

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

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN WAYMARK

Volume 5

Issue 5

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

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

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

Pray Without Ceasing

(From a Sunday Exhortation given by Bro Wayne Marshall
at Sedgley on 25/09/2005)

We have come once again, brethren and sisters, to remember our Heavenly Father's loving care as exhibited in the emblems before us upon the table. Our fellowship together in **remembrance** is not only of our Heavenly Fathers and our beloved Master's sacrifice, but also of **their continuing loving care** manifested in each of our lives daily. To this end we read these words in: Luke Chapter 18 and at verses 1 – 8:

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

The Master's parable here stresses the need for us to be men and women of **prayer**. Alongside our study of the word of life, prayer is our other primary weapon in our arsenal to fight the good fight of faith, so that we might bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ and thereby escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The ability to handle the word is one of two key signs of spiritual maturity in Christ, the other is of course is **our personal prayers** and of the two, prayer is undoubtedly the most difficult, is it not? Now if we are brutally honest, prayer does not come easily to any of us, yet we might not think so when we hear brethren give beautiful crafted and heartfelt prayers at meetings such as this.

The Master's exhortation here and its surrounding parable is, when examined, full of powerful guidance with regards to our personal prayers.

Also more importantly the words of our beloved Master here provide great incentive and encouragement for us to **overcome our difficulties** in approaching the throne of **grace** in prayer. For although the stress in this parable is upon our need for continual prayer, two reasons are given and are rooted **firstly** in our need and **secondly** and more importantly in the character of our Heavenly Father.

Life today with all its speed, attractions and distractions makes it difficult for us to give proper place and time to prayer. Hence the Master's exhortation that: *"men ought always to pray"*.

The word *"ought"* here means that prayer *"is absolutely necessary for our salvation, having been decreed so by our Heavenly Father"*.

We can see the sense in this when we read the rest of the verse *"that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."* To *"faint"* is to be *"utterly spiritless, being completely exhausted"*.

Indeed we read in Luke Chapter 22 and at verses 39 and 40

"And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed."

This exhortation to these three exhausted disciples is repeated in verses 45 and 46:

"And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Notice two things with regards to this incident; **firstly** the Master himself practiced what he preached, for he was praying that he would not either faint or

fall to temptation. **Secondly** Peter was one of those three disciples specifically exhorted and yet, shortly thereafter he succumbed to temptation in denying his Lord. Thankfully the Master we read earlier prayed for Peter:

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Lu. 22:31-22)

These examples reinforce the Master's lesson here that we *"ought always to pray"*, for prayer, like Bible study is a discipline that we each need to develop, if we are in faith to overcome and endure unto the end. Prayer then is a **necessary strengthening action** to our faith and also a means of **developing our love**, for as we read elsewhere our faith which, worketh (is energised) by love.

The parable speaks of a *"widow"* in verse 3, who is not named and as such, she is a beautifully fitting Type of Israel, who was married to our Heavenly Father. For this word *widow*, speaks of *"one bereft"* of her husband and of her comfort. This Greek word for *widow* also carries the idea of *"a gulf"*, and sadly there is still a gulf between them.

In Isaiah Chapter 54 and at verses 4 – 8 we read:

"Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the

shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; Yahweh of armies is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For Yahweh hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Yahweh thy Redeemer” (Is 54:4-8).

“I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

This widow was clearly not of the world, for as we read elsewhere, speaking of the class this poor widow represents. That *“if ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”*

The first question we need to ask ourselves, Brethren and Sisters is this – is there that gulf between us, as individuals and the world, so that it hateth us?

Yet Brethren and Sisters, this figure of the widow has a bearing upon each one of us, as individual virgins, which make up part of that great bride of spiritual Israel. Now as chaste virgins espoused to Christ, we are like this poor *widow*, without our bridegroom’s physical presence - but unlike this poor *widow*, we are not, without his comfort. For there should not be any gulf between our Beloved Master and ourselves.

