

*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**

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*“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)*

Doctrines to be Rejected

Sometimes, folk ask why it is necessary for the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith to contain “Doctrines to be Rejected” as an intrinsic part, and question the validity of such an inclusion. The following item by Bro Robert Roberts seems to settle the question, hence we include it for the benefit of our readers:

At first sight, it might appear superfluous, and even unwarrantable, to set forth points of non-belief as a basis of faith, but a moment’s reflection will dissipate this impression, and reveal the negative side of faith to be of equal value with the positive. Every affirmative proposition has a converse. Every “yes” has a “no”; and if a man is not prepared to boldly accept that “no,” it shows his “yes” is not worth very much. For instance, if a man profess to believe in the God of Israel, he is bound to be able to say that he does not believe in the gods of the heathen. If he were to be timorous about affirming the latter, would it not show that his belief in the God of Israel was no belief in the real sense, but merely a fragment of ancient polytheism, which recognised different gods for different nations? It is not part of a true profession of faith in Jehovah to be able to say boldly that we do not believe in any of the deities of heathen imagination. Would any even “Christian” community recognise the faith of a man who hesitated to commit himself to this negative? Does not the acceptance of any truth involve the repudiation of everything opposite to it? And would not hesitancy to repudiate the opposites, show uncertainty and indecision with regard to the positives? There is but one rational answer to these questions, and that answer falls in Paul’s exhortation, that in maintaining the Truth, we must “refuse profane and old wives’ fables.” Now, in the present day, there are man profane and old wives’ fables abroad in the earth in the name of the Gospel. Paul predicted that such would be the case—that the time would come when men, professing the Name of Christ, would turn their ears away from the Truth, and be turned aside unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Now, is it not of the first importance that these fables should be repudiated? Can anyone hold the Truth without rejecting them? Is it not a part of a true confession of faith in our time to reject the traditions that make the Word of God of none effect? Common sense will supply the answer. There is a negative as well as a positive side to the faith in our day, for the simple reason that there is a spurious faith to be destroyed before the True faith can enter the mind. In the apostles’ days, the work was more simple. There was no counterfeit Christianity to obstruct the operations of the Truth. The apostles had only to propound their doctrines constructively. There was no necessity to go out of the way and deal with the dogmas of Paganism. Paganism was Paganism, and the Gospel was the Gospel. They did not stand on the same ground. There was no competition between them. If Christ was received, Paganism was rejected, as a matter of course, but it is a different thing now. We have to deal with Paganism in the garb of Christianity. We have to deal with another Gospel preached in the Name of Christ and his Apostles; and it therefore forms one of the first duties of intelligent and faithful testimony to protest against, and expose the imposture. One of

the first acts of a valid profession of the Truth is to repudiate “the profane and old wives’ fables”, which abound in the guise of truth. In fact, in times like these, the repudiation of false doctrine is almost a criterion of the reception of the Truth. If a man shrink from the objection of the fictions of so-called Christendom, it is a sure sign that his apprehension of the verities of the Gospel is very weak, if it is not altogether *non est*. Positive belief (that is, full assurance of faith) on one side necessitates and produces positive non-belief on the other. A man heartily believing the Truth will heartily reject error; and if he does not heartily do the latter, it is an infallible proof that he is incapable of heartily doing the former. Hence the propriety and necessity of exacting the non-belief of truth-nullifying fables as a corollary to the reception of the Truth in its positive form. On this foundation, the Birmingham ecclesia take their stand, and will have fellowship with none who are not prepared with themselves to maintain the purity of the Truth.

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

Being Reminded

It is sometimes said that time is a great healer. Strictly speaking, it is not, of course, time that heals but the capacity of the human mind to forget. With the passage of time and the crowding into the mind of other things memory tends to fade and the image of past happenings becomes blurred, and it may be that eventually the event is pushed out of the mind and forgotten. By far the vast majority of past happenings, together with the men and women who took part in them, are now forgotten and unknown. It was of such that the prophet Isaiah wrote: “O Lord thou hast visited them and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.” Or again, as the Wise Man says, “The memory of them is forgotten.”

But there are events which sometimes as a result of own doings, are never forgotten. “As a man sows, that shall he also reap” is an unalterable principle or life; and it may be that the effect of things done in earlier life, either in ignorance or in folly, or even things done with the best of intentions and a clear conscience, or matters over which we have no control, remain with us in our memories all our days as a constant reminder.

We read of such an example from the life of the apostle Paul. In the first chapter of his letter to Timothy, the apostle recalls how that formerly he persecuted the Church of God. He was a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, something done ignorantly and in unbelief, and for which cause he says “The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Those impressions never faded from Paul’s mind as long as he lived. As he again says:

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

It was that constant reminder of his former manner of life, and of the abundant love and mercy that he had received at the hands of the Lord, which sustained him in all the trials which he endured for the Truth, that, as he says, "In me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to that which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Or as he again says:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Now we meet this morning nearly 2000 years after those words were written, to remember Christ. Our meeting is based upon his memory. This is primarily a memorial meeting and this is dependent upon our keeping in memory those things which have been preached unto us. It is as often as we "eat this bread, and drink this cup, that we show forth the Lord's death, till he come." But our obedience to that commandment is not merely a matter of remembrance. For that remembrance to be complete and acceptable before God, it must be coupled with both an intelligent understanding and a deep appreciation of the events we are commended to keep in memory, together with our responsibilities to those events, and a firm resolve to follow the example of the One so remembered.

But as we have said, the events symbolised by the bread and the wine on the table happened nearly 2,000 years ago. Customs have altered, times have changed and those events, in any case, are quite outside our experience. Now we live in a different age and under different circumstances. As an incoming tide obliterates the footprints on the sands, so time tends to sweep away our sense of closeness and participation in that tragedy enacted upon Calvary's hill so long ago, unless we continually bring it to mind. Indeed, in the unresponsive formalism by which that death is sometimes, we fear, 'remembered', it would seem that those pierced hands and feet and wounded side have been quickly healed in the minds of those whose ears are closed to appeals to the love of Christ. Those whose hearts are cold and unmoved and unresponsive to that saying which Paul says is worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came into the world to save sinners.

According to the depth of the impression which the Truth has made upon our minds will be the value which we place upon what Christ has done for us. We shall remember in the prophecy of Zechariah where is brought to our notice the incident in which the prophet, as a man of sign, had weighed to him his price, at which he was value even thirty pieces of silver. This incident is referred to in the Gospel record, as a prophecy of the events which happened at the crucifixion. Thirty pieces of silver was the amount which the priests covenanted to give Judas as the price of the betrayal of his Master. That was the price at which he was "priced at of them", and which eventually went for the purchase of the potter's field in which to bury strangers. That was the value which they placed upon Christ in the furtherance of their schemes against him.

Perhaps by way of remembrance we can recall some of those events and by way of exhortation ask ourselves:

What is the value which we place upon him today?

Perhaps with the passing of time this meeting is not always celebrated with the same fervour and intensity of meaning as would have been shown by Christ's immediate disciples and the early believers. Crucifixion would mean so much more, we should think, to that generation of believers than it does today. Jesus said on one occasion:

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

That allusion to taking up a cross and following Jesus cannot perhaps have the same impact upon us today, who happily, have never witnessed such a spectacle. It would be quite readily understood, however, by those in the first century, and the lesson therefore would be the more penetrating.

Death by crucifixion was the punishment of those times inflicted upon criminals and malefactors of varying degrees. It was the most cruel and excruciating of deaths which man's evil art of ingeniously tormenting and extinguishing life has ever devised. It would scarcely be possible to describe the horror and brutality of such punishment. However, one writer has said; "The Wise Author of our being has formed and constituted the fabric of our bodies in such a merciful manner that nothing violent is lasting. Death came generally in three days. Hunger, thirst and acute pain dismissed them from their intolerable sufferings.

In addition must be added the ignominy with which it was surrounded. It was reputed, we are told, “the most shameful death, to which one could be exposed. It comprised every idea and circumstance of odium, disgrace and public scandal.”

To all that Jesus voluntarily submitted himself. Those were the limits of the priests and Judas' estimation of him a mere thirty pieces of silver; a parcel of ground in which to bury strangers. With what depth of feeling, then, would the apostle acquainted with these things of his own day represent Jesus as taking upon him the form of a slave, and being obedient to death, “even the death of the cross.” Yes, the apostle conjures up all the disgrace connected with such a death when he uses that word "even" saying “even the death of the cross.” Although not expressed in words, undoubtedly the apostle had in mind (which he would clearly convey to the early brethren by that emphasis) all the public indignity and infamy together with the indescribable suffering, which Jesus endured at his death.

Or again, how full of meaning are his words, when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, in which he extols the selfless love of our Redeemer “in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Or again, that it was "for the joy set before him that he endured the cross, despising the shame.”

