

*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 7**

**Issue 9**

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

<i>Our Response to The Word</i> .....	2
<i>Sacramentalism</i> .....	7
<i>Like a Bird</i> .....	12
<i>“Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge”</i> .....	15
<i>“Hath Made us Kings and Priests”</i> .....	22
<i>“Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of His Saints”</i> .....	26
<i>“Dirty Linen” Petition</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)*

## **Our Response to the Word**

Our recent readings in Daniel reveals the state of mind of the prophet regarding the message that would come through him. 2 Peter describes how the prophets “*enquired diligently* ... searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify ...” (1 Pet. 1:11), and the example of Daniel in Chapter 10 of the prophecy bearing his name illustrates the point. The Scriptures reveal that he “was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, nether came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself, till three whole weeks were fulfilled” (Dan. 10:2-3). Such was his desire to know of the meaning of those revelations given to him – an example for ourselves to follow in our desire to learn of the revealed Word.

Isaiah 66 speaks of this acceptable spirit before the Lord: “... to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, *and trembleth at my word*” (Isa. 66:2). In the various contexts of our readings over recent months, we have come across many people’s attitude to the Word: some who feared and trembled at it, and others who rebelled against, and despised it. In all of these things we have examples for our learning: example of faithfulness, and examples of disbelief.

### ***THE KING OF JUDAH***

Jeremiah chapter 36 recounts the giving of a particular revelation to Jeremiah, when he was in prison. So “Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Yahweh, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book” (Verse 4). Those who initially heard it, had the approach described in Isaiah 66 (above): “they *were afraid* both one and another, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words” (Jer. 36:16). So they approached the king, Jehoiakim, and arrangements were made to read the words before him. His reaction, however, was very different:

“it came to pass that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. *Yet they were not afraid* ...” (Jer. 36:23-24).

Here is the example of the Apostasy down through the Ages. Many times men have sought to suppress and destroy the words of the Living God, but by His Grace it has survived through to our day. “Yet they were not afraid ...” – this is the natural man: “There is *no fear of God* before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18). So it was that through his lack of obedience to Divine requirements, the king was overcome by the power of Sin, as vested in the Babylonian army.

### ***THE KING OF BABYLON***

The events we have just described took place, we are told, “in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah king of Judah” (Jer. 36:9). Chapter 35 spoke of events “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah King of Judah, that was

the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon". We see then, that Nebuchadrezzar's first year was the fourth of Jehoiakim, and that therefore Jehoiakim's fifth year was Nebuchadrezzar's second. Interestingly, the events of Daniel chapter 2 are said to have happened "in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadrezzar" (Dan. 2:1) – and this therefore means that these events happened in the very same year as Jehoiakim sought to destroy the Word of God.

But what a difference we see in the attitude of this Gentile Monarch! Following the revelation of the Image described earlier in this chapter, we see Nebuchadrezzar's response: "The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret" (Dan. 2:47).

The very same year in which Judah's king despised and sought to destroy the Word, Nebuchadrezzar recognised the greatness of Israel's God, and the revelation that was made known to him. Even so it has been from the cutting off of the Israelitish olive branches (Rom. 11), that because of the Jewish rebellion against their Messiah, Gentiles come to accept and embrace Israel's Hope, and look forward to that day when the kingdoms of men shall have an end, with the God of Heaven's kingdom being established in their place.

It is interesting to note that Nebuchadrezzar's recognition of Israel's Deity goes beyond lip service: it would appear that when the Babylonian army came against Zedekiah's forces, they did so in recognition that they were doing the will of Yahweh. So Nebuchadrezzar "gave charge concerning

Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan that captain of the guard, saying, Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee" (Jer. 39:11-12). So Babylon's king knew about the prophet Jeremiah – could that have been through Daniel? We know of a certainty that Daniel was familiar with Jeremiah's prophecies, for Daniel 9:1 tells us that he understood them. Could it be therefore that Daniel, who had access to the King made request concerning Jeremiah? This seems even more likely when we read Jeremiah 40:

*"... the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said unto him, Yahweh thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. Now Yahweh hath brought it, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against Yahweh, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you" (Jer. 40:2-3).*

How marvellous is this! The captain of the guard not only knew about Jeremiah: he also knew that the Babylonians were bringing the judgments of God upon the place, because of Israel's disobedience! How appropriate are the words of Proverbs: "whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed (Jehoiakim): but he that feareth the commandment (Nebuchadrezzar) shall be rewarded" (Prov. 13:13).

### **THE PROPHET JEREMIAH**

By contrast to Judah's King, Jeremiah delighted in the law of Yahweh. 2 Kings 22:8 describes how Hilkiyah the

high priest “found the book of the law in the house of Yahweh”. Jeremiah (Hilkiah’s son - Jer. 1:1) seems to allude to this discovery, in saying “thy words were found, *and I did eat them*; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart ...” (Jer. 15:16).

Desiring to assimilate the word of Yahweh into his very being, Jeremiah sought after the bread of the word. The Psalmist wrote: “Taste and see that Yahweh is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Psa. 34:8), and this is what Jeremiah did. Trusting in Yahweh’s power to save, he sought to devour the spiritual bread that had been found, and which Jehoiakim sought to destroy.

However, preaching the message of the Word had personal repercussions for Jeremiah:

“... I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of Yahweh was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily”.

Here, we can identify with the experiences of the prophet. Not that we, in our day, suffer the same degree of persecution; but that as we proclaim the gospel message, we will invariably find ourselves mocked, and reproached. But how do we deal with this situation? The human tendency is to stop preaching: to cease doing that which is bringing reproach upon us. That was Jeremiah’s initial approach:

“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as

a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer.20:8-9).

Jeremiah tried to evade his duty, to cease from speaking Yahweh’s Word. But in practice, he found that he could not: the Word was as a fire in his bones: he could not help himself from withholding it. Herein we see an example for our own circumstance: do we ever feel that other might mock us for the things we believe and stand for? Are we ever reluctant to preach the word regardless of the consequences? Jeremiah provides the answer. Let us preach in earnest, and leave the consequences to Yahweh, knowing that at the last, He will plead our cause.

### *THE APOSTLES*

The Apostles also had this same attitude of mind. They were called, and commanded by the religious leaders of their day, “not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus”. How did they respond to this?

“But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:18-20).

Again:

“We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)

And yet again, the prophet Amos wrote in a similar vein:

“the lion hath roared,  
who will not fear?  
Adonai Yahweh hath spo-  
ken, who can but proph-  
esy?” (Amos 3:8).

When the word of Yahweh is sent forth, though it may fall on deaf ears, it will nevertheless accomplish the purpose for which it was sent – of this there can be no doubt (Isa. 55:11). We are but agents, part of the overall process by which men and women are given the opportunity to come unto Israel’s God, and be sharers of the glory yet to be revealed. Some – even many – may disbelieve, but that makes no difference as to the accomplishment of Yahweh’s overall purpose: “what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea let God be true, but every man a liar ...” (Rom. 3:3-4).

### ***ZEDEKIAH***

Returning to the example of Judah’s wayward kings, we see the attitude of mind of Zedekiah towards the prophet, who had been imprisoned for speaking out the words of Yahweh:

“Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from Yahweh...?” (Jer. 37:17).

Notice, Zedekiah was a man of shadows: he would not approach the prophet directly, but “secretly”. So the word came:

“... And Jeremiah said,  
There is: for, said he,  
thou shalt be delivered

into the hand of the king  
of Babylon” (Jer. 37:17)

In the next chapter, we read of an ultimatum given to Zedekiah by the prophet, that if he would surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, he and his house would live. But if he resisted: “then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.” (Jer. 38:17-18).

How did the king respond?

“And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen unto the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me” (Jer. 38:19).

What a contrast we have between Zedekiah and the prophet! One who was mocked, and persecuted by his own people for the Truth’s Sake, and an old and foolish king who would no more be admonished (Eccl. 4:13). Fearing the people, and how they would mock him, Zedekiah went forward to his own destruction rather than obey the commandments of Yahweh.

