

*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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*"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)*

## **THE SON'S POST-MILLENIAL SUBJECTION TO THE FATHER**

The passage from which the idea expressed in the above caption is derived, is found in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul had affirmed that the resurrection of those "*in Christ*" would happen at his coming. In the next verse, he says: "Then cometh THE END." He does not say how long after Christ's coming it would be to that end. Indeed, he did not know, for "the times and seasons" were reserved by the Father in his own power, until he revealed them to Jesus Christ, "who sent and revealed by his messenger to his servant John." This apostle, however, makes us unacquainted with the truth that *the end* would be divided from Christ's coming in power and great glory, by an interval of a thousand years; and that this long period will be occupied by the kingdom of Jehovah and of his anointed. Thou Paul could not tell the duration of this, "the Economy of the Fullness of Times," as he styles it (Eph 1:10), he records events by which the end of the economy might be known. These are, the conquest of all enemies; the final abolition of death; the delivering up of the kingdom to the Father by the Son; and the Son's own subjection to God. The passage is remarkable, and deserving of quotation in full:

"As in Adam all (the saints) die, even so in Christ shall (they) all be made alive. But every one in the destined order: Christ an offering of first fruits; next, they that are Christ's at his appearing: after that the end, when he shall have delivered over the kingdom to the God and Father: when he shall have vanquished every dominion, and every jurisdiction and power. For it is necessary that he reign until he (God) shall have put all the adversaries under his (the Son's) feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath subdued all things under his feet. But when he saith, that everything hath been put under, manifest it is, that he, having subdued the all things to him (the Son) is excepted. But when the all things shall be subdued to him (the Son) then the Son himself also shall be subordinated to Him (the Father) who has subjected the all things to him (the Son) in order that God may be the all things for all."

To see into this matter, it must be understood that before sin entered into the world by Adam, the economy was "*very good*," and God was "*the all things for all*" the living souls he had made. In this state of being there was no adversary, and no death, because there was no sin, and death being absent, there was no viceregal kingdom to make was upon hostile powers, for the purpose of subduing them, and substituting the power of God instead. All was peace and harmony between God and man upon earth.

But when sin entered into the world, and death by sin, a rebellion commenced against God which has never been put down effectually from that day to this. It has ever gathered strength, and is at the present crisis more defiant of his authority than

ever. But he has declared that all things shall not always continue thus; for he has sworn by his own life, saying, “*as truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord* (Num 14:21) and therefore the Lord Jesus taught his disciples to express their hearts desire, saying, “Thy kingdom come; and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When Jehovah’s will shall be thus absolutely obeyed, “*the end*” will have arrived. The sin of the world will have been taken away; and every curse have ceased. There will then, consequently, be no more death: and once more a state of being will obtain, in which peace and harmony between God and men will exist, so that on receiving all things elaborated by the Son, he will again pronounce them “*very good*”.

### ***A NEW POLITICAL HEAVENS AND EARTH***

This very good constitution of things terrestrial, is thus indicated by John. “And I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth; and there was no more sea. And I heard a great voice out of the heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be *no more death*, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be my son (Rev 21:1-7).

Here is a state upon earth evidently pertaining to “the end” indicated by Paul, when death, the last enemy is no more. God’s tabernacle with men upon the earth is not pitched until death is destroyed. The destruction of death implies the previous suppression of sin in the world. Death’s sting is sin, which causes death; but the sting being extracted from human nature, it dies no more. Every dweller upon the earth becomes an immortal son of God, who will be with them as he is now with his only and chief begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this postmillennial very good state there will be no sinners; consequently, none separated from God, and requiring a mediator betwixt them. But in the economy of the previous thousand years, sin, sinners, and death, still exist; hence a very different constitution of things must obtain to the succeeding arrangement in which they find no place at all. The epoch between the Millennial Economy and its successor, is marked by the delivering over the Millennial kingdom to God, as it will be then in the hands of Christ and his brethren, have accomplished the work assigned to it.

The Kingdom’s mission is, “to break in pieces and consume all kingdoms,” and to “fill the whole earth” in ruling over all. It will be introduced into the world to put down the great rebellion against God, which is organised under the “dominions, jurisdictions, and powers,” or governments of the nations. Of course, with the means to be employed, this is not an instantaneous affair. For its full and effectual accomplishment, God has allotted 1,000 years. The work to be accomplished is stupendous, but not too great for the forces of the kingdom. All these great

kingdoms, empires, and republics, are to be conquered, and their millions of armed defenders cut up, and dispersed. Beside the overthrow of these rebel hosts, knowledge, righteousness, and peace, have to follow in the train of victory. The religion and law of the conquerer will be gratefully accepted by the nations as they become freed from the tyrants who oppress and brutalize them. "Of the *increase* of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever." On that throne he will reign until "the end;" for "his kingdom shall not be destroyed, and his dominion is *unto the end*:" for he must reign until God hath put all enemies under his feet.

When the nature and constitution of the kingdom are duly considered, it will be readily perceived that it cannot, in the fitness of things continue longer than the extinction of sin, and the entire abolition of its wages, which is death and corruption. The kingdom of Christ and of God is a *priestly* institution; for so it is written, "THE BRANCH shall build the Temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; *and be a priest upon his throne*." The reader, I suppose, need not be informed that this prophecy is of Jehovah's Anointed in his kingdom; and, therefore, of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. When "the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David" that he may sit there and "reign over" the House of Jacob "*unto the ages—eis tous aionas*—he will be God's High Priest for the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the nations of his dominion. This is proved by Isaiah's testimony, which reveals, that "All nations shall flow unto the Lord's house," "Which shall be called a house of prayer for all people", the offerings of whose flocks and herds "shall come up with acceptance on mine altar" saith Jehovah, "and I will glorify the house of my glory." Then shall "many people go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to Jehovah's mountain, to the Temple of Jacob's God; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion (the city where David dwells), shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa 2:2,3; 56:7; 60:7). Who will then be the High Priest and Teacher of Jehovah's ways, in the house of Israel's God? - the great light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel? There can be but one answer, and that is, "The Priest upon the throne," (Zech 6:12,13) who "shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off;" even Christ Jesus our Lord; "who is now the High Priest of our confession, "made a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec *for the Age*" - *eis ton aiona*;- but even now, "a High Priest over the house of God," "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb 3:1,6; 5:6; 10:21). Thus, what he is now doing in the presence of God for "the Heirs of the Kingdom" - making reconciliation for his household - is but *the earnest* of what he will do for the subjects of his dominion, when, with his reconciled ones, he shall occupy "the thrones of the house of David."

Now, "every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, *that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*" (Heb 5:1). It is clear from the testimony quoted, that sin, sinners, death, and national sacrificial

worship, will obtain in the world till “the end” of the thousand years beginning with the appearing of Christ in his glory. “Gifts and sacrifices,” therefore will all that time be necessary because of sin; and being necessary, there, must be a high priest to offer them for men to God, in the place appointed. Now, the nature of the kingdom being Melchizedec, or royal and priestly, its covenant, or constitution, provides that its king shall unite the two offices in his own person. This applies also to all the joint-inheriters with him in the same kingdom. Hence, they are all styled, “kings and priests to God.” The kingdom is, therefore, *mediatorial*. It stands, when established, sacerdotally between Jehovah and all who are not *office-bearers and dignitaries* of the kingdom. So long as this monarchy exists with a priestly constitution, “the tabernacle of God” cannot “be with men,” neither can “he dwell with them,” nor can they be “his people.” “*With men;*” that is, with the entire population of the earth. He is now *with Christ Jesus*, dwelling in him with his fullness; and during the thousand years, he will be with Christ’s brethren, the saints, dwelling in them as in their elder brother; but with the residue of men he will not so dwell, until Christ has accomplished the work of “destroying that having the power of death, that is, the devil,” and its works, or, in other words, until he shall have “taken away the sin of the world;” destroyed all its dominions, jurisdictions and powers; and have extinguished death. When this is consummated there will be no obstacle preventing God’s abode with men but the Melchizedec kingdom; which must, therefore, of necessity be taken out of the way, as no longer adapted to the state of things upon the earth.

The reader will see this at a glance when he is asked, What will be the use of priests to God for men, when, because of the effectual suppression of their transgression, and the extinction of sin in the flesh, there are not gifts and sacrifices to offer, no errors and ignorance to atone for? Christ and the saints’ occupation will then be gone. It will then have expired according to the statute of limitation, which says, “Thou art a priest *for the age* after the order of Melchizedec” (Ps 110:4). The word *le-Olahm*, in the Hebrew text, is rendered in Paul’s citation of it *eis ton aiona* in the Greek; which I have translated “*for the age,*” which is not only probably correct, but made certainly so, by the scripture doctrine concerning priesthood.