The depth of contempt and reproach which greeted the preaching of the apostles

in their day is completely unknown to us. From the ideas surrounding such a death the Greeks treated the apostles with the utmost scorn, if not pity, for embarking on the cause of One who had been brought to so reproachful an end by his own nation. The preaching of the cross to them was foolishness. The promulgation of a system of religion taught by a person who had suffered the death of a slave, or a common thief. The teaching that salvation was to be found in no other name than that of Jesus of Nazareth who perished upon a malefactors cross, appeared to them the last thing in absurdity and madness. "What will this babblers say?" was what the men of Athens reproached Paul with as he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.

Historians tell us that the Greeks looked upon the attachment of the early Christians to a religion whose publisher had come to such an end as undoubted proof of their ruin, that they were only destroying their interest, comfort and happiness in this life by adopting such a system, founded upon such a dishonourable circumstance. That was the value which the wise of this world placed upon Christ and God's offer of salvation.

The Jews held Christ's death in the same ignominy as did the Greeks. Indeed, to them more was added inasmuch as they esteemed one guilty of such an end as not only abandoned by men but forsaken also by God for in their Law it was written "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

Perhaps in these circumstances we can perceive why the chief priests were so careful to ensure that Christ died by crucifixion. They no doubt thought that such would put an end once and for all to his teaching and memory, and no doubt it would have done so had it not been followed by the indisputable fact of his resurrection. We can see, then, with what aversion the Jews would receive the preaching of the Gospel. To them the preaching of the cross was a stumbling block. At the same time we can perhaps also realise what it would mean to accept the Truth in those times. The whole world, Jew and Gentile, was bitterly opposed to the preaching of the gospel, and to follow Christ then, under those conditions, meant a very literal fulfilment of his words:

"If any man will come after me let him renounce self" - utterly - "and take up his cross, and follow me."

The circumstances related by the writers of the Gospels show that the death of Jesus followed the usual customs in such executions, so that when we read:

"They did spit in his face, and buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands,"

or that

"when they had stripped him, they put on him a scarlet robe,"

or that

"Herod with his men of war set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe," and so on, we are reading of things which the narrators and their readers of the first century would readily understand were the tokens of contempt and ridicule in use and meted out to such an one in those circumstances.

The same would be observed when, after Pilate had pronounced sentence against Jesus, he gave the order that he should be scourged. Among the Romans scourging was always inflicted prior to crucifixion. Also the carrying of one's own cross, was a principal part of the shame of such a death. The very last term of reproach amongst the Romans was the expression "cross-bearer." Historians of the time tell of such people covered with wounds from the scourging of the soldiers, staggering under the weight of the cross, and subjected all along the road to abuse. License was given to the rabble to heap upon such a one every act of insolence and inhumanity which their depraved minds could conceive.

Was that, then, the picture which Jesus wished to pass before the minds of any who would come after him, when, he said: "Let him first deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"? That was the picture they would see, undoubtedly, and how much more real would it become when Jesus himself had trodden that road. Perhaps the picture has become a little blurred after the passing of twenty long centuries. It may want reviving in our minds, for it is still there for us to see as we strive to keep in memory those things which have been preached unto us. Jesus said "Follow me..."

There is no reason to think that our Lord escaped the customary abuse on the road to Calvary. Lacerated and bruised (for our iniquities) by the stripes laid upon him; exhausted by the cruel mocking and scourging; fatigued and spent because of the bestial treatment meted out to him, there is little wonder that now oppressed with the weight of the cross he could go no further, and they laid hold on one Simon, a Cyrenian, and compelled him to bear it for him. And yet although his flesh was weak. His sufferings beyond endurance, his spirit still was willing to be obedient unto the end, even the death of the cross.

He refused the medicated cup, offered no doubt by the kindness of some of his few friends. Instead he drank the dreadful cup of pain with all its bitter ingredients, which the Father had placed in his hands; and mercifully his sufferings were shortened; he gave up the spirit and it was "finished." The one whom men thought worthy of only a few pieces of silver, in whose tongue was found no guile, and in whose character was found no sin, was at last beyond the sufferings of this present mortal span.

"Follow me ..." God forbid that he should ever require us to tread that same path. Some have done, of course. Almost without doubt his beloved apostle Peter perished in the same manner, and maybe there were others also, the memory of whom is now unknown, at least to us. How then should we apply the Lord's words to ourselves? As noted before, this is the most privileged of all genera-

tions of believers. We live in an age of luxury, tolerance, ease and comfort which have been denied those of former years.

We have to acknowledge with the psalmist that "the lines have fallen unto us in (very) pleasant places." Tonight we shall rest in peace upon our beds in the shelter of our homes. The One we remember had not where to lay his head. We have met here this morning by our modern methods of transport, with little effort or inconvenience on our part; the One we remember trod the rough roads and hills and mountains of Judaea and like Jacob before him, he doubtless had to endure "the drought by day, and the frost by night." We do not know what it is to suffer such hunger or thirst that Christ was tempted to turn even the stones of the wilderness into bread to sustain him.

So as we examine ourselves consider:

What have those abundant privileges done for us?

What value do we place upon them?

What is our real estimation of the One whose life and death is reflected in these emblems?

Have we been transformed by the renewing of our minds by his spirit into an energetic, self-sacrificing, enthusiastic courageous, whole-hearted band of believers, knit together as one by our love for Christ?

Well, as we look around those been have been called to the Truth in these last days and find apathy and indifference, resentfulness of the discipline of the Truth; when we see the encroachment of the spirit of the age with pleasure put before the work of the Ecclesia, comfort and business put before Christ's work, slackness in the work committed to our hands; when instead of an eagerness to read and study and learn and grow in the knowledge of the Scriptures there seems to be a satisfaction to leave off with a bare (and sometimes threadbare) knowledge of the first principles; when doubtful habits, and worldly entertainments and friendships, are cultivated regardless of the warning, lest we cause one of Christ's little ones to stumble; when instead of unity and love and self-effacement in the laying down of one's life for the brethren, we experience fellow servant smiting, bitterness and resentment against those who would uphold the purity of the Truth, it surely should cause us much heart searching self-examination before we partake of these emblems before us.

What is the price we are prepared to pay for Christ's fellowship, his friendship, his love and care and protection? We have not been redeemed by silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ. He who though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Nothing can repay our debt to him. We stand in our privileged position of forgiven sinners, called to be saints, by his grace and love. What he demands of us is our love. He said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Christ has suffered for us, leaving us an example. He expects us to follow him by the cultivation of his spirit.

He did not endure the shame and the agony and the degradation and the buffeting and the spitting, that we might follow our own ways and fulfil our own desires, and live our own lives to please ourselves. Unless his sufferings were in vain on our account, we must experience the renunciation of self, and the crucifixion of the flesh and the lusts thereof. Our sacrifice is to be a living sacrifice, a martyrdom daily to the things of the world. Our bodies offered in a willing service, no longer our own, our will surrendered to his bidding.

No longer should we be thinking according to the mind of the flesh, or giving way to every whim and temper at the least provocation, but rather bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

If our values need adjusting, let us do it now. As he laid down his life for us, so ought we to lay down our lives for one another. To renounce self is to win Christ. To die to the world is to gain that life which is to come. To take up the cross now is to gain that crown of righteousness which fadeth not away. To follow him now, bearing his reproach, suffering beyond the gate, will be to reign with him in glory.

That reward is sure and steadfast, reserved in heaven for us. One day it will be ours if we keep in memory those things which by the word of the gospel have been preached unto us.

(R. Stubbs, 1966)

When are Sins Forgiven?

Paul speaks of the heart being sprinkled (with the blood of Christ): when does this take place? Before Baptism or after it? MMC

Answer:

Peter says “Ye have purified your souls *in obeying the truth*” (1 Pet. 1:22). The meaning of this is made apparent in the words addressed to the Pentecostal crowd who asked “What shall we do?” “Repent and ***be baptised for the remission of your sins*** (Acts 2:38), and further illustrated in the words of Ananias to Paul: “Arise and be baptised, and *wash away thy sins*” (Acts 22:16), and further in Paul’s words to the Romans: Buried with him *by baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him” (see 1 Col. 2:12) to newness of life (Rom. 6:4). “Baptism *doth also now save us*, not by the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but *by the answer of a good conscience toward God*” (1 Pet. 3:21). Hence this “answer of a good conscience,” consequent on the remission of sins, is obtained *in the act of baptism*.

Baptism is the institution God has appointed for bringing believing sinners into contact with the benefit secured by the death of Christ. By a figure borrowed

from the Law, the blood of Christ is then sprinkled upon his heart. Literally, God then forgives him for Christ's sake. People may laugh at this arrangement, but they cannot deny that it is the way appointed, if they believe the testimony of the apostles. Their laughing may pass unnoticed now, but there is a time when "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh;" and for this time, like Felix, they would tremble if they realised the "terror of the Lord" appertaining to it for those who despise the goodness of God. It hath pleased God to make use of contemptible things, that men's faith may be put to the test, and man's insignificance and God's importance made palpable to every man's conscience in the obedience he has required.

