

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

The Living Way

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**Upholding the Original Christadelphian Faith concerning:
“The Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12)**

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

Tobiah – The Infiltration of an Enemy (1)

Written for our learning in the inspired record of Ezra, is a description of the Spiritual state of the remnant in the land, who had returned there following their 70 year period of Babylonian captivity. And what we find, is that rather than to maintain their distinct identity as a people called out as a “separated” people (Ex 33:16) to show forth the Holiness of Yahweh; many of the Jews had sought to join themselves to the people of the land. The princes brought the following report before Ezra:

“The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers have been chief in this trespass” (Ezra 9:1,2).

Notice this; it was not simply the case that the princes and rulers had done nothing to prevent the people bringing in foreigners to the land, marrying them, and giving in marriage – rather, they were foremost in this thing, they were “chief in his trespass”! Doubtless, like certain today they thought the exclusivity of the Way too restrictive. They found that those of differing beliefs were actually quite sincere in their own way – who were they to judge them as being unworthy of entry into the camp of the sanctified ones? So, their daughters were allowed to enter in, and become joined to the Sons of the Deity.

The effect of such news upon Ezra was very great: “when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished ... and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice” (Ezra 9:3-4). He understood the gravity of the situation, that by the folly of the people, priests and princes, the continued existence of Israel as a set-apart nation was threatened.

These events are most instructive for our learning, for just as Israel were called upon to separate themselves from “the peoples of the lands,” maintaining a distinct identity as a holy people undefiled with the “abominations” of the heathen, it is even so in the case of believers today. “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers,” is the Apostolic maxim, “for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? ... wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2Cor 6:14-18).

The need for separation is just as great in our day, as it was for the remnant in Ezra’s day. “Come out from among them” is the command, and how lamentable it is to behold instead, “them” coming in amongst the community of believers. Those who love the things of the Spirit, and who seek earnestly after the kingdom and righteousness of the Deity (Mat 6:33), can only share the sorrows of Ezra, and empathise in his deep distress

at what the Children of the Light had done, in mingling themselves with the Children of darkness.

REMEDIAL ACTION

Drastic action was required. Following Ezra's prayer before the Father, as recorded at the end of Ezra chapter nine, we read of how confession was given, and a covenant was made at the instigation of Ezra, to separate from the strangers that had been brought in: "Shechaniah ... answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my Lord ... and let it be done according to the law" (Ezra 10:2,3).

So the resolve was made, and Ezra brought the command before the people: "separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. And all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do ..." (Ezra 10:11,12). Amongst the priests were found some who had transgressed in this matter; and of them we read that "they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass" (Ezra 10:19). So it was, that the strangers were separated from the people of the Most High, who bound themselves in a covenant to remain separate before their Redeemer.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF FOLLY

But the damage was already done. In this time of laxity and compromise, enemies had 'crept in unawares' to the camp. Tobiah, and Sanballat had been given opportunity to make their alliances, forge friendships and unions with the people, and infiltrate the household of faith. And it was these men that appear as the strongest enemies that Nehemiah had to later contend against.

The Spirit recounts how Nehemiah, after having been granted leave by the king, went on his way to Jerusalem:

"Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." (Nehemiah 3:9-10)

These exceedingly grieved men, were of that class of people whom Yahweh had banished from entry into the congregation. "An Ammonite, or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of Yahweh" was the command (Deut 23:3), yet Tobiah, an Ammonite, and Sanballat (Horon being a city of Moab (Is 15:5)), a Moabite, had indeed found their way into the congregation, during a time when the people were failing to uphold the laws of their Maker. Nehemiah describes how the infiltrators "laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?" (Neh 2:19). Yet he replied in accordance with the Law "the Elohim of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion,

nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem,” even though they resided there, through the failure of the people to uphold the principles of the most High.

ENTRY INTO THE CONGREGATION

Both Tobiah, and Sanballat had become joined to the people through marriage. So we learn from Chapter six, and verses 17-18:

“Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.”

During a time of compromise and weakness, when the people were marrying the daughters of strangers, Tobiah, an Ammonitish servant took the opportunity to enter into the congregation. He became the Son-in-law of Shechaniah – who was a priest (12:3), whose lips ought to have kept knowledge, and disseminated wisdom: “that they should seek the law at his mouth” (Mal 2:7). But as we have seen, both priests and people had compromised the Righteous precepts of Yahweh, and despised his Holy Ways (Mal 2:12), and it was as a direct consequence of this compromise on the part of the leaders of the people, that the enemy was given opportunity to establish a foothold, for it was “because” of this alliance, that Tobiah had credibility and even respect amongst the people. And it was not just Tobiah alone; he established his family amongst the congregation, for his son married the daughter of one of the city builders, Meshullam (cp 3:4,30).

Sanballat had also made use of the situation; his daughter married the high-priest’s son (Neh 13:28), which meant that both men – and their families – were in a position to wield considerable influence among the people. The fact that they were permitted to remain joined to the priesthood, even after the people had separated themselves, showed both the extent of their influence – and also the hypocrisy of the rulers, who required the enactment of a covenant of separation, when they were evidently not prepared to honour it themselves. Having men’s persons in admiration (cp Jude 16) for the sake of personal gain, they permitted these enemies of the Truth to stay within the camp. And how much like today that is!

THE TACTICS OF THE ENEMY

It is most instructive for us to notice the means whereby Tobiah sought to undermine the work of Nehemiah. He began by pouring scorn upon the enterprise, suggesting that the work was so great it was foolish to even begin building, but also by misrepresenting the enterprise as being an attempt at establishing independence from the Persians; an act of rebellion against the king: “they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?” These men were influential amongst the people, having obtained the ear of the elders. Tobiah regularly wrote to, and received letters from the nobles of Judah; “many in Judah were sworn unto him” (Neh 6:18), so we can well understand his hostility to Nehemiah, as one who

sought the good of the people, rather than to elevate his own Name. They despised the dominion he had over them, and spoke evil of him (cp Jude 8). But Nehemiah gave a good and faithful response, words of trust in Yahweh, and rebuttal towards those who had sought to take possession by their intrigues of those things forbidden by Israel's Master: "the Elohim of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will rise up and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem" (Neh 2:19). He refused to be discouraged by the mockery of those who walked after their own lusts (cp Jude 18), and refused to become distracted with time-wasting denials of false allegations. Rather, he set his hand to the work, in faith and confidence of Yahweh's blessing.

THE PEOPLE WHO HAD A MIND TO WORK

Under the leadership of Nehemiah, the building began in earnest, and chapter 3 details those who did not hearken to Tobiah's words of discouragement, choosing rather to build up the walls of the city. It would appear from the record that much was accomplished in a short time (cp Neh 6:15; the wall was begun and finished in fifty two days) such was the zeal of the people, and it may be a reference to the speed at which things had been done, that Tobiah and Sanballat said in their further words of derision: "What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" Would they really finish it so quickly – make an end of the work in a day? "Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Neh 4:2,3). What is the quality of workmanship like? All kinds of people from all kinds of professions; priests, merchants, apocatharies, and goldsmiths were all engaged in the task – they were not qualified builders – surely their work couldn't last for long especially with such a rushed job – why, if even a fox were to go up a wall built by these kinds of people, it would simply collapse under it's weight! Here was an attempt at open discouragement from those with influence among the people, but the work continued unhindered. "so we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Neh 4:6).

Experience has shown time and time again that much can be achieved with little. Those with few resources can achieve much more than those who have much, unused resources – if there is "a mind to work". Here is an example for ecclesial life; for those whose responsibility it is to build up the ecclesial house (cp Jude 20). They may feel that they do not have the skills and abilities possessed by others who may be more qualified in worldly matters than they. They may feel that because others who are more able in such things neglect the work, that therefore there is no-one left to do it. But men of faith will rise above their sense of personal inadequacies, and get on with the work. The end product will be of the Father, not of man; time and experience both tell us that the greatest works have been accomplished not by the men with the best resources, but by men of vision, faith, and perseverance.

Determination, and trust in Yahweh will more than compensate for failing natural abilities. Men of faith will unhesitatingly commence a needful, yet thankless work so tedious and so tiresome that those who would rather seek their own good will neglect

– and men of vision, diligence and endurance will finish that work, even when humanly speaking everything is going against them. Men whose heart is in the things of the world will have their reward. And men of the Spirit who possess “a mind to work” diligently that they may enter into the promised day of Rest will also have theirs (cp Mat 6:1-5).

