

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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“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)

JOHN CHAPTER 4

“whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jno 4:14)

It is written concerning our Master that “we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). The Lord Jesus Christ then, was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and the temptations of the flesh common to us all. He bore the frailty and weakness of a human constitution, being a son of Adam as we. Yet being also the Son of the Highest, he was able to overcome that weakness, being “made strong” (Ps 80:17) to do his Father’s Will in all things. He had the strength and capacity to render perfect obedience in all his ways, turning every circumstance into an opportunity to magnify his Father in heaven. And in the chapter before us, we have an example of this: here the Master transforms a circumstance generated by his own bodily requirements, into a means of declaring salvation to a Samaritan woman. Labouring under the infirmities of the flesh, he used his own needs as a basis for preaching the word of life to one who had ears to hear.

In John Chapter 4, the Spirit records how the Master was wearied with his journey, and coming to a city of Samaria, he sat down upon a well to rest. All perfectly normal for a son of Adam, tired by the arduous journey from Judea to Galilee. He took opportunity to rest, whilst his disciples went away to buy food from the city. A woman drew near to where he was - a Samaritan woman, who came to the well to draw water. Being thirsty and the well being deep (he having nothing to draw water with, v 11), he asked the woman to give him some water and thus ease his tiredness: “Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink”. She responded with surprise, for it was most unusual for a Jew to ask favours of her, being a Samaritan: “Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (Jno 4:9).

The Samaritans were a mixed race, originating from the intermarriage of the remnant who dwelt in the land following the destruction of Israel by Hoshea, the king of Assyria (2 Kings 17:6), with foreigners brought from Babylon and elsewhere to dwell there (2 Kings 17:24). They were taught “how they should fear Yahweh” (2 Kings 17:28) by a priest who was brought back from captivity for that purpose, yet they would not depart from their idolatry: “howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt” (2 Kings 17:29). They were

therefore of mixed religion, embracing elements of the Truth, yet mingled with the ways of the heathen – very much like the general state of Christendom today. The Samaritans, not being permitted to join the work of rebuilding the Temple by Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra 4:3), instead built their own rival temple upon mount Gerizim, something which perpetuated an enmity between themselves and the Jews. There was therefore no dealings between the two nations, the Jews particularly not accepting any favours or hospitality from Samaritans. The woman was therefore justly surprised that the Master should ask water from her.

The Master however, took hold of this circumstance and turned attention away from his personal needs, and what the woman could provide for him, to what he could provide for her. He was coming to her not just as a Jew – any Jew – but as the Son of the Highest – and she was unaware of it. “Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (Jno 4:10). She was ignorant both of the identity of the traveller who conversed with her, and also the availability of “the gift of God”.

THE GIFT OF GOD

In the Old Testament, the “gift of God” is the blessing of being able to peaceably partake of food and drink obtained through one’s own labour: “I know that there is no good in them (ie the days of a man’s life - CAM) but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, *it is the gift of God*” (Eccl 3:12-13). And again: “every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; *this is the gift of God*” (Eccl 5:19). The woman of Samaria had approached with her waterpot to take up drink, and partake of the natural gift of God in so doing. She was to enjoy the blessing of that which came from her own labours, in peace. Yet the Master directed her attention to a much higher plane – the true gift of God is not merely the partaking of physical refreshment, but is to partake of the waters that the Son of the Highest can provide – not obtained by one’s own labours, but as a gift, freely granted to those who believe.

The woman evidently did not understand the higher sense of Messiah’s words, for she took him to be speaking of the literal water still. She replied, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?” The Master was indeed greater than Jacob, and his response showed that the waters of which he spoke were also greater than

those provided by Jacob's labours in digging out the well. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jno 4:11-14).

But what is this "living water" of which Messiah spoke? It is something that can perpetually quench the thirst of men, and rather than being a variable source drying up at times, it becomes a resource of nourishment within the partaker himself: "It shall be *in him* a well of water". And it is something that is able to provide everlasting life. To understand the sense of the Master's words, we need to go beyond the literal, to examine the way in which Scripture uses the language he employs in this place.

A WELL OF LIVING WATER

Upon his discourse upon the mount, the Master spoke of those who thirst being filled: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mat 5:5). Here then, is a spiritual thirsting; a thirsting after righteousness. Dwelling in a spiritually dry and barren wilderness, there is a group of men and women who find no satisfaction with the things of the world. They seek first the kingdom of Yahweh and His Righteousness (Mat 6:33), craving for that righteousness to be seen in the earth. Their meat and their drink is to partake of the Righteousness of Deity as provided in the spirit-word. This is their daily Manna, and is that which sustains them during a wilderness pilgrimage to the Kingdom of their Father. Without a constant partaking of the word, they would starve, and be as spiritually malnourished as the churches around them, which know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, for the increase of goods, and the deceitfulness of sin have led them to imagine they are blessed above all people (Rev 3:17). But beholding the reality of things, the few who follow Messiah recognise that there is nothing lasting in the present order of things, for all that is in the world shall pass away, they only remaining who are filled with the words of everlasting life (1Jno 2:16,17).

The water which the Master offers itself becomes a well within those who partake of it: "The water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life". Having received the Word of Life, a believer thus becomes equipped to impart that word to others. In other words, he becomes a source, or fountainhead of knowledge to which others can repair to learn things Divine. So the Proverb has it: "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life" (Prov 10:11). "Understanding is a well-spring of life" (Prov 16:22), and a man who has understanding is therefore a well of life himself, the words of his mouth being able to impart wisdom to those willing to receive them. There are few such wells

in these degenerate times of the Gentiles - and such as there are must be diligently sought for - but they are there, and those who are desirous to grow in understanding can do no better than to draw waters in abundance from such sources (Prov 20:5).

But the ultimate source of all such living waters is Yahweh himself. "With thee is the fountain of life" declared the Psalmist (Ps 36:9), and from Him comes that which is able to grant eternal life to those who drink richly from it. He has given richly in the form of His Son, and the fountain which springs forth from him. The undying flowing of this symbolical water is to be a feature of the Age to Come, when those who hunger and thirst for righteousness truly shall be filled:

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev 7:16,17).

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev 21:6) are the words which will be uttered by Messiah in that day, as in the kingdom age the waters of life shall be freely available for all to be nourished thereby. All shall be called upon to "draw water out of the wells of salvation" with joy and gladness (Is 12:3), as the present age of arid barrenness shall give way to the breaking of a new day of blessedness at the rising of the sun of righteousness.

This is the hope we look towards; this is the hope that was granted to the Samaritan woman who discoursed with the Master. Leaving her waterpot behind (Jno 4:28), she no longer had any regard for the natural water, but went her way into the city to pour forth the living waters to others. She became a waterpot in her own right, for receiving the waters of life from Messiah, she was equipped to testify of him to others, and so nourish them with the words of life. Many of those in the city believed in Messiah because of her testimony (v 39), and came to hear for themselves. So it was, that from a simple conversation initiated by the Master's own physical need for refreshment, a great harvest (v 35,36) was had to the glory of God, and the foundations were laid for the later preaching of the Apostles in Samaria.

Chris Maddocks

STARS IN SCRIPTURE

IN THE BEGINNING

The stars feature prominently in Scripture, in both a literal and symbolic sense. Consider the first verse of Genesis chapter 1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (note the order - heaven then earth). In verse 14 we are told of the purpose of the arrangement of the heavens: "... lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night ... let them be for signs, and for seasons, and days, and years." The lights spoken of are the sun, moon and the stars (v 16).

The Hebrew word "made" (v 16) is *asah* meaning "assemble". It is different from the word "created" (Hebrew *barah* meaning an instantaneous act of production) used in verse 1. This suggests that the heavenly bodies were already in existence at the time of the six days of creation and were assembled by God to sustain the earth and fit in with His wonderful plan for our well-being.

