

“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)

Colossians – An Exhortation for Unity in Love (7)

"THE CIRCUMCISION MADE WITHOUT HANDS"

In our previous studies, we have seen how the inspired Apostle warned the Colossians of the Judaisers, who sought to add elements of the Mosaic Law (combined with their own traditions) to the requirements of the Gospel. And a key feature of their “philosophy”, was the insistence on Circumcision for salvation. They taught “except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1), and it is this requirement which is especially dealt with in the Epistle to the Colossians, where Paul expounds the true significance of circumcision, and how the spiritual points it taught might be manifested by the disciple. He speaks of the Lord Jesus as being “the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11). In some sense then, although the Gentile believers at Colosse were physically uncircumcised (2:13), the spirit of circumcision took place in their union with Christ, for in him they are deemed to be “circumcised” - but “without hands”.

In actual fact, the ordinance of Circumcision did not originate in the Law, irrespective of what claims the Judaisers had made. The Lord Jesus made this clear in his dialogue with the Jews: “Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man” (Jno 7:22). The reason why Moses enjoined circumcision upon Israel then, was not because it formed part of the other ordinances which came by him, but because it was “of the fathers”. It was a practice which became incorporated into the Law, but in actual fact, had it’s origin with the Abraham (Acts 7:8), and was associated with the giving of the New Covenant to him.

CIRCUMCISION - A TOKEN OF FAITH IN THE NEW COVENANT

Genesis chapter 17, verses 1-9 describes the giving of certain promises to Abraham, including the establishment of a covenant between him and his seed - particularly the pre-eminent seed, even the Lord Jesus Christ. It speaks ultimately of the future, when Abraham’s seed shall be given - with him: “all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God”. And as a token of that covenant, the practice of circumcision was commanded:

“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his

foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant” (Gen 17:10-14).

In these words, we find a number of important details which are interesting to note. Firstly, circumcision was enjoined upon certain Gentiles as well as Jews - those who had been “bought with money of any stranger”, and had by this means become part of Abraham’s household. So we have in Type, the manner in which Gentiles could become joined to the household of faith, being “bought” by the shed blood of Christ; as the Apostle wrote immediately after his discourse on Circumcision: “he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (see 1Cor 7:18-23). And as we saw earlier, in Christ, all members of the household become, in a sense circumcised, but “without hands”, for “he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom 2:29).

But another point which is not immediately apparent in the Genesis record, is that circumcision was given as a token of Abraham’s faith in the Covenant made with him: “faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness ... not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also ...” (Rom 4:9-11). Circumcision then, was a “sign”, which spoke of the faith of Abraham in Yahweh’s covenant with him, made when he was yet “uncircumcised”. This was the significance of circumcision under the Law - it should have reminded Abraham’s natural seed of the principles of the New Covenant, and the promises which Abraham had faith in. It was given as a token of faith, and in essence, taught the Jew that righteousness was not by the observance of Law, but by sharing the faith which Abraham had - of which it was a “sign”. And in this way, it would have led them to the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the promises relate, and through whom they are to be accomplished.

Circumcision then, was a physical sign which distinguished Israel from the nations around them, to be a people chosen by God. Literally speaking, it was the cutting off of the flesh, and so carries the spiritual signification of cutting off the fleshly lusts of the heart. As we cited earlier, “circumcision is that of the heart” (Rom 2:29). It spoke of the faith which ought to have been manifested in Abraham’s seed, and so speaks of righteousness and purity - whereas “uncircumcision” in Scripture speaks of the way of the flesh, or defilement and is a term of reference to some of the ungodly Gentile nations, most notably the Philistines (Jud. 15:18, 1Sam. 14:6, 17:26,36 etc). So Israel, although literally circumcised, were exhorted by Moses to “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked” (Deut 10:16). Yet although the people went through various phases of national faithfulness, the cutting off of the flesh can be very painful; and not at all pleasing to the natural man. Thus, the foreskin of their hearts remained. They failed to heed the word of the Living God, for the barrier of the flesh obstructed their spiritual hearing, as Jeremiah lamented: “behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of Yahweh is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it” (Jer 6:10). He, as Moses exhorted the people: “Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men

of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings” (Jer 4:4), but they failed to hearken, and so the promised destruction duly came.

The matter does not end there for Israel, however, for the New Covenant, of which the “sign” of Circumcision testified, is yet to be accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ, as the “Deliverer” who shall “come out of Sion ... and shall turn away ungodliness out of Jacob. So Moses spoke of this time - the time of Israel’s future regathering, and subsequent glorification in the land: “Yahweh thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Yahweh thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deut 31:6). This verse leaves us in no doubt what it is to be Circumcised; it is to remove the fleshly covering of our hearts which proves to be a barrier to things Divine. It is to become Spiritually renewed, that we might love Yahweh, Israel’s God, with all our hearts and soul, that we might become heirs of everlasting life, according to the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant. And in that day, all who dwell in Jerusalem - and all who pass through there on their annual pilgrimage to give homage to the King of Kings, shall be spiritually circumcised, for thus saith the Lord to Zion; “put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the circumcised and the unclean” (Is 52:1)

We then, are “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands” (Col 2:11), if we have faith in Abraham’s Greater Seed. As the Apostle taught the Philippians, “we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3). Literal circumcision was but the literal removal of a small part of the body. But circumcision in Christ is far greater, for it is “the putting of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11, cp Rom 6:6). Let us therefore rejoice in the faith of Abraham’s God, that we also might find life in Him!

Christopher Maddocks

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1pm Monday 10th November

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Joab – Captain of the Host

In our daily readings of late, we have been considering the example of David, and those who were with him. For our study today, we shall consider the character of Joab, the captain of David's army.

The first point to notice about Job, is that he was related to David. The record in Chronicles speaks of David "whose sisters were Zuriyah and Abigail. And the sons of Zuriyah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three" (1 Chron. 2:16). This would make Joab David's nephew, and this family association may well have a bearing on the events that would transpire between them. Be that as it may, he became the captain of David's army (see 2 Sam. 8:16), and remained such for the most part throughout David's reign, until he rebelled at the last.

Picking up the record of 2 Samuel, we read of the way in which Abner slew Asahel, Joab's brother. After a particular skirmish between Abner, the captain of Saul's army, and Joab, David's captain, Asahel chased after Abner:

"and Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? How then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place ..." (2 Sam. 2:23).

The events that follow provide an insight into the character of Joab: he sought vengeance for his brother's spilt blood. 2 Samuel 3 recounts how David made peace with Abner, who humbled himself before the king, in recognition of the Divine promises: "to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba" (2 Sam. 3:10). But rather than to recognise the peace treaty, Joab took matters into his own hands:

"and when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother" (2 Sam. 3:27).

And again, we read that:

"so Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle" (2 Sam. 3:30).

Although Joab slew Abner under the pretext of it being for the good of the kingdom, it is evident that the real reason was because of Asahel's death, and the need to avenge it. The Apostle Paul taught: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). Yet this is what Joab had done, which displeased David very greatly:

“And afterward, when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before Yahweh for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father’s house ...” (2 Sam. 3:28-29).

Maybe there is an allusion to this event in Psalm 7: “O Yahweh my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it ...” (Psa. 7:3-5).

It would appear that Joab was a valiant warrior, as the captain of David’s army. He became chief because of his courageous defeat of the Jebusites: “and David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief” (1 Chron. 11:6). He was evidently a very focussed individual, devoted to service as a good soldier – even more than king David on one occasion which we shall shortly consider. Again, Paul wrote concerning those who engage in the warfare of faith:

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

This was the spirit of Joab: a mighty man, who fearlessly discharged his duty as a soldier of David’s guard. However, David himself, who was chosen of Yahweh to be a good soldier did become entangled with the affairs of this life. 2 Samuel 11 recounts his rather sordid affair with Bath-Sheba, and Joab had his part to play in this matter also.