### ***DELIVERING THE KINGDOM TO GOD***

The Son, then, will “deliver over the kingdom to God and the Father” of men, at the time all become his sons, because of the unsuitableness of its nature and covenant to THE AGES succeeding the Millennial Age. The kingdom will not be destroyed, but only *changed* in its constitution, so as to adapt it to the improved and altered condition of the world. The kingdom in its Melchizedec or millennial organization, is the heavens planted, and the foundations of earth laid by the Lord, when he proclaims to Zion, “Thou art my people;” and saith, “Thy God reigneth” (Is 51:16; 52:7). John styles this organisation in reference to that of the post-millennial ages, the former, or “first heaven and the first earth” - that constitution of Israel predicted in the sixty-fifth of Isaiah. This heaven of the kingdom is destined to be changed, so that when “the End” comes, it will have “passed away” as entirely as if it had been

destroyed. This constitution of the kingdom will have perished, though Christ and the Saints remain in undiminished glory and beatitude. Hence, it is written in the hundred and second Psalm, and applied to Jesus in Hebrews 1:10, "Thou, Lord, at the beginning (*kat' archas*, at the beginning of Zion's earth and heavens) laidst the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou shalt stand: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture *shalt thou change them*, and they shall be changed." then Jesus creates all things new: "but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) shall continue, and their seed (the saints) shall be established before thee.

### ***CHRIST SUBJECT TO THE FATHER***

Now, when the Lord Jesus has changed the whole system of things terrestrial and mundane, by the Spirit of the Father, a new world will be the result, in which the constitution of society will be royal, but not priestly; Jesus and the Saints being the Jehovah and the Elohim of the new order of things, as others were of the old, as appears from the Mosaic account of the Six Days. Jehovah-Jesus and his Elohim will have consummated the work begun by Jehovah-Elohim, the Lord of the Gods, seven thousand years before. But though "great," Jesus is always "the Son of the Highest," of whom he says, "My Father is greater than I". He is Jehovah's servant to perform an appointed work, and to establish *his Father's authority* in all the earth. This done, the Father no longer veils his face in a representative, but appears as sovereign in his own kingdom; in which, however, his glorious son is always pre-eminent, and next, but not upon, the throne. The words of Pharaoh to Joseph will express the idea I wish to convey of the Son's subordination to the Father in the Ages, that God may be the all things for all. "There is none so discreet and wise as thou. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." The kingdom, therefore, though changed, continues a kingdom still—a sinless kingdom added to the universal dominion of "the Blessed and only Potentate, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power *aionion*, in all ages, Amen."

Such is the exposition of Paul's saying concerning the turning over of the kingdom to the Father, as it appears to me. The kingdom is without end, but not without change. In the thousand years, it is "the kingdom of Christ *and* of God;" in the after ages, "the all things" are centred in God, "for all" the dwellers upon the earth. Mediation exists no more, since all things are reconciled, and endless peace obtains. All which is submitted to our readers in the hope that we may all rejoice together in the kingdom of the Age to Come.

*John Thomas, March 1853*

## WHY BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION

*Communication with a number of brethren and sisters indicates the need to reaffirm, and demonstrate from Scripture, this fundamental first principle. We invite further comment from our readers:*

The Scriptures declare that it is by providing the Master Jesus Christ that Yahweh has extended an arm of salvation to mankind. There is no true hope in any other system of religion than that ordained and taught by Messiah, for Peter testified: "Neither is there salvation in any other: *for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). The Name of Jesus then, is a *saving* name. It is a name given that "must" give salvation. It is a name, therefore, unlike any other name given among men, for it is the name of the only man who possesses immortality, and the only man who can save from death.

But the intelligent inquirer will ask, "How can one avail oneself of this salvation? How can I obtain salvation through the name of Jesus Christ?" The Bible answer, is through Belief and Baptism: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). These are the words of the risen Master, as he instructed his disciples to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." According to these words, it is those who believe and are baptized who shall be saved, and those who believe not the Gospel preached to them will be damned (notice; in their case whether they are baptised or not is of little consequence; with a disbelief of Christ, their condemnation is certain). This passage is quite plain in linking the baptism of a believer with

salvation; according to its teaching both are required in order to be saved. However, there are those who dispute this. According to some "authorities," the text here is spurious, being a later addition - and so one baptism denying correspondent (non-Christadelphian) informs me, we must look elsewhere in Scripture for proof for our case, because the validity of this text is "uncertain".

This is not as difficult as our correspondent might imagine, for the same truth is illustrated many times in Scripture. Acts chapter 2 records the words of Peter at Pentecost, as he addressed a great company of Jews:

"Now when they had heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The answer that Peter gave was very direct and specific:

"Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ..." (Acts 2:37-38).

The question was put by those who heard the Gospel being taught—what were they to do? Being pricked in their hearts by the apostolic testimony, they saw the need to do something, but they did not know what that something was. The answer was unequivocal: "Repent and be

baptised”. So it was that “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

Here we see the same pattern as Mark 16:16: belief and baptism—those who received the words of the Apostle were baptised. And in this place, reference is made to another element which is required, that is, Repentance. “Repent and be baptised” was the command. Belief, Repentance, and Baptism go together therefore, three vital things which are required of those who wish to be saved.

Upon consulting the New Testament record, we find that in the First Century, Baptism was something that naturally followed a belief in the Gospel. Examples could be multiplied: Saul of Tarsus was baptised (Acts 9:18), so was the Ethiopian Eunuch, (Acts 8:36-38) Cornelius, (Acts 10:47), and a whole multitude of men and women who heard the preaching of Philip (Acts 8:12,13). It is clear then, that Baptism was seen as being a necessary action in response to hearing and believing the good news concerning Messiah, and his coming kingdom.

### **WHAT IS BAPTISM?**

According to the Church, there are two types of baptism; infant-sprinkling which it calls “Christening” and adult immersion—with infant-sprinkling being the most commonly performed. According to the Bible however, there is only one type of Baptism: “There is one body, and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, *one baptism*, one God and Father of all ...” (Eph 4:4-6). And it is clear that this “one baptism” comprises a full immersion into water, for when the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by Philip,

we read that “they *went down* both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were *come up out of the water ...*” (Acts 8: 38-39). Again, concerning the work of John the Baptist, we are told that he baptized “in Aenon near to Salim, *because there was much water there*” (John 3:23), which would be needed for full bodily immersion, but not for infant sprinkling. And again, when the Master, Jesus Christ was baptized, we read that he “went up straightway *out of the water*” (Mat 3:16), which implies he had first gone down into the water. These passages clearly imply bodily immersion: sprinkling or pouring are both inconsistent with “going down into the water” and “coming up out of the water”, and with the need for “much water”. We shall come to see the importance of understanding what form baptism should take, when we consider more fully:

### **THE MEANING OF BAPTISM**

In the Scriptures, there are two principal things signified by the act of baptism. Firstly, it is a means of becoming associated with the sacrifice of Christ (Rom 6:3, 5), and secondly, it is a symbolic washing away of sins (Acts 22:16). Concerning the former, the Apostle spoke to the believers at Rome:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his

resurrection” (Rom 6:3-5).

The Lord Jesus Christ has achieved the victory over sin. He was “in all points tempted like as we are” (Heb 4:15), for he came “in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom 8:3), and bore the same nature common to all mankind (Heb 2:14)—yet he never succumbed to those temptations even once. He was sent to “condemn sin in the flesh” (Rom 8:3), and it logically must have existed in his flesh for him to condemn it there (cp Rom 7:17). He experienced “the motions of sins” working in his members, but he never permitted them to bring forth fruit unto death. He condemned sin in his flesh by taking it to the grave, whilst remaining holy and obedient to his Father in all things. He achieved the victory over it by never yielding to it, but by obtaining the mastery over it in all areas of life.

Upon the cross, he made his Father’s will his own (cp Mat 26:39,42) declaring that the Father was right in requiring man’s sinful nature to be put to death - declaring his Father’s righteousness (Rom 3:25,26). And having overcome that which has the power of death (Heb 2:14), that is, the *diabolos*, or sin in the flesh, the grave could not hold him; he had to be raised by the glory of the Father. God raised him up “having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24), and he was resurrected to be given immortality; the just reward for overcoming the greatest enemy of mankind.