The moon is the only natural satellite of the earth; but it has puzzled some scientists as to why it is so different from the earth. It is virtually without an atmosphere, lacks an appreciable global magnetic field, is different in composition, appears to be very old and is not believed to have been originally part of the earth. Further; the four planets nearest the sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars

contain elements that are different from those found in the sun. This would suggest that the sun is an unlikely source-material for the rest of the solar system. God's word is simple, yet profound. The sun, moon and stars already existed, and God took them and set them on their courses in order that we might recognise signs, know the seasons and be sustained night and day. Note that this work was done on the fourth day in order that the plant cycles established on day 3 would not perish due to perpetual darkness or light, or grow in a manner in which the Creator would be unable to declare of what He saw that "it was good" (eg vs 12, 18).

Scripture encourages us to look for spiritual lessons in the arrangement of the heavens: "The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory" (Ps 97:6). Jacob understood this, and interpreted Joseph's dream (Gen 37) in terms of the hierarchy of the family:

Sun - father (Jacob)

Moon - mother (Rachel, already dead)

Stars - Israel (Joseph's brethren)

Consider the spiritual lessons signified in the heavens in Psalm 19:

Verse 1: "the heavens declare the glory of God"

"the firmament (expanse, Young) sheweth his handiwork".

Verse 2: “Day unto day uttereth radiation effects of the sun by the speech” atmosphere that shrouds the earth.

“Night unto night sheweth There are clear parallels with our knowledge”. Heavenly Father; God is the sustainer of all life: “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he uphold from them that walk uprightly.” (Ps 84:11)

Verse 5: “... the sun, which is a bridegroom coming out of his chamber”. “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Tim 6:16); “There shall no man see me (God), and live” (Ex 33:20) Mankind without God is in darkness and without hope (Mat 22:13).

The earth travels at a mean speed of 66.6 thousand miles per hour on its 7000 million mile orbit (significant numbers?) of the sun and returns each year to a given point, always on time. When we look at the heavens on a cloudless night, we cannot but marvel at God’s handiwork– its boundlessness and our insignificance (Ps 8:1-4, “what is man, that thou art mindful of him ...?”)

THE MOON

THE SUN

The cycle of a day from sunrise to sunset speaks to us of the power of God. The brilliance and penetrating heat of the sun is likened to “a bridegroom coming out of his chamber” and to the rejoicing of “a strong man to run a race” (Ps 19:5,6).

The sun is at the centre of our solar system; it is the sustainer of all life. The temperature of the surface of the sun is about 6000 degrees K, and the energy is generated by thermonuclear processes: we cannot therefore approach it. Without it we would be in total darkness and perish; if we try to look at it, we will be blinded. God, in his infinite wisdom and care for mortal man, has protected the earth from harmful

God has provided one natural satellite for the earth. The moon completes a cycle of phases from one new moon to the next in approximately 29.5 days. The moon is a night light that reflects the sun’s rays on the darkened surface of the earth, and is a controller of the ocean tides.

The moon was intended by God to be a “lesser light” to rule by night to facilitate the measurement of time. The phases of the moon (new, crescent, half, gibbous and full) followed by the same sequence in reverse order, gave the Jews a lunar month. The psalmist tells us that “he appointed the moon for seasons” (Ps 104:19). This marking of time was important, since it was essential to know when the “beginning of months” (Num 10:10) was. It was a time for blowing of trumpets, offering of burnt offerings and peace

offerings, and for marking the time of Passover (Ex 12:2). which declare the glory of God (Ps 19:1).

David was aware of the cycle of moon phases: "Tomorrow is the new moon" (1Sam 20:5) when he was required to eat with the king.

The moon provides us with a God-given time calculator. Paul applies this knowledge to the time of the Lord's coming: "of the time and seasons, brethren, ye have not need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1Thess 5:1-2). His statement was not intended to indicate that believers could predict the time when the Lord will return (see Acts 1:6-7), but that they should be able to read the signs of the times (Mat 16:3) when people say "peace and safety" (1Thess 5:3,4). God has not revealed the actual date, but rather the circumstances that will prevail when our Lord returns.

PLANETS

The essential difference between stars and planets is that stars emit light. The stars are vast distances away from the earth, and therefore appear to be 'fixed', as far as a man can observe in a human life-span. Planets do not give light, but merely reflect it, and follow a regular orbit around the sun. There are spiritual lessons for us in the way Scripture uses these terms. The faithful are at present like the planets, reflecting the glory of God (Mat 5:16). But when given eternal life, they will be as stars giving light which will contribute to the spiritual heavens

THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC

The Zodiac is a band of twelve constellations through which the sun passes each year. It has been suggested that these constellations and their signs were invented by the Babylonians before 2000 BC. Israel were commanded not to worship any graven image, male, female, beast, fowl, creeping thing or any fish. They were also forbidden to worship the sun, moon or stars (Deut 4:15-19). The signs of the Zodiac combine the worship. Men have taken creatures (i.e. crab, bull, fish, goat, lion, ram, scorpion), some mythological (e.g. Sagittarius), and identified them with groups of stars - such is the perversity of human nature.

The Zodiac signs are linked with Chaldean mythology and date back to the time of Nimrod. They are part of idolatrous worship and were, perhaps, worshipped by Israel (2 Kings 17:16) and by Judah (2 Kings 21:3). Manasseh worshipped the sun, moon and planets (see AV margin - 12 signs or constellations, 2 Kings 23:5) and all the host of heaven. Stephen speaks of Israel (Acts 7:43) worshipping the star of Remphan (an Egyptian deity) which corresponds to Chiun (Amos 5:26) - which is the planet Saturn.

METEORS

The word used for star (Greek *aster*) also means 'luminous meteor'.

Meteors, also known as shooting stars or falling stars, are the result of interplanetary dust from comets entering the earth's atmosphere at high speed. The heat generated due to friction with the atmosphere causes the material to be dissipated as a bright light, usually lasting only for a fraction of a second before it disappears for ever.

Jude 13 speaks of the unfaithful in the ecclesia as "wandering stars", or wandering luminous meteors whose course is inexact - "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever". The faithless have not permanence or stability; they come on the scene suddenly and are removed just as quickly. Meteor-type language is also used of the political systems of the world (Mark 13:25; Rev 6:13) and of the tribulations of the western (Rev 8:10) and eastern (Rev 9:1) portions of the Roman empire.

At certain times of year, the earth encounters swarms of cometary dust which gives rise to meteor showers. At 33 year intervals there can be extraordinary displays with thousands of meteors per hour for short periods. Jesus' words may have a literal as well as a symbolic fulfilment at his return: "The stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Mat 24:29).

STARS

The use of the term "stars" is important in Scripture. It is used frequently to symbolise Israel, ruling

powers, and the faithful. God said to Abraham, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Gen 15:5). The stars are a nightly reminder to us of the reality of the promises that God made to Abraham and to us, who are "heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29). Deborah, like Jacob recognised the stars as a symbol of Israel, in her song of praise to God of the downfall of their enemies: "They (Israel) fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Jud 5:20). Edom also will be cut down because they set their nest among the stars (Ob 4). Similarly, Nineveh was cut down, because she "multiplied (her) merchants above the stars of heaven" (Nah 3:16).

The leaders of the seven ecclesias in the book of Revelation are seen as stars to whom Jesus addresses warning. Like stars, they were expected to give light and therefore guidance (Rev 1:20). We have received the light of the gospel and this brings responsibility (Rev 2:1-2).

To those who walk faithfully and preach to others, the stars are a symbol of their future exultation: the "wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan 12:3,4). To the spiritually-minded man the star-spangled heavens speak therefore of resurrection to life everlasting and the occupation of an exalted place for eternity in the Kingdom of God

with the faithful of all ages.

There will be differences at the resurrection as to the level of authority given in the Kingdom: “one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:41,42). There is a difference in the strength of the light from the stars, and Jesus’ parable of the pounds reminds us of the spiritual lesson to be drawn from the observation of the literal heavens: “Because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities, and to another he said, “Be thou also over five cities” (Luke 19:17,19).