DAVID AND BATH-SHEBA

The narrative of 2 Samuel 11 recounts how that on an occasion where Joab went out to war, David remained at home:

“And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel: and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem” (2 Sam. 11:1).

The record continues to describe how David beheld Bath-Sheba washing herself, and the chain of events that led to him committing adultery with her. Moreover, to compound his sin further, he gave instruction for Joab to set her husband Uriah “in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die” (2 Sam. 11:15). And Joab complied without protest. Uriah was also an example of one who refused to be entangled with the affairs of this life, and was loyal to his master to the end. The Psalms, particularly Psalms 51 and 32 recount the depths of David’s repentance, yet the record of David’s life is blighted by this matter: “a dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour” (Ecc. 10:1).

Joab seems to be uncomplaining, and complicit in the matter. He gave Uriah over to the hands of the Ammonitish enemy, which brought about his death. Perhaps it is in a similar way, that the Jews handed the Lord over to the Romans, and had him put to death by their hand. Certainly, it is the way that Saul sought to have David himself slain by the hand of the Philistines: a fleshly way of dealing with a problem that never should have arisen.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

The record continues in 2 Samuel 14 to describe the circumstances of Absalom being reunited with his father David, at the instigation of Joab. The Lord taught “blessed are the peace makers” (Mat. 5:9), and this is what Joab turned out to be on this occasion. However Absalom rebelled against his father, and sought to take the kingdom, necessitating David and his household to flee. There were many who fled with David, as indicated when “David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds over them” (2 Sam. 18:1). In his strategy to take control of the kingdom again, David gave instruction concerning his wayward son:

“and the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom” (2 Sam. 18:5).

Joab, however, disregarded the command of the king, and slew his son: “... he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom” (vs. 14), and so killed him. Perhaps he was doing so, bearing in mind the commandment of the Law: “he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death” (Exo. 21:17). This certainly applied to Absalom, who sought the destruction of his own father.

David, however, was much displeased, and wept for his son – see 2 Samuel 19:1-8. And it would appear that it was for this reason that he replaced Joab as captain of the host: “and say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bond, and of my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab” (2 Sam. 19:13). So it was that Joab was deposed, and Amasa exalted as head of the Armies of Israel. Joab, however, was keen to have his job back, and killed Amasa to obtain his goal – so it was that he slew two captains of Israel: Abner and Amasa. David later commanded Solomon:

“Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and ***shed the blood of war in peace***, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet” (1 Kings 2:5)

And again:

“And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men *more righteous and better than he*, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah” (1 Kings 2:32).

THE NUMBERING OF ISRAEL

2 Samuel chapter 24 recounts the occasion when David was moved to number Israel – and Joab protested:

“And Joab said unto the king, Now Yahweh thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? Notwithstanding the king’s word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the host” (2 Sam. 24:4).

There is a principle in Scripture, that numbers are not too important. Jonathan had the faith that “there is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many of by few” (1 Sam. 14:6). And Jesus himself taught: “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:14). The Truthholders have always been a minority group in each given generation, but when brought together by the Lord in the kingdom, they will be “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9). To desire to number the congregation of God then, is a futile enterprise, with no material benefit. In this matter, Joab proved himself to be more righteous than David, for he appears to have recognised this point.

JOAB’S DEMISE

At the end of David’s life, Adonijah his brother sought to seize control of the kingdom – and Joab supported him: “he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him” (1 Kings 21:7). For the most part, during the reign of David, Joab was loyal to his king: but at the time of his death, Joab turned against his Lord, and conspired with the High Priest to aid Adonijah’s revolt. As a consequence of this, and for slaying two other captains, Solomon was instructed: “Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace” (1 Kings 2:6).

Exodus 21:14 reads: “if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die ...”. This was certainly the case with Joab: when the coup against David failed and Solomon was enthroned instead, Joab – the slayer of two “innocent” men – went into the Tabernacle, and laid hold of the altar:

“Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of Yahweh, and caught hold on the horns of the altar” (1 Kings 2:28).

Subsequently, the king gave the command, and Joab was slain whilst grasping the horns of the Altar: "... and Yahweh shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever ...' (1 Kings 2:31-33).

The name "Joab" signifies "Yah is Father", and he chose Adonijah, whose name means "the Lord Is Yah", instead of David, the "beloved". The name "Barabbas" means "son of the Father", and he was chosen by the people instead of Jesus, God's Beloved Son. But the Lord "through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14). He was, as it were, the acceptable sacrifice upon the Altar. As the antitypical Altar, the true believers approach him in faith, to be sanctified by association with him (cp. Exo. 29:37). Joab, although he was right in some things – like protesting against David numbering Israel – was fundamentally a man of the flesh. Like so many men, he knew what he wanted, and had the determination, and courage to succeed: he would stop at nothing to secure his position, even to the killing of the "innocent". He forsook David at his most vulnerable state, just before his death, and thus displayed his true character. Though he laid hold upon the Altar, it did not sanctify him, but he was rather slain there. But by contrast, the true believers offer up their lives in Sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) and will so be rewarded by the Greater than Solomon, the prince of peace, at the commencement of his reign.

Christopher Maddocks

"We Are His Workmanship"

In our chapter for today, the Apostle describes matters of fundamental importance to the servants of the Lord:

"... for by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:8-10).

There are a number of important points here: firstly, we are saved by Grace, and not of works. The significance of this can be seen in Romans chapter 4: "... therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ..." (Rom. 4:16). If salvation were by works, then no man would be saved, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). But the fact that it is by grace makes it "sure" and certain. For those who follow the ways of the spirit, their hope of salvation is indeed sure and certain, like an anchor "both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6:19). And in his parable of the two ways, Jesus taught that for those

who walk on the narrow way, their destination is guaranteed – it only leads to one destination, which is eternal life (Mat. 7:14).

However, in our verse cited above, works do have a place. Whilst salvation is a gift by grace, “we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works”. If we are men and women of faith, we need to demonstrate that faith in the things that we do, else our faith will be dead, being alone (see James – entire Epistle). But those works are themselves of God, “we are his workmanship”. God Himself has a purpose with the believers, being developed as a new creation (i.e. “created in Christ Jesus”). And ultimately, the faithful works of the believer are of Him, and part of the outworking of that Purpose.

Paul taught the Philippian that: “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). Notice that all things are of God: it is He that works within us causing us to both want to do His Will, and to actually perform it. But how is this accomplished? Not by some nebulous Holy Spirit infusion as some would have us believe, but by the indwelling of His Word of Truth:

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, *which effectually worketh also in you that believe*” (1 Thes. 2:13).

It is the Word of God which worketh “effectually” in the believer’s heart, enabling them to will and to do of His Good Pleasure. We must therefore give attendance to that Word, studying it diligently, that it may produce the works of God, lest we be found workmen that need to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).

It is written that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth all things ...” (1 Cor. 2:14-15).

It logically follows then, that in order to receive spiritual things, we need to have a change of mindset. As it is also written: “be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed *by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

The process is described by Paul thus: “... so then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Notice that here, hearing itself comes from the word of God. “The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, Yahweh hath made even both of them” (Prov. 20:12). The more we study and attend to the Word of God, the more receptive we can become to Divine Principles. And by allowing the word of Christ to dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16), we can be part of a new Creation brought about by the expression of that Word.

