

*Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart
Toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest (Jer 31:21)*

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN WAYMARK

Volume 7

Issue 2

**Devoted to the Defence and Proclamation of the Way of Life
in Opposition to the Dogmas of Papal and Protestant Christendom**

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*“I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that
sat upon him had a bow; and a crown was
given unto him: and he went forth conquering,
and to conquer” (Rev 6:2)*

*“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable ...” (Jas 3:17)
“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)*

“Behold, I Come as a Thief”

“Behold, I come as a Thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame”

These words which form part of Messiah’s last message to his brethren comprise an exhortation for readiness at the time of his coming again. In our considerations therefore, to mentally prepare ourselves to remember what he accomplished for us in the bread and the wine, it is appropriate to examine the exhortation, and take the lessons learned to heart:

“Behold, I come as a Thief...”

This expression is used by Messiah a number of times, to encourage a state of readiness in the minds of those who look for him. Naturally speaking, a thief enters a house under cover of darkness, and takes to himself those things he considers to be valuable. Having collected together those things, he leaves just as silently as he came. No-one knows what has happened before the breaking of a new day, when the occupants rise from sleep and find their house ransacked, and their goods taken. Even so it will be with Messiah at his coming: he will come to a world in darkness, and gather to himself his special treasure. He remain undetected by man until at the dawning of a new Millennial day, when it is seen that the graves are opened, the dead raised, and those saints who are alive and remain until that day have been taken away from their midst. So Messiah spake thus:

“know this, that if the Goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh” (Mat. 24:43-44, cp. Lu. 12:39).

We, who do not know the day, never mind the hour of our Master’s coming, need to be on a constant state of readiness. Like a man who knows that the thief will come some time in the darkness of the night, but does not know when, we must always be alert, and waiting for him to come. Again, Paul exhorted the believers:

“... of the times and seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night ...” (1 Thes. 5:1-2).

And again, the words of Messiah:

“ ... if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Rev. 3:3)

The common theme in these passages, is to be in a constant state of readiness. When a thief comes, it is to the detriment of the house-holder in that valuable things are lost. But also, there is a rejection of those things that are worthless: they remain amongst the mess that the thief leaves behind him, having ransacked the place. Even so shall it be when Messiah comes to judge the household of faith.

“Blessed Is He That Watcheth”

A key point referred to in some of the passages cited above, is the need to “watch”. “**Watch** therefore: for ye do not know what hour your Lord doth come” are the Master’s words (Mat. 24:42). Again, Luke further records him as saying:

“Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them” (Lu. 12:37).

The question requiring an answer here, is What is it that we should be watching? The answer is clearly: those things that go on around us. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, saying: “... O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Mat. 16:3). The “signs of the times” therefore constitute the things to be watched, that through the light of a sure word of prophecy, we can discern our place in the outworking of the purpose of God in the affairs of men. By watching the things that go on around us with the illumination of the Word, we can, perhaps, make more sense than most in the tangles and threads of human affairs.

WATCH UNTO PRAYER

There is another sense in which we must “watch”. Peter exhorts: “watch unto prayer” (1 Pet. 4:7), or be alert to the things of God in our prayers before Him. This is what Jesus required of his disciples during his agony at Gethsemane, yet it was something they could not do. “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me” (Mat. 26:28). But this was something they could not do. Though the spirit was willing, their flesh was weak, and so the spirit of Christ in the Psalmist wrote: “I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none” (Psa. 96:20). So Christ spoke to Peter, who had only just avowed loyalty to him (Mat. 26:33), “What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” (Mat. 26:40). This is our task. Even as the disciples waited for their master to come back to them, so we await his return. They could not “watch” for one hour, for the weakness of the flesh. But what of ourselves? We will only know in that day to come, when Christ shall come for us, no longer in weakness, but with power and great glory. It is written that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18): the word “perish” is rendered in other translations as “made naked”. To avoid being “made naked” therefore, we must have a clear vision and focus on the things of the spirit, seeking above all else, the Kingdom of God.

“And Keepeth his Garments, Lest he Walk Naked ...”

The figure of a “garment” occurs many times in Scripture. Jude exhorts the believers to try and save lapsing brethren, “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 1:23). The ecclesia at Sardis had those within it “which have not defiled their garments” (Rev. 3:4). And Isaiah was told to be a living parable, and “walk naked” as a sign to Israel and the nations amongst whom he lived. So the word came to him:

“ ... go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. And Yahweh said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia, So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.” (Isa. 20:2-4)

The Egyptians were to be shamed by the uncovering of their nakedness, as enacted by Isaiah in his walk before men. We can well anticipate a similar situation to come upon the world at large when Messiah comes. In this age – maybe more so than any age – there is great pressure to present an outward appearance of things. To wear the latest fashions and designer clothes: to make a show of ourselves and our things. Israel of old did this very thing, as Isaiah describes in chapter 3 of his prophecy:

“... the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet ... and it shall come to pass that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink, and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty” (Isa. 3:16-24 – read the whole chapter for context).

The outward beauty of Israel therefore, was to be stripped away, and sackcloth – a garment of mourning be worn instead. For Egypt and Ethiopia however, it was even worse: they would be “made naked” without even sackcloth to cover their loins.

We need then, to ensure we are clothed. But as the parable of the wedding feast shows, those garments must be of a particular type (Mat. 22:11-12). So it was so since the foundation of the world: Adam and Eve devised their own garments which were rejected by God. What is needed for man is not for himself to devise his own covering for sin, but to make use of the garments provided by God. Yahweh is the offended party, and only He can state what is acceptable to reconcile man to Himself. The clothing of His providing, being skins, involves death and sacrifice, foreshadowing the merciful sacrifice of His Son. It is only through Baptism that a man can adorn himself with the proper garments, as it is written:

“put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

Jesus is the Slain Lamb: the One through whom forgiveness will come. He provides a covering (the Hebrews for “atonement”) that the shame of nakedness be not seen before Yahweh. The teaching of Paul is identical:

“... ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26).

Putting on these Christ-garments, we can draw near to the throne of the Most High – not with any sense of shame, but rather rejoicing in a clear conscience, being sprinkled by the blood of the Lamb (Heb. 9:14).

“... and they see his shame”

Exodus chapter 32 records Israel’s return to idolatry, soon after they had left Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Verse 6 records that the people, in Moses’ absence “sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play” (Ex. 32:6) Moreover, they corrupted themselves in making a molten calf to worship, to which they offered sacrifices, both burnt and peace offerings.

In these circumstances, we see a parallel between the situation of Israel as they awaited the coming of Moses again, and the way in which we ought to wait for Messiah, the prophet “like unto” Moses. Israel proved themselves to be “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:4). Eating, drinking, and playing are the Spirit’s words that characterise this people. Whereas the exhortation in the Apocalypse is “blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments”, Israel walked naked and their shame was displayed to all:

“...when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on Yahweh’s Side?” (Exo. 32:25,26)

The reference to “their enemies” implies that what they were doing was open for all – both friend and foe – to see. Whether they literally took their clothes off, or whether the description is of a spiritual nakedness, we can see the parallel with our own day. In the absence of our Great King, do we “watch”, patiently waiting for the coming day, or do we, as Israel, grow tired of waiting, and turn aside to the pleasures of this life for our amusement and gratification? Only we can answer this question individually.

In this question, we have the example of Moses to help us:

“by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: Esteeming the

reproach for Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward ...” (Heb. 11:24-26).