God knows how many stars there are in the heavens and has named them all (Ps 147:4), in contrast to thing on the earth which he invited Adam to name (Gen 2:19,20). God,

when speaking to Job out of the whirlwind, used the names of some of the constellations, Pleiades, Orion (hunter), Arcturus (bear) and Mazzaroth (twelve signs) (Job 38:31,32). It appears that some names given by God were known to man in early times (Job 9:9). The names of the stars are not lost; God knows them all by name, just as the names of the faithful are recorded in his eternal memory (Mal 3:16). The Psalmist tells us that God gave a name to each star; the spiritual type is seen in the promise to the faithful that each will be given a name by God in the kingdom age (Rev 2:17) and elevated as the stars in brightness for ever (Dan 12:3).

Peter Moore

(To be continued)

TRIAL IS THE ORDER OF THE HOUSE OF GOD

*The heart enlightened in the principles
on which God deals with all whom He chooses,
instead of growing weary under trials, will, like Paul and his brother James,
“count it all joy” to be thus put to the test.*

*Trial is the order of the house of God; and in our day,
when the sword is taken out of the hand of the magistrate, it is necessary,
if we are to belong to this house, that we be put on a par with our brethren of
past ages, by having trials in a form adapted to our time of freedom and
privilege. A right view of the case will make us welcome these when they come.*

Paul said, in view of the meaning of his sufferings:

*“I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities,
in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake.”*

*A spiritual view of our affairs will lead us to entertain a similar sentiment
with regard to those things we may be called on to endure
through our identification with and our service of the one faith.*

*They are far from agreeable: if they were agreeable,
they would not answer their purpose, which is,
that by the mental exercise induced,
we may become partakers of the Father’s holiness.*

Robert Roberts (1874)

THE BASF—IT'S IMPORTANCE AND TEACHING

XXIII.- "That the governing body of the kingdom so established will be the brethren of Christ, of all generations, developed by resurrection and change, and constituting, with Christ as their head, the collective "seed of Abraham", in whom all nations will be blessed, and comprising "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets", and all in their age of like faithfulness.— Dan 12:3; Luke 13:28; Rev 11:18; 1Thess 4:15-17; Jno 5:28, 29; 6:39,40; Luke 14:14; Mat 25:34, 46."

When Messiah returns in power and great glory to restore the kingdom to Israel, and reign over all the earth from the holy hill of Zion, he will not exercise dominion alone. The Scriptures reveal that his immortalised brethren shall reign with him in glory, subduing all the earth to the righteous precepts of the Most High. In that Age, the Lamb shall be known as "Lord of Lords, and King of Kings" (Rev 17:14, 19:16); titles which imply other Lords and other Kings over which he is chief. These are his brethren, immortalised and glorified, who sing praises unto the One who redeemed them with his shed blood: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth*" (Rev 5:10).

These are they who have overcome, to whom it will be granted to sit with Christ in his throne, even as he overcame and is set down with his Father in His throne (3:21) - in other words, to share the restored Davidic seat of power with him. Comprising "the meek", during the days of their mortal weakness, this multitude shall "inherit the earth" (*Mat 5:5, Rom 4:13*) with their Lord, and exercise dominion thereupon with him, as it is written; "a king shall reign in righteousness, and *princes shall rule in judgement*" (*Is 32:1 - see also 1:25*).

THE 12 THRONES OVER ISRAEL

As an innumerable number of "kings and priests" requires a similarly innumerable number of nations over which they might rule, if one "king" reigns over one nation, it is evident that this will not be the Divine order. Rather, there will be a hierarchical organisation of their dominion. The 12 apostles (with the exception of Judas, being replaced by Matthias, (Acts 1:26)), it is revealed, shall have a most exalted position, each reigning over a tribe of Israel's sons: "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, *ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Mat 19:28). These twelve then, shall execute the

office of Divine Judges over each tribal canton, acting immediately under the authority of the Lord Jesus. The Psalmist likewise spoke of their thrones, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: *whither the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh*, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of Yahweh. For there are set *thrones of judgement*, the thrones of the house of David" (Ps 122:3-5). Thus it will be, that arrangements will be made within Jerusalem itself for Israelites to appear before their respective judge, according to the tribe of their origin, and receive justice at the hands of one of the Lord's apostles.

But under these 12, there will also be other judges, entrusted with the role of instructing the people the ways of God. Speaking of the priests in Jerusalem, the Lord informed Ezekiel: "they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgement; and they shall judge it according to my judgements ..." (Ezek 44:23,24). That these priestly judges are the immortal saints is made clear in the words of Paul to the Corinthian ecclesia, in his rebuke for their failings to judge righteously in their mortal days: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that *the saints shall judge the world*? And if the world be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor 6:1,2). So it is that the saints shall also be involved with the dispensing of justice in the Millennial Age, something which we must prepare for now, in our relations to each other.

JUSTICE DISPENSED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

But notice, the apostle declared that the saints will be involved with the dispensing of justice for "*the world*", not just in Israel. Thus, we may suppose that just as in Israel, there will be thrones placed for judgement and teaching, this same pattern will be replicated in centres throughout the earth, with immortal saints (subject to the Lord and his apostles), judging other nations.

A possible indication of how these judges might be appointed; both in the nations and Israel, under the exalted 12, is in the Lord's parable of the pounds. When considering the responses of those to whom he had given varying amounts, he speaks of the blessing conferred on the fruitful: "Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, *have thou authority over ten cities*. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, be thou also *over five cities*" (Luke 19:16-19). Immortal saints then, will be appointed to dispense justice over varying numbers of cities, comparable to

their degree of fruitfulness in the days of their probation, quite possibly with the saints over 5 cities, being subject to those over 10 cities, and so on. Indeed, after the pattern of previous ages, there does appear to be grounds for the suggestion that above these city judges, there will be other saints appointed over each nation, to oversee national affairs, (see for example Ex 18:13-26, Num 11:16,17 and compare Deut 32:8, Gen 10).

The quality of judgement thus dispensed shall be of the highest standard - infallible, for the Great King “shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But *with righteousness* shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Is 11:3,4), and those who reign with him, “shall be like him” (1Jno 3:2). In contrast to previous times, when the poor and needy, the widows and fatherless (those who lacked both the resources, and the guidance of father or husband to instruct them), were dealt with hardly, suffering oppression and injustice at the hands of wicked rulers who favoured the wealthy, their cause shall be determined righteously. Indeed, their King is himself One who “became poor” (2 Cor 8:9), that through his poverty, and unjust execution at the hands of the wicked, we might be made rich. “He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight” (Ps 72:12-14).

Again, the Psalmist speaks of those future days, when Yahweh will be king in the earth; “Yahweh is king for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. Yahweh, thou has heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed*, that the man of the earth may no more oppress” (Ps 10:16-18).

WILL THERE BE PERSONAL TUTORS?

But in order to keep the statutes and ways of the Israel’s God, peoples will need to be *taught* those ways, and that task could either be another role of the divine judges, or there may be other saints appointed to do this. Most probably, it will be the work of other saints, or even both, as this appears to be suggested by Isaiah. In speaking of the teachers of Israel, the Lord promised: “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind (*Heb. “after”*) thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Is 30:20,21). And although this passage primarily speaks of Israel, we might reasonably

suppose that these arrangements will be replicated throughout the Kingdom, that all nations might be so taught. The picture presented here, is suggestive that each mortal will have an immortal tutor to watch over his/her affairs, in a way not totally dissimilar to the role of the Angels in the life of a believer today. But of course, the difference is this, the mortals in the Age to Come shall see their tutors, and hear their words of instruction. And if, despite having been instructed of the right Way, due to the inherent propensity of human nature to seek out other ways, (cp. Eccl 7:29) they begin to turn aside, their teachers shall be watching over their affairs, and will be at hand to give further guidance along the way. Possibly not by a voice suddenly booming at them out of nowhere, at the moment in which a mortal is about to commit a sin, as some suppose - this would surely bring about a life of terror for them, being afraid to do anything, lest they hear “the voice” of rebuke! Rather, when a mortal’s walk in life is beginning to take a new direction, beginning to move away from the Divine Will, and back to their old ways, their tutors will call “after” them, to come back, and receive further counsel and instruction, that they might be corrected, and that their walk might be guided back onto the right path once more. The Psalmist spoke of such guidance: “Good and upright is Yahweh: therefore will he teach sinners *in the way*. The meek will he *guide in judgement*: and the meek will he *teach his way*” (Ps 25:8,9).