BEGOTTEN BY THE WORD

Just as the Genesis creation came about by the sending forth of God's word (i.e. "Let there be Light"), even so the New Creation is brought about by God sending the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ into the believer's hearts (2 Cor 4:6). This brings about a spiritual rebirth:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3).

And again, the believers are:

"... born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23).

This is God's "workmanship". It is brought about by both His Providence, and the influence of His Word being sent forth, which brings forth children, born from above (Jno. 3:3): newborn babes committed to the doing of His Will. And as babies grow into adults, so the believers must grow and mature into members of the complete body of Christ:

"that we henceforth be ***no more children***, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the Truth in love, may ***grow up*** into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ ..." (Eph. 4:14-15).

HIS WORKMANSHIP

The important point to note is that in every aspect of the system of Salvation ordained by God is arranged that man cannot glory in man. God is the first cause, the prime mover in all things: there is no scope for man to boast: all glory is to Him alone. Any good work that we can achieve is not of ourselves, but of God whose word dwells within us. Hence Paul wrote of "... him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own Will; that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Eph. 1:11-12). Again, he writes: "now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the ecclesia by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:20-21). And yet again, he describes how "I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:29). All things are of God, and are ordained for His Glory and Honour.

The situation is not that we loved God, and that therefore He blesses us. Rather, it is that He loved us first, and brought us near by His Grace:

"herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 Jno. 4:10-11).

Again:

“we love him, because he first loved us” (1 Jno. 4:19).

He is the prime mover: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). Man cannot claim life by entitlement – he is utterly dependant upon the Grace of God: “... for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those that believe” (Gal. 3:21-22).

THE IMPORTANCE OF ISRAEL

Returning to today’s chapter (Ephesians 2), we find that the believers were once “strangers and foreigners” (vs19) but have now been brought nigh. Speaking of the brethren before they embraced the Gospel Truth, Paul writes:

“That at that time, ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:12-13).

This emphasises the importance of Israel. For the believers it can be said that “Jerusalem” is “the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26). To embrace the Gospel message is to embrace the Hope of Israel (Act 28:20), and become joined to “the commonwealth of Israel,” being “made nigh” by the blood of Christ.

Fundamentally, there is only one body. Speaking of Jew and Gentile, the apostle speaks of the mission of Christ “to make in himself of twain ***one new man***, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in ***one body*** by the cross ...” (Eph. 2:15-16). Again, to the Romans, Paul describes that one body as being one olive tree (see Rom. 11). The Gentiles are taken out of a wild olive tree, and grafted into the Israelitish national tree – both become one: one Body, and one Tree.

There are many practical points that emerge from these things: being that the true believers comprise one body, there should be a unity between them. Hence in chapter 4, Paul admonishes them: “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:3-6). Notice the emphasis of unity here: The ecclesia of Christ must be of one mind and spirit, a single, not a split and divided body. Hence Christ is described as being “the head over all things to the ecclesia, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

It is clear then, that in order to be partakers of the promises, we need to be joined as One to Israel. This also emerges many times in Scripture: to take one example, we have the prophecy of Isaiah:

“... but Israel shall be saved in Yahweh with an everlasting salvation: ***ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.*** For thus saith Yahweh that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am Yahweh; and there is none else” (Isa. 45:17-18).

Notice that the point here, is that whilst God will make a “full end” of all other nations (eg. Jer. 30:11, Psa. 10:16 etc.) Israel will continue as the “world without end”. Indeed, this phrase is picked up by Paul in our chapter, as we have already quoted:

“unto him be glory in the ecclesia by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, ***world without end***” (Eph. 3:21).

It logically follows then, that if we wish to be saved “with an everlasting salvation”, “world without end”, then we must become joined to Israel’s national hope - and indeed, that is one of the major themes of Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians. This is the utmost and earnest desire of all the faithful: to attain to the Kingdom of God, being part of that unending world.

The main substance of our considerations today is summarised in the words of Messiah to Nicodemus:

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jno. 3:5).

There is a need to submit ourselves through the waters of Baptism, and to trust in the power of our God to save. We are thus born as members of the New Creation which Yahweh is developing from those who give ear to His Word. And we look forward to when we might inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world for those who believe and embrace the promises. Truly that will be when the true ecclesia will glorify Him “world without end”, living and glorying in Him throughout the Ages to Come.

Christopher Maddocks

“The fear of God, that will warm and purify the inner man, as the result of giving heed to the testimony, is founded on the recognition of the fact, that the Presence of God, by the Spirit, pervades the universe; and He is not far from every one of us; that all things are naked and open to Him; and that He discerns even the secret thoughts and intents of the heart. The fact is unintelligible only to the lowest forms of intelligence. A child thinks God cannot see it through the wall of the house ... and there are many grown children”

(Robert Roberts)

The Two Paths and Two Outcomes for Mankind

The Lord speaks of two ways along which men can walk (Matthew chapter 7, verses 13 - 14).

1. The wide and broad way — “Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.”
2. The narrow way — “because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”

What does this mean? The wide and broad way is what most of mankind follow, and it leads to the final home you worked hard for all your life — the grave, also known as hell: the place whose thirst is never quenched, and many will spend eternity there in total nonexistence.

They have had their portion in this life and chose by their free will to live that way until death, under the bondage of the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

Enjoying the pleasures and riches of this life, making it their god, leaning on their own understanding, making vain men their masters and wise counsellors soaked in vexation — all are the blind, leading the blind, who fall into the ditch together.

The straight and narrow way that few of mankind find is to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ and things concerning the Kingdom of God. Believing Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God died for our sins, and was raised from the dead on the third day — and be baptized, and be born again, cleansed of all sins past by His blood.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:3-8).

You will then start the journey upon that narrow path, being first born of water, the old man dead with Christ, being mortified by the flesh — a daily battlewhich had you in

bondage before, enduring the suffering, and now learning to seek after the things of the Spirit.

But if one is faithful until death, or Jesus returns, obeying His commandments and walking in them thereof by faith, then the grave will not hold you. For Jesus is the life and the resurrection and will raise the dead at His coming by the grace of God.

God, the Creator of all things, has given authority over all flesh to the Son, Jesus Christ. God's Will and Providence no man can manipulate, for God's Will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

But we cannot step outside the divine will and providence of God. There is absolute truth, which is God's word. And there is apostasy and lies, which are the vain imaginations of this world, and a wicked generation called men.

Men have been the problem since the fall of man, when sin entered the world by Adam – see Romans chapter 5, verse 12. The two outcomes: eternal life upon the earth with your Creator and Jesus Christ the Lord, or eternal separation from God in an eternal dark and unconscious abyss for eternity — where it will be too late to turn to God when we do not exist anymore, returning to dust as if we were never born.

The gospel has been preached for over two thousand years, and creation around you is a witness to you daily of the Creator — that men are without excuse.

The grand Architect is the Author, and Potter — we, the clay. Whether it be good or calamity, God Himself says, “I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things” (Isa. 45:7). So what can the clay say to the Potter? Nothing, we are but dust.

Men and women have free will, allowed to choose how they want to live their lives. He gives us a choice, just like Adam and Eve had a choice. However, we live by faith, not by sight. It is written, Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report through faith.

We understand that “the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Heb. 11:1-3).

So what will you choose? Repent of your sins, accept the gospel, or continue enjoying pleasure and confusion — trusting in the vanity of your mind, waiting for wretched man to solve your problems, living in sin until the day you perish unto dust, forgotten by those who come after. All that you worked hard for and left behind is but dung, for any memory of you will last but a while, but will fade away from thought as quickly as the last breath you took.