Robert Roberts, (The Christadelphian, 1873)

For What are we Baptised?

There are some who maintain that Adam's sin is in some way legally imputed to us, and that when we are baptised, we are freed from this "legal condemnation" - as well as having our sins forgiven. So they reason that, unless we have this legal sentence of eternal death removed through baptism, we are not accountable to judgement. However, the Scriptures testify that baptism is always for remission of personal offences (Acts 2:38, 22:26 etc), never for the removal of the imputed guilt of another. It is a means of becoming part of the family of which the Lord Jesus Christ is Head, for we are "baptised into Jesus Christ" (Rom 6:3), we "put on Christ" (Gal 3:26) and become "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28,29). And we are introduced into a new relationship with the Father, as we are able to approach His Throne of Grace through Christ as our representative (Heb 10:19,22, Rom 5:1,2).

But at the same time, there are others who allow this to blind them to the fact that we are born into a situation of "condemnation" by descent from Adam, and that this condemnation can be removed by becoming a member of the family of Christ by baptism. This is the clear teaching of Scripture: "as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom 5:18). And again, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2). From these testimonies, it is clear that whilst baptism is for the remission of our offences, it also introduces us into a situation whereby we might no longer bear the condemnation we inherit from Adam.

The condemnation given against Adam was a sentence of death passed because of sin. This sentence "became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity" (BASF clause V) as the Apostle declared: "by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom 5:18). The sentence of death was inflicted upon Adam, and we are partakers of that sentence, not in a legal sense, but physically by the inheritance of his condemned nature.

But in Christ, there is “now no condemnation” (Rom 8:1), that is no condemnation now, either from Adam, or because of our own transgressions.

Bro. Roberts spoke of this: "What is cancelled at baptism (and it is only cancelled potentially - for there is an "if" all the way through) is the condemnation resting upon us as individual sinners, and the condemnation which we physically inherit" (Preface to The Debate on Resurrectional Responsibility).

But the condemnation we bear from Adam, is the physical inheritance of a mortal, sinful nature, and this is not removed until Immortality is bestowed. As Bro. Roberts showed later in the same debate, “there are two stages in the process of being saved, one a moral, and one a physical; one having to do with the mind and the other the body. That is the distinction. We are justified from the moral now”. And in answer to the question, “Are we not justified from “sin in the flesh” at the same time as from wicked deeds, he replied, “that is your way of putting it. I put the facts; that God forgives our sins when we are baptized, and takes away sin in the flesh when we are changed”.

So then, we will not be justified physically (1 Tim 3:16) until immortality is bestowed. In what sense, then can it be said that there is “now no condemnation”, if the condemnation we physically inherit now remains with us? The answer, is that we are prospectively freed from condemnation now, although the physical reality will not actually take place until the Judgement Seat.

Bro Roberts clearly explained the situation thus: “Legally, a man is freed from

the Adamic condemnation at the time he obeys the truth and receives remission of sins; but actually its physical effects remain till “this mortal” (i.e. this Adamic condemned nature) is swallowed up in the life that Christ will bestow upon his brethren at his coming. Those whom Christ does not approve are delivered up to death again (because of their own sins and not because of Adam). Although reconciled to Christ, we remain under the physical effect of Adam's sentence till we are “changed in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump”.

The case is parallel with what takes place between two nations at war (alienated) who arrive at terms of peace. As soon as the treaty is signed, they are legally at peace, yet the effects of the war are not at once ended, for the forces of the one remain in the territories of the other until the ratification of the treaty and the arrival of the date fixed for evacuation. Peace between God and the disobedient is signed, so to speak, when the believing sinner submits to the righteousness of God in being baptised INTO THE DEATH OF HIS SON! But war measures are not entirely withdrawn until the reconciliation is ratified at the judgement seat of Christ” (The Christadelphian, 1878, p 225).

In his debate with JJ Andrew, in speaking of this quotation (Question 686 & Preface), Bro Roberts clarified what he meant by the term “Legally”. He did not refer to the notion of a legal guilt being removed, that JJ Andrew taught. Rather, he said “legal mortality would be that which is constituted, ordered, or determined upon by law. In this sense, we pass (potentially) from death to life at baptism - which is a very important sense certainly, for without it there

could be no hope of the physical deliverance that waits at the coming of Christ”.

As we have shown, the way in which our transgressions are forgiven, is that they are taken away by Christ, as our representative. Being baptised, we are represented before God in Christ as our High Priest, and because in him, there is no sin, sin is not imputed to us. But in the Lord Jesus Christ, not only is it the case that there is no sin, the physical condemnation he inherited from Adam has also been removed. The BASF speaks of the Lord “who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him” (Clause VII).

Therefore, as we appear before God, even though in actual fact we are still sinners, and even though we are still the partakers of a condemned nature, because our representative is neither a sinner, nor any longer a partaker of that nature, both of these things are removed. The law of condemnation has been abrogated, and sins are no longer imputed. We can do no better than to conclude this section with the words of Bro Roberts in debate with JJ Andrew, when JJ Andrew was the questioner concerning the quotation from The Christadelphian, cited above:

690. Do you adhere to this statement that he (i.e. the obedient believer - CAM) is legally freed from Adamic condemnation? Answer: I understand God gives the obedient believer a clean slate, as you might say.

691. What is wiped out? Answer: Everything that stands against us in any way, whether from Adam or ourselves.

692. Then there is a passing out of Adam into Christ at baptism: Answer: Certainly.

693. When a man passes into Christ, what has he in Adam that he loses when he passes into Christ? Answer: His relation to the whole death dispensation which Adam introduced. There is a preliminary deliverance at baptism, but it is not actual till the resurrection.

So then it is clear that Baptism forms the basis of forgiveness of sins by association with the perfect sacrifice of the one who destroyed sin. But also, it forms the basis for the ultimate purification of our nature, and in this sense, we are also prospectively freed from the condemnation we inherit from Adam. In Apostolic terms, because we are “planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom 6:5), that is, our body shall be changed “that is may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil 3:21), “When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1Jno 3:2).

Christopher Maddocks

*“Don’t justify yourself:
Your friends don’t need it, and
Your enemies don’t heed it”*

Reproach

Our attention has been called this morning to the remarkable exhortation of Paul to the Hebrews, in the 13th chapter of his epistle to them, verse 13: "*Let us go forth, therefore, unto him **without the camp**, bearing his reproach.*" This exhortation had a meaning for those to whom Paul was writing which it cannot have for us. They were Jews who, like himself, had been brought up in subjection to the Mosaic institutions in all particulars, and whose acceptance, of Christ brought upon them excommunication from the synagogue, and all the reproach connected with an apparent apostasy from a Divine institution, and an acceptance of what was accounted a cunningly devised and magically supported imposture. Their steadfastness was put under a powerful strain in having to accept an apparent dissociation from Moses, by whom all were agreed God had spoken; and in having to associate with one who had the reputation of being the destroyer of the law of Moses, and whose undoubted end as a crucified companion of felons, brought him under the curse of the law of Moses.

It was true comfort that Paul administered to them, when he said to the Romans that his doctrine of Christ, so far from "*making void*" the law, "*established*" it. It was similar consolation for them to be told that Christ had said, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.*" Writing directly to themselves, Paul had told them that the law, though Divine, was but "*a figure for the time then present,*" pointing forward to Christ, in whom all its hidden significances had an end. This was his declaration on the subject as a whole. In the exhortation under consideration, he makes a particular application of it in a matter of detail. He reminds them that "*the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, were burned **without the camp**,*" involving the recollection that anyone availing himself of the ceremonial purification connected with the use of the ashes of the beast, had to go out of the camp to get at them: a typical foreshadowing of the fact that when the real purification from sin was provided, Israelites would have to go outside the national camp to obtain the benefit. In harmony with the figure, Christ "*suffered without the gate,*" in being proscribed by the national authorities, and in being crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem. From this it was easy and natural to extract the farther figuration, by which the position of Jesus at the time of his crucifixion is made to represent the excommunicated and despised position of those of Israel who afterwards believed on his name. It was a natural climax to say, "*Let us go forth, therefore, to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*"

We cannot apply this to ourselves in a direct manner this morning. We are not Jews, who in accepting Christ, have had to turn our backs upon what is called Judaism, and to go forth with courage to brave the reproach of those remaining in the camp. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which we are called upon to submit to such an ordeal. We have had to go forth from a certain camp, bearing the reproach and dating historically back to the work of the apostles in the first century. We have left that camp, with all the attractions that belong to a popular es-

tablishment. We cannot assemble with the respectable crowds that fill the commodious religious edifices that abound in every town. We cannot take part in their opulent arrangements, or join their imposing and comfortable services. We have chosen to step out of the flourishing throng; to desert the attractive festivals of popular faith; to stand aloof from the profitable associations of "the names and denominations of religion." We have accepted the obscurity and the dishonour of hole-and-corner meetings apart from the rich and powerful. It has been a hard resolution to take, not only because of the temporal disadvantages of our decision—not only because of the sacrifice of present gratifications of society, and the acceptance of present mortifications to the natural man and the spiritual too, but because the system of religion around us accepts Christ by profession. If these systems said, "We reject Christ," our course would have been much easier; instead of that, they profess his name, and proclaim themselves his servants. It has in consequence been a great exercise of mind for us to consider whether we are justified in leaving a system professedly subject to Christ, and taking a step which by implication passes condemnation on them as an unchristian thing. But we have not faltered when all the facts were fully before us for decision.