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

The BASF makes a most interesting use of one of the promises made to Abraham, saying that the immortal saints will be, “with Christ as their head, the collective ‘seed of Abraham’, in whom all nations will be blessed ...”. The allusion is to Genesis chapter 22:

“... thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ...*” (Gen 22:17,18).

Here, the “seed” can be readily seen to be the Master, Jesus Christ, for Paul declares, citing another of the promises, “... ‘and to thy seed’, *which is Christ*.” However, the BASF applies this promise not to Christ alone, but to the multitudinous body of which he is head (Col 1:18).

The saints become part of the Seed of Abraham through faith and baptism: “for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ... and if ye be Christ’s, *then are ye Abraham’s seed*, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal 3:27-29). All nations are to be blessed in Abraham’s seed - all nations therefore are to be blessed in the Master, Jesus Christ and his brethren who are collectively that seed.

This is a most exhilarating prospect to consider. It is in us, if we be baptised into Christ, that all nations are to be blessed. It will be through us, under the auspices of Christ himself, that the world will be subdued to the dictates of the Almighty, and ruled according to his precepts. We are, if we remain faithful, the future world rulers. We shall live and reign with the Son of the Almighty over all of the earth. How then, do we conduct ourselves in the present dispensation? Do we walk soberly, recognising the high calling to which we have been called? Do we maintain a separation from the sinful kingdoms of men, pledging our allegiance solely to the King and Kingdom to come? We can only answer these questions individually, but one thing is certain; there is a glorious future in store for those who “seek first” the Kingdom of God in this dispensation.

Chris Maddocks

(To be continued)

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

“He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth: and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers” (Jno 10:1-5).

“This parable,” we are told, “Jesus Sheep-culture was a prominent spake unto them, but they occupation in the country as it is to understood not what things they this day. It differed from modern were which he spake unto them.” sheep-raising as regards the Presently, however, he explained, domestic relations subsisting and anyone may understand who is between the shepherd and the capable of the necessary attention sheep. The sheep were provided and discrimination. The with substantially-made folds, into explanation shows that Christ which they were driven at night for himself is the import of more than safety from the wolves and other one feature of the parable. The dangers. The fold had a solid sheep occupy a secondary place. entrance at which the porter waited, ready to deny entrance to those

The parable itself was a literal truth who were not entitled to it. The apart from any spiritual application. sheep-stealer did not present

himself at the door, but clambered over some unprotected part of the wall. The lawful owner had not object in using any but the proper entrance. The owner also knew his own sheep as no western sheep-farmer knows his; and so intimate were the relations between them that they knew his voice and went after him when he called them to go forth upon the hill-side for pasture—not driving, but leading them. To the voice of a stranger they could not be made obedient. They scampered off at the unaccustomed tones.

These are facts in which Jesus asks us to recognise a figure of himself and his people. It is profitable to trace the correspondence and its nature. The thing signified is, of course, much higher than the figure; but there is an analogy which helps the understanding of the matter. There is a variety of points, but all are beautiful and instructive. There is a shepherd, the fold, the door, the porter, the sheep, the wolf, the hireling shepherd, the shepherds voice, the listening flock, the shepherd's death in defence of the sheep.

THE SHEPHERD

“I,” says Jesus, “am the good shepherd.” Here is the key of the parable. How simple, yet how much there is in it. For who is the “I”? “Who art thou, Lord?” “I am Jesus of Nazareth.” But who is he? The Son of Mary (and therefore of Joseph, David, Abraham, Adam), but which is of much more consequence (for there were plenty

of that sort of no benefit to themselves or their kind) - Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God—begotten of the Holy Spirit, and therefore one with the Eternal Father, who sent him forth to be “righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption” to all who should receive him.

The Good Shepherd is God manifest in the flesh. It was not the first time that character had been so associated. It had been written (Is 40:10), “Behold the Lord God (*Yahweh Elohim*) will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him ... He shall feed his flock *like a shepherd, etc.*” The Creator in Shepherd-manifestation by the Spirit; this is the glorious idea before us in the parable put forth by the Son of David, in the hearing of an undiscerning audience in the Temple. Here are power and kindness in combination. You may have power without kindness, and kindness without power: and either or both without wisdom. But when “the Creator of the ends of the earth” steps into the arena, we have all in combination. The wonderful phenomenon presented to view is of a kind, strong, wise, unerring, SHEPHERD-MAN, in whom the Father dwells.

THE SHEEPFOLD

The place where the sheep are collected and defended—principally required at night. Paul says: “The night is far spent: the day is at hand.” We are at no loss to recognise the night. It is now, while

darkness prevails over all the earth in consequence of the hiding of the face of God (the glorious sun of the universe). During such a time, a fold for the sheep is necessary. If none had been provided, the sheep must have remained scattered and exposed to depredation and death.

Literally speaking, if God had made no arrangement for the spiritual development and nurture of men and women, barbarism must have prevailed for ever, as in the dark places of the African earth at the present day. The provision of sons and daughters must have remained an impossibility. But He has not left the earth in so hapless a state, His purpose being to fill the earth with His glory, in the sense of ultimately populating it with a race which should ascribe to Him the glory of His own works. He arranged for their development in the due measure required by that purpose at various times. This arrangement, taking different forms at different times, according as His wisdom saw it, took, in the days of Christ, the form of creating a community—founding a church or ecclesia—establishing a fold. This community by another figure is considered as a house or temple—“Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” By another figure, it is spoken of as a body of which Christ is the head. “There is one body,” says Paul, “composed of many members.”

We are unfavourably placed in this 19th Century for judging of the

character and the beauty of this institution, and its adaptation to realise the object of its appointment. We are living at the end of a disastrous history. As the Israelitish nation departed from divine ways after the death of Joshua, and the elders who overlived Joshua, so the community founded by the apostles changed, when the apostles and their co-labourers had passed away, from being the “House of God, the pillar and ground of the truth” into “the synagogue of Satan,” whose constituents “turned away their ears from the truth, and turned unto fables,” as Paul had foretold (Acts 20:30; 2Tim 4:4). Ecclesiastical history is a history of the corruptions and bickerings that ensued upon this change—the effect of which has been to blight and destroy instead of conserving and invigorating the work of the gospel. What was once the fold for the sheep has become a well-fortified enclosure of fat wolves and other noxious creatures, from whose association the sheep of the flock have fled in panic long ago.

Whether we look at the Church of Rom, or the Church of England, or other kindred communions, we see systems which suffocate, suppress, and destroy the truth, instead of nourishing and cherishing it. We see a different spectacle from what was presented to view in the first century, when the friends of Christ were organised into loving and enlightened communities, under the fostering care and guidance of shepherdly men, “feeding the flock

of God, over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers” (Acts 20:28). It is a day of devastation and duntreading for divine affairs, both in the national fold and the individual fold.

It would be a beautiful and a glorious thing if God were to permit a clearing out and renovation and revival of the fold in which real and healthy sheep might multiply and dwell in safety. The prophetic word does not justify any hope of this sort, till the Great Shepherd of the sheep himself arrive, for, to the last, it speaks of darkness prevailing till the coming of Christ, and the prosperous ascendancy of antediluvian indifference till the very hour of his manifestation. The most to be done with present agency is for believers, in the spirit of loving co-operation, to approximate, as nearly as they can, to the primitive assemblies, doing all things decently and in order, and all things for the edification of all, in the spirit of mutual and affectionate submission in the fear of the Lord.

By this co-operation, the one fold in little sections may be planted here and there, in which a little may be done in this evil day for the keeping alive of the testimony in the earth, and the development and preservation of a people controlled by the knowledge, love, and obedience of the Truth. All such, in all time are in the one fold in the highest sense; they are constituents of the one community that God is forming for Himself out of the mixed material of the passing generations,

and every one of them will, at the appointed time, be gathered from the accomplished ages of probation, and set in his appointed place in the happy day when “there shall be one fold and one shepherd”.