### ***OURSELVES***

Against the background of the various individuals we have considered, we see examples of belief, and unbelief. In the Bible that we have before us, we have a powerful thing: the “power of God unto salvation” to those that believe. How do we approach the Living Word? The Thessalonians set forth an example:

“when ye received the  
word of God which ye  
heard of us, ye received it  
not as the word of men,

but as it is in truth, the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thes.2:13)

The Word is a living power, able to transform the lives of those who receive it. It is not a passive thing, but rather, once it is permitted access to men's hearts, it works within them dispelling works and thoughts of darkness, that ultimately Yahweh be glorified. So, we do not receive it in the same way as we might read books and novels etc written by the heathen that tantalise the fleshly disposition of all men, but as servants of the living God, it becomes an influence for good, being "able so save our souls."

Again, the well-known words to Timothy:

***"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).***

Notice the point here: if we contract a workman to do some repairs or building for us in our houses, how would we react if when we came home at the end of the day and the workman had done nothing? Even so, we have a work to accomplish, labouring in the Word and in the doctrine. Only if we assimilate the principles of the Word of God into our hearts and minds will it be able to have an effect upon us, preparing us for the coming day of glory.

And yet again, more well known words to Timothy:

"till I come, give attendance to reading, to ex-

hortation, to doctrine ... take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:13,16).

Notice particularly the command to "give attendance to ... doctrine". In our day, the preaching of doctrine is increasingly unpopular. Folk don't like to hear the doctrines, and so there is a move towards so-called "non-doctrinal preaching". As a substitute for the doctrines that give life, some ecclesias engage in other activities, such as Teddy Bear Picnics. As justification, they point out the numbers that they have been able to get to attend – yet their attendance is based on activities that have nothing to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the Word that saves, and if we remove that word from our preaching, we are presenting nothing but an empty husk that can accomplish nothing.

In all of these examples we have seen, they all direct our minds to our Master and Redeemer: the One who was the "word made flesh". He did not shirk from the preaching of the Word, even though the adversary crucified him for it. In him, as our Elder Brother, we have the supreme example to uphold. We see in the bread and in the wine before us the emblems of Christ's obedience to His Father's Will. As we partake of these things, let us therefore "taste, and see that the Lord is good", and resolve to receive, follow, and obey the calling of the Gospel. Only by this means can we obtain entry into that glorious kingdom-age to come.

*Christopher Maddocks*

## Sacramentalism

The following article was penned by Bro. John Thomas in 1859 in response to a correspondent on the subject: "Is the Lord's Table a Sacrificial Altar?" - we reproduce it for the benefit of our readers, as it touches on certain aspects of our ecclesial arrangements today:

A *sacrament* (from the Latin *Sacramentum*, an oath) is defined by ecclesiastical speculators to be "an outward and spiritual grace." The Roman Mother has "Seven Sacraments," but her Protestant Daughters and their Abominations, recognize only two of them, which they style Baptism and Eucharist. Their sacrament of Baptism consists in sprinkling the face of a babe at any time from its first breath, and making upon its forehead the sign of a cross with the finger of an ordained administrator, dipped in water, either previously "consecrated" or consecrated in the act of using it for the sprinkling. This is "*the outward and visible sign*" which ought to be styled *Rhantism*, or Sprinkling; for there is no baptism or dipping in the case, the fingers of the clerical sorcerer excepted.

But of what is this rhantism the sign? It is said to be "*the sign of an inward and spiritual grace*" operated upon the immortal soul of the babe, which in the process is regenerated, cleansed from all sin, and ingrafted into the body of Christ! This marvellous work is *sacramentalism*, the hypostasis or basis of which is, abstract spirit without, operating upon concrete spirit within, the babe! Hence faith is not necessary to sacramentalism, either in clergyman or subject: water, the form, and abstract spirit are all that are necessary; even an ordained administrator may be dispensed with, if it be thought the babe would die before the person could arrive. Hence nurses and doctors' ap-

prentices often administer "the outward and visible sign"

### HOLY WATER

In all this theological sorcery and spiritual legerdemain the spirit is supposed to be *subservient*, or in the water. That is, when the words "I baptise thee, &c.," are uttering or uttered, Holy Spirit strikes into the water, as it were, and makes it holy water. Hence, what the spiritual sorcerers call "holy water" may be styled *spirit suspended in water*. The Devil is said to hate this very much, so that it has become proverbial to signify intense hatred, as "he hates virtue as the Devil hates holy water". But the contrary is true. The Devil is very fond of holy water, for he uses it abundantly in all his lustrations. When a pagan, he used it freely; and when he became a Catholic, and filled his wardrobe with popish, protestant and sectarian investments for public occasions, according to the community he found himself among, he has always called the pint basin or "font," with "the outward and visible sign".

### A REGENERATION

But, how doth this water regenerate? How is the "*spiritual grace*" it contains made "*inward*," and blended with "the soul"? Not by any mental or moral process assuredly, because the subject of "the sign" is incapable of thought, being simply a newborn animal. The mental and moral being ex-

cluded, the physical alone remains. We have seen the mesmerised drink pure water, and vomit at the unexpressed will of the operator; after the same example therefore, we may suppose, that the clerical sorcerer mesmerizes the little animal by his manipulations, and wills the regeneration if it's "immortal soul"; by which will, the "spiritual grace" in the water being *en rapport* with his spirit, strikes "inward," and blending itself with "the particle of the Divine Essence" - *divina particular auras* - "the soul," washes, sanctifies, justifies, and save it: so that being thus generated or born again, its body may be buried in consecrated ground with "christian burial," and itself become "a little angel with wings," flying about with its companions like clouds of gnats on a summer's eve, "beyond the realms of time and space" - somewhere "beyond the skies!!".

### THE BREAD AND WINE

But what has all about clerical rhanism to do with our correspondent's difficulty? Much every way. Her difficulty relates to the subject of the remission of sins. "For a number of years," says she, "I supposed that if a believer committed sin, he received remission thereof by confession of the same, and partaking of the bread and wine, viewing it as a sacrificial altar, to which we were commanded to come for the purpose." This supposition is *sacramentalism* - REMISSION OF SIN BY A SACRAMENT; the foundation corner of the Apostasy, of whose wine all peoples, and nations, and tongues have drunk to intoxication, so that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth, he finds them "drunk" and wallowing in the mire - Rev. 17:2,6; 18:3. We have dwelt upon *the Sacrament of Rhanism*

as a familiar example of sacramentalism - "an outward and invisible sign of the inward and spiritual grace" of remission of sin from "the soul" of a new born animal. Only think of it reader; the sin of a part of Deity, called the "immortal soul" purged away by subvenient spirit suspended in a few drops of water trickling from the fingers of an old wife, parson, or apocathary's apprentice! Are you not astounded at the magical effects of "holy water"? But look at the absurdity - Satan will have it that "the soul" is immortal, or deathless; and yet the sin cleansed out is said to be of that deathless soul: but the Scriptures saith, "*the wages of sin is death*;" how, then, can there be sin in the soul, and that soul deathless or immortal?

Again, Satan admits that God is sinless, and that his parts partake of the nature of his whole. Now Satan teaches that the human soul is a particle of God's essence; how, then, can that soul just born, innocent of all action whatever, be sinful, and "in danger of the pains of hell for ever?"

That fact is, that Satan is a deceiver and deceived. He is lost in "*his depths as they teach*" (Rev. 2:24). His sacramentalism has bewildered him; and he is stultified by "the sentiments of all christendom," in which he piously and clerically ministers to the admiration of the Devil in all his manifestations of the flesh.

### SUPPOSED REMISSION OF SIN

Now as to *Eucharistic Saramentalism*, or the remission of sin by confession and partaking of the bread and wine, the eating of the bread and wine is the "outward and visible sign;" and the

remission of sin is the “inward and spiritual grace;” or abstract spirit, communicated. The sacrament of the Eucharist, or of Thanksgiving, differs from the sacrament of Rhanthism, or Sprinkling, not in the theory of its *opus operatum*, or work operated, but in the form and subject. The vehicle through which the “grace” is transmitted, is bread and wine instead of water; and the subject one that has been satanically rhanthized or aspersed. An unsprinkled animal cannot be admitted to “the altar”.