We have learnt that the true *"house of God, which is the church of the living God, is the pillar and ground of THE TRUTH"* (1 Tim. iii. 15); and that men and systems may say, "Lord, Lord," and may even claim to have done wonderful things in his name, and yet have no claim to his recognition at his coming, by reason of their non-submission to his requirements. Consequently, we have asked—Is the religious system under which we were born *"the pillar and ground of the truth"*? A pillar supports, holds up: does the religious system support, hold up, the truth?" "Ground" gives a resting-place, a basis, a foundation: does the religious system act as a foundation, a resting-place for "the truth"? We have been able to answer this with an emphatic negative when we have come to know what "the truth" is.

This phrase "the truth" is very comprehensive. "The truth" we find to be made up of many things which require to be put together before we can have the whole thing so defined. For instance, it is true that God exists: but to believe that God exists is not to believe the comprehensive thing meant by "the truth." The Jews believed in God's existence: and yet Paul had *"continual sorrow of heart"* because they were not in the way of salvation. The truth is not only the fact that God exists, but that He has said and done certain things and given to us certain commandments. It is part of the truth that Christ was crucified: but to believe this of itself is not to believe the truth. Jews and infidels believe that Christ was crucified, but reject the truth of which that is an element. It is part of the truth that Christ rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples: but if these facts are disconnected from his ascension and the promise of his return to raise the dead and establish his kingdom, the belief of them does not constitute a belief of "the truth." So with every element of "the truth" by turns; they must all have their place in relation to the rest, or we fail to receive and hold the truth.

Now, when we try the system around us by this test, we find it is the very opposite of being *"the pillar and ground of the truth."* It lacks, yea rejects, the very

first principles of the oracles of God. It teaches a triune instead of the one God: it asserts man to be immortal instead of mortal: it declares torment instead of death the wages of sin: it preaches the death of Christ as a "substitutionary" satisfaction of the Divine law, instead of a declaration of the righteousness of God (Rom. iii. 25) in the condemnation of sin in the flesh (Rom. viii. 3), as a basis on which the forbearance of God offers the forgiveness of all who recognise themselves "*crucified with Christ*" (Rom. iii. 25; Gal. ii. 20). It proclaims death instead of resurrection the climax of the believer's hope; it preaches heaven instead of earth as the inheritance of the meek. It affirms our going, instead of Christ's coming as the means and occasion of the promised reward. And so forth. The dissimilarities might be enumerated in other points. Instead of being "*the pillar and ground of the truth*," the religious system around us is the puller-down and scatterer of the truth. How, then, could we hesitate to "*come out from among them*"? It is part of apostolic doctrine that we are not to be identified with any who bring not the doctrine of Christ, whatever their profession (2 John 10; Rev. xiv. 9; Rom. xvi. 17). Consequently, we could not remain in popular fellowship without the danger of being responsible for their errors. This is the explanation of our position this morning in having gone forth out of the popular camp, unto Christ, bearing the reproach incident in our professedly Christian day to a profession of his truth.

It is well also to recognise the fact that the principle which isolates us from popular communion isolates us also from the fellowship of all who reject any part of the truth. Some accept the truth in part, but are either unable or unwilling to receive it in its entirety, They believe in the kingdom but reject the Bible doctrine of death; or they hold the mortal nature of man but do not receive the restoration of the kingdom again to Israel; or they accept both, but deny the judgment; or believe in the judgment, but deny the kingdom; or accept all three, but reject the apostolic doctrine of Christ's nature and death, and so on. Such persons are generally what is called very "charitable": that is, they are willing to connive at any amount of doctrinal diversity so long as friendliness is maintained. They are lovers of peace. Peace is certainly very desirable when it can be had on a pure foundation: but the charitable people referred to are not particular about the foundation. They will compromise the truth in some one or other of its integral elements for the sake of personal harmony. This is a spurious charity altogether. We are not at liberty to relax the appointments of God. The exercise of "charity" must be confined to our own affairs. We have no jurisdiction in God's matters. What God requires is binding on us all: and the faithful man cannot consent to accept any union that requires a jot or tittle to be set aside or treated as unimportant. Such a man cannot consent to form a part of any community that is not "*the pillar and ground of the truth*."

There is just another side to this question which cannot be too well remembered, and that is that the possession of the truth in its entirety does not necessarily ensure acceptance with Christ at his coming. The Scriptures speak of "*those who hold the truth IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS*," and declares that the end of such will be "*indignation, anguish, and wrath*." Consequently, no one should rest on the knowledge and belief of the truth as securing his salvation without failure. That knowledge is of great value to him. In the obedience to it in baptism it brings him into relation with Christ, who is the righteousness of God; invested

with whose name he stands a forgiven man, "*purged from his old sins.*" But he has a life to live after that, and Christ shall judge that life at his coming; and it will all depend upon his estimate of that life as to how he will deal with the person. He will give to every man "according to his works." In the case of some, he will "*blot their name out of the book of life.*" He will take away their part out of the holy city. He will refuse recognition and dismiss the refused to the society of the adversary, at that time about to be "devoured." In the case of others, he will confess their names, and invite them to inherit the kingdom of God. There is no sane man who would not desire to be among the latter. There is a principle upon which admission is predicated. The doctrines of the apostasy have obliterated this principle. They teach that men have "only to believe" that Christ has paid their debts, and that they have nothing to do but believe that Christ died for them. Whereas the exhortation of Peter is to be "*diligent to **make our calling and election SURE***"; that only "*if we do these things* (which he had enumerated,) *we shall never fall.*" This is the uniform teaching of Christ and his servant Paul. Jesus says it is vain to acknowledge him unless we do what he commands (Matt. vii. 21). Paul says every man at the judgment seat of Christ shall receive according to that he hath done (2 Cor. v. 10); and that he who doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done (Col. iii. 25). Consequently, it rests with us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. ii. 12), as obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to our former lusts in our ignorance, but as He that hath called us is holy, so must we be holy in all manner of conversation. There is a natural tendency to overlook this phase of the work of Christ, unless we are on our guard.

The popular habit of depreciating the importance of doctrine, is liable to have the effect of shutting us up entirely to the fact that apart from a knowledge of the truth, we cannot be saved. We are in danger of shutting our eyes to the equally certain truth that a knowledge of the truth will be of no value to us if it fail to effectuate that purification of heart—that moral and intellectual assimilation to the Divine character which it is intended to produce in all who are called to the holy calling: we can only avoid this dangerous extreme by a habitual and meditative reading of the holy oracles. In this exercise, day by day, we shall be made acquainted with the full and noble breadth of the Divine work, in the practical transformation of men. We shall not fail to perceive that Christ made the state of the heart and the character of our actions the most prominent feature of his teaching. He preached the Kingdom of God it is true, and constantly did so: but this, only, as the framework of his instruction. The character of those who would inherit that kingdom, was constantly the burden of his speech to those around him. And we shall only resemble him and take part truly in his work, in proportion as we do the same. And what is more solemnly true, we can only hope for an entrance into his kingdom in the day of his glory if we are of the same mind and work as he. It is written, "*There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie*" (Rev. xxi. 27). Men—aye, even such as are called brethren, may forget or be indifferent to this meanwhile, but they will discover at last that the word of the Lord standeth sure, and that the gate of eternal glory will be barred against everyone who conforms not to the Divine standard revealed in the Word. The fact may appear a stern one,

but its effect as regards the House of God will be only good and glorious: it will secure a perfect fellowship, composed of such as know God and delight in His praise, and in the delightful love one to another that glows in every heart that truly seeks His face.

(Taken from "Seasons of Comfort" Volume 1, R Roberts)

Doth Job Fear God for Nought?

"I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not ... Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:3-6).

We are once again reading together the marvellous book of Job. It is the only non-Jewish book of the Bible, and it is in all probability the oldest book of the Bible. Many eminent men—both religious and non-religious—have called it the supreme literary production in all the world's history. It is, from any point of view, a most remarkable piece of writing.

THE PLACE AND TIME

From the names of the characters and their ancestors, and the place names, the location of the story lies in the area between the Dead Sea and the desert, or somewhat to the north or south of that: the area of the descendants of Abraham other than through Jacob—generally speaking, the Arabs. Job was one of the "Men of the East," a term applied to the Arabs: Ishmaelites, Edomites, etc. And the time seems most likely to be during the two hundred or so years Israel was in Egypt. All the background and customs and genealogy point to this place and time.

