

*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

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

<i>The Prayer of Hannah (1)</i>	2
<i>Enduring a Fiery Trial</i>	6
<i>The Majesty and Grace of Christ's Kingdom</i>	12
<i>Stuck in a Rut</i>	21
<i>Building the House of God</i>	24
<i>Jerusalem</i>	29
<i>Love the Sinner and Hate the Sin?</i>	32



*“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 Prayer of Hannah

(1) The Background to the Prayer

The background of Hannah's prayer is well known. Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Penninah. Penninah had children but Hannah was barren. The tabernacle was at Shiloh where it had been set up in the time of Joshua (Josh. 18:1). As a family they went up to Shiloh to worship year by year even though the wicked sons of Eli were there. Hannah's adversary, probably Penninah, provoked her year by year because she had no child.

Hannah prayed for a child

After one of their visits Hannah prayed for a child as we read in 1 Samuel 1:10-11:

“And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Yahweh, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Yahweh of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto Yahweh all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head”.

She gave Samuel to Yahweh

God answers Hannah's prayer and the child is born whom she named Samuel (asked of God), “Because *I have asked him* of Yahweh”. Hannah then waited for the time when the child is weaned and then brought him up to Shiloh when he was possibly about five years of age, where she addressed Eli in these words:

“Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Yahweh. For this child I prayed; and Yahweh hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to Yahweh; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to Yahweh. And he (Samuel) worshipped Yahweh there” (1 Sam.1: 26-28).

Samuel worshipped Yahweh at that early age, even as we read of Jesus:

“I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God (Ail) from my mother's belly” (Ps. 22:9-10).

I believe that the reason why Hannah lent her son to Yahweh was because she saw the wickedness of the sons of Eli, when she came to Shiloh and saw her son as a child of destiny who would bring about a reformation in the nation.

Great changes were to take place as shown in the words spoken by the man of God to Eli in chapter 2:27-36:

“Thus saith Yahweh, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father (Ithamar), when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh’s house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest. . . Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? . . . Behold the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father’s house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, . . . and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever”.

A Change in the Priesthood

The man of God here is speaking of a change in the priesthood, which began to be fulfilled in the time of Saul on the occasion when Doeg the Edomite slew the priests of Nob, but was completely fulfilled in the time of Solomon when Abiathar the priest was thrust out, as we read in 1 Kings 2:27:

“So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto Yahweh; that he might fulfil the word of Yahweh, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh”, - the words we have just read from 1 Samuel chapter 2.

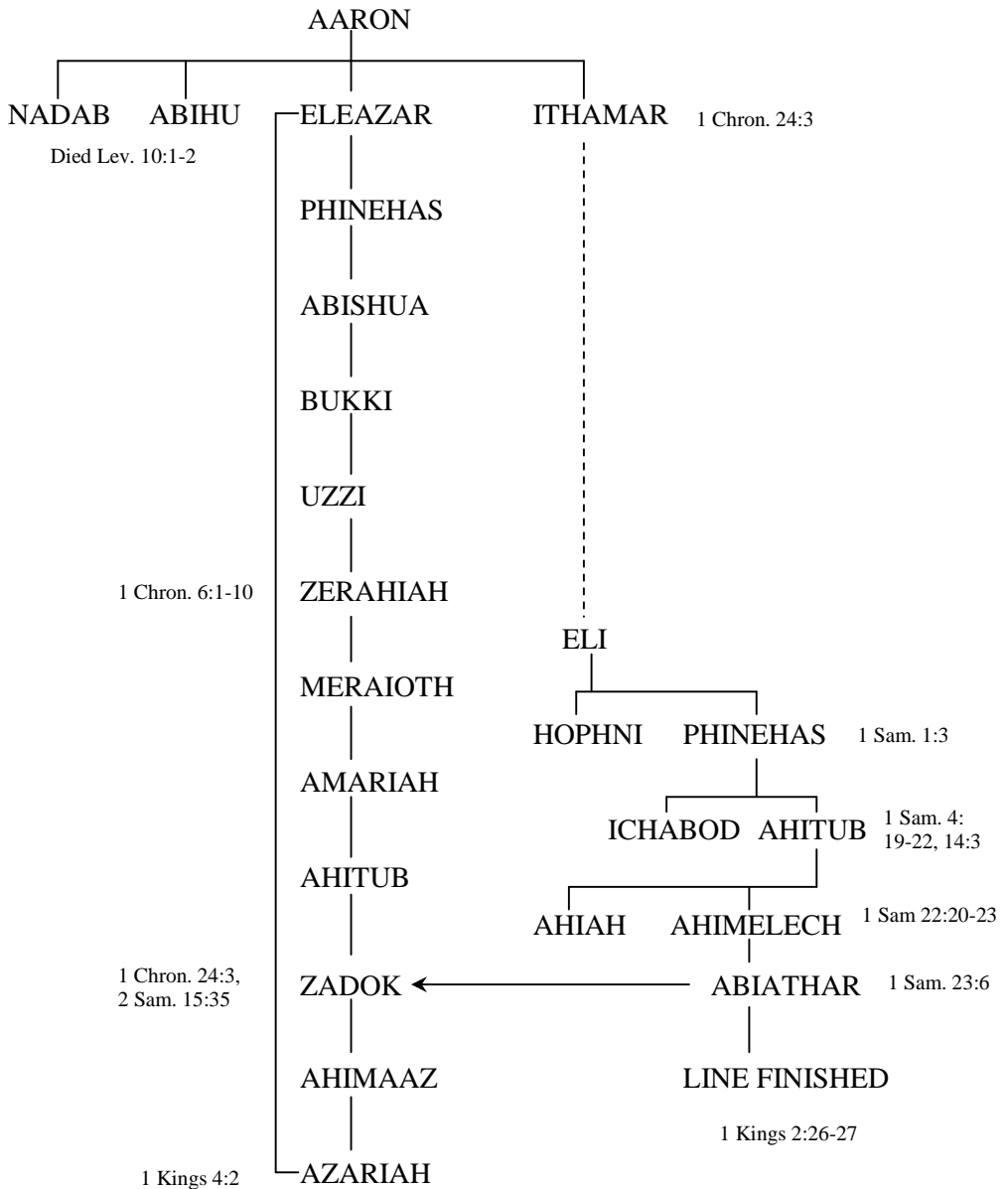
Eli had descended from Aaron’s son Ithamar. A new line had already begun in David’s reign through Eleazar (1Chron.24:1-4) (see chronological chart). It is very significant therefore that Zadok began to be priest in the reign of David. Zadok means ‘the just one’ or ‘the righteous one’. Zadok the priest and David the king were typical of the time when “the sons of Zadok” will stand before Christ the King Priest in the kingdom (Ezek. 44:15-16. These words are in parenthesis). The key verse in 1 Samuel 2 is therefore verse 35;

“And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever”.

This pointed forward to the change in the priesthood in the reign of David, but its complete fulfilment will be seen in the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. The words “sure house” and “for ever” imply a priesthood for the *olam* or the Kingdom Age, as the promises to David were for ever or the *olam*. Bro. Sully comments on this verse in “*The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy*”, Ch.5, under the heading “3. The Chambers of the Singers” as follows:

“The administrative functions of the tribe of Levi would end at the inner posts of the Temple; they would not be permitted to officiate at the table. Those who sit at the table within the Most Holy and who keep the charge of the altar

**CHRONOLOGICAL CHART SHOWING
THE CHANGE IN THE PRIESTHOOD TO FULFIL 2 SAMUEL 2: 27-36**



Gradual fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the end of the house of Eli:
(1 Sam. 4:11-22; 1 Sam. 22:9-23; 1 Kings 1:7,19,25 & 42; 2:26-27)

are first mentioned in Chapter XL as:

The sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the Lord to minister unto him. (Verse 46)

They are again parenthetically referred to in a description of the duties of the subordinate order of priests, thus:

“The priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God. (Chap XLIV. 15)

They shall enter into my sanctuary and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge”. (Verse 16)

These verses seem to imply that the sacrificial elements are presented at the table before the sons of Zadok, and are offered upon the altar in the Most Holy under their direction. See Sub-Section vi.