Kieran Waite

Worshipping in Sincerity and in Truth

The brethren of Christ meet together every Sunday wherever possible, to memorialise the sacrifice of Christ by partaking of the emblems of bread and wine. But they do so in all sincerity, recognising the gravity of what was accomplished in the offering up of Messiah. And in a sense, it is a Passover meal of fellowship - hence the Apostle writes:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of *sincerity and truth*” (1 Cor 5:7-8).

Notice these two features of our worship: “sincerity and truth”, together comprising the “unleavened bread” spoken of by Paul. Especially in our irreverent age of frivolity and shallow thinkers, there is a very real need for gravity and sincerity. So Paul exhorts the brethren to “try the things that differ (AV. Margin); that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10). But this sincerity is linked with lacking “malice and wickedness” – elements which must be cast out. The phrase “sincerity and truth” is derived from the Old Testament, particularly the occasion where Israel are told by Joshua at the end of his life, to cast away every vestige of false worship:

“Now therefore fear Yahweh, and serve him *in sincerity and in truth*: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye Yahweh” (Josh 24:14).

In a similar way, Messiah’s brethren must put away malice and wickedness: both features of false worship. We must have a sincere and genuine desire to worship the Lord in the Way that He Prescribes, and not according to our own dictates and whims. The Lord Jesus Christ uses a similar expression, as recorded in our New Testament reading from John chapter 4:

“God is spirit: and they that worship him must worship him *in spirit and in truth*” (Jno. 4:24).

A Scriptural analysis of the word “spirit” indicates that it refers to the moral, emotional and intellectual aspects of a person. We must worship the Father with a willing spirit, and a wholehearted devotion to learning and implementing His Ways in our lives.

But there are many who follow other religions who are very devout and “sincere” in their worship. Indeed, there are many churchgoers who are ever so sincere in their outlook and their faith. But according to Jesus, and the examples we have considered above, sincerity alone is not sufficient. We need to worship “in truth” also: and this is something that excludes those who are sincerely wrong. To worship “in truth” implies a recognition of certain true principles that are taught and embodied in Messiah. Men and women need to receive “the love of the truth that they might be saved” (2 Thes.

2:10). Only the Truth can save – there is no power to save in falsehoods: a person needs to “believe” the true Gospel in order to be saved by it.

THE BROAD AND NARROW WAYS

According to the Lord Jesus Christ, there are two ways, which are accessed by two gates (Mat. 6:13-14). One way is a broad way which is traversed by many who enter in at a wide gate. This way has enough space to accommodate the multitudes who find it – yet it is a way that leads to destruction. The “many” who walk along it, doubtless do not know where it leads, for if they did, they would turn aside out of it. They go forward blindly, not knowing any other way, for the alternative route is found only by a few. This alternative is a narrow way – and being narrow by design, it will accommodate only a “few”. The entrance to this way has to be sought for, and the way is traversed by a minority who have forsaken the broad streets of iniquity to walk along the paths of wisdom. This way, though narrow, is the only way that leads to everlasting life. The travellers know exactly where it leads, and it is the knowledge of this that gives them encouragement and comfort when the going gets tough, and obstacles present themselves. In such circumstances, the faithful few exhort and help one another, lifting up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees (Heb 12:12), that they be not turned aside out of that way. They walk together, to reach their final destination which they so earnestly long for.

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

However, there are those who profess to be walking along the narrow way of life, who seek to make that way wider, that it might accommodate more men and women. Who push against the parameters of the Truth, seeking to broaden it’s constraints in order that those who are not devoted to living in humble obedience to Christ, might nominally enter in. The pushing takes various forms, from seeking to accommodate inappropriate behaviours, to embracing others of other religions to that enunciated by the Most High in the Bible. Most commonly, it is the latter; there is an embracing of the Ecumenical policy of humanism, an attempted widening of the entrance that others of other persuasions may enter in, who do not know or believe the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes our detractors describe us as being “arrogant” because we say that we have the Truth, and “other Christians” do not. As one of our adversaries has it: “we don’t have a monopoly of the Truth” – and who are we to judge others who worship Jesus just as sincerely as we do?

The root of the mischief – for that is what it is – is that our position is mis-stated. We do not say that of our own selves “we have the Truth”. Rather, we say that the Bible has the Truth, and we believe the Bible with all deference, sincerity and humility – just as our adversaries are at liberty to do, if they so choose. It is perfectly true to say that “we don’t have a monopoly on the Truth” – but our God does. As it is written: “Yea, let God be True, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4).

As we have often cited, according to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God is Truth. As he said in his prayer for his disciples: “Sanctify them through thy Truth: thy word is Truth” (Jno. 17:17). Whereas Truth is sometimes portrayed as a subjective thing, with “one man’s truth being another man’s heresy,” these words of the Master demonstrate that there is a fixed and absolute standard of Truth – which is the Word of God. And by definition, that which differs from that Word is not Truth. Hence it is said of those who forsake it, that they “concerning the Truth have erred” (2 Tim. 2:18). And again, that they “erred from the Truth” (Jas. 5:19). Concerning teachers who preach something different to Apostles, it was prophesied: “... they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:4). Here is the vital principle: “no lie is of the Truth,” (1 Jno. 2:21) and that which contradicts the True Words of God are by definition lies.

But what of those “sincere Christians” who have a different point of view to ourselves? Surely it is unChristlike to speak against others who just don’t see things as we do? Actually, no, as we have shown before, This is the teaching of Messiah:

“... they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”. (Mat. 15:14).

A blind man cannot have a “point of view” – he can see nothing. Those who would brand us to be “unChristlike” should examine what Christ actually said. Men close their eyes to the things of the Truth (Acts 28:27), for the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). A person who closes their eyes cannot have any vision of what is before them. They need to anoint their eyes with the eyesalve of the Word, so that they can see (Rev. 3:18). Only then can they have a legitimate “point of view”.

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Word of Truth comes to us through the Gospel being preached. Hence that Word is styled in Scripture: “the Truth of the Gospel” (Gal. 2:14, Col. 1:5). The Gospel is defined as “the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ”, which is was necessary for the hearers of Philip to understand and believe in order to be baptised (see Acts 8:12). The BASF describes those two aspects very succinctly and scripturally. It thus epitomises the principles of the Gospel.

Sometimes the issue is raised as to how much a person needs to understand in order to be validly baptized. The Scriptures contain both “first principles” and “solid food” (Heb. 5:12): it is the first principles that need to be understood to lay a foundation for repentance from dead works (Heb. 6:1). Those who do this, are said to “believe and know the Truth” (1 Tim. 4:3), for they have “come unto the knowledge of the Truth” (1 Tim 2:4).

Again, is sometimes asserted that a person doesn’t need to have a particularly detailed knowledge in order to express belief and repentance in submitting to Baptism. But such forget that Israel were “destroyed for *lack of knowledge*” (Hos. 4:6). It is possible to not have enough knowledge to be saved – but it is not possible to have too much knowledge! And this assertion overlooks that it is necessary to “believe” the first principles: “he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mrk 16:16, see also 2 Thes. 2:12). But what is it that has to be believed? As we defined above, the “things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ” – and it is a summary of those things that comprise our Statement of our Faith.

UNDERSTANDING AND WORKS

There is a need then, to have an understanding of, and belief in, the principles that collectively form the Gospel message. This is “the full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2:2), without which there can be no faith, or belief – for how can a man have faith in something he knows nothing about?