A NEW TACTIC – PHYSICAL FORCE

Perceiving that open words of scorn and derision were not having the desired effect, the adversaries of Israel sought other means to hinder the work – physical force: “when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it” (Neh 4:7-8). There was quite a number involved in this conspiracy, not just these 3 men, but their people also. Arabians, Ammonites and Ashdodites united together in opposition to the construction of the City of the Most High El. But their tactics changed from open words, to covert operations. “Our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease” (Neh 4:11). Here was the intention plainly expressed, to creep in unawares (cp Jude 4), so that once they were in the midst of the people, they could begin to slay them, and cause the work to cease by violence. Nehemiah, however, made due preparation by way of exhorting the people to be alert, and ready to overcome the enemy: “I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters your wives and your houses” (Neh 4:13-14). Here, the issues were made plainer than ever before. This was a matter now of national survival. The people, through their folly, had permitted the ungodly to enter into the congregation of the righteous, and were now reaping the consequences. They had to be prepared to fight, or be overcome. To either earnestly contend, or to lose the warfare of faith.

In our day, although the nature of the warfare has changed, in that “we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (2 Cor 10:3-4), there is a warfare to be engaged in nevertheless. “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies when went before thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1Tim 1:18-19) was the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, his own son in the faith. It is required that those enlisted in the service of Christ (2Tim 2:3,4) engage in this warfare, and be active in earnestly contending for the faith which was once for all revealed to the holy ones (Jude 3). The work is disagreeable, as it inevitably brings the contenders into conflict with those in positions of authority and influence in such a degenerate age as the one in which we sojourn; but it is as necessary as it was in the days of Nehemiah – it is a matter of survival.

There are “certain men crept in unawares ... ungodly men,” whose condemnation was written of in old times (Jude 4). There are those who would undermine the foundations of faith, upon which the ecclesial edifice is constructed. And “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3). For the most part, these, like Tobiah

and Sanballat, are the influential, having attracted a following. The Apostle Paul lamented such a situation which would arise at Ephesus: “I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch ... and now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:29-32).

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Here is both the problem, and the preventative measure expressed together. The problem is those who lead a following away from the principles of truth – but the preventative measure is to ‘watch’ for such, and to be builded by the word of God, to become a fortress which the enemy cannot prevail against.

This was the manner by which Nehemiah dealt with the foxes who sought to pull down the wall which the people were building, who purposed to enter in and cause destruction. He set watchmen, prepared to cry out in warning when the enemy came, and set the people in a state of alert, being left with no doubt of what was required of them. “Be not ye afraid of them: remember Adonai who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives and your houses” (Neh 4:14).

But, though being faced with such perils, Nehemiah did not permit the work to cease. There is a need to contend against those who would make a spoil of Christ’s flock – but there is a greater need to build up the walls, that a place of protection, refuge, and strength might be established. This is the primary work in which all must be engaged; the work of contending is a secondary affair which becomes needful when the builders are being confronted with those who purpose to hinder them. So, once it was made known to the enemy that the people were alert, and watching out for them, the work continued; but with particular details from which we can learn much:

“it came to pass that from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons (i.e. coats of mail) ... they which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side, and so builded” (Neh. 4:16-18).

Notice this point; the primary work was that of building, yet with the sword at hand to contend against the adversary as and when needed.

Even so it is in our day. Those who have faith in the things of the Spirit must build. That is their primary work; of building and edification. But they must also be ready to wield the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17) to cut down every high thing that exalts itself against that work, to hinder it. They must labour faithfully and diligently within the Master’s household, yet they must also be watchful and vigilant lest there enter in

wolves who would tear and rend the flock. Both are indispensable duties of the faithful disciples (cp Luke 14:28,29), for without either one, the eternal lives of Christ's brethren is exposed to danger.

Christopher Maddocks

(To be continued)

Hosea – Visions of the Kingdom

It is written in Scripture that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18). And as the Apostle put it: “we look not at that the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). There is a need therefore, to have good spiritual sight, in beholding the fulfilment of the promises in our minds. This is a characteristic of the faithful: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but **having seen them afar off**, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13). It is in this spirit of visualising the promises, that we turn to the prophecy of Hosea, which we have been reading over recent days. Although it is perhaps not a prophecy we would ordinarily turn to for such a vision, it nevertheless is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16) for us to consider and learn.

Hosea chapter 1 describes the troubles that would come upon Israel as a consequence of their waywardness – but at the same time it also offers hope:

“... I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and **will save them** by Yahweh their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen” (Hos. 1:6-7).

Though there remains a time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:10), God will not cast away his people whom he foreknew (Rom. 11:2), but will fight against their adversaries: “then shall Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (Zech. 14:3). He “will have mercy” upon them, and “will save them,” not with the military might of men, but by his Spirit: “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Yahweh of hosts” (Zech. 4:6). “when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of Yahweh shall lift up a standard against him” (Isa. 59:19), and the One who is “full of power by the spirit of Yahweh, and of judgment and of might” (Mic. 3:8), shall turn away ungodliness out of Jacob (Rom. 11:26). He will fight, as in the days of old, and deliver His People from the hand of he that is stronger than they.

The promise through Hosea continues:

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea ... and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye

are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the Living God” (Hos. 1:10).

This comparison by which the number of the people is described – as the sand upon the sea shore – brings us back to consider the promises made to Abraham (see Gen. 22:17). But their cast-off state forms a basis for the bringing in of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:12). If Israel who were cast off, are able to be grafted back into their own olive tree, how much more shall Gentiles, who are in a similar cast-off position, also be brought in (see Rom. 11). Abraham is not the father of his natural descendants only, he is to Gentiles also, who emulate his faith, and embrace the promises. This is the application of Paul to these words of Hosea:

“... even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but ***also of the Gentiles?*** ***As he saith also in Osee,*** I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people: there shall they be called the children of the living God” (Rom. 9:24-26).

Here is the point: if Israel who were in the state of being “not my people” could be reconciled to their God, then surely Gentiles who are naturally not the people of God can similarly be brought in, upon the same basis of faith. Hence these words of Hosea have a very direct bearing upon our own salvation, as well as that of Israel!

Hosea 1 continues: “Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land ...” (Hos. 1:11). In ancient times, Israel appointed themselves, and were given a king: “I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath” (Hos. 13:11). But in the future, the Lord Jesus Christ will be their head. But the description is: “they shall come up out of the land” – which is most interesting! Whilst it is true that the nation shall return out of the land of the North (Jer. 3:17-19), their regathering is likened to a national resurrection, when they shall come up out of the earth of their graves:

“behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves ...” (Eze. 37:12-13).

In this way, Israel in dispersion shall return to their land and their God, and be elevated out of their political graves. But the prophets also describe how that on their journey to the land they shall pass through a spiritual wilderness:

“And 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” (Eze. 20:34-35).

There would appear to be only a few references in the Prophetic word to this “wilderness” of the latter days. Jeremiah 31:2 speaks of how there, the people will find grace, and be drawn back to their God, and Revelation 17 speaks of the European spiritual wilderness, inhabited by the Roman political animal. This latter chapter is of great interest: “... he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy” (Rev. 17:3). The European system at present is not a dry and barren place, literally speaking. But spiritually it is such, it is dry, barren and desolate. On their journey through the European wilderness, God will “plead” with his people, which perhaps implies a time of persecution, as Ezekiel also describes how then “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” (Eze. 20:38).

Hosea chapter 2 also describes this wilderness:

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt” (Hos. 2:14-15).

Notice the reference here to the valley of Achor – in Joshua chapters 6 & 7, we find that when Israel left Egypt, they passed through the wilderness, and began to take up their inheritance. However, Achan stole from Yahweh. All the spoils were to be devoted to Divine service: “All the silver and the gold, and vessels of brass and iron are consecrated unto Yahweh: they shall come into the treasury of Yahweh (Josh. 6:19). But Achan was brought to confess that he had stolen: “Indeed I have sinned against Yahweh God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done” (Josh. 7:20-21). He stole from the silver, gold, and took a Babylonish garment, and was thus condemned to death. He was stoned to death: “all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So Yahweh turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day” (vs 25-26).

The name “Achor” means “trouble” and expresses how that Achan troubled Israel by his deeds (vs. 25). It was a place of cursing, where the troubler of Israel was destroyed. But Hosea describes how that place will become “a door of hope”. Israel as a nation were under a curse because of their rebellion against their God, but in that day, the curse will become a blessing, and the place of cursing a door of hope. Then, the Name of Yahweh will be made known, and the names of the Baal gods will be no more remembered (Hos. 2:16-17).