The declared purpose of Deity dividing the Levitical order of priests, in the Temple service, into two classes is more than interesting. In consequence of the pollution of the priestly office during the ministration of Eli he was told that the iniquity of his house, i.e. of the house of Aaron (see 1st Sam. II. 27,28), “should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever,” and yet the purpose of Deity should not fail. Hence we read:

“I will raise me up a faithful priest, that will do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.” (1st Sam. 11.35.)

Just as the promise of a son to David (2nd Sam. V11. 12-16) involved the coming of an immortal king, so the promise of a priest who should walk before God’s anointed for ever implies that the faithful priest referred to will be an immortal priest. This faithful priest is referred to in the 15th and 16th verses of Ezekiel XLIV. . . Now the sons of Zadok mentioned in verse 15 must be an immortal race, because they are said to be those “who kept the charge of Yahweh’s sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray.” Select whatever period we may, those who “kept the charge” are now dead. The sons of Zadok must, therefore, be raised from the dead before they can minister in the presence of Deity at the restoration. If raised from the dead, and accounted worthy to attain unto that age, they are immortal and consequently “equal unto the angels and cannot die any more, being children of the resurrection.” (“The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy”, ch.5, p.73-74, 6th edition-June 1984, Logos Publications).

Brother Sully’s conclusion is that the “faithful priest” of 1 Samuel 2:35 is Zadok or the Just One, even the Lord Jesus Christ and that the immortalised Sons of Zadok refer to the saints. It is important that we understand that Ezekiel 44:15-

16 are in parenthesis and that the verses before and those which follow apply to the mortal Levites. In view of this, what a great responsibility we have to keep the charge of Yahweh during our mortal lives, even when others go astray.

We hope these thoughts will serve as an introduction to a consideration of “The Prayer of Hannah” which we propose to deal with in our next article, God willing.

Carlo Barbaresi

Enduring a Fiery Trial

Under the inspiration of God, the apostle Peter gave a warning to the believers concerning a time of trial to come:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning *the fiery trial* which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

These words provide both a warning, and an encouragement to stand fast. In times past, believers have had to literally undergo a fiery trial (and we shall consider such a case shortly), when they were burned alive for holding fast to the testimony of Jesus Christ. But the encouragement given to enable them to continue in faithfulness, is that a crown of life will be given to those who so suffer, even those who “love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

In our day circumstances are different, and especially in the western world there is generally much less open persecution towards Messiah’s brethren - but with this freedom there comes responsibility. It is part of the perversity of human nature that when open fiery tri-

als and persecutions are brought to bear, men and women become galvanised into action, and are compelled to take one side or another, whether for Christ, or for Mammon. But when things are allowed to become more comfortable and lax, the boundaries of the front line in this warfare become blurred and folk fall into a state of apathy and ignorant indolence. This is the circumstance in our day: a danger of becoming conformed to the principles that govern the World, as distinct to the Commandments of Christ.

It is a Divine Principle that those who wish to be part of Yahweh’s treasure when he makes up his jewels (Mal. 3:7) will have to go through a time of difficulty and affliction: a refining process to remove the dross, and bring forth a refined nature. So Peter again teaches:

“the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ ...” (1 Pet. 1:7).

The “fiery trial” therefore, is not inclusive of being put to the literal flame only, but is also a figure used to de-

scribe the afflictions that come upon the righteous to further develop their faithfulness and dependence upon Yahweh. In our present considerations, we wish to examine two cases of a Fiery Trial being endured: firstly that of Israel (symbolically), and secondly (literally), that of Daniel's faithful friends who were cast into the furnace.

ISRAEL'S FIERY TRIAL

Isaiah chapter 43 gives the promise of deliverance following trial:

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, *thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee*” (Isa. 43:2)

As foreshadowed in the Burning (but not consumed) Bush (Exod. 3:2), Israel were to be brought through the fire of affliction, but would at the end, be delivered. Though the flame would be kindled upon them, for those who remained steadfast, they would pass through unharmed, and even benefit from the experience. The entire nation was to suffer, that with the dross being removed, only the righteous would remain.

Deuteronomy chapter 4 speaks of Egypt as being an “iron furnace” thus:

“... Yahweh hath taken you, and brought you forth *out of the iron furnace*, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day” (Deut. 4:20).

Of course, Egypt was not a literal furnace, but the hardship imposed upon Israel – purely upon the basis of who they were – is likened to passing through the furnace, like the bricks they had to make in order to build up Pharaoh's cities. The words used are most instructive: When Moses sought to release the people that they could go into the wilderness to serve Yahweh, it was claimed that the people had too much time on their hands, and were thus conspiring against Egypt: “...they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, let us go and sacrifice to our God” (Exo. 5:8).

In these things, we see a parallel with our own days. Not in quite the same way, but certainly with the same end. Modern slave-masters, as the ministers of Sin seek to erode the time brethren and sisters have to spend with their families, and in worship to Yahweh their God. If we have “spare” time, we are being idle, and need more work to do! Employers increasingly impose more labour upon their workers, often requiring them to work more hours overtime, without extra pay even. Those who seek to develop a career for themselves must devote their lives to serving worldly masters, with less and less time being available to read and meditate upon the Divine principles of Scripture. The pressure is there to conform to the ways of those around them, and seek to better themselves in every material way. Regarding the Truth as being too restrictive, spurning the narrow way that leads to life, men choose a broader way, which is able to accommodate them, their desires and aspirations. They encourage us to wander from our narrow, “restrictive” path, to join them in their freedom. Yet, “while they promise liberty, they themselves are the ser-

vants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Pet. 2:19). Contrariwise, Christ’s brethren follow the Truth that shall set them free (Jno. 8:32), and will find true liberty at the last, when in joyful immortality they shall follow the Lamb withersover he goes.

SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO

These three men, better known as Daniel’s friends of like precious faith, endured a fiery trial in demonstrating a faithfulness we could do no better than to emulate. The circumstances of Daniel chapter 3 are well-known to us: seeing the representation of the Image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, the king saw how his own empire would be succeeded by three other empires. Being carnally minded however, Nebuchadnezzar could not believe that his own empire would pass away into oblivion, and so constructed his own Image. Whereas the true image had a head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar’s image was made all of gold. In it, the king sought to declare his empire to be a perpetual one, which would never fade away.

It is interesting to note that the origin of Babylon, in the building of Babel by Nimrod, was designed to accomplish the same end. Not long after the Flood, when all men but Noah’s family of 8 perished, we read of how men sought to unite themselves together in building a tower for two reasons:

1. To make a name for themselves and
2. For safety, lest they be scattered.

Building their tower with bricks that had passed through the fire they

thought they could maintain a unified perpetual existence. But Yahweh saw it and confounding their language, he scattered them across the face of the whole earth, confuting their endeavours. But what a contrast there is between the tower to the name and glory of Man, and the spiritual Tower which is the Name of Yahweh: “The Name of Yahweh is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Prov. 18:10). And the Kingdom of Yahweh shall not be destroyed, or left to other people, but will be the only perpetual kingdom the world has seen.