Here we see the difference between Moses and the people he led. They enjoyed the pleasures of Sin, whilst Moses forsook Egypt and all the attractions and lures thereof. He “had respect” or “looked away” towards the things of God, rather than the things of Egypt. Suffering affliction at the head of a stiff-necked and rebellious people, his patience was truly tried to the uttermost.

The Master, Jesus Christ

In each of these particulars, we see Messiah, particularly in the context of his sufferings. Of him it is written that:

“for the joy set before him [he] endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2).

In the day when sin’s flesh was laid bare, he was physically stripped of his garments by the Roman soldiers, and impaled upon the tree of cursing. We see the example of Christ in choosing and enduring affliction and shame for his people’s sake. It is written: “the eyes of Yahweh are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry” (Psa. 34:15). So it was that the pre-eminently Righteous One cried to his Father: “and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7). He was one who “watched”, in that he always had his Father’s glory in his sight (Heb. 12:2), and presents a powerful example for us to follow.

Christopher Maddocks

ERRATUM

A reader writes regarding our last issue:-

“I was very, very surprised to see ‘Jehovah’ used instead of the more accurate ‘Yahweh’, for the Name ... many of us are a little irritated (perhaps) when our names are mis-pronounced. The overwhelming scholarly opinion is that when the name was given (Ex 3:15) it was the name Yahweh. To have it pronounced in error as a large ‘So-called’ Christian group do, is to be flippant with it in the extreme and not to revere it or memorialise it at all.”

It is written: “iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Prov. 27:17), and in this spirit we are thankful for our brother’s correction. The responsibility for the error rests with myself as editor, and I whole heartedly endorse our brother’s remarks, and recognise the true import of our Father’s Name. The use of ‘Jehovah’ slipped through when it ought to have been picked up whilst proof-reading: greater care will be exercised in future articles.

Christopher Maddocks

“Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness ...”

Our New Testament reading for the day includes our Master’s exhortation, that the primary things to be sought after in life are those things that pertain to the Coming Kingdom, and the Righteousness of God. His words are: “*seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [i.e. the food, drink, clothing etc of verse 31] shall be added unto you*” (Mat. 6:33). In our considerations therefore, we shall examine each of these aspects in turn: namely that of “seeking” particularly in connection with the coming Kingdom, and secondly, seeking in connection with the Righteousness of God.

Seeking

Matthew chapter 13 parabolically describes the Kingdom in terms of a precious treasure, to be sought after at all costs:

“... the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field” (Mat. 13:44).

Again, we have *seeking* in connection with the Kingdom: here, it is a great treasure to be obtained. The discoverer rejoices so much at what he has discovered, that he is willing to give even his last penny to obtain it. Giving even “all that he hath,” he seeks to obtain what is described in Luke’s record of the Master’s discourse as: “a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where not thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Lu. 12:33)

The allusion here is to Proverbs chapter 2, speaking of the virtues of Wisdom: “if thou *seekest* her as silver, and *searchest* for her *as for hid treasures*; then shalt thou understand the fear of Yahweh, and find the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:4-5). A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Lu. 12:15), and so it is only reasonable that he gives his all to obtain eternal things, even the incorruptible treasure of immortality. Being enlightened to the true nature of man, and the vanity of life without God, men of the spirit count all the things of this life to be but dung (Phil. 3:7) when compared with the glories to come. So the Prophet likewise exhorts:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” (Isa. 55:1-20).

And in allusion to these same things, Messiah exhorts:

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you ...” (Jno. 6:27).

The message of these combined testimonies is that to exert oneself in the things of the world - even if it be ostensibly to obtain the things necessary to sustain a mortal existence - is vanity. Our primary focus needs to be on the obtaining of the spiritual food, provided by no less than the Son of the Almighty, which will eternally satisfy our hunger for righteousness. And then, the Master teaches, “all these things shall be added unto you”. These spiritual meats are available to all: they cannot be “bought” simply by the giving of worldly money, and therefore can be obtained by the poorest among men: “he that hath no money”. Rather, a man must give his all – everything he has in life, to be granted the gift by grace.

The Kingdom

Solomon, upon his ascendancy to the Throne of David, was invited by Yahweh to choose a blessing that he could receive:

“... Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said: *Ask what I shall give thee...*” (1 Kings 3:5).

Solomon’s answer is very instructive for us to consider. What was his heart’s desire? If we were similarly given such an opportunity for a Divine Blessing – anything we like, what would be our response? Great riches? A long and prosperous life? Not Solomon: he sought first the things pertaining to the Kingdom he had been given rule over. He sought the Wisdom of God in order that he might correctly and wisely administer justice in the kingdom:

“... give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people” (1 Kings 3:9).

Solomon sought after Wisdom, as hid treasure. His desire was not for the things pertaining to his own affairs, and his own sphere of existence, but for the Kingdom, that he might have the wisdom to govern it righteously in the sight of Yahweh. And so, in the words of Messiah, all other things that he might have sought after were “added unto” him:

“And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart ... and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour ...” (1 Kings 3:12-13).

Here is a tremendous example for us to give heed to. Because Solomon sought the wellbeing of the kingdom over which he would reign above all else, his desire was granted - but those things he could have sought after, but did not, were given to him also. Not that if we seek the Kingdom that we shall be granted riches in this life; that would not be right at all. Rather, the “Greater than Solomon” shall obtain glory and honour in his kingdom, and we who shall live and reign with him, shall be partakers of the prosperity of that kingdom to come. In that day, we shall sing with loud voices:

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and *riches* and *wisdom*, and strength, and *honour*, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:12).

Seek Righteousness

The citation which we began with is often quoted by brethren – put in part. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” is a phrase that all Messiah’s brethren should instantly recognise, but the passage continues “... and his righteousness”. We seek not only a coming kingdom, but one in which the governing laws, precepts, and principles shall themselves show forth the Righteousness of God. We seek both the Kingdom, and the Righteousness together: indeed, one without the other would be an impossible situation. The prophet Zephaniah gave a similar exhortation:

“*Seek ye Yahweh*, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; *seek righteousness*, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of Yahweh’s anger ...” (Zeph. 2:3).

Notice that here, seeking meekness and righteousness is paralleled with seeking Yahweh. This is characteristic of all of the worthies of old: their pursuit after the righteousness of Israel’s Deity, in seeking His Ways, in all meekness and humility. A number of characters in Scripture are said to have sought Yahweh: we shall only consider one: Jehoshaphat.

The inspired Narrative in 2nd Chronicles speaks of king Jehoshaphat at the beginning of his reign:

“... and *Yahweh was with Jehoshaphat*, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; but *sought to the Elohim of his Father*, and walked not after the doings of Israel” (2 Chron. 17:3-4)

Here is one who, like Solomon sought after the ways of Yahweh in his dealings with the kingdom that he had been appointed to reign over. Spurning the idolatry of his day, he sought to the Deity that his Father worshipped, and so we read that “Yahweh was with Jehoshaphat”. Moreover, as Messiah taught, other things were “added unto him”:

“Therefore Yahweh stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had *riches and honour* in abundance” (2 Chron. 17:5).

Like wise king Solomon, because he sought Yahweh’s ways above all else, Yahweh blessed him abundantly. Not that he sought after riches and honour, but that seeking first to rule righteously before his God, Yahweh blessed him with the things of this life, as well as that which is to come.

Proverbs 15:9 teaches that: “the way of the wicked is an abomination unto Yahweh: but he loveth him that *followeth after righteousness*”.

The Example of Messiah

In these two examples before us, we see this principle outlined very plainly. Both Solomon and Jehoshaphat were men who Sought Yahweh, and His Righteousness, and were plentifully rewarded for so doing. But even these exemplary cases fade into insignificance when compared with the righteousness of Messiah. The Spirit of Christ in the Psalms writes concerning him:

“Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Psa. 45:7).