Sometimes the idea is expressed that we need to live out the principles of the Truth in our lives, rather than to study the Bible. But this is a false dichotomy: the situation is not either/or, but both! We must “love in deed and in Truth” (1 Jno. 3:18), and be found “walking in Truth” (2 Jno. 4). And it logically follows that we cannot walk in the Truth, if we do not know what that Truth is! We must believe and understand the righteous principles of the Gospel message, in order to “walk according to the Truth of the Gospel” (Gal. 2:14), and thereby “obey the Truth” (Gal. 3:1, 1 Pet 1:22). Yes, it is vital to live out the practical outworking of the Gospel believed, but it is also necessary for us to “study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth” (2 Tim 2:15). Both aspects are necessary in order to please our Father and Maker.

A DELIGHT!

Another objection heard from time to time, is that we need to enjoy ourselves as well as doing Bible study. But such sentiments do not come out of the mouths of those who are lovers of the Truth (2 Thes. 2:10). The Apostle Paul wrote: “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22). And again, the Psalmist:

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is

in the law of Yahweh; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa. 1:1-2, Psa. 119:97).

To study the Scriptures is not a chore to lovers of the Truth. It is a “delight”! Often we hear folk say concerning a novel or some other book that “it was so absorbing I couldn’t put it down!” That is what the Bible is to the brethren of Christ. It absorbs us into itself, and engages the mind in spiritual things. Those of a spiritual mind will delight in it, and will be reluctant to put it down!

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that “the Truth shall make you free.” And as we have demonstrated, the Truth needs to be understood and believed (1 Tim. 4:3). As the Apostle wrote, we need to receive it “not as the word of men, but as it is in Truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thes. 2:13).

It is written by Paul to the believers at Colosse: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ...” (Col. 3:16). But logically, the word of Christ cannot dwell in us, unless we put it there! To study the Bible brings great enjoyment and pleasure to men of the Spirit, and it also provides wisdom, and a power by which we can be saved (Rom. 1:16). To study the Word is not an optional extra for the more studious amongst us: everyone that is of the Truth will hear the Master’s word (Jno. 18:37). We disregard it therefore, at our peril!

Christopher Maddocks

Knowing in Part – The Enigma

The following piece is from an item written by Bro John Thomas in the style of a Dialogue between two men, Josedec who is being taught by Elpis, and has been forwarded by a brother for the interest of our readers

“We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass in an enigma; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1Cor 13:9-12).

Josedec: But an inspired apostle has said “we know in part”.

Elpis: He did not say, “We know the gospel in part before baptism,” as you quote these words out of their connexion to prove. The apostle is discoursing about “spiritual gifts,” such as, “the word of wisdom,” or “prophecy,” “kinds of tongues,” and “the word of knowledge” (1Cor 11:10, 13:8). These were coveted by the members of the “One Body;” some of whom only were privileged to possess them for the benefit of

all (11:7). He pointed out the best of the spiritual gifts, and exhorted them to seek after those, nevertheless, he would show them a way more excellent than even the possession of the best of the spiritual gifts (verse 31).

This way, which should abide when the gifts “failed,” “ceased,” or “vanished away,” consisted of “Faith, Hope and Charity; the greatest of which is charity.” (13:13). He then defined what he meant by “charity;” (and according to his definition of it, the most loving pietists of the churches of the Gentiles are utter strangers to it;) and said “Charity never faileth;” but that “prophecies,” “tongues,” and “knowledge” would fail, cease and vanish away. He then gives the reason why these gifts should be withheld; and after which withholding, faith, hope and charity would continue: “because,” says he “we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when perfection comes, then that which is in part shall be annulled.” (13:9,10).

KNOWING IN PART

Now, the word rendered “in part” does not bear the sense you attach to it. It is the same phrase as in 1 Corinthians 12:27, which is translated “in particular;” and refers to the same thing; namely, to the partial manifestation of the Spirit through the Spiritual men of the congregations; which consisted of those to whom the Spirit severally divided the gifts as he pleased (11:11) and the idiotoi, or those “occupying the room of the private person,” or plebian; rendered the “unlearned” in chapter 23:16. These two classes of the Temple of God, the public and the private brethren, having been all, by the spirit’s teaching through the apostles, baptised into one body (12:13) constituted that body in Christ; but the public brethren were “the members in particular,” the foot, the ear, the eye, the hand, the nose, the tongue &c.—of the whole; and constituted thus by the special gifts, called “spiritual”.

This was an imperfect state of the “One Body,” whose prophesyings, faculty of speaking foreign languages, and revelations, were individual, or “in part,” and not general. But there is a time coming, when perfection will have come; and then the Body of Christ will no longer “know in part, and prophesy in part,” as in apostolic times; but all the individuals then composing it, will, without exception, be qualified in a higher degree than the apostolic “members in particular;” so that the least in the kingdom of the heavens will be endowed with greater accomplishments than all the Spiritual Men of Paul’s day put together. In the apostle’s day, even with the Spirit’s manifestations through a part of the body, or “members in particular;” they could only say, “We see at present by a mirror in an enigma, but then (when the reality is manifested) face to face; now I am skilled (speaking for the Body,) by mirror-like partial manifestation but then (when perfection is come) I shall know perfectly as also I shall be known perfectly,” having then attained perfection by resurrection unto incorruptibility and life (Phil 3:11,12, Luke 8:32).

Can the miserable abortions, my dear Josedec, that pass current for Christians in our day, say, that they see by a mirror in an enigma - “with unveiled face beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord” - do then see the image of that glory there, being

transformed into it, “from glory,” comprehended by faith, “to glory,” inherited when perfection is obtained (2Cor 3:18, Col 3:10)? What sort of a school of Christ is that you talk about, where the pupils after all the ‘new and elevated lessons in the gospel of the kingdom,’ they are said to receive, are as ignorant to their last breath, of the Image of Glory mirrored in the gospel, as though there were no image there? Will you be content to remain in that school of the Outer Court, the professors of which have not yet attained to the great principles of the Truth? If I could, I would seize you by the hand as another Lot, and bid you to escape to Zoar, nor look back at your old gloomy and dingy cloisters, at the peril of your life.

Josedec: the things you bring to my ears interest me greatly; and in proportion as I perceive their import, I confess, I lose my admiration for the things which are behind. Will you be kind enough to add a little more in connexion with the mirror?

THE MIRROR

Elpis: With great pleasure. When you take up a position before a mirror, you see delineated thereon by the rays of light passing from real objects, a beautiful and exact representation, or image, of the landscape behind you. You study it artistically; and the more you consider it, and dwell upon it, the more is your admiration heightened and the more you appreciate its excellencies, until by this operation this picture is transferred, as it were, from the mirror to the “fleshy table of your heart,” mind, or sensorium; which becomes to you a mirror, upon which also an image of the original is vividly impressed.

Such is the process by which realities that have existed, do exist, and shall exist, are stamped, written, engraved, or impressed upon the heart of man. The fleshy tables of the heart, by way of access to which is ordinarily by the five senses (extraordinarily by the direct operation of the Spirit upon “the tables” themselves) are in the aggregate the mirror. Now through the apostolic ministry of the Word, the Spirit of the living God, impinged “the light of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” upon that mirror. In this way “it shone into” the mirrors of the unmanifested mathetes. The beauties and magnificence of Christ’s glory fixed their attention, and they began to contemplate them artistically; until becoming so captivated with “the image,” its attributes began to shine forth from within them, and “they were known and read (or recognised) of all men,” who themselves understood the truth (2Cor 4:4; 3:11).

In this way, the Image of God, which is the Christ in his glory and sufferings, was depicted upon the fleshy tables of their hearts, and so long as it remained there, he “dwelt in their hearts by faith.” (Eph 3:17) - “the hope of glory” (Col 1:27). Here was a new man formed within them by the creating spirit, and what they now had to do, was to put on this new man by baptism into him (3:10). When they looked into their own hearts to see if they were in the faith, they beheld with unveiled face, as in a mirror, the Image of the Glory there, “in an enigma”.