Returning to the Idol that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, we find that a general command was given for all who lived under his reign to bow down and worship the image: “and whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace” (Dan. 3:6). Here is the threat of a real and literal fiery trial. In response, we read that “all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up” (Dan. 3:7).

This is the way of the world: to worship that which gives glory to Man, for personal benefit. However, whilst all the people were bowing before a gentile idol, there were three men who stood tall. The stance which they took would be immediately obvious: all around them men were bowing down, but they themselves stood upright. This is what it means to make a stand for the Truth: it is to maintain personal integrity in a day of evil, when all around are falling before the altar of mammon. So the king commanded to bring the three offenders before him, and gave them another chance. Again, he commanded

them to “fall down and worship the image which I have made”, warning them “if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and *who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?*” (Dan. 3:15).

Notice these words: the issue was no longer about whether or not mortal men should bow before worldly idols, it was a direct challenge to the God of the Hebrews, and whether or not He was able to save those who trusted in Him. So the men of faith expressed their confidence:

“... we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee O king, that *we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image* which thou hast set up” (Dan. 3:18).

Notice the spirit of meekness that these men showed. There was no railing against the Babylonian deities, or those that served them: there was simply a quiet confidence in the saving Hand of their God. There was no presumption: whilst they trusted that Yahweh could save them, they did not assume that he would—either way, they would not bow before man-made idols.

So, the furnace was heated seven times hotter, and “the most mighty men” were commanded to throw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into it. Notice this point: Nebuchadnezzar commanded “the most mighty men” of his army—and just to deal with three Jews! The battle-lines were drawn, so to

say: the king utilised the mightiest men he had—what was the God of the Hebrews going to do? Surely with such a display of force, nothing could stop these men from being thrown into the fire!

The plan backfired however, for the “because the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego” (Dan. 3:22), and so the king lost the mightiest men of his army. Moreover, whilst the flame consumed Babylon’s strongest, it had no effect upon the Hebrews. The circumstances mirrored those of Israel, which we considered earlier: “*when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned*, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Isa. 43:2). Just as the furnace was heated seven times hotter, even so Israel were to pass through a fiery trial, and be punished 7 times more for their sins (Lev. 26:18), yet just as Israel were not to be destroyed, neither were these three men.

As the king looked into the furnace, expecting to see the burning carcasses of those who dared to defy him, “he was astonished”! Not only were the three men alive, but there was a fourth with them: “He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the son of God” (Dan. 3:25). Their bonds had been destroyed enabling them to walk freely, and it would appear that the visage of the fourth man was in some way extraordinary, as the heathen king thought he was the son of one of his deities. But beholding “these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats

changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them”, he recognised that it was the God of the Hebrews who had delivered them, and the fourth man he saw was an angelic messenger. So he spake:

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, **who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him,** and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any God, except their own God”

There are a number of points to be observed here: when faced with adversity, men of faith “trusted” in Yahweh, who sent His Angel to deliver them. The Sweet Psalmist of Israel trusted likewise, and cried out for deliverance:

“This poor man cried, and Yahweh heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The Angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psa. 34:6-7).

Here is a supreme example for us: do we cry out for the Angel to deliver us from adversity? Messiah certainly did; he “in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, **and was heard in that he feared**” (Heb. 5:7). Several times we read of Angels ministering to Him. We likewise should trust that they truly are with us, as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14).

Another aspect to notice, is that these faithful men “yielded their bodies” in

being cast into the fire. That is, they willingly submitted themselves. But what was the furnace designed for? One suggestion is that in order to set up the idol of gold, there would have been a need for a furnace, or furnaces to melt the metal for it to have been so used. If this is the case, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were to pass through the furnace used to prepare the gold—in the faith that they would be somehow saved. Maybe we have an allusion to this in the oft-cited words of Peter:

“... that the trial of your faith, being **much more precious than of gold that perisheth**, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7).

The faith of these men, was much more precious than the gold that had previously passed through the furnace, and though they were tried by fire, nevertheless in the day of reckoning, when these things will matter, they would be found unto praise, honour and glory for so submitting themselves, and trusting in their God.

There is a third point we ought to mention: the Babylonians worshipped fire. They had a deity of fire, and so by being caused to pass through the furnace, the king was effectively offering them up as a sacrifice to his deities. It is as if he was saying: “Either you bow down and serve my gods, or I will offer you as a sacrifice to them—either way my gods will be served”. But the companions in tribulation did not struggle or resist: they quietly trusted in their God.

An interesting reference to note in this connection is Romans 12:

“I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, *that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And *be not conformed to this world*: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind ...” (Rom. 12:1-2).

The major theme which runs throughout the book of Daniel is that of non-conformity. From the beginning of their time in Babylon as described in chapter 2, Daniel and his friends refused to be like the Babylonians. And when the decree went out for all men to bow before Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image, when all around them were bowing in subservience to Sin, they refused to be conformed to the world of idolaters. They presented themselves as living sacrifices, willingly submitting themselves to whatever their God considered necessary. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was offering them up as hu-

man sacrifices to his deity. But the reality was that these men were offering themselves to their God, in the faith that He would deliver them from death, if not in the immediate circumstance, in the world to come.

This is the main point to consider in this study: if nothing else, think on this principle: the danger of conformity is that you will become like everyone else. The Holy Ones of Yahweh are not like other men: they have no fear of the idols of mammon, and will refuse to bow the knee before the altars of superstition. They look beyond the time of present difficulty towards that time when Christ shall reign victorious over his enemies. And at that time, at the mention of His Name, “every knee shall bow ... and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:10-11).

Christopher Maddocks

THE PERMITTING OF EVIL

*Evil is permitted that we may be tried.
For how should a man know whether he be holding on to
God or man, unless he were put to the proof?
When the way of the truth is hedged with thorns,
we are exercised with the result of either greater strength
or the snap that takes the fruitless branch from the tree.
In this respect, evil from the hand of the Lord subserves
the highest purpose; and if we could hear the Shepherd’s voice,
he would say: “Be of good cheer;” “Be not overcome with evil;”
“Hold fast that which thou hast; let no man take thy crown”.*

Brother Robert Roberts

THE MAJESTY AND GRACE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

It is remarkable in how many places in the Scriptures we find the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. It cannot be considered surprising, in view of the all-prevalent authorship of the Spirit of God throughout these writings. That One Spirit, operating "at sundry times and divers manners," should enunciate with frequency the one great purpose underlying all its communications—the purpose of finally bringing everything upon earth under one head, to the glory of the Eternal Creator, must, in a sense, seem natural.

The illustration this morning is the 45th Psalm, in which David appears before us full of matter on this subject.

"My heart is indicting a good matter . . . My tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

This suggests the idea of lively contemplation and stirring impulse to utter. The origin and nature of this mental fullness and activity we may easily understand in view of the testimony that "the Spirit of God came upon David from that day (the day of his anointing by Samuel) and forward;" and David's dying declaration:

"The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me, and His word was on my tongue."

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—liberty of thought—liberty of utterance. David's natural ardour divinely supplemented thus, naturally made him a powerful singer of the divine verities.

The theme in this case he tells is "touching the King." This was the theme of his last words:

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

What king was this? Was it himself, or any contemporary? Nay. This he excludes:

"My house is not so with God."

How did the topic come in then? He tells us:

"He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, which is all my salvation and all my desire."

To whom the covenant related is authoritatively settled for us in the apostolic testimony several times over: Peter tells us the covenant-undertaking was that

God should raise up Christ to sit on David's throne. Consequently, we are not speculating. Our feet are on the rock of incontrovertible truth. In Psalm 45 we have before us a divine oracle on the glory of Christ. He is the "King" whose charms inspire the meditations of the writer, and give wing to the utterances of his tongue. In him we have the kernel of the Kingdom of God. A kingdom is a king's power territorially applied. It is the King that makes the Kingdom of God what it will be—a house of righteousness and a haven of rest.