Now in this 3rd verse we find the widow petitioning the judge that he *might* *“avenge me of mine adversary.”* From this we can gain exhortation concerning the very content of our prayers. This widow earnestly requests **justice**, because of some **adversary** that is not named.

This *widow* appears to be a native of this city, yet at the same time, because of her status there is a great gulf, between her and the cities other inhabitants. We too, brethren and sisters, were natives of this land, but having changed our status at baptism in joining ourselves to Christ, we too find a great gulf between ourselves and the inhabitants of the land we sojourn in.

We too have such an **adversary** - namely in the **first** instance, our flesh - with its carnal mind, that *“is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* **Secondly** we have another adversary in the form of the flesh socially and politically manifested in this evil age in, which is described elsewhere as, *“the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”* These two opponents ought to cause us to be like righteous Lot:

In John chapter 17 and at verses 15 & 16, we read:

“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an

overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) **The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished**" (2 Peter 2:6-9).

We too live in such an evil age and we likewise need to be vexed with the wickedness that surrounds us on every side day by day. No wonder **verse 7** speaks of this widow class "*crying day and night unto him*".

Lot is described in those verses as "*just*". Now this word does not speak only of his moral uprightness, but more importantly of his standing in the eyes of Yahweh our God. Lot was **vexed**, we read, with the wickedness that surrounded him and the first word for **vexed** means "*to be afflicted and to be oppressed with evils, so as to be exhausted and worn out with it*". Are we not back, to the point of where we started in **verse 1** "*men ought always to pray, and not to faint*"?

Now this word "*vexed*" in the Greek, is a present passive participle, meaning that this is something which our Heavenly Father has brought into our life through the effect of the word of life upon us. We are being taught here that Lot's reaction was "*just*" and fitting for the trial he was in and this is undoubtedly true of this poor widow in Luke chapter 18.

But Brethen and sisters, are we so vexed by the wickedness around us? And if so is our reaction to it like that of this poor widow and righteous Lot?

This example of just Lot fleshed out for us that **secondary** sense of our adversary namely the evil age we live in and its pernicious influences. Yet, Lot can also illustrate for us that **first** sense of our own adversary, namely our defiled nature that drags us down into sin.

For in that passage we read from 2nd Peter chapter 2, we actually have two different words for **vexed**. We have already examined the first use, but the **second** word means "*to torment and torture with grievous pains (of body or mind)*". Here we see Lot spiritually racked with the problems of how to maintain his faith, because of **firstly** his own weakness, particularly his ill judgement in settling in Sodom and **secondly** with the constant temptations surrounding him. Again this in the Greek is a present passive participle, meaning that this is something, which our Heavenly Father has brought into our life through the effect of the word of life upon us.

In Romans Chapter 8 and at verse 23, we read:

"Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

No doubt Lot and this widow felt like this, but the question for us is:

Do we find ourselves so groaning and longing for our redemption from these vile bodies?

Thus these two vexations of spirit present part of the work of our Heavenly Father's providence in our lives, to stop us becoming comfortable with this wicked age and to keep our minds focused upon spiritual things and of our hope of the kingdom.

Our prayers then, are to contain outpourings to our Heavenly Father concerning these two vexations of our spirits as we grapple to keep our selves unspotted from the world.

From the example of faithful Lot, we can now much more easily understand why the poor widow's prayer in the parable is "*avenge me of mine adversary*" in **verse 3**. Now this word "*avenge*" means, "*to be protected and defended, to have one's self vindicated before another*".

In Revelation Chapter 3 and at verses 9–11 we read:

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Did you notice this widow class finding vindication before their enemies in that wonderful day, when Yahweh shall manifest his righteousness in the earth through his Beloved Son, even the Lord Jesus Christ?