The unsprinkled are brought to the convenicle pint-basin, or to the parochial font, and no further towards the clerical sanctum; but the besprinkled, Satan’s own newborns, are admitted to the altar-rail, and permitted to eat a “wafer,” or if they belong to the reformed synagogue, to eat bread and drink wine for the healing of their immortal souls, that is, for the remission of any sin or defilement the incorruptible and deathless soul may have contracted, since it was cleansed “by grace” in the water, or by a previous eating. In Satan’s papistical synagogue, the ministers keep the decanter to themselves; while they give the wafer to their dupes. Satan’s ministers love good cheer above all things, and always take care of number one.

### **TRANSUBSTANTIATION**

They persuaded the foolish people that there was such virtue in their ministry that by repeating the words of Jesus over a wafer, they call the “host,” and over a tankard, or cup, of wine, they could convert the wafer into the flesh, and the wine into the blood, of Christ, so that, when these elements were before the people, they beheld Christ really present – sacrificially. The process developing this result, they call it

“the Sacrifice of the Mass;” and the thing itself, “the Real Presence.” Only think of the sorcery! A devil of a priest, the very antitype of Judas, whom Jesus styled a devil (Jno. 6:70), takes a little flour, water, and salt, makes it into a paste, and then mutters over it in Latin, *Hoc est corpus meum* (“this is my body”), and instantly the words pass through his lying lips, the wafer-dough becomes the actual flesh that was crucified! By this sorcery, the cannibal makes his god, and eats him!

But the process does not stop here. He takes a cup of wine (the best, doubtless he can find in the market, as he intends, selfish tippler that he is, to drink it all himself,) and mumbles over it, *Hoc est sanguis mea* (“this is my blood”), and instantly the wine becomes the real blood that poured from the heart of Jesus when “filled with iron, and the shaft of a spear.”

But, behold the creature’s “depth” or subtlety! He says, to the people, this blood was poured out for you; but it is not lawful for you to drink it; but for the priest only. You may eat of the wafer; and in eating of this, you, in effect, take also the blood, for the blood pervades all the flesh. Oh! Ye knaves, ye children of the devil, enemies of all God’s righteousness, witnessed by the law and the prophets! Ye say that ye have turned wine into real blood? Suppose ye had, why do you not pour it upon the ground, and cover it with dust? - Lev. 17:13-14. Who gave you a dispensation to do as worship what it was not lawful for Peter and the other apostles, nor for any Gentile christians to do? Ye hypocrites, ye generation of vipers, ye deceivers and destroyers of the people, hear what the apostles say to you, and to all who profess the faith of Jesus:- “It seemed good to the Holy

Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, *and from blood*, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well” – Acts 15:28-29.

Hear this, ye blood-drinking priests “it is a necessary thing that ye abstain from blood”: but ye pretend to make it, and to drink it too! But what is the use of talking to you about what the Scripture teacheth, except, indeed, for the benefit of your dupes, who perchance may read it. Your “wisdom” is from beneath, and your mission therefrom to deceive the world, and to make the Word of God of none effect by your traditions.

**LUTHER**

But Luther, a sorcerer himself, taught his contemporaries that his brother priests did not effect what they pretended—that they did not convert the substance of the dough and wine into the real blood, flesh, and bones of Christ; but that the words uttered over them brought Christ down into a mystical union with the dough and wine: which were not consubstantial with the iron, when heated to redness. This was only a modification of the original absurdity; the absurdity essentially remained. The bread and wine were eaten sacramentally by all sorts of ignoramuses, whose “immortal souls” were healed by the *con*, or “grace”, while the *substance*, or bread and wine, were digested in the usual way.

After Luther, Zwinglius and Calvin, two other sons of the Sorceress declared that the monk of Wittenburg, though a little more rational than most of his order, was still very wide of the

true exposition. They admitted that the Eucharist was “a sacrament”, but taught that the bread and wine were only emblems of the body and blood of Jesus, and to be eaten as such for the reception, in some way or another, of “an inward and spiritual grace”. This dogma of Zurich and Geneva is the sacramentalism of the Parliamentary Superstition of Britain, and of American Sectarianism. Until quite recently, “infidels” and “deists” used to take the Sacrament of the Eucharist as a qualification for a seat in Parliament, to which they had been elected. People of all sorts of opinions, and of no opinion (we say nothing of “faith” in their ease), take the sacrament at the parochial altar rails from the hands of the ministers duly authorised to administer ordinances by Satan. Being ignorant of Bible Christianity, any “grace” they are supposed to obtain gets into their “immortal souls” sacramentally; and the bread and the wine become to them “a sacrificial altar”.

Men’s opinions on the nature of the Eucharist used to define their position, in the beginning of the controversy of Rome. If they confessed the Real Presence in the Sacrament, they passed for good Catholics; but if they denied it, they were deemed to be Protestants, and worthy of the stake. The question was put to the Princess Elizabeth, while under surveillance in the reign of her sister, “the bloody Queen,” what she thought of the bread and wine in the Eucharist. But she, perceiving the snare, replied, saying,

*Christ was the Word that spake it;  
He took the bread and brake it;  
What he did make it,  
That I believe—and take it.*

But what he did make it, she pretended not to say.

## THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

But the truth is, the institution is not a "sacrament" at all. Apart from an enlightened mind, the bread and the wine are of no more benefit to the eater, than immersion for the person dipped. Immersion is a sign; and the eating of the bread and of the wine is a sign. The former is a burial and a rising again from the water, in which the believer was put out of sight. It is memorial of his death to sin, and his resurrection to a new moral existence; and a sign of his resurrection from the grave of earth, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. But it is a memorial and sign of these things only to him who is the possessor of the "One Faith"; to all others, it is neither—Rom. 6:2-11; 1Cor. 15:29; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26-29.

The latter is also memorial and significant. It memorializes the breaking of the body of Jesus for his brethren, and the outpouring of his blood for the dedication for the Abrahamic Covenant, by which covenant so dedicated, all the believers of it's promises are sanctified in putting on Jesus as it's Anointed Mediator. It memorializes the body as the victim and altar on which sin was condemned, and upon which the iniquity of all the faithful was laid. All in Jesus are therefore "*in the altar*" - partakers of the Altar "of which they had no right to eat who served the Tabernacle" - Heb. 13:10; and of which they could not possibly eat, being without faith. It is a sign of feeding on Christ, the bread of heaven, "whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed"; for as bread and wine nourish the outward man upon physical principles, so the testimony, or unadulterated milk of the Word concerning Christ in his sufferings and

glory, understood and believed, is mental and moral nourishment upon which the faithful feed, and grow, and become strong. It is a sign of this spiritual eating, digesting, and assimilating of the word of Christ or "the Spirit, which" says John, "is the truth" - 1John v 6. This is the bread that came down from heaven—*the Spirit-truth*"; "if any man eat this bread, he shall live in the age": for it is the spirit that maketh alive; the flesh profits nothing; spirit is, and life is, the words which I speak to you." "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye show the Lord's death *until he come*" - 1 Cor. 11:26. It memorializes the first coming, and reminds the partaker continually that he will certainly appear again, not to suffer, but to conquer and to reign.

It is manifest, then, that without understanding of the truth, it is impossible to eat in the true sense of the institution. It must be eaten in faith with the unleavened (cakes) of purity and truth—1 Cor. 5:8. An ignoramus cannot do this, for "ignorance alienates from the life of God" - Eph. 4:18; such can only eat unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body in it's spiritual relations.

The bread and the wine are no altar at all, but memorials of the altar. That altar, we have seen, is Jesus: and the saints in him, the worshippers thereat. About three or four years after the death of the Apostle John, Ignatius, in one of his letters, says, "Let no-one mistake: if any man is not *within the altar*, he is deprived of the bread of God. The altar was the place of sacrifice; therefore, all within it, are in a suffering state. If they offend, they have the privilege of approach to the Father through their advocate Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, who is the

covering for their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness—1 John 1:9; 2:1,2. They eat bread and drink wine as the memorial of this: not as a sacrificial altar, sacramentally imparting the remission of sins.