We need a King. The democratic idea is not true to nature. The universe has a head. Nothing works well without a head:

"The head of every man is Christ."

We have Kings and heads, but none of them are fit for their office. They are mere makeshift appliances by which God regulates the present evil, till the moment arrives for His purpose to—

"Gather together all things under one head, even Christ."

We require a head who towers far above us in every respect—in love, and wisdom, and power, and life. God has provided for us such a head. The mass of mankind are indifferent to Him, or worse; they say with disobedient Israel:

"We will not have this man to reign over us."

Our meeting this morning has to do with Him. We are not of Israel's alienated mind. The love of Christ constraineth us.

The Psalm is in His praise, and suits the mood which the table of remembrance inspires.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men."

In what sense? Fairness of countenance? Beauty of person? Christ will be all we could wish on these points, but this is not what is meant, as the next sentence shows.

"Grace is poured into thy lips."

Grace of lip or language is the principal part of grace as affirmable of a man. A man may be graceful from the artistic point of view, but lacking of the most valuable grace. If his words jar on the ear, we instinctively feel that his personal comeliness is of very small account. He may have the personal grace of an angel, but if his "throat is an open sepulchre," his very beauty of form becomes a nauseating mockery. On the other hand a person of plain features becomes positively desirable in our eyes if his mind as expressed in his speech is fair and beautiful. He may even be ugly, and his very ugliness becomes the pleasant symbol of his

excellence. The surpassing fairness of the King lies in the grace of his speech linked with power. His enemies bore witness to it in the days of his flesh:

“Whence hath this man this wisdom?”

“They were astonished at his doctrine.”

“Never man spake like this man.”

Whence came this extraordinary, this superhuman grace? The Psalm says it was “poured into his lips.” How? from what source? We have only to know who he is to see the full answer. He was no mere earthborn. He could say to the Jews:

“Ye are from beneath: I am from above.”

His name tells the mystery of his excellence—Yahoshua, in English pronounced Jesus.

“The Father dwelleth in me.” “God was in Christ.”

We understand how, when we remember his inception. (“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (Mary): the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee), and when we follow him to the banks of the Jordan and behold the shaft of spirit-light rest on his head in the form of a dove, and hear the voice—

“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.”

When we remember these things, we are at no loss to understand the supernal grace that characterised the Son of David. He was a spring from the Eternal Fountain.

As the Psalm unfolds his picture, there are things that are surprising from the popular point of view. They are in harmony with every exhibition of the Messiah to be met with in the Scriptures: but they are at variance with the traditions of ecclesiastical theology. According to these, the grace that makes Christ fairer than the children of men is the grace of a sublime meekness that can never be ruffled: a benignity that can never be disturbed: a beneficence that can never shine in self-assertion or frown in displeasure at the wicked. This is an artificial view. Christ is the perfection of meekness and beneficence; but there is another side which we see here:

“Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.”

Here is a spectacle of executive power which, though foreign to popular conceptions of Christ, forms a natural part of the perfection of the King appointed. He who is to bless mankind must be able to expel the ungodly from place, power and possession. He must be one who can punish the wicked, and teach the world righteousness by the overpowering display of the power of God. His meekness and kindness and righteousness, unsupported by acts of vengeance and retribution would be unheeded and contemned and uninfluential in a lawless world like this. There is no flaw in God's arrangements. He who, in fit time, was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and stood like a sheep before its shearers dumb, opening not his mouth, will yet cause the world to tremble with the lion-roars of his mouth.

“He shall not fail, nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth” (Isa. 42:4).

“Faithful and true, in righteousness doth he judge and make war. His eyes as a flame of fire, on his head many crowns . . . Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev. 19:11-15).

At his coming, he will break in pieces and consume all kingdoms of the earth preliminary to the establishment of his own power (Dan. 2:44; 7:15). He will take vengeance on them that know not God or obey not the gospel (2 Thess 1:8), chief among whom is the Roman man of Sin, —

“Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thess. 2:8).

He will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen (Haggai 2:22). Then shall his kingdom be established, and “the isles shall wait for his law.”

All this is contemplated in the words next addressed to the King in the Psalm before us:

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou lovedst righteousness and hatest iniquity. Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

Here are two beautiful “things of the kingdom” brought to our view. The kingdom will be truly a kingdom of righteousness, and it will have no end. What restfulness and joy of life is meant by righteous government. In the present state of things, public life of all kinds is a thing of hurry and worry and fright. It is only fit for the human dogs and sharks that disport themselves voraciously in its turbid and boisterous waters. You cannot go to the meanest rate office without feeling that you are in touch with a merciless machinery that will grind you to pow-

der in the name of law. There is no mercy or justice in legal process. It is an affair of soulless technicality. It cannot, of course, be otherwise in human hands; but so it is. What a change when technicality will be unknown, except as a convenience, and kindness and justice will be the inspiration of all law and its administration. The humble and the widow and the orphan will not then find the world such a dreadful place. The King is a shepherd and not a wolf: his servants, lovers and friends, and not bone-gnawing foxes.

“He shall lead his flock like a shepherd, and gather the lambs with his arms.”

“He shall judge for the poor and the needy, and save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor. Men shall be blessed in him”—not blighted and cursed and withered.

Then to think that the head and fountain of all authority will have risen to his position through that very ordeal of personal probation, through which all the children of God are made to pass—probation with reference to those principles of righteousness then triumphant in the Kingdom, but which are now of so little account:

“Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God hath exalted thee.”

What encouragement to us while the vision tarries. It enables us to feel that however much it may appear to be in vain for a man to serve God, and to stand upon scruples dictated by His law, it is very, very far from being what it seems.

“Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart.”
“Unto the upright, there ariseth light in the darkness.”

For our proper trial, the darkness must prevail for a time. Sometimes it may prevail with an intensity of inhospitable coldness added to the darkness that seems to extinguish all hope, but it is only for a time. Hold on.

“Weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.”

It is the morning of Messiah’s long and glorious day. It will break upon our night, and show us light and gladness that will fill our mouths with laughter and our lips with singing: We have God’s own word for it:

“They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.”

We shall yet say:

“The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.”

The glory and comfort of the Kingdom are portrayed in the second half of the Psalm. We are so accustomed to suffering and dishonour as god's appointment for the narrow way that we may have a difficulty in realising the great change that God purposes for His friends. As some one has said, "The present always seems for ever." But the future will come, however long the present lasts. And it is a future all sweet and good without alloy. It has been written,

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived what God hath laid up for those who love and serve him."

This is true, though—

"God hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit."

We get glimpses here and there. It is mostly in figures and similitudes. So in this case:

"All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. King's daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir . . . with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace."

It would not be possible to suggest more graphically scenes of gorgeous beauty and delight—coming after the establishment of the King's power by acts of judgment: the delicious odour of spices; the beautiful purity of ivory dwellings; the splendour and grace of royal women—combine to ravish the senses.

A practical application is thrown in having special interest for us. "King's daughters" are mentioned, and then there is this invitation:

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people and thy father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."

Considering that the King is Christ beyond all contradiction or doubt, in view of the frequent applications of the psalm to him in the letters of the apostles, what meaning can there be but one to this proposed espousal?

"I have espoused you to one husband," says Paul, "that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2).

It is neither more nor less than an invitation from the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth to poor earth worms to come into His glorious family. It is for "him that hath ears to hear." It is on a par with the pathetic adjuration of Isaiah 55.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?”

