

BIBLE LIGHT AND TRUTH

Reflections on Scripture

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

CHRISTADELPHIANS ONLINE

“SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS

RIGHTEOUSNESS” MATT 6:23

A HARMONY OF THOUGHT AND DEED

Sincerity implies a continuous harmony between our convictions and our words and deeds. *Convictions are not adaptable to circumstances*, else they are no longer convictions. We must not be play-actors, for that is hypocrisy; we must not conceal truth in a polite guise, for that is insincerity.

The Pharisees were hypocrites. It was the absence of harmony between their inmost thoughts and their outward lives which moved Jesus to denounce them so indignantly as white sepulchres without, dead men's bones within. If we judge others and behave in a similar way ourselves, if our words are not matched by our actions, then we too are hypocrites just as they were.

As in the Pharisees, so in the Cretans Paul had noticed a lack of sincerity. *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient and unto every good work reprobate”* (Titus 1:16). In other words there were hypocrites among them, men and women who were insincere. The was a disharmony between their profession of love for God and their actions. The word reprobate used in this verse bears the sense of being counterfeit, sham, some-

thing which will not stand proving, therefore not genuine, insincere.

How often do we meet with insincerity in the world around us, and how multitudinous are its manifestations. Insincerity of speech occurs daily and something said to us may be superficially cordial, but is often in reality a mere formalism or exaggeration. We are all familiar with it in our contact with the world, and we have to be on our guard against its insidiousness, against the possibility of its infecting us with its contagion.

To the Philippians Paul says: *“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment”* (R.V. margin “discernment”). Why? *“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence (without cause of stumbling) till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God”* (Phil. 1:9–10).

Paul had a deep love for the Philippians, and his prayer for them was that they should be filled more completely with the love of God and should manifest the fruits of that love. He expects the growth of their love to yield a keenness of

conscience.

Clearly the man motivated by the love of God will try to do the Father's will, and his conscience will steadily become a more efficient indicator enabling him to discriminate between more than good and bad, between good and apparently good. This keenness of discernment or of conscience is capable of increase, and our consciences should become more and more sensitive indicators as we grow in the truth.

But what the apostle is leading to is that which is likely to arise from their keenness of conscience: *“that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence”*. He wants their keenness of discernment to manifest itself in character devoid of hypocrisy, so that they will bring forth the fruit of righteousness.

Paul is conscious of the gulf between the discernment of right and wrong and the capacity to choose the right, the distinction between knowledge and practice. But he is strong in the faith that love needs only to know, in order to do. The love which abounds more and more in knowledge and discernment will obey what is right, and delight in so doing. (adapted)



Commandments of Christ

Let Christ dwell in your heart by faith. (Eph. 3:17).

To allow Christ to dwell in our hearts is to feel his presence with us in every minute of every day and to let this presence guide our every action. This is not an easy thing to do: Christ is very much with us during the Breaking of Bread meeting and other meetings which we attend with those of like precious faith, but then the cares and concerns of everyday things crowd in upon our consciousness and threaten to drive out higher things. We must hold on to that presence of Christ in our hearts and this can only be done by a strong faith in the salvation which he has accomplished.

Christ does not change: the promise of his return is a constant to which we can anchor our hearts and minds. The evidence of Christ dwelling in our hearts lies in our actions and words: *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”* (Galatians 5:22-23).

Let us hold on to that one faith in our hearts and if we can do this at all times, then we will preserve that dwelling-place in our hearts for our Lord and Master. (C.S)



Jesus said:

"If you love me, you will obey what I command."