Christ fed upon the spiritual food of the Word, which enabled him to discern between good and evil:

“butter and honey shall he eat, *that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good*” (Isa. 7:16).

As “the Word Made Flesh”, Messiah was pre-eminently the Wisdom of God, as it is written:

“of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is *made unto us wisdom, and righteousness*, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

The primary things that concerned the Master, were not the material things of this life. “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jno. 4:34) was his maxim. Seeking only those things that related to his Father, he was the Son in whom Yahweh was “well pleased”.

The Spirit writing to the Hebrews directed their attention to consider Christ from a particular aspect. That is, the aspect of one who constantly sought the things of God:

“... let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the Captain and Perfector of our faith; **who for the joy that was set before him**, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2).

Jesus endured all things for our sakes. What kept him strong, able to bear the shame of the cross, was not simply a brute determination: it was the motivating power of a joyous vision of the future. That vision is one that we can share – indeed, it must be so, for the Apostle presents Christ as an example to follow in this particular. Let us therefore lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and focus our attention upon the finish line in the race in which we are engaged. Let us constantly have a vision of the Kingdom before our minds, and do all that we can to keep a focus on that vision, seeking to show forth the glorious righteousness of Yahweh in some way – however imperfectly – that in the day to come we might be granted glory, honour, and immortality.

Christopher Maddocks

The Lord Jesus Christ

Reflecting on the Name and Titles of God in the Old Testament is an instructive and highly exhortational exercise. Recently, I have been meditating, albeit superficially, on the composite form of the name for our Master (as per our title) as found in the New Testament. Hopefully these few ideas may be a ‘taster’ for our readers to investigate in more depth. Let us commence with looking at the meaning of “Lord”, “Jesus” and “Christ”.

Lord*

Dr Vine in his “Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words” states that in the Greek, the noun is “*kurios*”; properly an adjective, signifying in the New Testament, “Lord”, “Master”, “owner”, “Sir” - a title of wide significance. There are other Greek words translated “lord” regarding our Master, but our thoughts in this article are revolving around the above composite title, and this Greek word for “Lord” is consistently used.

Perhaps the most well-known use of the word *kurios* is found in John chapter 13, when the Master having washed the disciples’ feet said “Ye call me Master and Lord [kurios] and ye say well: for so I am. If I then *the* Lord [kurios] and *the*

** Bro Woodall is here expounding the Greek word translated “Lord”, and the use of the word “Lord” in its modern day sense, not according to its etymology. The English word originates from the old English hlāford’ which itself originated from ‘hlāfweard’ meaning ‘bread keeper’ or ‘loaf-ward’, reflecting the Germanic tribal custom of a chieftain providing food for his followers - a very different meaning than in it’s common modern use.*

Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, Verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than *his* Lord [kurios] neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (Jno. 13:13-16 RV)

So we have before us the respect that is due to Christ. He is indeed THE Lord, and he had sent forth his disciples as HIS ambassadors in preaching the Gospel. In this incident, the greatness of his being THE KURIOS is stressed (see verse 3), and his humility in serving the disciples (verses 4-5). This combination of greatness and humility is seen after the resurrection and ascension in his being our High Priest. The only man to have ascended to the presence of Yahweh, and yet being the sympathetic and understanding High Priest for us (Heb. 2:v 17-18; 4:14-16 etc). He is our Lord, Master, and Mediator. His Lordship, however, was dependant upon him trusting, reflecting, and being a perfect manifestation of His Father. So it is to God that Christ's Lordship is derived. Thus Paul writes: "and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord [kurios] *to the glory of the Father*" (Phil. 2:11). This thought brings us to consider the Name of our Master:

Jesus

"but while he [Joseph] thought on these things, behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Mat. 1:20-21)

The name "Jesus" is a transliteration of the Hebrew name "Joshua" meaning "Yahweh is salvation". So in Jesus, God is being revealed. As Paul writes: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). As is expressed in John chapter 1: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him". For the word "declared", the Amplified Bible gives one of it's meanings by the phrase "brought him out where he can be seen". In other words, "The Word became Flesh" (Jno. 1:14). In our sin stricken nature, he revealed Yahweh—"he who will be salvation" and if we truly serve him, then forgiveness of sins can be extended to us. In the Kingdom, we shall be part of that Yahweh Name to fill the earth with the glory of God. As it is written, "and *Yahweh* shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be *one Yahweh and his Name One*" (Zech. 14:9).

Christ

This title signifies "anointed" and relates to the Messiah of Israel, the King promised. The Gospel record through Matthew stresses this role. For example, in chapter 1, and verse 1, he commences Christ's genealogy with "David" and then "Abraham". Thus directing our attention to the promises made to David as regards the Master being the "Christ". Note how often this title "Christ" is used:

verses 1, 16, 17 and 18. And the name of David occurs in verses 1, 6, 17, 20 of this one chapter. The Revised Version in verse 17 reads it is “**the Christ**” - the one promised in the Old Testament. Addressing Joseph the angel say “thou son of David” (verse 20), showing that Messiah would come of the line of David. As an aside, the consonants D.V.D equal 14, note verse 17!

In the forgoing, I have very briefly looked at the Name and Titles involved in “**the Lord Jesus Christ**”. When Peter made his inspired speech on the day of Pentecost, it seems to me that the framework of that message was “**The Lord Jesus Christ**”. Let me demonstrate:

In verses 22-29 of Acts, Peter speaks of **Jesus** of Nazareth, although demonstrating by miracles that God was with him (v. 22), was rejected by the people and crucified, yet he would be raised from the dead (V. 24) because he had led a perfect life. Peter shows that David understood that Jesus would be raised from the dead (Vs. 25-28), contrasting David himself who was dead to the living resurrected Messiah (V. 29).

However, David having received promises from God knew that “**the Christ**” (verse 30 RV) would sit on his throne in Jerusalem. Thus, the Master would be raised from the dead, and ascend to heaven (V. 31). The miracle of the Gift of Tongues demonstrated that “Christ” was in heaven (V. 33). Peter continues: “For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself: the Lord said unto my Lord [kurios] Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.” Here quoting from Psalm 110:1. Please note the summary by Peter: “... therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same **Jesus**, whom ye have crucified, both **Lord [kurios] and Christ**” (V. 36).

Think for a moment about the **Lord Jesus Christ**. It contains saving Truth. Take away the name, or one of the titles, and we are astray from the Gospel. By reflecting and using this form of address, one is reminded of the full redemptive Gospel in him.

It is very instructive to discover that *in the majority* of the Epistles, the introductory greeting contains this form of address. To take a few examples:

“To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and **the Lord Jesus Christ** (Rom. 1:7. How can we have Divine favour (Grace) and oneness with God (Peace) if we do not believe in and apply the lessons associated with **The Lord Jesus Christ?**).

This wording is also found in 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 3 (please look at verses 9-10 and see how Paul uses the title Lord (Kurios) to drive home the evil division in the ecclesia.

