

# Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 155

## July 1995

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## EDITORIAL

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

While wondering what I could write for an Editorial, a letter came this morning from a reader accusing me of detracting from the Word of God and concluding; "by your words thou shalt be condemned."

Referring to Circular Letter No. 131 the writer complains about my doubting the authenticity of some of the words and phrases we find in the Authorised Version of our Bibles, and as we have recently been considering some of these in detail I felt it worth a short comment.

The writer says: -

"the Lord God has prepared only one Holy Bible, and this particular Bible has been circulated throughout the whole earth, being made available to the poorest of the poor. The question is, How many believe it to be the Word of God? Let us take the Nazarene Fellowship for example. It is no doubt they claim to have the truth and try to attract others to their understanding; and no doubt the mote in their neighbours eye is clearly seen, while at the same time they try to impress upon their readers that we are misled by translators of the Scriptures who added words of their own according to their beliefs and certain words are an interpolation and should be deleted."

But what are we to do when we find translators and copyists have taken liberties with the original text? In the case of Matthew 28:19 we find words attributed to Jesus Christ which were not in manuscripts earlier than the fourth century A.D. We ask, Were the translators inspired to add these words to the original text so that we must accept them as "Gospel Truth" or are we to use our reason and say these were falsely added to the Word of God some four hundred years after Jesus Christ, and we are correcting their falsehood? With reference to 1 John 5:7 - We ask, Were the Scriptures incomplete until, in the sixteenth century, some translator was inspired by God to add the triune phrase? Was not the Bible complete until four hundred years ago? Was the triune phrase added by inspiration of God one thousand six hundred years after John wrote the Book of the Revelation? It is others who have added to the Word of God and not we who have taken from it. We do not accept these additions in blind faith.

We, of course accept the Word of God as being inspired.

The problem lies with man. The Scriptures have divine inspiration - but sadly, a human history.

With Sincere Love to all, in the Master's Service,      Russell Gregory

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## Thoughts on The Daily Readings for July

The early readings of this month take us through the history of David, from the time he was anointed king up to his being officially made ruler, first at Hebron, then in Jerusalem.

It was a time of severe trial for David. Most of what we read is made up of his continuous flights from Saul and how God saved him on so many occasions.

Now one thought I would like to pass on is that although David was chosen by God especially, chosen as the man after God's own heart, yet he was not spared these trials. How true of what we read about the father chastening his son whom he loves. And remember David's trials started after he was anointed king - after God chose him. And then how David conducted himself in difficult situations!

David was a man of war, a skilled strategist, the right man chosen at the right time for God's purpose, as so often happens in history, to our day; but he never took unfair advantage of his war skill. He was chosen by God to finally subdue the Philistines. That was one reason for God's choice of a man skilled in war. But he also was a man of great love and compassion. He never laid hands on Saul, although there were two occasions when God delivered Saul into David's hands - when a deep sleep from God fell on his body guard. The men who were with David wanted him to kill Saul, but what was David's reply? "Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless. As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed..." (1 Samuel 25:9-11).

David knew that God had chosen him to subdue the Philistines and to raise Israel from repeated oppression by the surrounding nations to a powerful kingdom. We can well see one reason for God's choice of David as the man after His own heart: a balanced combination of a warrior, and a compassionate man of love, understanding and magnanimity. David proved right when he said "he shall descend into battle and perish," for this is just how he met his end. But it was in God's time, not when some men in David's company wanted it to happen; and even when an Amalekite claimed, or at least expected, some reward for having slain Saul, far from getting rewarded he was in fact executed. And there comes to mind David's sense of justice. He mourned for Abner who was unjustly killed by Joab, though at that time he was in the opposite camp. And when shortly after, two men slew Ishbosheth, whom Abner had set up as king in a very underhanded and cowardly manner, David quite justly executed them. This was a most impartial decision, administering justice to the killer even though the victim was on the side of the opponents to David. Come to think of it, there are not many records in Bible history, apart from Christ Himself, of men who administered justice without any motive of self-interest and self-glorification. There were a few beside David, to mention only Moses, Samuel and Elijah. They, with David, all had absence of self-glorification as a feature of their character.

Now it must be remembered that there were times, and will be again after Christ's return, when God commands to kill the sinners. It was the sin of Saul in failing to kill Agag which, in the end, brought his downfall. Elijah's task was to kill the prophets of Baal. Contrary to misguided popular belief, a man of God is not necessarily a man of peace. Neither will Christ be when He returns to put down God's enemies. And David, in fulfilling God's command, took life, but he had that good trend in that he displayed some of God's character in conducting just wars, throwing down the wicked, combined with administering mercy and justice.

One more thought; when David fled to Achish, king of the Philistines, He was made his body-guard and had to follow him to war against his own people. I often ask myself; What was David's intention in going with Achish before he was sent back? We shall only find out after the resurrection. Personally, I am quite curious about the answer. I am sure he intended to go over to his own people and so bring about defeat for Achish. From their point of view the princes of the Philistines made the right decision in sending David back.

But now one of the greatest disasters of his life awaits him. Homes burnt and all their wives abducted. The loyalty of his men wavering, they spoke of stoning him. But all was recovered; it had a happy ending.

And here is another example of how God can turn a disaster into victory. David and his men not only recovered their own, but gained enough spoil to let all their friends and cities of Israel have a share of it.

And so let me close with what Paul, centuries later, repeated to the Romans; -

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:20).

Brother Leo Dreifuss.

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## THE TRINITY EXAMINED

**Author: Anthony Buzzard**

“It may be said at once that there is no trace in John of the doctrine of a Trinity” – E.F.Scott, D.D. (St. Andrews), Professor of New Testament Literature, Queens University, Kingston, Canada. (“The Fourth Gospel,” page 341).

“To ask whether in the New Testament the spirit is a person in the modern sense of the word would be like asking whether the spirit of Elijah is a person? But the Holy Spirit is not a person existing independently of God. The New Testament, and indeed patristic thought generally, nowhere represents the Spirit any more than the power or wisdom of God, as having independent personality.” - Alan Richardson, D.D. (Oxon), Hon.D.D. (Glasgow), Professor of Christian Theology in the university of Nottingham. (“Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament,” page 120).

“I cannot think that it is of very great importance to settle the vexed question whether St. Paul thought of the Holy Spirit as a divine being personally distinct from Christ.” Oliver C. Quick (Oxon) Hon. D.D. (St. Andrews), Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford. (“Doctrines of The Creed,” page 280).

“The ancient church, including the Nicene Fathers, did not attribute to the Spirit a personality separate from the personal life of God.” - H.B.Swete. (“The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church,” page 376).

“The notion of the Holy Spirit as a third Divine personality... is one of the most disastrous importations into the Holy Scriptures.” - Beyschlag- (“New Testament Theology,” Vol.2, page 279).

The quotations presented above appear in standard works on New Testament theology and reflect the thoughts of men who gave a lifetime of study to the documents of the New Testament. They must serve to illustrate to any fair minded enquirer that the traditional dogma of the Trinity, as denoting three co-equal persons in the one God-head, may not be as well-founded upon New Testament teaching as we have been led to believe.

It is our intention to show that the New Testament offers no evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity as it is popularly (and often so tenaciously) believed. Not only can this proposition be established by a careful reading of the New Testament but it is implicit in the statements of such New Testament scholars as those quoted above. Their writings are only samples of many whose message is the same.

To the average layman the doctrine of the Trinity is a baffling mystery best left to the deliberations of learned theologians. The New Testament however, nowhere grapples with a mystifying, indeed inexplicable doctrine of a Triune God. New Testament mysteries are secrets now made manifest to the Church; of a mystery of “three persons in one God” there is not a hint on any page of the New Testament Scriptures.

We must first dispose of a popular objection. Does not the New Testament somewhere speak of “The Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost... and these three are One”? The emphatic answer is that it does not, but

that in the Authorised Version a Trinitarian statement was added to the text. The spurious verse appears in the text of no Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century! Modern translations omit it as a flagrant insertion; it forms no part of the original manuscripts. The point is not in dispute, and can be confirmed in any commentary. The verse in question reads as follows, the section shown in brackets being the added words which do not belong to John's Epistle;

“There are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One. And there are three that bear witness in the earth], the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one” (1 John 5:7,8).

The comment of E.W.Bullinger on these verses is appropriate: “The words are not found in any Greek manuscripts before the 16th century. They were first seen in the margin of some Latin copies. Thence they have crept into the text.” (Companion Bible, ad. loc. cit.).

The reader should note that in contrast to the inserted Trinitarian statement, John places the Spirit in a trio of which the other two elements are definitely not persons (blood and water). Yet John is popularly thought of as having taught a doctrine of the Spirit as a person distinct from the Father and the Son and co-equal with them. Had John believed in a Trinity of “3 in 1” this would have been an ideal place to have recorded that belief; but he did not, despite the efforts of some unknown interpolator to convince us to the contrary! This insertion should serve to illustrate the determination and ingenuity displayed by some in their efforts to give scriptural backing to cherished tradition.

If we consult the witness of all the Apostolic letters - of Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude, we find that they invariably begin with a blessing from the Godhead. It is here, if anywhere, that we must expect to find the Apostolic definition of the Godhead, since each writer enumerates the divine persons in a precise statement. The evidence is impressive and is quoted in full:

“Paul... to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:7).

“Paul... to the Church which is at Corinth... Grace be to you and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:2,3; 2 Corinthians 1:2).

“Paul... to the Churches of Galatia, Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:3).

“Paul... to the saints who are at Ephesus, Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Ephesians 1:1,2).

“Paul and Timothy to all the saints who are at Philippi... Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:1,2).

“Paul to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Colossians 1:1,2).

“Paul... to the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ; Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:1,2; 2 Thessalonians 1:1,2).

“Paul To Timothy... Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:1,2).

“Paul to Titus... Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 1:1,4).

“Paul to our beloved Apphia and Archippus our fellow soldier... Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philemon 1:3).

“God hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1,2). “James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ...” (James 1:1).

“Simon Peter, a servant of Jesus Christ to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Peter 1:1,2).

“...and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

“The elder to the elect Lady and her children... Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father” (2 John 1:1-3).

“Jude to those who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ... mercy to you and peace and love be multiplied” (Jude 1:1,2).

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him (John), bear record of the Word of God, and the Testimony of Jesus Christ- John to the seven Churches which are in Asia. Grace be unto you and peace from Him which is and which was and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before the Throne and from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness” (Revelation 1:1-5).

These most important passages demonstrate beyond all argument that none of the Apostles used a Trinitarian formula when defining the Godhead. None of them links the Holy Spirit to the names of the two Divine Persons, as a third divine person co-equal with the Father and Son.\* Each Apostle draws a careful distinction between the two divine Persons “God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

[\* *It is true (that 1 Peter 1:1,2 contains a reference to the sanctification of the Spirit in connection with the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Nevertheless the phrase “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” represents his statement about the Godhead, in harmony with that of the other Apostles ]*

The fact that there is complete silence about a third divine Person must be taken as highly significant, for if indeed there are three persons in the Godhead, all equally God, why is the third consistently omitted from the Apostolic statements at the head of all their writings? The question demands an answer.