THE ENIGMA

When Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, Jehovah summoned the three before him, and addressed them, saying, "If there be a prophet among you (Israelites), I, Jehovah, will make myself known unto him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses, who is faithful over all mine house. I will speak with him mouth to mouth, even in sight and not in riddles, and the Image of Jehovah shall he behold" (Num 32:6-8). "Not in riddles, and the Image of Jehovah shall he behold," is rendered by the King of Egypt's seventy translators, "not through enigmas and the glory of the Lord shall he behold." By vision and dream was the enigmatical mode of revelation which Jehovah communicated his truth to the prophets, much of which they could not unravel. It was too enigmatical for them, and even for Angels (1Pet 1:10-12). This enigma was the salvation of lives in connection with the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The Image of Jehovah came into Moses' sight on the Mount of Transfiguration; Moses spake with him mouth to mouth, of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). This was the basis of the enigma; for without that decease there would be no salvation of lives, or souls, no joint-heirship with the Christ in his kingdom and glory. Isaiah, in vision, saw Jesus, "the King, Jehovah of armies," as contemporary with "the whole earth being full of his glory" (Is 6:3-5, Jno 12:41); but he did not see him in glory at the head of his armies, in the enigma of his decease and resurrection for the remission of the sins of those Jews and Gentiles who should share with him in that glory. It was revealed to Isaiah and the rest of the prophets, that their diligent search for a solution to this enigma, was in vain; inasmuch as it was purposely hidden from them; but would be revealed at a future time.

Josedec: This was the reason then, why the unsolved enigma is styled by Paul, "the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, which God ordained before the ages unto our glory" (1Cor 2:7)?

Elpis. It is. And in another place he styles it, the mystery of the Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it is now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph 3:5); "and made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:25-27).

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

Before the sending forth of the apostles, "the Mystery of the Christ" was not made known as they preached it; and when they announced it, they set forth the riches of its glory, which, when believed, became the hope of the believer. By their word, or teaching, the Spirit of the living God, daguerretyped the Mystery of the Christ upon the fleshy plates of their intellectual and moral sentiments and faculties, styled in the aggregate "the heart". They saw that the purpose of God was to set up a kingdom in Judea, which would have dominion over the whole earth: and that its administration should be justice and righteousness. They saw the Son of God, the Lord (eth-Adonai) highly exalted, sitting upon the throne of the kingdom, which was Jehovah's Davidian

kingdom, in which was Jehovah's Davidian throne, in the enjoyment of omnipotence, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, for ever more (Rev 5:12). They saw Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, and many from the four corners of the earth (Luke 8:28) associated with him in his kingdom, and ascribing glory, honour, and thanks to him, because he had redeemed them out of all nations, peoples and tongues, and had made them God's kings and priests to reign on earth with him (Rev 4:9, 9:10). They saw that both the King and his Associates were clothed in robes which had been made white and free from all spot, wrinkle, stain, or blemish, in the blood of One slain as a lamb in sacrifice (Eph 5:27; Rev 7:14) and declared to be all undefiled, guileless, and without fault before the throne of God (Rev 14:3,4,5); and well-fitted therefore, to rule the nations with a rod of iron (Rev 2:26) in righteousness, as their own peculiar and absolutely exclusive inheritance (Ps 2:8,9; 25:13; 111:6; Is 54 to the end).

When they contemplated the Spirit's Daguerreotype artistically, they saw that the King, sitting upon the throne high and lifted up, was no other than the deceased Nazarene, named Jesus; and that he was, therefore Son of David and Son of God. They perceived that he attained to his high exaltation over the mundane system, as the heir of certain wills and testaments made by Jehovah, the God of Israel, with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and their seed (Gen 11:7, 1,3,7; 13:15; 15:7,8,21; 17:5,8; 18:18; 26:3,4; 22:17,18; 28:4,13,14; 2Sam 7:12,16; 1Chron 17:11,14) as "the heir of all things," and that, as he was "God manifested in flesh," this decease was the death of THE TESTATOR of those Wills, which came into force thereby, and acquired a sanctifying efficacy for him and his joint-heirs (Heb 9:16,17; 10:10,14; Mat 26:28). Sanctified by the covenant with Abraham, inaugurated and made purifying by the death and resurrection of his seed, this federal person and all in him, when that all is filled up, entered, they perceived, on the possession of the kingdom and glory by resurrection from among the dead, or by transformation if living, temporary with the event.

Here, then, were the kingdom and glory set forth in an enigma, styled by Paul, my gospel (Rom 2:16, 16:25,26). Those upon whose minds his declaration of the testimony (1Cor 2:1) and reasonings (Acts 17:2, 18:4,19, 19:8) daguerreotyped his enigmatical gospel, having searched the scriptures to see if it accorded with what was written there (Acts 17:11) and finding it in strict accordance with Moses and the prophets, believed.

FAITH

If you do as the Bereans did with the scriptures I have quoted, you will comprehend their faith, which was something worthy of the name. It was "true christian faith based upon the plain word of God," which they could not read for themselves, until the enigma it contained was expounded by the apostles under the guidance of the Spirit. To such believers with their eyes truly opened, the apostles presented an invitation, or call to the kingdom and glory they beheld with unveiled face in the mirror of their hearts (1Thess 2:12). Joyfully they accepted the high vocation (Eph 4:1, Acts 16:34) being ready to do anything commanded by the apostles. We do not read of any

sorrowing for sins; they had fallen in love with the righteousness and goodness of God; and rejoiced in the hope of his glory; and there repentance evinced itself in their joyous obedience to “the truth as it was enigmatically set forth “in Jesus”.

John Thomas, June 1856

"Feed Me With Food Convenient For Me"

“Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I deny thee, and say, Who is Yahweh? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain” (Proverbs 30:8)

In the materialistic age in which we sojourn, we see all around us both men and women striving for greater things, seeking better work conditions, better pay, a better position in society. And even for Christ’s brethren, there is immense pressure for them to “succeed” in the things of this life - a success which is measured purely in terms of social advantages, and material possessions. Yet when measured against the standards of Divine Wisdom, this “success” proves to be nothing short of failure. “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15) was the exhortation of the Lord Jesus, introducing his parable of the man seeking to build bigger and better barns in which to store his accumulation of wealth.

This man, in terms of the base standards of the world had made a success of life. He became rich because of the productivity of his labour, and the fruitfulness of the ground he owned. But did he ever stop to think of why his land yielded it’s fruits in such abundance? Did he ever reflect upon the fact that “the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God” (Heb 6:7)? Job did, and concluded: “If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gotten much ... this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above” (Job 31:25-28).

But in contrast to Job, the rich man, having more food than was sufficient for him, did deny the God which is above, for trusting in his own labour, he seemingly gave little thought to the One who so greatly blessed the land upon which he worked. Thus, he was a failure: “God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:20, cp Mat 16:26). This, then is the exhortation of Scripture: “labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom” (Prov 23:4). Rather than to trust in our own wisdom and labour to obtain the empty riches of this evil world, we must seek the wisdom of God, for therein lies true riches - yea, riches which can sustain us beyond the grave, to the time of resurrection at the Return of our Lord. “How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding rather than to be chosen than silver” (Prov 16:16)

“for wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired are not to be compared with it. I wisdom dwell with prudence ... blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of Yahweh” (Prov 8:35). But although riches are not to be sought after; neither is there any virtue in poverty. There are those who suppose that there is righteousness in becoming poor for poverty’s sake, and so give up all to live on the goodwill of others. But there can be no virtue in making ourselves burdensome to others, or even worse, looking to the state as a provider. -23- Indeed, scripturally, poverty is associated with shame: “Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured” (Prov 13:18). There is no intrinsic virtue to poverty, for it merely cultivates covetousness, and in many cases, theft to obtain that which is desired, yet beyond lawful means to obtain.

