

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

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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)*

# SUNDAY EXHORTATION

## ESCAPING THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD THROUGH LUST

Brethren, this morning we will spend time considering parts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle of Peter.

Let's begin by reading 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1 verse 4:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped *the corruption that is in the world through lust*”

Brethren, please notice the phrase “corruption in the world through lust”. It is an interesting phrase to consider.

Corruption is the spoiling, the decay, the disintegration, or decomposition of a thing. The word “corruption” in the Greek is *phthora* and signifies either moral or physical corruption. This word is used in Romans 8:21 where we read that the creation “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption”. The corruption of creation is a physical corruption which for all living things ends in death or in non-living things dissolving away. In Galatians 6:8 the same word is used:

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”

The last clause of this verse speaks of ‘life everlasting’. From that we understand that ‘life everlasting’ is being set in contrast to the corruption of death. Yet we are also given to understand that “sowing to the flesh” first results in moral corruption.

Turn back now to 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. This word *phthora* occurs three times in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle of Peter, the first being in verse 4, as we have seen. The 2<sup>nd</sup> occurs in chapter 2 verse 12 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> occurs in chapter 2 verse 19:

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are *the servants of corruption*: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning”

Peter speaks of “*the servants of corruption*”. In this instance, the corruption is moral corruption. These false brethren are promising liberty or freedom, yet they are

themselves slaves of corruption.

Corruption, be it physical or moral, is the result of a process. The corruption which Peters speaks of occurs through lust, so let us consider this word 'lust' also.

### **WHAT IS "LUST"?**

We frequently define 'lust' as an unlawful desire. Part of the reason for this is that the King James translators usually used the word 'lust' in a negative context. They tended to use 'desire' in a positive context. But if we look at the Greek words translated 'lust' we will find that the same words occur in both positive and negative contexts. It is a mistake to view 'lust' simply as an unlawful desire.

The problem with viewing 'lust' just as 'unlawful desire' is that we can easily make the argument that if something is not specifically outlawed, or prohibited by God, that therefore it is ok for us to have or ok for us to participate in. This reasoning is simply untrue.

The Greek word *epithumia* indicates 'desire'. The word itself does not indicate the intensity of the desire, nor whether the desire is good or evil, lawful or unlawful.

Let's look at a few places this word is used:

(Negative [notice the process])

*"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed"* (Jas 1:14)

*"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (1 Tim 6:9-10)

*"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful"* (Mark 4:19)

*"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts"* (2 Pet 3:3)

**The process:** Drawn away, enticed, falling, drowning, pierced through, choking, walking after their own lusts.

**The lusts described:** Foolish and hurtful, the love of money, the cares of this world,

the deceitfulness of riches, the lusts of other things

**The results:** many sorrows, unfruitful, temptations, a snare, perdition, destruction

(Positive)

“But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with *great desire*” (1 Thes 2:17)

“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a *desire* to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil 1:23)

“And he said unto them, With <sup>†</sup>*desire* I have *desired* to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22:15)

“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels *desire* to look into” (1 Pet 1:12) (Also Matthew 13:17)

(As I mentioned before the Greek word *epithumia* indicates ‘desire’. The word itself does not indicate the intensity of the desire, nor whether the desire is good or evil, lawful or unlawful. We should not deceive ourselves in thinking that ‘lusts’ are different from ‘desires’. Our natural tendency is to want to classify the ‘desires’ we have as good things, and the evil things we want are ‘lusts’. The Scriptures do not divide it as such. The desires which are not necessary to sustaining lives of service to God are described as: Foolish and hurtful desires, the love of money, the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the desires of other things.)

Both these words ‘lust’ and ‘corruption’ take us back to Genesis and the first transgression when corruption was introduced into the world through lust... corruption in the world through desire.

### ***OUR OWN STANDING***

We are preparing ourselves to partake of the memorial. It is therefore fitting that we should examine ourselves in relation to this Epistle. Are we living lives where it can be said that we are escaping “the corruption that is in the world through lust”? Are we progressing towards the mind of Christ, in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brother kindness, and love?

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter chapter 1, verse 9 says:

“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”

The NKJV reads slightly differently:

“For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:4 explains this spiritual blindness:

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

And Hebrews 11:13 demonstrates the very opposite:

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Now, our instinct is to say, “we are not blind” but Peter’s words are clear: “he that lacketh these things is shortsighted, even to blindness”. In other words, in proportion as we have developed those characteristics, we will be able to “see afar off” to the promises of God, and recognizing that we are not our own, but that we have been bought with a price.

### ***WHO DO WE SERVE?***

It is quite possible for us to attend meeting, and then go our own way, straightway “forgetting what manner of man” we are called to be (James 1:24): Drawn away, enticed, falling, drowning, choking, pierced through and finally overcome by the world and its corruptions. Profession alone is unacceptable to God. We must develop these characteristics of faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience and so forth.

Simply put, **are we serving God, or are we serving ourselves?** This is a question we should ask ourselves continually throughout every waking hour. It is a very high standard, but a Scriptural standard. Everything we do should be judged by the question: Are we serving God, or are we serving ourselves?

This is a question the prophet Zechariah asks, and it is one we do well to ask ourselves:

“Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? (Zech 7:5,6)

Are we escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust, or are we pampering ourselves as the ‘civilized heathen’ of whom it can be said “while he lived he blessed

his soul: and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself?” (Psalm 49:18)

Of the Corinthians Paul wrote:

“Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you” (1 Cor 4:8)

Are we doing a better job than the Corinthians of escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust? Are we serving God, or are we serving ourselves?

### ***DIVINE FAITHFULNESS - NOTHING TO HARD FOR GOD***

It will be of profit to us this morning if we now turn our attention to God’s faithfulness in helping us to overcome the world. We see the first indications of this in verse 1 of 2Peter chapter 1, where we read that Simon Peter is “a servant, and an apostle of Jesus Christ”. We go on and see in verse 16 that he was an eyewitness of Christ, and therefore he is qualified to testify of the things he has recorded by the Spirit.

In verses 2 and 3, we read:

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According [Seeing] as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:2-3).

In these verses, we see how God is working to help all those that seek Him. There is grace, peace, knowledge, His divine power which provides all things that pertain unto life and godliness, glory and virtue. Peter tells us that God’s grace and peace grow within us as we grow in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let’s now look at some related verses:

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Ps 84:11).

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Rom 8:31-35).

“And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, *Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible*” (Mat 19:24-26)

Keeping these words of Christ in mind: “but with God all things are possible”, let us turn now to Genesis 18:14 where we find tremendous words of promise:

“Is any thing too hard for Yahweh? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”

This prophecy speaks not only of Isaac; not only of Christ, but also of all those who are in Christ. Who is Sarah, but the symbol of the Jerusalem which is from above? She is ‘the mother of us all’ (Gal. 4:26). And so we might paraphrase the prophecy as follows: Christ will return, ‘at the time appointed’, ‘according to the time of’ eternal ‘life’ and Jerusalem ‘shall have a son’. Is anything too hard for Yahweh?