*John Thomas, Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*

**NOTE:**

Whilst we agree with Bro Thomas' that the bread and the wine of Messiah's appointed memorial do not change into anything else by the priest's blessing, the use of clumsy and inaccurate language can give the wrong impression. Countless times we have heard brethren in their prayers say, "we pray for a special blessing upon the bread" or "upon the wine". But what is the "blessing" sought for? What difference is there between bread blessed, and bread unblessed? Surely none: the bread and the wine remain natural bread and natural wine, and it is the simple partaking thereof which provides a memorial of the sacrifice of Messiah. The language is vague, inaccurate, and must surely fall into the category of what Bro Robert Roberts called: "prayers that smell of the old Roman cask; prayers that are unreasonable, that could not be answered, that are a mere rattle of words, and in their implications are an unintelligent shutting of the eyes to facts, and an insult to the majesty of God" (1893)

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## **LIKE A BIRD**

Over the summer some lovely little Blue Tits have been raising their young in a nest box that we put in our garden. We have had a lot of pleasure watching the parents lay and then hatch the eggs. We have watched as they then spent a very busy few weeks feeding the young birds. These little birds got quite use to us being in the garden and were not afraid to fly to the nest while we were close by watching them. As the young birds got older one day a little bird fell out of the nesting box and being unable to fly, just hopped along the ground. It was quite unafraid as I picked it up and put it back in the nest! It brought to mind the scripture which says:

"O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions" (Psalm 104:24)

They are indeed 'His possessions' and we are privilege to share in them! Creation and the natural order of things can teach many spiritual lessons that can both warn and encourage. For example Solomon writes:

"Like a bird that wanders from its nest is a man who wanders from his place." (Proverbs 27:8)

The word translated as 'place' means in the sense of a man being removed from his home or land, but can also mean wandering from his post or station. Now, if

the Truth is the focus of our lives, just as it was for the faithful of old, then our desired home will be the eternal city that is to come. We will wholeheartedly embrace the promises, confessing that we also are strangers and pilgrims on the earth who are seeking a permanent homeland.

Now our ‘place’ or spiritual home lies with the Lord Jesus. If we remain in Him, we have fellowship with those who share the same precious faith. Then, our role or station is fulfilled by working towards the edifying of the body. This then is our place, our home, albeit temporary, a lodging on the way to an eternal abiding place. But, woe betides us if we stray from our place and desert our post within the body. For then like a young bird away from its nest, we are vulnerable and lost.

Sin easily entangles, deceives and leads astray. Yet, to counter the tendency to stray, we have many descriptions of the Kingdom to guide and encourage us. For example, Jesus said:

“To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? "It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; "but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.” Mark 4:30-32

Surely, as we labour through the heat of the day as we journey onward, in preaching with little result, in warning and encouraging with little gain, an oasis of shade is so greatly needed.

Yet, if we do truly long for the Kingdom; if our hearts yearn for the promised homeland; if we desire to be with that Divine family drawn from all ages, then our hearts will surely echo these thoughts of David:

“My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young—Even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You.” (Psalm 84:2-4)

What a beautiful, harmonious scene is set before us in this passage. True peace at last! Blessed indeed are those who are privileged to walk through those Holy courts and view this breathtaking scene. Indeed, with spontaneous joy, rapturous songs of praise will spring forth from our lips.

The wonders of creation that we see displayed in nature all around us, speak of God’s love, His mercy and His tender care. Indeed, Jesus exhorted His disciples saying that if God provides even for the smallest bird, how much more will He not supply all that His children need (Matt 10:29-31). We are supremely privi-

leged to be able to see, to enjoy and to learn spiritual lessons from all the beauty of nature around us. May the day soon come when Jesus will return and the Kingdom of God will finally be set up upon the earth.

The kingdom age will usher in a time when all things shall be renewed and man will once again be in harmony with creation. No longer will mankind pollute and destroy the environment, but instead will tend and care for nature, just as God intended from the beginning.

There are some lovely passages in scripture that come to mind when seeing the wonders of nature. They are a reminder of what the earth will be like in the Kingdom age:

“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, The excellency of our God” (Isaiah 35:1-2).

and

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.” (Isaiah 11:6)

In the Kingdom age the world will know peace at last and will be filled with righteousness, for as Isaiah continues:

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” (v9)

May that day come soon! “Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

*Andy Peel*

### ***THE FATHER'S BENEFICENCE***

*There is every reason for Paul's remark : “I would have you without carefulness,” that is, carefulness in the sense of worldly anxiety.*

*Peter tells us to “ cast all our care upon God, for he careth for us.” Faith will confide and good sense will abandon useless fret. We have the authority of Jesus for saying that “ the Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him ” : and that the benevolence spontaneously exercised towards the birds of the air and the grass of the field will not be invoked in vain by those who fear Him.*

*Robert Roberts*

## **Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge**

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Prov. 29:18).*

The two books of Chronicles are a brief résumé of God’s dealings with men from the Creation to the destruction of the Kingdom. Today we are brought to the final chapter in that history—a tragic history of wasted opportunity and un-filled expectations.

What glorious possibilities were open to Israel! —a holy nation, a chosen people, a sanctified vessel, to whom God had drawn marvellously near, and through whom He had condescended to reveal Himself to mankind.

But how miserably they failed! What prolonged distress and wretchedness could have been avoided if they had only hearkened to the gentle voice of divine instruction, speaking to them as a Father to His children. What useless sorrow, just because they would not learn!

Is it indeed true that we can only learn wisdom by the path of bitter experience?—only learn it when it is too late? Does man lack entirely the faculty of avoiding evil by timely self-discipline? Must human experience always be one endless cycle of heedless folly and hopeless regret?

Fortunately, we have the assurance that this is not the whole picture, although the broad course of Scripture and experience indicate that it is almost universally true.

But there have always been the exceptions. Our hope lies in discovering and applying that hidden source of divine power by which these exceptions succeeded in breaking the strong downward gravity of the natural, and drawing themselves upward toward God.

From both the successes of the few, and the failure of the many, we must take lessons that will enable us to succeed.

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What happened to Israel? What went wrong with their bright beginnings—their eager enthusiasm for God? And how could it have been avoided? Did they voluntarily and consciously choose the path of self-destruction, or did it overtake them without warning from behind as the accumulated consequence of deeper and deeper self-deception and neglect?

To the very last moment they did not see the blow falling. Each increasingly ominous portent of disaster found them further blinded by the perverted fleshly exhilaration of a still lower descent into abomination and rebellion against God. If they could have seen to the end the consequences of their course—if they had

fully realized what was in store—if they could have clearly perceived things in their true light—would they have acted differently, before it was too late? Unquestionably, unless they were entirely devoid of reason.

So, in the final analysis, the whole trouble lay in their perception. True, what led them astray were the natural motions of their flesh, but everyone has them. A man is not a helpless slave to his flesh in any respect, unless he chooses to be. There is always available an inexhaustible supply of divine power, if man will only accept it to help fight himself.

But sometimes we are not very anxious to get rid of our idols, and after a few halfhearted attempts as a concession to our conscience, we find it easy to convince ourselves that it cannot be done.

The plea of weakness will not bear the light of day. God delights to make the weak strong, if they will unreservedly give themselves to Him. Most do not really want to put away their enjoyable little “weaknesses.”

The trouble with Israel lay in their perception. They could not see. Darkness enveloped them, and they stumbled on to destruction, fighting against the light, mocking the messengers of God, twisting themselves tighter and tighter in the net of their own blind obstinacy, till the wrath of God rose like a flood, and there was no remedy.

Now all this is recorded for our admonition. There is something here for us. Something we must have. Each chapter adds its particular ray to that light which alone can deliver us from the same sad end.

Israel illustrates the almost inevitable course—the course which can be escaped only by constant, tireless effort and application, and by being very different from the majority.

