

BIBLE LIGHT AND TRUTH

Reflections on Scripture

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 11

DAWN CHRISTADELPHIANS

“SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS
RIGHTEOUSNESS” MATT 6:23

THE RACE IS NOT TO THE SWIFT

How true it is that God's ways are not man's ways! It seems to be universally believed that the swift and strong in this life, win the race. But the Word of God says it is not so. The wise man said, “Again, I saw that under the sun that the race is not for the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to the men of skill.”

The greatest man who has trodden this earth was poor and lowly; he was despised and rejected, yet he has been made the Ruler of the destinies of all who live upon the earth. He sits on his throne directing the affairs of all nations until he returns in person to take charge of all nations.

Those who will rule with him will not be the strong and swift by this world's

standards. Those deemed strong and swift in the Kingdom age will be those who have followed in the steps of Jesus of Nazareth. They have been trained by their Lord to understand the same principles that He so perfectly obeyed.

Those who have entered the race for eternal life are all placed in their positions so that God's purpose with the earth and man can be accomplished. The swift, the strong and educated have no advantage over the slow, the weak or illiterate.

No human scheme whatsoever could be accomplished on divine principles of “esteeming others better than themselves to be.” It is so easy and gratifying for the strong to forge ahead in this world's affairs, leaving their weaker competitors

to struggle along and often at their expense.

The strong perceive themselves to be in control, to be worthy of honour and to be ‘achievers’. But in the divine race, the strong have no advantage over the weak. God has made it “that His strength is; made perfect in weakness.” There is no room for human pride.

The status of all those who are striving to run the race for eternal life is equalised by “Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low.” It is put into perspective by “esteeming others better than themselves to be.”

If this divine principle is exercised in the church of God, the royal law “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” will have every prospect of being enacted.

“LORD, YOU CAN MAKE ME CLEAN”

Deep down in everyone is a danger of which very few are aware. We are loath to admit that envy is in our heart. It is not always realized that envy is a transgression of divine law. The possession of this destructive attitude led the Jews to put their Messiah, to death. They were unaware that such an attitude was leading them astray, but a Gentile ruler, Pilate, perceived the cause “that it was for envy that they delivered

him.” The Proverb says, “Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?”

After two thousand years of Christianity the most ardent followers of Jesus are still liable to possess this subtle emotion of envy and not to be aware that it influences their judgment.

It needs a clear understanding of scriptural principles to be pleased when others suc-

ceed and to be humble. Paul wrote, “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*”

When this attitude of mind takes hold on our hearts then envy will have no power to deceive us.

(Adapted)



Commandments of Christ

In everything give thanks to Him: for this is His will and pleasure concerning you (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:15,17; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15).

Prayer is a privilege and must never become a mere ritual. We are totally and utterly dependant upon God, who provides for all our needs. Therefore, we are exhorted to express our gratitude to Him at all opportunity and in all the circumstances of our lives.

Prayer will be an expression of our characters and an outpouring of what lies within the heart. Prayer will spring forth in times of joy and adversity. As we walk in the footsteps of our Master we will reflect His constancy in prayer and humble submission to God.

Paul exhorts us more than once to “Pray without ceasing” (1Thess. 5:17). Again he writes:

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Heb. 13:15).

Does the hope set before us, the myriad ways in which God provides for us as His children and the desire to express our appreciation cause prayer to well up from within?

How poor is the mind devoid of prayer and how rich the mind that communes with the Father.

Indeed it could be said that prayer is the lifeblood of faith!



Jesus said:

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

"THE CAMEL"

*The camel at the close of day,
Kneels down upon the sandy plain*

*To have his burden lifted off
And rest again.*

*My soul, thou too shouldst to
thy knees*

*When daylight draweth to a
close*

*And let thy Master lift thy load
And grant repose.*

*Else how canst thou tomorrow
meet*

*With all tomorrow's work to do
If thou thy burden all the night
Dost carry through?*

*The camel kneels at break of day
To have his guide replace his
load*

*Then rises up anew to take
The desert road.*

*So thou shouldst kneel at morn-
ing dawn*

*That God may thy daily care.
Assured that He no load too
great*

Will make thee bear.

(Anna T. Whitney)

SELF EXAMINATION

Question to consider:

Do I honestly endeavour to "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Does the thought of the Kingdom make me always put the Truth first in my life?

THE SYNAGOGUE

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read" (Luke ch 4 v 16)

By the time of Jesus, nearly every village or town in Israel had a synagogue (a place of assembly). It is understood that the captives returning from Babylon and Persia had started them as centres for worship and teaching of the Law (see Ezra ch 7). By that time the books of the Old Testament had been collected together.

Each synagogue, usually on a hill, was built with the front end facing Jerusalem. The best seats, for the elders, and the "ark" to hold the scrolls, were at the front, where a

lamp always burned. One special seat, called "Moses' seat" was where an elder sat to explain the Law.

The wooden platform for readers and speakers was in the middle, and men and women sat separately. Round the walls were stone steps for extra seats. The synagogue was the scribe's home, and the place where boys went to school, to listen to Hebrew pronunciation, learn by heart, and learn to read and write by copying. Discussion and questions were encouraged. The ruler of the synagogue looked after the place and all the arrangements.

Language caused difficulties. They had to cope with original Hebrew, its sister language Aramaic (Persian) and

later on, Greek. The Septuagint helped, being a translation of the Old Testament into Greek. It was done by scribes in Alexandria about 300 BC.

In Jesus' time the Pharisees were in complete control of the synagogues and could decide on all matters, sometimes using the synagogue as a kind of court. If they did not like what a person said, they could "cast him out".

Stones have been found by archaeologists with the names of people inscribed on them, which are thought to be the names of people who had contributed to, or had built the synagogues. Some Romans were generous donors.

Sis D. Oakley

BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

"BE thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." This is one of those comprehensive commandments which include all others. In this one, our duty is urged upon us as a thing that grows from our faith (for 'faithfulness' is absolute adherence to faith), and is connected with the most glorious promise, by which duty can be made inviting. He who is possessed by faith cannot shrink from any duty, though death is visibly in the

way of it; for to him death is transparent, and through it he sees the crown of life shining. It was this which encouraged Christ to be "obedient unto death." A crown of Life! Ah, what a prize! The life we now feel is no life at all, compared with this which is promised, for this is the crown of life. Well may the man of faith exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" When sin entered into the world, and

death by sin, a rebellion commenced against God which has never been put down effectually from that day to this. It has ever gained strength and is at the present crisis more defiant of His authority than ever. But He has declared that things shall not always continue thus; for He has sworn by His own life, saying, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD." J. Thomas.

"THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE"

Youth treads its carefree path unheeding—but not for long. Gradually there is an awakening to life's sadness. Associations of childhood are broken; loved ones pass away. The frailty of mortal strength, the uselessness of human pride, the transience of earthly rejoicing is slowly revealed. Sooner or later the realization must come that: "Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away." But we, who

seek not as others seek, nor mourn as others mourn, find our solace in Him, "the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." We see past our weakness to His strength; past our earthliness to immortality; past the treasure which rusts and corrupts to our incorruptible crown in His Kingdom; past the darkness to eternal glory. So, as we grow older, we are

not troubled, but we have peace of mind: we are not fearful, but we have tranquillity: we are not faint-hearted, but we have courage. We look with joyful expectancy to the time when, former things having passed away: "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (R.M)