Again, the same wording is used in 2Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1st and 2nd Thes, and in Titus and Philemon. However, when we come to 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 2, it is “Jesus Christ our Lord [kurios]”. In this

Epistle, we see the Apostle Paul advising Timothy how to conduct himself in the ecclesia, particularly refuting false teaching and to nourish the brethren and sisters in the spiritually healthy instruction of the true Gospel. He was responsible to his Lord [kurios] for what he did. Paul writes in chapter 1 and verse 12: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord [kurios] who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful (Greek: trustworthy), putting me into the Ministry. In 2 Timothy chapter one, verse 2, we have: “Grace, Mercy and Peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul is pleading with Timothy to rekindle the spirit gifts in the service of God. He is reminding him of whom he serves—“Christ Jesus our Lord”, our owner, and our Master. So he writes in chapter 1, verse 8: “be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of *our Lord [kurios]* nor of me *his prisoner*, but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the Power of God”. Although we do not have spirit gifts like those of Paul and Timothy, yet it is essential for us not to be ashamed of the Gospel and to use whatever abilities we have in the service of our Lord (kurios).

For further meditation, note how Paul stresses the Master as our “Lord” in Romans chapters 4-9, ending each chapter with the phrase: “Jesus Christ our Lord”. In chapter 14 and verse 17, he speaks of the Kingdom of God not being centred upon food issues, but upon spiritual qualities, and so he uses the appropriate title “Christ” (verse 18) for the Master in the context of the Kingdom. Please see if you can find the topic of our consideration in Luke chapter 2, at the birth and circumcision of our Master.

Finally, in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, we have

- 1) Aspects of the past: Jesus
- 2) A work in the present: Lord
- 3) A looking to the future: Christ

May we appreciate the salvation wrought by God in Jesus, that to us, he is our High Priest, mediator and Lord, and that by the mercy of our God, we may share “in his throne” in the Kingdom.

It is then appropriate that the Scripture ends with the words:- “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen*”.

Brian Woodall

We cannot put Christ too high.

God hath given him a name above every name, even His own name, the name of God, which shortly cometh from far.

He is the Way the Truth, the Life, the Resurrection, the Hope.

He is the head; the beginning of the creation of God, the firstborn of every creature, Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, who is, and who was, and is to come, the Lord Almighty. (Rev. 1:8,11,17) His name shall endure forever. The earth shall at the last and for evermore be filled with His glory, when the institutions and the pomp, and the pride, and the theories of men shall for ever have disappeared from below the sun.

Robert Roberts

The Olive Trees and the Candlestick

Peter, in his old age and his last known letter, expressed his anxiety that the brethren should be mindful of what the prophets had written. We shall act in harmony with his desire this morning if we bestow a little attention on that portion of the prophetic writings which has been read from Zechariah (Chapter 4). It may not appear to have much connection with the purpose for which we have met—to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread. We shall find a connection, notwithstanding—a connection it may be said to be found, directly or indirectly, in every part of the Scriptures—not a wonderful thing in view of the fact that all Scripture is given by inspiration, and that the testimony for Christ is the inspiring idea of it all.

The chapter before us presents this testimony in the form of symbol. This may be difficult at first to understand; but the effect of symbol, after understanding is attained, is to make the matter set forth much more vivid and striking to the understanding than it would be in a merely literal presentation. Considerable use is made of symbol throughout the prophetic writings, though these writings mainly deal with the literal. Yahweh alludes to the fact in Hosea thus:

“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets” (Ch. 12:10).

If the similitudes were employed without any clue to their significance, their use would not be enlightening; but the clues, in almost all cases, are supplied—if not in the immediate context, in some corresponding part of the word. Diligent search and comparison will find them.

In some cases it requires no such search; they lie on the surface. Thus Jeremiah, at the commencement of his ministry, was caused to see an almond rod. He was asked what he saw; he said,

“I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto him, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it” (1:12).

Here an almond rod is constituted the symbol of speed in the execution of the Lord’s purpose, so that every time it was seen, it would carry that meaning with it, in the same way that the scales in modern allegory represent justice. The same prophet was shown a seething pot with its face towards the north, the explanation of which was added in these words: “Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land”—namely, a military invasion, as the next verse shows. Consequently a seething pot would become a symbol of the sore affliction arising from war. Amos was shown a basket of garnered fruit (ch. 8:1), and informed that it signified the completeness of Israel’s iniquity, because of which Yahweh would bear no longer with them.

In the chapter in Zechariah, the symbol is very beautiful, and the explanation glorious when apprehended in the fullness of its meaning. The prophet sees two olive trees, and a seven-branched golden lamp standing between. From each olive tree is a golden pipe communicating with the bowl out of which the seven branches are supplied with oil. This bowl is at the top of the central shaft or stem, and at the bottom or meeting point of the seven branches.

The prophet having attentively inspected the apparatus, asked the meaning of it. The answer he received was brief but pregnant. At first it seems no answer; but at last it appears complete and glorious. The answer was:

“Not by might, nor by power,
but by my spirit, saith the Lord
of hosts.”

In what way did the olive-fed candlestick show forth this idea? It will not be difficult to perceive this when one or two simple clues are followed up.

This was not the first time the seven-branched golden candlestick had been symbolically employed. It was part of the furniture of the Mosaic tabernacle in the wilderness—a tabernacle of which Paul says it “was a figure for the time then present” (Heb. 9:9). It was therefore an element in the “shadow of good things to come” (10:1). Those good things to come are all covered by, or summarised in, the intimation early made by Yahweh to Moses,

“I will fill the earth with my glory.”

The gospel is a declaration of this purpose in its detail, and if there is one feature more conspicuous than another as to the agency by which this glorious purpose is to be accomplished, it is the one expressed in the interpretation of the olive-fed candlestick:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by
my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

But it may be asked, “Is there no might, is there no power in the spirit of Yahweh?” Yes; in truth there is no might or power besides, for all might and all power are of it. What is the meaning of the contrast then expressed in the inter-

pretation? Obviously the contrast is between human power, and divine power. It is the contrast otherwise expressed in Paul’s words thus:

“Not many wise men after the
flesh, not many mighty, not
many noble are called . . . that
no flesh should glory in his pres-
ence.”

Not by human might, not by human power, but by the direct operation of the spirit of God, were the things to be accomplished that had been foreshown to Zechariah prior to the vision of the olive-fed candlestick. What these things are may be learned from attentive consideration of the matters exhibited in chapter 3. They are in brief the emancipation from mortality which awaits the chosen of God, the cleansing of the house of Israel and all nations from their present sin-polluted state, and the consequent peace and blessedness that will ensue over all the earth. These results are to be educed “not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of Yahweh!” The reformation of the world is not to be accomplished by human power, but by God Himself, operating in the particular form signified by the symbol shown to Zechariah.

What particular form is this? What is meant by the oil combusted in the candlestick, after being drawn from the two olive trees? We perceive the answer when we look forward to the organization through which the spirit of God is to illumine the earth in the day of Yahweh’s glory. This organization is expressed in its simplest form as Jesus and the saints in corporate completeness, glorified and imperially enthroned. But from whom are the elements of this his One Glorious Body derived? There are two sources recog-

nised in the apostolic writings. Paul having alluded to Israel after the flesh as “the circumcision”, among whom he remarks the Gentiles are called “the uncircumcision” (Eph. 2:11), says:

“He (Christ) is our peace, who hath made both one,” abolishing the law “to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.”

He further says:

“He came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh: for through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

The reference is, of course, to Jew and Gentile. The question is, Are the Jews and Gentiles spoken of under the figure of olive trees? The answer comes at once from Romans 11, where Paul discoursing of the natural relation of Jew and Gentile to the covenants of promise, says to the Gentiles:

“If thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” (Rom. 11:24).

If this idea were enigmatically presented, in reference to the glorious ending of the matter in the day of “the manifestation of the sons of God,” how could it be more strikingly done than in Zechariah’s symbolism—an illuminat-

ing apparatus fed by material drawn from two olive trees? The flame would tell us of the Spirit which transforms and empowers the saints in the day of their glory; the oil, of the called and chosen persons through whom the Spirit will be manifested; the olive trees, of the two great sections of mankind (as they are grouped in relation to God) from whom the saints are selected. The golden pipes through which the oil was conveyed from the trees to the lampstand, would also tell the principle on which the selection is made. Gold, in moral similitude, is always employed to express the idea of tried faith:

“When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7).