Brethren and sisters, this **avenging** that the widow cries day & night for - let us not misunderstand what it is. For this call for justice is not some fleshly reaction to her adversary's torment, but rather, it is a fervent desire to see the righteous rule of Almighty God in the earth. It is above all a desire to see our Heavenly Father vindicated. That is why they call continually goes out: "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*"

"Our prayers are to contain outpourings to our Heavenly Father as we grapple to keep ourselves unspotted from the world"

Thankfully we have the following assurance recorded for us in Revelation Chapter 19 and at verse 2

"For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and **hath avenged** the blood of his servants at her hand."

Now this word "*avenge*" in this 3rd verse of Luke chapter 18, in the Greek is an Aorist active imperative. In other words it is an ongoing continuous command given to the Almighty to act and this widow class prays such day and night until our Heavenly Father, so acts to vindicate his righteousness and holiness.

Brethren and sisters, you may say how can we command the Father to act? Well when we first examine

the use of the imperative command towards our Heavenly Father it strikes' us as the height of folly, bordering on blasphemy. Yet in reality it is a supreme act of faith, for only someone who truly believed would have the faith to invoke and implore such a strong summons upon the Deity.

Now normally anything in the imperative is a command, but when an inferior uses it to someone greater, as it is here, it becomes the **strongest request possible**. The use of the imperative here also stresses the immediate need of the request within the prayer for this poor widow.

Our prayers then, are to contain the same strong outpourings to our Heavenly Father concerning our desire for Him to fulfil those great and precious promises contained in his word.

“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Ps. 50:15).

The manifestation of such faith through this strong imploring glorifies our Heavenly Father - that is why such fervent prayers are not blasphemous. Our prayers my dear Brethren and Sisters, are to be emotional, powerful and full of the deepest outpourings of our hearts. Indeed do we not read of our Beloved Lord:

“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7).

In **verse 5** we learn that this widow brought her petition before the judge “*continually*”. The Greek word here means, “*to the end*”, in other words till her request was granted. Here, we are being exhorted to be persistent in our prayers. We see the sense of this in the following passage:

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of Yahweh, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Is. 62:6,7).

Indeed, such unceasing fervent prayers manifest our faith in:

- Manifesting a maturing understanding of the word (**the bread**), as is evidenced in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Manifesting a maturing outworking of the principles and practice of love for the things of God (**the wine**), as is evidenced in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ

In our opening remarks, we stated that the initial exhortation of the Master and its surrounding parable contained a number of powerful lessons giving guidance for our own personal prayers. Therefore in the spirit of this poor widow, let us emulate the Master in our personal prayer life to the glory of our Heavenly Father.

We also stated that the words of the Eternal Spirit through the Master provide

great incentive and encouragement for us **to overcome our difficulties** in approaching the throne of **grace** in prayer. For although the stress in this parable is upon our need for continual prayer, the two reasons for this are given and are rooted **firstly** in our need and **secondly** and more importantly in the character of our Heavenly Father.

We have looked at the **first** of those reasons of encouragement to pray, being **our own individual need**. Now let us, as we come towards the end of this parable, begin to concentrate our minds upon the incentive and encouragement given here for us to overcome those difficulties in prayer.

In order to do this, we need to consider our **second** reason that for that encouragement, which is rooted in the character of our Heavenly Father. In verses 7 and 8 we read

“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? **I tell you that he will avenge them speedily**. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

It is my firm conviction Brethren and Sisters, that most of our problems and our anxieties concerning our walk in the truth and even the events of our everyday lives would cease, if each one of us **had and would develop a deeper knowledge of the person of our Heavenly Father and also of our beloved Master**. Indeed if such a knowledge was also clearly communicated within the ecclesia then our ecclesial problems would be likewise greatly minimised.

These words of the Eternal Spirit here

through our Lord powerfully contrast the standard of human judgement with that of the divine standard. Likewise we have the same form of contrast in the character of the unjust judge with that of our Holy and Righteous Heavenly Father, who is the **judge of the widows**.