Hosea chapter 6 describes the healing of that day:

“Come, and let us return unto Yahweh: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive

us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight” (Hos. 6:1-2).

Notice that again, we have the language of a national resurrection: “he will raise us up, and we shall live ...”. Israel had been smitten by their God, as described by Isaiah:

“Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (Isa. 1:5-6).

The reference to “wounds and bruises” indicates a trauma caused by smiting. Yet though they were smitten, they refused to repent, hence the words: “Why should ye be stricken any more”. But in the future, the nation will revive, and be healed by their God. The reference to being raised on the third day is interesting, and reminds us of Messiah’s resurrection on the third day. The application is also made sometimes of the 3rd millennial day, when Christ will come again for the healing of his people.

Then, as a national bride, Israel shall be betrothed to her husband, even Yahweh Himself: “I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know Yahweh” (Hos. 2:20).

This reference, “thou shalt know Yahweh” reminds us of the first marriage in Scripture, that of Adam and Eve: “Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived, and bare Cain ...” (Gen. 4:1). Knowing the Lord also equates with having eternal life: “this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Jno. 17:3). And these two ideas are brought together by Paul: “... for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit ...” (1 Cor.6:16-17). This is the hope of believers: to know and become joined to the Lord as one living spirit (cp. Eph. 5:30-32).

Hosea chapter 6 proceeds to describe the favour of the Lord as rain:

“he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth” (Hos. 6:3).

This aspect is also described in Psalm 72: “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth” (Psa. 72:6). The nations having been mown down by the judgments of Yahweh, the blessings of the Lord shall descend in abundance. Following His wrath, his favour will be extended to the nations, even as it is written: “The king’s wrath is as the roaring of the lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass” (Prov. 19:12).

Hosea chapter 14 describes the spiritual blessings of that day:

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as

the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon” (Hos. 14:4-6).

Being grafted back into the rootstock of the promises made to the fathers of old (Rom. 11:24), cut off Israel shall be restored, and will prosper. The Lord himself used the same comparison with a tree, speaking of the coming kingdom:

“It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it” (Lu. 13:19).

This the day so longed for by all the saints of old: the kingdom being restored to Israel. “there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch will not cease” (Job. 14:7). And the Israelitish tree will indeed regrow! Being the rod out of the stem of Jesse, the Lord Jesus Christ himself will be the pre-eminent “branch” (Isa. 11:1), and his kingdom will grow as a tree, and provide shelter for the fowls of the air, or the nations that will seek refuge in her shadow. This is the Hope of Israel, embraced by all those who have a vision of the glories of the Age to Come.

Christopher Maddocks

Angelic Deliverance – And Michael

In Daniel chapter 12, we have a prophecy regarding a personage by the name of Michael:

“At that time shall **Michael stand up**, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ... and at that time **thy people shall be delivered**, everyone that shall be found written in the book ...” (Dan. 12:1).

As we shall shortly consider, this would appear to be a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, taking on a role like that of the angels of old, and delivering his people. But before we examine this aspect, we shall briefly review the work of the Angels and the deliverance effected through them.

2 Kings Chapter 19 expresses Hezekiah’s confidence in Yahweh in the face of the Assyrian invasion that had beset the land. In his prayer he asks:

“... now therefore O Yahweh our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art Yahweh God, even thou only” (2 Kings 19:19).

The answer came through the prophet Isaiah:

“... I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake. And it came to pass that night, ***that the angel of Yahweh went out***, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.” (2 Kings 19:34-35).

We find therefore that the means by which Yahweh delivered his people from the power of sin, was through the work of an Angel appointed for the task. In some ways, the believers are in a similar position as Israel of old. We are at enmity with the world around us, and daily we face the power of sin active within our mortal frames. Each day is a warfare against the flesh – both within and without, and there is no discharge until the day of our death, or the appearance of our Master, whichever comes first. But like Israel, we are appointed with Angels to watch over us, even as it is written: “Are they not all ministering spirits, ***sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation***”? (Heb. 1:14). We would do well therefore, to scrutinise the angelic activity in relation to Israel, that we might understand more about the ministers that attend to us in our own lives.

When we consult the Scriptures, we find that Angels had a role right from the very beginning of Israel’s history. Acts 7:53 describes how Israel “have received the law *by the disposition of angels*, and have not kept it”. And Exodus 23 recounts the promise of divine blessing and protection when Israel were to go forth to take possession of the land of promise:

“Behold, ***I send an Angel before thee***, to keep thee in the way, and *to bring thee into the place* which I have prepared ... mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: ***and I will cut them off.***” (Exod. 23:20,23)

But even though Israel were promised possession of the Land, they had to go forth to war against the powers of sin themselves. They couldn’t simply sit at the border and expect the land to be turned over to their control: they had to fight and contend against their enemies. The Angel used the people’s own endeavours to bring about success. Hence in our New Testament reading for today, although the people were victorious in fighting for the land, it is described as God destroying the 7 nations (Acts 13:19). We must engage ourselves in the same warfare as Christ did, in order for him to lead us into victory. We must also therefore “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim.2:3), and be willing to suffer for his sake.

There is an aspect of the Angelic care that is sometimes overlooked. It is sometimes thought that because we have divine “ministers” to help us, that therefore we should experience no evil. A little reflection, however, reveals the short-sightedness of such a view. It is part of the Father’s purpose that we endure afflictions as part of His Chastisement upon His sons:

“for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you illegitimate, and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-8).

Psalms 34 describes the Angels’ work of deliverance:

“the Angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, *and delivereth them*” (Psa. 34:7).

Notice the point here: the Angel does not prevent difficulties from coming, but will deliver the faithful out of those afflictions when they come. As it is written: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able, but will with the trial also *make a way to escape*, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13). Indeed, the same Psalm describes: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but Yahweh delivereth him out of them all” (Psa. 34:19).

The allusion in this Psalm appears to be from Jacob’s words concerning the Angelic hand in his own life:

“*The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads...*” (Gen. 48:16)

When we consider the life of Jacob, we see a man who endured many adverse circumstances in his life – in his case, there is no question as to whether evil times had come. But Jacob’s faith was not that he be spared affliction: rather it was that Yahweh’s Angel would deliver him out of it when it came.

Another case in point is the experiences of Daniel’s three friends in the Truth, and their refusal to bow the knee to the Babylonian Idols. They were thrown into a fire so hot that it devoured the mightiest men of Babylon, yet were protected from harm, so that even the smell of the fire did not linger in their clothes. So Nebuchadnezzar recognised the means of divine protection: “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *who hath sent his angel* and delivered his servants that trusted in him...” (Dan.

3:28). Again, the fiery trial was to come – it was not averted – but in the midst of it all, the Angel delivered them out of all evil.

We read earlier that the angels are “ministering spirits” sent forth on the behalf of those who are “heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). The application does not only refer to the disciples: The Master himself, as the heir with whom we obtain the inheritance, also needed, and experienced strength from Angels. Matthew chapter 4 describes his wilderness trials, ending: “then the *diabolos* leaveth him and, behold, **angels came and ministered unto him**” (Mat. 4:11). At the time of his wrestling against his mortal nature in Gethsemane: “there appeared **an Angel** unto him from heaven, **strengthening him**” (Lu. 22:43). And again, whilst being crucified he spoke of how he had 12 legions of Angels at his disposal. The Master therefore, was One who recognised the hand of the Angels in his life – and we, therefore, must seek to have that same vision. Jacob, Caleb, David, Elisha, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego and others still, all trusted in angelic deliverance in times of difficulty and adversity.

Messiah cried out to Yahweh in his distress: and that prayer was answered by the provision of an Angel. Hebrews chapter 5 describes how:

“in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7).

Notice the expression here: “... to save him **from** death...” The Greek is more specific: “... to save him *out of* death ...”. The difference is this: if he was saved from death, he would not have died, he was saved from it. But the truth of the matter is that he did die – but he was raised up out of that death by the hand of the Father. As we showed earlier: Angelic ministrations do not mean evil will not come, but will rather mean that we will be delivered from our trials – and the example of Christ himself is a case in point.

MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Although there are an innumerable company of Angels, we are only told the names of three: Michael being one of them. He is referred to in the Epistle of Jude:

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).