Let us first however consider the apostolic view of the relationship of the two Divine Persons from whom grace, mercy and peace proceed. It will very quickly become clear that Christ is everywhere described as subordinate to the Father. The two Divine Persons are never equal in “rank.” Divinity is indeed ascribed to both, though the evidence shown so far points to the fact that the term God in the absolute and unrestricted sense is reserved for the Father alone. This is not to deny that elsewhere in the New Testament Christ is identified with the Lord of the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 10:4 & 9). He is also said to be divine and pre-existent (John 1:1,2; Philippians 2:6,7; Colossians 1:16,17), and is twice addressed as God (John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8).

The popular notion that the Father and Son are indistinguishable as to “rank” is not supported by the New Testament and commentators admit this: “The very word Son implies derivation, subordination and dependence, and yet it also implies identity of substance and therefore co-equal divinity.” (Alan Richardson, “Introduction to New Testament Theology” page 123). Thus the New Testament states that “Christ is God’s” (1 Corinthians 3:23). It would, of course be quite impossible to say that “God is Christ’s.” Paul also states that “the head of Christ is God just as the head of the woman is the husband, and the head of every man is Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:3,4). These passages demonstrate beyond all question that the Father and Son are never in the New Testament equally “ranked” within the Godhead as sometimes in popular Trinitarian thinking. Indeed as H.L.Goudge says: “Above and beyond all there is God, the Father. When in Corinthians Paul uses the word “God” it is the Father who is always intended... Our Lord is subordinate to the Father in His eternal being for the Father is the ‘fount of Godhead’ and the divinity of the Lord is

eternally communicated by the Father and dependent on Him. Christ belongs to the Father and serves Him.” (“Commentary on 1 Corinthians” pp. XXIX, 28). In the same connection we may add the remark of the distinguished commentator Dean Henry Alford, “that there is a sense in which the Father is greater than even the glorified Son, is beyond doubt (see especially 1 Corinthians 15:27f.).” (“Greek Testament on John 14:28”).

Entirely consistent with Paul’s statement that God is “the head of Christ is John’s quotation of Christ that “the Father is greater than I.” Though He is at one in purpose and will with the Father (“I and my Father are one” - John 10:30), He remains in subordination to His Father, who is greater than He (John 14:28). The statement that “I and my Father are one” certainly cannot mean that Father and Son are really only one individual; this would be a meaningless statement for any Hebrew writer, as also presumably for anyone else! Christ prayed that the Church should be “one” with the Father and Himself, meaning of course that they should all three be united in purpose (John 17:21).

Such are the simple propositions of the New Testament which is delightfully free from the complex wrangling that marred the later history of the Church.

Having established that the New Testament draws a careful and consistent distinction between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, we must now consider the nature of the Holy Spirit and the all-important question of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. Above all we must account for the conspicuous absence of a Trinitarian formula in the apostolic definition of the Godhead appearing at the head of all the epistles.

We will begin with a definitive statement about the meaning of the term Holy Spirit, part of which has already been quoted at the beginning of this paper. It comes from Alan Richardson, D.D. and appears in his “Introduction to New Testament Theology,” pages 104, 105 & 120:

“The Spirit of God has no existence apart from God, any more than the spirit of Elijah can exist apart from Elijah. God’s Spirit is God acting. The spirit of a man is his *‘dunamis’* (power), his person in action, and the same is true of God’s Spirit. It is His *‘dunamis,’* i.e., it is God acting.” “To ask whether in the New Testament the spirit is a person in the modern sense of the word would be like asking whether the spirit of Elijah is a person. The Spirit of God is of course personal, it is God’s power in action. But the Holy Spirit is not a person existing independently of God... The New Testament (and indeed patristic thought generally) nowhere represents the Spirit, any more than the power or the wisdom of God, as having independent personality.”

Such statements as these appear to the present writer to strike at the very roots of traditional Trinitarianism, and are taken as such, when read out to those holding to the traditional teaching. Yet the words of Alan Richardson reflect the Old and New Testament facts, as will become evident.

The crux of this whole discussion is that the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) is no more a separate person from God than the spirit of man is a separate person from the man himself. The Holy Spirit of the Bible is not a third divine personality. Yet the doctrine of the trinity as popularly understood at least, insists on the Spirit of God being a person distinct from the Father and Son, in the same sense that the Father is a person distinct from the Son. But this would mean that the spirit of Elijah is a different person from Elijah! Or that when Elizabeth said that her spirit had rejoiced (Luke 1:47) a person other than herself was rejoicing! Clearly the truth is simply that “my spirit” means “myself,” “my mind.” Consequently God’s Spirit is simply God Himself in action. All this is of course merely to give to language its natural and normal sense.

It is fundamental to biblical thinking that “Holy Spirit” (the term frequently occurs without the article, though this is not shown in translation) \* has as its primary meaning the power of God in action. There is no argument that this is universally true of the Old Testament use of the words “Spirit of God.” Naturally enough the writers of the New Testament take over this concept from the Old Testament, so that it is common to find passages in the New Testament which equate “spirit” with “divine power.” Referring to the Gospels first, we find Jesus casting out demons “by the spirit of God” (Matthew 12:28), which means “nothing more by than divine power” (Richardson, page 107). In Luke’s Gospel we find the expression “by the Spirit of God” replaced by the words “by the finger of God” (Luke 11:20), showing that he understands

the Spirit of God as simply the energy of God. Again in Luke 1:35 we read that “Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you.” Here Holy Spirit is parallel to, and equated with power. In verse 17 of the same chapter we read that John “shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah.” In Luke 24:49 there is another striking equation of “Holy Spirit” with “power” – the Holy Spirit to be poured out at Pentecost is defined as “power from on high.” This use of the word spirit to mean power is, as expected entirely in harmony with the whole Old Testament use of the term spirit. Indeed the Hebrew word “*ruach*” (spirit) and its Greek equivalent “*pneuma*” mean “breath” or “wind,” and are therefore the ideal metaphors for the invisible energy or power of God.

[\* *The writer is aware that the absence of the definite article in Greek need not necessarily be represented in translation into English, but notes that commentators do sometimes omit the article and render *pneuma hagion*” as “Holy Spirit.”]*

This primary meaning of spirit as power is thus naturally and properly adopted by the writers of the New Testament. Yet we can trace an important new development in their understanding of “Holy Spirit;” for after the resurrection the Spirit is invested with a more personal meaning, since it becomes directly associated with the work of the risen Christ. The Spirit now represents the personal power of Christ, directly affecting the Church and filling its members with supernatural energy.

The following statement of Alan Richardson is of crucial importance in this connection; “After the resurrection the distinction between Christ and the Holy Spirit becomes blurred, and the New Testament writers do not attempt to distinguish between the operation of the risen Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit.” Christ Himself comes in the coming of the Spirit. John can write, “He, the *Paraclete* will come to you” and “I will come to you,” as if both sentences mean the same thing.” (John 16:7, with 14:18,28 - “Introduction to New Testament Theology” page 121).

Thus in John 16:7 we find Christ saying “It is profitable for you that I should go away; for if I go not away, the *Paraclete* will not come to you.” So also in John 14:18,28; “I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you... I am going away, I am coming to you.”

There is only one possible conclusion to be drawn from these statements, and it is simply stated by Richardson; “The spirit who interprets the Scriptures is none other than the Risen Lord Himself” (Page 121). The Spirit is the Risen Lord, no longer present physically with the disciples but present nevertheless in spirit!

That this is the right way to understand the four occurrences of the word “*Paraclete*” in John’s Gospel, we may confirm by turning to the only other occurrence of the word - in John’s first Epistle where he provides his own definition and identification of “*paraclete*;” “we have a *Paraclete* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 2:1).\*

[ \* *The Authorised Version obscures the identification by rendering the Greek “Paracletos” in this verse as “Advocate.”*]

Popular Trinitarian teaching proposes that the *Paraclete*, the “other Comforter” (“other, but of the same kind,” as the Greek implies), is a hitherto unknown person, distinct from Christ, mysteriously introduced by John, and apparently unknown also to the other Apostles, none of whom use the term *Paraclete*. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity has been very largely built upon those four occurrences of “*Paraclete*” in John’s Gospel, to invest the Holy Spirit with separate personality. However, this is to abandon the fundamental and primary sense of the word Spirit, which is God’s invisible power, to overlook the fact that in the Gospels “Holy Spirit” is invariably equated with “Divine Power;” and to fail to notice that the distinction between the Risen Christ and the Holy Spirit is blurred, indicating that the Holy Spirit is none other than the Risen Christ now absent, but present with His Church in spirit.

John is not alone in equating the Risen Christ with the Spirit, for Paul makes exactly the same identification, in a passage which surely poses serious difficulties for Trinitarianism: “Now the Lord (Christ) is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit” (“the Lord Who is the Spirit” - R.V.) (2 Corinthians 3:17,18).

This passage puts beyond all doubt the identity of the Lord and the Spirit. The Spirit is no third person, as popularly believed; it is the Lord Himself in spirit presence. It is significant that in Green's Handbook of New Testament Greek we read concerning these words of Paul ("The Lord is the Spirit"), "When the article is found with the predicate, an essential identity with the subject is asserted" (page 179). Nothing could be clearer than that the Lord, everywhere in the New Testament the title of Christ is the Spirit. The Spirit is not therefore a third person!

Returning to the Gospel of John and bearing in mind the identification of the Lord with the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:17,18, we will quote in full an important passage from a work by E.F.Scott, D.D., to which preachers of the traditional Trinitarian teaching would do well to give heed:

"It may be said at once that there is no trace in John of a doctrine of a Trinity. The prologue, where the presuppositions of the Gospel are most succinctly stated knows only of the Eternal God and the Eternal Word. We are not to infer that John regarded the Spirit as a personality in the sense of the later Church doctrine. The discourses of John dwell on the relation of the Father to the Son, without any thought of a third person co-ordinated with them in one Godhead." ("The Fourth Gospel," page 341).

Statements like these ought to be disturbing to any who claim to be teaching biblical doctrine. The absence of a third person co-ordinated with the Father and Son applies equally to the apostolic definition of the Godhead quoted in full earlier. It is "the later Church doctrine" which knows of a distinct third person, not the Scriptures. Yet we are responsible for teaching the truth of apostolic doctrine, and it is useless to seek refuge in later creedal statements, especially in such fundamental issues as those under discussion. It ought not to be overlooked that the earliest apostolic proclamation of the Gospel announced that God "has blessed you in turning every one of you from his wickedness" (Acts 3:26). The latest Apostolic warning was that even before the New Testament was complete, they would be "turning away their ears from the truth and turning to myths" (2 Timothy 4:4). There is a powerful irony to be found in a comparison of the word "turning" in these passages.

We may confirm the truth of E.F.Scott's statement quoted above by pointing out that late in the Gospel of John, representing mature Christian thinking, the Spirit is still for John not a person, but the divine breath: "He breathed on them and said, "Receive Holy Spirit" (the original has no article) (John 20:22). This episode is of course the New Testament parallel to the divine in-breathing which made Adam a living soul (Genesis 2:7).