But the victory is Christ’s. He alone has overcome sin. He alone is worthy of possessing an endless life, for he alone has rendered perfect obedience to the Father’s Will. The question is, How can

Christ’s victory become ours? How can we benefit from what Christ achieved?

The Bible answer, is through faith and baptism. In order to be partakers of Christ’s victory, and thus be partakers of his resurrection, we need to be identified with his death. In baptism, we are symbolically buried with Christ in the grave. In descending into the waters of Baptism, a believer is acting out a symbolic death—the water represents the grave, and the believer is descending into it. In this way, he declares that he is worthy to die; he recognizes his own condition of sinfulness in the sight of the Almighty. But he is to rise from his watery grave again. He therefore descends into a symbolic death in hope, knowing of a surety that he will rise up. In this symbol, he is also enacting the death of Christ—he is enacting how Christ descended into the grave, yet ascended up again out of it. Thus, the apostle wrote: “therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). Even as Christ rose again to a new life, so the believer rises from the watery baptismal grave, to a new life, forsaking the old ways of the flesh, being devoted to doing Yahweh’s Will in all things.

### ***CRUCIFYING THE FLESH***

Upon the cross, Christ condemned sin in the flesh. He crucified his flesh, in order to demonstrate the righteousness of God, that God was right to pass the sentence of death upon sinful human nature. And in baptism, a man is said to “crucify the flesh” symbolically “with the affections and lusts” (Gal 5:24). He resolves to

destroy the old man of the flesh, and live a new life, devoted to the things of the Spirit. He resolves to forsake his previous life of sinfulness, and lead a life of holiness to the Father. In this way, the believer is planted in the likeness of Messiah's death; they associate themselves with that which he achieved upon the cross, and resolve to follow his example. They resolve to take up their cross, and follow him (Mat 16:24), even as he commanded. And so, being associated with the death of Christ, the believer will also be associated with his resurrection to life: "if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom 6:5,6)

When we recognize these things, we can readily perceive the importance of what form baptism must take. Total immersion readily carries the symbology of entering the grave, and rising again, whereas a mere sprinkling cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be likened to a symbolic burial. Moreover, a new-born babe, not having done either good or bad (Rom 9:11) cannot forsake a life of sinfulness and resolve to put to death the ways of the flesh. A new born babe cannot have faith in the resurrection of Christ, nor believe in him. Infant-sprinkling does not, in any of it's points, correspond to Bible baptism.

### ***WASHING AWAY OF SINS***

As well as identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the act of baptism is also a symbolic washing. Literally, the whole body can be said to

be washed in water, in the act of baptism. And this symbolizes the way in which a believer is cleansed from his sins, by association with the sacrifice of Christ. Accordingly, Ananias commanded Saul of Tarsus, later to become the apostle Paul: "arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling upon the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16, cp Heb 10:22). Through obedience to the gospel in the act of baptism, a person associates himself with the sacrifice of Christ, and can thereby find forgiveness of sins. Therefore, by a figure, baptism is a washing away of sins. It logically follows that for a man to stand acceptably before Yahweh, who is of purer eyes than can behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity (Hab 1:13), he must have his sins forgiven. And the Bible way for sins to be forgiven is through faith, repentance, and baptism into the saving name of Jesus Christ.

### ***SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED***

It has been argued by some, that to say baptism is essential for salvation, is to detract from the sacrifice of Christ. It is to say that Christ's sacrifice alone cannot save, it requires something else for salvation to be obtained. To quote from one writer, Robert Hill: "it implies Christ's atonement was not sufficient for our salvation and that something else must be added to His death, burial and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins".

However, this argument overlooks the fact that baptism is a means of association with the sacrifice of Christ. Forgiveness is obtainable through Messiah's great offering, yet in order to obtain that forgiveness, certain things are required of men. Not as works by which they might

earn salvation, but as obedience to a Divine Command. For instance, faith is required for “without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb 11:6). Forgiveness of sins comes about through the atoning work of God in Christ, but a person must have faith in order to give pleasure to Yahweh. And a man of faith will be faithful to the things which He has Commanded - and one of those commandments is to be baptized. To suggest otherwise would be to suggest that a faithful man can choose whether or not he obeys the call to be associated with the sacrifice of Christ, and yet still be saved. To answer the above argument; association with the atoning offering of Christ is essential for salvation, the requirement for baptism does not so much mean that something else in addition to Messiah’s sacrifice is required; it means that this is the way of obtaining forgiveness through what he has achieved.

Others point to the example of Old Testament times, before John the Baptist began his ministry, to indicate that baptism is not essential. But what we have shown, is that Baptism is essential for identification with Christ *in this dispensation*. In previous ages, it was not so. The Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not baptized, yet they are heirs of the promises made to them. Israel in the wilderness were not baptized into Christ (although they were as a nation, “baptized unto Moses” (1 Cor 10:2)). Something else was required of them, for them to be identified with the coming Redeemer, namely the offering up of animal sacrifices. From the Fall, it had been required that men offer up animal sacrifices (Gen 4:4), which were but shadows of that Great Offering which was to be made by Yahweh’s only begotten Son (cp Heb 10:1). In Old Testament times, the offering up of Sin offerings, and

Trespass offerings were necessary to find forgiveness (Lev 4, 5-6), but in our dispensation such things are not required. Rather than to offer up animal sacrifices in anticipation of the offering up of Messiah, men today are required to offer themselves as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1), devoted to the Father. And it has so pleased the Father to ordain that baptism be the means, in this dispensation, for men to be associated with the atoning work of His Son, and thereby find forgiveness in His Sight.

### ***ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS?***

Several members, who have lost close relatives who were not baptized to hand of death, have intimated that perhaps God will make exceptions. He is gracious and merciful, and if it so pleases Him, He has the prerogative to grant salvation to those whom He chooses, whether they be baptized or not. So, they comfort themselves in the belief that perhaps the Father will be merciful, and will raise their beloved relatives to be in the Kingdom.

Though the sentiments are readily understandable, as a way of coping with the loss by retaining some hope, this really does go beyond what Scripture reveals to us. The Bible does not make that point. The Bible, as we have seen, demonstrates that we need to have our sins forgiven, or washed away, in order to be saved, and that in order to obtain this forgiveness, we need to be buried with Christ by baptism into death, that we might also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Those who choose not to be baptized, are choosing not to wash away their sins. The Scriptures, hard though it may be to accept (and the present writer has also lost a close, unbaptized relative to the grave), are clear that salvation is *conditional*, the conditions

being faith, repentance and baptism.

### ***THE THIEF ON THE CROSS***

Sometimes, the incident of the repentant thief, who was crucified with the Master is raised, to illustrate that a man does not need to be baptised in order to be saved. Here was a man who although he began by cursing the Master (Mat 27:44), he ended by giving an expression of trust and faith in him, and was promised a place in the Kingdom. “He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:42,43).

There are, however, a number of points that come out from this incident:

1. The Law of Moses was not done away with until the sacrifice of Christ had been accomplished. Animal sacrifices were still offered, pointing forward to His Offering and the dispensation for baptism only as a means of identification with Christ had not yet begun.
2. We are not told that this man had not been baptised—it is an assumption. In fact, in his recognition of how Christ was going to be raised from the dead, to come into a kingdom at some future point, he showed a rare understanding into the mission of Christ. It is quite possible that he had been baptised, and had fallen away into a life of sin—but confronted with the consequences of his actions, and the sinlessness of Messiah, who was crucified alongside him, he repented and sought forgiveness.

3. Even if it could be demonstrated that the thief was not baptised (which it cannot), it must be recognised that he did literally what others do symbolically in baptism. He literally died with Christ; he was literally associated with the sacrifice of Christ, whereas in baptism these things are done in symbol. His circumstance was therefore unique—and does not compare with those of our day who, for whatever reason choose not to be baptised.

It is clear from the foregoing therefore, that in this dispensation, it has so pleased Yahweh to command men to be baptised, to wash away their sins, and share the likeness of His Son’s death, that they might also share the likeness of his resurrection. Not that there is anything magical, or special about the act—it is merely taking a cold bath. But that rather it is an act of obedience to the Gospel, and is representative of a believer’s resolve to crucify the flesh, and walk with newness of life in the sight of God.

The act itself is so simple, that it is surprising that there are those who refuse it, believing it to be unnecessary. But men do not change, and as Naaman initially refused the simple act of washing in the river Jordan to be cleansed of his leprosy (2 Kings 5), even so men today refuse the simple act of washing away their sins in the waters of baptism. But Naaman came to recognise that it was necessary for his cleansing and healing, and so it is our hope that we have provided sufficient evidence in this article for the reader to be convinced of the importance of Baptism. Reader’s comments are invited.