God only proposes to save a very small remnant of the countless millions that come and go. And God is no respecter of persons. It follows then that those whom He selects must be exceptional to a very marked degree, and they must be constantly on guard to maintain this distinction.

Of what must this necessary distinctiveness consist? Not in accomplishments, or ability, or intellectual preeminence—but just one thing: putting God first. Putting God first consists primarily in keeping Him constantly in the forefront of our current consciousness. Remembering and not forgetting.

Many things fill our minds and come and go as memory is provoked, but it is what occupies our heart and interest and attention that counts. What or who is it to whom our mind irresistibly turns whenever the pressure of the immediate present is relaxed? That is the acid test of our affections. Here we stand face to face with our real selves.

What or who occupies the secret, inner sanctum of our heart where at every opportunity we delight to retire and muse? This is where God looks in making up His jewels, and if He does not find Himself there, He passes on. We may have lots of other things laid out to show Him, but He will not be interested in them. David said—

“Thy testimonies are my delight and the rejoicing of my heart” (Psalm 119: 24).

“I have longed after Thy precepts. I have loved Thy commandments” (Psalm 119: 40).

“Thy statutes have been my songs in my pilgrimage” (Psalm 119: 54).

“O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119: 97).

Extreme? Overstated? Too highly colored? Poetic exaggeration? Not at all, though it may seem so to the crude, common, animal outlook. Here lies the difference between death and life.

David realized what the Scriptures are—not a book of ordinances for the regulation of servants, but a divinely-provided medium of intimate communion between a Father and His children.

Many express regret that the Bible is not more simple and precise. They complain because it does not give a clear-cut, straight-forward list of just what we must and must not do, and a convenient, orderly catalogue of just what we must believe.

But such people entirely miss its purpose. God has made it as little like a legal document, and as much like an affectionate personal message, as possible.

In the Old Testament, employing every shade of literary style, He tells us a story filled with vital and living characters, and in telling this story He skilfully weaves in all the lessons He wants us to learn.

In the New Testament He partly follows the same plan but much of what He has to say does not lend itself to this, so He writes us a series of very personal letters and sends them by a man who wins our heart by his simple humility and unconcealed affection. Paul does not dictate—he beseeches and entreats—pleads that he may be spared the sorrow of having to exercise his authority.

This method of presenting the Scriptures to us necessitates much application to draw out its treasures. But this is not a disadvantage. God has a reasonable right to assume that a message from Him will be eagerly received by His true children—that they will delight to dwell upon it day after day and search patiently for its hidden mysteries.

The Bible is circulated in uncounted millions. It is found everywhere—this personal message from a Father to His children. But, written as it is, there is no danger that rude and unsympathetic intruders will pry into intimacies and confidences that are not for them. To all such it is a sealed book—an incomprehensible mystery.

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Wherein did Israel fail? What lessons are we to take from their failure? They lost their grip on the one thing that could save them. It gradually and fatally seeped away all unnoticed, because they neglected it. It is so natural to say:

“How utterly depraved they were! At least we do not do those things—murder, violence, every conceivable form of wickedness! We ourselves must be doing quite well, considering how bad the flesh can be!”

But such a view misses the point. These things did not begin in this form. They started to slip very gradually and imperceptibly.

They are recorded to show, not how good we are in comparison, but how far it is possible to go, once the foundation is undermined.

They did not realize that the only safeguard was to keep a vision of God and His law bright in the forefront of their consciousness. Lose this, and there is no solid ground left. The full descent is just a matter of time.

Hosea, in chapter 4, continues the same theme—

“Hear the word of the Lord ye children of Israel; for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land” (v. 1).

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (v. 6).

“They did not like to retain God in their knowledge: therefore He gave them over to a reprobate mind and vile affections” (Romans 1:28).

—so Paul sums it up in writing to the Romans.

They would have preferred, perhaps, just to go part way. The depths to which they ultimately descended would have appalled them at first. But there was no part way. God did not allow it. When once they had chosen forbidden fruit, God saw to it that they had their fill.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

Transgression is just ignorance—trying to battle the inevitable—taking issue with the omnipotence of God—a persistent delusion that we are different from

everyone else and that somehow we will escape the consequences of our folly. Sin is obstinate and childish refusal to face the facts. God is the central fact of the universe. God's will, His power, His purpose—these are the basic facts which dominate eternity. They are inescapable. Sin consists in acting in a way that ignores these facts. Sin therefore is ignorance; often wilful, intentional ignorance. Peter says of the ungodly (2 Peter 3: 5)—

“For this they are willingly ignorant of.”

To transgress divine law, we must either not know, or else not give full weight to, all the facts of the case. The cure is fuller knowledge. Paul says—  
“No man ever yet hated his own flesh” (Ephesians 5: 29).

Yet sin is self-destruction. If a man holds his head under water, he will drown. He transgresses against the laws of nature, and nature is stronger than he, and he cannot escape from it.

This is far more true if he transgresses against the laws of God. He will perish. He is setting himself up against irresistible forces. He is making himself an obstacle in the way of an unalterable purpose. God has declared (Isaiah 11: 9)—  
“The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

This leaves no room for ignorance, for the purpose is that knowledge shall be universal. Knowledge is light (John 11: 9)—

“If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not.”

Here is the safeguard: keep out in the open daylight—away from the hidden things of darkness. Keep in the safe narrow beam of revealed light, accepting it in simple faith and holding to the center of the beam.

There are always myriads of unanswered questions along the edges on either side where the light only half shines and fades off into the darkness. It is very easy to become preoccupied with these—to spend precious time elaborating theories regarding partially-perceived shapes, or to halt stubbornly in the half light demanding answers where none are given.

“Fear God and keep His commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12: 13).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1: 7).

Sin is lack of knowledge—natural darkness and ignorance—the blind groping of the thinking of the flesh.

The remedy is knowledge, divine knowledge, constantly increased by study. A gradual building up of enlightenment and education—line upon line, precept

upon precept—gradually displacing the shifting chaos of ignorance and undisciplined natural feeling with a solid framework of knowledge and clear perception of eternal fact.

The textbook is the Scriptures. It has often been said by prominent men that a knowledge of the Scriptures is better than a college education—that is, even from a natural and worldly point of view and for natural ends. It gives a fuller and more rounded view of life and background of experience. But its real purpose is to prepare us—not for the pre-eminence in the life that now is—but for that which is to come; to school us in the knowledge of God; to give us a proportioned groundwork for balanced and constructive self-development.

Its peculiar suitability in this respect is occasionally brought vividly to our attention by our conversations with others who have no knowledge of it.

The average individual, for example, appears singularly ignorant of history—even of the little uncertain light on the past that secular history offers.

The reason is quite obvious—the average natural man has no incentive to investigate history. Apart from a knowledge of the plan of God, history is uninteresting, purposeless, and depressing to the mind.

The natural man, like an animal, lives within the restricted sphere of his own personal activities, absorbed in himself, ignorant and heedless of either the future or the past.

But the student of Scripture finds his view extended boundlessly in every direction. The world around him, and the long colorful cavalcade of history is invested with intense interest and purpose. He is like a man suddenly released from a dungeon and placed on a mountaintop.

The alphabet of Scriptural education is the historical detail of the Old Testament. This sketches, often in the briefest terms but always sufficiently, the general background upon which the inner significance of the play is developed.

This background is essential to a proper knowledge of the whole. Not, of course, every detail of it, but at least the general outline in its proper proportions.

We learn, and sometimes it seems that this is more important than anything else, that there is nothing particularly unique about ourselves, our lives, our problems. An endless procession of humanity has preceded us. Every phase and shade of human experience and emotion has come, and gone, and come again, time without number. We are no different. We are no exception.

The rules of life and death were written long before we came. Every situation that confronts us is a well-trod path in which, of those who have passed, a few have succeeded by accepting divine guidance and the rest have failed.

And now it is our turn. The rules will not be changed on our account. We must write a record to put beside the rest. Life is complex, but the rules of life are simple—

“Fear God, and keep His commandments.”