But even this is very different to the spirit of self-sacrifice; becoming poor for the sake of providing some benefit to others can be a good and honourable thing - indeed we have the supreme example of this in our Lord Jesus, “though he were rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2Cor 8:9) - and consider also the Lord’s commendation of the widow who cast in her last mite. In her case, righteousness was not in her poverty, but in the fact that out of the depths of that poverty, she gave her all to the service of her God. And in the greater case of our Lord Jesus, truly he literally gave his all, even his own life, to provide better riches for those who would trust in him.

Christopher Maddocks

Could Christ Sin?

It is not, however, the object of these remarks to repudiate or disregard the mode by which the Father wrought out these results by Christ, or the principle involved in that mode. Though Christ was the Father's manifestation by the express operation of the Spirit, it is not to be suggested that he was without a separate and independent will in the part he performed.

The existence of a separate and independent will is several times alleged by himself, as when in the Garden of Gethsemane, he desired to escape from the terrible ordeal impending, but added, "not my will but thine be done". The existence of a separate and independent will was a necessity for what he had to do; for what was that? To yield an acceptable obedience. Thus Paul says, "he was obedient unto death" (Phil 2:19). And again, "By the obedience of Christ many are made righteous" (Rom 5:10). Because of his obedience, he was styled by Yahweh, "my righteous servant" (Is 53:11). There can be no obedience or righteousness without independence of will. The very essence of obedience is voluntary compliance, and there can be no voluntary compliance if the will is chained. No one would say an engine is obedient; neither could it be said that a child is obedient if you give it opium and tell it to be quiet, and it does so; or if you tie it in a chair and tell it not to leave the room, and it does not do so. The nature of obedience, and the beauty of it require the utmost liberty of action

on the part of those from whom it may be exacted. That Jesus had this liberty, he expressly declared in saying, "thinkest thou that I cannot now pray unto my Father, and He shall presently give more than twelve legions of angels, but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? (Luke 26:53). So that the thing that deterred Jesus from praying for deliverance at this stage was the consideration that the Scriptures would thereby be broken. So with his temptation in the wilderness. He had power to make stones into bread, but he refused to exercise that power because of the sanction it would have given the tempter's philosophy of life and its objects.

If the question be asked, how came it that Christ's will always acted with the Father's as no other man's did, it is here that the object of God Manifestation becomes apparent. There never could have been such an obedient man if God had not produced him, and made him what he was; but God does not stultify himself in any part of his work. Therefore, though God, in Christ, produced one who was righteous under all trial, he did not tie or force his will, but gave him that complete independence of volition, and ample opportunity of disobedience which gave acceptability to his obedience, and value and force to it as an example to us.

The principle involved in God's procedure towards man absolutely required this. The object aimed at throughout is the voluntary consecration of independent will to his glory. It is for the development of this result that all ages of evil are allowed. The prevalence of evil is the necessary foundation of righteousness. If it were not for this element of the work of God, the world's history is without an explanation. Take it away, and we are in darkness, and there is no reason why God should not at the first have populated the earth with sinless immortals. The long reign of evil is the measure of the value God attached to the voluntary obedience of independent will. The evil has come through the impartation of this power of independent will. Man has misused it, and hence the reign of evil; but the gloriousness of the obedience of a multitude who will come out of this great tribulation, is so great as to be more than a compensation for the night that broods over the world.

Christ was the inauguration of this race of sons obedient under trial. His obedience was perfect, and we are forgiven and accepted by God through him at last, if Christ at the judgement accounts our obedience to him sufficient. It is left in his hand to determine this. But we must not shut eyes to the fact that he in himself inaugurated the principle of our acceptance. It is expressly testified that he was "made perfect through suffering" (Heb 5:8); further, that "though he were as son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered" (Heb 5:8); also, that because he loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore he is exalted to his present position of supremacy (Heb 1:9); also that it was the consideration of the joy set before him that led him to endure the cross and despise the shame (Heb 12:2). We must not allow any conception we may form on the subject of God manifestation to exclude these scriptural declarations. One part of the Truth never interferes with another, when rightly understood. There is always a tendency on the part of those who strongly sympathise with one phase of truth, to shut their eyes, to other phases, which are not in opposition, but which on a superficial view appear to be so.

To the question "could Christ sin?" The answer in view of the foregoing facts, is easily discernible, and ought to be offered for the agreement of all sensible men. Christ could disobey, so far as the possession of an independent will, and the opportunity to disobey, were concerned; but Christ could not disobey with the clear and constant perception he had, (which no other man had) of the glory and righteousness and sweet results of obedience, and the delight it was to him to do the will of God. The case is perfectly illustrated by the remark made a few months ago which was unreasonably presented by those who have gone to extremes, VIZ that a sane, healthy man can commit suicide so far as power to commit self destruction is concerned, but cannot commit suicide in view of all the facts and principles that bear on the act.

Robert Roberts, The Christadelphian Magazine, 1875

Notes on the Book of Revelation (3)

Vision Of The Son Of Man In The Lords Day:

Rev 1:7 "BEHOLD he is coming in Clouds, and every eye shall see him, and whosever pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall wail before him. Yea verily; so let it be" (Bro Thomas Translation)

REVELATION 1	COMMENTS
7 Behold, he cometh	<p>"In these words is an exclamation which is designed to direct the reader's attention to Jesus and the Saints, as the ὁ ἐρχομενος, ho Erchomenos,No event is more prominently set forth in the apostolic writings than the coming of the Lord Jesus in power and great glory." (Dr Thomas Eureka Vol 1pg.112)</p> <p>"The opening salutation of the apostle contains the implication of the divine purpose in the title of the Announcer thereof: "Grace be unto you and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come" (ho erchomenos, the Coming One) (Rev. 1:4). And again, verses 7 and 8: "Behold he cometh with clouds;...." (CCW says in "Theophany" Chapter 12 pg. 226)</p> <p>For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels... Mt 16:27 ;When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him...Mt 25:31;And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Mt 19:28</p>

REVELATION 1	COMMENTS
with clouds	<p>“In these three testimonies, Jesus plainly teaches,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Son will come in glory and power; 2. That He will come with Holy Ones; 3. That He comes to ascend and sit upon the throne of His glory; 4. That the Regeneration shall be at this epoch; 5. That the time for rewarding men according to their works is in this Regeneration Era; and, 6. That in this Regeneration Era the thrones of the house of Israel will exist again, and be occupied by the Twelve Apostles, then possessed of the life pertaining to the Aion of the Son.” <p>(Dr Thomas Eureka Vol 1.page 112)</p> <p>“Clouds of witnesses Heb.12:1 “so great a cloud of witnesses”;of saints caught away to meet him 1Thess.4:17 “caught up together with them in the clouds”. ;compare Dan.7:13 “the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven”, Matt 24:30 “the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”</p> <p>Contrast. Ezk.38:9. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou,”</p> <p>(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse page 3)</p> <p>“...the rendering of Paul’s words in 1 Thes. 4:17, “shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” is objectionable. ... Paul had no reference to either the clouds of our atmosphere, or to the air itself; ... arpagesometha, rendered “we shall be caught up,” neither expresses the idea of up nor down; but signifies “to snatch, to seize, to take hold of forcibly, as a wild beast doth its prey;” and hence, the idea of hurrying off by any kind of force or power.... Paul does not say in the clouds, but simply, en nephelais, in clouds; instead therefore of “caught up in the clouds,” we read “hurried off in clouds:” so that clouds of saints, by almighty power, will be removed from the east, west, north, and south, where they have been resurrected, “for a meeting of the Lord” in the territory of his kingdom, the Holy Land—Luke 13:28, 29. “</p> <p>(Dr Thomas Eureka Vol 1 pg.145)</p> <p>“The appearance of dew from the womb of dawn, as representative of the resurrection of the saints, in the most</p>