It is significant that throughout the Bible the Spirit is likened to things which would be most inappropriate, if Spirit were supposed primarily to denote a person. The spirit is like wine (Ephesians 5:18); like living water (John 7:37,38); like divine breath (John 20:22). It is "poured out" (Acts 2:17), can be quenched (I Thessalonians 5:19), given in different portions and measures (John 3:34). It is always a portion of the whole which is conferred upon the believer ("I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh").

Now this is surely an inappropriate way of speaking if that 'whole' is to imply a person! Indeed the question has been asked by sceptics whether the Holy Spirit or the Father is the real Father of Christ, if in fact the Spirit is a distinct person! ("She was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit" - Matthew 7:18). Or again, was one member of the Godhead descending upon another when the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ (Matthew 3:16)? Such questions are immediately clarified when it is seen that the Spirit is nothing but the power of the Deity in action.

In the writings of Paul we may further confirm the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as being essentially the power of God, and more specifically the Presence and Power of Christ in Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:11, Paul discusses an important analogy between "the spirit of man that is within him" and "the Spirit of God." Now it is clear that the spirit of man is in no sense a different person from the man; nor then is the Spirit of God a different Person from God. Yet this appears to be how Trinitarian teaching is popularly understood; for the Trinity is a doctrine committed to three distinct divine "personalities," and when this notion is read back into the New Testament the simplicity of the scriptural record is obscured. Far from being a third person "the Spirit which God communicates to men through Christ is at the same time the principle of His divine self-consciousness, and it therefore carries with it a revelation of the inmost nature of God. For Paul, the Spirit

resides in God, as the conscious mind resides in man, and proceeds from Him as His divine activity... the Spirit becomes active in the life of the disciples, it is like another and higher will sustaining theirs... it is a spontaneous, self-authenticating impulse towards the higher life... Practically then, the Spirit is the power of Jesus acting on believers as it acted on the first disciples. Paul is able to declare in so many words; "The Lord is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17). ("The Fourth Gospel," pages 327-329).

Now this is exactly how Luke uses the word Spirit in those passages in Acts which describe the direct guidance given by Christ to the Church. It is said that the Spirit "spoke," "forbad," "permitted." "Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, having come down to Mysia, they attempted to go to Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them" (Acts 16:6-8). It is clear that the Holy Spirit is none other than the Spirit of the Lord directing His Church. Thus "the Spirit said" is synonymous with "Christ or the Lord said." In the absence of Christ, a direct communication could be imparted by His Spirit residing in, and united with the mind of the disciples. The point is clearly made in the "New Testament Theological Wordbook," art. "Spirit" page 238; "After the resurrection, the Spirit is known henceforward as God's gracious power and equally as the presence of Christ Himself."

It is in this sense that Luke's expression "The Holy Spirit spoke" and his reference to lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3) are to be understood. The latter phrase is equated in the next verse with "lying to God" (Acts 5:5). Clearly no difference in meaning is intended. Since the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost the divine self-consciousness comes to man in a new way. Christ is now "in you" as the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). "The Holy Spirit speaks" is therefore precisely equivalent to "Christ speaks." It should not be forgotten that Luke can also say "the wisdom of God spoke" (Luke 11:49), without intending to introduce a new person!

The equation of the Holy Spirit with Christ is found in the Gospels also; "When they deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what you shall speak, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak you, for it is not you that speak but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11). Now Luke's version reads; "Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay" (Luke 21:15). Richardson's comment is interesting: "Clearly St. Luke, who in Acts dramatically describes the fulfilment of this prophecy through the coming of the Spirit, does not distinguish between the activity of the Spirit and the operation of the Risen Christ; 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom' compared with 'They were not able to withstand the wisdom and Spirit by which Stephen spoke'" (page 109).

All this, when carefully considered, is very different from the Trinitarian doctrine of the Spirit, as generally understood. The fact that in the New Testament the Risen Christ and the Holy Spirit are not differentiated as far as their operations are concerned; that Paul identifies the Risen Christ, the Lord, with the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17,18), and that John states that the Paraclete is Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1), should be sufficient to show that Christ and the Spirit are one and the same person (certainly not two persons merged as one individual, which would be a quite unbiblical idea!).

In order to add further weight to the conclusions we have reached, we will complete our study by referring to the article on the Holy Spirit in the well-known "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels," edited by Hastings. (It should be pointed out that the writer's view was reached quite independently of the opinions expressed in the Hastings' article). Writers on the biblical doctrine of the Spirit are faced with the impossible task of reconciling the biblical facts with the later Church dogma. In the case of the article to be quoted, a short paragraph on the Trinity is appended without biblical reference to support it. The discerning reader however will note that the biblical evidence examined by no means bridges the gap between the Apostolic belief about the Godhead and the later Trinitarian doctrine.

It is highly significant that the writer of this article, James Denny, D.D., Professor of New Testament Language, Literature and Theology in the United Free Church, Glasgow, omits all reference to the Holy Spirit as a third person, often writes 'holy spirit' without the article and without capital letters, and consistently refers to the Spirit as 'it.' We will quote in condensed form the main conclusions of the article, and show that it is in line with the point of view advanced by our study.

Professor Denny begins with the significant statement that “To the men who wrote the New Testament, and to those for whom they wrote, the Spirit was not a doctrine but an experience; they did not speak of believing in the Holy Spirit, but of receiving the Holy Spirit when they believed (Acts 19:2). The work of Christ was summed up in the words “He shall baptise with holy spirit” (Mark 1:8). When we come to the Old Testament the one idea which is dominant in connection with the Spirit is the idea of power as opposed to impotence.” Professor Denny quotes A.B.Davidson (“Theology of the Old Testament” page 126):-

“The Spirit of God is God active... God in efficient operation.” “The most elementary notion of the Spirit may be that of Divine Power, but where we see it at work in Jesus, it is Divine Power which is at the same time holy; it is at war, in principle, with everything that is unworthy of God... In the Gospels it is variously named “The Spirit,” “God’s Spirit,” “the holy spirit,” or “holy spirit.” It is the divine power with which Jesus was endowed at His baptism and which committed Him to an irreconcilable conflict with evil. If then we try to sum up the oldest evangelic representation, we can hardly say more than that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Power which from His baptism onward wrought in Jesus... If we turn from Mark to the other Evangelic sources common to Matthew and Luke, we find little to add to this. The last light Luke throws on the Holy Spirit is in Luke 24:49, where the Risen Saviour describes it as “the promise of my Father” and as “power from on high.” The last word therefore brings us back to the first. The fundamental idea to be associated with the Spirit is that of Divine Power. We can think only of Divine energy or intensity of life... The two expressions “holy spirit” and “power of the highest” are precisely equivalent (Luke 1:35). To be “in the Spirit” is to be under divine impulse. It is the Divine Power which is behind this incalculable elevation (the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost). This is the New Testament point of view throughout.”

Having established that the primary and essential meaning of Spirit is divine power, Professor Denny passes to the matter of the Spirit as being the personal Spirit of Jesus Himself:

“The Spirit which Christians have and of which they speak is never anything else than the Spirit of Jesus: it is always referred specifically to Jesus, and it is fundamentally a token that He is there. It is the work of God through the Spirit - the Spirit of the Risen Saviour.”

“In St. Paul’s epistles the Holy Spirit is mentioned nearly 120 times, and may be said to have a prominence and importance which it has nowhere else in the New Testament... St. Paul’s whole ministry has been accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13f). He calls it specifically the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9). He goes even so far as to say that the Lord is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17), and “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” (1 Corinthians 6:17). The presence of the Spirit is, it may be said, the spiritual presence of the Lord. It is not an indefinite power of God, but the last Adam who has become life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45).”

“In the Book of Revelation, when the Spirit speaks, it is the Risen Christ who speaks; “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches” (Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22). In St. Paul’s phrase, here too the Lord is the Spirit. It is no other than Christ who speaks through the inspired prophet.”

In John’s Gospel, “what strikes us is the assumption that every reader will know what is meant by “the Spirit” or “holy spirit.” The Spirit comes to us with life-giving power. Later John’s language becomes more precise; “I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth which the world cannot receive because it does not see or know it (Greek “auto” - neuter). You know it, for it dwells with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you.” (The translation is Professor Denny’s).

“What strikes us first here is the new name given to the Spirit - “another Comforter.” It is indeed only the name which is new. In idea it answers closely to the only promise of the Spirit which we find in the Synoptic Gospels. The expression “another Comforter” implies that the disciples have already had experience of one, namely of Jesus Himself. As long as He was with them their strength was reinforced from Him and when He goes, His place is taken by the Spirit. There is another power with them now which does for them what Jesus did before. Yet is it really another? In 1 John 2:1 it is Jesus who is the *Paraclete*, even after Pentecost; and even here (John 14:18), He says “I come to you.” The presence of the Spirit is Jesus’ own presence in Spirit.”

Professor Denny's closing statement is of vital importance as summarizing the predominant New Testament teaching about the Spirit; "It cannot be truly thought of as impersonal, and yet it is far more frequently spoken of in a way which is satisfied by the conception of a Divine impulsion to or stimulation of human thought, feeling, or action, than as a distinct personality. This is so even in writers who, like St. Paul (1 Corinthians 12:11) and St. John (16:14) distinctly have the latter mode of representing the Spirit. Certainly the Spirit is not so unmistakably thought of as a person as is the Father or the Son. We never for example, find the Spirit in the salutations of the Epistles; "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" is never supplemented by "and from the Spirit." Neither do we ever find the Spirit united with the Father and in prayer, as, e.g., in 1 Thessalonians 3:11; "Now our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way to you." Even in the Apostolic benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14) it may fairly be questioned whether the Spirit is conceived as personally as the Lord Jesus Christ and God."

To this last sentence we may add that the same is true of Christ's command to baptize into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19) which can hardly alone be appealed to as evidence for investing the Spirit with a separate personality, when the whole biblical doctrine of the Spirit is against it.\* Regrettably the traditional doctrine of three equal persons has been "read back" into the New Testament records, thus fully justifying the remark of Professor Beyschlag, quoted earlier, that "the notion of the Holy Spirit as a third Divine personality... is one of the most disastrous importations into the Holy Scriptures."

*\*(4) See separate article in C.L.s 153 and 154 where Matthew 28:19 is discussed in detail.*

In conclusion we will point to the genuine biblical "Trinity" of three personalities perfectly united in purpose, will and love. This is a "trinity" of Father, Son and Church, and is derived from the teaching of Christ Himself as recorded by John. In John 14:10 we read that Christ is "in the Father," and the Father "in Christ." The force of the preposition "in" here is clearly that the two divine persons are perfectly united with each other - the Father and Son are One (John 10:30). But in John 17, Jesus prays that this unity be extended to include the Church also, so that "they may be one, as thou, Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us... I in them, Thou in me, that they may be perfect in one." (John 17:21,23,26). This union of "three-in-one" is found in several passages in John's Gospel:-

"As the Living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John 6:57).

"And I know those that are mine, and am known by those that are mine; as the Father knows me, I also know the Father." (John 10:14,15).

"He that receives whoever I shall send receives me, and he who receives me, receives Him who sent me." (John 13:20).

"In that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him." (John 14:20 & 23).

"For all things which I heard of my Father I made known to you." (John 15:15).

And in John's first epistle; "...you also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." (1 John 2:24).