Not asking for special favors and consideration, just because it happens to be us, but asking instead for the wisdom and strength and courage to take our place with the rest and fill our part as it comes to us.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

The great, consuming pity was that the knowledge had been there—but it had slipped through their fingers. Gradually they forgot all about it. Once or twice they ran across it by accident, as in the days of Josiah, and there was a great scurry of self-searching for a while, but it soon slipped away again, and the old self-satisfied slumber returned.

How strenuously Paul labored against this deadly tendency to relax and fall asleep! His constant keynote is, “Watch and remember!” In the chapter read this morning (Acts 20) as he takes his leave of the brethren at Ephesus, we enter perhaps more closely into his inner feelings than anywhere else.

A man of great capabilities, signally honoured in the service of God, yet appealingly simple and sincere. He was wholly unreserved and unashamed in his demonstration of affection for those whom he had begotten and labored over in the Truth, knowing as he left them that many would not be able to hold on to the end—“Watch, and remember.”

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (v. 31).

Remembrance—

“Have these things always in remembrance”  
(2 Peter 1:15).

“Stir you up by putting you in remembrance”  
(2 Peter 1:13).

“Put the brethren in remembrance of these things”  
(1 Timothy 4: 6).

And the words of Jesus, the night he was betrayed—  
“Do this, in remembrance of me, until I come”  
(Luke. 22:19).

*G. Growcott*

## **“Hath made us kings and priests”**

The scriptures are truly inexhaustible in imparting wisdom, knowledge and all we need so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. That we may be scribes likened unto a man which is a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. ‘Ready to distribute’. For the word of God has many dimensions to all and sundry regardless of who we are and where we live.

In the last few months that we went past, our first portion of readings have been exposing us to the kingdom of Israel. Kingdom of Israel which was one but running as two states for a good while. Separated and yet one, for they were all children of Jacob that make up the twelve tribes, to which pertaineth the promises.

The primary reason why they ran as two kingdoms was because of their kings . The kings were meant to lead and guide the nation to achieve unity and dedication towards God. Unity of the faith as was in the days of Moses. Yet we see one by one how they failed to lead the people, instead how they were influenced by their circumstances to live a life in direct disobedience to God’s ways in light of all the admonition that they would receive at the hands of the prophetic corrections.

One king after the other would start of good and would eventually be his own master and Lord. If we were to draw a graph. The graph would be so easy to predict and focus. For measured against time with prosperity, they soon faltered as they could not contain it within themselves that success is from the Lord. For the tendency were driven by greed and selfishness. Human nature at its best is nothing but corrupt.

If only they had confided in the word of God they would have learnt of the ways of their father David who was humble and whose heart was right before God. Whose thoughts and prayers are known to all for in gratitude to God He said:

“Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever”. (1 Chron. 29:11)

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.” (1Chron. 29:12)

“Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all”. (1Chron. 29:13)

“Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.” (1Chron. 29:14)

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee”. (1Chron 29:15)

“For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding”. (1Chron. 29:16)

“O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.” (1Chron. 29:17)

“I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.” (1Chron. 29:18)

O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee:

They are some today who strive to attain world peace, massive agricultural outputs and mining productions that are plenteous some even foresee unequalled travel and communications methods so improved to help mankind out of all his burdens. No human achievement can and will remedy the predicaments we have put ourselves in. For all things done have consequences and all human efforts are nothing but a matrix of irrelevant meddling of things that belong to someone else.

They think the answer lies in developing policies called constitutions and electing individuals who will champion ideas and provide all things necessary so as to attain a elevated state for mankind to glorious levels.

The kings of Israel attained more than most people can comprehend. They were in their days of favour truly blessed by God. They hand their heart’s desire taken care of and in the language of scripture, every one lived under his own fig tree. They had the Most High on their side and all things were ‘good’. The blessings were of such magnitude that it can be sufficiently said they had peace on every side.

Yet, in all this comfort human nature found a way to turn against God. In all its ambitions our sinful nature can only but seek that which pleases self. The times of peace and plenty were soon a cause for being overfed and unconcerned. Noted by the preacher in the book of proverbs when he was careful to ask only for his daily bread , least the plenty can lead to ignorance.

You can almost see the proportionality of fat and ignorance, how they fattened themselves in blindness, the spirit describes this as fattening for the day of

slaughter.

The things written were written for our learning. There are things we have to learn and our wisdom coupled with obedience, curry favour, if we have ears to hear and not keep hearing and never learning. Take heed therefore how ye hear: The less frequent we have things repeated to us the less we annoy whoever is delivering the lessons. For the apostles speak often of us leaving the basics and moving onto the meat issues which gives strength relative to age (measured in exposure to the truth Luke 7:32, John 9:23) and task at hand.

We learn from the life of the kings that it is not by favourable conditions that we are better positioned to serve God, rather it is working with God in walking with him in all we do. It is more of the steps we take with Him everyday than our desire to get there. It is not only getting things done but how and why as well. Whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord knowing ye shall receive a reward.

Each king was soon overwhelmed by that which surrounded him. we can assume they were willing victims of the situation and feel comforted in that folly. If we, apart from God's word, aim to overcome that which surround us we will soon be swallowed, that is if we have not be taken in already. Constant enquiry, study of God's word will benefit us in nurturing a humble and contrite attitude that is right for continual growth to sustenance. Our circumstances might look natural or not challenging to our way that we are called to live. This is because it is already too let for us, we have blended in and have been taken in as one with our surroundings. For of a truth the world will not change. We have to change and when we change it still does not change. It was the same world in Ahab's days and it is still the same 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. The word 'lust' denoting a continual pursuit of the longing to have without attaining gratification.

In the days of the Judges the Benjamites were so corrupt that when certain of them abused a fellow Israelite the rest of the Benjamites could not see any untoward doing in the act. This is because they were the same potentially with the offender. We will not see any wrong doing amongst were we live if we have become one in mind with them. Rather we will see the members of the body of Christ as offensive, we will even accuse them of trying to be over righteous. They will even appear abnormal, sound abnormal and behave awkward. We might even suggest to them to loosen up a little bit and not to take this whole thing too seriously. Instead of our souls being vexed in the world in which we live we find the fellowship causing us discomfort and so seek a little livening up. This was the kings lives they wanted to be like the other nations around them. They got tired of the offerings at the temple they even got tired of the passover and soon forgot all about it. They were pagan festivities that were more pleasing to the flesh, maybe in today's language this is what we call entertainment. Something real that distracts your mind but has no spiritual bearing and adds no value. In some languages the word entertainment can be substituted by the word pas-time or distraction. Distraction from what?

Not all things are beneficial although permissible, so we learn, but things got so enticing the Mosaic festivities were soon history. Your portion is your portion, we sometimes do not have time to debate about issues, for maturity teaches us that when you are engaged in certain matters you can not involve yourself any more on the other side without risk of condemnation. Rules of engagement, hands to the plough.

The kings were also found of foreign women, in direct disregard of every warning they had had. But this was already too late, for in their pursuit of being like other nations they roped in a whole network of problems that naturally bring in diverse sub-problems and other derivatives of complications. Often when we are forbidden from something, we treat it as if God begrudges us and it is not quite that but we can actually do it like this or that and it will be ok. We are limited not only to the confines of time in our space but lag also in appreciating values as they are put before us. We should be content like Abram and move on to see later what God will put before us. Long after David was anointed king and openly shown that Saul has been rejected that he actually became king. This is just one example how we ought to take things as they come and not add to alter or hasten the outcome to achieve our own glory.

This was the down fall of most of the kings, they one by one manipulated the course of things and not only did they fail to see that they cannot change anything but they passed on the wand one to another.

We also run two kingdoms in our times as well. One part thinks and would like us to naturalise our call just as did natural Israel. We would like to believe that all is well and some of Christendom would like us to believe salvation is secured upon personal acceptance of Jesus as your savior. The other part is Jerusalem where the truth is potentially present but in danger of some from within slowly adulterating the gospel to suit the times. To align the gospel with modern challenges. As stewards we have been merely entrusted with the vineyard and to produce in our occupation to show fruits for our tenure. It does not help to change the object and prove a good result of what we have been tasked with, the duty is to take charge of the sheep and not to go after something else. Obedience in its nature involves a set of instructions per given space and time.