As to how the book of Job got into an otherwise wholly Jewish Bible, there is a strong and ancient Jewish tradition that Moses wrote it, or at least made it part of the Scriptures—by the guidance of the Spirit of course. Moses would have been the logical one to do so. He may well have known Job himself, or Job's early descendants, during the forty years he was in Midian. Job was the greatest (and therefore best known) of the "Men of the East" (Job 1:3), and Midian would be included in that area. The history of Job would be well-known there.

It is remarkable that the great typical and exemplary patient sufferer of the Old Testament is not a Jew, but rather is of a race which—though closely related—was always, and still is, in deep antagonism to the Jews. He was a Gentile—a non-Jew, that is—of the seed of Abraham, adding to the beauty and fitness of the typical picture.

A NON-JEWISH MODEL OF EXCELLENCE

Here, in the midst of an otherwise Jewish book, is a perfect model of excellence for all time: a man who is not a Jew, not under the Law, who had nothing to do with the Law, nothing to do with Israel. He is referred to by Ezekiel (14:14), with Noah and Daniel, as three outstanding examples of righteousness. He is referred to by James (5:11) as the ultimate example of patient, faithful suffering.

The story opens with the simple picture of worshipers of God coming together before Him, and among them a bitter, jealous adversary making a travesty and mockery of it. Orthodoxy represents its Devil as having free access to God's heaven, and being God's agent and accomplice. One respectable modern commentary, the "New Bible Commentary," says concerning this scene that the Devil is a "divine agent," and is the supreme cynic of the heavenly court." What a debased, pagan conception of God's holy dwelling-place!—in perfect harmony with the crude gods and heavens of Greece and Rome, but certainly not with the Scriptures of Truth.

"Doth Job fear God for nought?" He DID: and so must we. Our motive must be love alone, and not self-benefit, though self benefit will inevitably follow, for goodness can lead only at last to goodness, in a world ruled by the goodness of God. But our motivation must be pure love of God and of goodness.

WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?

The great question of the book of Job is: Why do the righteous suffer? And the great lesson is: We must totally and unquestioningly trust God, and have implicit faith in His love, mercy and justice, regardless of any appearances or circumstances. He has a reason and a purpose in the suffering of His people: different reasons at different times, but all working toward their ultimate glorification—often a reason (as here) that would be impossible for man ever to guess without knowing what was in God's mind.

The sufferings of Christ point to the same problem: Why? We can dimly perceive how he was "made perfect through suffering," and how his perfect submission to that suffering laid the eternal foundation for the world's redemption from all suffering.

But, above all, we must unhesitatingly accept the ways of God because He is God; because He manifestly has made all things, and knows the reason for all. He has manifested His infinite power and wisdom in all the beauties and glories of Creation. He proclaims His love and justice in His Word. He overwhelmingly manifests His divinity in that Word.

We must accept the whole picture, or reject the whole picture. To reject it in the light of its overpowering evidence is stupidity. To question God's ways in the light of His overpowering greatness is obviously equal stupidity. This is the lesson of Job. The final outcome manifested God's wisdom and love and compassion. We must have implicit trust that it always will if we do our part faithfully.

It was a high honor and privilege for Job to be used by God to demonstrate for all ages what true righteousness and faith really is, and to give an example of patient integrity in the face of what appeared to everyone, including Job himself, a deliberate divine effort to afflict and torment him to the uttermost.

JOB AND CHRIST: STRIKING PARALLELS

We see throughout, a very striking, broad parallel between Job and Christ, although there are necessarily differences and contrasts.

Both were the outstandingly righteous men of their age.

Both suffered more intensely and grievously than is recorded of any other man. Christ suffered more greatly, and more extendedly, for he lived his whole life in the shadow of the inevitable cross, under the constant burden of required perfection, or all Creation would have been betrayed. And in his deep and superhuman empathy, he suffered all the sufferings of his people of all ages. Infinitely more even than Paul he could say: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

He was pre-eminently a Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53:3), though at the same time a Man of incomparable Joy (Jn. 15:11; 17:13).

With both, God knew from the beginning that they would hold fast to the end, regardless of the intensity of the trial: and God built His purpose upon that assurance. What a glorious role for men to play! If Job had failed, the adversary would have been triumphant, and God would have been put to shame: His whole dispensation of love exposed as mere self-serving.

Both were reduced in shame from the highest position to the lowest, though in different ways. Christ, as the only begotten Son of God, was the potential heir of the universe. As Paul explains to the Philippians (2:6-8), though finding himself the one special man above all men, even the "Fellow" of God (Zech. 13:7), entitled to the homage of the angels (Heb. 1), yet he humbled himself, and accepted the form of a slave, even to the most ignominious of deaths.

Both were utterly despised and rejected. Both were assumed by their own people and generation to be under the special curse of God, at the very time they were suffering for the sake of others. For we must recognize that Job's sufferings went far beyond himself, and were for universal instruction and comfort and guidance. It was not an aimless wager, when God staked all on Job's integrity, but an essential manifestation of the noble, vital, spiritual principle of faithful integrity for its own sake alone, under the extremist of testings: the key to salvation. We must do good simply because we love the good and hate the evil.

MADE PERFECT BY SUFFERING

Both were "made perfect by suffering." This is a deep and important aspect in both cases. Christ, though of unblemished righteousness, was not "perfect" until

he had, in loving and all-trusting obedience, passed through the required suffering and sacrificial death.

Job was the most righteous man of his day: a giant of faith and endurance—"perfect and upright," "none like him in all the earth," according to the testimony of God Himself (Job 1:8). Still, Job has something to learn, something in which to be developed and brought to beautiful fruition, as he at last freely and humbly confesses (40:4; 42:6).

Unquestionably, Job was a better, wiser, greater, more understanding man, much closer to God, after his terrible trial than before. And he had attained to a far higher position in the Divine Purpose and Manifestation. As a prosperous and honored sheik, he never would have fully known God. He never would have become an inspiration and example for all ages. He never would have been granted the unique and inestimable privilege of the direct Divine revelation he received.

GOD'S UNIQUE SELF-MANIFESTATION TO JOB

Was ever a man the subject of so full and personal and searching a Divine address to himself? God did not deign to explain, for that would have been utterly inappropriate, and would not have accomplished the desired result. We must first accept God and all His ways fully and unquestioningly, before we can hope for any explanation of their mysteries.

But God condescended to take the time and trouble to fully and in detail manifest Himself and His majesty to Job, as He did to none other we know of but Christ himself. God's address to Job is unique in all Scripture.

Job at last received that which he had so passionately pleaded for: a direct divine manifestation. It would be well worth all the scorn and abuse and terrible suffering he had endured. Indeed, its value and power would be greatly heightened by that dark background. What a joyful, glorious, inspiring, comforting memory for the last one hundred and forty years of his life!—a life which he thought was already over. How much closer he would now be to God for that long period of recompense for his trials! How much more at peace—for there are hints that for all his religious efforts and prosperity, he was not before truly at peace. In the anguish of his suffering, he makes such revelations as this:

"That which I GREATLY FEARED is come upon me" (3:25).

But never again would he fear anything. Now his peace was deep and strong. The ordeal was dreadful, but we see its wholesome benefits.

JOB'S CRUSHING AVALANCHE OF AFFLICTION

Job's afflictions were many and cumulative. They would quickly have destroyed a lesser man. In evaluating Job and what he at times says, we must strive to comprehend the almost incomprehensible extent to which he was tortured and tried in so many ways at once.

First, he lost all his possessions and livelihood. In swift succession, calamity upon calamity fell crushingly upon him. And with it, he lost his whole family of ten beloved children in what was obviously a direct divine blow, unexplained and unprovoked: his cherished family for which he had constantly prayed and offered sacrifice.

His reaction was perfect, unhesitating, total acceptance and worship—

"The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Then, in seeming heartless response by God to this loving and godly reaction, he was smitten from head to foot—again obviously by the hand of God—with the most painful, loathsome and abhorred disease known to man, inevitably fatal in terrible suffering in the natural course of events: a particularly repulsive form of consuming, deforming leprosy, universally regarded as a manifestation of God's especial wrath.

Then his wife turned against him—and all his friends and acquaintances. And he found himself a universally abandoned pariah, cast out of the city, consigned to the refuse heap to die a lingering death: the butt of ridicule and abuse by the vilest class of the people, who tormented him for their depraved amusement.

Job was totally rejected, and driven "without the gate" by those who considered themselves the "Holy City."

In the raw meanness of ordinary human nature, everyone was gratified to see this mighty man, this presumed paragon of righteousness, crushed and humbled in the mire, and eager to add their own miserable quota to his overflowing misery. They spit in his face, he says. Exactly the same thing is said of Christ (Matt. 26:67): the deepest degradation and insult. "Crucify him! Crucify him! He pretended to be so good!" It was his very God-attested goodness that so enraged the blind evil fury of the flesh against him.