### **CHRIST’S COMING IS NEAR**

There is one other point that we should consider. It is the point that Peter makes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. In this chapter Peter prophesies of the faithlessness of the latter day ecclesia. He speaks of “scoffers, walking after their own lusts... saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.” He goes on to note that the Lord is not slack concerning his promises, but that He is longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Thus, Christ’s return is at hand and so he exhorts his readers, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”

### **LET US DO OUR PART**

The answer to this question turns us back to the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, chapter 1 verses 4 to 8.

“Whereby are given unto us *exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.* For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor **unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Remember Mark 4:19: “And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it **becometh unfruitful.**”)

Peter notes in verse 12 that though we know these things, yet we must be constantly reminded:

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in *remembrance* of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in *remembrance*; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in *remembrance*” (2 Pet 1:12-15)

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of *remembrance*: That ye may be *mindful* of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” (2 Pet 3:1-2)

“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jno 2:5,6)

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal 5:16)

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

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal 3:22)

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jno 1:8)

“Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jno 2:15).

*Stephen Genusa*

## THE BASF—ITS TEACHING AND IMPORTANCE

XXIV.— *That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it), dead and living—obedient and disobedient—will be summoned before his judgement seat “to be judged according to their works”; and “receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad”.—2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1; Rom 2:5,6,16; 14:10-12; 1 Cor 4:5; Rev 11:18.*

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When Messiah is revealed from Heaven, one of the first things to take place will be the judgement of the House of God. It is testified that he “*shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom*” (2 Tim 4:1), which itself implies the resurrection of the dead in order that they might stand before him for that purpose. They will be summoned out of their graves, and be gathered together with the living to appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ, that they might give account of themselves before the Lord of all the earth. As the Apostle wrote:

“... *we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ.* For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall *give account of himself to God*” (Rom 14:10-12)

And again:

“*We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*” (2 Cor 5:10)

There are those who believe that the dead

will be raised immortal; and that the judgement - if it takes place at all - will simply be for the bestowal of varying degrees of rewards upon the faithful. But this last passage cited above disproves any such notion, for some who appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ will be rewarded with bad. According to a man's work, so will it be done unto him, with good and bad being received by those who are called upon to stand before the Judge of all the earth.

Messiah's Judgement seat then, will be where men are called upon to give account of themselves, and be rewarded according to their deeds. There it shall be determined who will be granted glory, honour and immortality, and who will reap shame and *aion*-lasting contempt. There, the faithful shall be separated from the wicked, as wheat from the chaff (Mat 3:12), and be granted immortality that they might live and reign with their Master.

### THE AMENDMENT

This particular clause of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith has been the object of considerable controversy, for it is this clause that contains the alteration that made the Birmingham Statement of Faith *amended*. The original wording was as follows:

“That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the kingdom, the responsible (faithful and unfaithful), dead and living of both classes, will be summoned to his judgment seat "to be judged according to their works"; "and receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad".

The current clause (with the amendment in *italics*) reads:

“That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the kingdom, the responsible (*namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it*), dead and living—*obedient and disobedient*—will be summoned before his judgement seat “to be judged according to their works”; and “receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad”.

It will be observed that in the original statement, “the responsible” (that is, those who will be held accountable to judgement) were not defined. The Amendment, made in 1898, was the insertion of the words in parenthesis defining who the responsible are: “*namely those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it*”. The change in wording was not intended to be a change in belief, but rather a clarification of a matter that hitherto had not been adequately expressed. Bro Roberts was emphatic that rather than being the insertion of something new, the amendment was an affirmation of what had always been taught, but not specifically defined in the

existing Statement. This omission had permitted the development of a problem whereby some taught that unless a person had been baptised, they would not be held accountable by the Almighty for their actions in rejecting the Truth. This controversy (which was but a symptom of a greater problem, namely a misconception of the atoning work of Messiah), grew to become a major threat to the body, and there was a need for the Statement to be amended to reflect the true position on the matter. Those who rejected the Amendment placed themselves out of fellowship, and became known as the *Unamended* group, who still exist (mostly in America) today. The Amendment defined what the Christadelphian position of the matter had always been, and established the minimum requirements for fellowship on the point.

#### **WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

But the question is sometimes raised, Why make a definition of who will be responsible to judgement a matter of fellowship? Why should the judgement or otherwise of enlightened rejectors of the Truth be a cause of division?

The answer is readily seen when we appreciate that the Bible’s doctrine of judgement is one of the first principles of the Gospel:

“ ... in the day when God shall *judge* the secrets of men by Jesus Christ *according to my gospel*” (*Rom 2:16*)

“Therefore leaving *the principles of the doctrine of Christ*, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the

foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of *eternal judgement*. And this will we do, if God permit” (Heb 6:1-3).

“... *he commanded us to preach* unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God, *to be the Judge of quick and dead*” (Acts 10:42).

From these citations, we learn that the Apostle was under a divine command to preach that Messiah is ordained of the Father to be the judge of the living and the dead. It was *according to his gospel*, that the secrets of men shall be judged - and if we preach the same Gospel as Paul, it will be according to ours also. Although in our age, to speak of coming judgements is most unfashionable, (and will inevitably bring the derision and scorn of many), nevertheless it is a fundamental Truth that in order for Yahweh’s kingdom of righteousness to be established, judgements must take place, and it is in accordance with His justice that a certain class of men shall be held accountable for their deeds. Faithful preachers of Paul’s Gospel will not shun from declaring this truth as part of their preaching.

### ***THE RESPONSIBLE DEFINED***

The oracles of God are clear that not all men will be called upon to give account of themselves to Messiah. There is a class of men who shall not be raised from the dead for any purpose, let alone to appear before the Judgement seat of Christ. So the angel implied to Daniel: “*Many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to

shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2). Notice, *many* shall be raised, not *all*. Scripture speaks elsewhere of those who shall not rise:

“O Yahweh our Elohim, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name. They are dead, *they shall not live*; they are deceased; *they shall not rise ...*” (Is 26:13,14).

“Yea, a man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, *they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep*” (Job 14:10-12).

These men will neither be rewarded for faithfulness, nor punished for iniquity. They “shall not rise,” being dead for ever. But why are they exempt from Judgement? What is it that places a man into the category of those who will rise to appear before Christ?

The BASF states that it is a man’s knowledge and position of calling before his Maker: “those who *know* the revealed will of God, *and have been called upon to submit to it*”. Those who *know* the will of God as it is revealed in the Word, and who have therefore received the calling of the Gospel, are deemed to be accountable for their actions in rejecting it.