And again:

“Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

The glory of the invitation is not now manifest. People are apt to dismiss the matter as being sentimental. It is far from that. It is a proposal of substantial and lasting goodness of the highest order, as all will see those who attain to it stand in the bright presence of the King—themselves desirable and most blessed, and offering to the King a worship that will not come short of rapture. The lowest in the Kingdom will be objects of the highest attention on the part of the great of the earth.

“The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift: the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.”

Tyre, at the time the Psalm was written, was the wealthy emporium of maritime commerce. It was a synonym for the riches of the sea. Tyre also was a friendly power in the day of Israel’s glory—in alliance with Solomon. The anti-type in the day of the greater than Solomon will be seen in the attitude of a greater than Tyre. The wealth of the sea in this latter day is centred in Britain. This will be at Israel’s service in the day of their restoration, as it is written:

“The abundance of the sea shall be converted (that is, turned) unto thee . . . Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them.”

Consider what is involved, then, in this allusion to the latter-day daughter of Tyre, and “the rich among the people.” They are to be “there with a gift.” They are to entreat the favour of Christ’s accepted people. His people are those who believe, love, and obey him, now in his absence, when “darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.” These at present are “the offscourings of all things.” The mighty people of “Society,” whether in London or the provinces (Oh, how lofty are their eyes!) would not deign to bestow a look upon them, as they sweep past in their fine equipages. What a gratifying change to all lovers of righteousness when these lordly folks forget their pride in the terrible events which in that day will exalt the Lord alone and His chosen; and come bowing abjectly, like Joseph’s brethren, for a crumb of recognition at the hands of the humblest of Christ’s accepted people. It is no picture of the fancy or wild thought of fanaticism. It rests on the word and purpose of Him who humbled Pharaoh before a flock-master, and brought the necks of Canaan’s kings under the heel of Joshua’s officers. It is not in the power of man to expunge this oracle from the written records of the earth:

“According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show marvellous things. And the nations shall see and be confounded at all their might . . . they shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God and shall fear because of thee” (Micah 7:15, 17);

“The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (Isa. 2:11).

The figurative “King’s daughter” who is to be thus elevated in public life, “to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Christ,” would need to be worthy of such exaltation, would she not? Of some we read, that they are “not fit for the Kingdom of God.” (The words are Christ’s.) We may be sure that those who are “not fit for the Kingdom of God” will not enter therein. Christ is judge of the fitness: and he has specified it beforehand. It is graphically figured in this Psalm:

“The king’s daughter is all glorious *within*: her clothing is of wrought gold.”

The excellence is internal:

“Man looketh on the outward appearance. The Lord looketh on the heart.”

A certain state of mind is essential to acceptability. What that is, is abundantly revealed in the apostolic epistles which may be said to be the fashion book of the king’s daughter. The leading feature is hinted at in “the clothing of wrought gold.” Gold is the constant symbol of faith worked up by love into various forms of practical service. What is pleasanter in a friend than that completeness and ardour of conviction that leads to ready action? We are friends of God if this is our state in relation to Him and His affairs. This faith without it, we cannot please God. He has so informed us, and we may as well accept it once for all as a first principle not to be questioned. It is a reasonable requirement: for what an insipid company of people would half believers be. We shall have undergone a great change of nature before we stand in the presence of the King “all glorious within,” with clothing of wrought gold; but even then, the crowning beauty of the elect of God will be the ardent faith that overcomes the world in these times of trial.

The greatness of the position to which the King’s daughter is called accounts for what is demanded of her meantime:

“Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: FORGET ALSO THINE OWN PEOPLE and thy father’s house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.”

This denotes affectionate preference for “the things that are Jesus Christ’s,” and separation from friendships that have their basis in merely natural things. Both

must appear in the highest degree reasonable in the eyes of those who have attained to full conviction concerning Christ; and when Christ comes they will appear reasonable in the eyes of those who have not so attained. How could a man be fit for the society of Christ who did not value him at his real worth, or who was so badly instructed as to think other men and things on some degree of level with him? How could a man be fit for the Kingdom of God whose heart is with those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel? This is the state of things with “thine own people and thy father’s house” everywhere. The divine invitation is to “forget” them. Christ’s command is relatively to “hate” them: Paul’s command is to “come out from among them.” The flesh is a flower that blooms but for a moment. It is great with the children of the flesh everywhere. In all times and places it vanishes away: yet they learn not the lesson. Be not enslaved by the universal folly: but “consider, and incline thine ear.” Open thy heart wide to “the things of the Spirit of God.” So will you become interesting to the King, who will greatly desire the beauty of the new man formed within thee. “In raiment of needlework” will you be presented for the wedding: even in the fully-manifested and recognised deeds of righteousness begotten of faith in long-forgotten times, but now remembered and proclaimed with divine commendation, which will be praise worth having. The cup of gladness will be filled complete with the addition of “virgin companions,” even an innumerable company of angels, who will cooperate as the servitors of the saints, and minister to the glory, honour, and peace of the Father’s newly-begotten servants and sons.

“With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, and enter into the King’s palace.”

“Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children;”—

For in a thousand years wedlock with the glorious Bridegroom, the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, will bring forth a glorious family of rejoicing sons of God, who shall inherit the earth for ever. The endless ages beyond will give full scope for the fulfilment of the final promise.

“I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.”

Robert Roberts, The Christadelphian, 1891

“... by love serve one another”

A booklet dealing in practical ways to help brethren and sisters suffering from some form of Dementia. This 100 page booklet costs £4 per copy, £5.25 including postage. In this figure is a contribution towards Dementia Care in the Christadelphian Care Homes. Contact the author: Bro Brian Woodall at: ‘Bronllys’, Waungron Road, Betws, Ammanford, Carm, SA18 2HY, or e-mail: nellie.woodall@mypostoffice.co.uk

STUCK IN A RUT?

Over the years in the course of my work I have known people who shall we say were somewhat obsessional about various things in life and were particularly habitual about how they lived their lives. For example a lady who lived on her own was a creature of habit in her day to day life. She often felt that life was routine, lacked any great interest and had little to offer by way of occupying her time gainfully. She saw little future for herself and life consisted of cleaning, cooking meals for herself and going out shopping. She had few friends and certainly none who visited.

This lady was depressed and as we discussed her life, over a few sessions she admitted that it was not a life style that she found satisfying, but rather one that she saw as merely meeting her day to day needs. Her routine, which never really changed from week to week, was seen as the only motivation to bother getting up. Each day had its assigned tasks, activities and its set meals. Although she would like to have some company, someone to talk to occasionally and maybe go out to see friends, well, there was no time!

She found little satisfaction with her life, could see no future, wanted some excitement in her life and wanted herself to be more confident. She could not see, nor really realise, that her set routine did not allow for any changes. In short she was in a rut, a habitual routine so ingrained that any consequences were unseen.

We all have the potential to live much of our lives on autopilot! Now be honest, how often do you sit in the same place at home or in the meetings (and get upset if somebody else takes your place!), go to the same places, visit the same shops and have certain days when certain jobs and other things have to be done?

Do you tend to get up at the same time, drive the same route to work, visit the same people, phone family members at the same time on a set day, and possibly even eat the same sort of meals on set days from week to week.

Much of our daily routine is not a bad thing and placing unimportant things onto autopilot frees time, energy and attention that can then be focussed upon new things, more important tasks and upon creativity. On the other hand slavishly following routine can also greatly hinder and restrict life, just like the lady I mentioned. Although wanting change and being unhappy with her life, the daily routine stopped her making the changes that were needed in order to gain more satisfaction out of her life. She wanted friends, but never went out to meet them. She wanted people to talk too, but it was never convenient to phone or be phoned. She wanted to go out and enjoy the things in life that used to give her pleasure, but the housework always needed to be done and shopping had to be fetched. If nothing else 'autopilot' must be turned off, if close relationships are to be formed and maintained.