*Chris Maddocks*

## **WILL THERE BE ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN THE AGE TO COME?**

*(Based on a Bible Class given by the writer at  
Erith ecclesia on 11th March 2004)*

In some ways, this subject is a difficult one to address, for brethren tend to be entrenched in holding strongly held opinions one way or another. However, we must approach the Word with all the teachability of little children (cp Mark 10:15), implicitly accepting whatever it tells us. We must be prepared to cast aside any preconceived ideas we may have, to be corrected in our understanding by the Holy Writ. And as we shall see, the Bible speaks with great clarity on the matter in question; it leaves us in no doubt as to what form worship in the Age to Come will take.

For some, the suggestion that there will be a re-institution of Animal offerings in the coming Kingdom, undermines the sacrifice of Christ, for it is felt that his offering should be sufficient for all things, there no longer being a need for other sacrifices after his one great sacrifice. Indeed, there is much truth in this feeling, for the offering up of Messiah is the greatest offering that ever has been—or ever will be—made. His sacrifice was far superior to any of the sacrifices under the law, for the Mosaic system required the repeated offering up of many sacrifices, whereas Messiah accomplished all effects in his one great offering: “... nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now *once* in the end of the world hath he appeared to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*” (Heb 9:25-26). And again, “For such an high priest became us ... who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for *this he did once*, when he offered up himself” (Heb 7:27).

### ***THE PUTTING AWAY OF SIN***

According to the Apostle, cited above, the Master “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”. In actual fact, his offering is the *only* sacrifice by which sin could be put away. Under the Law of Moses, no offering could put away sin: “it is *not possible* that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb 10:4). The shed blood of animals could not take away sins. What that effectively means, is that under the law, when a man offered his animal for a Trespass offering, or a Sin offering, that animal was in itself utterly incapable of removing his sin. It was just “not possible” for the blood of that animal to take away his sins.

But how then, did those who lived under the first covenant find forgiveness? Why were sin-offerings and trespass offerings required of men, if they were powerless to make provision for the covering of their iniquities? The apostle is clear in teaching

that the putting away of sins committed under the Mosaic Law was effected by the sacrifice of Christ: “For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, *for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament*, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15). The Master then, died “for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament”. It is by his sacrifice that those who transgressed under the law, can find forgiveness. The offerings they made were powerless to save them, but they could find redemption through the work of Jesus Christ.

### ***THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW***

But what point was there then, in the sacrifices they were commanded to offer, if it was “not possible” for them to take away sin? The answer becomes clear, when we appreciate that the Law was a Schoolmaster, to lead the people to Christ. It was to teach them the principles of atonement, as a divinely-ordained instructor, that they might be led to the greater Prophet like unto Moses. That is the Apostle’s testimony: “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith . . .” (Gal 3:24).

Now here is an aspect of the Law not often thought about. It was to bring people into a position whereby they might be justified by faith—in Christ. The Law itself witnessed to the principle of justification by faith (Rom 3:21,22), for those who desired to find forgiveness under it had to look forward in faith to the coming of Messiah, as the lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. A man would offer his sin offering, or his trespass offering in faith that through a greater sacrifice of Yahweh’s providing, forgiveness might be found. Not that they understood all the details—they could not, for the mystery of the Gospel had not yet been revealed (cp 1 Cor 2:7-10), as it was later made known through the apostles and New Testament prophets (Eph 3:5). But nevertheless, through the promises made to Abraham, and the principles of the Law, men would be able to look forward in faith, to the coming of Messiah, who would take away their sins by the offering up of himself.

This is a fundamentally important point to recognise then, when we consider sacrifice in Scripture. No other offering, save that of Messiah, was efficacious for the putting away of sin. All the sacrifices under the Law were but shadows (Heb 10:1), giving a basic outline of the sacrifice of Christ. Their virtue was not in any ability to save, but in their ability to instruct the offerer that there would be a future sacrifice of Yahweh’s providing, who would take away the sin of the world. The vital point to understand, is that it is by Messiah’s offering alone, that forgiveness ever has been, or ever will be obtained, and not through any animal offerings.

### ***SACRIFICES TO COME***

What then, do the oracles of God teach us concerning sacrifices to come? Scripture is explicit in stating that sacrifices *will* be re-instituted in the kingdom. Consider the

following testimony of Jeremiah concerning the future:

“Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, YAHWEH-TSIDKENU (Yahweh our righteousness)”.

So much is familiar to us; we readily and often use this passage in our preaching to describe the Age to Come. But the passage continues:

“For thus saith Yahweh; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; **neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually** . . . Thus saith Yahweh; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; *then may also my covenant be broken* with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers” (Jer 33:14-21).

So then, Yahweh has made a covenant concerning the kings and priests of the Age to come. A covenant which is as certain as Yahweh’s covenant with day and night—a covenant which can only be broken if man can prevent day and night from occurring. This is a certain covenant, which states that the priests, the Levites shall never want a man to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. There can be no doubt therefore; sacrifices will be made by Yahweh’s priests in the Age to come - Yahweh has made a covenant that it will be so, a covenant which cannot be broken so long as there remains a day and a night in their appointed seasons.

Another familiar passage that we often use to describe the coming Kingdom of glory is Isaiah chapter 56, which describes what form of worship will be accepted at that time:

“ . . . the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to Yahweh, to serve him, and to love the name of Yahweh, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: **their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar**; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people” (Is 56:6-7).

Here, we find that the sons of the stranger who join themselves to the Yahweh will offer acceptable sacrifice upon His altar. Notice this, the sons of the stranger—

Gentiles—offering up acceptable sacrifice before Him. Burnt offerings, and sacrifices will be a feature of Divine Worship, in that day when Yahweh’s house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

Again, Isaiah chapter 60 provides a further prophecy of the offering of Gentile Sacrifices in the Age when Christ will bear rule over all nations:

“all the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: *they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar*; and I will glorify the house of my glory” (Is 60:7).

Here, Arab territories are referred to; their offerings shall come up with acceptance upon Yahweh’s altar. There can be no doubt that the offering up of animal sacrifices will be a prominent feature of worship in the Age to Come.

### **YAHWEH’S ALTAR**

The last few passages we have considered, make reference to Yahweh’s Altar. This altar is described in considerable detail, in the 43rd chapter of Ezekiel’s prophecy. Again, this is a chapter which is familiar to us, as being something that relates to the future, with verses 4 –5 describing the return of Yahweh’s glory into the house of prayer for all nations, and verse 7 describing, “the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever”. This chapter gives the dimensions of the altar in verses 13-17, commencing: “and these are the measures of the altar after the cubits: the cubit is a cubit and an hand breadth; even the bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about shall be a span: and this shall be the higher place of the altar ...”.

But the presence of an altar generally implies the presence of sacrifice (Josh 22:10 excepted), and we have already considered some of the offerings that will be made. The chapter continues to describe other sacrifices, used in the purification of the Altar:

“and he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith Adonai Yahweh; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, *to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon*. And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith Adonai Yahweh, *a young bullock for a sin offering*. And thou shalt take of *the blood* thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about; thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it. Thou shalt take *the bullock also of the sin offering*, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary” (Eze 43:15-21).

## LITERAL ANIMAL OFFERINGS

These verses plainly show that there will be literal animal sacrifices offered in that day. Regarding the other references we have cited, it might be argued (and has been argued) that the sacrifices are *spiritual* sacrifices, not literal animals. The New Testament tells us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1), so maybe that is what is being referred to here; not the offering up of poor defenceless animals, but people dedicating themselves to the Lord.

However, Ezekiel 43 precludes any such application, for this chapter even tells us what will happen to the blood of the animal; it being placed upon the four horns and settle of the altar. The type of animal is named: a bullock, for a sin offering. And that bullock is to be burned in an appointed place, without the sanctuary. There can be no doubt, that what we are reading of here is the slaying and offering up of literal animals, in Sacrifice to the Deity in the Age to Come.

There are those who dispute the application of these prophecies to the coming age, on the basis of Ezekiel 43:11. They argue that the prophecy is a *conditional* one, that it's fulfilment was predicated upon the children of Israel repenting of their iniquities. They say that Israel did not repent, and that therefore these verses will not be fulfilled. Let us therefore, take a look at the passage in question:

“Thou, son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them” (Eze 43:10-11).