THE FRIENDS COME

And so time dragged on wearily, with Job lying in misery in the ashes (2:8) (the Septuagint says "dung-heap," which is probably the meaning), until his three especial friends heard of his calamities, and assembled to comfort him. They were so struck with his misery and dreadful appearance that they sat around him in silence for seven days. Then, when he repeatedly implored their comfort and sympathy, they more and more heatedly condemned him and accused him of the vilest crimes and hypocrisies.

This is the background against which we must consider him. Truly, like Moses, under tremendous stress he "spake unadvisedly with his lips."

Job is throughout wrestling tremendously with this problem. Upon the shame and misery of his condition is heaped the smug and self-righteous condemnation of his closest friends. His friends' rejection aroused an over-reaction in what he

said, but threw him more and more on God. He had sought their support and sympathy against the hand of God. They railed on him, thinking they were thereby earning God's favor. This added to his bitterness, but it showed him there was nowhere to turn for comfort and understanding but to God Himself.

The friends' condemnation was an essential part of the trial, and of the final result. Though it added immeasurably to his grief, it was probably more helpful to him (in a way opposite what they intended) than their sympathy would have been.

JOB'S GREATEST AGONY: GOD'S SEEMING REJECTION

All forsook him in his extremity. But his greatest agony was not in his sufferings, nor in his rejection by all mankind, but God's apparent rejection and forsaking and enmity. Again and again he implores God for but one word of hope or comfort or recognition, but is met with total silence, and increased oppression. Even when he seeks brief, exhausted surcease in sleep, he is terrified with awful dreams (7:14).

To judge what he says, we must consider all he said, and the order in which he said it; just as we must consider the whole of Psalm 22, and not just the first few words from it that Christ quoted on the cross. It is all too easy to get his cries of anguish out of proportion, as if they were the studied and final conclusions reached coolly and theoretically in ease and comfort.

The fundamental fact is that Job held fast his trust in God, and would not deviate from his dedication to righteousness (which has no meaning outside of faith in God); and he was confident throughout of final resurrection, and of God's open manifestation to him at last.

There is no more triumphant victory of faith than is expressed in his memorable words, wrung from him in the depth of present despair—

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him ... He also shall be my salvation!"

"If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee. Thou wilt have a desire (kasaph: longing) to the work of Thine hands."

"I KNOW that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day UPON THE EARTH ... Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold" (13:15-16; 14:14-15; 19:25-27).

WHY SUCH DREADFUL AFFLICTION?

His complaints are not against God's overall justice, but against His seeming injustice in the affairs of this life—especially that one who tried so hard to obey

should be picked out for the most terrible of afflictions, while all men gloated, and the wicked were at ease. Job knew that at last all would be righted, but why this special, dreadful, unprovoked affliction of a righteous and faithful man?

The friends fall silent. Job restates his case at length (chapters 26-31) with great power and beauty: conceding that the wicked are finally punished; conceding God's infinite might and understanding; conceding that man's whole wisdom is to fear God and depart from evil— but again long and stoutly declaring his own righteousness, and crying for the opportunity of debating his case with God, confident of victory.

Then a new figure enters, the young Elihu, who prepares Job for the final revelation from God. He introduces the idea that suffering is not only for punishment, as the friends contended, but has many uses in the love and wisdom of God: constructive loving discipline, directional chastisement of a Father, strengthening by training and rigor, manifestation and deepening of faith, purification—especially purification, making perfect. Suffering can and must lead to fuller understanding, and thus be a blessing. Job makes no attempt to answer Elihu.

GOD SPEAKS

Then God speaks. It is notable that Job was given just what he asked: an opportunity to stand up to God and argue with Him, to show Him how He must be mistaken. But how swiftly Job's bold self-assurance fled before the mighty manifestation of God's infinite wisdom and power!

That God should deign to speak to man at all—especially to one calling His ways in question—is a tremendous condescension in itself, a tremendous and unique honor, and manifestation of love for Job.

As God spoke of the endless marvels of His Creation, Job shrank to nothing. Crushed in shame, he learned to rest totally and unreservedly in God, devastated by the sudden realization of the stupidity and presumption of daring to challenge God and question His ways.

When God brought Job to the comfort and peace of unquestioning love and trust, He thereby solved all Job's problems, even before He removed Job's afflictions. Their removal came later, after Job had waived all his complaints, and prostrated himself in loving worship.

God banished Job's questions, not by answering them, but by totally removing them from his concern. Job was wholly satisfied that whatever God did must be right, and must be rooted in love and wisdom.

God's answer was to give no answer, but to manifest a God so great that no answer was needed. To need an explanation and justification of anything God does is to have a degraded and unacceptable conception of God. He is infinitely above all question and accountability.

MAN DARE NOT QUESTION GOD

Job was faithful and righteous above all his contemporaries, and completely, actively dedicated to good works, and to service to God and man. He demonstrated his firm and unshakable endurance, and that he unselfishly loved goodness for goodness' sake alone. But he did not have the necessary total self-abasing humility and recognition of self-nothingness until he was crushed by the divine revelation. The learning of this was the supreme blessing of his entire experience.

The whole lesson of God's self-manifestation to Job is the limitless greatness of God, and the utter littleness of man. If God had stooped to explain Himself to Job before totally humbling him in the recognition of his nothingness, then God would have been conceding man's right to judge God and demand an answer for His ways. And this right, man must be made to fully realize, that he just does not have. It is absurd and unthinkable that puny little ignorant created man should for one moment question God, Who effortlessly maintains the numberless stars and galaxies in their myriad courses throughout the universe. What is weak, brief-lived, earth crawling man to question his Creator?

But when Job humbled himself, and cast away all self-importance, God graciously went much further to set Job's mind at perfect rest, and doubly compensated him for all his faithfully-borne suffering and shame. He totally vindicated and honored him before his self-righteous friends, and gave Job the joyful, forgiving privilege of being their mediator.

RESTORATION

And then He justified Job before his whole community, and made him twice as rich as he had been before. After what Job had bitterly learned of the fickle respect and fellowship of men (who fled when he needed them, and came back shamelessly seeking his favor when he was restored), and had gloriously learned of the companionship of God, the riches and honor would mean little to him, except as an even greater opportunity to resume his former course of goodness and guidance and charity to others, succoring the needy and defending the oppressed.

Some have felt that the restoration of the temporal riches and honor detracts from the spiritual force of the story, which is otherwise played out on a wholly spiritual plane. Such think incorrectly, again unwisely judging God's ways. It was fitting and necessary—for the instruction of all Job's associates, and all since—to complete the picture by the double restoration of all he had lost.

And it brings the closing picture fully into harmony with the antitype. Job, in well-deserved riches and honor—after passing triumphantly through all his trials for the inspirational and instructional benefit of the race—rejoiced to see his sons and his sons' sons, in peace and prosperity.

So Christ, in eternal riches and honor, shall see his redeemed Seed: a holy, perfected "generation of the race"—

"HE SHALL SEE OF THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL, AND BE SATISFIED."

"How unsearchable are God's judgments and His ways past finding out!"

(Taken from "Be Ye Transformed" G. Growcott.)

Special Study Section:

The Repentance and Restoration of Israel

In order for the Kingdom to be restored to Israel, there must firstly be a humiliation and repentance of the Lord's people, that they might learn to bow before the King they rejected 2000 years ago. Even though, within the last 50 years or so, we have seen the Jews pouring back into their Land, these Jews are not yet ready to submit to their King - they still reject the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, and do not accept the things testified concerning Him in the Oracles of God. And in addition to these faithless sons of Jacob, there are still many more of them resident in foreign lands, who also refuse to bow before their Lord. There is then, a need for a dual conversion; for all 12 tribes, both inside and also outside the land to have the veil currently cast over their understanding to be removed (2Cor 3:14-17), that they might turn to the Lord in recognition of His Saving Power.

As regards to the Jews resident in the land at the epoch of our Lord's return, the Divinely selected means of causing them to turn back to Him, as in the days of old (cp. Deut 28:49), is to afflict them at the hands of a foreign invader. The prophetic testimony is that by the hand of his angelic ministers, the Lord will gather the armies of the world against Jerusalem, to afflict them for "all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land" (Ezek 39:26). Thus, Zechariah was "moved" by the Spirit to proclaim: "Behold, the day of Yahweh cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity ..." (Zech 14:2). This "day of Yahweh", is styled by Jeremiah, the "day of Jacob's trouble" which shall be "great, so that none is like it" (Jer 30:7, cp. Dan 12:1), and it is in that unique "day", that Isaiah testifies the Lord shall remove "the filth of the daughters of Zion ... by the spirit of judgement, and by the spirit of burning" (Is 4:4).