The golden pipes through which all the oil must pass that finds its way to the illuminating lampstand, to be used there in the manifestation of the divine glory, are a symbolic intimation of the fact that “without faith it is impossible to please God,” and that no one may hope for a place in the glorified body of Christ who has not, in mortal probation, glorified God by a steadfast faith in His promises in the midst of affliction.

All parts of the symbolism unite in proclaiming the fact that the salvation in due time to be accomplished in the earth is not of human might or power. It is:

“According to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:7-10).

Even as regards the preliminary adoption of which believers are now subject, it is “not of works, lest any man should boast.”

“By grace (favour) are they saved through faith.”

God, in His favour, has condescended to appoint and accept their faith as righteousness; this is not an arrangement of themselves; it is the gift of God:

“Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”

Much more is the resurrection-sequel “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,” for who can refashion and glorify the dead but God only by His Spirit through Christ to whom He has given the power of using it for this purpose?

By a happy coincidence, we have the symbol of the golden candlestick in the New Testament portion of our reading as well as in our reading from Zechariah. The seven golden candlesticks seen by John in Patmos are not the same as those in Zechariah, except in the sense of being involved as an element of these. Those of Zechariah comprehend those of John in the sense

in which the New Jerusalem comprehends the saints as they now are—that is, as a thing involved and not as a thing expressly represented. Zechariah’s olive-fed golden candlestick shows us the One Body glorified, those of John, the One Body in the day of its development and probation. The symbol is the same, though at a different time and in a different relation. A tried faith giving forth the light of testimony is the idea proximately manifest in the golden candlestick; in weakness now; in power and glory in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God.

As applicable to the present time, there is special significance and usefulness in the symbol of the candlestick when we consider the leading idea associated with it. Men do not light a candle, says Jesus, to put it under a table, but to put it on a table that all in the house may have light. To represent a community by a candlestick is to intimate that its function is to maintain and exhibit the light. This is the plain lesson of the apocalyptic candlesticks.

“The seven candlesticks are (or represent) the seven ecclesias.”

Seven stand for the whole. The messages sent to the seven (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea) were each accompanied with the intimation that they were for “him that had ears to hear,” generally—therefore the symbols of all similar communities wherever found. The friends of Christ are a light-bearing community in all ages. They speak of and uphold the exhibition of the testimony of God, whether men will hear or forbear. In this they are to be discerned from the sluggish and dark-minded, who are Christians so-called. Jesus says of them plainly,

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14), and he tells them to let their light shine—(verse 16). Therefore, however unpalatable to men, they are those who “speak of the glory of Yahweh’s kingdom and tell of His power.” The light appertaining to them is not of or in themselves: it is the light that has come from God by revelation to prophet and apostle, and which, being written, becomes an illumination through the word written to all who study it. Hence, they can all say with the Psalmist:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.”

They are men in whom the word of Christ dwells richly, as Paul exhorted—in whom therefore the light shines. Where this is the case there will be a showing of the light, in some way or other, every one in his own way and according to his own measure, but still showing the light. Their life will be a testimony for Christ in some way or other; otherwise they are no part of the candlestick by which Christ is pleased to symbolise his ecclesia in the present state.

Men obtained admission into the community of the believers in the apostolic age who did not possess or ever acquire the characteristics of that community. Jesus refers to them as “men crept in unawares.” Paul speaks of them with tears, as “many” who were in reality the enemies of the cross of Christ, and who minded earthly things. Peter describes them as false teachers, whose pernicious ways many should follow, and by reason of whom the way of truth should be evil spoken of. Jesus had foretold the same thing in likening the kingdom of heaven in its doctrinal operations, to a net let down into the sea, into which all manner of fish

would come, good and bad. The conclusion to be deduced from this is that it is necessary to exercise discrimination with regard to men called brethren whose influence and teaching are in opposition to the mind of the Spirit as embodied in the word. There will always be such: we must try every one, yea, ourselves also, by the one standard. Jesus commended the brethren in the seven ecclesias addressed for this very thing: The very first words of the entire series of messages are:

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

On the other hand, we find him condemning the carelessness and indifference of some ecclesias who tolerated wrong teaching in their midst. Thus to Pergamos, he says:

“I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.”

To Thyatira, he says:

“I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants.”

The tendency of such teaching is manifestly in palpable contradiction to the spirit of the present age, which inculcates a “charity” that would sacrifice the truth to peace and love. There can

be no peace or love acceptable to God that is not based upon that wisdom which as James says, is "first pure, then peaceable." The truth, in faith and practice, is the rule of fellowship and peace with every son of God. He will be considered bigoted and uncharitable; but what matters the unfavourable opinion of men if the Lord Jesus approve at his coming?

"We must contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

So says an apostle, and he is a higher authority than the uninspired thinkers and speculators of an easy-going age. It but requires to be added that this faithful contention in the hands of true men will not degenerate into cantankerousness or bitterness: in the hands of such, it will be done in the true spirit of kindness and forbearance, anxious only for the ascendancy of truth as Paul prescribes:

"The servant of the Lord must not strive: but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

A further feature of these messages deserves special notice before closing. It is a feature bringing comfort and encouragement. It is the frequent occurrence of the word "repent." To almost every one of the seven ecclesias, this command is addressed. To such of the Laodiceans who were "neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm," we are not surprised at such an exhortation: but even Ephesus, commended for their vigilance in the detection of spiritual imposture, is similarly advised:

"Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

To Sardis, "having a name to live but being dead," we expect to hear the words addressed: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die . . . repent."

But we find a similar exhortation to Pergamos, of whom it had been testified:

"Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith."

It might be suggested that there was little comfort to be found in this general necessity for exhortation to repentance. The comfort lies here: Christ addresses his own brethren in these messages. He therefore illustrates in this way the fact overlooked in some systems of interpretation: that we are all invited to renew our ways before god. Some have taught that defection in the saints is unpardonable. This is only true as applicable to presumptuous and wilful sin. It is not true as applicable to sins of weakness, such as Peter's denial of the Lord through the combined effect of cold, unsleptness, fear, and the anticipated surrender of Christ to the hands of his enemies. This discrimination is important: it will give heart and hope to every struggling believer. Let us never give in. Let us die fighting. If we are oppressed with the consciousness of past remissness, let us listen to the words of Christ who in addressing the seven ecclesias of Asia, spoke to his brethren everywhere for all time:

"Repent, and do the first works."

Robert Roberts

I will bless Yahweh at all times

Reading: Psalm 34

As we come around the emblems once again brethren and sisters, we are once more struck with the example of the Lord Jesus Christ who magnified his Father and his Fathers will, above all other considerations, including his own will and life.

And what of us brethren and sisters how well do we do - each day, as we try to set our Heavenly Father and his will at not only the forefront of our minds, but also as a priority in our hectic lives, day by day?

Psalm 34 and Verses 1 - 3:

“I will bless Yahweh at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in Yahweh: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify Yahweh with me, and let us exalt his name together”.

Here in the opening words of this powerful and comforting psalm the psalmist David provides us with an example to follow an exhortation to heed and a challenge to take up.

One of the key means that David kept our Heavenly Father before him continually was through the practice of praise, even daily praise. No wonder then that this faithful man is elsewhere described as the sweet psalmist of Israel. Here then my dear brethren and sisters is our first challenge to become men and women of praise; the idea behind the Hebrew word here is of a song, which contains thanksgiving and adoration.