These principles apply just as much, if not even more so, in our relationship with the Lord our God, life in His service and relationships with brethren and sisters.

It is equally as easy to get into a 'spiritual rut' in the Truth, just as it is in day to day life.

Now, I guess all of us would say that we love and appreciate God and the many blessings that we enjoy day by day. But how do you show that love? I think most of us would answer that we pray, read from the scriptures on a daily basis and attend meetings. However:

- Is your love as it was at the beginning when you were first baptised?
- Is your zeal the same?
- Is your enthusiasm the same?

The answer should be at least 'yes' or even better still honest self examination should indicate that they have increased.

It is quite possible for the day to day life of families to have an almost automatic mode to some aspects of conversation, such as for example a reply to a daily question about how the day has gone, given without any great thought to the answer. It is quite possible for even close relationships to become routine and lack spontaneity.

What about life in the Truth?

Meetings are regularly attended and yes we go to some other gatherings and studies – the ones we usually have on our calendar each year. But what about other activities and more importantly what activities do you personally instigate?

Ask yourself how the week to week routine of your life in the Truth stands up to change, to the unexpected and to periods away from home, for example taking a holiday. Do you still live putting God first and foremost?

Are you 100% satisfied with how you live life in the service of God, could your life in His service be improved? Does the routine of life hinder spiritual growth and making positive changes?

Do you make an effort to speak to as many brethren and sisters as possible at meetings and other gatherings, particularly those whom you may not know so well?

So, how to get out of a spiritual rut?

First, take notice of what you think, feel and do in response to God's love and mercy. What do you think, feel and do in response to reading His Word? Not in the routine things, but what you do spontaneously?

That spontaneous prayer of thanksgiving, joy or praise.

That deep desire to read the scriptures and learn more about some aspect of the Truth.

That welling up of appreciation and joy at some view of nature, answered prayer, thought of the Kingdom and the myriad other thoughts that can bring hope and joy.

What would Jesus say to us if He were with you now discussing your life? The church in Ephesus was admonished:

“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”

There is every reason to have hope and to love God and the Lord Jesus who have done so much for each and every one of those called to know the Word of Truth. Therefore Paul exhorts:

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:23-25

If we truly love Him who first loved us, then the response will not be a mere routine or habit, but rather our lives will be full of spontaneous expressions of appreciation and love, a willingness to forsake everything in order to be part of the divine family:

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” Hebrews 13:15

God never forsakes those who love Him: “He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:5-6) Though this world crumble and fall (as it will and soon), though we face troubles and trials, the Lord our God will never leave us, if we do not forsake Him.

Just mediate for a few minutes on these wonderful words and you will soon avoid getting into a ‘spiritual rut’:

*“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.
They are new every morning!”*

Lamentations 3:22-24

Andy Peel

Building the House of God

In 1 Corinthians chapter three the inspired Apostle Paul likens himself to a builder who has laid the foundation of an edifice:

“... as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:10-11).

Notice how the Apostle does not present himself as working alone. Others are also involved in the building: he laid the foundation, and upon the basis of his labours, others “built thereupon”. But notice the verse before this: Yahweh Himself is with the labourers:

“For we are *labourers together with God*: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9).

It is this aspect of being “labourers together with God” that we need to particularly focus upon. The work that we do, we do not of ourselves to glorify ourselves, but is of God, that He might be glorified. Knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord, (1 Cor. 15:58), we are willing to bear the reproach of men, and the scorn of those who would deride our feeble efforts, looking to the day when the House will be complete in all its splendour and glory. In that day our efforts will be seen to have been all worthwhile, as our Master who has gone before us shall welcome us into paradise – even Eden restored.

This aspect of labouring “together with God” demonstrates that there is something which is required of us. There are those who seem to believe that God has done it all: He has given His only begot-

ten Son, and that therefore there is nothing for us to do, but wait to be invited into his Kingdom. But whilst it is true that God has made a Gracious and Merciful provision in the giving of Messiah to save us from our sins, it is also true that we have to add our own labours into the affair. Christ gave us an example: “... Christ suffered for us, *leaving us an example*, that ye should follow his steps ...” (1 Pet. 2:21). Rather than to lie back in indolence, we ought to set our hand to the plough – and so become a labourer “together with God”.

The same principle is demonstrated in another context in the Old Testament. 1 Samuel 14 recounts how the Israelites warred against their enemies, the Philistines, and the foolishness of Saul in making a rash vow: “cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food” (1 Sam. 14:24). Saul’s folly is seen plainly in this chapter: without the sustenance of food, the army were not as strong as they otherwise could be, and therefore were unable to make a much greater slaughter among their enemies (1 Sam. 14:30).

His son Jonathan however, was not aware of his decree, and ate honey which was forbidden. In doing so, “his eyes were enlightened”, verse 27 tells us, and Jonathan was able to pursue the enemy with vigour and strength. However, Saul overlooked the benefit of Jonathan’s contribution to the war, and once it was established that he had unwittingly eaten that which was forbidden, he was condemned to death by his own father. The people, however, rose up in Jonathan’s defence:

“and the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in

Israel? God forbid: as Yahweh liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for **he hath wrought with God** this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not” (1 Sam. 14:45).

Here is the fundamental difference between Saul and his son Jonathan: Saul fought under his own strength (as seen, for instance, in his treatment of the Amalekites), whereas Jonathan – and later, David – “wrought **with God**”. Here is the tremendous example for us: our remit is to build, and to contend, and in both of these things, the focus ought to be on servitude to our Master, rather than to trust in an arm of flesh for deliverance. The battle is not ours, but is Yahweh’s warfare against sin. And the building is not ours, for it is the erection of the house of the Living God.

Like Israel of old, we cannot simply stand back and wait for the enemy to be defeated: we have to war the warfare with our Masters. We therefore, ought to labour in love and fellowship together, even as it is written: “...truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1Jno. 1:3).

Returning back to 1 Corinthians 3, we find that particular aspects of work are referred to, again in the context of brethren working together:

“... I have **planted**, Apollos **watered**; but God gave the increase. ... now he that **planteth** and he that **watereth** are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God ...” (1 Cor. 3:6-9)

We find then, that the growth and maintenance of the ecclesia required different

types of work to be done. There was planting the seed (as per the Parable of the Sower), and there was the follow-up work of watering and tending to the growing plants. The work was different, but the brethren were nevertheless “one” in their labours.

Our Master also spoke of the Apostolic work, but the figure is changed from sowing and watering, to sowing and reaping – but with a similar teaching involved:

“he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth” (Jno. 4:36-37).

One of the points being made here, is that different brethren have different roles - yet they shall both rejoice together with the same reward: life eternal.

1 Corinthians 3 speaks of how “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour,” which informs us that although we must work together, we cannot rely upon another man’s labours to gain us entry into the kingdom. The Judgement Seat is to be a highly personal experience, where a man shall stand or fall according to his own deeds, not the deeds of another. In fact, this quotation from 1 Corinthians 3 is derived from the book of Ecclesiastes:

“Two are better than one; because they have a **good reward for their labour**” (Eccl. 4:9)

See the emboldened text to discern the quote. Yet again, Ecclesiastes brings us back to this central theme: brethren and sisters need to work together, and not

separately. Two have a “good reward” for their labour, because two are labouring. Similarly, Messiah sent his labourers out in pairs to preach the Word – a good model for our work in the present dispensation.