This is in harmony with Scripture, for as James states, “to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas 4:17). Those who know to do good are convicted of sin if they do it not - those who know the commandment that

Yahweh has given them, yet do it not, shall be convicted as sinners, for their rebellion shall be counted sin to them in the Day to come. By the same token, those who do not know the way of righteousness - who therefore have no opportunity to do that righteousness, and be just - will not be held accountable for defying a command that was never made known to them. The Scriptures are quite plain on this:

“the times of this ignorance God winked at ...” (Acts 17:30)

“Jesus said unto them; If ye were blind, ye should have no sin” (John 9:41)

“for as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Rom 2:12)

“ ... the law worketh wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression ...” (Rom 4:15)

Men who are “without law”, who are “ignorant” are not held accountable for not responding favourably to that which they did not know. Such men, with no understanding of the commandments of the Creator, rather to be raised for the purposes of being punished for disobedience to a law they never knew, shall rest in the grave without hope, and without punishment - like the beasts that perish:

“Man that is in honour, *and understandeth not*, is like the beasts that perish” (Ps 49:20).

But whilst God winked at times of

ignorance, no Scripture states that He winks at times of knowledge. The Scriptures are equally plain in teaching that those who have received the Light of the Word are accountable as to how they have responded to it, as we have already seen, either in obedience or disobedience:

*“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you”* (Prov 1:24-27).

“This is the condemnation, *that light is come into the world*, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jno 3:19)

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: *but now they have no cloak for their sin*” (Jno 15:22)

*“he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (Jno 12:48)

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; ***but he that believeth not shall be damned***” (Mark 16:16)

There is, therefore, ample Scriptural proof for the claims of the Amendment—as much proof as there is for any other

fundamental Bible principle. It is in accordance with Yahweh's righteousness that knowledge brings responsibility - a man who knows the revealed will of God, and who receives the call of the Gospel will bear accountability as to whether or not he obeys that call. Even for those who have obeyed by submitting to the waters of baptism, it is their knowledge of the way of righteousness, not their association with the blood of Christ, that will be the basis of their judgement, should they turn away:

"It had been better for them *not to have known* the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:21).

### ***GIVING ACCOUNT***

It is written in Romans 14:12 cited earlier, that "every one of us shall *give account* of himself to God." Again, Peter speaks of the believers "who shall *give account* to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (1 Pet 4:5). But what does the Spirit mean by "give account"? What kind of account is being referred to? What will comprise a good account, which will be accepted by the Master?

The Judgement is often presented as being a review of deeds done, where folk who appear before the judgement seat will recite their works, with their salvation being dependant upon whether or not they are able to speak of mostly good deeds. There is truth in this - there will undoubtedly be a review of past deeds involved with the process, for it is upon the basis of those deeds that men shall be rewarded, or condemned.

However, Scripture would appear to give a slightly different picture to that which is commonly imagined of what comprises a good account. There are those who will be rejected by the Judge, who are able to cite their good works as a reason for their entry into the kingdom:

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Mat 7:22-23).

Here, a good account is given, in the sense that good works are listed with the expectation of gaining entry into the Kingdom. But these men are rejected as workers of iniquity. They boasted of their wonderful works, yet left many other things undone, for they did not the will of their Father in heaven. A good account alone is insufficient; it must be matched with good deeds, and a turning away from iniquity.

But again, the Master told a parable concerning a Pharisee, and a publican, both of whom went into the temple to pray:

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be

merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other ...” (Luke 18:11-13).

The man who was “justified”, or considered to be righteous by the Father, was the man who was filled with the sense of his sinfulness in the sight of the Almighty, and who sought the Father’s mercy and forgiveness. Again, the one who gave “a good account” of his deeds was the man who was not accepted. He proclaimed his righteousness, but it was the one who sought forgiveness that was a righteous man.

Upon the basis of these passages, we would tentatively suggest that a mere proclamation of personal righteousness is not what will be required at the Judgement Seat of Messiah. “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can

find?” (Prov 20:6). A proclamation of one’s own goodness is of little value when compared to the faithfulness of one who humbly seeks the mercies of Yahweh, and who seeks to walk uprightly in His sight. What will count in the day to come, is not how many good works, or great works, we are able to boast of, but our entire disposition of character. Whether we have humbly sought to walk with our God or no. Whether we have used our Talents wisely, or whether we have buried them in the ground. In reflecting upon the coming Judgement Seat of Christ which we will stand before, we should be stirred up to take heed to our ways, to seek forgiveness wherein we have erred, and to strive to uphold the Father’s righteousness in all that we do. If we do those things, it will then surely be given to us to enter into the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

*Chris Maddocks*

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## SALVATION WITHOUT FAITH

“He that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16)

*The following article appeared in answer to a correspondent in the “Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come” of September, 1852. We reproduce it here for the benefit of our readers*

*Heathen* is the Saxon equivalent for the Greek word *ethnos*, and the Hebrew *goi*, and properly signifies *nation*. It is in this sense that it is used in the sacred scriptures. The word *Gentile* is of the same import, only derived from the Latin *gens*. All nations, except Israel, being under “times of ignorance,” were merged in hopeless superstition; so that to be of the nations was equivalent to being an idolator: the word *heathen*, therefore, came to represent a man, or nations, worshipping idols; though the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin originals, are never used in this sense in the scriptures.

The salvation promised in the gospel is the salvation of Israel and the Heathen in the sense of blessing *all nations* in Abraham and his Seed, on the principle of individual and national faith and obedience. The gospel has been preached for eighteen centuries to the nations for the salvation of heathen, in the sense of idolator and natural religionists – “to *take out* from the Gentiles a people for God’s name.” This people are to be the immortal rulers of the nations, or heathen, in the Age to Come; when the heathen, no longer idolators and natural religionists, shall be enlightened and “serving the Lord with one consent.” They are *then* “the nations of the saved,” sitting under their own vines and fig trees, with no tyrants to destroy them, and make them afraid as now. The separation of mankind into nations, however, is finally to cease; and all of the race who attain to eternal life will be merged into Israel then become immortal, by “the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body,” as it is written, “I will make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, O Israel, but I will not make a full end of thee” (Jer 30:11). The last eighteen centuries has been the “Day of Salvation,” the “accepted time,” a day of probation for individuals, who aspire to the glory, honour, and immortality of the Kingdom, as the reward of “the righteousness which is by faith:” the coming thousand years will be a day of blessedness and probation to the nations, saved from the evils now besetting them; in which vastly greater multitudes than now or heretofore, will become *heirs* of immortality and earth-inhabitation for ever, when the thousand years shall have passed away.