David in these first few verses of the psalm instructs us brethren and sisters in how to become such men and women in our day. He states in that opening verse “I will bless Yahweh at all times”. A statement, which is easy to say, but more difficult for us to carry out in that - all times, is all encompassing including both the good times and the bad. It harbours no exceptions, in this we are to be like that worthy of old – Job.

In Job Chapter 1 and at Verse 21:

“Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: Yahweh gave, and Yahweh hath taken away; blessed be the name of Yahweh”.

Or indeed like Paul and Silas, who after being beaten and placed in the dungeon at midnight prayed and sang praises unto our God. Is this the sort of response that we each give brethren and sisters when the severest of trials enter our lives?

To be able to do so brethren requires that we like David apply all four ways we can understand, this simple phrase “I will”. For here we have a four-part process, which will enable us to learn to praise as David did. Here we find the desire of David, the decision of David, the determination of David and the devotion of the psalmist.

The sweet psalmist of Israel had a desire to bless Yahweh and we too brethren and sisters must have this same desire. A desire, which is so strong that it, generates action in our daily lives. For like the one we have come to remember our lives must be wholly given over to the blessing of Yahweh.

Now what do we mean, when we speak of blessing our Heavenly Father? How can you and I brethren and sisters bless the great creator and sustainer of the universe?

Well the idea here of blessing is to return unto the Almighty what are his rightful dues in terms of our thanksgiving, our love and our service. In this we see then that becoming men and women of praise is much more than speaking mere words. We must heed the warning and exhortation of the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah Chapter 29 and verse 13:

“Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me”.

Our whole lives are to become a hymn of praise in that we are to shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. It is recorded of the Master in Psalm 40:

Psalm 40 and verses 7 – 10:

“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Yahweh, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation”.

Indeed earlier in that Psalm in verse 3 it records “he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in Yahweh”. Each one of us are living witnesses to the truth of this verse brethren and sisters. For we have come to know the fullness of the life of praise, which is the Lord Jesus Christ’s. Seen in the emblems before us upon the table of bread and wine.

Yet when we look around at one another brethren and sisters do we see this desire to give our lives to bless our God? When we meet together do we see the

praise of our God in one another's lives and so likewise learn to fear and trust our Heavenly Father at all times?

Thus David in Psalm 34 and verses one makes a decision to give his life to the blessing and praise of his God. We did the same brethren and sisters when we were baptised into Christ, but as the Greek in Romans twelve shows. That initial, decision with its resulting action of baptism, although it was a once for all action – it has an ongoing outworking, a commitment which, is to be renewed day by day.

Romans Chapter 12 and verse 1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”.

Thus we read that which is recorded of our beloved Lord: “not my will, but thine, be done”. This likewise must become our motto if we are to lead lives of blessing and praise to Yahweh.

We have seen so far brethren and sisters that this simple “I will” statement we tend to read over contains a four aspects. Indeed four stages in a process, which instructs and exhorts us to follow in the footsteps on not only the sweet psalmist of Israel, but in the way of the Beloved himself.

We have seen then both the desire and the decision of our Lord, now we shall briefly consider the determination required. For it is one thing to have the desire and indeed to make such a decision, but without determination nothing shall be accomplished.

Luke Chapter 9 and at verse 51:

“it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem”.

Here we see determination of the Lord Jesus Christ. A determination that is equally required in each one of us brethren and sisters if we are to manifest a life of praise before our Heavenly Father, which after all is our reasonable service / worship.

It will indeed take determination to bless and praise our Heavenly Father in the dark times, when things are not going well for us, when we are bewildered and are unable to understand what the Father is trying to specifically accomplish in our lives.

Cast your eyes across to Psalm thirty-five: indeed here is a very different Psalm with the Psalmist David in dire situation being persecuted by those close at hand.

Yet notice verses 9, 18 & 28:

“And my soul shall be joyful in Yahweh: it shall rejoice in his salvation. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long”.

Some of you may indeed be in such a dark period and I exhort you to take courage brethren and sisters. Indeed the Apostle exhorts us to count such trials a joy because of the fruit of character, which comes forth from those experiences. Our determination brethren and sisters will result in endurance unto the end if we continue to develop and cultivate the final aspect in the four-part process.

Now the final stage within this “I will” statement is that of devotion. For we know that determination can only carry you so far brethren and sisters like fear it is weak through the flesh. Whereas devotion is a deep-seated love that overcomes, for love brethren and sisters is the most powerful motivation force, known to mankind, why?

Because it is our Heavenly Father’s motivation – for He is love we read and He indeed is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. In that He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, as is evident in the bread and wine before us.

In Galatians Chapter 2 and at verse 20:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith (or faithfulness) of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”.

Here we see the devotion of our Lord Jesus Christ for us brethren and sisters and in this verse in Galatians.

Yet at the same time we see also modelled by the Apostle Paul in this verse what must be our reasonable response a reciprocated devotion to our Master and our Heavenly Father.

Verses 11 – 14

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of Yahweh. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it”.

Here we see within the psalm it’s self that this praise, which must be on our lips, within our hearts and lived out. Is only hollow and empty if it is not accompanied with a righteousness of life.

This four part process of acting upon the desire, taking the decision, being determined to carry through and devoting ourselves to the daily praising of our Heavenly Father actually has a dynamo effect. In that each stage leads into and strengthens the next, but this is all the result of having the heartfelt urge to bless and praise our God firstly in words.

It is the action and the resulting effects of such praise on a daily basis brethren and sisters, which enables the whole process. So that we might come to know the wonderful truth of the following two verses. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure and I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”. Indeed that we each might learn to praise our Heavenly Father after the manner of both David and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in the second half of this first verse of psalm thirty-four David continues “his praise shall continually be in my mouth”. Having seen the process, we now are introduced brethren and sisters to the method of keeping our lives focused upon the right things, eternal things, even the continual praise of our Heavenly Father.

This praise is to be in our mouths continually, now it is clear from verse two that part of this methodology of praising our Heavenly Father involves vocalised praise in the presence of others of like mind.

Verse 2

“My soul shall make her boast in Yahweh: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad”.

Again note carefully the use of the term “my soul”, it speaks of our whole life and being, so praise brethren and sisters is much, much more than just our words.

Now when we boast or brag about something it is usually to others and often it has a negative effect upon them, but that is not the case here. Rather the opposite effect occurs for we read that they hear and are glad. The Hebrew word “glad” actually means to rejoice, so in effect the praise of our Heavenly Father is multiplied. We spread his name and his fame amongst one another, which builds confidence both individually and ecclesially in our Heavenly Father and his providential care.

Implied here is the concept that praise is contagious and that when we make our lives a praise to our Heavenly Father it rubs off onto one another and redounds to his glory. When we vocalise our praise and our blessing of our Heavenly Father one of the benefits of it, when done collectively is that it strengthens others in their desire to praise, in their decision to praise, in their determination to praise and their devotion to continually praise our God. It has then a dynamo effect ecclesially, as well as individually.

David throughout this psalm is explaining through his own understanding of how our Heavenly Father works providentially in the lives of his saints. Additionally and most importantly He exhorts us through his own experience of our Heavenly Father in his life. We are being exhorted brethren and sisters that our Heavenly Father is nigh unto them and is faithful in his care for them, so David challenges all that will hear in verse eight: “O taste and see that Yahweh is good”.

“O taste” the Psalmist proclaims, this is the language of our senses indeed it is the language of experience. That of taste, which if Christadelphians are to be observed is the most pleasant of our senses.