THE DOOR

Jesus says, “I am the door.” This is one of those graphic figures that carry their meaning home at a stroke. By Christ only can we enter the sheepfold. He immediately adds a comment to this effect: “By me, if any man enter in, *he shall be saved.*” This is enough. Men who work apart from Christ work without hope; that is, any hope they indulge must prove illusory. They are straying on the inhospitable mountains of sin-caused evil and death. Remaining there, they must perish. There is a fold in the mountains, entering which there is safety. The door of this fold is Christ; and how we enter in was expounded by the apostles. It was their work to do so. The mode is too simple for most men. It was defined by Christ himself in the memorable words about the Gospel which he addressed to the apostles before he sent them forth: “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

What this double process of faith and baptism does for the believer is stated by Paul, in terms which can only be read with one meaning: “as many of you as have been *baptised into* Christ have *put on* Christ” (Gal 3:27). When a man believes the Gospel apostolically delivered, and submits to the baptism apostolically

enjoined, he enters in by the door of the sheepfold. He enters by Christ, than whom there is no other entrance—a negative fact of the first importance to recognise. Men who think there are other doors are liable to neglect him. There are many such now-a-days. Almost all men nourish the idea that a fairly moral life will secure salvation (if there is any, of which many are in doubt). In this, they hold the views of “natural philosophy” which Paul, in his day, declared to be a foolish and a spoiling, because an untrue thing (1 Cor 3:18-19; Col 2:8). The foolishness of the world’s wisdom has not become the wisdom of God with the progress of time. “The simplicity that is in Christ” remains the Truth, though unfashionable now as ever. Christ is the door, and “by him,” and by him alone, “if any man enter in, he shall be saved.”

THE PORTER

“To him (the shepherd of the sheep) the porter openeth,” says Jesus. If we are justified in giving a specific application to this, we might fix on Moses as the porter in the first degree, and John the Baptist in the second degree. Both acted in the porter capacity to Christ. As regards Moses, this may not be apparent on the first suggestion but it will be found to be true. First, Jesus says, “He (Moses) wrote of me.” Paul says, “Moses was faithful in all his house *as a servant*, FOR A TESTIMONY of those things which were to be spoken after, but Christ *as a son over his own house*, whose house are we” (Heb 3:5). And again,

“The law was our schoolmaster *unto Christ*” (Gal 3:24). Again, “To him gave all the prophets witness” (Acts 10:43); and again, “Christ is *the end of the law* for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom 10:4).

Thus Moses, in whom the Jewish leaders made their boast—the great pioneer of the (shortly-to-be-finished) work of God with Israel, was the great opener of the way for Christ, whom they rejected. Moses expressly told Israel (Deut 18:18) that God would raise them up such an one to whom they would listen (which they had not done to Moses); and in all the laws and institutions delivered by his hand there was a shadowing of the glorious realities connected with this greater “prophet like unto Moses.”

In the case of John the Baptist, the analogy to the porter is still more obvious. He stood at the very threshold of the work of Christ, calling direct attention to him, and introducing him to all Israel who feared God. He was sent to “prepare his way.” “He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light” (Jno 1:8), and, having done his work, he announced: “He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease.” He declared to them: “There standeth one among you whom ye know not. He it is that coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose;—that he might be made manifest to Israel, therefore I am come baptising with water.” John’s work attracted great attention and exercised a powerful influence with the whole

nation, as we saw in the chapter (15:14). “Not everyone that saith devoted to the consideration of that matter. To him Jesus appealed in confirmation of his own claims as the good shepherd. “Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness to the truth ... He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John; the works that my Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.” (Jno 5:33-36). To Jesus, the good shepherd, the porter-ministry of John the Baptist (which was known to the hearers of Christ’s discourse), opened the door of the sheepfold, in which they might have recognised an incontestable evidence of his claims.

THE SHEEP

Who they are, Jesus makes plain: “My sheep *hear my voice*: and I know them, and *they follow me*” (Jno 10:27). Here is there characteristic wherever found: men who submit to the word of Christ and do what he commands. This is a more cordial and distinct type of discipleship than is common among the multitude who recognise the lordship of Christ in the abstract. It is the only type of discipleship acceptable with him, and the type acceptable with him is the only type of ultimate value. He spoke very plainly on this subject more than once: “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (Jno 14:21). “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded

unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that *doeth the will of my Father* which is in heaven” (Mat 7:21). The apostles spoke with equal plainness. Thus, Paul: “IF any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom 8:9). Thus John: “HE that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked” (Jno 2:6). Thus Peter: “If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning” (2 Pet 2:20).

The men who submit to the word of Christ and obey his commandments are most aptly represented by sheep. The sheep is a strong but harmless animal, from which no living thing suffers injury. There could be no more powerful exhortation than the employment of such an animal to figure the disciples of Christ. He is himself *the Lamb of God*, and those who follow him are like him in the strength of their spiritual attachments and the guilelessness and inoffensiveness of their characters.

THE WOLF

The nature of this animal is well-known. He will stop at nothing in the gratification of his hunger, provided he runs no risk. He attacks the weak and shies at the strong. In contrast to the sheep, he represents the rapacious character which is common in the world—headstrong,

unscrupulous, merciless men who will sacrifice everything but their own skins in the accomplishment of personal ends. They prefer the weak for their prey. Therefore, the sheep are their especial victims, because the true sheep are not given to fighting. *“The wolf catcheth the sheep and scattereth them.”*

The wolf may be taken to represent any danger that arises to the sheep, but more particularly the one danger with which the name of the wolf is particularly associated in the sayings of Christ and the apostles—the spiritual wolf. This wolf is given to disguises. If he came in his open character, the sheep would flee. So he puts on the fleece. He professes to be a true and humble sheep, and above all, a tending sheep, a bell-wether, a kind of shepherd sheep.

These are false teachers, clever men of shallow intellect and no conviction, who live by their wits in the religious realm. They have always been a numerous tribe, as at this day. Jesus foresaw their activity, and forewarned his disciples. “Beware of false prophets. They come to you in *sheep’s clothing*, but inwardly they are RAVENING WOLVES. Ye shall know them by their fruits.” Paul also foretold their advent and success when the restraint of his presence should be removed:- “I know this, that after my departing shall GRIEVOUS WOLVES enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Even of *your own selves* shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts

20:29,30). Elsewhere, he speaks of them as “evil men and seducers,” who should “wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2Tim 3:13). By their ravages, the sheepfold of the apostolic age became emptied and desolate soon after the apostle’s death. The fleece-clothed wolves “caught the sheep and scattered them,” because of the officialism of:

THE HIRELING

The apostles were not hirelings, nor were the men who came immediately after them. They were men in earnest love with the work for Christ’s sake, at the peril not only of their living, but of their lives, serving in the spirit enjoined by Peter, who said to them, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:2).

A hireling is a man who is paid for his job, and who works because he is paid, and ceases to work when he is not paid. This class of worker has been numerous developed by the clerical system. Paid work in spiritual things is liable to become poor work and mercenary. Paul, who had a right to be maintained, refused on this ground, “lest the gospel of Christ should be hindered” (1 Cor 9:12). He did not refuse occasional help, prompted by love and the appreciation of his labours (Phil 4:10, 17), but he declined a set maintenance, as all

wise men have done since his day.