Now, notice first what these verses do *not* say. They do *not* state that the fulfilment of this prophecy would only come if the people repented. Those words just are not there. Such a statement is not made to Ezekiel. What the verses *do* say, is “If they be ashamed of all that they have done, *shew them* the form of the house . . .”. The verse is not about whether or not the things described will happen, rather it is about whether or not Israel would be *shown* those things in the first place. The distinction is important; we do not know how many of the people repented, and were ashamed of their sins; some of them may have been, and may have been shown the vision. Certainly for the most part they were not, and they therefore would not have been shown the vision—but that does not preclude the vision from being written down for later generations to see and consider. The objection cannot stand; the verse does not state what it is claimed to.

But in any case, we have proven (irrefutably, we believe), that sacrifices will be an integral part of acceptable worship in the Age to Come from passages outside of this

prophecy of Ezekiel. This means that even if the objection was a valid one, it would in itself have little bearing on our main argument, for we can prove our case without reference to Ezekiel.

The argument, however, does not stand, and so we can look to Ezekiel for more details concerning the subject. There will be sacrifices in the Age to Come, and Ezekiel describes them for us; Burnt offerings (43:8, 27; 44:11; 45:17, 25; 46:4), Sin offerings (43:19, 21, 22, 25; 44:27, 29; 45:17, 19, 21-25), Peace offerings (43:27; 45:17), Meat offerings (44:29; 45:17, 25; 46:5,7), Trespass offerings (44:29) and Drink offerings (45:17), are all referred to as being re-instituted in the age to come.

The existence of animal offerings in the kingdom can also be seen from two of the feasts which will be kept at that time; the Passover, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

### ***THE PASSOVER***

We read of the Millennial Passover in Ezekiel 45:21-25:

“In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days, unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince prepare *for himself and for all the people of the land* a bullock for a sin offering . . .”.

Here, the Passover differs from that kept under the Mosaic institution, for it also combines principles from the Day of Atonement. Instead of a Passover Lamb, there is a bullock for a sin offering, which is offered for the Prince himself, and for “all the people of the land”. Notice this, the Passover in the kingdom age is not kept by all nations, but only by the Prince and all the people of the land. The Passover, being originally designed to memorialise the redemption of the children of Israel from the oppression of Egypt (Ex 12), will be a most fitting mode of celebration to memorialise Israel’s redemption from the Gogian oppressor, and their return to the land from captivity at that time. So it will be a great day of national rejoicing, as a great deliverance will be brought to mind from year to year. Truly in that day, “it shall no more be said, Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but Yahweh liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them” (Jer 16:14-15).

### ***THE PRINCE—OFFERING FOR HIMSELF***

In the Millennial Passover feast, the Prince is depicted as offering for himself, as well as for the people of the land. From this, it is concluded by some, that the Prince must be a mortal man, and cannot be Messiah. However, this would present an insoluble difficulty, for here, the Prince performs the role of a high priest in offering Sacrifice, and if he is not Messiah, it would present a situation of there being two High Priests in the Kingdom, the Prince and the Messiah—an untenable proposition. The

difficulty is immediately removed, however, once we recognise the Master's own involvement in his own sacrifice. It is true that he needed no sacrifice for transgressions, for clearly, he never transgressed. But he was born with a physical nature which was under condemnation (Rom 6:18), because of the impulses of sin that resided in it (cp Rom 7:17; 8:3). And it was through his Sacrifice that he redeemed himself (Heb 9:12 note: the sense of: "for us" is not expressed in the Greek text here), from the condemnation of that nature, that he might rise from the dead. This is the point—the Master had to redeem himself from the curse of his own nature, in order that he could redeem us from ours. Only when the root cause of transgression was condemned in him by his sacrifice, could the way be made open for our forgiveness. And so, God having "condemned sin in the flesh" of Christ (Rom 8:3) - the "law of sin" which physically dwelt in him (cp Rom 7:23) - he was given immortality, thus providing a foundation for the forgiveness and redemption of others. How wonderfully appropriate it will be, therefore, that in the Age to come, "the Prince" will not simply offer sacrifices for others, in a detached manner of indifference, but with a personal participation and involvement with them. Having been "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb 4:15), he will offer for himself to memorialise his own redemption from those infirmities, and his victory over the *diabolos*, or "sin in the flesh" (Heb 2:14, Rom 8:3), the victory by which both he, and those he came to save might be granted Eternal Life. Thus, the keeping of the Passover will memorialise the principles of redemption in Christ Jesus, from both the oppressor of Israel, and also from the greater enemy, Sin.

### ***THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES***

Although it will appear that the nations of the world as a whole will be exempt from the Passover celebrations, it will be a requirement that they attend Jerusalem annually to keep the Feast of Tabernacles: "it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech 14:16). The verses which follow describe the punishment upon those who refuse to comply: "they shall have no rain", or in the case of Egypt, "there shall be the plague". This threatened withholding of rain gives an indication to the purpose of the feast, which is essentially to demonstrate utter dependence upon the Elohim of Israel for all things.

It is not possible to keep the Feast of Tabernacles without the offering of Animal Sacrifice, for under the law it was commanded:

"the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Yahweh. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days *ye shall offer an offering* made by fire unto Yahweh; on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and *ye shall offer an offering* made by fire unto Yahweh: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein" (Lev 23:36).

For eight days, then, offerings “made by fire” were to be presented before Yahweh, with the first and eighth days being days of rest to the nation. The observance of this feast also involved dwelling in booths, temporary structures constructed from “the boughs of the goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook”. “Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: *that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Yahweh your Elohim*” (Lev 23:42-43). So it is, that whatever other lessons can be drawn from this feast—and there are many—it’s central object was to serve as a yearly reminder of how the Israelites were strangers and sojourners, dwelling in booths, under the Divine supervision and protection as they left Egypt to go into the land of promise. How fitting it will be therefore, that all peoples in the Millennial Age, having left their respective countries to travel to that same land, shall also be taught the same principle—reliance upon Israel’s God for all things—and that those who refuse to comply will learn the lesson the hard way, in the withholding of the Lord’s blessing of rain, until they relent.

But there is another significant point; the feast of Tabernacles coincided with the final ingathering of the harvest: “Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, *when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto Yahweh seven days ...*” (Lev 23:39). And as such, it typifies the final ingathering of peoples at the end of the Millennium, the final resurrection and judgement, when the harvest of the world will be complete, and the situation prepared for the final stage, when Yahweh will be “all in all” (cp 1Cor 15:20-25). How appropriate then, that in earnest of this, all nations shall be gathered in to Jerusalem at the time of this annual event, to present themselves before the Great King, keep this feast, and so be taught in word and practice, of the time of their ultimate ingathering, and acceptance before Yahweh at the close of the thousand years.

### ***SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED***

We have seen then, that there are clear and unequivocal prophecies in Scripture, which state that the offering of animal Sacrifices will be an indispensable part of worship in the Age to Come. However, some do raise objection to these, and we bring our considerations to a conclusion by answering some of these objections:

1. There are no New Testament passages which state that animal sacrifices will be reinstated, and by contrast, there are New Testament passages which speak of the elements of the Law passing away.

It is true that the New Testament does not contain such prophecies as we have considered in the Old. However, both Old and New Testaments form the complete Inspired Word, and we would be wrong to reject the plain teaching of the Old Testament purely on the grounds that the same teaching is not repeated in the New

Testament. To reject future Animal Sacrifices on these grounds is not wise, for it would leave us with many passages of the Old Testament which would otherwise be inexplicable—we have considered some passages which cannot be explained in any other way than to be plainly stating that sacrifices will be offered.

In actual fact, the New Testament does not contradict the Old Testament; there is no passage in the New Testament which states that there will not be animal offerings in the Kingdom. When pressed, those who present this objection will be unable to produce a single such passage. However, it is true that there are plenty of passages which show that the Law of Moses was to pass away, being fulfilled in Christ, such as 2 Peter 3:7,10, a verse often used to show the point:

“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”

This is certainly depicting the dissolution of the Mosaic heavens and earth around the time of AD 70—however it does not preclude the coming of a new age, when certain aspects of the old will be reintroduced, in a modified form. Indeed, Isaiah predicts that this will happen, “I will create a new heavens and a new earth . . .” (Is 65:17). The Mosaic heavens and earth were to depart, but a new heavens and earth are to be re-instituted, with, as we have seen, animal sacrifices being a part of worship there. Finally, the above argument provides us with no answers as to what Jeremiah 33, Isaiah 56 & 60, and Ezekiel 43 actually do refer to, if not animal offerings.

2. The Sacrifice of Christ was a putting away of sin once for all, there is no need for any further offering up of animal sacrifices. To think of innocent animals having to suffer in the kingdom is not at all in harmony with what we imagine the kingdom to be like.