David exhorts us brethren and sisters to place our faith and trust in our Heavenly Father, for although we can intellectually appreciate certain points. The fullness of their understanding can only come through actual experience, hence the exhortation to “taste and see that Yahweh is good”.

There is another exhortation for us here brethren and sisters in that we need to share our experience of our Heavenly Father at work in our lives as the David does here.

For in doing so we are praising our Heavenly Father, as the psalmist does here and we are allowing others to learn and benefit from our experiences both positive and negative.

Returning back to the second half of verse one where we read “his praise shall continually be in my mouth”. Let us consider a little further David’s method; firstly we have seen the need to talk to and encourage one another. Secondly and importantly there is a need to rehearse these things ourselves individually day by day for us to become men and women of praise.

Let us remember that the word “praise” here is speaking of a song or melody that contains both thanksgiving and adoration. Within scriptures our Heavenly Father is praised on two accounts firstly for who he is, in terms of his personality and his attributes and secondly for his works and his purposes.

These two areas are to be sources of our praise brethren and sisters, but how do we do this on a daily basis as we each go about the day to day activities of life. Well I have a few suggestions for you:

- We can pray
- We can sing hymns to ourselves
- We can meditate upon scripture
- We can rehearse / remember how God has worked in our lives in the past

All four of these activities can be done in the background, as we go about our daily business. For example when I am alone in the car I often pray as I drive or attempt to sing hymns to myself. The only problem here is I don’t know the tunes, and can only remember odd lines, so a number of hymns get blended to-

gether or at worst the same few lines get mass repetition.

Indeed I have found it a profitable exercise to pick a verse and think about it during the subsequent few days. In fact this is how this exhortation actually came about brethren and sisters, as I started to meditate upon verse three of this psalm and then upon the earlier two verses. Truly the idea here is to fill our minds, our hearts and our mouths with the things of the truth, with our Heavenly Father and the work of the Master we have come to remember and of course with the word of life.

We need to learn to praise in this way brethren and sisters, because we become much more aware of our Heavenly Fathers interaction and blessings in our lives. As a result we have a more positive outlook in our day by day existence and its purpose in conforming us to the image of the Son.

Scientific studies into the area of happiness show that thankful people who at least vocally give thanks for at least three blessings a day are people who are more positive and have a happier outlook upon life. They are less subject to stress and are more optimistic about the future.

If we can learn to praise in this way then additionally brethren and sisters the negative and fleshly characteristics of verses thirteen and fourteen will be greatly diminished in our lives.

Verses 13 & 14

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil”. Essentially what we are seeking to do is let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom. By “speaking to our selves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”. In order that that we may daily perform our vows unto our Heavenly Father.

In Hebrews Chapter 12 and at verse 2 we read:

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the stake, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”.

Our Master brethren and sisters set the kingdom, the fulfilment of the purpose of God before him. The Greek in this verse in Hebrews indicates that not only was this setting before a personal choice, but also importantly it was a daily principle he applied in order to overcome. We must do the same with our praise brethren and sisters.

When we fill our mouths in such a way, particularly with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs it effects us emotionally. So that our hearts and our minds are connected in the process, for as the Master warned the Pharisees “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”. We desire our speech to be always

with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how we ought to answer every man.

Thus brethren and sisters when we praise and bless our Heavenly Father in performing these things we are not only keeping our selves from evil, but more positively we are setting our individual affections on things above.

Now there is one more important lesson brethren and sisters contained in the first two verses of Psalm thirty-four for us, which I would like to bring before you.

Verses 1 & 2

“I will bless Yahweh at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in Yahweh: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad”.

If we carefully notice that the praise is his or our Heavenly Fathers and that our boast is in Yahweh our God. Here then brethren and sisters is an antidote to pride, which is undoubtedly the worst of all the sins of mankind in our Heavenly Father’s sight. Thus our blessing and praise of our Heavenly Father enables us to think soberly and not to think too more highly of our selves in his sight.

In learning to become men and women of praise, as our beloved Master was - we develop the quality of humility before our God. Acknowledging that the focus of our lives is upon our Heavenly Father and his purpose and not upon our selves. The scriptures speak of such humility as being in the sight of God, riches, honour and life.

In Philippians Chapter 2 and at verses 8 & 9

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the stake. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name”.

Now as we begin brethren and sisters to draw our minds around once more to the emblems upon the table and to the example of the one we have come to remember. The Lord Jesus Christ whose entire life was a hymn of praise in that He only did those things, which pleased and glorified the Father.

In the bread brethren and sisters we see the word made flesh, we see the one who came in the volume of the book to praise our Heavenly Father in a life of faithful obedience. Thus in the bread we have the exhortation to partake of the word that the new song may be put into our mouths, even the praise unto our God.

Then in the wine we see the Master’s sacrifice both in terms of his ministry and then in his death upon the stake. The blood, which speaks to us of the pouring out of his life in the ultimate sacrifice of praise, thus in the wine we see how we

are to lay down our lives in praise for the brethren, as living sacrifices. “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name”.

Let us take careful note brethren and sisters that when the purpose of God is complete, we in the mercy of the Father will spend eternity praising him with our Lord and Master in the great congregation. Therefore let us each heed David’s faithful example, let us each take the exhortation to heart and let us each rise up to the challenge to be men and women of praise. Let us collectively learn to rejoice in praise now brethren and sisters for we read it is comely for the upright so to do.

Finally then brethren and sisters let us leave the last words to David from the third verse of psalm thirty-four. Let each of us meditate upon this verse as we partake together and see it as a personal appeal from the one we have come to remember, David’s greater son.

Verse 3

“O magnify Yahweh with me, and let us exalt his name together”.

Wayne Marshall

Evil-ution

The theory of evolution has, rightly, been singled out as a major threat to godly thinking. Much time and effort has been spent in the Brotherhood over many years in arguing against evolution, thus seeking to establish the truth of the biblical creation account.

Charles Darwin did not invent the theory of evolution: others before him had put forward evolutionary ideas, but they had not gained general acceptance. In 1859, Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, in which he propounded the idea that evolution had taken place by natural selection.

The book very quickly aroused interest and it was not long before it was widely accepted. At a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Oxford in 1860, the Bishop of Oxford attacked T. H. Huxley, a proponent of Darwinism, in an attempt to defend the biblical account of creation. But the established churches eventually abandoned this position as untenable. Science, it seemed, had done away with the need to regard the Scriptures as reliable, and it had provided a rationale for rejecting the existence of God Himself.

This is the crux of the matter. Once the Almighty could (as was thought) be safely ignored, science could progress unencumbered by religion. Darwinism, therefore, was an important influence in bringing about a number of developments in our culture both scientific and non-scientific. Its effects go far beyond the question of the status of the early chapters of Genesis.

Humanism—The Subtle Delusion (Various)

The Stumbling Blocks of Unbelief—Revisited

In a previous issue of *The Christadelphian Waymark* under the heading of “*The Stumbling Blocks of Unbelief*” we examined the proposition advanced in *The Endeavour Magazine* that an acceptance of the Bible’s Creation record as it stands is incorrect. Rather, an alternative position was advanced thus:

“Now we have ample evidence of prehistoric man hunting and gathering and living a nomad existence in caves and other primitive dwellings for hundreds if not thousands of years before the emergence of the Adamic family and many of their cave drawings depict them hunting animals long since extinct until relatively suddenly these Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) people began to be replaced by Neolithic (New Stone Age) people, who replace the hunting and gathering mode of existence with a settled agricultural and stock-raising form of living, which correlates with the calling of Adam ‘from the dust’ (i.e. from the desert of Mesopotamia) into the well-irrigated ‘Garden of Eden’ ‘to dress it and to keep it’. Suddenly, a ‘helpmeet for him’ (metaphor ‘close to his side’) was found, presumably from the same source, i.e. the local population, the same people who Cain feared would all want to kill him because he had murdered his brother Abel” (Endeavour, June 2002 Page 39,40).