The plain allusion here, is to Zechariah 3:

“and he shewed me Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And Yahweh said unto Satan, Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan; even Yahweh that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? (Zech. 3:1-2).

Although it falls outside the scope of our current considerations to expound these words, we find that the Satan, or Adversary answers to the Samaritan opposers to the Temple being built, who sought to hinder that work. And the “body of Moses” would appear to be the body of believers who were baptised into Moses (1 Cor. 10:2), concerning whom the Satan was in opposition. But the point we wish to make from this, is to notice that the Angel here bears the name of Yahweh. It is said that “Yahweh said unto Satan ...”, yet Jude informs us that it was actually Michael the Archangel who uttered these words. Hence, Michael is the name-bearing Angel, and we suggest that he is the same Angel described in Exodus 23 (above) where he spoke in the name:

“... *my name is in him*. But if thou shalt indeed obey *his* voice, and do all that *I speak*; then I will be an enemy to thine enemies ... for mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites etc: and I will cut them off” (Ex. 23:21-23).

Notice that again, it is the Angel’s “voice”, but it is Yahweh speaking. And this angel is again referred to in Isaiah 63 as “the angel of his presence” (Isa. 63:9) - a specific Divine Messenger sent for a particular purpose. It is assumed that all the angels bear the name of Yahweh, but there is no Bible verse that states this.

This foreshadows the work of the Lord Jesus Christ: “Believest thou now that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you *I speak not of myself*: but *the Father that dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works” (Jno. 14:10).

And just as the Angel went before the people to bring them in to their inheritance, Jesus declared: “... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ...” (Jno. 14:2-3)

There is another reference to Michael in Daniel chapter 10, in the words of a different Angel:

“... the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but lo, *Michael, one of the chief princes*, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia” (Dan. 10:13).

Again, it is beyond the scope of our present considerations to expound what is described here: suffice it to say that it illustrates the providential Hand of God in action, with the Angels assisting each other to accomplish the Divine Will. But the point here, is that this Michael is “one of the chief princes” – which implies that there are other chief princes in the heavenly realm also. There is therefore a hierarchy amongst the Angels of God, some being more “chief” than others.

But Michael is but a *type* of the Lord Jesus Christ. The name itself means “Who is like El”, with “El” being a Title of God. This matches the person of Christ, who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3) – and the citation here, is by way of illustrating how that Jesus is higher than the Angels: “again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb. 1:6).

This brings us to Daniel chapter 12. There we read:

“And at that time *shall Michael stand up*, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time, thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.” (Dan. 12:1).

Notice, that the “Michael” described here, is not “one of the chief princes”, but rather he is higher than that: “the great prince” – which can only be the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the prince of peace, who shall stand up for the deliverance of his people, in a way not dissimilar to the angels of old. When he stands up, there will be a general resurrection:

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:2-3).

This can only take place when Messiah comes again, “who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1). Indeed, the very name Daniel means “El is Judge”!

We began by showing how the angels minister to the saints, particularly emphasising the way in which they deliver from evil. But it is written that “unto the Angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Heb. 2:5). The earth will rather be given to Messiah and his glorified brethren. Christ and his saints will cause God’s Will to be performed as in the heavens above. As the Lord taught his disciples to pray: “... thy kingdom come. *Thy will be done on earth*, as it is in heaven” (Mat.

6:10). Obedience to the Will of Yahweh will be the ultimate objective in His coming Kingdom.

To conclude therefore: we have seen tremendous things from the Holy Writ, which have a very direct application to our lives. The Angel is there, and will deliver us out of all evil, according to the mercy and wisdom of our Eternal Father. Trusting in the Angelic Host, we declare war against the flesh, both within and without, and can be confident of the victory. The Lord Jesus Christ himself needed Angelic deliverance, and we, as his brethren, have a like need. In the future, Christ's brethren will themselves have an angelic role, becoming part of Yahweh's continually expanding glory. This is a position which we need to prepare for - and the only preparation is to search the Scriptures daily, and act upon the precepts revealed therein. This we do, both to see whether these things are so, and also to strengthen our vision of the coming kingdom, and our place within it.

Christopher Maddocks

Man is Mortal Because of Sin

This is a true statement, but it has been suggested that Roberts Roberts' use of this phrase supports the idea that "we die because we sin". Let him answer for himself:

"...men are mortal because of sin, quite independently of their own transgressions." (RR The Law of Moses page 173)

Robert Roberts completely rules out the possibility that he is using this phrase to teach that we die because we sin. He makes this abundantly clear by his use of the same phrase when talking about the Lord Jesus.

"...he possessed our mortal nature, which is an heir of death because of sin...." (RR The Law of Moses page 259)

"He was the offerer, the priest, the sacrifice, the altar, the veil, the mercy seat, the tabernacle and much else besides.... the seed of David according to the flesh, of which Jesus partook, which is a mortal and unclean thing because of sin, and had, in the wisdom of God, to be purified by death and resurrection," (RR 1876 page 376)

"It was a spiritual necessity that he should partake of our nature. It is expressly said that he did, and John says that any man who denies it, as many did in his day and many have done since, denies the truth and is indeed anti-Christ. He is strong in maintaining that Jesus came in the flesh, that is, the flesh of the children, the flesh of David—flesh mortal because of sin ... Christ could not righteously die if death had no dominion over him, and it could not have this dominion except through Adam,

through Abraham, David, and his mother, for he had **no sin of his own**" (RR The Blood of Christ page 16)

Jesus was a mortal man like the rest of us because like us we are all descendants of Adam, in no way could it be said of Jesus that he died because he sinned!

"The question is—the **mortality of Adam's race; how did it come?** Was the race created **subject to death?** or did death come as a specific divine super-addition for a reason that came into play after Adam was made? ... Did it commence mortal, or was it brought down to a **mortal state** after it appeared? ... "by one man (Adam) sin entered into the (human) world and death by sin" is a settlement of the question. **Mortality has been a fundamental law of human nature** from that day to this. ... **Death is written in our present nature.** It was written in Eden. It is the writing of God; ...

...He sent forth His son in the **death-written nature** that in him it might be cleansed, redeemed, and perfected. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21). How the resurrection came by man is told in the life and death of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. It came by his obedience (Rom. 5:19), but obedience requiring death as the declaration of Jehovah's righteousness (Rom. 3:25), and the condemnation of sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). Jesus died unto sin once (Rom. 6:10). **It touched him through Adam:** but though **a sufferer from its effects,** he was without sin himself (Heb. 4:15). Having died once, death has no more dominion over him (Rom. 6:9). "Through death, he destroyed him that having **the power of death,** that is, the devil"—otherwise **sin in the flesh** (Heb. 2:14). (RR. The Visible Hand of God page 30–34)

Robert Roberts did not teach as the Old Paths does today that

"There are 2 reasons for our state, namely that 1) we are physically mortal and 2) that we die because we sin"

The truth that Robert Roberts taught is that there is only **ONE** reason why we grow old and die not two, only **ONE** reason we are in this "mortal state", because we inherit a physical law, the law of sin and death is written in our nature.

"...So Adam before and after transgression was the same nature, but in two different states—the **second state being expressed by the word mortal or subject to death, which is not affirmable of the first. The sentence of death became a physical law of his being; hence it has passed on us who are derived from him.** Its passing on us would be incomprehensible **on any other principle.**" (RR 1874 page 86–87)

RR uses some phrases here which he also uses in the BASF, regarding the "sentence of death" becoming a "physical law of his being". He makes it clear that he saw this as

the same as Adam becoming mortal or subject to death when sentenced. So there can be no doubt of his meaning in the BASF. Just because RR does not use the phrase “mortal” or “mortality” all the time in the BASF this does not mean he is not referring to it. By way of illustration, we have highlighted where he is clearly referring to mortality.

Clause III That the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth on the earth was necessitated by **the position and state** into **which the human race had been brought by the circumstances connected with the first man**

Clause V That Adam broke this law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and **sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken—a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.**

Clause VI.—That God, in His kindness, conceived a plan of restoration which, without setting aside His **just and necessary law of sin and death**, should ultimately rescue the race from destruction, and people the earth with sinless immortals.

Clause VIII.—That these promises had reference to Jesus Christ, 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 IX.—That it was this mission that necessitated the miraculous begetting of Christ of a human mother, enabling him **to bear our condemnation**, and, at the same time, to be a sinless bearer thereof, and, therefore one who could rise after suffering the death required by the righteousness of God.