The kings were often called uncaring shepherds.

He hath made us kings and priests, we are God's representatives here on earth. It is such a high calling. Let us look at the life of the kings with resolve. We shall be kings in the kingdom and it is what we shall be that we ought to be now. In all points that the kings failed, we should mark them very well, for our learning.

Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.  
Pro 31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:

Responsible decisions are our challenges. Kings make decisions, we are decisions makers. Decisiveness is our strength of key note.

We are called to lead , to lead people to righteousness . We are the light of the world in that we lead the people to Christ. If we are to lead, we have capabilities to stand as individuals who will promote the truth in the society we live, as individuals standing out for and in defence of the truth.

*Bro Tendai Gombera Sibanda*

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## **"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints"**

(Ps.116:15)

Our opening citation from Psalm 116:15 informs us that the deaths of Yahweh's saints are precious to him. How different, then, is the estimate of human life which Yahweh forms from that which has ruled the minds of great warriors and mighty conquerors. Had Napoleon spoken forth his mind about the lives of men in the day of battle, he would have likened them to so much water spilt upon the ground. To win a victory, or subdue a province, it mattered not though he strewed the ground with corpses thick as autumn leaves, nor did it signify though in every village orphans and widows wailed the loss of sires and husbands. What were the deaths of conscript peasants when compared with the fame of the Emperor? So long as Austria was humbled, or Russia invaded, little cared the imperial Corsican though half the race had perished.

Contrast the feelings of worldly leaders with those of Yahweh toward the sons of men. The apostle Peter informs us that Yahweh is "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet.3:9). He doesn't desire it or wish it. His nature is compassionate, and He sincerely desires the eternal happiness of all, and His patience toward sinners "proves" that He is willing that they should be saved. If He weren't willing, it would be easy for Him to cut them off, and exclude them from hope immediately. This same characteristic was manifested in Jesus, and how many times do we read that Jesus, "looking on the people was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd" (Mk.6:34).

Now let's take this up a notch according to our reading this morning: "Precious in the sight of Yahweh is the death of His saints".

This is one of the many comforting statements in Scripture concerning that great event from which the flesh so often shrinks. If Yahweh's people

would more frequently make a prayerful and believing study of what the Word says upon their departure out of this world, death would lose much, if not all, of its terrors for them. But, instead of doing so, they let their imagination run riot; they give way to carnal fears; they walk by sight instead of by faith. Looking to the Holy Spirit for guidance, let's try to dispel, by the light of Divine revelation, some of the gloom which unbelief casts around even the death of a Believer.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” These words intimate that a dying saint is an object of special notice unto Yahweh - mark the words “in the sight of.” It's true that the eyes of Yahweh are ever upon us, for He never slumbers nor sleeps. It's true that we may say at all times “Thou Yahweh seest me.” But it appears from Scripture that there are occasions when He notices and cares for us in a special way. “Yahweh is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee” (Isaiah 43:2).

“Precious in the sight of the Yahweh is the death of his saints” brings before us an aspect of death which is rarely considered by believers. It gives us what may be termed Yahweh's side of the subject. Only too often, we contemplate death, like most other things, from our side, yet he text tells us that from Yahweh's viewpoint of the death of a saint is neither hideous nor horrible, tragic or terrible, but “precious”. This raises the question, Why is the death of His people precious in the sight of Yahweh? What is there in the last great crisis which is so dear unto Him? Without attempting an exhaustive reply, let's suggest a few possible answers.

### **1. They, in themselves, are precious to Him.**

They always were and always will be dear to Him. His saints! They were the ones on whom His love was set before the earth was formed or the heavens made. These are they for whose sakes He bought with the precious blood of His beloved Son, who willingly laid down His life for them. They are His Father's gift to Him, His children, members of His body; therefore, everything that concerns them is precious in His sight. Yahweh loves His people so intensely that the very hairs of their heads are numbered and angels are sent forth to minister unto them; and because they are precious unto Him, so also are their deaths.

### **2. Because death terminates the saint's sorrows and sufferings.**

There is a reason for our sufferings, for “through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Nevertheless, Yahweh does not “afflict willingly” (Lam. 3:33). He is neither unmindful of - nor indifferent to our trials and troubles. Concerning His people of old it is

written, “In all their affliction He was afflicted” (Isa. 63:9). “Like as a father pitieth his children, so Yahweh pitieth them that fear him” (Ps. 103:13). So also are we told that our great High Priest is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15). Here, then, may be another reason why the death of a saint is precious in Yahweh’s sight—because it marks the end of a Brother or Sisters sorrows and sufferings.

### **3. Because death affords Yahweh an opportunity to display His sufficiency.**

Love is happy when ministering to the needs of its cherished object, and never are we so needy and so helpless as in the hour of our death. Yet man’s extremity is Yahweh’s opportunity. It’s then that the Father says to His trembling child, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy Elohim: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isa. 41:10). It’s because of this very statement that the believer may confidently reply, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” Our weakness appeals to His strength, our emergency to His sufficiency. Most blessedly is this principle illustrated in the well-known words “He shall gather the lambs (the helpless ones) with his arm, and carry them in his bosom” (Isaiah 40:11). Yes, His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Therefore is the death of the saints “precious” in His sight because it affords our loving Father an occasion for His love, grace and power to minister unto and undertake for His helpless people.

It’s most interesting and instructive to trace out the fullness of the Hebrew word here translated “precious.” It’s also rendered “excellent.” “How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God!” (Ps. 36:7). “A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit” (Prov. 17:27). However worthily or unworthily he may live, the death of a saint is excellent in the sight of the Lord.

The same Hebrew word is also rendered “honorable.” “Kings” daughters were among thy honorable women” (Ps. 45:9). So Ahasuerus asked of Haman “What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?” (Esther 6:6).

This Hebrew word is also rendered “brightness.” “If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness” (Job 31:26). Dark and gloomy though death may be unto those whom the believer leaves behind, it is brightness “in the sight of the Lord”. Zechariah writes “at evening time it shall be light” (Zech. 14:7). So - Precious, excellent, honourable, brightness in the sight of Yahweh is the death of His saints. May Yahweh make this little meditation precious unto each of us.

A final rendering of the Hebrew “Yaqaar” is the English word, “valuable”. “The death of his saints is held to be of value” - The death of His saints is an object of value; that He regards it as of importance; that it’s connected with his great plans, and that there are great purposes to be accomplished by it. The idea here seems to be that the death of a saint is in itself of so much importance, and so connected with the glory of God and the accomplishment of his purposes, that he will not cause it to take place except in circumstances, at times, and in a manner, which will best secure those ends. The particular thought in the mind of the psalmist seems to have been that as he had been preserved when he was apparently so near to death, it must have been because Yahweh saw that the death of one of his saints was a matter of so much importance that it should occur only when the most good could be effected by it, and when the ends of life had been accomplished; that God would not decide on this hastily, or without the best reasons; and that, therefore, he had intervened to lengthen his life a little longer. Still, there is a general truth implied here, that the act of removing a saint from the world is, so to speak, an act of deep deliberation on the part of our Heavenly Father; that good, and sometimes great, ends are to be accomplished by it; and that, therefore, he regards it with special interest.

We might recall the episode in the life of Jesus when “the people of Nazareth rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong”(Luk 4:29)

Yet, in the plan and purpose of Yahweh, it was not the time nor the manner in which the life of His Son should be taken from him..

Another aspect in the death of the saints is that their death is precious to Yahweh, because He has so long sympathized with them in all their trials, pains, and sorrows. He has watched all their labors and sorrows with a parent's most tender interest; He has seen them mourning, broken down with grief and penitence; agonizing in their warfare against sin and temptation; therefore when He sees all these trials end, to be renewed no more--their physical pains and trials cease--all their wants to be supplied forever; when He sees all this, how can we help but believe that He feels a certain joy, on some level? There can scarcely be a more erroneous view of Yahweh's character than that which denies to Him the attribute of sympathy and joy in the happiness of His created, who he has known from the womb.