It is clear then, that there will be great suffering and sorrow, as the disobedient sons of Jacob are chastised for their iniquities, and brought to a situation of desperation and utter helplessness, that they might learn to trust in a Strength far greater than their own. And in the midst of such affliction, there will be heard the voice of bitter crying; Rachel weeping for her children (Jer 31:51), her tears running as a river day and night (Lam 2:18), as once again the enemy shall open the mouth against her: "they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have

found, we have seen it" (Lam 2:16). Women shall be raped, houses pillaged (Zech 14:2), sons taken as slaves (Joel 3:3,6), the survivors of half the city shall go into captivity and "a great spoil" shall be taken, and divided in the midst of the land.

In that day, Jerusalem truly shall become a furnace of affliction (Ezek 22:18-22), in order that the people might be refined, as silver and gold in the heat of the fire, and finally look to their God for deliverance: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Yahweh, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, Yahweh is my God" (Zech 13:8,9). In the depths of sorrow, and on the brink of annihilation, the survivors, "an afflicted and poor people" (Zeph 3:12) shall cry unto their God, in confession of their uncleanness: "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities" (Is 64:6,7).

This will truly be a turning point in the history of the world - the final repentance of Israel, in order that the work of reconstructing their Kingdom might begin. From that day forward, Israel shall trust in Yahweh their God, Who shall turn and fight against their enemies. Following their confession of sins, and recognition of their utter dependence upon the mercies of the God of their Fathers, they shall cry for deliverance: "Be not wroth very sore, O Yahweh, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation ... Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Yahweh? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" (Is 64:9-12). And Yahweh shall indeed hear the cry of His People - He shall answer swiftly with the outpouring of His Grace (Zech 12:10), and contend with those nations which so bitterly oppressed His People: "He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee" (Is 30:19, cp. Ps 50:15), for "then shall Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech 14:3), "and I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am YAHWEH" (Ezek 38:22:23).

JUDGEMENTS UPON THE HEATHEN

From these words of Ezekiel, we learn that the events of Armageddon are designed for more than one end. Not only will Israel be brought to trust in their God once more, as they see the power of the Almighty in effecting their salvation; the heathen also are to be witness to that Power being manifested in destruction to their armies, and shall themselves be thus taught of the God of Israel. These nations who assemble together against Jerusalem will do so unaware of the providential control over them, and unaware of the true reason for their gathering. They will be motivated entirely by their own carnal desire to "take a spoil ... to take a prey" (Ezek 38:13), and humiliate the Jews. They will say, "let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts

of Yahweh, neither understand they his counsel” (Mic 4:11,12), which is to cause His people to turn to Him, and then judge those who sought to oppress them. Never before will the armies of the entire world have been united together in one place on such a scale - it will be an unprecedented assembly of all peoples to Zion, the Holy Mount of the Lord. This is the site of the future capital of the world, the place that the Lord has chosen to Place His Name there from ancient times (1Kings 11:36). How appropriate therefore, that He should bring the nations to that very place that they may all appear before Him for judgement: “ ... my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy” (Zeph 3:8).

Thus it will be, that the preparatory work of establishing the Lord’s reign, shall commence with the Glorious Power of the Lord being laid bare in the sight of all nations, in bringing Salvation to His People, yet destruction to “the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen” (Hag 2:22). Isaiah speaks of this, in describing the joy of Israel for their deliverance: “Yahweh hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Yahweh hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Is 52:10, cp. 40:5). They will see the Salvation of Israel’s God, at great cost to themselves, as Yahweh’s anointed shall “rebuke many people” (Is 2:4, Ps 9:5), and so make himself “known in the eyes of many nations”, who will then be called upon to submit themselves to him (Ps 2:12).

The judgements which the Lord shall bring upon the heathen, are to be executed at the hands of the Lord Jesus, and His Saints, as it is written: “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; ... to execute upon them the judgement written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye Yahweh” (Ps 149:5-9). But there will be no need for carnal warfare on the part of those who are energised with the Omnipotence of the Almighty, for as we have read, Ezekiel reveals a scene of destruction reminiscent of past judgements, in the use of natural elements: “... I will plead against him with pestilence and blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I AM YAHWEH” (Ezek 38:22,23).

The repentant people of Israel themselves are also to have a hand in the final destruction, and removal of their oppressors. The strength of Gog’s armies having been miraculously overthrown at the hands of the Lord’s immortal hosts, the people will turn, and contend against those which remain, destroying their weapons and reclaiming their spoil: “And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears; and they shall burn them with fire seven years ... and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord Yahweh” (Ezek 39:9,10). And again, Zechariah speaks of this burning: “In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left; and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem” (Zech 12:6, see also Obad 17,18).

The oppressing army having thus been obliterated by the power of the Almighty, the voice of rejoicing shall be heard in the mountains of Israel, as the former misery shall become but a fading memory: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. Yahweh hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even Yahweh is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph 3:15). The tears of sorrow shall be replaced by the voice of gladness and joy, as the Lord's repentant people will be joined to Him once more, that the abundance of His blessings might be poured out upon them (Joel 3:21-29) and the beginnings of their restored Kingdom might become the nucleus of a world-wide dominion with all nations bowing before the greatness of Israel's God.

THE MINISTRY OF ELIJAH

This then, briefly describes the circumstances of the repentance of the Jews in the Land. But what of those outside, who will not experience such humiliation at the hands of the Gogian host? It is testified that the great prophet Elijah shall be instrumental in bringing Ephraim to repentance: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal 4:6). Speaking of his work, Bro Thomas wrote: "The person with whom they will have more immediately to do in their Second Exodus is Elijah. There would seem to be a fitness in this. In the days of their fathers, when they forsook the Lord and abolished the Law of Moses, Elijah was the person whose ministerial life was occupied in endeavouring to "restore all things". Though he did much to vindicate the name and law of Jehovah, he was taken away in the midst of his labours. For what purpose? That he might at a future period resume his work and perfect it by restoring all things among the ten tribes according to the law of Moses, preparatory to their being planted in their land under a new covenant to be made with them there. But it may be objected that Elijah has come already, and that John the Baptist was he (Luke 1:17). True, in a certain sense, he has. John was Elijah to the House of Judah in the sense of his having come "in the spirit and power of Elijah". But John was not the Elijah who talked with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration. The latter is Elijah to the house of Israel. The scribes taught that Elijah must precede Christ; which Jesus approved, saying, "Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things". He said this after John was put to death ..." (Elpis Israel, p 451, 452).

There are those who feel that the Lord will not send Elijah "before the great and dreadful day of Yahweh", as Malachi taught he will. They say that this prophecy had a total fulfilment in John Baptist, and needs not a further application. But what did John himself say? Was he Elijah? "They asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith I am not" (Jno 1:21). This is conclusive evidence, which ought to settle all dispute on the matter. Either John

was Elias, without knowing it, or he spoke the truth, saying "I am not". True it is, that John came "in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17) as Bro. Thomas shows, for his preparatory work for the coming of the Lord Jesus, foreshadowed the future work of the ancient Israelitish prophet (Mat 17:12). But he was "not" that prophet. This Elijah, it is testified, shall "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children

to the fathers” (Mal 4:6), that is, to join together the hearts of the Sons of Israel to become at one with that of their Fathers, that they may rejoice together in the covenant made with them. And this work, as is evident from the present decadent state of the children’s hearts, is a work for the future, which must be accomplished in order for them to inherit the blessing promised to their Fathers.

This will be the mission of Elijah - to “restore all things”, that is to restore the remnant of Jacob to their God, and effect the second exodus, the final restoration to the land. How appropriate in this regard that on the Mount of Transfiguration (a foretaste of the Kingdom, (2Pet 1:16-18)), there should appear Moses, the leader of the first Exodus out of Egypt, with Elijah, the leader of the final Exodus, through the wilderness of the peoples (Ezek 20:35) to communicate with the Lord concerning his “decease (or “exodus”, as the Greek has it) which he should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31) - the means by which as the captain of salvation, he would lead many sons out of darkness into glory (Heb 2:10).

THE REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL IN DISPERSION

The re-gathering of the 10 tribes forms the object of many prophecies in Scripture as we shall see, but it is evident that in order for this to occur, their repentance shall come first. Moses, after speaking of the blessings and curses to come upon the people prophesied of this: “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither Yahweh thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Yahweh thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then Yahweh thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither Yahweh thy God hath scattered thee” (Deut 30:1-5). Moses thus taught that whilst in the lands of dispersion, Israel shall return to their God, obeying His voice “according to all that I command thee, this day”, that is, the day in which he taught them the Law prior to their entry to the Land. It would appear from this, that whilst in the lands of their dispersion, the people are to be brought under the Mosaic Law, prior to their resettlement in the Land, to discipline them, and to teach them the things concerning the Lord Jesus (Gal 3:19, 24). This conclusion is strengthened by Malachi, who immediately before speaking of the work of Elijah, spake thus: “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgements. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet ...” (Mal 4:4). Bro. Thomas commented on this: “It would seem from the testimony of Malachi, who prophesied concerning the ten tribes, that while they are in the wilderness of the people, they will be disciplined by the law of Moses as their national code, while things concerning Jesus will be propounded to them as a matter of faith; for it is testified by Hosea, that they shall be gathered, and “shall sorrow a little for the burden of the King of princes (Hos 8:10)” (Elpis Israel, p 451).