LAYING A GOOD FOUNDATION

One of the themes of 1 Corinthians 3 is the building of the house. For the purposes of our exhortation, I’d like to examine just one of the many aspects of building, which serves to strengthen our remarks made above: that is, laying the foundation.

Ezra Chapter 4 contains the copy of the letter sent by the Jew’s adversaries to Artaxerxes, in an effort to persuade him to end the building of the city. Their words included the following:

“... be it known to the king that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, **and joined the foundations**” (Ezra 4:12).

A marginal note indicates that the word “joined” here literally means “sewed together”. How this worked in the practical terms of how the foundation was formed I am not sure, but it is a distinctive expression that is picked up in the New Testament, in the Epistle to the Colossians:

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts might be comforted, **being knit together** in love and unto all riches of the full

assurance of understanding ...” (Col.2:1-2).

Notice the parallel expression, the foundation of the temple was “sewed together,” the ecclesia at Colosse was to be “knit together”. One of the points that come out from this is that our life in building up the spiritual House of God is to be like the construction of the previous, literal House. The very foundation of Christ’s ecclesial house is the principle of love, with bands of love drawing believers together upon the basis of the atoning work of the Father and his Son – and a work in which we engage ourselves also.

Whilst we are considering Ezra chapter 4, there is another relevant point. The chapter commences with a description of how the men of other nations came to the Jews, and said to them: “... let us build with you: for we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur which brought us up hither” (Ezra 4:1-2).

Naturally thinking, in practical terms, it would seem desirable to have as many labourers as possible, especially skilled ones. And if these men all worshipped the same God, where is the problem? The problem was not a practical one, but a spiritual one. These men were not of Israel. They were engaged in a corrupt form of worship, which may well have incorporated parts of the Law followed by Israel: but they were not worshipping Yahweh in spirit and in truth.

We recognise the same principles at work in the world around us. The principles of Ecumenicalism where churches join together irrespective of differences in teaching and doctrine are making their effects known upon the ecclesia of Christ. Here is the people’s response to the Ecumenicalists of their day: “**Ye have noth-**

ing to do with us to build an house to our God; but we ourselves together will build unto Yahweh God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us” (Ezra 4:3).

This is what our response should be: “ye have *nothing* to do with us”. The Apostle in alluding to these things says likewise:

“what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the Living God* ... wherefore come out from among them, *and be ye separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you ..” (2 Cor. 6:15-17).

The Jews had come out from among the nations amongst whom they were scattered, to be a separate people to the glory of their God. There was no question as to whether those who believed in a god, or gods other than Yahweh, should be permitted to be part of the ecclesia at the time. Even so in our day, those who worship the mythical triune deity prove themselves to be idolaters (i.e. worshipping a god that doesn’t exist), and cannot partake of fellowship with us.

In the above, we have assumed that the “House of God” in our day is the ecclesia of Christ, as distinct from the temples of idolatrous worship. This is plainly stated in 1 Timothy chapter 3:

“ ... the house of God, *which is the ecclesia* of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). The House of God then, is a “pillar” and ground of the Truth.

The allusion here is to Jacob fleeing from the face of his brother Esau, the man who

God “hated”. Genesis 28 recounts a dream that Jacob had; a prophecy of greater things to come. The end of the chapter speaks of how:

“Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place *Beth-El* ... and Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to may father’s house in peace, then shall Yahweh be my God.” (Gen. 28:18-21).

Notice, we have here the House of God (the meaning of the Hebrew name Beth-El), which is a pillar – like the description we saw in 1 Timothy 3. Whilst the connection is plain, the point or points being made by that connection are not immediately obvious, but there are principles which have a bearing on the development of Christ’s ecclesia, the pillar of the Truth in the present dispensation.

Where the AV renders verse 20: “If God will be with me” (which seems to be putting conditions on whether he would serve Yahweh or not), another translation has it: “*Seeing Elohim is with me*”, which is a preferable rendering, as Jacob is here using the fact of Yahweh being revealed to be with him (the earlier part of Genesis 28), as the basis for his worship. There are three points to these words of Jacob:

“*Seeing Elohim is With Me* ...”

In Genesis chapter 48 at the end of his life, Jacob recognised the guiding Angelic hand in his life. In his prayer for Joseph’s children, he said: “*the Angel which re-*

deemed me from all evil, bless the lads ...". His confidence and trust in the angelic presence right until the end of his life is an example for us. Israel is ostensibly an extension of Jacob's household, and the development of Jacob's faith is something that all members of that household ought to emulate.

Will keep me in this way ...

The words here are cited later in Exodus chapter 23, by way of describing how the Angel would be with Israel, keeping them "in the way":

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to **keep thee in the way**, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared" (Exod. 23:20)

Another interesting reference in relation to this is Hebrews chapter 12. We recall that when Jacob returned back to the land of his fathers, he wrestled with the angel (as described in Genesis 32), and had his thigh put out of joint, making him lame. Bearing these things in mind, look at the admonition of Hebrews 12: "... lift up your hands which hand down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, **lest that which is lame be turned out of the way**, but let it rather be healed" (Heb. 12:12-13). The word rendered "**be turned out of the way**", we are told, is a medical term used of dislocated limbs: the exhortation therefore, is that just as Jacob could not trust in his own strength to save him, but in the power of El, even so we trust in the Angelic company that encamps around those who are the heirs of salvation.

Bread to Eat and Raiment to Put On

Jacob prayed that Elohim would give him: "bread to eat, and raiment to put on".

He did not seek wealth and riches, but just those things which are necessary to sustain a mortal existence.

These words are alluded to in 1Timothy chapter 6, where the believers are similarly exhorted:

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And **having food and raiment let us therewith content**" (1Tim. 6:7-8).

The natural way of the flesh is not simply to want food – we want nice, sumptuous delicacies! And by way of clothes, we don't want cheap cloth, but the latest in designer fashion! But that was not the spirit of Jacob, and neither should it be ours. As Jesus himself taught:

"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15)

Let us beware of covetousness, for these are the things that the heathen look for.

In order for the House to withstand the stormy blasts that life brings, it is essential for it to be built on a strong foundation. As it is written: "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. 11:3). The Master spoke of the importance of being founded upon the bedrock of his teaching:

"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house,

and could not shake it: *for it was founded upon a rock*. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that *without a foundation* built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, *and immediately it fell*; and the ruin of that house was great” (Luke 6:47-49).

There can be no substitute for the Rock of Divine teaching. Rather than to be covetous of this world’s goods we need to lay up for ourselves “a good foundation against the time to come” (1 Tim. 6:19), that we might lay hold of eternal life. For those who give scant attention to the commandments, who build on a foundation of sand:

“thus saith Adonai Yahweh; I will even rend it with *a stormy wind in my fury*; and there shall be *an overflowing shower in mine anger*, and *great hailstones in my*

fury to consume it. So will I break down the wall ... and bring it to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am Yahweh” (Eze. 13:132-14).

There is much work to do by way of ensuring that brethren and sisters are being built up by the Word of Truth. In this study, we have considered just a few of the principles which must be followed, but the central theme is that it is Yahweh’s house, and not ours. He has provided the conditions and the means for its building and survival in the day of evil. Let us therefore give heed to these things, and set our hands to the work, upon the sure foundations laid by Messiah and his Apostles.

Christopher Maddocks

JERUSALEM

“Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6, 7).

There is a distinct need to remind ourselves of this admonition. It used to be a characteristic feature of meetings, and particularly of public prayers, that Zion was constantly brought into remembrance and her speedy restoration to Divine favour entreated. Well do we recall the impression made upon us in our early experiences in the Truth, when the lecturing brother quoted with rare eloquence and conviction those words of the Spirit of God through Isaiah:

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me” (Isaiah 49:15).