The death of the righteous is also greatly useful to the living. Often it’s one of the most precious methods that He can employ. What does he ever do which more deeply impresses survivors than this? Let it not then be thought strange that our Father should consider the death of His saints as precious.

The death of the apostles must have had a profound effect on early believers and increased their resolve to fight the good fight.

The death of saints should be precious in our sights, as well, simply because it's so in Yahweh's sight.

Doesn't He take the right views of things? Can we suppose that His views and feelings are not as correct as ours? Can we demand that He should come over to our views and conform Himself to our notions, and not we to His? He deems the death of his saints precious; should we deem it appalling, grievous, and evil? Why shouldn't we believe that He sees all events, and this one of death in particular, in a far more just light than we do? Isn't His view more broad and deep and in every way more perfect than ours?

Of course it is! And it's obvious that we ought to sympathize with Him, both in our opinions and in our feelings. If He regards the death of the righteous as being precious because it places them beyond the reach of care and trouble, trial and pain, then it's clear that every one of these considerations ought to have no less and no different influence on our minds.

Having said that, why is it that we sometimes might not consider the death of saints as precious?

Not that it's unlawful to shed tears or grieve over the loss of a brother or sister, when ties so dear are rent asunder. Our sensibilities might bleed under the wound; but yet the joy of the Lord must be such a strength to us that many of our tears are will be tears of submissive, trustful joy.

We often fail to regard the death of saints as precious, because of the selfishness that's born out of our human nature. The selfishness of surviving friends or relatives is so great that we don't look at the great glory and great gain of the departed saint. So much are we absorbed in our own loss, that we seem incapable of looking away to the glory of that dear child of God who has been permitted at last the freedom from life's trials, pain and torment.

Sometimes there may be a hidden disbelief as to the death of a loved one being the wisest and best thing possible for them to be taken away just as they in fact are. This is one reason why we do not esteem the death of saints precious. Although it's generally admitted that Yahweh has done the best possible thing; but though we may admit this in theory, we may not believe it in heart. It's no small matter in the case of death, to admit fully and believe heartily that infinite love sought the very best result; that infinite wisdom devised the best means to secure it; and that infinite power could not lack the resources to do the best thing in the best way. To take

hold of these truths in their broad extent and precious application, will go far to sooth the turmoil of those afflicted with grief, and will make the death of a saint seem truly precious.

When our confidence is shaken, then it's time to let our faith counteract our weakness, and say continually--"It is Yahweh's Will". We ought to have sufficient confidence in Him to believe that He has not removed a saint from earth one day too soon. If we would only realize how Yahweh regards the death of a saint, we could see why it should be precious in his sight, and consequently why it should be so in ours. Again, many are prone to conceive of their Brethren or loved ones as gone to the grave, and scarcely think of them as being anywhere else except in the cold ground, and as long as we take this view of their case, it will not appear precious.

If our faith in the gospel be consistent and intelligent, it will lead us to look upon the death of a saint without murmuring, and without ever counting such events, as on the whole, sad and painful. Even in repentance there is joy. So when saints die, though we mourn, yet in the depths of our being we may have the joy of heaven.

"Yahweh is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit". (Psalm 34:18)

Death, if rightly viewed, is a blessing from the Yahweh's Hand. . . . to one who has shouldered the burden of malady, it's not a loss to die, it is a gain, a lasting, a perpetual, an unlimited gain.

The man is at one moment weak, and cannot move a finger; and in an instant he is clothed with power.

Don't we call this a gain?

That brow that's aching; it will wear a crown within the next few tickings of the clock. Is that no gain?

The hand that's palsied; it will, in the twinkling of an eye, wave the palm branch. Is that a loss? The man is sick beyond a physician's power; but he will be where the inhabitant is never sick. Is that a loss?

May we always remember to give thanks to Our Heavenly Father- for His mercy endures forever.

*Bob Corbeille*

## **“Dirty Linen” Petition**

We are aware of an on-line petition being circulated on the Internet, the object being to pressurise us into restricting access to the Contending for the Faith section of our website. We do not know to what extent the petition is being circulated, or how many names are on it, but are amazed as to the lengths people will go to in order to force their point forward in the absence of Scriptural support. Instead of utilising Scripture to show the point, a petition to gain strength in numbers is used to coerce us. The worldly and emotive expression “dirty linen” is used, with it being claimed that we are “airing” “Christadelphian dirty linen” “in front of unbelievers”, as a substitute to Bible phrases. We have responded to this challenge on the FAQ section of the website, as follows:

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### **Why are you airing Christadelphian "Dirty Linen" in public?**

This query was posted and discussed on an online discussion-group (by those who object to individuals being openly named as proponents of wrong doctrine) in response to the ["Contending for the Faith"](#) section of our site. "Dirty Linen" is not a Bible expression: we prefer to use Bible words. Whereas men speak of "different points of view", deviations from Bible Truth are described in the Bible itself as "damnable heresies" (2 Peter 2:1). Those who teach things that are different to the Bible are described as "men of corrupt minds" (1 Timothy 6:5) and wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15, Acts 20:29). We realise that these terms are generally unpopular in the humanistic "multi-faith" community in which we live, but they are Bible terms, and Christ's followers are to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

The Bible itself gives an example of naming offenders in practice or doctrine. Jannes and Jambres are named as resisting Moses (2 Timothy 3:8). King David is named as an adulterer and a murderer (2 Samuel 12:7). Many other kings of Israel and Judah are named as idolaters, and murderers (cp. 2 Kings 21:16). Saul is named as failing to obey God (1 Samuel 15:23). Achan, Ananias and Sapphira are named as stealing from God (Josh. 22:20, Acts 5:1). Judas is named as betraying Christ, Peter as denying him. The list could go on. And what about if an individual is disseminating false doctrine which undermines the Truth? Yes, Scripture names them also: see Hymenaeus and Philetus, whose "word will eat as doth a canker" (2 Tim. 2:17). Also, Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Ti. 1:20).

Notice that the Bible does not hide the identity of offenders: millions of copies of a book rendered in many languages, being available all over the world (i.e. The Bible) names all these individuals - and many more also before all

men. Their names are laid bare before all, believers, non-believers, and disbelievers alike, to learn from, and heed their examples.

The example of The Bible (as seen above), shows that it is not wrong to identify those who are apostate in either doctrine or practice. Simply because a person claims to be a Christadelphian does not grant them immunity from scrutiny, or being named. Where false doctrine is openly taught, as in the cases described on this website, it is appropriate for a refutation to also be openly taught. The fact of the false teaching being open and public means that the difference is not simply an "internal" matter for Christadelphians to deal with privately amongst themselves: where those who claim to be Christ's brethren teach things different to Christ, and different to Christadelphians, we have a duty to point out the fact. If we do not point out the difference, folk may well assume that the doctrines of the pretenders are what the Christadelphians as a body believe, when in fact they do not. (There are cases of this nature).

To summarise, where folk openly claim to be presenting Bible (and Christadelphian) teaching, they should be ready to have their teaching scrutinised. By contrast to the claims of our detractors, it is not at all "Christian" to allow false teachers to influence the Flock of God anonymously.

*Christopher Maddocks*

### **THE TRUTH**

The truth creates "sides" -  
the for-it side, and the against-it side;  
and between these two sides there is no neutral ground.

He that is not for me, saith Jesus, is against me;  
and he styled himself "The Truth."

If we are for the truth, we cannot encamp with the enemy, and cooperate with them. Being for the truth, it will place us in the minority, and identify us with those who suffer tribulation for the truth's sake.

He that runs with the hare, but holds with the hounds,  
will never save the fugitive from being worried to death.  
There were men in the days of Jesus who would preach his doctrine,  
and not speak lightly of him  
but would also carefully avoid identification with his unsavory name.

This is referable to the pride of life,  
love of popularity, or to some other equally unworthy thing.  
It is certainly a course not prompted by a devotion to the truth,  
or a love of righteousness