Brethren and sisters, when we read carefully the language of that 7th verse, we see the desire of our Heavenly Father towards this poor widow class. For they are spoken of as being “*his own elect*”, thus they are his personal, chosen, called out special treasure - and as such he is zealous over them. We see then quite clearly that our Heavenly Father is for his people and if God be for us, who can be against us?

Thus as we have already seen Yahweh the great God of Israel will avenge his people - but in his own time! This undoubtedly is one of the hardest lessons we have to learn concerning prayer, that the Father in his wisdom may seemingly delay his response to fulfill his multiple purposes, often for our own initial and eternal good.

Here we have another lesson concerning our willingness to wait for an answer to our prayers in faith, accepting our Heavenly Father’s good time to answer us in his love.

It is also likely that in the apparent delay the action and focus of our faith towards the Father in prayer has a greater strengthening effect upon our faith, than if our loving Father acted immediately. This seems to be the case when we examine the rest of this 7th verse.

Thus this widow class **cry**, as they implore the Almighty for aid, “*day and*

night". Now in the Greek this word "cry" is a present active participle, so it is actually an ongoing principle of daily life that the elect should live by. So in doing the Father purposes, each of them is moved forward, as they move away from the fleshly instinct to want to be independent and in charge of our own destiny, to being dependent upon Him and his strength in Christ.

In 1st Peter chapter 5 and at verses 6 & 7, we read:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

Brethren and sisters, let us never mistake any apparent delay in our Heavenly Father's response to our urgent prayers, as a lack of care. For this 7th verse continues "though he bear long with them" The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish - let us therefore account that the longsuffering of our Lord is to our salvation.

The phrase "bear long" means, "to be patient, to be longsuffering and to not lose heart". Did you notice that our Heavenly Father does not lose heart with us, as he patiently awaits our development of our faith, our love and our characters in Christ? Now this phrase "bear long" in the Greek this is a present active participle, so it is actually an ongoing principle of daily life that our Heavenly Father lives by.

In James Chapter 5 and at verse 7 we read:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

Thus the tormenting trial of this poor widow's adversary is actually working out to the salvation of her; such is the beauty of our Heavenly Fathers sovereignty and omniscience.

Thus as, this widow class is exercised by the great trials in their lives, it is yielding the peaceable fruit of righteousness in them to the glory of our Heavenly Father. No wonder B & S that we read the divine husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it.

Brethren and Sisters, we clearly can see the tremendous care of our Heavenly Father towards this poor widow and all those she represents. Thus the Master ends this parable with firstly the declaration that they will be vindicated and when that vindication comes, it will be swiftly.

In Romans chapter 16 and verse 20 where we have this same word

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

The exhortation to each and everyone of us B & S is that, just as our Heavenly Father does not lose heart with us, we likewise should maintain our faith and not lose heart in him and his purpose in Christ with us.

Then finally we have this chilling warning from the Master in the form of a question:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

This question here functions like the word “*selah*” does in the psalms, to get us to pause and consider our own individual practices before our God, particularly with regard to our prayers. This question also works to let the Master’s point being made sink in to our hearts and minds.

For as our Beloved Master in this parable powerfully portrays the character of our God is always for us and we see here the depth of the Almighty’s loving care towards his own elect. Then our reflection upon such wonderful thoughts ought to banish our difficulties with prayer B & S, particularly with regards to our own sinfulness.

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:33,34).

My beloved Brethren and Sisters, the Master himself has passed into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of

God for us and by the blood of Jesus we now have access by faith into the holiest.

*“Therefore being **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have **access by faith** into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts”* (Rom. 5:1-5).

Let us resolve then to put into practice the exhortation of the Master and pray without ceasing B & S **that we faint not**. Let us then come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Now as we begin to focus our minds upon the emblems before us on the table, Brethren and Sisters, let us see clearly **the bread**, which speaks here of “*the love of God*” in Christ, expressed in his word. Likewise with **the wine**, which speaks of the outworking of that word in a life poured out, **firstly** in the Master’s sacrifice and **secondly** in his ongoing High Priestly intercession on our behalf to our eternal well-being and ultimately our Heavenly Father’s glory.