This leaning of *Endeavour* towards Evolution is again expressed in the editorial for the December 2008 issue, headed: “*Religion and Science*”. In this article, Les Boddy makes the statement:

“... I do not wish to fall out with those who can’t see it that way, but it does seem to me *that the evidence for an evolutionary history of the world has become compelling and in no way diminishes the glory of God*” (The Endeavour Magazine, December 2008, page 2)

In support of his position, Les recommends various publications, including one entitled: *Creation or Evolution, Do We have to choose?*”.

The fact of the matter however, is that Evolution specifically contradicts the Bible record, and that therefore it is impossible for a believer of the Bible to accept Evolution without compromising the belief that the Creator’s own account is correct.

Back in August 2002, we demonstrated the alleged literal events being taught by an alleged metaphor in Genesis are found wanting thus:

“The proposition therefore, is that the formation of Adam from the dust of the ground is a metaphor to describe the literal the calling of Adam from the desert regions of Mesopotamia - and the formation of Eve is likewise a metaphor for her being brought from the same source. But the supposed literal events outlined here simply do not match the descriptions of Genesis, even taking the record to be metaphorical. Adam is

there depicted as being formed *from* dust, not emerging *out of* it. The record speaks of his formation as an event distinct from his being placed in the garden - whereas the literal counterpart, would require both to be the same event. Moreover, there is no literal counterpart to the “metaphor” of breath of life being breathed into his nostrils. And the formation of Eve is described in a totally different manner—an entirely different “metaphor” is employed, to teach that she has identical origins as Adam! Significantly, no attempt is made to define what the “metaphor” of a rib being taken out from Adam in his deep sleep specifically relates to!”

This year (2009), will bring the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, and there will doubtless be many pro-evolution events organised to mark it. It is important therefore that the Bible Student is clear on what the Bible has to say on this subject, as our faith is likely to be challenged during this time by those who reject the Creator’s Own account.

NO NEED TO BE SCIENTISTS

We can readily understand the desire to show that Science and the Bible are not contradictory, as Science—so called—is held to be the repository of knowledge, whereas the Bible is held to be a collection of fables, myths, and delusions. To claim that Science is wrong—especially if we are not amongst the learned men of Academia—will inevitably bring scorn upon us. This need not worry us however. The Master, Jesus the Christ taught:

“except ye be converted, and become *as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 18:3).

Again:

“Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God *as a little child*, he shall not enter therein” (Mrk. 10:15).

These words demonstrate that it is not required of us to understand the intricacies of men’s theories (and Evolution *is* but a theory), and formulate an academic response. If we can do that, then all well and good—but for the majority of us the time spent analysing and refuting the minutiae of the various theories held (for there are many evolutionary theories, with even scientists disagreeing amongst themselves), can be better spent. There are those who feel a little lost with all the science-speak, but they need not be. The teaching of Christ is that we should humbly and simply accept the Truth; being as little children believing the teaching of their Father. The matter really is that simple. As a child of God, I believe my Father. If someone asks why I believe in Adam and Eve, my simple answer is “*because my Father taught it me*”. If they ask why I do not believe in the position held by the majority—that of Evolution, my answer is “*because my Father taught me to believe otherwise*”. And that is all that is required of us: men may despise us for it, and deride us as being “naïve” “blinkered” and all the

other terms that they like to use—but none of that matters. For most of us, there is simply no need to devote ourselves to sifting through the complications of alleged “evidence” that men might bring: we need rather to simply believe our Father, trusting that as the Great Creator, He alone knows how he brought about Creation.

It is important therefore, for us to understand that Evolution *does* contradict the Bible, regardless as to what *Endeavour* teaches. The fact of Creation (in terms of Adam, Eve etc) is assumed to be fact in the New Testament, with various points of teaching being derived from it as follows:

Marriage

Matthew 19:4, Mark 10:6—“made male and female”

Role of Sisters

1 Timothy 2:13—Adam formed first, then Eve

Danger of Apostasy

2 Corinthians 11:3—As the Serpent beguiled Eve

Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:22-25 As in Adam all die, in Christ (second Adam—read the whole chapter) all made alive (see also Romans 5)

New Creation

1 Corinthians 4:6—light shine, 1 Corinthians 5:17—New Creature (see also Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11; Rom. 8:19-22).

The Genesis account of Creation therefore must be accurate for any one of these teachings to hold true.

RECOMMENDATION OF PAPAL WORKS?

The Apostle Paul plainly taught that there would come departure from the Truth, as a consequence of those who were once part of the Ecclesia of Christ turning away:

“of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts. 20:30).

Whereas the true ecclesia would remain as a “chaste virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2-3), those who fell away would become “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). So, the apostle warned, drawing upon the fact of Creation: “I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

Notice the terms used here: “beguiled”, “corrupted”, “simplicity”. Those who adopt the fables of men are not simply presenting “a different viewpoint”: in Bible terms, they are “corrupted”. And the Truth-holders are not those who become learned in the dogmas of man’s theorising, they are those who hold the “simplicity” of Christ as little children trusting and believing their Father.

It is ironic to note however, that the Apostasy emerged from the ecclesia of Christ. There was a falling away, and the man of sin was revealed (2 Thes. 2:3), just as predicted. The Mother of Harlots is a particularly appropriate term for the Catholic system, with it’s claim that: “*The one, holy, catholic and apostolic universal church is not sister but ‘mother’ of all the particular churches.*”^{*} And each one of her ‘daughters’ preach the same philosophies of man in the place of the Gospel of Christ. It is so sadly ironic to see how *The Endeavour*, purporting to be “Christadelphian” leans towards Papal teaching concerning Evolution—and even recommends a book written by the current Pope. Headed: “***Jesus of Nazareth Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI Bloomsbury pbks £8.99***” Sheila Harris writes:

“This book is a brilliant reaffirmation of the authenticity of the Gospel records, as a true account of the actual, historical life, work and sayings of Jesus himself ...”

Now, however unlikely it might be, it could well be the case that in this specific publication, the Pope does not make any wrong statements—without reading the book it is impossible to know. But in each step of the falling away from the Truth as revealed by Messiah and his Apostles, there has always been a mingling of Truth and Error. So that some folk present us with statements that are true, and say, “there you are: the Church believes the Truth”. The problem is, however, that they also paradoxically believe error at the same time. For instance, it is difficult to see how in the case at hand, the Pope could truly “reaffirm” anything about “the actual, historical life, work and sayings of Jesus himself” without abandoning the dogma of the Trinity, held to be one of the most important tenets of the “Christian” faith. It is ironic that in these matters we see a repetition of history: the Catholic system itself is derived from a falling away of the Truth, and in these latter days when our Master is at the door, there is another falling away (finding a mouthpiece through *Endeavour*), with leanings towards Catholicism in it’s acceptance of Evolution, and recommendation of papal writings. But whilst we lament the situation, we must also take heed to ourselves, being warned of this example of unbelief, lest we fall away likewise.

“Beware, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2Cor 11:3).

Christopher Maddocks

* cited from: “*Note on the Expression ‘Sister Churches.’*” dated June 30th 2000, authored by the then Cardinal Ratzinger, and approved by the then Pope John Paul II.