The same oneness of Father, Son and believers is expressed by Paul, who says that "He who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and is thus one in spirit with the Father and the Son (1 Corinthians 6:17). It is the Spirit, the divine mind, which joins the three, and creates the fellowship between them; and this gives us the clue to the real meaning of the Apostolic benediction conferring "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:14), the latter being not a third person, but the divine spiritual presence of Father and Son.\* It is "into" (Greek 'eis') this fellowship of the Father, Son and their common spirit that Christians are to be baptised. (Matthew 28:19).

[ \* *There is not a single verse in the whole of scripture enjoining prayer to or worship of the Holy Spirit. Biblical worship is directed to the two divine persons, (The Father and the Son:- “To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, Blessing and honour and glory and might for ever.” (Revelation 5:13).*]

The New Testament view is thus radically different from the later Church teaching for it invites believers to join the Father and Son to form the third member of a “trinity” comprising Father, Son and Church. The later, post-biblical teaching introduces a subtle and significant ‘twist’ by which that third position with Father and Son is already occupied - by a mysterious intruder! It will not be inappropriate to ask whether “an enemy hath done this.”

Finally we append a quotation to serve as a reminder that significant voices have been raised in protest against a cherished traditional teaching which cannot be found in the writings of Apostolic Christianity.

“Milton’s arguments against the Trinity are ultimately logical and commonsensical: why create mystifications which are not to be found in the Bible? John Locke and Isaac Newton, with Milton the three greatest names of the period (c-1650) could not find Trinitarianism in the Bible.” (Christopher Hill, “Milton and the English Revolution” Pages 286,295).

Anthony F. Buzzard. (1980)

“Pay attention to yourselves and to your teaching... In so doing you will save yourself and those who hear you.” (1 Timothy 4:16).

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## **Report on Meeting with Christadelphian Study Group**

**John Stevenson. Australia.**

Dear friends in the Nazarene Fellowship,

Greetings in Jesus’ Name. An interesting meeting occurred with a Bible study group from Bendigo recently. I will first explain some background to my involvement.

A hundred years ago, when my father was in his early teens, he and his family heard Robert Roberts who visited Melbourne. Consequently they all studied Christadelphian books and literature. Fifty years ago, Peter and Meryl Morgan knew my father and his brothers, and met and studied with them, along with many other Christadelphians. In their retirement, Peter and Meryl settled near St. Arnaud, a little country town north-west of Melbourne. In recent years they have contacted me several times, urging me to join up with Christadelphians and assist their activities. That is what made me redouble my efforts to renew contact with the Nazarene Fellowship. Although I explained to them the mistakes in Christadelphian belief, they did not seem to think they mattered, and did not seriously study the literature I gave them. They insisted that nowadays nobody takes Robert Roberts seriously, and made light of my objection that the B.A.S.F. preserves his mistakes. They believe that the B.A.S.F. is Bible-based.

I had given up on convincing them, but they had not given up on me, and invited me to one session of a regular Bible-study group at which Meryl’s father, Arthur Fletcher, was to speak on the atonement, and would welcome questions. He is a respected Christadelphian elder, over eighty, with solid Bible knowledge. Bendigo ecclesia meets in Bendigo, but the Tuesday night Bible study group meets at a member’s home in Lockwood South, about fifteen kilometres south-west of Bendigo. The “Atonement” study took place on July 4th at 7.30, but most of us were invited to dinner at five. There were ten people present on this night.

After opening prayer, Arthur Fletcher began by saying that two classes of people don’t understand the atonement; those who admit they don’t, and those who say they do. He maintained that there was so much to

the atonement that you could not understand it completely with a lifetime of study. He said you can find the truth by listening to prophets and discerning whether they are of God by Bible criteria. Thus we know that the Scriptures are true, and in faith we must accept what the Bible says. "In six days God created the heavens and the earth" means literally exactly what it says. His discussion implied that many people interpret the creation days to suit their own theories. At this point I asked permission to ask a question, and enquired whether he meant that those who did not agree that the creation days were literal 24-hour days were therefore supposed to believe in evolution, as his statement implied. He replied that he did not actually say that, but some people play fast and loose in interpreting what the Bible says. I went no further with that, because an argument at this point would have diverted the discussion.

Arthur continued that, God created the first man, and from him, the first woman. Adam was given certain things by God, and we are the inheritors. All living things, both plant and animal were created mature, that is, full-grown, and containing the seeds of reproduction, and they were all in a dying condition. The fact that we sustain life by killing and eating living things, both animal and vegetable, has a symbolic reference to the atonement. Then he said "Dying dying" means the initiation of a slow process of death, and the condemnation of Adam in being expelled from the garden and barred from the Tree of Life, and having to till the cursed ground until he returns to dust, was the "Dying dying" sentence that God had passed upon him for the sin. He then read out clause five of the B.A.S.F.

At this point I challenged him and disputed these things. I pointed out that a few minutes ago he had argued that we should not play fast and loose in interpreting the Scriptures, but this clause five does exactly that. It is no-where written that Adam was adjudged unworthy of immortality, nor that the death sentence was a sentence to return to the ground nine hundred years later, nor that his defilement became a physical law of his being, to be transmitted to all posterity. However, I failed to convince them that the promised sentence "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" was definitely not the equivalent of what actually happened after the transgression. I could see that they were all blinded by years of believing that they were equivalent. Another difficulty was that the older members emphatically refuted the term sin-in-the-flesh as a Robertism which does not occur in the B.A.S.F. and that Robert Roberts, with all his personality problems and prejudices, is long dead and gone, and what they were defending was the B.A.S.F. as resolved by Cooper and Carter, not Robert Roberts. I replied that the B.A.S.F. was drawn up by Robert Roberts, and its wording perpetuates his fallacies.

Arthur Fletcher then proceeded to discuss clause six for a rather long time. When he had exhausted the topic, he looked anxiously at me as if anticipating another argument. I simply said I had no quibble with that one. But then others in the class resumed discussion on the atonement and the fall, so that I was able to join in freely. I insisted that Jesus did not inherit defilement from Mary, but was born free of condemnation because he had no human father. Again, they could not comprehend this because they were all thoroughly soaked in Christadelphian doctrine. Two of the younger members were impressed and surprised that a different explanation of the atonement existed. One of them asked "Is that the clean flesh theory," to which I replied "Yes, that is it exactly." Maybe I should have explained that we do not use that term, just as they say they do not use the term sin in the flesh. I distributed copies of the booklet "The Gospel That Is Never Preached," of which I have a supply, and I think some of them will be open-minded enough to read it.

Years ago, Arthur Fletcher was called to appear before a doctrinal committee, and he told them that he would answer questions on the Bible alone and on no other document. The result was that he heard no more from them, and evidently the inquisition was dropped, and Arthur is still in fellowship with the ecclesias throughout Victoria and Australia. Incidentally it seems that John Carter and Cyril Cooper did a magnificent job convincing Australian Christadelphians that the B.A.S.F. does not quite mean what it says, and that what it means is O.K.

On the subject of the creation week, I would never dispute anyone's right to believe that the days were literal 24-hour days, but personally I cannot accept that. Genesis 2 verse 4 concludes with the phrase "in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens." So was it one day or six days? And there are numerous other occasions where the word "day" is used to mean a period of time. I see no reason to refute the scientific evidence that the earth is millions of years old, and I can accept that the creation days could mean epochs. I have heard a Jewish argument that if God created a tree, and shortly afterwards a man cut it across and counted the rings and said "This tree is thirty years old," he would be incredulous when told that

it was only half an hour old, but if he believed in God, he would accept it. While that story is plausible, I find it unconvincing because I cannot believe that God would mislead us by creating a universe six thousand years ago, and including in it evidence indicating an age of many millions of years.

In preparation for that meeting, I looked through several N.F. booklets in which I had underlined important points. Also I studied "The Atonement" a book from Logos Publications, full of perverted arguments and scriptural distortions, about half of which was from the pen of Robert Roberts, including his lectures "The Slain Lamb" and "The Blood of Christ." Thirdly, I studied the Netherton Debate from the N.F. Circular Letters, particularly to learn about unexpected difficulties one might encounter in a debate or discussion. I found that this preparation served me well on the night of this meeting. I may not have convinced the others, but at least they could see that I knew my subject and they could not fault me. I therefore strongly oppose any suggestion that the Circular Letters should contain only concordant felicitous exhortations. We can only be sure of truth by studying the false basis of fallacies. Thought-provoking studies like the Netherton Debate and discussion of the Temple of Ezekiel's prophecy are very important, and I congratulate Russell on producing a vibrant newsletter.

I plan to make a list of unscriptural phrases and sentences from the B.A.S.F. and to challenge the Bendigo ecclesia to confirm them from the Scriptures. Whether that will achieve anything is in God's hands. I wish one or two of you were over here to assist me. I will report any developments.

Yours in the Love of the Lord, John Stevenson.

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## From Your Letters

### First a letter, in full, from Brother Stanley A.E.Jelfs:-

Dear Brother Russell, May I offer a few thoughts on the subject of Priesthood. Dr. Thomas covered the subject quite well in an article on "Aaron and Christ" in the book "Faith for the Last Days" compiled by the Christadelphian Office some years ago and still available. Discounting some not unexpected errors, he also says in referring to the washing and anointing of Aaron as High Priest; "Jesus... came to John as the "Ram of Consecration," that His inwards and his body might be washed according to the law" (Exodus 29:17,22).

However this may be, and allowing that the Law gave only "a shadow and not the very image" the important word being "consecration" it is clear that Jesus baptism was in fulfilment of the "righteousness of the law" referred to when He said "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." It is significant that the blood-tipped forehead, thumb and toe were excluded in the case of Jesus who had no sin of any kind contrary to what others believe. But the baptism of Jesus was evidently the antitypical consecration of the Great High Priest of the New Covenant. That is the important point.

In connection with it should be noted the fact as given in Hebrews 9; "the priests went always into the first tabernacle" the Holy Place, "but into the second went the High Priest alone once every year." Here are two phases of priesthood, the daily and the "once a year," or annual. I see in this another type the anti of which is Jesus ministry of teaching, forgiving and healing teaching up to His Great Sacrifice. That is the first phase of His Priesthood to be followed by the second phase after passing through the veil of flesh into the Most Holy state of His glorious and "spiritual" body (1 Corinthians 15) beyond.

The latter of course, is very different from the first. In it after offering Himself up with strong crying and tears and after experiencing the meaning of obedience by the things that He suffered the Son of man was fully fitted as "a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, for His household.

Dr Thomas presents a sin-bearing aspect of His baptismal consecration with which I agree but excluding the words "with the sin of the world... rambling in his flesh."

With appreciation and love in Christ Jesus,

Stanley.A.E.Jelfs."

\* \* \*

Brother Stanley does not say whether or not his letter was prompted by my statement in C.L.153 that Jesus Christ was not of the priestly line and could not therefore have been a High Priest before His crucifixion, but the two views create a very important topic for discussion, so Readers, do please write to me with your comments. - Russell.