To address the second part of this objection first; what we may imagine the kingdom to be like may be different to what it will actually turn out to be. Our picture of the Kingdom must be founded upon the descriptions that Scripture furnishes us with; we have proved irrefutably that animal sacrifices will be a part of the kingdom, and so that should form part of our vision of the future. Part of the problem is that we live in a way that is so detached from the death of animals in an age when we purchase meat shrink wrapped from the supermarket. To speak of “innocent animals suffering” is a loaded, emotive term —animals have to die to provide us with the food which we eat (unless we are vegetarian). We don’t see that aspect, and so conveniently forget it when we enjoy our Sunday roast. But in the kingdom, animals will be slain for a far more noble purpose than to provide man with tasty food—it will be to glorify Yahweh, and provide a graphic picture of how the sacrifice of Christ is able to bring us forgiveness and life.

It is true that the Sacrifice of Christ was a putting away of sin—indeed as we have

shown, it was the only sacrifice by which sin could be put away. But that does not mean there will be no need for animal offerings in the future; we have seen that under the Law of Moses, the blood of bulls and goats was not designed to take away sin, but rather to teach about the atoning principles of the sacrifice of Christ. The Law of Moses was a divine institution devised to teach a nation; in the kingdom, there will be many nations who will all need to be taught. What better way then, to revive the old Schoolmaster—which was perfect for the job it was designed to do—on a global scale, to instruct the multitudes?

3. Animal offerings have not had to be made for two thousand years since the death of Christ—if they are so important, why don't we have to offer them?

The Law of Moses was designed to teach a nation; the laws of Christ are for individuals scattered amongst many nations. Here is the difference; the sacrifices were part of a national code, the laws of Christ are for individuals. It has pleased the Lord to command that his brethren memorialise his death through the acts of baptism, and breaking bread together in the period before his return. Of this simple feast of remembrance, the apostle wrote “for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death *till he come*” (1Cor 11:26), which implies that when he come, the memorial feast will have fulfilled its function, and will no longer be kept. A different memorial will be needed for national remembrance, and we have considered passages which do plainly state that sacrifices will be offered in that age. The above objection does not even attempt to offer an alternative explanation of those passages.

Such is the matter as it appears to us. We invite further comment from our readers.

*Chris Maddocks*

### ***MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS***

The subscriptions for *The Christadelphian Waymark* are now due with the current issue; we would be grateful if those who have not yet paid could do so as soon as possible, that the work be not hindered. The cost is £7.00 for a year’s subscription (6 issues), which literally covers the cost of production. Other costs are made up from donations, and in this regard, we would like to gratefully acknowledge the kindness of various brethren who have enclosed an additional amount in their subscription renewals. Provision has been made for any who cannot remit the requested amount, yet who would still like to subscribe.

We are now resuming the distribution of periodic exhortations by e-mail (free of charge); for those who wish to receive them, please send an e-mail to: [subscribe@christadelphian-waymark.org.uk](mailto:subscribe@christadelphian-waymark.org.uk). The magazine is also available as a free bi-monthly PDF file from the same address.

## WARNINGS TO THE SLUGGARD

From the beginning, it has been Yahweh's purpose for Man to be a creature of activity. Even before the fall, Adam was to be active, being given a task to which he was to diligently attend: "Yahweh Elohim took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden *to dress it and to keep it*" (Gen 2:15). That was his role and responsibility, to keep and dress the paradise in which he had been placed. The work would not have been arduous, or toilsome, but would have been a delight. It would have been a most enjoyable duty to tend to the things of Creation, but nevertheless it was a work which required activity. In the Purpose of the Father, Adam was required not merely to exist, but to *do something* that would bring pleasure to his Maker, and Eve, being an help suitable for him (Gen 2:18) was given to assist him in that work.

After the Fall however, great changes took place. Work became required, not simply as an enjoyable pastime, but as a necessary activity to provide the very basics of life: "*in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen 3:19). Work became arduous and toilsome; by the sweat of sustained effort would man eat bread, for being evicted from the Edenic paradise he was deprived of the luxury of being able to eat from any of the trees planted there for food. Having rejected the commandments of the Almighty, Adam was sentenced to a toilsome existence, having to exert much effort simply to obtain food to eat.

The sluggard, however, is one who desires to obtain his food with little, or no activity. He seeks to exert as little energy as possible in life, seeking to rely on the labours of others for his food. Rather than to eat bread in the sweat of his face, he prefers to take his ease, and hope that by some good fortune, he may continue an existence of indolence and enjoy himself reclining upon his bed. The sluggard has little regard for working in obedience to the Father, for it all seems too much effort for him. Proverbs chapter 6 gives an exhortation to such an one:

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Prov 6:8).

In these words, the sluggard is exhorted to consider the ant, an example in Creation of diligence and wisdom. And he is directed to a particular characteristic of the ant – the ability to provide food, both in summer and in harvest time. The ant is similarly referred to later on in the book of Proverbs: "the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer" (Prov 30:25). From these two testimonies, we learn that ants have no overseers, or rulers to keep chivvying them on in their work, lest they get slack in their duties. They are not a strong people – yet they can accomplish great things. They are able to sustain themselves, and make provision for themselves, to keep the whole community going. We can readily see a

parallel with ourselves in this regard. The brethren of Messiah are not a strong people in that sense. They are not among the mighty of this world, but are rather amongst the despised class of men who are in the minority. Nevertheless they hold the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. They have no guide, overseer or ruler appointed over them in this life; their only guide being the revealed Oracles of God. And they have a need to provide one another with spiritual food, culled from the Living Word, to build up and edify one another in love:

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Mat 24:45,46).

This passage speaks primarily of the spirit-gifted elders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, who were appointed to watch over the affairs of the ecclesias; nevertheless the import is relevant today. There is a need – as there ever has been – for men to feed themselves, and the Household of Faith, such as it stands, with the nourishing meat of the Word, lest the body become spiritually impoverished, and starve through lack of wholesome spiritual food.

Whereas the righteous are to be found seeking the communal good, feeding one another and building up one another, the sluggard is inherently selfish. He, lying upon his bed, rather than occupying his time in labour, considers only his own needs, and his own desires. Yet being unwilling to exert the effort required to obtain this world’s goods, he has nothing:

“The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat” (Prov 13:4).

“The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not” (Prov 21:25-26).

Lying in slothfulness, the sluggard occupies his time considering his own desires. He covets all the day long. But by contrast, the righteous spend their time considering the needs of others – giving and sparing not.

The Apostle Paul provides us with an example of one who was righteous, and who sought to provide for others, rather than to covet the goods of others. He was able to declare: “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:33-35). He sought no man’s goods, but rather he provided for the needs of others. Labouring, he was able to say that he provided for himself “*and to them that were with me*”. He lived out the teaching of Messiah, that it is more blessed to give than to receive; he was not a sluggard, but a diligent servant of the Master.

Proverbs chapter 11 shows that those who follow the pattern of Paul will be

blessed in their latter end: “The liberal soul (*Marg. “Heb. The soul of blessing”*) shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (Prov 11:25). Those who are liberal in their distribution of this world’s goods – those who seek to provide for others will, at the final end, receive blessing themselves. Their soul shall be made fat in the blessings that will abound in the Age to Come.

### ***EXCUSES OF THE SLUGGARD***

Men who are slothful will readily find a reason to justify their inactivity. “The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he begin harvest, and have nothing.” (Prov 20:4). It was hard work to plow the fields in ancient times, and the work was particularly uncomfortable in the coldness of winter. The toil was arduous and difficult. The sluggard will not stir himself in such a time; he would much rather remain by the fire at home, than to go out into the cold to work. But there is a lesson for us here. The work of the gospel is not always easy and pleasant. At times in life, it all seems to be so much of a chore. In the face of the prevailing winds of time and circumstance, it seems to be so much easier to leave the work to others; to do nothing, rather than to experience the rigours of working with our hand to the plough (cp Luke 9:62). But the Master requires us to be active in his service in all seasons: “be instant in season, out of season” (2 Tim 4:2) is the Apostle’s teaching. Unless we set our hand to the plough in the difficult circumstances of life, as well as in the good, in the day of the Great Harvest (Mat 13:30, 39), there will be nothing for us. There is a very real need for us to labour both in season,

when all is well, and out of season, when we would least like it, and when the sluggard takes his rest.