But by what means are the people to be brought under the Mosaic Covenant once more? What signs and wonders (Joel 2:30, see Mic 7:15) will testify to the Truth of what the diaspora find themselves being taught? It would appear that the restorative work of Elijah will run concurrently with the humiliation and redemption of Jerusalem, for we

read that Elijah shall be sent “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh”, that is, prior to the invasion of Jewry by the Gogian host. Yet it will not be finally accomplished until after the salvation of Jerusalem, for “Yahweh also shall save the tents of Judah first” (Zech 12:7). So it will be that Elijah’s preaching shall receive a powerful witness in the desolation, deliverance, and miraculous blessing of the land. He will, doubtless warn the exiles of the impending judgements to come upon the earth, and will be able to look to Jerusalem as an example of this. And again, he will doubtless speak of the blessings which will fill all the earth - and will be able to point to the blessing of Jerusalem as an example of this. Thus it will be, that Elijah will lead the people out from the kingdoms of men, their dominion about to be crushed by the Stone-power of God (Dan 2:44) into the land of promise, its desolate wastes transformed into an Edenic paradise (Is 51:3) by the beneficent power of the Lord, upon the repentance and cry of his people. And beholding these things, what greater incentive could there be for the scattered tribes to seek after the One who has performed these “great things” (Joel 2:21)? So it will be, that as they sojourn among the countries of the heathen, they shall see these things, and rejoice: “Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, Yahweh hath done great things for them. Yahweh hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad” (Ps 126:2,3).

The response of the people to Elijah will be good: “thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” (Ps 110:3), and in belief of their God, they shall depart from their adopted lands, to return home, to Zion.

AFFLICTION IN THE WILDERNESS

But the Scriptures indicate that many of the returning exiles shall be compelled to leave their host countries because of persecution. Just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem are to experience great affliction at the hands of the confederacy denominated in the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, so their brethren, resident in “their enemies’ lands” (Ezek 39:27), are to groan under great travail and distress:- “behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts” (Ezek 37:11), as they shall become a “curse among the heathen” (Zech 8:13). And even having left those countries, the people shall not find peace in the nations they will need to pass through to reach the Promised Land. Rather, they shall be subjected to a purging: “I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face ... And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am Yahweh” (Ezek 20:34-38).

From these words, it is evident that as they seek to return to their homeland, the Jews shall experience many terrible atrocities, as anti-Semitic feelings are aroused, probably by the leading countries of the campaign against Jerusalem. The scene of these events is to be “the wilderness of the peoples” - it is in this place that the rebels (those who desire to escape persecution in their own lands, and experience the blessings of Zion, yet refuse to accept Yahweh’s terms of deliverance) shall be removed. And it is here also, that the

remnant shall be brought into “the bond of the covenant”; that is, the New Covenant (Jer 31:31), having been taught of it, through the Mosaic schoolmaster (Gal 3:24), and the ministrations of Elijah.

We have been unable to find in the Divine Testimony precise details of the route which the returning sons of Jacob shall follow in their journeying, and so it is difficult for us to define with certainty the exact location of this “wilderness of the peoples”, if indeed it be referring to a specific place. But in the apocalyptic visions shown to John, he beheld a European “wilderness” (Rev 17:3), inhabited by the harlot mother of Christendom, the Catholic system, seated upon a multi-headed beast. This beast, we learn from verses 9-13, is a Roman political animal, comprised of 10 kings over which the Papacy exerts its influence - in short, Roman Catholic Europe, as it will exist at the Epoch of the Lord’s Return. And of these 10 Kings, we read, “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Verse 14). We shall say more of this war with the Lord Jesus later, but these words serve to place the “wilderness” beheld by John in the time-period under our present consideration - at the epoch of the destruction of the Kingdoms of men, and their replacement by the reconstructed Kingdom of Israel.

This Apocalyptic wilderness then, is the arena inhabited by the papal-driven European political creature (See Eureka for further evidence of this). It speaks of the European land which, although in many ways is a fruitful place - physically speaking - due to its lack of spiritual nourishment, is little more than an inhospitable, barren desert, in the Divine Estimation. And it is quite possible, therefore that it is this area of the globe that Ezekiel styles the “wilderness of the people”, the places in Europe through which the returning exiles will pass through on their journey homeward - the place which has been the scene of some of the most bitter campaigns of hate against God’s people in past ages.

DIVINE DELIVERANCE ASSURED

But be that as it may, it is clear that in this wilderness, having been “purged” of the “rebels”, the refined remnant shall find grace in the sight of their God: “Thus saith Yahweh, the people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest” (Jer 31:2; see the whole chapter. It may be thought that these words relate to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, but in that event, it was not just a remnant, those “left of the sword”, but the whole nation which was saved. See also Hos 2:14). These people have a promise of Divine protection: “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, though shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is 43:2, see Ps 66:12) and so it will be, that having entered into the New Covenant, just as the Lord shall deliver the Gogian confederacy into the hand of those in the land; so He will be with his people, in contending against their enemies outside. And just as Judah will have a part in executing judgements against their oppressors under the auspices of their Redeemer (Is 59:20), even so Israel will execute the Lord’s judgements upon those countries which seek their destruction. Thus we read of the proclamation of Yahweh: “Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I destroy kingdoms; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider ...” (Jer 51:21). And again, in speaking of Yahweh’s “weapons of war”: “when I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised

up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece ... And Yahweh shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord Yahweh shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. Yahweh Tzavaoth shall defend them; and they shall devour ..." (Zech 9:13-15).

In that day the sons of Jacob shall fight victoriously against their enemies, in the preliminary work of subduing the nations, under the reign of their King. As it is written, "the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off" (Mic 5:8,9). Thus it will be, that Israel shall prosper, being victorious over their oppressors, in preparation for that time, prophesied so many years earlier, when "the sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The City of Yahweh, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel ... I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations" (Is 60:15).

ASSYRIA AND EGYPT

The Scriptures speak of a miraculous gathering of the people from Assyria and also the Land of Egypt after the pattern of their deliverance under the hand of Moses: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt ... And Yahweh shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river (i.e. the Euphrates), and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt" (Is 11:11-16). Thus it will be, as Yahweh spoke to His Prophet Micah, "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things" (Mic 7:15).

This drying up of both the Red Sea, and the River Euphrates, to provide access for the people, suggests that both Egypt, and the site of ancient Assyria, are to be rallying points for Israel to head towards, before their final journey home. Indeed, this is also suggested by other passages:

"I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon ... and he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away" (Zech 10:10,11)

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that Yahweh shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel ... and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Yahweh, in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Is 27:12,13).

This association between the ancient sites of Egypt and Assyria, both scenes of Israelitish captivity in bygone ages is most interesting, especially in consideration of the reference by Isaiah to the “highway” which is to be constructed (Is 11:16, cp 35:8, 43:19). Apparently, this speaks of a single highway, extending from Egypt, through Israel into Assyria, thus allowing access for the returning captives from both sides into their land - but also allowing free intercourse between those nations. This arrangement of things will permit ready access from east and west to the Holy Land, for the peoples who will go up to Jerusalem to worship there, and is described further in Isaiah 19: “In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be a third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom Yahweh Tzavaoth shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria, the work of mine hands, and Israel, mine inheritance” (Is 19:23-25). Both Egypt, and Assyria are here linked with Israel, by a common highway, and also become what the Lord styles “my people”, and “the work of my hands”, therefore being granted an exalted status in the Kingdom Age. Could this be because following their repentance, they are to provide a safe refuge for the returning exiles (cp Gen 12:3)?

The Scriptures also reveal that there shall be many physical blessings also, provided for the benefit of the travellers. Thus, we read of the Lord’s mercy in once again providing water in the wilderness: “when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I Yahweh will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water” (Is 41:18 cp Ex 17:6). The effects of the provision of water in the previously barren desert will be most remarkable, and will remain throughout the Kingdom Age, as a testimony of the grace of God extended to his weak and feeble sons, during their homeward journey: “The wilderness and the solitary place 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 ... strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you” (Is 35:1-4).

The provision of these mercies in the deserts, will primarily be “for them”, that is, for the benefit of the returning exiles. But once provided, we may not unreasonably suppose that as the people of the earth shall attend the Temple for worship (Zech 14:16-18), these things will remain for their benefit also, providing them with both water, and also magnificent scenes of beauty, as they come nearer to the Holy Land, witnessing to the exalted position that country shall have in the age to come. And it will form part of a most splendid approach to the Holy Temple, adding to the wonderful scene of glory the travellers will behold, and testifying to the greatness of the Power and Grace of Israel’s God.

Christopher Maddocks