Clause X.—That being so begotten of God, and inhabited and used by God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh—yet was, during his natural life, of **like nature with mortal man, being made of a woman, of the house and lineage of David, and therefore a sufferer, in the days of his flesh, from all the effects that came by Adam’s transgression**, including the death that passed upon all men, which he shared by partaking of their physical nature

Anyone who calls themselves a Christadelphian should be able to see what the BASF is teaching about why we grow old and die and that it definitely does not teach that “we die because we sin”. Some understanding what is written in the BASF correctly still seek to justify those who believe and teach that we die because we sin, but in so doing they are supporting clean flesh logic.

Whilst it is true that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), the context here is to do with rejection or acceptance at the judgment seat, and not the natural process of growing

old and dying: “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life though Jesus Christ our Lord” – both the wages and the gift will be given when Christ comes again. In Lesson 23 “Sin and its Consequences”; one of the online Christadelphian Bible Mission courses the connection is made between a wrong understanding regarding the sacrifice of Christ and the idea that we die because we sin as follows:

“Through the sinless life and death of Jesus, we can have the hope of life after death:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:16,17).

We die because we sin. But our sins can be forgiven through Jesus, who was described as “the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). And if our sins are completely forgiven, then like Jesus we will not stay dead but will be raised from the dead and given immortal life just as he was.”

The teaching that it was the “sinless life and death of Jesus” that was the sacrifice for sin supports clean flesh. To say “we die because we sin” is also clean flesh logic, it nullifies that we grow old and die because we have physical sin in the flesh; it is just not possible to have it both ways it is a contradiction.

This is how the errorists end up with Christ having a sinless nature, he did not sin therefore he had no sin (they reason). The true understanding of the nature and sacrifice of Christ is then lost. Compare the teaching of the Christadelphian Bible Mission and the BASF

XII.—That for delivering this message, he was put to death by the Jews and Romans, who were, however, but instruments in the hands of God, for the doing of that which He had determined before to be done, viz., **the condemnation of sin the flesh**, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, as a propitiation **to declare the righteousness of God**, as a basis for the remission of sins. All who approach God through this crucified, but risen, representative of Adam’s disobedient race, are forgiven. Therefore, by a figure, his blood cleanseth from sin.—

What the Old Paths seem to be doing is trying to bridge the gap between pure clean flesh logic by trying to have it both ways as one Old Paths member has stated it.

“There are 2 reasons for our state, namely that 1) we are physically mortal and 2) that we die because we sin”

Maybe another problem is that they are confusing the fact that all men deserve to die as a result of their transgressions with why they grow old and die. They certainly misapply a lot of scriptures that refer to judicial punishment on account of

transgressions with the reason why we grow old and die. We will look at those in our next study.

We have shown clearly here that Robert Roberts did not believe or teach that we die because we sin. We do not grow old and die because of “our crimes” we grow old and die simply because from birth we inherit the “death-written nature” which is our “misfortune not our crime”. Yes as RR puts it **men are mortal because of sin, quite independently of their own transgressions.**

Les Fern

Haggai – Consider Your Ways (5)

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDIES

The following four studies aim to look at some of the themes and topics referred to in the main text in a little more detail.

THE TWO JOSHUAS

As we have seen, both Joshua and Zerubbabel stand in the record as great leaders, charged with the responsibility of overseeing the work of restoration. Both of these men were personally engaged in labouring with their brethren, in building up the House of God. Yet both were also engaged with building up the Spiritual house – the people themselves. Joshua led the Return to Worship, whereas Zerubbabel led the Return to the Land.

There would appear to be a number of similarities between Joshua the High Priest, and Joshua the Son of Nun. In Deuteronomy 3:28, Yahweh spoke to Moses concerning Joshua the son of Nun: “Charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before his people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.” And in Deuteronomy 31:7, we find Moses obeying this command: “And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which Yahweh hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.” And before he entered the land, following the death of Moses, the Lord again encouraged him: “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Josh 1:5).

And so, the people were to enter the land under the guidance and direction of Joshua. Yet, we know how after the death of the great leader, the people fell away from his ways. And so, they were driven out of their land into captivity, to return to the land of the Chaldeans, from whence their father Abraham was called.

In Haggai, we find the Jews entering the land once more, and again they are accompanied by a man called Joshua. The parallel between Joshua the son of Josedech, and Joshua the son of Nun is reflected in Haggai 2:4. Here, the words which were used to encourage Zerubbabel and Joshua echo those spoken to the son of Nun:

“Yet now *be strong*, O Zerubbabel, saith Yahweh, and *be strong*, O, Jeshua son of Josedech, the high priest and be ye strong *all ye people of the land*, saith Yahweh, and work; for *I am with you*, saith Yahweh of hosts.”

In Joshua chapter 5, we read of how an angel appeared to Joshua. He declared himself to be the “Captain of the Host of Yahweh” (Josh 5:14). And so, Joshua was given the divine promise that he would not enter the land under his own strength, but Yahweh’s. It would not be the host of Israel which would overthrow the Amorites, but the Host of Yahweh. It is significant, that in Haggai, the phrase “Yahweh of hosts” occurs 14 times, in only two chapters. And this would be a reminder to Joshua the son of Josedech that he had the same army of *Elohim* with him as his predecessor. As the Lord declared through Haggai, referring back to the promise of the Angelic presence of Exodus 23, “According to the word of promise that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: *fear ye not*” (Hag 2:5).

In Haggai, as we have seen from the first chapter, the Children of Israel neglected the House of God. They tried to gain wealth for themselves rather than to do the Will of God. And they actually stole from the materials collected to provide for the house of Yahweh, to furnish their own! When the people entered the land under Joshua the son of Nun, they were commanded to consecrate the wealth of Jericho to the House of God. And so they did: “they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of Yahweh” (Josh 6:24).

But Achan kept some of the spoil for himself, including silver and gold (Josh 7:21). In Haggai 2, these events are alluded to. In verses 6 and 7, Yahweh speaks of when he would once again shake the heavens and earth (cp the fall of Jericho). But in verse 8, the Lord says, “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Yahweh of hosts”. As the Israelites under Joshua the son of Nun had to consecrate the silver and gold to Yahweh, so did the Jews under Joshua the son of Josedech.

Let us, therefore, take heed to this example. Whatever we have is not our own, but to be used in building the House of God. As the greater Joshua reminds us, we are merely stewards (Luke 12:42) over our Master’s goods. We must therefore use whatever we have in the Lord’s service, not to fulfil our own lusts. For if we are found so doing, when the greater Joshua comes as the Captain of our Salvation, he will lead us into our inheritance.

I WILL FILL THIS HOUSE WITH GLORY

In Haggai chapter 2, verse 3, we read of how there were those amongst the restored remnant who “saw the house in her first glory”. These were the elders of the Priests and Levites (Ezra 3:12), who would have ministered in the house, before the great

destruction. But what was the Glory which they had seen, and which was now lacking in the current building?

2 Chronicles chapter 7 tells us of the Glory which filled the house which Solomon built: “When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering; and the sacrifices, *and the Glory of Yahweh filled the house*. And the priests could not enter into the house of Yahweh, because *the glory of Yahweh had filled Yahweh’s house*” (v 1-2). This was the true Glory, not the glory of gold and silver, but the Glory of Yahweh, which signified His approval of the work completed. That Glory dwelt there, until it departed as seen by Ezekiel (Ezek. 10 & 11) prior to the temple’s destruction.

And so, the elders at the time of Haggai, having seen this glory of the previous house wept at the building of the new house. It was “as nothing” in their sight. The people were unclean (Hag 2:14), and so was “every work of their hands”. And so the restored house, not being built with the faith of Solomon, was not a fit place for the Glory of God to dwell. Yet, the elders were nevertheless wrong to discourage the people. Although the work was imperfect, there was an attempt to honour the Lord in building. Amongst the people, there were a remnant who were building in faith. And so, rather than to share the displeasure of the elders, Yahweh declared: “I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Yahweh” (Hag 1:8). And so, despite the imperfections, which rendered the house unfit as a dwelling place for God’s Glory, the labours of a faithful remnant gave pleasure to Yahweh, and he was, nevertheless, glorified.

But in chapter 2 and verse 7, the Lord gave a promise to the people. “I will shake all nations, and the desirable things (Lit. Heb, referring to the Saints) of all nations shall come: and *I will fill this house with glory*, saith Yahweh of hosts.”