The hirelings have no objection to a set maintenance. On the contrary, it is what they most particularly appreciate and aim to secure. The consequence is seen in what Jesus says happens in times of peril: "The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep." When he sees the wolf coming in the shape of any danger, "he leaveth the sheep and fleeth." How little he cares for the interests he professes to have in charge becomes apparent when he cannot turn them to his personal advantage. To be out of pocket or put up with disgrace is quite out of the line of which he feels himself called upon to submit to. This is quite beyond his calculations of prudence. The least smell of danger in this shape makes him look round for a decent pretext to get away. In complete contrast to this is

THE SHEPHERD WHO LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP

This primarily refers to Christ himself, who offered himself a sacrifice of "sweet smelling savour" to Him who required this declaration of his righteousness, "that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom 3). But it is true of all shepherd-men who have received the truth in the love of it, and estimate the work of Christ as their sweetest occupation and their highest honour. There is a "chief shepherd" (1Pet 6:4), viz., "that great shepherd of the sheep," our Lord Jesus, who was "brought again from the dead through the blood of the

everlasting covenant" (Heb 13:20). This implies under-shepherds, namely the apostles and all who enter into their work in the line of things indicated to Timothy in the words of Paul: "The things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, *the same commit thou to FAITHFUL MEN*, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). Men of this qualification are the true successors of the apostles, and they have been found wherever faithful men of ability have received and espoused the faith of Christ with the ardent appreciation and disinterested aims of the apostles. They require no hireling to look after the sheep, and when the wolf of danger in any shape presents itself, they sally forth with clubs to beat off the beast at the peril of their lives.

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE AND THE LISTENING FLOCK

"The sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

These are the natural facts in the case. The spiritual meaning is plain. The shepherd's voice is what Christ has said for the guidance of men, but with this is bound up much more than the precepts that actually come out of his own mouth. What he said himself is only part of the message of God to man. For the rest of the message, he refers us to Moses and

the prophets: "Think not," said he, "that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (Mat 5:17). "They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:29). "If ye believe not his writings (the writings of Moses), how shall ye believe my words?" (Jno 5:47). "The Scripture cannot be broken" (Jno 10:35). "The Scripture must be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49).

Such are a few illustrations of the way in which, in so many words, he binds up the message of God in the "Old Testament" with his own personal word in the New. In addition to these, the instances in which he does so by implication, and in which such an association results of necessity from his teaching and his work are more numerous and weighty than the casual reader of the Bible can be aware. The conclusion resulting from them all is that the Shepherd's voice is co-extensive with the Bible.

The Shepherd's voice is *the voice of the Spirit*, as especially manifest from the pendant to each of the messages sent by Jesus to the seven ecclesias: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what *the Spirit saith* unto the ecclesias:" concerning all of which messages, he says, "*I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches*" (Rev 22:16).

Because, therefore, the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets are given by

inspiration of God - because their authors were "holy men who spoke (and wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," and not as impelled by human will (2Pet 1:21), those only truly listen to the voice of the shepherd who listen to those Scriptures, as interpreted and applied by the Spirit in Jesus and the apostles. The voice of Jesus is not a different voice from the Holy Scriptures which were read in the Jewish synagogues every Sabbath day in the days of Jesus, and now placed in the Providence of God in the hands of Christendom.

The voice of the personal Jesus is but a supplementary and explanatory expression of the same Eternal mind. The Old Testament Scriptures, in conjunction with the Apostolic testimony to Jesus as their fulfiller, were able to "make men wise unto salvation" in the days of Paul (2 Tim 3:15); and they are still able to work that great result for men if they will allow them. God not only spake by Jesus, but the prophets also, as Paul says: "God, who at sundry times and divers manners, *spake in time past unto the fathers BY THE PROPHETS, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son*" (Heb 1:1). So also Jesus teaches in the parable of the vineyard - the proprietor of which sent first various messengers, and then his son.

Now, the voice of the shepherd being of this amplitude, we have to note how the fact bears on the claims of many in our own day who are regarded as his sheep. If that which constitutes and distinguishes men as

the sheep of Christ's parable is the hearing of the shepherd's voice, and if that voice be the voice of God in the entire Scriptures of Moses, the prophets and the apostles, where do myriads stand, professing his name, who not only neglect making the acquaintance of these Scriptures, but who actually, in an increasing multitude of cases, discard them as the obsolete and infantile conceptions of a past age?

They are manifestly not even hearers of the Word, let alone doers. They do not recognise the voice of the Shepherd, and therefore follow him not. The sheep are to be found among those who are enlightened in this matter—who discern the voice of the Shepherd in the "whatsoever things" that have been written aforetime for our learning—who "hear what the Spirit saith," whether through Jesus, or the apostles, or the prophets. Such are strongly characterised by that other sensibility of which Jesus speaks, when he says he sheep "know not the voice of a stranger." "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him." A knowledge of the Scriptures, in the understanding thereof, gives them a quick sense of the alien element. They quickly detect what is foreign to the mind of God.

Philosophy in all its branches comes under their reprobation, where it claims to guide in divine matters. They see with clear eye that Paul

uttered not empty flourish when he spoke of philosophy as a spoiling thing, of which believers had to beware. They can exactly tell why. They den define the limits of philosophy in relation to religious truth, and demonstrate the radical distinctness of the two realms of thought.

They know the whereabouts of the natural thinker, while the natural thinker cannot place the sheep, except by a blundering hazard, which attributes their conceptions to mental peculiarity bordering on aberration. Paul expresses the fact well when he says, "He that is spiritual judgeth (discerneth) all men, but he himself is judged (discerned) of no man." The eyesight of the spiritual man not only covers the ground occupied by the natural man but extends much further, like the visual range of the man at a higher altitude than his fellows, *e.g.*, a mountain observatory overlooking a plain. They know enough to know that Christ is the only guide for man in relation to the things of God and futurity. Therefore they hear his voice and follow him, while they flee very determinedly from any man or system who poses as a substitute, or rival, or equal. These things are discerned by all who truly know Christ. They know his voice, and they know all counterfeits.

Robert Roberts, (1897)

***Study is a restraint,
compelling us, if we would learn anything,
to concentrate the forces of thought and to bridle the caprice of fancy***

The Herald (1851)

BELIEF AND SALVATION

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat 7:13,14).

According to the Master Jesus Christ, there are two ways, which are accessed by two gates. One way is a broad way which is traversed by many who enter in at a wide gate. This way has enough space to accommodate the multitudes who find it - yet it is a way that leads to destruction. The “many” who walk along it, doubtless do not know where it leads, for if they did, they would turn aside out of it. They go forward blindly, not knowing any other way, for the alternative route is found only by a few. The alternative is a narrow way - and being narrow by design, it will accommodate only a “few”. The entrance to this way has to be sought for, and the way is traversed by a minority who have forsaken the broad streets of iniquity to walk along the paths of wisdom. This way, though narrow, is the only way that leads to everlasting life. The travellers know exactly where it leads, and it is the knowledge of this that gives them encouragement and comfort when the going gets tough, and obstacles present themselves. In such circumstances, the faithful few exhort and help one another, lifting up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees (Heb 12:12), that they be not turned aside out of that way. Together they walk, to reach their final destination which they so earnestly long for.

According to these principles, the majority are not walking along the path of life. They wander along the broad way that leads to destruction - only a minority can say in truth, that they are walking towards life everlasting. In other words, the majority live in their sins and their iniquities, given over to fulfilling the lusts of the flesh which will only lead them to the grave - whereas the few live within the parameters of the Truth, in hope of greater glory to come. It has always been so; the way of Truth has only ever been discovered by the few souls who search it out, and who eschew every evil work. For most of mankind, the way of Truth is too restrictive, for it does not allow for the unfettered satisfaction of the fleshly instincts that govern their walk in life. They are excluded from it both by it's nature, and theirs, the two being mutually incompatible to the extent that most men never even find the entrance to the narrow way.

However, there are those who profess to be walking along the way of life, who seek to make that way wider, that it might accommodate more men and women. Who push against the parameters of the Truth, seeking to broaden it's constraints in order that those who are not devoted to living in humble obedience to Christ, might nominally enter in. The pushing takes

various forms, from seeking to accommodate inappropriate behaviours, to embracing others of other religions to that enunciated by the Most High in the Bible. Most commonly, it is the latter; there is an embracing of the Ecumenical policy of humanism, an attempted widening of the entrance that others of other persuasions may enter in, who do not know the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

In this spirit, the June 2003 *Endeavour* magazine carries an article by Mr Peter Wright* headed: “*Ecumenism in the Good Samaritan Parable*”, beginning: “There are in the Good Samaritan story (Lu 10:25-37) profound ecumenical factors which clearly demonstrate that personal or denominational possession of every correct doctrine is **not** essential for salvation or unity” (emphasis as per original).