A PRAYER

*Father in Heaven, hear, I pray,
The words I speak in prayer this day.
May I do what is true and right
And so be pleasing in Thy sight.
As I by grace Thy purpose know,
May I in love that knowledge show.
Guide Thou my steps that I may be
From harm and hurtful evil free.*

*Give me, not what I want,
but need,
On Thy life-giving words to feed.
Look down in mercy: I am weak,
And for my faults forgiveness seek,
Thy Kingdom come: for that great day
With all my heart and mind I pray.
Thy will be done: speed the time when
Our Lord returns. Amen,
Amen!*

S. F. Jeacock

FAITH IN ACTION

The only way that I can please God and learn what pleases Him is to know His Word; therefore it will be my pleasure to read from my Bible each day. Psa 119:9,11,16, 105

THE SEA OF GALILEE

Much of the ministry of Jesus and many of his miracles, took place in the area of the Sea of Galilee. Galilee means "circuit" and the Sea, or lake is surrounded by a ring of very high hills. The Sea of Galilee is about 13 miles north to south, and about 7 miles east to west, and lies in a deep volcanic depression in the rift valley of Jordan. Its surface is about 680 ft below the level of the Mediterranean. The height of the nearby hills and mountains causes air currents to be quite violent at times, and sudden storms can arise, which are dangerous for boating.

The water comes from the north. It gushes out from limestone rocks at the base of Mount Hermon, flowing through Lake Huleh (230 ft above sea level) and entering the Sea of Galilee at its northern end near Beth Saida and flowing out again at the south into the river Jordan (meaning

'descender'), down towards the Dead Sea (1290 ft below sea level). The water of the lake is clear and sweet, and the shore is pebbly, strewn with glistening shells from shellfish. The Sea contains fish in great numbers and varieties.

In the time of Jesus the area was very busy with several ports, many towns and a thriving fishing industry. The fishermen took their catches to Magdala (Mary's town on the west shore) for the fish to be salted and dried for export to all parts of the Roman world. They would also have to take them to Capernaum to be weighed and taxed (Herod 'owned' the lake).

Jesus, after leaving Nazareth, made his home in Capernaum, where there was a synagogue, where Peter lived, and where Matthew sat at the receipt of custom, collecting taxes from fishermen, ordinary people, and

from travellers using the road which passed through Capernaum, making their way to and from Damascus (Syria) and also south to Jerusalem.

The area behind BETH SAIDA (meaning 'house of fish') was not under Herod's rule, and Jesus often went to this quieter area, crossing back and forth by boat with his disciples, and once returning walking on the water!

Tiberius, the only town to have survived the ages, was built by the Romans as a new capital for Herod. The builders found remains of an old cemetery, which rendered the place unclean for the Jews. Tiberius was populated by both Greeks and Romans.

Today, the water of the Sea of Galilee is shared between Israel and Jordan for irrigation. Less water now flows into the Dead Sea which is slowly drying up.

Sis D. Oakley

BEING TRIED AND PURIFIED

BESIDES the trouble a man may make, God sends trouble, as He sent to Job, that men may be tried and purified and made white. We may even receive a present punishment that we may escape the judgments of the wicked. Thus it was with the Corinthians to whom in their affliction Paul wrote,

"When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world."

When this trouble comes, it is sure to be something hard to bear; for this is the nature of trouble. You cannot have trouble that shall be pleasant; as Paul says:

"No chastisement for the present is joyous but grievous."

The consolation is that if we be such as God regards (and He regards every man who knows

Him and who, in a broken and contrite heart, trembles at His Word), we can take thankfully from the hand of God whatever comes, whether trouble or blessing.

If we commit our way to Him, He will direct our steps. This is a matter of revelation, and a thing to be realised and acted upon to the full. Jesus has told us that the hairs of our head are numbered, and that a sparrow cannot fall without the Father's knowledge. Faith tells a man, in view of this, to surrender himself without carefulness into the hands of God, committing the keeping of his soul to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator.

By-and-bye, the Lord who was the sacrifice for the sin of the world comes also as a judge. It is a beautiful arrangement. Through him the way was opened, and he

is the way to its ultimate issues. God accepted him, and leaves him to administer the results as regards others. All judgment is committed to him. It rests with him at his coming as to which of us shall enter into life eternal. And of whom he will make choice.

Will it depend on "influence"!

Will he be influenced by favouritism?

Nay, verily, just will be his judgment, and without respect of persons. Yet his selection will be made on a definite principle. He has himself been made perfect through obedience; and being made perfect, he has become the author of eternal salvation to *all them that OBEY him.*

This is the class that will be chosen: *those who obey him.*

(R. R.)