Here was a promise, that following another period of judgement, when the nations shall witness the great power of Israel’s God, the house would be filled with Glory. In the Kingdom, when the house is built for a third and final time, it will be a suitable dwelling place for God. Ezekiel describes the approach of glory: “And, behold, the glory of the *Elohim* of Israel came from the way of the east (i.e. “the sun’s risings” (cp Rev 16:12), speaking of the Saints who have risen by the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2)). And his voice was like a noise of many waters; and the earth shined with his glory ... and the glory of Yahweh came into the house by the way of the gate, whose prospect is toward the east” (Ezek 43:2-4).

But this glory is different to the glory of Solomon’s temple. This glory is said to have a voice “like the noise of many waters”. When John saw a vision of “one like unto the Son of Man,” he described “his voice as the sound of many waters” (Rev 1:15). The “Son of Man” is a title often used by the Master himself. Therefore, the “one *like unto* the Son of Man” must be the body of Saints, who are like Christ. John saw a vision of the Immortalised Body of Christ in the kingdom.

This is the Glory of the House of the Age to Come, which “shall be greater than the former” (Hag 2:9). It is the Glorified Body of Christ, that great multitude which shall be energised with Immortal Power. They shall be “before the throne of God, and serve

him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them” (Rev 7:15, Is 61:1-4).

“IN THIS PLACE WILL I GIVE PEACE”

In Haggai 2:9, Yahweh promised Israel that “the Glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former ... and in this place will I give peace”. So then, although Yahweh was “yet once more” to “shake the heavens and the earth,” and so destroy the temple which the Jews were rebuilding, there will come a time of peace. No longer will the people of God be faced with a great mountain of opposition (Zech 4:7), but a new house will be built – a house which will be greater than the former. And this promised peace is not something which will be established by man’s efforts, but Yahweh’s Spirit (Zech 2:6). It will be his Gift to Man: “will I give peace”.

The Lord Jesus Christ alluded to these words, when speaking to the disciples, who were to build the Spiritual house, the Ecclesia (1 Tim 3:15). “Peace I leave with you, *my peace I give* unto you” (Jno 14:27).

And just as Yahweh exhorted Israel, “Fear ye not,” for “my spirit remaineth among you (Hag 2:5), so the Master exhorted his disciples, “let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jno 14:27). For after his departure, they would not be left alone. “The comforter which is the Holy Spirit” would be sent. This would be “another comforter, that he may abide with you for an *aion* (age)” (Jno 14:16). Moreover, the Master had just spoken of the Millennial House: “In my Father’s house are many abiding places (lit. Grk): if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (Jno 14:2).

And so, even though the Master was to depart, and the temple was to be destroyed, as spoken of by Haggai, the disciples would be given peace, and the assurance of Yahweh’s presence with them. But in our day, we do not in any sense receive the Holy Spirit. Yet, we also are assured that He is with us through the ministrations of a host of Angels. They are all “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb 1:14).

We, then, are heirs of the promise of peace. But “not as the world giveth,” that is, simply a cessation of violence. Nay, we are the heirs of true peace – peace between God and Man. Yet in order to have a part in this peace, we must not be discouraged in the way. We must rather build up ourselves in our most holy faith (Jude 20), labouring to rebuild and strengthen the house of God where it is decaying. We must keep ourselves in the love of God, “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).

ZERUBBABEL THE SIGNET

The prophecy of Haggai concludes with a promise to Zerubbabel: “in that day, saith Yahweh of Hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith Yahweh, and will make thee a Signet: for I have chosen thee, saith Yahweh of Hosts” (Hag 2:23).

As we have seen, a Signet, or Seal, is an engraved device, usually on a ring, or other ornament. When pressed into a suitable substance, such as wax or clay, it left a mark identical to its engravings. The mark was unique to the owner of the seal, and rather like a signature, showed the identity of one who had, say, sent a letter (as in 1 Kings 21:8). In Revelation 7, the Seal is used in a symbolic way, in a vision revealed to John:

“And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow upon the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, *having the seal of the Living God*; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have *sealed* the servants of our God in their foreheads” (v 1-3).

Thus, four angels are seen holding back the four winds of Yahweh’s judgments. And they are told by a fifth “angel”, to continue holding back the winds. This angel, unlike the other four, was in possession of “the seal of the living God”. This was because he had a different purpose. The role of the first four angels was that of judgment, whereas the role of the fifth was that of sealing.

This fifth angel was a single angel. Yet, he says, “Till *we* have sealed the servants of *our* God. This one angel then, represents a multitude, who have a single purpose, to “seal” the servants of Yahweh (cp v 3) in their foreheads. The forehead in Scripture can represent the mind. The “seal” which this multitudinous “angel” possesses is engraved with certain principles, when are impressed upon the minds (foreheads) of the servants. Thus, the seal is the Word of Yahweh, the principles of which become indelibly imprinted upon the minds of the faithful (see Ezek 9:4). The multitudinous “angel”, or “messenger” as the Greek word means, therefore represents the multitude of preachers who sought to impress the principles of the Gospel upon the minds of those who would receive it.

It is interesting to note that there are a number of parallels in this chapter which link up with our studies in Haggai. Firstly, both speak of a *seal*: Zerubbabel is to become a seal; the saints were to become sealed. Haggai, as we have seen, speaks of the shortage of food and wine in the land. But Revelation 7 gives the promise, “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst no more ... for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters” (v 16,17). And the servants who are sealed shall “serve” the Almighty “day and night in his Temple”, which Temple, Haggai informs us, will be filled with glory. Finally, verse 9 describes the saints as being “of all nations” – a reference to Haggai 2:7, as we have already seen.

But Zerubbabel was not promised that he would be “sealed”, rather he would become the seal itself. In this matter, Zerubbabel stands as a Type of Christ. No only was the Master “sealed” (Jno 6:27) by his Father, but he was an embodiment of the seal itself. He was “the word made flesh” (Jno 1:14). Not only did Jesus receive the seal, but he became as one with it. He himself became the seal, as the words he spoke left their impression upon the minds of those who would hear them. In the Song of Solomon chapter 8, the Bride speaks to her beloved: “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal

upon thine arm.” (Song 8:6). So, the bride is here portrayed as desiring to become a seal. And so it will be that the immortalised saints will manifest the glory of Yahweh, as they seek to impress His Word upon the minds of the mortal inhabitants of the Age to Come.

But a seal was also a token of authority. So, Pharaoh gave Joseph his seal, enabling him to make decrees. And Mordecai was given the king’s seal for a similar purpose. The word is also used of Coniah, a king who was given authority to rule, and make decrees over Judah. But, as a seal which no longer makes a good impression, he was “plucked hence” (Jer 22:24). And so, being promised to be the chosen Seal, Zerubbabel, as a type of Christ, is promised that he will be given the authority to rule by his Father in the future kingdom Age. And as the Bride is to become a Seal also, this promise applies to us, if we show the faith of Zerubbabel. This is the glorious hope we have, that we might show forth the likeness and image of our Master, and that we might be chosen to rule with him in the Age to come.

(Concluded)

Christopher Maddocks

Our Motto

The following was penned by brother John Thomas regarding a change of wording on the cover of The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come in 1852, and contains sentiments relevant to our work:

Though we have changed the sentence expressing the subject of our paper, we have by no means abandoned the thing itself. This would be impossible. Ruin, slavery, and death, are preferable to such a departure from the only thing that sweetens life and makes its evils tolerable. “The faith,” and *the contention for the faith*“ once for all delivered to the Saints,” are the most interesting as well as important subjects of thought and action that can be presented to the human mind. They are the only things upon which we enter with any spirit or energy of mind; for there is no real abiding profit to be derived from any thing else. Abandon the faith then, and cease to contend for it! Let not our readers impute to their friend so evil a thing. We have changed our motto, not as significative of this, but that it may be superseded by another strikingly expressive of “the faith” for which we do earnestly contend.

Our paper is the *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*. A stranger taking it up and casting his eye upon the title would very naturally inquire, “Of what kingdom in this republican country is this paper the Herald?” In the former volume he would see the motto, “Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints”—“What faith is this?” he might add. “What is it about; is there a new question in politics? Are the saints tired of republicanism and going to found a kingdom for themselves? Is this their faith for which the Herald professes to contend? If it be, the sooner our authorities look after them the better; for the greatest revolutions have ever resulted from small beginnings.”