But, what the brethren D and B want to know is, is there not salvation from hell for idolaters, and natural religionists, idiots, and sucklings, now, without believing the gospel and being baptized? – They, and not they only, but all antichristendom, say there is salvation for them. – but the Bible has nothing to do with the *soul hell* they speak of. The salvation it proclaims is the deliverance of God’s people from sin, death, and the grave, and the bestowal upon them of glory and honour forever in his

kingdom; and the deliverance of the nations as already stated. – If they modify their proposition, and affirm that the parties indicated have part in this salvation without faith and its obedience, there is something tangible to lay hold of. Well, if it be so, it can be easily proved. There are the scriptures, show us the testimony; for the burden of proof lies upon D and B and the natural religionists. Ah, here they come with the second chapter of the letter to the Romans, telling us that the salvation of sinners without the obedience of faith is taught there! Now behold the proof – “When the Gentiles having not the law, *do by nature the things contained in the law*, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: who show *the work of the law written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.” But I object to this as being perfectly irrelevant, having not the least reference to idol worshippers, or the unenlightened. It refers to Gentile “*doers of the law*,” in the sense of their being justified by that system of righteousness which is “testified by the law and the prophets.” The “work of the law is written in the hearts” of such persons only, be they Jews or Gentiles. Of Israel under the New Covenant Jehovah says, “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them upon their hearts.” How is this done? Take an illustration from the doings on Pentecost. – The righteousness testified by the law and the prophets was put into the mind of the assembled multitude by the voice of the apostles; and written indelibly on their hearts by the divine attestation which miraculously confirmed it. The same thing occurred to the Gentiles afterwards at Cornelius’ where the work of the law was written on the hearts of all his company. When the law was thus written, they “*showed the work of the law*” in loving the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind, and their neighbours as themselves, in which all the law and the prophets are obeyed (Mat 22:37-40; 7:12); “for love is the fulfilling,” or doing, “of the law” (Rom 13:10).

### **AN UNFAIR QUOTATION**

The natural religionists do not fairly quote their proof text. They should quote the whole passage. Their text is a reason given in support of the affirmation contained in the preceding verse, which they ought to have quoted to show what the apostle was writing about. The omitted words are, “not the hearers of the law are just before God, but *the doers of the law* shall be justified.” And even this is but the reason of another affirmation in the verse before, which declares that “as many as have sinned without law (that is, the Gentiles, who were never within the jurisdiction of the law) shall also *perish* without law; and as many as have sinned in (or under) the law (that is, the Jews to whom it was enjoined) shall be *judged* by the law; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” This declaration is contained in the twelfth and sixteenth verses, the proof text of the natural religionists being the fourteenth and fifteenth, which, with the omitted thirteenth, are a parenthesis between. But again, all these verses even are but illustrative of the eleventh, which is itself the reason why God will render to both Jews and Gentiles according to their deeds, as stated from the seventh to the tenth verses both inclusive, that is, “Because there is no respect of persons with him.” Now, from

the sixth to the sixteenth verses of the second chapter the doctrine taught is, that Jews and Gentiles are all in the same category with respect to the gospel; because, from the eighteenth verse of chapter one to the fifth of chapter two, the apostle had there “proved, that they are all under sin,” none being righteous, “no, not one;” and all the world consequently “guilty before God” (Rom 3:9,19). Mankind, then, being none of them “doers of the law,” none of them are justified; and *without justification there is no salvation*. - What remains, therefore, is only a question of condemnation. Are Jews and Gentiles, equally vile in their conduct before God, to be subjected to execution in the same way? No, the Jews sinning against light deserve a sorer punishment than Gentiles who sin under “times of ignorance;” therefore Gentiles die and perish; while the Jews are reserved for judgment and execution till the day yet future, when Jesus Christ shall judge them “at his appearing in his Kingdom,” as taught of Paul in the gospel he preached.

This implies the non-resurrection of those who being without law sin in times of ignorance; and the resurrection of those who sin under law. Of the former class, it is written in the prophet, “They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.” (Is 26:14) but of them under law, it is written, “all they in the graves (*pantis hoe en tois mnemeiois*) shall hear of the Son of Man’s voice, and come forth; they having done good things for a resurrection of life; but they having worked evil things, for a resurrection of judgment (Jno 5:28,29). So much for the guilty who are all under sin, and therefore heirs of death, being “condemned already.” But, whether that death shall be “unto death” so as to end therein, or, the sinners without law, and under law, shall pass from under sentence of death, and come under a sentence unto eternal life, depends upon both classes becoming obedient to the truth, or “doers of the word;” for it is “he who looks narrowly into the perfect law of liberty, and perseveres, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, he shall be blessed in his doing” (Jas 1:22,25).

### ***NO BLISS IN IGNORANCE***

The Jews and Gentiles in the days of the apostles were all in the same state with respect to God that the idolators and natural religionists are at the present time – “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God *through the ignorance that is in them*, because of the perverseness of their heart” (Eph 4:18). Truth is ever the same. It is therefore as true now as when written, that *ignorance alienates from God’s life*. Let D and B look at this principle without blinking. - Their theory demands the salvation of creatures in their ignorance of “the knowledge of God, and of Jesus the Lord;” but the scriptures place an emphatic veto on the notion, and declare that, “Except a man be converted, and become as a little child, he can *in no wise* enter the Kingdom of God;” and out of that Kingdom there is no salvation. And again, “Except a man be born of water and of spirit, he *cannot enter* the Kingdom of God;” which is equivalent to saying, “Except a man believe the gospel of the Kingdom, and is baptized, and raised from the dead incorruptible and

immortal, he cannot be saved.” There is no bliss in ignorance of God’s truth; if there were, it would be folly to be wise; because wisdom and knowledge make responsible – If the ignorant were in a salvable state, it was cruel to send Paul to them, “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness,” or ignorance, “to light,” or knowledge; because, in so doing, he was bringing them into the jeopardy of persecution, and the hazard of the sorer punishment which is to devour the adversaries at the coming of the Lord.

### **KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF IS ESSENTIAL**

But the truth is, that neither Jews, nor Gentiles, of any age, sex, or condition can be saved, or “inherit the kingdom,” which is the same thing, who live and die in their ignorance of the truth. “This is life eternal, that men *should know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Paul was therefore sent “to turn them from the power of Satan to God by enlightening them, *that they might receive* forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus” (Acts 26:18). Now, I argue that if this was necessary for the salvation of the heathen then, it is equally so for their salvation now; and that it was necessary is proved by the testimony before us. To say that creatures may be saved without faith it so blaspheme, or speak evil of, God and his Christ, and to pronounce the scriptures a falsehood; for they testify that, “he that comes to God must believe *that he is*, and that he is a rewarder of them who *diligently seek* him.” Again, “without faith it is impossible to please God;” and again, “no man cometh to the Father,” says Jesus, “but through me:” but these are all vain words, and they who uttered them liars, if human creatures “who know not God,” who do not seek him, and are ignorant of the faith; and not only so, but are “filled with all unrighteousness,” have inheritance with the sanctified – if we say, that these may be saved in their ignorance, we in effect proclaim our own faithlessness in the oft-repeated and positive declarations of God to the contrary – we declare it in defiance of testimony, sound reason, and common sense; not the common sense of the unthinking and fleshly multitude, for that is foolishness; but that natural sagacity which is common to the thoughtful and sober-minded among men.