Then the presiding brother in his prayer repeated those moving words from the 137th Psalm: “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning”.

In those days the remembrance of Zion seemed woven into the fabric of our worship. The words of the Spirit above leave us in no manner of doubt regarding the true attitude of the children of God on this subject. "Ye that make mention of the Lord".

Do we make mention of the Lord? Undoubtedly; it should be one of our most distinct characteristics in both public and private life. To us then is this command specially applicable: "Keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth". If we heed this Divine admonition our worship will not be marked by silence in the matter of entreating God for the speedy dawn of Zion's glad morning.

This attitude is not merely a matter of sentiment, but springs from sound reason and a correct understanding of the purpose of God in relation to the earth. Zion is the focal point of God's dealings with the human race; He has declared in no uncertain voice that Zion alone is the city of His choice.

"For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Ps. 132:13).

It is pre-eminently the city of our God; the mountain of His holiness; the mount Zion which He loved.

Jesus forbade his disciples to swear by Jerusalem, giving the all-sufficient reason that "it is the city of the Great King". His throne will be established there; from Zion will go forth the law which will govern the nations when His glorious Kingdom will be set up. And the name of the city in that day shall be Jehovah-Shammah; The Lord is there.

Until Jerusalem becomes a praise in the earth, no Kingdom of God can be established. Zion, redeemed and triumphant, is the very core of the Divine purpose. Well then may they who truly seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness say with the Psalmist: "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in glory".

If we are in danger of neglecting the Divine injunction to "Let Jerusalem come into your mind", let us return to the old paths and pray for the peace of Jerusalem; yes, pray for it; not merely sing about it. Let our presiding brethren, upon whom the responsibility of directing our ecclesial worship rests, make themselves in truth and reality "The Lord's remembrancers" (see Isaiah 62:6, marginal reading), and determine that through their prayers Zion shall indeed come into remembrance.

"For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore".

(Adapted: Bro F. Turner 1940)

Secretary's Notes

Missing Issues:-

Due to computer problems and the combination of other adverse circumstances, we regret that we have been unable to produce this magazine for a number of months. Subscribers are reminded that a subscription is for 12 issues, monthly wherever possible. This issue completes the current subscription, being the 12th issue.

Subscriptions Now Due:-

The Subscriptions are now due for the next year/12 issues. The cost is £13.00 per subscription, but is available **free of charge** to anyone who, for any reason, cannot remit the requested amount. Please note that this amount is to cover the costs of production and postage, with further expenses such as advertising, special projects and free issues being met by individual donations from readers.

The BASF—It's Importance and Teaching:-

We have now uploaded all of our articles on the 30 Positive Clauses of the BASF to our website here: <http://www.christadelphian.uk.com/BASF.html>. To our knowledge, this is the only detailed study of each clause available online. It is our intention, if the Lord permit, to collate these studies into book format at the suggestion of several readers.

Christopher Maddocks

Brother Eric Phipps

It was with great sorrow that we learned of the death of our dear Brother Eric Phipps. He fell asleep in the Lord on 20th June 2010 after a lifetime of service in the Truth, aged 88.

Brother Eric was instrumental in the setting up of *The Christadelphian Waymark* magazine—including deciding on the name for the magazine—and clearly defining the Aims and Objectives it should have. His wise counsel was always appreciated. Bro Eric wrote many articles for the magazine, seeking to earnestly contend for the faith. Having a keen appreciation of the Scriptures of Truth, and the expositions of our earlier brethren John Thomas and Robert Roberts, Brother Eric had a particularly clear grasp of matters pertaining to the Atonement, and the booklets we have produced on the subject reflect in measure, his guidance and counsel.

Brother Eric's wise guidance, influence, and example, will be sorely missed.

Christopher Maddocks

“Love the Sinner and Hate the Sin”?

The words which form the title of this article are being increasingly used by the undiscerning to describe the love of God towards His Servants. It seems that to “love the sinner, and hate the sin” is regarded by increasing numbers as being the teaching of the Bible, which those who believe the Bible should accept. The present writer has been confronted with this position on a number of occasions.

But as is often the case, the facts of the matter are very different. It will come as a surprise to some that actually, the phrase occurs nowhere in the Bible. It’s origin in its first form would appear to be from the Catholic Saint Augustine, whose letter 211 (c. 424) contains the phrase *Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum*, which roughly translates as “With love for mankind and hatred of their sins.” It’s more popular form is expressed: “love the sinner but hate the sin”, or “hate the sin and not the sinner”, the latter expression coming from Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography of 1929. With such dubious sources as these, we would do well to stop and consider whether or not the popular phrase does in fact reflect the Truth of Scripture. In doing so, we need to consider:

1. What the Bible teaches concerning love and hate
2. What the Bible teaches concerning sinners
3. What the Bible teaches concerning repentant sinners

1. Bible Teaching concerning Love and Hate

It may come as a surprise to some that Hate is a characteristic of the faithful, as well as Love. Ecclesiastes chapter 3 states that there is “a time to love, and a time to hate” (Eccl. 3:8). Amos chapter 5 exhorts; “hate the evil and love the good” (Amos. 5:15). The Psalms teach the same principle—consider the following citations:

“Ye that love Yahweh ***hate evil***” (Psa. 97:10).

“Though thy precepts I get understanding: therefore ***I hate*** every false way.” (Psa. 119:104).

“... therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and ***I hate*** every false way” (Psa. 110:128).

And again, it is taught in the Proverbs:

“The fear of Yahweh is ***to hate evil***: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the forward mouth do I hate” (Prov. 8:13).

This latter passage is most significant, as “the fear of Yahweh” is stated time and time again in Scripture to be “the beginning of wisdom” (cp Prov. 9:10), but this passage actually defines what the fear of Yahweh involves—the hating of evil.

2. What the Bible teaches concerning Sinners:

So much is clear: “love the sinner *and hate the sin*”. The hatred of sin is something that defines the character of those who would constitute “the faithful”. But what of those who commit the sin? Should sinners be unconditionally loved? Consider the following:

“Yahweh trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence *his soul hateth*” (Psa. 11:5).

“Do not *I hate them*, O Yahweh that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? *I hate them* with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.” (Psa. 139:21-22).

“Jacob have I loved, *but Esau have I hated*” (Rom. 9:13).

The Scriptures are clear and unequivocal therefore: men who constitute “the wicked” are to be hated as much as their sin. Esau is a prime example of this, it is explicitly stated that he is among the company of the “hated” of God. As far as the Bible is concerned therefore, it is certainly not the case that as a general principle regarding all men that we should “love the sinner and hate the sin”.

3. What the Bible teaches concerning Repentant Sinners:

As we saw in our first paragraph, the sinners that we are told by men to “love” comprise all of mankind. However, Scripture teaches that there is only a particular group of men that Yahweh loves: those who repent of their sins:

“... *except ye repent*, ye shall all likewise perish” (Lu. 13:3, 5)

“... *Repent ye therefore*, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“... hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (Jas. 2:5)

It is written concerning the sacrifice of Christ as follows:

“scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God *commendeth his love towards us*, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

The love of God is extended “towards us” - that is, the category of those who are “rich in faith”. Though we be sinners, we are *repentant* sinners, and heirs of the kingdom promised to those who love God. Let us therefore shun the wisdom of this world, and embrace the faith of those who love God. We, as the Psalmist, hate those unrepentant sinners—the “wicked” of the world, but are lovers of those who seek the Truth. Let us appreciate the honoured position of our high calling, and continue in well doing, that when the Master appears we might comprise part of that great company of the Redeemed, whom Messiah loved, and purchased with his own shed blood.