Another excuse is given in Proverbs 22:13: “The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets”. Here, as well as being inherently lazy, the slothful man lacks faith. In the Land, in ancient times, there certainly were wild beasts – there were dangers outside of the house. But rather than to courageously face up to the dangers, and go out to work regardless, trusting in Yahweh’s power to save, the sluggard uses this as a reason why not to work. Again, there are lessons to be drawn for ourselves. Do we shy away from preaching the Word, because of the dangers of being mocked, ridiculed, or even worse? The Apostle Paul did not shirk his responsibilities to preach, even though there were lions outside, lions which captured and threatened to slay him. Here was his confidence: “The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: *and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim 4:17-18).

Here, the Lion was the Roman authorities, which took hold of him, and placed him in the prison. Later, that same lion was to slay the Apostle – yet the dangers never discouraged him in the work. He continued the work appointed for him, trusting in Yahweh’s ability to save, knowing that at the last, he will be granted a place in the coming Kingdom of heaven.

## THE RUIN OF THE SLUGGARD

Solomon describes how he passed by the vineyard of the slothful:

“I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (Prov 24:30-34).

Solomon thus beheld the ruin of the sluggard. Being unable to stir himself to tend to his vineyard, he was not able to reap the fruits of his labour. The vineyard became ruinous; the wall designed to keep wild beasts out, became broken down. The picture, far from being one of prosperity, was one of ruin. Solomon saw, and considered it well. He was looking at the consequences of slothfulness and indolence.

Notice here, there is a gradual process of falling into slothfulness, all starting with a little extra sleep. A *little* sleep, a *little* slumber, a *little* folding of the hands to sleep, all accumulating to form a life of laziness. With a little came a little more, so that before the sluggard knew what was happening, his ruin had come upon him, like an armed man.

The writer to the Hebrews warns us

against slothfulness in the vineyard. He exhorts us not to permit thorns and briers to grow, but to diligently tend to the vineyard, so that fruits are brought forth:

“the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned” (Heb 6:7,8).

The blessings of Yahweh are bestowed abundantly; the rain falls upon all the land. But some land brings forth herbs useful to those who tend it; other land – neglected land – brings forth only thorns and briers. This is the field of the slothful. Its end is to be rejected, to be come a cursing, and to be burned.

But believers in Christ are not of such ilk. They rather show forth diligence in tending to one another, aiding one another in their various labours of life. So the apostle continues:

“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through

faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb 6:9-12).

Rather than to yield thorns and briars, we ought to show diligence in yielding the fruit of the Spirit, manifested in our labours for one another. We ought to minister to the saints, being not slothful, but followers of men of patience, such as Abraham, and others to whom the promise came. We must be found bringing forth herbs meet for the Master’s use, that we might receive blessing from God.

### ***THE LORD JESUS CHRIST***

We come to our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the antithesis of all that we have considered concerning the slothful. He was a man of diligence, and labour. Walking many miles during the day, preaching the gospel and healing the sick, he spent many a night in prayer to his Father. Being thus deprived of sleep, he continued his labours the next day. He was a diligent man, devoted to the doing of his Father’s will in all things. He did not leave the appointed work undone, but performed all the doing of it, so that he could declare before his Father: “I have glorified thee on the earth: *I have finished*

*the work* which thou gavest me to do” (Jno 17:4). And again, upon his expiration on the accursed tree: “it is finished” (Jno 19:30). Here was a man whose zeal for the things of the Spirit were such that he never succumbed to a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. His poverty never came, for he was raised up to glory, honour and immortality. He was raised up far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, both in this world and that to come (Eph 1:21). Here is the ultimate example for us to emulate.

Let us, therefore, lift up the hands that fall, and the knees that grow feeble, and run with patience, and vigour the race that is set before us, “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher 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 12:2). Let us consider the Master as an example of diligence and activity in doing His Father’s Will, that we might do likewise, and at the end, enter into the Rest promised to the elect from the foundation of the world (Heb 4:9).

*Chris Maddocks*

***“The heart is deceitful above all things.”  
“He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife.”***

A truly wise and great man will hide self behind the truth  
and exalt the truth to the glory of God before men.

A weak and little man will push self to the front  
and seek to make mankind think that the truth shines at its best through him.  
But, in the end, it is God who searches the heart of man.

Brother Welch

1894

## THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

When we come to consider the work of Messiah, particularly his becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil 2:8), we tend to do so from the point of view of what benefits might be obtained by ourselves from what he did. How we can find forgiveness in the sight of the Deity by association with the death of Messiah, and how we can look forward to the future in hope, knowing that he who raised up Messiah from the dead can also raise us up in the likeness of his resurrection. We tend to look at the Sacrifice of Christ from the point of view of human salvation, and human benefits.

However, the salvation of men is merely a means to a greater end. The Psalmist was moved by the Spirit to write:

“Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; **that** glory may dwell in our land” (Ps 85:9).

From this, we learn that Salvation is extended to men for a purpose – that Yahweh’s Glory may dwell in the land. Indeed it is the Father’s Revealed Purpose to fill all the earth with His Glory:

“As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh” (Num 14:21; Hab 2:14, cp Ps 72:19, Is 6:3).

It is the Father’s purpose to ultimately populate the earth (Is 45:18) with an innumerable multitude (Rev 7:9) of immortalised men and women, who are his children, being the children of the resurrection (Luke 20:36), each of whom is in his likeness and image (Ps 17:15; cp Rom 8:29 with Heb 1:3; see Col 3:10, 1Jno 3:2). Showing forth His glorious attributes in a state of sinlessness and deathlessness, this global, raised population shall fill all the earth with the glory of Yahweh – as we have seen, as the waters cover the sea. So it is, that the salvation of men is but a part of the process by which Yahweh will be glorified, and the earth transformed from its present state of corruption and wickedness into a habitation for the Deity among men (Rev 22:3).

That being so, when we turn our attention to the ministry of the Master, we find that it was his purpose to glorify Yahweh among men. He prayed at the end of his ministry: “*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*” (Jno 17:4). The work that was given to Messiah to do, therefore, was to glorify Yahweh upon the earth. This means that the miracles which the Master performed, were not mere humanitarian gestures, healing the sick solely for their own individual benefit, but were also designed to give glory to his Father. And this we see in the example before us: the raising of Lazarus from the grave.

John chapter 11 opens with a description of how Lazarus was mortally sick. His sisters, Mary and Martha sent a message to the Master “saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, **but for the glory of God**, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” (Jno 11:3-4). The sickness then, was not that Lazarus might die, but was for the glory of God, and that Christ might be glorified. And this we see in the raising of Lazarus by Christ, for when he had commanded that the stone covering his grave be removed, Messiah said to Martha, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest **see the glory of God?**” (Jno 11:40). The glory of God was declared in the death and resurrection of Lazarus, for it declared the power of the Almighty to save, and foreshadowed the greater events to come to pass in the death and resurrection of Messiah himself. It caused many to believe in Jesus, and was a powerful testimony to the fact that he had power, even over the grave itself.

### *MARY AND MARTHA*

Several highly interesting characters are involved in these events, most notably Lazarus of course, but also his two sisters, Mary and Martha. We first come across these women in the tenth chapter of Luke’s inspired narrative, where we find that the Master had been received into their house. Mary “sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:39-42).

Here, we find that both women are preoccupied with the Master, one hearing his word, the other serving him, presumably by way of preparing a meal for both him and his disciples to eat. Martha was serving alone, and seems to have become somewhat flustered by this, and desired of the Master that Mary be taken away from him, to help her. However, the Master placed things into their proper context. There are many things to be done in life, and Martha was troubled about them all; but only one thing is really “needful” - which is to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. Mary had chosen the “needful” thing which would not be taken away by her having to go and help her sister. Here, Mary is portrayed as being at the place of learning, at the feet of Jesus (cp Deut 33:3), being instructed by him, and therefore receiving spiritual food. Martha, on the other hand, although being moved by admirable motives in wanting to do her best for her Master, nevertheless had her attentions drawn away from what the Master might do for her by way of instructing her, to what she might do for him. Her focus had shifted, and needed to be brought back by the Master. She needed to be corrected, that she might be ministered unto by him, for his purpose was not to be ministered to by others, but to minister himself (Mark 10:45). The lesson for ourselves is clear: we must not become so distracted by the cares of this life that we neglect to hear the voice of Messiah. There is much to do in life; some things are needful, others are not. In fact, most are not, but that which is needful however busy and preoccupied we might

find ourselves, is to give ear to the word of Messiah. He alone can save, and the Gospel he spoke is the power of God unto salvation.