\* \* \*

**It is very pleasing to hear again from Brother Grant Pearce who writes:**

“I am going over the information again concerning the what’s and the why’s of our Lord’s sacrifice and one thing is for sure, I am very wary of terminology that cannot be immediately and simply matched and lined up with the Scriptures. I am very concerned about this aspect of my investigations because it is a phenomena that sadly occurs on both sides of the fence and brothers and sisters mustn’t do it! The so called experts in the field of Christadelphia had a very bad habit of speaking above their listeners, baffling them and everybody else with their own brilliance. I can well remember listening to Bible studies and addresses and wondering to my self, how did the speaker come to that assumption/ conclusion?... and I urge all those from now on who would teach others to be sure they speak strictly in scriptural terms, avoiding at all times Christadelphianisms jargon...”

Grant goes on to say how he feels it is so wrong of anyone to “withdraw” from another -

“In my opinion this is wrong. We are brothers and sisters till kingdom come and just because we will not accept the words of a man or creed does not give one the right to be judgmental... In typical judgmental fashion after the tradition of the elders I used to be hard hearted and hard nosed, too. I have mellowed a lot now and would like to think have learnt a lot since and as a result of my investigations and much of the information that had been sent to me. For which I am very grateful and thankful that there are many many brothers and sisters who are prepared to make the effort.... It would be good if someone else here in Tasmania would see the light... and I would have someone I could spar with face to face! It has been a hard slog in very doubtful and unknown waters at times but thank the Lord I have been able to see clear water ahead in quite a number of areas. I feel a lot better now and more confident that the chains and shackles of tradition are gone and one can use his own brain to think for himself in stead of bowing allegiance to a creed and words of man.... Best Wishes and King Regards to all, your brother,

Grant Pearce.”

I am sure we all feel a certain identity (may I use the word ‘empathy’?) with Grant in his views, especially regarding the terminology which all too often is used to baffle rather than enlighten. This is a very serious point and one we must all guard against. As the Apostle Paul, when writing about the speaking with tongues, says; “In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” - 1 Corinthians 14:19. It seems to me Paul’s words apply just as much to the use of little understood terminology as to the speaking in unknown tongues.

Regarding the matter of withdrawing from anyone, this becomes impossible where there is no Creed or Statement of Faith, and 1 John 2:19 applies;- “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us:...”

- Russell.

\* \* \*

**Brother Harold Dawson writes:-**

“In the March/April C.L. Sister Audrey Bundy raises the question following Brother Phil’s article regarding the thief on the Cross beside Jesus.

I'd like to raise a point or two as she seems to be seeking further comment and perhaps explanations.

Dear Sister Audrey, The placing of the comma does not alter the comfort Jesus was extending to the thief crucified beside Him.

“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom.” The request indicated recognition of the status of Jesus - belief in Jesus’ mission, and faith in the majesty of Christ and belief also that Jesus was the Messiah.

The thief was at the very end of his life and probably had had no opportunity of telling Jesus of his faith in Him before. Jesus had been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; the majority certainly rejected Him in Jesus’ experience. He had been opposed and contradicted by sinners. “In extremis,” Jesus had appealed to God - “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And here both Jesus and the thief were very near death and Jesus was hearing a convicted thief declaring belief and faith. It must have been about the ‘last straw’ for Jesus, but what did He say? - “Today (of course it was to-day), thou shalt be with me in paradise. The confession of faith, at the very end of the thief’s life was a confession of faith and we can be very sure it did save the thief. It was Jesus Christ who said it and it matters not what paradise means - the paradise was whatever lay beyond that day.

You remember the parable of those who worked all day for a penny and others arrived just near ‘stop work’ time and also got a penny. Here is your answer to something you say you cannot accept. Presumably you accept and believe in the miracles that Jesus performed - the water into wine, sight to the blind, the lame to walk, raising the dead, feeding the five thousand, to say nothing of Jesus knowing that the required money would be in the fish which the disciple were told to catch, and then how Jesus knew that the donkey for His ride into Jerusalem (with Hosannas being sung to Him) was going to be where He said and that the owner would be ready to hand the donkey over! Oh yes, Jesus Christ was a very, very special man; a King in prospect indeed and we can be sure that if Jesus Christ said to the thief that day he would be with Jesus in paradise who are we to say that he would not be? But if that is difficult, we could say, Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief.”

Brother Harold Dawson.”

\* \* \*

In personal letters to both Sister Evelyn Linggood and Brother Leo Dreifuss I mentioned what I saw as a problem regarding a statement in the last C.L. where we read in the third paragraph of Brother Gates’ article on Ezekiel’s Temple on page 17: “...the city itself will be comparatively small; David and Isaiah, Hezekiah and Jeremiah will be able to recognize it as the one they loved.” But I asked, Will they? What about the great earthquake which is to split the Mount of Olives into two and a very great valley between. This will seriously affect the whole site on which Jerusalem stands today. - Russell.

**Sister Evelyn replies,**

“Yes it is certainly a thought that Jerusalem will be altered after the earthquake, however, it seems from Zechariah 14:10 that it will affect mostly the south of Jerusalem and it appears that the ‘gates’ will still be there, but we shall not know this until (if we are found worthy) we shall see with our own eyes. Oh for that day to come”

**Brother Leo replies,**

“Now concerning Gates’ statement about David and others recognizing Jerusalem, I quite agree with you. On account of the preceding earthquake with all the forecast geological change it will be well beyond recognition.”

I would like to hear what others think on this matter.

\* \* \*

**Brother Leo continues his letter:**

“Now concerning Ezekiel’s temple vision, this is still a matter of controversy. Concerning the work “if” in Ezekiel 43:11 does not prove anything. When read in its full context, beginning at verse 10 he is talking about the house of Israel being ashamed when they see the pattern, ashamed of the evils they have done. I always took this to refer to the future when Zechariah’s prophecy is being fulfilled, when there will be a great national mourning as they look on Him whom they pierced. Then they will truly be ashamed. There is also God’s pleading with them in the wilderness; but I don’t know whether this is also future, or whether this refers to the present time when the Jews are in the political wilderness and whether the holocaust may have been part of this. The question still to be answered, If it is not the future temple, then which one was it? And what about all the accompanying geographical specification of future Palestine? That is still to be fulfilled.”

I think it may be of interest to say that the walls surrounding the Temple area at the time of Christ, the one built after the Babylonian captivity, and started some 38 or 39 years after Ezekiel’s prophecy, was of exactly the size Brother Gates says the future Temple area will be - some 500 cubits square (see Gates’ article, page 28, in this issue). This was shown in C.L.129 (March/April 1991) on page 17, middle paragraph, where Dr. Edersheim states the Temple Plateau as being about 950 feet square. - Russell.

\* \* \*

**Dr John Stevenson writes:**

I was very interested in the various thoughts on the Temple of Ezekiel’s prophecy, and also in the Netherton Debate. I am sorry some feel that they might stir up dissent; I’m sure they would not but they do stir up interest.”

\* \* \*

**Brother Phil Parry comments further on Ezekiel’s Temple prophecy:**

“These are matters of course that all can have reservations about when no clear statement is made by the Lord to Ezekiel that this Temple is to be built more than 2000 years later, and Ezekiel himself would be instrumental in its consecration and cleansing – See Ezekiel 43:18 to 27.” ... “We must take into account the words of Zechariah chapter 6 the last verse of which lays down a condition; “And this shall come to pass if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord”

I would have thought that Zechariah 6:12-15 speaks of the time when Jesus was performing His mission and grew up out of His place in the land of Israel and laid the foundation of His Ecclesia or Temple - Matthew 16:18, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Jesus - 1 Corinthians 3:9. “And they that are far off - Gentiles and Jews [?] - shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord.” But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon - see also verses 12 to 17.

Jesus speaking to the Jewish rulers of His day made a challenge to them, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Perhaps the wording should be ‘And after three days...’ i.e. after His resurrection. The lively or living stones are being prepared as in Ephesians 2:15 to 21.

I will not write more at present on this subject except to quote Hosea 6:5 to 7; “Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.”

Micah 6:6 to 8; “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Hebrews 10:1 to 10; “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

\* \* \*

**Referring back to earlier discussion, Brother Leo writes:**

“Concerning Bible zymology, I am beginning to accept the view that the serpent did not actually speak as this would mean God giving it the ability to go against His will.”

Thank you for all your letters. Do please keep writing with your thoughts. We all have a lot to share.

Russell.

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## Thoughts on the Daily Readings for August

The readings this time of the year take us through the Book of Jeremiah, the section of the prophets' warning of Jerusalem's downfall, unless the king surrenders to the Chaldeans.

The king and his princes would not listen to Jeremiah, they put more trust into their false idol prophets, with the consequences of Jerusalem's destruction and a large proportion of Judah being taken captive.

Now the Israelites always had a preference for the prophets who prophesied smooth things; things they wanted to hear rather than what God actually told them. That goes back to the days of Isaiah who lived some hundred years earlier. At that time Jerusalem was also under a grave threat - then from the Assyrians, but on that occasion they were delivered by divine intervention. No doubt they became over confident, and due to human habit, trusted in their own strength and forgot God, confidently thinking they would be rescued again this time. But in the time after Hezekiah's death, their moral standards got worse and worse, with the exception of the short reign of Josiah.

God, don't forget, is very patient. They should have learnt their lesson after their delivery from the Assyrians, and seized the chance to repent. But instead they sinned more and more; so that this time they had to take the consequences of their actions unless they repented. God gave them the chance to repent for about a hundred years, but apart from the time under king Josiah, they did not take it.

One reason for their king's stubbornness in refusing to surrender was fear of making a fool of himself in front of the people. It was similar to Saul's failure. He, too, wanted to be "the big man" in front of the people. When Saul failed to carry out God's command by sparing the best of the spoil, he insisted that Samuel should glorify him in front of the people, even though God had rejected him. And Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was afraid of the princes and the people turning against him, even though Jeremiah assured him that no harm would come to him.

God did not leave the Jews without a warning sign. Among the many false prophets, there was Hananiah. He prophesied falsely that God would remove the yoke of the king of Babylon within two years.

Jeremiah exposed the falsehood of it by a sign which came to pass, the God appointed method to identify the true prophets. Jeremiah foretold Hananiah's death within that same year - and so it happened.

One of the most difficult tasks for all of us, I think, is to admit we are wrong. And this applies especially to people in authority. Had king Zedekiah surrendered to the Chaldeans, it would have amounted to an admission that the course of trying to defend the city was wrong. Yet the greatest men of the Bible admitted their mistakes. Take David in his sin of adultery and murder. Take Paul when he admitted in public speech and in his epistles that he walked contrary to God in persecuting the Church. The great men are not beyond admitting their mistakes. There comes to mind a teacher I had when I was at school. He was very strict; he was regarded as the strictest disciplinarian of the school. Yet I remember a few occasions when he apologized in front of the class when he misjudged, or unjustly treated a pupil.

One other thought. After the destruction of Jerusalem, king Nebuchadrezzar left a remnant under the charge of Gedeliah. When he (Gedeliah) was assassinated, the people feared vengeance by the Chaldeans and wanted to flee into Egypt. They asked Jeremiah to pray for them and to ask counsel of God. They set their minds on fleeing into Egypt. Yet God warned them of the dangers that would follow them and told them to stay where they were. But they disobeyed; so determined were they to go into Egypt.

