Hebrews was produced by Yahweh—to speculate on who was the penman that inscribed the book misses the point that it is entirely a work of the Spirit. And again, the Psalms were written by God, drawing upon and enunciating principles that he, not David wrote.

The case of David is particularly instructive. It is said that he drew upon his own life’s experiences to pen the Psalms. But what saith David himself?

“The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me, and his word was in my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2).

There is an appropriateness that Yahweh chose a shepherd through which Psalms which bear the theme of shepherding should come. But David himself specifically stated that “his word was in my tongue” - he was directly inspired by God to speak. It was not the case that David drew upon his experiences: it is rather that the Spirit drew upon David’s experiences, producing an infallible word that related as directly to the penman as to those for whom he wrote.

A “FOUNDATION”

There are those who voice protest against calling the first Clause as being “THE FOUNDATION”. They say that the only Foundation is Christ, and not the Word. So it is claimed:

“The key to where Christadelphian teaching goes astray is their insistence that the Bible is the True Foundation of their Faith. Jesus should be”.

Of course, Christadelphians do not reject Jesus as being the foundation of the ecclesia. But Christ is “the word made flesh” (Jno. 1:14) and it is as such that He is the foundation of our faith. Hebrews 6:1 states:

“ ... therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again *the foundation* of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God”

According to this passage therefore, the foundation is “repentance from dead works and of faith toward God”.

Again, Ephesians 2 states:

“ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20)

According to this passage, “the apostles and prophets” form “the foundation” as well as Jesus Christ himself. But how so? How can these be part of the foundation? Surely by virtue of the Gospel they preached (see Rom. 15:20). The only means by which “the apostles and prophets” can have anything relating to the ecclesia today is the inspired record of faith and courage that we have to strengthen ourselves.

ANALYSING TEXT

There is another point which ought not be overlooked. Often in today’s humanistic world, there is an emphasis on being “objective” when studying texts, including the Bible. But whilst that is ok so far as it goes, there is a real danger that we treat the Bible as being simply a piece of text to study in a detached manner, like the works of men. The Bible is inherently different: it is more than words on the page—it is a “power”: “it is *the power* of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). It is also living: “the word of God is *living, and powerful*, and sharper than any twoedged sword ...” (Heb. 4:12).

What this means is that when we come to Scripture, rather than to be detached in our studies, we ought to allow the Word to draw us unto itself, to impart unto us a power that the words of men can never achieve. It is testified that:

“all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word by which the Gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

“All flesh is grass”, and withereth. What then remains? For those who seek to be “detached” in their objectiveness before the word, there is nothing! As grass, they shall wither. But for those who seek to fill themselves with the Word, eager to absorb its precepts and principles, what remains is a “new creature” within themselves, “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:10). Being made in the “image” of our Creator is the purpose of Bible Study. It elevates our mind from the carnal inclinations of the Flesh to become after the Spirit of God. Only when we recognise the Power that the Word has to transform us, can this be accomplished. And only then will there be something within us worthy of perpetuation into the Kingdom and Age to come.

Christopher Maddocks