Now, to keep these authorities in their proper place, and to give sensitive strangers all the information possible in a few words, we have set forth a new motto that will at once show him for what the Saints are patiently waiting; what is to be the fate of all other kingdoms; and *by what power* they are to be demolished and expunged for ever. When, therefore, he shall read our new motto, it may strike him, notwithstanding all his admiration of the regenerative influence and potency of republicanism and democracy, that they are not exactly the “sanctified ones” by whose power the Lord of heaven and earth proposes to abolish the existing royalties of the world!

By comparing the motto with Daniel 2:44, in the common version, it will be seen that it differs a little in the reading. Our rendering of the Chaldee is more literal and accordant with other parts of the same book. The first variation is in the expression of the time. The common version is not so emphatic as the original words. “In *their* days (even) of *those* kings” points more precisely to *the Toedivisions of the Fourth Kingdom*, than the words “*in the days of these kings*.” The phrase *beyomayhon* signifies “in their days;” then follow *di malchayyah innun* “of those kings.” We have only inserted *even* to show that “their” is explained by “those kings.”—*In their days—of those kings* is the plain English of the text.

The Fourth Kingdom still exists, only in its divided form. Speaking in general terms, we may say that it has assumed three forms—one, in which it was a united dominion under one head; a second, in which it was united under two heads; and a third, in which it is disunited under two heads, and ten smaller divisions. It has not yet, however, passed through all the forms predetermined. The fourth kingdom has yet to exist in its fourth form, which will be its last. Under this its final constitution, it will be *united under One Head bearing rule over Seven dependent royalties*.

This Fourth Kingdom, represented by the iron legs and ferro-aluminous feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image, endures symbolically from its union, or incorporation with *the brazen thigh-kingdoms* of the Macedonians, till the manifestation of the Stone-kingdom which grinds it to powder. The One Head who rules the fourth kingdom at the crisis of its fate, and has dominion over the Toes is the Head of Gold, a king of Assyria, and prefigured by Nebuchadnezzar, who may be regarded as the first individual of the Golden Dynasty. The king of Assyria in all ages, from Nimrod to Christ’s glorious advent, is he who encloses the old Assyrian territory within the limits of his dominion. Hence, Darius the Persian, who reigned from India to Ethiopia over an hundred and twenty-seven provinces, is styled by Ezra “*the king of Assyria*.” and hence also the Czar, whose dominion when consummated will be vastly more extensive than Darius’, is styled in prophecy “*the Assyrian*” and “The King.” This Assyrian king cannot be any of the ancient rulers by that name, for he is declared to be contemporary with the day when Israel shall cast away his idols to the moles and to the bats;³ when the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth, and men shall be afraid of him, because of the glory of his majesty; and when He alone shall be exalted. Here then is a long line of kings—the kings of the Golden Head, the kings of the Silver Breast and Arms, and the kings of the Brazen Body and Thighs. But these never reigned over the Fourth kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Alexander, and the Seleucidæ were all kings of Assyria, but never of the Iron Power. As yet the Head of Gold—“*the Assyrian*”—has presided over only three fourths of the Image; but it is as necessary to the decorum of the symbol—a

colossal man—that he should preside over the Legs and Feet, as it is that the human head should direct the motions of all the members of the human body. Where then are we to look for the Assyrian? None of Julius Cæsar’s successors who have ruled the Iron Legs, nor any of the kings of the Toe-royalties, ever ruled Assyria, or had any claim to be regarded as the Assyrian. The Assyrian Head of the Fourth Kingdom must be looked for in the Scythian dynasty that now, as yet indeed, only rules Assyria in part. That dynasty is the Czar’s. He is the Image’s Head of Gold when it stands complete upon its Feet “*in the latter days*,” for the Image is the symbol of the Assyrian’s dominion when the Stone-power shall contend with it in battle.

The One Head, then, bearing rule over the seven dependent royalties is the Assyrian Autocrat. At present they are independent. They have no imperial chief who directs their policy to one common end. Great events must happen to bring them under his dominion. The probability is, that finding themselves too weak to contend successfully against the armed and combatant Democracy, the governments will place themselves under the protectorate of the Assyrian, who will guarantee to them their existence as kingdoms but without power to form alliances, or to act in any way in foreign affairs independent of his will. Whatever turns up among the nations the seven kingdoms will continue to exist until the Stone-power is revealed. Their thrones are to be cast down, but the Democracy cannot do it so as to keep them down. The Assyrian will be their guard. He will be ready to sustain them “until the words of God be fulfilled.”

“And in their days even of those kings will the God of heaven set up a kingdom.” In the days of which of all these kings we have treated of will God do this? That learned mystifier and perverter of plain truth, Moses Stuart, professor of profane nonsense, which “theologians” term “Sacred Literature,” has the absurdity to aver that the kings referred to are ten kings who preceded Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the Seleucidæ who flourished upwards of 2000 years ago! His words are “the Little Horn beyond all reasonable doubt symbolizes Antiochus Epiphanes.” Having said truly that the *Ten Toes* and the *Ten Horns* represent the same kings, he goes on to say, “the ten toes appear to designate in special manner, the ten kings who precede the king symbolized by the Little Horn, whose reign and character correspond well with the symbol of the iron and the clay.” “Those kings must of course mean the kings that belong to the fourth dynasty (the Antiochian) although they have not thus far been expressly named, but only by implication.” But seeing that the Fifth, or Stone, kingdom has not yet been set up, how does Professor Stuart make it break the kings of the Antiochian dynasty in pieces? Hear him! “When the Fourth Dynasty is crushed, which virtually comprised all the others, then the whole are represented as being crushed. If the crushing took place, as being necessary to *prepare* for the coming or ushering in of the fifth kingdom, then it may be well said that this kingdom occasioned the crushing. It is enough, that before the fifth dynasty becomes actually established, the other preceding dynasties are no more. This last circumstance seems very plainly to oppose the idea that the *Roman* dominion constitutes the fourth dynasty; for this had not reached its acme when Christianity was established.”

Another professor, of “*Sacred History*,” differs from Moses Stuart, and avers that the kings in whose days the God of heaven sets up the kingdom are *Roman emperors*, to wit: Augustus and Tiberius Cæsars! But why should we trouble the reader with learned

nonsense any more? We will not. We only quote these “authorities” that they may know how blind are they who say they see, and whom the people are wont to look up to as the great and blazing luminaries of the age!

The Fourth Kingdom is the Assyrian’s “whose princes are altogether kings.” It began with the Roman, and ends with the Assyrian, to whom the ten Toe-kingdoms belong—kingdoms which though on the Roman territory, were never subject to the Roman emperors; but not only so, they had no existence in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, nor in those of Augustus and Tiberius; no, not even for centuries after their reigns. They do, however, now exist and will exist until the Stone-power puts an end to them for ever. Their kings, the last of the race, will witness with dismay the introduction and growth of the power of their invincible enemy, who will not only defeat them and bind them in captive chains, but seize their kingdoms and make a spoil of all they call “their own.”

The fourth or Iron Kingdom is symbolized in the seventh of Daniel by “*a Fourth Beast.*” The prophet has a vision of it in which it is presented to him under two aspects. He saw it first as having conquered all before it, and subsequently divided into Ten Independent Kingdoms, which he terms “horns.” In its second aspect, he sees it subdivided into *Eight governments* yet all one Beast or dominion. These Eight are seven regal and one imperial. He saw how this change of constitution was produced, namely, *by war.* Of the ten Toe, or Horn, kingdoms, the Imperial Power which arises after them, conquers three, thus reducing the ten to seven. “He shall subdue three kings,” says the interpreter; a subjugation which makes the victor imperial. This imperiality originates with Charlemagne, the founder of the “Holy Roman Empire,” which was temporally suspended in 1806, and renewed in the Austro-Papal in 1815. As such it still exists at this the crisis of its fate, but even now as the mere satellite of the Assyrian Czar. It is only prevented from falling to pieces by the support it derives from him. When the house of Hapsburg loses its dominion, the Imperiality of the Fourth Beast will be Assyrian, the Head of which will receive the kingdom of the ten kings for one hour, even until the words of God shall be fulfilled; for they have one mind, and shall agree to give their power and strength to him until then. Now, it is the kings of these ten divisions of the fourth beast or kingdom who will be contemporary with the Stone-power; for “they shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall” do to them what is affirmed of the kingdom in our motto, grind them to powder and bring them to an end, or “overcome them.” It is “in their days even of those kings” the kingdom of God shall be established.