Now there is an important lesson for us in this. When we badly want something, not necessarily material things, or when we are about to make an important decision, we pray to God for guidance, and we often say, "Thy will be done," but suppose things don't turn out our way, the way we expected, or wanted things to turn out, do we gracefully accept it as God's will and God's guidance trusting He knows best, and that, although we did not get our own way, that future events will show that God meant it for our good? God knows the end from the beginning, but we don't know what the future will bring. What we think is good for us now may, when future events become known, be the worst that could have happened. We must accept God's will in faith, even if we don't get our own way, though the reason for it may only be known after the resurrection.

So let us remember that all things in the word of God are for our learning, and this includes what the Jews had to learn the hard way when they insisted on fleeing into Egypt; the sword and destruction which they feared overtook them in Egypt. Let us bear in mind what we read in the epistle to the Romans (chapter 8, verse 28); "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose."

Brother Leo Dreifuss.

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## EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE

### Part Three

#### 1. Introduction

In our first two numbers we set out some broad considerations which force us to believe that the Temple of the coming age to be built in Jerusalem will be smaller than that propounded by our late Brother Henry Sulley. At the same time many beautiful ideas, which give a joyous reality to the Kingdom, emerged from the Scripture we considered.

Now, however, it is time we got down to the work of studying the Temple itself as described by Ezekiel in chapters 40 to 42 (also chapters 43 and 46). We shall not be able to understand this article without having our Bibles open at the places mentioned.

#### 2. Let us read as if for the first time.

How often have we been bewildered when reading Ezekiel 40 to 42. We have had Brother Sulley's picture at the back of our mind, but we could not get that picture from a straight reading of the chapters.

Perhaps we put it down to our own architectural ignorance. However, in this article we want to look at the broad outline of the chapters as if we were reading them for the first time. Let us forget anything we ever read about the Temple prophecy and approach it with a completely receptive mind. Being beginners we should not sort it all out, but should we find the general thread? Would we be able to draw some kind of a sketch from the things we did understand, laying aside for the moment the things which were difficult? We shall be surprised how much of these chapters we can grasp, even at the first go. After only a week or two of this approach, the Dudley class found that when chapter 40 came in the Sunday readings, for the first time in their lives they were able to follow what was being read, to walk up the steps, through the gates and porches, across the outer court into the inner court and Temple proper, as if their feet already stood within Jerusalem. And surely any study that makes the Kingdom so real must be beneficial even if we make mistakes on some of the details. Many of us are looking forward, if God be gracious, to walking about the temple, and doubtless marvelling at the things that we have missed. Nevertheless, we do suggest that the broad outline is clear and that even this portion of the Word does not need us to have technical skill as an architect for its unravelling. To our preliminary survey, then, reserving full details to later numbers.

We are reading Ezekiel chapters 40 to 42 for the first time. Crossing a high mountain we come to a city-like structure (40:2) and we see a wall building surrounding a house, or Temple. The wall is not large, being no more than 12 feet high or broad (40:5) - (i.e. 6 cubits or 1 reed, which would be 12 feet if these large cubits of Ezekiel are 2 feet each). We will speak of cubits throughout this article so that you can find it all in the chapters (multiply by 2 to get some idea of size in feet).

### 3. Six Gates

We then examine three gates which pass through this wall. They are, in fact, each of them buildings of some grandeur 50 cubits long (v.15), 60 cubits high (v.14) and 25 cubits wide (v.13). Altogether very impressive with various chambers, thresholds and porches within them containing ornamental pillars and possibly some lofty arches, (the A.V. says "arches"). The gates - outer ones - are described in the following verses:-

Eastern gate	chapter 40 verses 6 to 16
Northern gate	chapter 40 verses 20 to 22
Southern gate	chapter 40 verses 24 to 26

We then move forward from these gates 100 cubits (40:19 & 23), across the outer court to another set of three magnificent gates, each of them the size of quite a large church. They are identical with the outer gates except that they face the opposite way, (verses 19,23,31,34,& 37). They are described in the following verses:-

Inner South Gate	chapter 40 verses 27 to 31
Inner East Gate	chapter 40 verses 32 to 34
Inner North Gate	chapter 40 verses 35 to 37

We find no mention of any gates on the western side.

We go up the outer gates by seven steps (e.g. chapter 40 verses 22,26) and then from the outer court to the inner gates and inner court by a further eight steps ( verses 31,34,& 37).

### 4. The Pavement and its Chambers

When we have passed through the outer gates we see next to the outer wall a pavement (v.17) as wide as the gates are long (v.18). On this pavement are thirty chambers (v.17). No size is given for these chambers, but they are obviously separate identifiable units on the pavement. They do not completely cover the pavement, which can itself be seen. The fact that the pavement corresponds in width to the 50 cubits length of a gate comes out a little clearer in the Revised Version: -

“And the pavement was by the side of the gate, answerable unto the length of the gates.”

In the American Revised Version: -

“And the pavement ran along the side of the gates, corresponding to the length of the gates.”

## **5. The Tables and Slaying Blocks**

In less than one page we have covered the broad sweep of the first 38 verses of Ezekiel 40. True we have not gone into the details of the six gate buildings. This we reserve to a later issue, God willing; but we have given the reader a skeleton of the whole outer part of the Temple.

Chapter 40, verses 39 to 43 gives the position of various tables and blocks for sacrificial preparation; and of certain chambers near the inner gates for the use of certain singers and ministers of the house. Of these we cannot now speak particularly, though if God grant time and resources we will later. Suffice for the moment to point out that while the A.V. and R.V. suggest in v.38 that washing of sacrifice goes on at more than one gate (R.S.V. keeps the singular) all versions of verses 39 to 43 speak of the slaying tables as being associated with the north inner gate only. This would link with the practise in the tabernacle (Leviticus 1:11; 6:25; 7:2) where the killing was done on the north side of the altar.

## **6. The Chambers for the Singers and Sons of Zadok**

The chambers for singers and ministers (v. 44 to 46) are on any interpretation difficult to place. Those at the side of the north inner gate have a southern prospect (v.44); we would have expected one with a northern prospect to be at the side of the southern inner gate; the Septuagint, R.S.V. so translates, but the A.V. and R.V. have this other chamber at the side of the east gate. Whichever turns out to be right, both the chambers facing south and the chamber facing north are in a specific and identifiable spot, and if the reader is making his own sketch he will know where to put them, subject to which version he follows.

## **7. The Altar Court and Altar**

With chapter 40 v. 47 and chapter 41 we have come into the inner court and we stand before the house itself - the very sanctuary. The whole structure - inner and outer – is called a house, a sanctuary and a temple (44:11; 45:2); but the inner sanctum, containing holy and most holy place, is also called by Ezekiel, the house (41); the most holy place is also called by him “the temple,” and the holy place “the sanctuary” (41:21,23). This is in line with the law which interchange the terms “altar court” “holy place” and “most holy place” (see Leviticus 6:26 where the court is also called “the holy place” and Numbers 18:10 where it is called the “most holy place”). We mention this now because it may be important at a later stage to realise that these terms are not exclusive and precise. To a large extent this is a “first definition” number of this publication.

“Before the house” in its narrower sense of “holy” and “most holy” is a court 100 cubits x 100 cubits; within this court is an altar, just as there used to be in the tabernacle and in Solomon’s Temple. The size of the altar which is “before” or in front of the house is given in chapter 43 verse 13 to 17 which greatly stresses in verse 13 that the measurement is in large cubits. Measured from its outer ledge it is 14 cubits x 14 cubits (v.17): its top surface is 12 x 12 cubits (v.16). The R.S.V. makes this section clear without departing from the text used by the A.V. After reading the R.S.V. you can go back and read the A.V. with complete understanding.

Here is the R.S.V. for chapter 43 verses 13 to 17:-

“These are the dimensions of the altar by cubits (the cubit being a cubit and a hand-breadth): its base shall be one cubit high and one cubit broad, with a rim of one span around its edge. And this shall be the height of the altar; from the base on the ground to the lower edge, two cubits, with a breadth of one cubit; and from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge, four cubits, with a breadth of one cubit; and the altar hearth, four cubits; and from the altar hearth projecting upward, four horns, one cubit high. The altar hearth shall be square, twelve cubits long by twelve broad. The ledge also shall be square, fourteen cubits long by fourteen broad with a rim around it half a cubit broad, and its base one cubit round about. The steps of the altar shall face east.”

More of the altar another time - but this much should help.

## 8. The Porch ( figure 5 ref. F: figure 6 ref. A)

Chapter 40 verses 48 and 49 describe one porch to one house (i.e. inner house). The biggest single measurement in it is 20 cubits. The porch of Solomon's Temple was 20 cubits x 10 cubits (1 Kings 6:3); the Ezekiel Temple porch is 20 cubits x 11 cubits. In Solomon's Temple the longer measurement was flush with the width of the house so that the porch jutted out only 10 cubits. If it is found to fit best that way it would not be unreasonable to expect a similar arrangement in the future Temple, i.e. a porch jutting out 11 cubits.

## 9. The Holy and Most Holy

This preliminary survey, in which we are simply getting our bearings and gaining familiarity with the general picture seen by Ezekiel, now passes on to chapter 41.

We go into the Temple which in verses 1 and 2 mean the Holy Place; its length is 40 cubits and its breadth 20 cubits. 40 x 20 as we should say. This is a measurement of ground area, identical with that of the Holy Place, called Temple, in the description of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6:17 where the Holy Place is 40 cubits long and verse 2, where it and the Most Holy are 20 cubits broad).

Please do turn up these verses in 1 Kings 6. Brother Sulley makes no reference to them, yet the identity is inescapable!

The Holy Place:	Ezekiel 41:1,2	40 cubits x 20 cubits
	1 Kings 6:17	40 cubits long
	1 Kings 6: 2	20 cubits broad

Could anything be clearer?

And what of the Most Holy Place?

Ezekiel 41:3,4, sees the measuring angel going inward into a chamber of which he says; "This is the most holy place". What is? The room he measured as 20 cubits long and 20 cubits broad. Again ground area, 20 x 20, and again identical with the area of the Most Holy Place, called "Oracle," in the description of Solomon's Temple. Please turn up 1 Kings 6:20 and see it for yourself.

The Most Holy:	Ezekiel 41:4	20 cubits x 20 cubits
	1 Kings 6:20	20 cubits x 20 cubits x 20 cubits high

Clearer than ever!

Much of the other detail in Ezekiel 41 links with 1 Kings 6. In fact, if you can understand 1 Kings 6 then Ezekiel 41 comes easy.

## 10. Details of the Inner House (Solomon's) (1 Kings 6)

Notice the following details of Solomon's Temple:-

1 Kings 6:5 - Chambers running right along the sides of the whole house flush against the wall of the house (holy and most holy, called Temple and Oracle).

1 Kings 6:6 - These chambers are in three stories; the lowest ones are only 5 cubits broad; the middle, 6 cubits broad; the top ones 7 cubits broad. The house wall next to the lowest ones was thus much thicker and gave a ledge on which the floor beams of the middle one rested. Likewise the floor of the widest top storey rested on the wider wall of the house next to the middle storey, thus the beams did not need to be fastened into the wall of the house at all but rested on ledges in that wall.

