

the Caesars, Hitler. Yet it is these, “the basest of men”, whom God sets up. In choosing one political candidate over another, would we really wish to find ourselves resisting the choice of God? “If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God” (Acts 5:39).

- 2 Although it is true that we are to “Submit [ourselves] to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake” (1 Pet. 2:13), yet “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29, RV; cf. 4:19). Where the demands, philosophies and ideologies of men run contrary to faithful service, or where it is possible that our allegiance to God is brought into question, our submission must be to God alone and Him above all. Ultimately it is God Who is the highest power to Whom we must submit.

Separation and witness

Our separation from political elections is an opportunity to witness to the hope we have in Christ. Like the Lord Jesus Christ, and other faithful men and women, we should confess ourselves to be “strangers and pilgrims on the earth”.

The reason? “For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own” (Heb. 11:13,14, RV). By our non-involvement we openly declare that at present “[our] life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).

Not to vote is a positive statement of our conviction in the faithfulness of God. Political elections are an occasion to make known the great hope that is within us. They are a particularly powerful opportunity to witness where the believer is compelled by law to vote. To vote by means of casting lots,² or to apologise weakly, “I’m a Christadelphian, I don’t vote”, is an opportunity missed. Our decision not to vote should be used as an open declaration of our belief in the sureness of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the certainty of the establishment of “a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44). Do we really wish to involve ourselves in a world in which we claim no part, with this hope before us?

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2. The drawing of lots is not in itself being deprecated (Acts 1:24-26; Prov. 16:33; 18:18).

Fellowcitizens: the lesson of Shimei

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WHEN DAVID fled from Jerusalem he was cursed by Shimei: “And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial” (2 Sam. 16:7). The words, “Come out, come out”, struck at the heart of David’s tribulation. He was the king of Israel, but he was fleeing from Jerusalem in fear. The taunt to “come out” from Jerusalem would have been especially hurtful to David.

When Solomon became king, David instructed him concerning Shimei: “Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood” (1 Kgs. 2:9). However, when Solomon was king he did not immediately put Shimei to death. He gave him a condition which, if he adhered to it, would enable him to live: “And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head” (vv. 36,37).

The requirement to live in Jerusalem was a true test of whether or not Shimei had repented. If he had sincerely repented from taunting David with the words, “Come out, come out”, then he had to manifest this by moving to Jerusalem and remaining in the city. He had to show he was a fellowcitizen with David.

At first he remained in the city. Eventually, however, the temptation to leave for a while became too great: “And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem

to Gath, and was come again" (vv. 39-41). As a consequence of going to Gath he was condemned and put to death. Solomon could have killed him straight away, but by providing this test it showed clearly that he had not repented. His heart was not really in Jerusalem.

The warning for us is clear. We have been baptized into Christ and have become fellow-citizens. We have, as it were, moved to Jerusalem. But how many times, if only in our heart, do we go to Gath and return? We think that nobody notices. However, our heavenly Father

sees all things just as surely as Solomon knew Shimei had left the city. As fellowcitizens we must remain in the city at all times.

The psalmist wrote: "The LORD [Yahweh] loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob . . . The LORD [Yahweh] shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there" (87:2,6). We too should have the same love for Zion. Let us strive to be faithful fellowcitizens, so that it might be said of us when we stand before the judgement seat: "this man was born there".

Bibliography

A SELECTION of Christadelphian books and pamphlets providing further treatment of the major topics covered in this special issue of *The Testimony*. Books on the Epistle to the Ephesians are also included. Appearance of a publication in this list does not imply the material is still in print.

Books

- 1 *Freedom in Christ*, H. A. Twelves (Birmingham, The Christadelphian, 1968).
- 2 *Be Ye Doers of the Word: A practical guide for godly living*, Compiled (Torrensville, South Australia, 1998).
- 3 *The New Life*, J. Marshall (Birmingham, The Christadelphian, 1971).
- 4 *Do All to the Glory of God: A short treatise on standards for Christadelphians*, Compiled (Torrens Park, South Australia, CSSS).
- 5 *A New Creation: A manual for new Christadelphians, young Christadelphians, and prospective Christadelphians*, G. Booker (Austin, Texas, G. Booker, 1989).
- 6 *Letters to George and Jenny*, H. A. Whittaker (Cannock, Biblia, 1988).
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- 23 *Quenching all the Fiery Darts of the Wicked*, R. Abel (Torrens Park, South Australia, CSSS, 1981).
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- 1 *The Gospel and Education*, H. A. Twelves (Birmingham, The Christadelphian, 1971).
- 2 *The Gospel and Mammon*, C. Cooper (Birmingham, The Christadelphian, 1969).
- 3 *The Gospel and Politics*, A. D. Norris (Birmingham, The Christadelphian, 1970).