Wayne Marshall

When a man is deeply and continuously engaged in an atmosphere of Divine thoughts, he has neither the time nor the inclination to plot mischief and play the fool. this is the vocation of vacant minds and idle hands, who know not what it is to enter within the veil.

John Thomas

The BASF – It’s Importance and Teaching

– Clause 25:

“That the unfaithful will be consigned to shame and ‘the second death’, and the faithful, invested with immortality, and exalted to reign with Jesus as joint heirs of the kingdom, co-possessors of the earth, and joint administrators of God’s authority among men in everything. - *Matthew 7:21; 8:12; 25:31-46; Daniel 12:2; Galatians 1:8; 5:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10; Hebrews 10:26-29; 2 Peter 2:12; Revelation 21:8; Malachi 4:1; Psalm 37:29-38; Proverbs 10:25-30; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; James 1:12; Romans 2:7; John 10:28; Matthew 5:5; Psalm 37:9,22,29; Revelation 5:9; Daniel 7:27; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 3:21; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; Psalm 49:7-9; Luke 22:29,30*

In our considerations of Clause 24, we saw how the “responsible,” that is, those who are considered accountable to judgment by Christ, are those “who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it”. They shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give account of themselves and to be rewarded according to their deeds (Rom. 14:10; 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10). Clause 25 now brings our attention to the consequences of that judgment; either blessedness for the accepted, or cursing to the rejected.

THE UNFAITHFUL

“The unfaithful will be consigned to shame and ‘the second death’”. The allusion here, is to two passages of Scripture, which we shall consider in turn; the first being Daniel chapter 12:

“... many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some *to shame* and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever”

Of those who emerge from the dusty beds where they have lain for perhaps thousands of years, there will be those who rise to shame and contempt. The word for “shame” is used 72 times in Scripture, including Isaiah 47:3, where it is used for the shame experienced at being stripped naked: “Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, *thy shame* shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.”

The rejected are those who sought to enter into the marriage supper wearing the incorrect attire (Mat. 22:11,12). That is to say, they were not clothed with garments of righteousness, but rather garments spotted by the flesh. These shall experience great shame, as their sinfulness becomes exposed for all to see. Here is the warning of Messiah: “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his

garments, *lest he walk naked, and they see his shame*” (Rev. 16:15). We must take heed to these words whilst time remains, that we might be ready for our Master when he comes.

The second passage being alluded to in the BASF (“the second death”) is Revelation chapter 21:

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: *which is the second death*” (Rev. 21:8).

In the lake of fire portrayed here, we have a symbol of total destruction. The closest thing in nature to a lake of fire, is the larva which flows from a volcano, destroying everything in its path. Here is utter annihilation, into which all forms of ungodliness shall eventually descend. It is styled the *second death*, for those cast into it have already died once before. They have been raised from death to appear before Messiah that their deeds might be made manifest, and they are to be severed from the company of the just ones (Mat. 13:49), and cast into the apocalyptic lake of fire (cp Heb 10:27), to utterly perish (2 Pet. 2:12) in the terrible judgments which are coming upon the earth.

THE RIGHTEOUS

But concerning the righteous, it is written that the second death shall have no power over them:

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias, He that overcometh *shall not be hurt of the second death*” (Rev. 2:11).

Being raised and approved by their Master, they shall be granted Immortality, that they might die no more. The second death shall not hurt them; rather their mortal bodies shall be made like unto the most glorious body of their Elder Brother (Phil. 3:21), and they, being united with him, shall continue as “one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17) throughout the ages to come. “We shall all be changed”, testified the Apostle Paul, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52). And the Apostle John likewise: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jno 3:2; cp Ps. 17:15). Being conformed to the Image of Yahweh’s Son, they shall inherit the glory prepared for them from the foundation of the earth.