- 1 Kings 6:8 - A winding staircase through the three chambers.
- 1 Kings 6:29 - Carved cherubim on the wall.
- 1 Kings 6:31-35 Two-leaved folding doors to both Holy and Most Holy Place.

### **11. Details of the Inner House (Ezekiel's)**

Now compare the above with the inner house of the future:-

Ezekiel 41:5 - Side chambers (basically 4 cubits broad) running right round the sides of the house up against its basically 6 cubit wall.

Ezekiel 41:6 - These chambers are in three stories and, as in Solomon's Temple, their floors do not fix into the wall of the house but rest on ledges in it. They "entered into" the wall, but "had no hold" in it. That is why we used the word "basically" above, because as verse 7 indicates, the higher you went the broader the chambers became; they ate a little into the wall of the house, which structurally would not require so thick a wall in its upper part where it was carrying less weight of side chambers.

Ezekiel 41:7 - A winding staircase through the three chambers which followed the ledges mentioned above.

Ezekiel 41:18-21 Carved cherubim on the wall.

Ezekiel 41:23-25 Two-leaved folding doors to both holy and most holy places.

### **12. The House on a Raised Basement (Ezekiel 41:8-11)**

The Revised Version helps here. What the A.V. calls a "height" is, in fact, a raised basement or platform (R.S.V.) (Figure 7 ref. F). This acts as a foundation of 6 cubits for the side chambers (v.8).

We are then told that the outer wall of the side chambers is 5 cubits wide and that there is a "place left" associated with these side chambers, i.e. part of the platform is left free of all buildings, so that a passage way 6 cubits above the ground runs all round the Temple and its side chambers (v.9). How useful this walk round the Temple would be is obvious. How else would ministers get out of the side chambers? Verse 11 explains that there is in fact a door from the side chambers on the north and south side, through the walls of the side chambers out on to the free part of the platform, the "place left" or "walk," we are told that this walk is 5 cubits wide.

Verse 10 groups the side chambers and Holy and Most Holy Places together as a set of chambers and says that they are separated from all other chambers by a clear space of 20 cubits on all sides of the house. In verse 12 this "wideness of 20 cubits," because it has a separating function, is called the separate place,

### **13. The Building toward the West (Ezekiel 41:12) (see figure 5).**

On the western side, this separate place separates the house and its chambers and platform from another structure called the building. This is something distinct from the house which contains holy and most holy place. We are not told its use. We are, however, given measurements which are obviously of ground area. This building is 70 cubits broad by 90 cubits long and has a 5 cubit wall all round it, so that its outer measurements is 80 cubits x 100 cubits.

### **14. Balancing Measurements. (Ezekiel 41:13-15)**

All that we have set out above is surprisingly simple! Now Ezekiel gives us what accountants would call our balancing figures. Four items are said to be an hundred cubits in measurement:-

- a) The house in its length, i.e. east to west (v.13).
- b) The building together with the western part of the separate place (east to west) (v.13).
- c) The breadth of the house (north to south) together with the northern and southern parts of the separate place (v.14).

d) The length of the building and its walls (north to south) (v.15) up to and including the phrase “100 cubits” - all translators now agree that the following phrases belong to v.16 and list all the other things that were measured but whose measurements are not specified.

Now let us see if we do get back to these balancing figures.

**a) The Length of the House East to West**

i) Porch	11 cubits	40	49	A
ii) Place left (east side)	5 cubits	41	11	H
iii) Thickness of door sides	2 cubits	41	3	
iv) Holy place	40 cubits	41	2	B
v) Thickness of door sides	2 cubits	41	3	
vi) Most holy	20 cubits	41	4	C
vii) Wall of house (west side)	6 cubits	41	5	
viii) Side chambers (west side)	4 cubits	41	5	D
ix) Side chamber walls	5 cubits	41	9	
x) Place left (west side)	5 cubits	41	11	H

Total 100 cubits

For only one of these measurements is there anything less than direct statement. We have to assume that if the door posts between holy and most holy place (41:3) are 2 cubits thick, then the position is similar for the door posts and “sides” between the porch and the holy place. Even without this we are so remarkably near the 100 cubits length east to west when we add up the individual items, as to be sure that we are on the right lines.

**b) The breadth of the House (north to south) with Separate Place.**

This is the right place to look at the breadth of the house. Work north to south,

i) Separate Place (north)	20 cubits	41:10	K
ii) Place left (north)	5 cubits	41:11	H
iii) Side chambers wall (north)	5 cubits	41:9	G
iv) Side chamber (north)	4 cubits	41:5	D
v) Wall of House (north)	6 cubits	41:5	E
vi) Breadth of house	20 cubits	41:2,4	B
vii) Wall of house (south)	6 cubits	41:5	E
viii) Side chamber (south)	4 cubits	41:5	D
ix) Side chamber Wall (south)	5 cubits	41:9	G
x) Place left (south)	5 cubits	41:11	H
xi) Separate Place (south)	20 cubits	41:10	

Total 100 cubits

Again we balance.

**c) The Building (East to West) with Western Separate Place.**

i) Wall of building (west)	5 cubits	41 12
ii) Breadth of building	70 cubits	41 12
iii) Wall of building (east)	5 cubits	41 12
iv) Separate Place (west of Temple)	20 cubits	41 10

Total = 100 cubits

(Incidentally, we now see why there is no western gate - the building is there instead!).

**d) The Building (North to South)**

1)	Wall of building (north)	5 cubits	41 12
ii)	Length of building	90 cubits	41 12
iii)	Wall of building (south)	5 cubits	41 12

Total = 100 cubits

**15. Overall Measurements (figure 8)**

Now if you are not mathematically inclined, do not give up. The whole thing is getting very exciting. A little hard work now will yield doctrinal beauties later.

Have you noticed we now have three squares of 100 cubits x 100 cubits? Working from west to east on figure 8 they are:-

A. The building with its walls and the western separate place, (see section 14 b) and d) above).

B. The house with its porch and the northern and southern parts of the separate place, (see sections 14 a. and c. above).

C. The altar court, (see chapter 40 verse 47).

Now let us continue the west to east journey, setting down just the east to west measurements of the three squares and then going on:-

i)	The Building and Separate Place (east-west)	100 cubits	
ii)	The House and Porch (east-west)	100 cubits	
iii)	The Altar Court (east-west)	100 cubits	
iv)	The eastern Inner Gate (east-west)	50 cubits	40:15
v)	The Outer Court (east-west)	100 cubits	40:
vi)	The eastern Outer Gate (east-west)	50 cubits	40:

Total = 500 cubits

Then let us go across the whole edifice north to south:-

i)	North Outer Gate (north-south)	50 cubits	40:
ii)	Outer Court (north side, north-south)	100 cubits	40:19
iii)	North Inner Gate (north-south)	50 cubits	
iv)	Altar Court	100 cubits	
v)	South Inner Gate (north-south)	50 cubits	
vi)	Outer Court South (side, north-south)	100 cubits	
vii)	South Outer Gate (north-south)	50 cubits	

Total = 500 cubits

**16. Important Deductions (see figure 8)**

a) Thus two lines drawn right through the middle of the whole structure West to East and North to South are each 500 cubits long.

b) Altogether we have twenty-five squares 100 cubits x 100 cubits.

c) The middle square is the Altar Court. Thus the Altar is right in the middle of the whole Temple Buildings.

d) And of course the outer dimensions just have to be 500 cubits x 500 cubits. This gives a third reason why the Temple cannot be 500 reeds x 500 reeds and that somewhere along the line the text of chapter 42, verses 15 to 19 has been corrupted, for Scripture cannot contradict itself. (The Septuagint has cubits),

## **17. Summary.**

a) In Part 1 we saw that Jerusalem is to be rebuilt as a city on her own site. The Temple is to be within the city and cannot therefore be 500 reeds x 500 reeds or 1 mile square: but must be 500 cubits x 500 cubits. (1/6 mile square)

b) In Part 2 we saw that the land apportioned between the tribes has its southern border at the Wady el Arish, or brook of Egypt, and that if the Holy Oblation were 25,000 reeds square there would be scarcely any room for the southern five tribes. It must therefore be 25,000 cubits square and the sanctuary within it 500 cubits square.

c) In this issue we have noted the links between Solomon's Temple and the one soon to be erected in Zion and have balanced all the measurements given in chapters 40 and 41 to produce a self consistent plan 500 hundred cubits square.

The writing of this issue and the drawing of the illustrations has convinced the writers more than ever that the simple, easy to understand picture they are presenting is right in its broad concept. They realise that there are implications in relation to the scale of which worship in Zion will take place in the day to come. They have faced up to these and found their vision of the future glory more vivid than ever, based on the solid facts of Divine revelation.

We do beseech the reader patiently to work through this number several times, Bible in hand. If this issue is clearly grasped, then all the wonderful studies we hope to have together will be easier to follow.

May God grant His blessing on the effort of the wise to understanding. After all, every part of Scripture is profitable - even a lot of apparently dry measurements.