### ***LOVED OF THE LORD***

This family at Bethany were loved by the Master. There are very few people in Scripture concerning whom it is said that the Master loved, but here are some of them: “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus” (Jno 11:5). They were amongst the few in Israel who received him. For the most part, “his own received him not” (Jno 1:11), but here were a handful who delighted in his company, whom he himself had developed an affection for. He whom Jesus loved had fallen sick, and knowing of the miracles of healing that Jesus had performed in many parts of the land, Martha and Mary send to him: “Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick” (Jno 11:3). Concerning this, Bro John Carter writes: “The greatness of their friendship and trust in Jesus is seen in the simple message they sent to him. They make no request either that he should hasten to their home or exercise his power from where he was; it is enough that he be informed that the one whom he loved was sick. They were content with whatever action he chose to take” (*The Gospel of John*, p 128). Their trust in him was implicit, and in the end of the matter, was amply rewarded.

The Master, upon hearing this message did not rise to go to them, but took the rather unusual step of remaining where he was for another two days: “When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was” (Jno 11:6). What a trial this must have been for Jesus! He had the power to heal the one whom he loved, yet it was not yet the time to exercise that power. A greater miracle could be performed, and greater glory would be given to God, if his friend should die first, and be raised from the dead. This must have been a great trial indeed, to allow a loved one to die, in order that the power and glory of God could be shown later.

### ***AWAKENING OUT OF SLEEP***

The time came for the Master to go to Lazarus. He said to his disciples, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep” (Jno 11:11). The language here is taken from the prophecy of Daniel, and the 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter: “At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ... and many of them that **sleep** in the dust of the earth shall **awake** ...” (Dan 12:1,2). Here was Michael – the one “who is like El” coming to awaken one who slept in the dust of the earth. The miracle was to be an earnest of the Kingdom – a shadow of greater things to come, when Messiah shall come to raise others, even his brethren whom he loves, to life eternal.

The disciples, however, did not perceive this allusion to their Scriptures, thinking that he meant merely a taking of rest in sleep, in which case it would be good for Lazarus. The Master therefore presented the matter plainly to them: “Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us

go unto him” (Jno 11:15). The miracle was to be a sign not just to the unbelieving Jews, but to the disciples also, that their faith might be increased. They did not yet understand that Messiah himself had to suffer before he could enter into his glory, and the events concerning Lazarus would have helped to prepare them for his death and resurrection.

The Master, with his disciples following, went towards Bethany where Mary and Martha lived, and where “many of the Jews” had gone to comfort them concerning their brother. “Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat in the house” (Jno 11:20). Here, the events are most instructive to ourselves. Martha, literally as soon as she knew that the Master was on his way, went out to meet him, without stopping to tell anyone else, even her sister. Again, we have a similar reaction on Mary’s part, as soon as she knew Jesus was coming: “as soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him” (v 29). Both were ready to immediately go out to meet the Master, as soon as they knew he was near.

We are living in the age immediately prior to time when Messiah shall leave his place in a “far country”, having received for himself a kingdom, and come to raise his brethren from the dead. How will we respond in that great day, when the angelic voice announces to us that the Master is come? The seven wise virgins of Messiah’s parable were ready to immediately go out and meet him: “at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; *go ye out to meet him* . . . the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut” (Mat 25:6,10). Here is the outworking of faith in a lifetime of waiting. To be ready at all times for the Master’s coming is difficult – especially for those whose lives are cluttered with the cares and troubles of this life - but needful, for we know neither the day nor the hour of his appearing. May it be that in that day to come, we will be found ready to leave all behind, to go out and meet our Master, as did Martha and Mary.

Upon greeting their Master, both the sisters uttered the same words, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (vs 21, 32). Here was their confidence in his ability to save; that had he been present, their brother would have been healed. Martha however, expresses a greater confidence in the Master, that even at this late hour all is not lost: “but I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee” (Jno 11:22). The Master tested her with the words: “Thy brother shall rise again”. But what could this mean? Martha could hardly dare to presume to apply these words to the immediate circumstances. Her words in reply expressed a faithful anticipation for the future: “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day” (v 23, 24). He replied with words that could only strengthen her conviction: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (v 26). He was the Resurrection – and the life! Here was the life-giver of Israel, the One through whom life eternal might

come! Those who live and believe in him “shall never die in the age” (according to Bro Thomas’ rendering of the Greek). Lazarus believed in him, so there was still hope for Lazarus! Did Martha believe this concerning the Master? “She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (v 27).

### *A CONFESSION OF FAITH*

Martha declared the Master to be “the Christ, the Son of God”. On another occasion, the Master asked his disciples to declare who they believed him to be. “Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Mat 16:16, 17). Flesh and blood cannot of itself reveal anything of the Spirit to any man, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). Knowledge of such things must come from above, revealed by the Father through inspiration, direct instruction of the Son, or as in our case, through the Spirit-Word. Simon was especially blessed for his recognition of who Messiah actually was; and here we find Martha giving the same confession of her faith in him. She knew that Jesus was he of whom the prophets wrote, the Son of the Living God; and although she dared not presume that her present wish for her brother would be granted, she trusted in him that Lazarus would rise again at the last day. What a remarkable understanding she had!

Her sister, Mary, also showed a depth of understanding in the Master. The record informs us that she was “that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick” (Jno 11:2). She anointed the Master against the day of his burying (Jno 12:7), showing a most remarkable understanding that the Master himself must suffer before he could enter into his glory. Not even the disciples understood this – what a remarkable family this was who dwelt at Bethany! No wonder the Master loved them!

The Master went to the tomb, beholding the weeping of Mary, and of the Jews who accompanied her. Then we have the shortest, yet perhaps the most poignant verse of the Bible: “Jesus wept”. “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities . . .” (Heb 4:15), and here we behold the feelings of the Son of Man. The Master wept. But why? After all, he knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the grave again – why was it a time of sorrow for him? Perhaps it was that in Lazarus, he saw represented the dead state of the nation; that though he had power to revive it, and bring breath back into it’s carcass (Mat 24:28), the Jews were too hard-hearted to accept him. Perhaps it was the hypocrisy of those who wept with Mary, yet who were to rejoice at his own death. Perhaps it was that in the death of Lazarus, he saw his own death foreshadowed. Perhaps it was also his sharing the feelings of human infirmities, those whom he loved weeping at the loss of a loved one (Rom 12:15). Being touched with the feeling of human infirmities, the Master wept at the graveside of his friend.

Lazarus' body had been placed in a cave, with a stone lying over the entrance of it (Jno 11:38), which reminds us of the Master's own tomb. The Master, having come to the tomb, gave the command for the stone to be removed. Martha, however, said to him, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days" (v 39). Again, we see her becoming concerned with the practicalities of things, being over worried at natural things. The Master gently reminded her of their previous conversation when she had met him: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (v 40). Her seeing the glory of God was predicated upon her belief. It would only be so, if she *believed*. She was strong in faith, as the stone was removed. The Master lifted up his eyes, and prayed to his Father: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" (v 42). His purpose was that the Father be glorified, not he. This is why he made this prayer, that those standing by would know that the resurrection was by the power of the Father, who had heard the voice of His Son (cp 11:22). "And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (v 43, 44).

Notice the parallels and contrasts with the Master's own death and resurrection, which we come together each week to remember in the bread and in the wine. The stone was rolled away, that the resurrected Lazarus could come out. Even so was the stone removed in the Master's case – albeit by angelic hand. Contrary to Martha's expectation, the body of Lazarus had not seen corruption: it had been perfectly preserved for four days in anticipation of this miracle. Even so, the body of Jesus saw no corruption (Acts 13:35-37) for the three days it lay awaiting revival. But Lazarus came out of the grave still wearing the bands of death – the graveclothes. He was still mortal, was still going to die at some point in the future. Whereas when the Master emerged from the grave, he did so to return there no more – he had achieved the victory over death, and so the graveclothes were folded up and left behind (Jno 20:6,7). The bands of death were loosed, for he could not be holden of the grave. He emerged to be given immortality, as being the firstfruits of them that slept. He is the resurrection, and the life.

We come then, to focus our attention upon our Master, as emblemised in the bread and in the wine. We have seen the depth of faith that both Mary and Martha had, a faith that was able to bring their brother back to life, for they both believed, and saw the glory of God. Yahweh was glorified in Lazarus' death and resurrection, for through it; many came to believe in Messiah. In this seventh 'sign' of John's Gospel, we have a declaration that Jesus is the keyholder of the grave (Rev 1:18); he has the power to resurrect those whom he chooses. And we look forward with great faith in him – with the faith of Martha, that he is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He is our hope and our salvation, and though we may yet descend into the dust of the ground before he comes, we will but sleep, awaiting the time of awakening at his appearing.

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