<p>and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.</p>	<p>beautiful of scripture similitude's. Before the sun rises, all nature is concealed in the womb of night; and although the herbage is wet with dew, yet is it invisible by reason of the darkness. The dew is, as it were, in Hades, waiting for the birth to be given it by the rising of the sun. As soon as the eastern portals of the sky begin to open to the light, which is the life of dew, its drops begin to sparkle with the prismatic glory of its refraction. The apocalypse, or appearing of the dew, is its birth from the womb of dawn; and, however clear the air may be at its birth, oftentimes the heat of the sun's rays exhales it from the herbage, and it becomes invisible until it reappears at the atmospheric dew point <i>in the form of clouds</i>. If the reader understand this he will be enabled to discern the relations of the saints to Jesus, as the Dew and Clouds of the Millennial Dawn to the Sun of the New Heavens, prepared "as a Bridegroom emerging from his canopy...."</p> <p>(Dr Thomas Eureka Vol 1 pg.140)</p> <p>This passage reference to what it says in Zec 12:10 " And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. (See also Luke 13v24 to say how those raised to judgment are included)</p> <p>Joh 19:37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.</p> <p>Every person left on earth will not literally see Jesus but his presence on the earth will be known to all, he will be clearly visible to all in contrast to being invisible in heaven for the last 2000 years.</p>
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Vision Of The Son Of Man In The Lords Day:

Rev 1:8 *I am the Alpha and the Omega, beginning and ending, saith the Lord, Who Is and Who Was and Who is Coming, the Omnipotent (Bro Thomas Translation)*

REVELATION 1	COMMENTS
<p>8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.</p>	<p>Jesus says I am Alpha, that is the beginning of God Manifestation in the Flesh.</p> <p>The Omega is the end of or fulfilling of Yahweh Eloheim, God manifestation in a multitude of powerful ones. ie the</p>

multitudinous Christ Glorified.

So

Alpha = God manifestation in Christ

Omega = God Manifestation in the Multitudinous Christ

“These words announce to us that He who is coming is “The Almighty;” also that this almighty one pertains to the past, the present, and the future; that he has a “beginning” and also “an ending,” as symbolized by the first letter of the Greek alphabet “to A,” and by the last, or “to Ω”—“the Alpha and the Omega.”

But let the reader understand, that this annunciation is not an announcement that the Eternal Theos, styled “the Father,” had a beginning. If he had not always existed without beginning, there would have been no creation. To imagine a time, or point of past eternity, when *Theos* or *Ail*, commonly styled “God,” did not exist, would be to suppose an epoch when there was nothing—no existing thing; and this supposition would be to make nothing the intelligent and wise creator of something, which is palpably absurd.

No; the annunciation before us carries us back no further than that “*beginning*” to which John had already introduced his readers, in the book he had already written, to convince men that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of the Deity; and that believing they might have life through his name—Jno. 20:31—the beginning of the preexistent Deity, by his Spirit-Effluence, or Logos, becoming Flesh; the beginning of the “Great Mystery, Deity manifested in Flesh”—1 Tim. 3:16. This manifestation, then, as we have shown, had its beginning. It began in Jesus, Son of David and Son of Deity.”

(Dr Thomas Eureka Vol1.pg.151)

“The symbol in the text is very expressive. It is the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Between these two are twenty-two other letters, which, with the first and last, make *one alphabet*—twenty-four in one; an idea still further elucidated in the “*twenty-four elders*,” who are representative of the Almighty Alpha and Omega manifestation of Deity.”

(Dr Thomas Eureka Vol1.pg.153)

The Beginning and Ending of God Manifested, the Logos
God’s purpose – Alpha the beginning of Eternal Salvation.
Amplified version agrees with Dr Thomas translation viz

"I am Alpha and Omega, *the Beginning and the End*, saith the Lord, He Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty (The Ruler of All)."

Vision Of The Son Of Man In The Lords Day:

Rev 1: 9 I, John, both your brother and joint partaker in the tribulation, and in the kingdom and waiting for Jesus Anointed, was in the isle called Patmos on account of the word of the word of the Deity, and on account of the testimony of Jesus Anointed. (Dr Thomas Translation)

REVELATION 1	COMMENTS
<p>9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>Tribulation = the tribulation of being in the flesh.</p> <p>“That is, in the royal dignity of a king & priest elect, & in the patient waiting for the time revealed in the Apoc. when the saints shall ‘reign upon the earth’ ch.5:10, ‘with Christ a 1000 years’ ch.20:4, when ‘the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord’ ch.11:15. Ignatius, who died A.D.107, uses the exact words of this v. (en hupomonē Jesou Christou), in the patience of Jesus Christ) in his epistle to the Romans. It is judged to be an allusion to the Apocalypse”</p> <p>(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse page 3)</p> <p>If CCW’s comment here is correct that Ignatius had read the Apocalypse, then it must have been written and circulated by 107AD.</p>

Vision Of The Son Of Man In The Lords Day:

Rev 1:10 I was in the spirit in the Lord’s Day; and I heard behind me a loud voice as of a trumpet (Dr Thomas Translation)

REVELATION 1	COMMENTS
<p>10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,</p>	<p>“on the day of the Lord” a good rendering. Has to be a time when the saints are glorified, then told to look back as to how he got there.</p>

<p>and heard behind me a great voice,</p> <p>as of a trumpet,</p>	<p>“Literally ‘I became in spirit’, Comp. ch.4:2, & Ezk.1:3, 3:12 ‘In the spirit I found myself present on the day of the Lord ’The N.T. in Modern Speech, Weymouth. ‘The Lord’s Day ’not Sunday, but ‘the day of the Lord’, ‘the day of Christ ’2Thes.2:2, ‘the day in which God will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained ’Acts.17:31.”</p> <p>(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse page 3)</p> <p>“Hence, from the general use of the phrase in this book, we are to understand that when “in spirit,” John was in such a relation to Deity as that he could see the things of Deity, which were known only to his Spirit; as Paul has said, “the things of the Deity knoweth no man, but the Spirit of the Deity;” in order, therefore, to know these things by primary visual representation, a man must be as John was, “in spirit.” ”</p> <p>(Dr Thomas Eureka Vol 1 pg 158)</p> <p>John looks back and sees his own death and resurrection. He looks back on the seven letters to the Ecclesias.</p> <p>“Comp. ‘things behind ’Phil.3:13. All that John was about to see would be ‘behind ’when the day of the Lord had really come.”</p> <p>(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse page 3)</p> <p>Seems to refer to the “Trump of God”</p> <p>1Thess 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first</p> <p>1Cor 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.</p> <p>“Trump” Strongs 4536 σάλπιγξ salpigx perhaps from 4535 (through the idea of quavering or reverberation); ...1) a trumpet</p>
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Compiled by the St Helens's Ecclesia

*“The Word of God is only true. Get the fear of God into our hearts, and our whole being is thereby constrained in the direction of right. The hope of wellbeing, the fear of evil, the love of excellence, all come into play with the promises and the threatenings. The difficulty is to get this fear implanted, because men habitually stand away from the only agency that can implant it.
The Word is the agency”*

(Robert Roberts)