Brother H.C.Gates

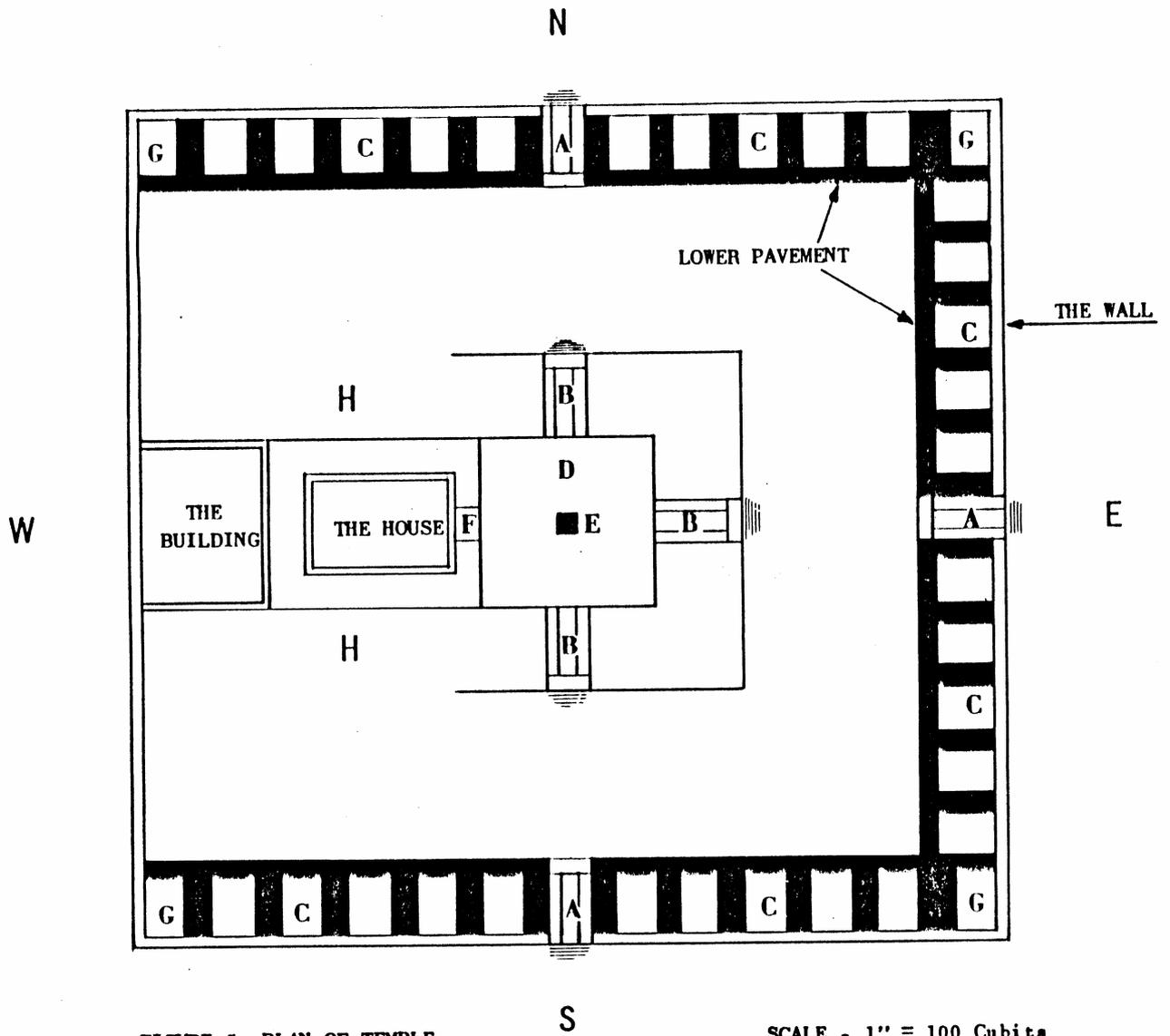


FIGURE 5. PLAN OF TEMPLE

SCALE - 1" = 100 Cubits

- A. Gateways of Outer Court with porches inward
- B. Gateways of Inner Court with porches outward
- C. 30 Chambers upon the Pavement
- D. Altar Court
- E. Altar
- F. Porch
- G. Corner Courts
- H. Chambers for Priests (to be detailed later)

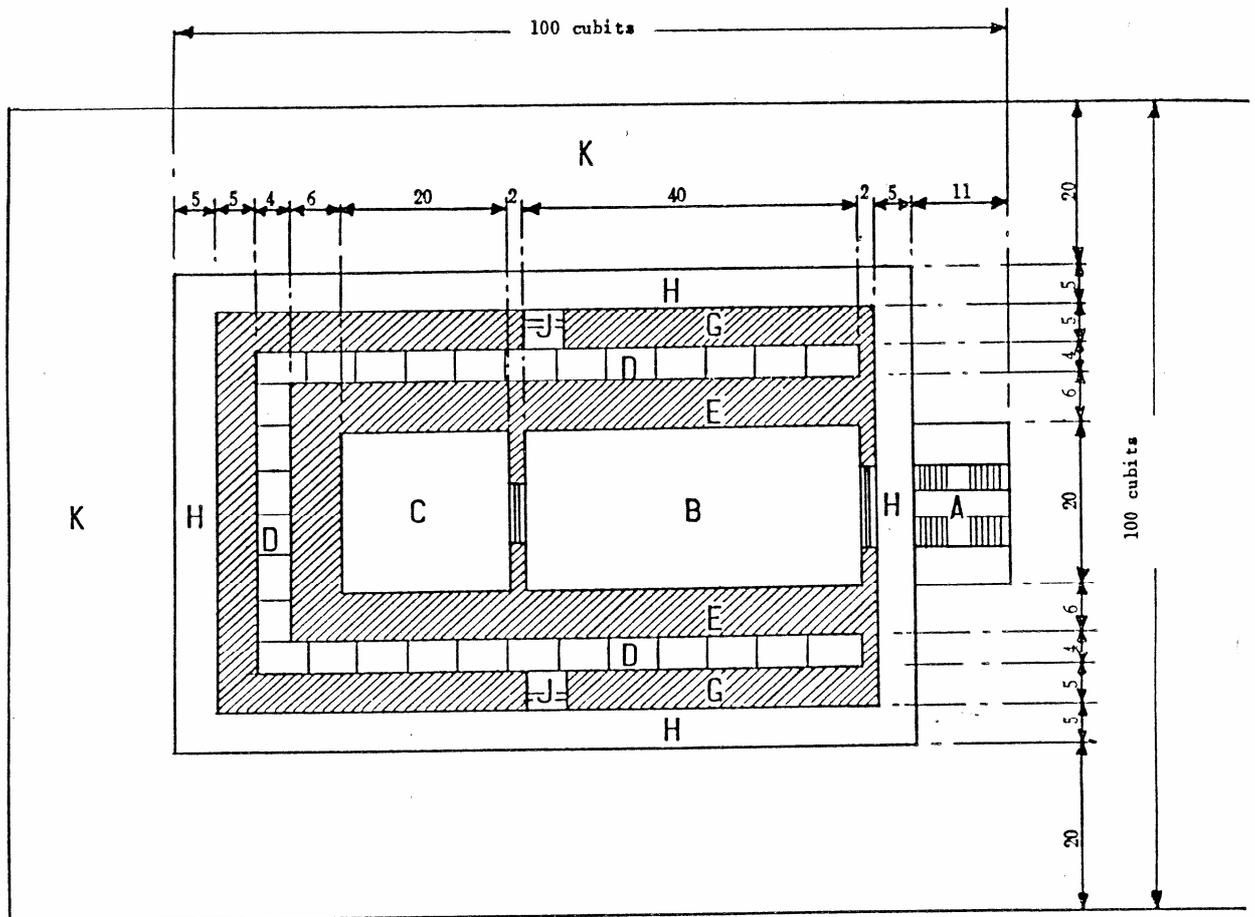


FIGURE 6. PLAN OF THE HOUSE

SCALE 1" = 20 cubits

- A. Porch
- B. Holy Place
- C. Most Holy
- D. Side Chambers
- E. 6 cubit Wall
- F. Raised Platform
- G. 5 cubit Wall
- H. Place Left
- J. Door to side Chambers
- K. Separate Place

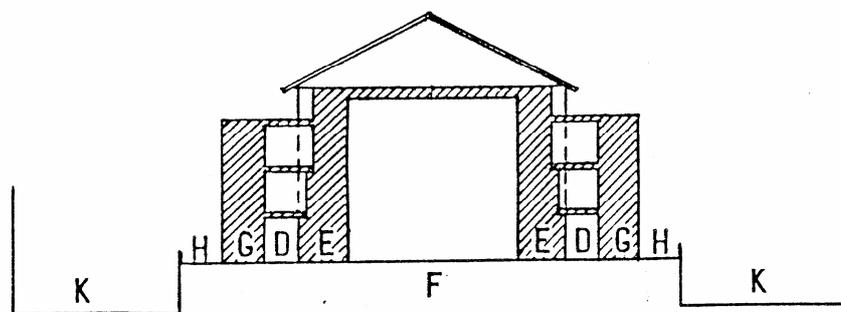


FIGURE 7. SECTION THROUGH HOUSE SHOWING SIDE CHAMBERS

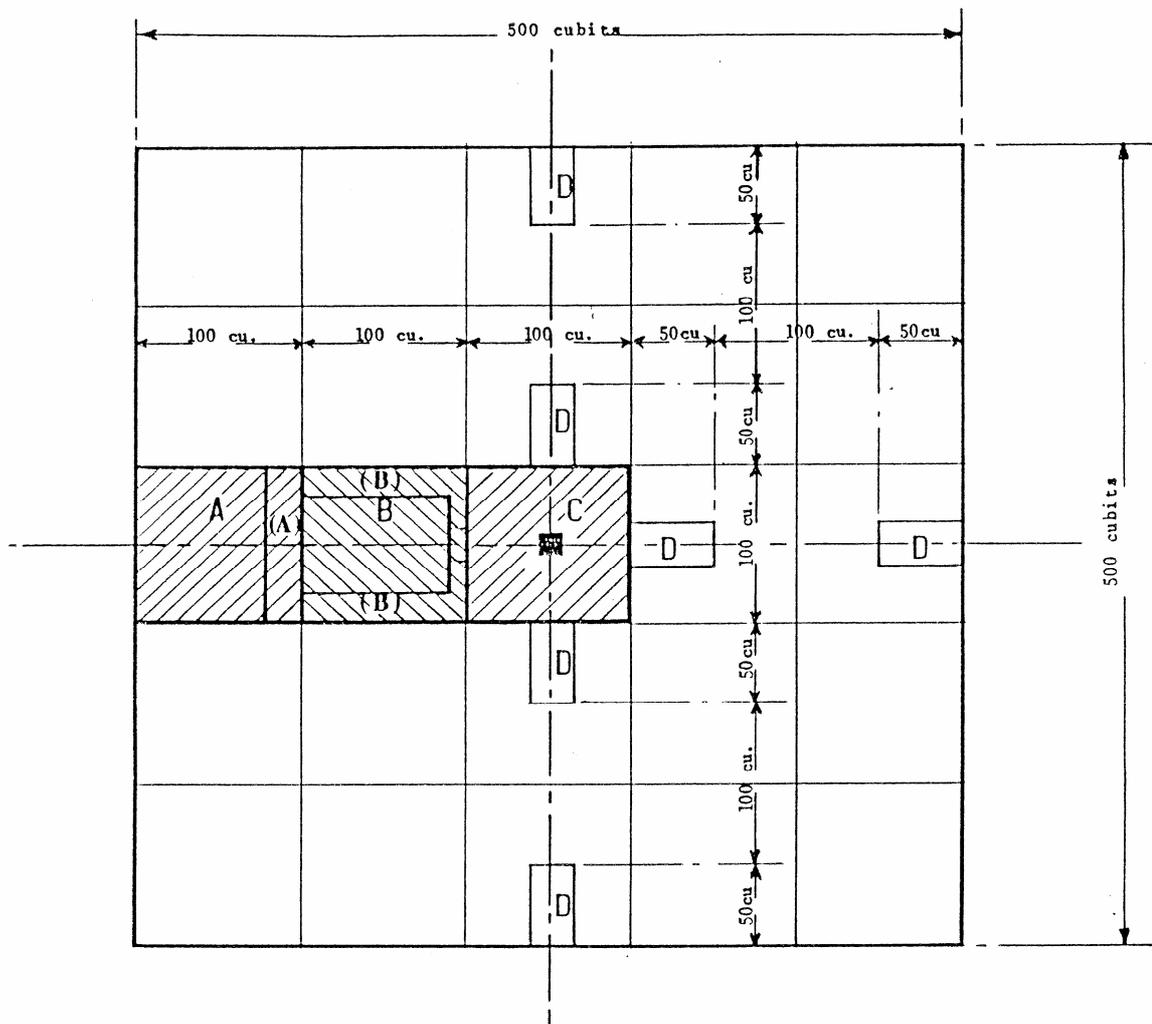


FIGURE 8. TEMPLE SHOWING MEASUREMENTS

SCALE - 1" = 100 cubits

Space occupied by -

- A. Building and Separate Place (West) (A)
- B. House and Porch with Separate Place (N. & S.) (B)
- C. Altar Court
- D. Gates