The parable was given by Messiah in answer to the question put by a lawyer, “and who is my neighbour?” According to Mr Wright:

“One of the most notable features in the answer to the lawyer’s question is that the promise of salvation goes not to the doctrinally accurate priest or Levite, but to the doctrinally inaccurate Samaritan ... Consequently the prospect of eternal life for this doctrinally imperfect Samaritan was obtained through nothing other than love and works, whilst somewhat shaky beliefs appear to be entirely omitted from the judgement”.

It is true that the Samaritans generally knew not the Truth, in fact the Master declared to a woman of Samaria, “ye worship ye know not what” (Jno 4:22), such was the mixture of their beliefs. Mr Wright refers to this, and concludes that the “doctrinally imperfect Samaritan” was given the prospect of eternal life through “nothing other” than his love and works for the man who falls victim to thieves.

The article continues under the heading, “Implications in Modernity”:

“The overall tenor of this parable also raises the question whether, if Jesus had been preaching today, this parable could have been about the Good Palestinian and if so, by inference, the Good Muslim? Also, could the net be cast even wider to encompass the Good Jew, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, or even the Good Christian? For all religions have in their ranks those capable of the Samaritan’s compassion. Regarding

* An earlier edition of *Endeavour* criticised the present writer for not referring to it’s writers as brethren. However it should be noted that the writer of the article we refer to is not baptised and has not therefore obeyed the Gospel, although *Endeavour* continues to publish his articles without making this known.

the relative importance between doctrine and love, Rom 13:8-10 says, ‘... **he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled this law.** The commandments, “do not commit adultery”, “do not murder”, “do not steal”, “do not covet” and **whatever other commandments there may be, are summed up in this one rule: love your neighbour as yourself.** Love does no harm to its neighbour, therefore **love is the fulfilment of the law.**’ In other words doctrinal perfection without love is empty and, as perhaps with the priest and the Levite, may prove to be an obstacle to eternal life (1 Cor 13:2). *On the other hand blank spaces in doctrinal perfection, as in the Samaritan, appear to be filled by love, therefore the short cut to doctrinal perfection is love that does good and no harm and thus all law/doctrine is fulfilled by love.* (see also Mk 12:28-33). If this is why the Samaritan epitomised entry into eternal life, because his unintended doctrinal blanks or inaccuracies were filled by love, then surely the same destination is arrived at by all who tread the path of love, regardless of their denomination or, like the Samaritan, even religious misconceptions. *Consequently those in modernity whose doctrines are inadvertently inaccurate (and that to some degree is, in all probability, the vast majority of us) may, like the Samaritan, enter God’s Kingdom via demonstrated love”* (Italics and underscore ours - CAM)

According to Mr Wright then, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Christians all may enter into the kingdom of God upon the same basis as a doctrinally errant Samaritan - through the exercise of love, “*regardless of their denomination.*” Their doctrinal “blank spaces” are “filled by love”; all, through love, have the prospect of eternal life. Erroneous doctrines, providing they are “*inadvertently inaccurate*” or “*unintended blanks*” form no barrier to their entry to the Kingdom of God. And by contrast, doctrinal accuracy itself, “may prove to be an obstacle to eternal life.”* But what saith the Word?

THE TESTIMONY OF THE WORD

Firstly, we should note what the Word *doesn’t* say. The parable mentions nothing whatsoever about the beliefs of the Samaritan, the priest, or the Levite. It is true that the Samaritans generally held erroneous beliefs - but belief is not the point of the parable, else it would be mentioned. The parable is in answer to a different question, “and who is my neighbour”. The Samaritan, as depicted by Messiah was different to normal Samaritans, who ordinarily had nothing to do with Jews. This Samaritan showed

*Although, in fairness to Mr Wright, he also states later in the article “*of course we should strive for doctrinal accuracy*, but also recognise that no judgement based on it exists in the biblical text. Therefore inadvertently spurious doctrines cannot be the basis of judgement and so doctrinal diversity should not divide” (Emphasis ours—CAM)

compassion and gave all the aid he could to the man who had fallen victim to thieves—he was no ordinary Samaritan. Who is to say that another difference was that he had correct doctrines, and recognised that “salvation is of the Jews” (Jno 4:22)? The parable itself is silent on the matter.

Secondly, it should also be pointed out that the parable does not present either the priest or the Levite as having doctrinal correctness, as Mr Wright claims they did. Ordinarily, priests and Levites at the time of Messiah did *not* have doctrinal correctness, for they, with the Pharisees, had corrupted the Law of Moses by the traditions of men. Indeed, the chief priests were among those who sought to destroy the Prophet like unto Moses (Mat 20:18), actions which demonstrated not doctrinal accuracy, but blindness to law in its relationship to Christ. There is no place in the New Testament where it is even so much as implied that the priests or Levites were generally sound in the doctrine. Of course, in the parable, these characters might have been exceptions, like the Samaritan - they may well have been sound in the faith. But Messiah is silent on that matter also.

The parable itself therefore, does not make the points which Mr Wright asserts, regarding belief and salvation. They are deduced from inferences, and suppositions, the validity of which must be tested against other passages of Scripture, where the matter in question is taught plainly. To base a teaching upon inferred and supposed points from a parable which is contradictory to the main thrust of plain Scripture teaching would clearly not be good exposition. Let us therefore go on to see what the Bible states, in great plainness of speech, concerning belief and salvation:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (Jno 3:14-16).

“and they said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*” (Acts 16:31)

“for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save *them that believe*” (1 Cor 1:21).

“*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ...*” (Mark 16:16).

“Verily, verily I say unto you, *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life*” (Jno 6:27).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: *he that believeth in me*, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jno 11:25).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and *that believing ye might have life through his name.*” (Jno 20:31).

These passages clearly show that so far as the Bible is concerned, salvation is inextricably linked with *belief*. Christ was lifted up so that “whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” - on this the Scriptures are plain. Those who are to have everlasting life are those who believe in the Messiah. But by contrast, there are no passages which state that love for fellow man alone is sufficient qualification for life eternal. And there are no passages which state that men who do not believe - even if their unbelief is “unintended” - will have life through the name of Christ. The testimony of Scripture is plain: belief is an essential prerequisite to salvation.

IMPLIED SALVATION FOR THE HEATHEN

What then, of Mr Wright’s implied salvation for those who do not believe in Christ Jesus, such as Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists? The Scriptures declare concerning the Christ that, “neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). There is then, no salvation in any system of worship devised by man, however loving it may be. Christ alone can save; in his name alone is the power of everlasting life. All the wisdom of Sikhism, Buddhism, or Hinduism is vanity, so far as it’s efficacy for salvation goes. Only though belief in the name of the Master Jesus Christ, will salvation be granted for in no other name is there power to save.

Mr Wright recognises the difficulty this passage poses to his implied salvation of those who follow heathen religions, and attempts to address it as follows:

“One final point concerning the implied salvation of non-Christians. Have I forgotten Acts 4:12, ‘... there is no other name under Heaven given among mortals by which we may be saved.’ NRSV. Does this mean that non-Christians cannot qualify for salvation? My answer is that the Samaritan epitomised qualification for life regardless of his lack of accurate knowledge. The *shegagah* law of Nu 15:22-29, (see my item in Endeavour no. 104) verifies forgiveness for unintended errors. Love originated with God, 1 Jo 4:19, and is the zenith of Jesus’ teaching, Mk 12:28-32. Now link Nu 15, 1Jo 4:19 and Mk 12 with Rom 2:14 & 15, ‘When Gentiles who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, those, though not having the law, are a law unto

themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts.’ (NRSV) In like manner, love was undeniably written on the Samaritan’s heart and in turn on all like him, regardless of their unintended ignorance. Where loves law is practiced among non-Christians, they demonstrate the spirit of Christ in themselves. On what pretext then could they be adversely judged? Absence of accurate knowledge perhaps? But what about presence of accurate spirit? The condition of Acts 4, ‘no other name’, is met by the spirituality of Rom 2, ‘written on their hearts’ and the mercy and forgiveness of *shegagah* law in Nu 15. Inadvertent omission of Christian knowledge is therefore an excuse especially when the highest principle of Christianity—love—is practised.”