In the common version it reads, “the God of heaven shall set up *a kingdom* * * * and *the kingdom* shall not be left to other people;” but in our motto this rendering is varied somewhat. There it reads, “he shall set up *a kingdom* and *a dominion.*” This distinction evidently obtains in the original Chaldee. The word used there for “kingdom” is *malchu*, while that for “dominion” is *malcuthahh*. It is also sustained by parallel testimony as well as by a verbal difference. This may be seen by turning to the reference below, where Daniel tells us that he saw one like the Son of Man to whom there was given “*dominion*, glory, and *a kingdom.*” It is true that “dominion” in this text is *shahltahn* authority or empire, and not *malcuthahh*; but the reason of that is that the latter is *dominion delegated* to the saints, which is not left to another people; while the

shahltahn is dominion *absolute* conferred upon the Son of Man. Our motto, then, contains the glorious announcement to the saints of God that he intends to establish in the earth *a kingdom and an empire* which shall be imperishable; and that they who shall possess them at their institution shall possess them always, for the dominion “shall not be left to another people;” but the saints shall possess it, for “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

But while our motto proclaims such “*glad tidings*” to the Saints, it heralds forth dismay to every son of Adam interested in the continuance of the Fourth Monarchy and in the perpetuity of “*all dominions*” contemporary with it. Hear this, ye kings of the Roman earth, that your kingdoms are to be ground to powder and to be put an end to! And ye also, O ye rulers of the world, be ye absolutists or constitutional, republican or regal, ye are to have your dominion taken away; and the Saints whom ye know not,¹¹ and whom ye have despised, opposed, and prevailed against, are to possess it in your stead. Righteous is God; just and true in all his ways is the King of Saints. The world’s rulers and their people are his enemies and hostile to his sons, therefore according to the measure they have meted out, so will he measure to them again.

Our motto, moreover, announces in part the nature of the Stone-power, or kingdom, which constitutes with all its attributes the subject-matter of “*the faith*” for which the Saints contend earnestly. And by the way, we would remark, that they have no scriptural right to reckon themselves of the Saints who do not believe in this kingdom according to its true character; nor are they of the Saints in the gospel or higher sense, who though they believe do not become subject to “the law of faith,” that is, to the obedience which it requires. Having stated this much on account of faithfulness, we proceed to say, that our motto declares the kingdom which God is about to set up to be *a military power* and imperishable, and therefore invincible.

The common version says, “it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms,” or divisions of the fourth monarchy. The Chaldee phrase is *taddik vethahsaiph*. The root *dahkak* signifies to *beat* or *grind small, reduce to powder*; hence *dak* a substantive signifying *small dust*. We prefer “*it shall grind to powder*” as the rendering of *taddik*, rather than “it shall break in pieces,” because that interpretation has been sanctioned by Jesus himself. Referring to our motto he said, “What is this then that is written, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Chief Priests and Pharisees, 5:45) and given to a people bringing fourth the fruits thereof.¹³ And whosoever shall fall upon *this* Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will *grind him to powder*.” The word in the Greek is *likmeesei* “to winnow grain; to scatter like chaff any thing broken fine; by implication, to grind to powder, dash in pieces, destroy.” Such are the words used to express *the nature of the power* employed in bringing the royalties of the Fourth Kingdom to an end. According to college professors and their satellites, the crushing or grinding operation which is to exterminate the kingdoms, is preaching what they call the gospel, by which all kings and potentates and peoples will come to do God’s will on earth, and hell will be no longer receiving accessions of disembodied souls to the

decillions already there! Grinding to powder kingdoms by preaching! By preaching commenced on Pentecost, when the kingdoms of the fourth monarchy to be so reduced had no existence whatever! Is this learned nonsense, or ignorant foolishness? Whatever it is we do not envy the college divines all the renown of the exegesis!

But let us turn from them to the truly wise and great men of Israel. In speaking of this destruction of the fourth kingdom and its divisions, Isaiah writes thus—"The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee afar off, and shall be chased *as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like thistledown before the whirlwind.*" Again, "*Then (baydayin, at that very time) were iron, clay (the Feet and Legs) brass, silver, and gold, ground to powder together—dahku chakhadah—and they became like chaff of the summer threshing floor; and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them; and The Stone which smote the Image became a great mountain, and filled all the earth.*" This is a contemporaneous and most complete grinding to powder. Not a vestige of them remains—not even space to receive them were their existence possible; for the place previously occupied by them is taken possession of by the Conqueror whose power is submitted to by all the earth. The meanest intellect must comprehend what it is to grind metal to powder. It is a pounding, rasping, violent operation, by which it is broken down and comminuted into the finest dust; so that the molecular attraction being completely overcome, it is easily blown away by the wind. This familiar process, then, of reducing hard substances to dust is referred to in our motto to give the reader some idea of the manner in which the kingdom of God will "bring to an end" the Assyrian and the Royalties over which he will have established his dominion.

We have said that the kingdom of God in its beginning is a military power. By a military power, we mean, that "the King of the Jews" will set it up after the same manner that Joshua set up the Commonwealth of Israel in the land of the seven nations he subdued. He will gather armies together, which will consist of officers and privates, armed with weapons even as the armies of the kingdoms are accoutred, whose honor and glory it will be to outgeneral and overthrow them in the name of the Lord, whose power will co-operate with them as in the days of old. Now, if the reader be a disciple of Moses Stuart, of the Evergreat, of John Wesley, Calvin, or Martin Luther, or one whose mind is unenlightened by "the Testimony of God," he will hold up his hands in most lack-a-daisical astonishment, and perhaps conclude that we are beside ourselves. But before he comes to conclusions we would inquire of him—Do you know what is written in the prophets, and if you know do you understand it? What would you say of us if you were to hand to us a book we had never looked into, and you were to tell us that such and such was written in it, and we were to laugh at you for a fool and deny that there was any such thing contained therein? Would you not conclude that the ignorance, the folly, and the ill-manners were on our side? You would conclude rightly; for no wise or reasonable and well-bred man would pass a judgment upon a matter without considering it.

If the reader reflect upon what is to be accomplished he will see the necessity of a military power arising that shall be stronger than those already in existence. The work to be done is to overthrow all kingdoms and dominions; to set up one instead of them, which shall have rule over the whole earth; and to put an end to the study and practice

of war. There are in Europe alone about 3,000,000 of men who live by soldiering. It is by these the governments are sustained, and society defended as at present constituted. The world-rulers are wicked spirits, and so are the priests that minister unto them; and if they were ever so much disposed to believe and obey the truth, which they are not, and will never be, there are none able to teach them. You cannot persuade such men as these to disband, and study war no more; nor can you induce them to “renounce the devil and all his works with all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world;” in doing which they would have to abdicate their crowns, and titles, and wealth, and honors, and become the poor of Christ’s flock. And suppose they did, *who would assume the government of the world?* The people! Bah, the people are as evil as their rulers, for it has ever been “like priests like people;” so that to put the reins in their hands would only be a change of drivers equally devoted to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

That man knows but little of human nature, and has studied the history of the world to but little purpose, who can imagine that its evils can be cured by preaching and persuasion; or who thinks that kings priests and nobles will strip themselves of all their glory, honor, wealth, and power, and dismiss their soldiers to cultivate the fields, from conviction of its benefit to other people. Men are so constituted, especially those who fancy themselves “born to command,” and grow up like wild beasts of the forest, as is the case with the world-rulers, that they will die and be the death of thousands, yea, millions, rather than lose caste and position and power in society. This is doubtless wisely so ordered, for it will involve them at last in a contest that will be their ruin. We have only space now to say, that the Bible reveals that the work to be done will be effected upon the same principle that one kingdom overthrows another—host will encounter host until victory shall remain with the strongest. What purpose does the reader suppose God had in scattering Israel among the nations, and in accumulating them in greater numbers where the tyrannies are the strongest?

The Bible reveals, that their king may make use of them as his battle-axe and weapons of war in subduing the kingdoms. And why are not the living saints to be immortalized as soon as the dead are raised? Is it not because he has use for them as men in the flesh to take command of Israel in the wars of the kingdom? For is it not said concerning all the Saints, “Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the nations, even punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron: to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his Saints?” Does it not say also that the Gentile powers “prevailed against them until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the Saints of the Most High?” And again, “the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion, *to consume and to destroy it to the end?*” This is the work of the Saints, to co-operate with Israel’s king and his hosts in grinding the kingdoms to powder, and so bringing them to an end. Let the reader think on these things, and give his mind to learn.

(John Thomas, *Herald Vol. 1852, pp. 2–8*)