But “*nature*” is truly the stronghold of natural religionists, although they profess to believe the scriptures. What they call “*nature*,” that is, their interpretation of nature, is of greater authority with them than a “thus it is written,” or a “thus saith the Lord”. It is their rule of Bible-interpretation; so that if God’s testimony does not speak in accordance with their interpretation of nature, they either reject it in contempt, or give it a mystical signification; or admit its truth and at the same time contend that some contrary and nullifying supposition may be equally true. This last alternative is the gossamer that mantles their hypocritical infidelity of the age. “It is true,” say they, “that ‘he that believes the gospel, and is baptized, shall be saved;’ but it is also true that if a man sincerely thinks he is right, he will be saved too, although he may not happen to understand the gospel!” “O yes, it is right to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins,” says another; “but then, baptism in the name is not indispensable for forgiveness!” “We admit,” say others, “that ‘without faith it is

impossible to please God;’ but then kind-hearted heathen, and babes, who are ‘germs of an immortal development,’ may be, yea are, saved without it!” “Yes, we believe in the resurrection of the dead; that is,” says the Swedenborgian Christian, “the awakening of the soul at the last pulsation of the heart in the article of death;” or, says some other mystic, “the revival of the dead in trespasses and sins when they get religion;” or, says a third, “the restoration of the ancient gospel some twenty or thirty years ago!” This it goes in all the world. There is scarcely a single truth admitted, but there is some nullifying hypothesis tacked onto it, by which it is rendered of none effect. And they who practice this call themselves *logicians* and philosophers. Precious logic to admit the truth of A, and at the same time to contend that B, which denies it in toto, is equally true! Yet such is the reasoning (save the mark!) of nature’s worshippers, who presume to subject the mind of God to the suppositions of their foolish hearts! Surely, it may be truly said, that

*Truth hath fled to brutish beasts;  
And men have lost their reason.*

But, this ‘*nature*’ the perverters of the gospel so devoutly worship, what is it? In the universal sense of the word, it is *what God has caused to exist subject to unvarying necessity*—the existence is nature; the necessity, its laws. Persons who see but little of God in any thing, are accustomed to attribute the phenomena they observe to Nature, as though Nature were the God in whom they live, and by whom all things consist. Nature, however, is a mere necessity, and exists simply because it is God’s will and pleasure. Those who are ‘taught of God’ never look to nature as an authority in regard to things spiritual and moral, because they do not venerate the creature rather than the Creator.

### **THE NATURAL MAN**

Man, as he exists by pro-creation, is part of that terrestrial nature called animal. When allowed to ripen into maturity under the uncontrolled influence of his propensities, “he has no pre-eminence over a beast” (Eccl 3:19). His ideas and reasonings, if he have any, upon God, morality, his own constitution, origin and destiny, are the workings of his veneration, conscientiousness, &c., styled by Paul “*The thinking of the flesh,*” and the conclusions he arrives at are *the* teachings of nature, or *Natural Religion*. This religion begins in the flesh, and ends in gas; which is all the spirit it contains. Confucius, Zoroaster, Mahomet, the Council of Trent, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell, and Joe Smith, not to mention a host of others, are all naturalists, whose systems of religion are all essentially the same. The reason of this is, because they have all come to their several conclusions by natural reason, to whose dictates the least foolish among them have paid more deference than to the written testimony of God. It is remarkable that all these systemizing naturalists believe in disembodied immortal souls, heaven in the skies, a hell of fire and brimstone for separate spirits somewhere, the same sort of a devil, the salvation of creatures of all ages, &c. The thinking of the flesh upon its own consciousness, and

the phenomena of animal magnetism, the means by which nature teaches, have conducted them to this universal and boasted uniformity. How common it is to hear them adduce “the universal belief of mankind” in proof of an immortal soul in man, capable of a disembodied existence among the stars! They do not see that this is a substantial reason against the notion, seeing that all mankind are in a state of ignorance, and therefore think only the thoughts of nature, or the flesh, which God says are not his thoughts. The only difference between Confucius, or Zoroaster, and Mr Campbell is, that the latter mixes up the sayings of the apostles with the thinkings of his flesh, which the former were unable to do, not having the scriptures. This is the essential difference between that form of Natural Religion, called Campbellism, and the others styled, Magianism, Buddhism, and so forth. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not say they are the same in detail; but the same in origin, and that origin the thinking of the flesh, and not the revelation of the mind of God.

### *NATURAL RELIGIONS*

As the heresiarchs named were mere naturalists, the religions that go by their names are mere natural religions. This is the nature of the religion of anti-christendom, call it Mohammedanism, Grecism, Romanism, or Protestantism. The thing is the same, whatever designation taste may give it. This is the reason why they are at variance with the Bible. The scriptures are from God, and reveal the thoughts, ways, and purposes of God; but the theologies, or othodoxies, or whatever you may call them, are of the unenlightened flesh, and reveal the thoughts, or opinions, of the flesh concerning the Bible. Now, the thoughts of men and the thoughts of God, are as diametrically opposite as flesh and spirit. They do not, and can not, think in harmony; for “the carnal mind (*to phronsema tou sarkos*, the thinking of the flesh) is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh (think and act according to the dictates of nature) cannot please God” (Rom 8:7-8).

From this it is clear that men cannot “do *by nature* the things contained in the law, in the sense of doing them from the dictates of unenlightened flesh. Nature, in this sense, would impel them to do the very reverse, for all the precepts of God are in contrariety to the dictates of the fallen humanity we possess. “My thoughts,” says he, “are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” “If any man will come after me, *let him deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow me.” “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” These are not the dictates of nature, but of the spirit. Nature could not dictate such principles of conduct. It is as impossible as for a river of its own tendency to ascend a mountain.