According to Mr Wright then (also in the article he refers us to), the Law of Numbers 15:22-29 which provided for sins of ignorance also covered unintended errors of belief. He then cites Romans 2:14,15 to show that “where loves’ law is practiced among “non-Christians”, they demonstrate the spirit of Christ in themselves”, and it is upon this basis that, their lack of belief is overlooked, and they are given salvation. Unbelieving non-Christians possessing the Spirit of Christ is certainly a new doctrine indeed; certainly there is no passage of Scripture that states this. But what do the passages in question actually state?

Numbers 15:22-29, to which we commend the reader, deals with sins of ignorance, and makes provision for the forgiveness of those sins, once a sacrifice had been offered. According to this law, the sinner would bring a goat (v 27), or in the case of the whole congregation being guilty, a bullock and a goat (v 24) as a sacrifice, following which their sin would be forgiven (v 25, 28).

However, it is testified in Hebrews 10:4: “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Upon what basis then, were the offerers of bulls and goats forgiven their sins of ignorance? Upon the same basis upon which all sin is forgiven, namely confession (1 Jno 1:9), and faith (Rom 4:1-8). By offering the sacrifice, the Israelite was confessing that they had indeed sinned ignorantly, and that they desired forgiveness. And they had faith in what the law pointed forward to, being a perfect schoolmaster teaching about the Master, Jesus Christ (Gal 3:24). Though doubtless, they would not perceive the details, being taught of the Abrahamic covenant, they would look in faith to the promised seed, through whom forgiveness would come.

All this is very different to the case in point. Here, the sin of ignorance is recognised, and then a sacrifice is offered to obtain forgiveness. But for those who do not recognise Christ, there is no recognition on their part of

any sin in not believing in him, or any need for forgiveness through his sacrifice. Having been blinded by Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism, or any other 'ism, they do not confess their sin, and seek the Father in faith. They may show love to fellow men, and they may perform great works of compassion - but so far as seeking forgiveness for their sin of ignorance, (or their "unintended" doctrinal ignorance) is concerned, they do not recognise their sin, or trust in the sacrifice of Yahweh's providing.

What then of Romans 2:14,15? Is this passage speaking of "non-Christians" demonstrating the spirit of Christ, whilst being unintentionally unbelieving of him, as Mr Wright suggests? Plainly it is not, as can be seen even from the translation he cites; it is speaking about those Gentiles who were not under the law of Moses, yet who nevertheless have the spirit of that law in their hearts: "*the Gentiles who do not possess the law ... they show that what the law requires is written on their hearts*". The principles of the Word (the Law) is *written on their hearts*. These are not the doctrinally ignorant therefore, but those who know the law, who have attended to it, and who have that law dwelling within them (there is an allusion here the Uriah the Hittite, but that we leave for a later article). Consider how the Spirit uses this language elsewhere - Israel in the future are to have the law written into their hearts, as prophesied by Jeremiah:

"this will be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith Yahweh, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*; and will be their *Elohim*, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:33).

To have the law written in the heart then, is to be in a covenant relationship with the Father, with the principles of His Righteousness dwelling in the heart. Israel, shall attain this when they turn to the Master and enter into a new covenant with their Maker. But for now, Gentiles who are not under the Law of Moses nevertheless show the righteousness of that Law, in having the spirit of it's principles, dwelling in their hearts. The Apostle is plainly speaking of enlightened Gentile believers, not charitable pagans in this place, who have the Word dwelling richly within them.

MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

In addition to the above remarks, there are various other points which we ought to notice, but briefly due to lack of space.

Firstly, Messiah testified concerning himself:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jno 6:44).

Those who Christ will raise up, are those who the Father has drawn to him. There is no question therefore, of there being any who the Father purposes to be raised, who are not drawn to Christ. The concept of a Muslim (to take one of Mr Wright's examples) having an "unintentional blank space" in his not recognising Christ denies the point that the who the Father wishes to be saved are drawn to Christ. The simple fact of the matter is that those who are not drawn by the Father to Christ, are not those whom he purposes to ransom by his shed blood. The purpose of God is according to election (cf Rom 9; 8:29,30), not the charitable deeds of man to fellow man.

Secondly, Mr Wright's emphasis on love towards men overlooks the greatest commandment, which is the love of God:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mat 22:37-39).

Muslims, Sheikhs, Buddhists, and the like do not believe in, let alone love the God of Israel. To suggest that they might be saved through their love for man alone (as Mr Wright puts it, "*love of neighbour equals eternal life*"), whilst remaining in ignorance of Yahweh is to elevate the love of man above the love of God.

Finally, it is the testimony of Messiah that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" and again, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jno 3:3,5). According to the Master, a person requires to be born again, to gain entry into the kingdom of God. Mr Wright, being unbaptised, has not himself been born of water, and he seeks to persuade us that members of heathen denominations can gain entry to the Kingdom of God, also without being born again. All they need do is show love and good works to their neighbours - irrespective of what god they believe in - according to the doctrine he teaches. But according to Messiah, a man "cannot" enter into the kingdom of God, unless he be born again. And that rebirth involves hearing and responding to the word preached, for this rebirth, according to the Master's apostle Peter, is "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet 1:23). The Gospel believed and obeyed, is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom 1:16), but the Scriptures are clear, that without belief, and without being born again by the word, men remain "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). No matter how charitable a man may be, this position is a desolate one indeed.

Chris Maddocks

THE NEW BIRTH

The new birth, like the old one of the flesh, is not an abstract principle, but a process. It begins with the begetting and ends with the having been born. A son of God is a character, which is developed out of the "incorruptible seed" (1 Pet 1:23) of God, sown into the fleshly table of the heart (Mat 13:19). When this seed, or word of the Kingdom, is received, it begins to work in a man until he becomes a believer of the truth. When things have come to this pass, he is a changed man. He has acquired a new mode of thinking; for he thinks in harmony with the thoughts of God as revealed in His law and testimony. He sees himself, and the world around him, in a new light. He is convinced of sin; and experiences an aversion to the things in which he formerly delighted. His views, disposition, temper, and affections, are transformed. He is humble, child-like, teachable, and obediently disposed; and his simple anxiety is, to know what God would have him to do. Having ascertained this, he does it; and in doing it is "*born out of the water.*" Having been begotten of the Father by the word of truth (Jas 1:18), and born of water, the first stage of the process is completed. He is *constitutionally* "in Christ".

When a child is born, the next thing is to train it up in the way it should go, that when it is old, it may not depart from it. This is also the arrangement of God in relation to those who are born out of water into His family on earth. He disciplines and tries them, that He may "exalt them in due time." Having believed the gospel and been baptized, such a person is required to "walk worthy of the vocation," or calling, "wherewith he has been called" (Eph 4:1), that by so doing he may be "accounted worthy" of being "born of spirit," that he may become "spirit," or a spiritual body and so enter the kingdom of God, crowned with "glory, honour, incorruptibility, and life" (Rev 2:7) ...

In the way described, sinners are transformed into saints; and it is the only way; their conversion being the result of the transforming influence of "the testimony of God." Those who are ignorant of "the law and the testimony," and who yet claim to be saints, and "teachers of divine mysteries," may demur *in toto* to this conclusion, because "in saying this thou condemnest us also." But truth knows no respect of persons; and while the oracles of God declare, that men are "renewed by knowledge," and "alienated from the life of God through ignorance," I feel entrenched impregnably in the position here assumed. According to the constitution of the human intellect, the knowledge of truth must precede the belief of it. There is no exception to this. If cases be cited as exceptions, the faith is spurious, and not that with which God is well pleased. It is credulity; the faith of opinion, such as that which characterizes the spiritual philosophy of the age.

John Thomas, Elpis Israel