The word used by Paul, and translated “by nature” is *physei* from *phuo*, “to cause to be.” *Physis* is *that which is caused to be*; hence, *to do by physis* is to do that which is caused to be done; that is, *to do in effect*. “When the Gentiles do in effect the things contained in the law, they show the work of the law written in their hearts.” This is intelligible enough. The writing of the law there, causes them to do the things it contains, which is doing as *the effect of the writing*; or doing in effect, that is, *by physis* or by nature. The Jews had the law, but did not do its work; the Gentiles had not the law; but having believed the Gospel, and yielding its fruit in their lives, they showed forth the law’s work; and in so doing “kept the righteousness of the law”, and put the Jews to shame. The Gentiles who obeyed the gospel, proved themselves to be better Jews than the hereditary sons of Abraham who had the law; “for he in the appearance is not the Jew; neither is the circumcision in the appearance, in the flesh: but he is the Jew in the hidden man; and circumcision is of heart by Spirit, not by letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” He that is a Jew by becoming Abraham’s Seed, through Jesus Christ, is *the Jew* to whom Glory, honour, and incorruptibility in the kingdom for ever, with Messiah, is promised in the covenant made with Abraham before the times of the jubilees were arranged. Such is the solution of the matter as it appears to me.

*John Thomas, 1852*

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## **STARS IN SCRIPTURE (2)**

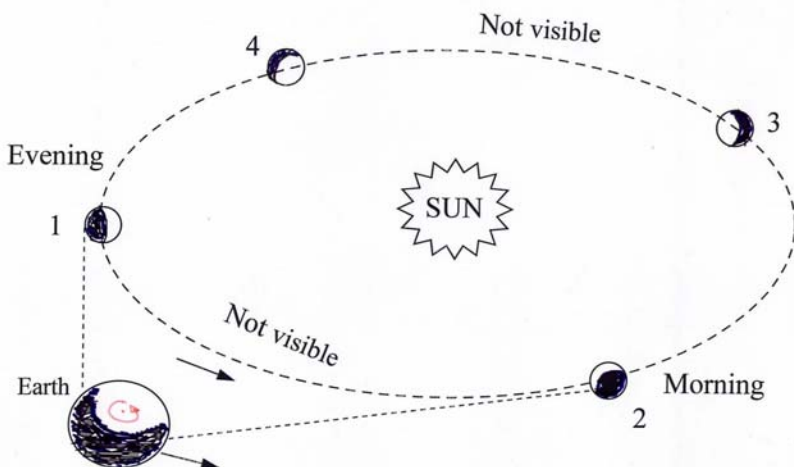
### *THE DAY STAR*

The Lord Jesus Christ is presented in Scripture as being a star. Balaam’s prophecy concerning Israel speaks prophetically of Jesus as a star that would come out of Jacob (Num 24:17). To the faithful, Jesus promised power, rulership and “the morning star” (Rev 2:28). The morning star is a reference to the planet Venus. The ancients did not realise that the first star to appear in the night sky and the last to disappear from the morning sky was in fact the same heavenly body. Two names were used, “Hesperus” (evening star) and “Phosphorous” (morning star, meaning Light Bearer) - see Figure opposite. The diagram shows that the evening star (east of the sun) is visible soon after sunset and that the morning star rises before daybreak in the morning sky (west of the sun) on its almost circular orbit of the sun.

The reference to Jesus’ work being light-bearing are numerous; for example:

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Is 9:2).

## “I am the first and the last” (Rev.22:13)



“I will ... give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Is 42:6,7).

“The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising (Is 60:1-3).

Jesus said of himself, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jno 8:12). The “word of prophecy” is likened to a light by Peter in preparation for the day’s dawn, when “the daystar arise in your hearts” (2 Pet 1:19). This is the light-bearing work of Jesus which is a source of joy and hope for the believer. The “daystar” (phosphorous) in this last quotation is the name of the planet Venus.

The natural world has lessons for the spiritually-minded. The planets have no light to give of their own; they reflect the light of the sun. Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do” (Jno 5:19); and “I can of mine own self do nothing ... I seek not mine own will” (Jno 5:30). The planet Venus has the highest reflective value of all the planets and is therefore the brightest object in the sky other than the sun and moon; it absorbs little light, but passes it on. Jesus said, “He that hath

seen me hath seen the Father (Jno 14:9).

Of all the planets, Venus is most like the earth in size (95% of the earth's diameter); its orbit round the sun brings it closer to the earth than other planets (within 24.8 million miles). We can see nothing of its surface features because the planet is permanently covered with cloud: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Is 53:2). Venus is closer to the sun than the earth is: "the Son is in the bosom of the Father" (Jno 1:18); and its orbit brings it between the sun and the earth: "One God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1Tim 2:5).

The rotation of 8 of the 9 planets in our solar system is West to East; the exception is Venus, the day star, which rotates in the same direction as the sun, ie East to West. The association of the daystar (Jesus) with the earth (man) and the relationship with the sun (God) is there for us to observe. Consider the astronomical implications of Jesus' words in John 8:12: "I am the light of the world" and verse 23: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world", and verse 29 "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

Scripture leaves us in little doubt that the "morning star" is a title of the Lord Jesus Christ: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev 22:16); and Jesus said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (v 13), as Venus is the first star to appear in the night sky and the last to disappear in the morning.

### ***LUCIFER***

From the time of Nimrod pagan kings have regarded themselves as deified mortals. A king of Babylon took one of the titles of the Lord Jesus Christ to himself; the word rendered "Lucifer" in Isaiah 14:12 means "day star" (see AV margin). The proverb spoken against this king of Babylon was spoken for five reasons:

- Because of pride ("thy pomp is brought down")
- Because he had taken a title of our Lord Jesus Christ (day star)
- Because he thought he was a God ("I will ascend into heaven", I will be like the Most High")
- Because he exalted himself above the stars of God (Israel)
- To show the cutting off of Chaldee mythology in the cutting down of the king of Babylon, for Lucifer was supposed to be "son of the morning" (Aurora) who married Orion (Nimrod).

As the work of Jesus in God's purpose is developed, we see Jesus no longer as a planet reflecting God's glory, but as part of the Sun he is now ready to bring judgements through fierce heat upon the wicked:

"All that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord ... but unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal 4:1-2).

The Lord Jesus was also prepared to bring judgment on the ecclesias in Asia Minor: "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (Rev 1:16—see also Acts 26:23). In the Kingdom of God, the holy city will have "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev 21:23).

### ***THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM***

Suggestions as to what the star was that guided the wise men to Bethlehem include the day star, a comet and a meteor. Scripture does not identify the guiding light for us. We may discount some possibilities, but the facts are as follows:

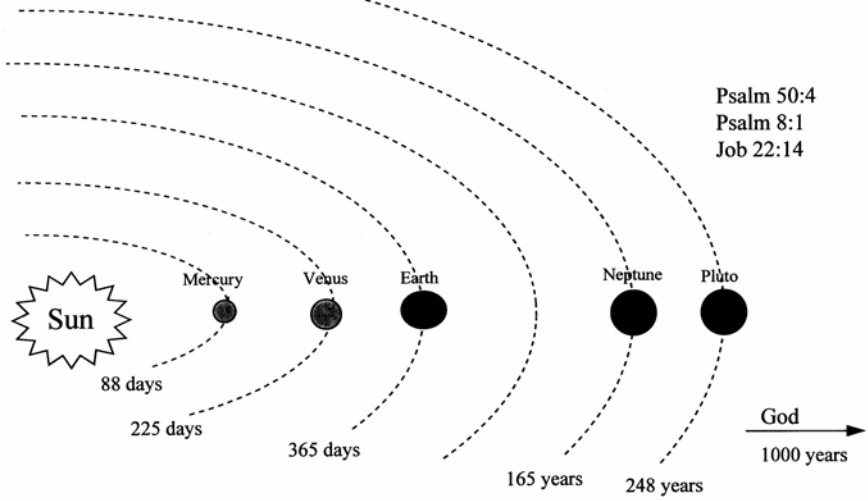
- The star arose in the East and progressed in a westerly direction (Mat 2:1-2).
- The wise men describe it as "his (Jesus') star" (Mat 2:2).
- The object was not obvious to the casual observer of the heavens, since Herod had to enquire what time the star appeared (Mat 2:7).
- On leaving Herod's presence, the wise men looked up and saw the star and continued to follow it to Bethlehem (Mat 2:9-10).

The "star" that the wise men followed was not therefore obvious to all. This discounts some spectacular display in the heavens. We cannot be certain about what they saw, but it required the eye of faith to discern this "sign of the times". My suggestion is that they saw the day star (Venus) which was always there, but only the wise men understood the significance of it as "thy light" which would attract Gentiles and "kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Is 60:1,3). They understood that the time was right (Dan 9:25,27) for "his star" to herald the first coming of the Son of God into the world.

### ***TIME***

The earth takes 365.25 days to orbit the sun; this is defined as one year. The further away from the sun a planet is, the longer it takes to complete a circuit of the sun. For example:

# Time with the Lord (2 Peter 3:8)



Mercury	88 days	35.9 million miles from the sun				
Venus	225 days	67.2	“	“	“	“
Earth	365 days	93.0	“	“	“	“
Neptune	165 years	2794.3	“	“	“	“
Pluto	248 years	3666.0	“	“	“	“

A day on earth is defined by one rotation of the planet which takes 24 hours; but this is not the same time-period on all planets. For example, Mercury takes 59 days to rotate once. Venus 423 days, Pluto 6.4 days (see Figure on next page). These physical characteristics of our solar system may help our understanding of Peter’s words: “ ... one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet 3:8). A “day with the Lord as a thousand years” suggests that while we on earth experience a 1000 year period (ie many rotations of the earth on its axis) this is the equivalent of one day with the Lord. The example of the slow rotation of Venus gives it the longest period of all the planets for its day (243 days). But a day with God, measured in human terms, would be 1000 years.

However, God tells us that for prophetic purposes, one day represents a year on earth (eg Num 14:33,34). "A thousand years as one day" suggests that the vast distance from the earth at which the Lord is located is represented by the ratio of a 1000 year circuit of the heavens while mortal man experiences a cycle of one day (a year) on earth.

The most distant planet in our solar system, Pluto, takes 248 years to complete its orbit of the sun (it is some 3666 million miles from the sun). The Lord may therefore be located at a distance far beyond this. The Lord is above the heavens (in distance): See Psalm 50:4: "He shall call to the heavens from above," Psalm 8:1 "who hast set thy glory above the heavens". The book of Job says that God walketh in the circuit of heaven" (22:14), yet He is not far from each one of us (for He "sitteth upon the circle of the earth" (Is 40:22)) if we seek him.

The Lord God is timeless, "from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps 90:2) and to help us understand this, God has set the greater and lesser lights for signs, seasons, days and years.

*Peter Moore*

### ***MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS***

We very much regret that due to poor health and prevailing circumstances, we were unable to produce the Nov/Dec 2003 issue of this magazine; nevertheless we continue our work as we are able.

**The subscriptions for the coming year are due from the next issue (Mar/April 2004).** The cost for a year's subscription (6 issues) is £7.00, or free for any who cannot remit the requested amount. Subscribers will note that there has been a substantial delay in requesting the renewed subscriptions - this has been to cover the issues we have been unable to produce.

### ***THE WORLD WIDE WEB***

By the grace of our Heavenly Father, we continue to labour on; the work is great, and there is much to do. We hope to shortly resume the fortnightly Sunday Exhortations by e-mail, which is appreciated by many in various countries. This service is free of charge; for those wishing to be added to the mailing list, please send an e-mail to: [secretary@christadelphian-waymark.org.uk](mailto:secretary@christadelphian-waymark.org.uk). Please also use this address to receive the magazine by e-mail (pdf format), again free of charge. We are thankful for the labours of various brethren whose help in producing this magazine, and the Sunday Exhortations, is very much appreciated. We also acknowledge with thanks various donations that have been received to help the work along from several sources.

*Chris Maddocks*

## **THE FATHER'S PURPOSE IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER**

When the Lord God finished his work of six days of creation, he had from the beginning a plan of salvation which has taken six thousand years for its consummation. Whereas creation was by the Spirit of God, Yahweh's plan of salvation has come about through the Holy Spirit - whereby holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. What they have spoken is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ who we have come to remember this afternoon, who, we know has been in the mind of the Father from the beginning. Brother Thomas referring to this plan sub-divides it into three grand divisions, namely, creation, providence and redemption. Since creation the Almighty through the work of the angels has worked provisionally to prepare the saints for this consummation, namely the Kingdom of God. But each week we come together to remember the beginning of the third great division and the most important division, namely the Father's work of redemption through his beloved Son.

But what is amazing and hard for our frail mortal minds to take in, is that all the saints were foreknown of the Almighty from the beginning. What happens in our lives therefore is not arbitrary, but is under the guiding hands of the angels. On our part faith is required and the manifestation of the works of faith under trial after the example of Abraham and all the faithful saints of old. This is brought before us in Ephesians chapter 1:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (or in the heavenlies) in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:3-6).

Truly brethren and sisters how great is God's purpose and how exalted is our calling, shown by the words “in the heavenlies in Christ”. But is not this true! In our baptism we have been born from above, having become children of the most high and brethren and sisters in Christ. In Hebrews 12:22-24, we read that we have come;

“To the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and ecclesia of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, (even

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the faithful) And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel”.

The great responsibility that comes with this high calling comes in verse 25:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, ( at Sinai) much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven”.

Our position is also shown in Colossians 3:1-4:

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things which are above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory”.

These words are showing the close relationship we have with the Lord Jesus Christ. We have died in the waters of baptism and our life is now hid with Christ in God. When he shall appear, which may be very soon, we shall also appear with him in glory. How important it is therefore that in the words of verse 10, we put on the new man which is being renewed (Bro. Thomas) in knowledge - not any knowledge - but by exact knowledge of God’s word.

The idea of heavenlies is also shown in Ephesians 2:4-7:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”.

“The exceeding riches of his grace”. So we read in verses 9-10:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, (i.e. the works of the law) lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus unto good works, (i.e. works of faith) which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”.

This shows that the circumstances of our lives do not happen by chance. They are overruled by the hand of the Almighty who has foreordained the situations which his children will be led into, that they might manifest the works of faith. Pre-eminent examples of this are Abraham offering Isaac and David slaying Goliath. But we know brethren and sisters, I know of myself, that our lives are strewn with failures. We fall far short of the high calling to which we have been called. It can take years to develop in us a right state of mind. We see this in the life of David and in his sin with Bathsheba. Where we sow to the flesh we must reap the consequences, but these very consequences, if we have the right attitude to them, can be the means of our salvation. David reaped the consequences of his sin for the rest of his life but as he fell asleep in death, the troubles he had gone through had made him ready for the kingdom.

### ***DAVID AND THE NUMBERING OF ISRAEL***

The situation of David’s numbering of Israel in our reading in 1 Chronicles 20 and 21 is an example of this. We read in 1 Chronicles 21:1 that “Satan (or the adversary) stood up against Israel”. The reading in 1 Samuel 24:1, shows that “the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah”. The adversary was against Israel. It could have been an angel as in the case of Balaam. It has been suggested that Yahweh was angry with them because they had forsaken David and followed Absalom. There was another factor namely David’s failure in trusting in numbers and deciding to number Israel and Judah. We need to appreciate however the difference between Israel and David. David was a man of faith. He was a man after God’s own heart. He thought as the Almighty thought. The Almighty would have foreknown this from the beginning. Many in the nation, possibly were without faith. They followed the crowd. But we should not be among this number. We should not follow a multitude to do evil. Our actions should be motivated by faith, not by what others do. Although David failed, he repented of his sin as we see from 1 Chronicles 21:8:

“And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly”.

But Yahweh saw that he was a vessel fit for his use. David had to see 70,000 people die of the pestilence. He blamed himself for this tragedy,

not realizing that it was because of Yahweh's anger with Israel. But the amazing consequence was that he found the site of the temple. The sword of the angel rested over the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, in the very place that Abraham's sword had rested over his beloved son Isaac. Moreover, the Gentile who owned the threshing floor was a man of faith as Abraham, for he would have given up his livelihood in sacrifice. So when David had bought the place from Ornan the Jebusite, he insisted in buying it. We then read in chapter 22:1:

“Then David said, This is the house of Yahweh Elohim, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel. And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God”.

In this incident we see how Yahweh brought good out of evil. Truly how great was his mercy and graciousness towards David. The incident had a profound effect upon David. Through it Yahweh directed him to his final great work, namely that of preparation of the materials for the building of the temple. Hence his words in 1 Chronicles 29:2:

“Now I have prepared with all my heart for the house of God. . .”

and verse 3:

“Moreover because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house”.

David had given of his own possessions for the house of God. What an exhortation to us brethren and sisters. Then we read in verses 14-15:

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding”.

Although David was a great king, he recognized that he was a stranger and sojourner in the earth as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were. And this is our position brethren and sisters. We are strangers and sojourners in the earth, “For here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come”.

In this incident with David, we see the graciousness and mercy of our heavenly Father toward David, that even when he did wrong, Yahweh brought good out of it. With this in mind let us go back to Ephesians 1. The word *predestinate* means *to mark first or beforehand or to limit in advance*. Yahweh marked out David's life in advance although we see from this incident that he had the freewill to choose which we he should go. Moreover what the Almighty does is in accordance with the "good pleasure of his will". Then we read in verse 6:

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved".

Yahweh's graciousness to David shows how he has been gracious to us. We need to lift up our minds to fully appreciate this brethren and sisters, remembering that our heavenly Father "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ". Verse 9 shows that the Apostle is going back to the memorial name of Yahweh for we read:

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself".

Let us go back to Exodus 3:15:

"Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, He who will be the mighty ones of your fathers, the mighty ones of Abraham, the mighty ones of Isaac, and the mighty ones of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever (or for the olam or age) and this is my memorial unto all generations (or a generation of the race)".

In the fulfillment of the memorial name Yahweh has marked out in advance individuals out of all generations to manifest the name in their lives, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob being pre-eminent examples. David also is among this number and all the faithful and we have been called to be among this number as we see from Ephesians 1:11:

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ".

The Lord Jesus Christ was the first as we read in Isaiah 41:4:

“Who hath wrought and done it, calling generations from the beginning (this takes us back to the memorial name)? I Yahweh (He who will be), the first, (the first one, i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ) and with the last (the last ones, a multitude) I am he”.

We have been called to be amongst the last ones brethren and sisters. Jesus is the first one. As John said:

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me”.

On the first day of each week, we meet to remember him. In Jesus first we see the third great division of God’s plan, namely redemption. In the Master we see the perfect manifestation of the name, as he said;

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was, *I have manifested thy name* unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world”.

This involved the pouring out of his life blood in obedience to the Father and in love for his friends. We have been redeemed by “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation, but was manifest in these last times for you”.

We have been bought with a price, even his precious blood. Let us conclude with the words in 1 Peter 1:18-20:

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you”.

May we use our lives in his service and live unto him who loved us and gave himself for us.

*Carlo Barberesi*

### **All hail the coming day!**

Ye have long tarried; break now in glory on our dark horizon,  
where faith alone, begotten of Yahweh's word,  
can see the glimmer of thy coming dawn.

O, we wait with strong desire; give us the first token;  
send athwart our night the gleaming messenger of thy presence.

Release thy prisoners: justify thy children;  
give them to see with their eyes the unbarred arm of Omnipotence  
lifted up to save His chosen, and to smite all the proud and lofty.

O, lift the curtain that shuts them out in the darkness that covers all the earth;  
unveil the impending glory; open the temple;  
uncover the ark of their covenant with God;

scatter the lightnings of Jehovah's anger among the nations;  
crash, ye hidden thunders, and destroy them that destroy the earth;  
bring to the dust the high refuges of rebellion and lies;

cast down the thrones; slay the Mother of Harlots; bring perdition on the 4th beast;  
and let all the world know that there is a God that judgeth, and who,  
though long silent, will not always be still,

but will rise to avenge his own elect, to carry out his own purpose,  
and to vindicate his own majesty and honour, against the ignorance, brutishness,  
perversity and wickedness of a hundred generations.

High and low, rich and poor, need the terrible lesson.

They are filled with their own devices. God is not in all their thoughts;  
they cast the testimony behind their backs, and seek every one gain from his quarter.

But now shall they see the glory of Yahweh; for his hand is about to be lifted up.

The end has come; the times of the Gentiles are knelling to a close.

Behold the signs!

**Bro Robert Roberts, 1867**