The faithful are described by the BASF as being: “joint heirs of the kingdom, co-possessors of the earth, and joint administrators of God’s authority among men in everything”. They are “joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17), for they have been

baptised into Christ, and therefore “heirs according to the promise” made to Abraham (Gal. 3:29). The principle enshrined within all the many promises made to Abraham was that he should be the “heir of the world”. And that promise is not something that can be earned, like wages can be—it is a gift of grace: “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt” (Rom. 4:4), whereas “the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13). Those who share Abraham’s faith shall be counted heirs, and they shall inherit the earth with Christ, even as he promised: “The meek shall inherit the earth” (Mat. 5:5).

Being co-possessors of the earth with Messiah, the faithful will also be “joint administrators” with him. This is the promise given to those who overcome:

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

The throne referred to here, is the ancient Davidic seat of power restored, for it was said of Christ even before he was born, that “the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David” (Lu. 1:32). Those who overcome shall sit with him in that throne—that is to say, they shall share the power and authority that this throne represents. As Paul exhorted his son in the faith, Timothy: “it is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also *reign with him ...*” (2 Tim. 2:12). They shall be part of the immortal multitude who shall sing a new song to the Lamb, saying:

“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God *kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth*” (Rev. 5:9,10).

Here is a most glorious prospect placed before us. All of Humanity is, in the ultimate sense, composed of only two classes: the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. The seed of the serpent shall only inherit destruction, as they shall be removed from the face of the earth, and even the memory of them shall be forgotten. But the destiny of the woman’s seed, is that they shall inherit eternal life. These are they who seek after glory and honour and immortality (Rom. 2:7), who “seek first” the Father’s Kingdom and righteousness (Mat. 6:33) above all else in life.

It behoves us therefore, to decide which class we are to fall into, and act accordingly. Do we sow according to the flesh? Then, of the flesh, we shall reap corruption. That much is a certainty (Gal. 6:8). But if we sow according to the Spirit; if we so to the Spirit, and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), then we shall reap life everlasting - that much is of equal certainty (Gal. 6:8). The decision, at the last, is ours.

Chris Maddocks

Correspondence

A number of questions have been received from our readers, which we endeavour to address as follows:-

“Since Yahweh married Israel - when and where did the marriage take place? I think it was Sinai, but I am trying to prove it?”

WM

You appear to be correct in thinking that the “marriage” of Israel to Yahweh took place in Sinai. This seems to be confirmed by Eze. 16:8, which places the marriage at the time when He entered into a covenant with Israel:

“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, **and entered into a covenant with thee**, saith Adonai Yahweh, and thou becamest mine.”

Historically, the time when Yahweh entered into a covenant of Israel was at Sinai, in the events which are recorded in Exodus chapter 19.

CAM

“Why isn’t the Man-Child of Revelation 12:5 referring to Christ?”

RF

Because after this person has proclaimed the kingdom to have come in verse 10, the faithful are persecuted (verse 17). That means the true kingdom cannot have come, and that it was only a pseudo-kingdom,- when the true kingdom comes, the faithful will reign with Christ as kings and priests (Rev. 5:10). However, the man-child here *typifies* Christ, in that it is said of him was to “rule all nations with a rod of iron,” which is a future role of Christ as described in Psalm 2:9.

CAM

“Why did Christ exhort his disciples to be “wise as serpents”, when the Serpent of Eden was punished for it’s errors of reasoning?”

RF

The Edenic serpent is described in the Genesis account as follows:

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made” (Gen. 3:1).

Bro Thomas writes concerning the Serpent as follows:

“Its subtlety, or quickness of perception by eye and ear, and skilfulness in the use of them (2 Cor 11:3) was a part of the goodness of its nature. It was not an evil quality by any means; for Jesus exhorts his disciples to “be *wise* as the serpents; and unsophisticated as the doves.” This quality of shrewdness, or instinctive

wisdom, is the which principally strikes us in all that is said about it. It was an observant spectator of what was passing around in the garden, since the Lord God had planted it eastward in Eden. It had seen the Lord God and His companion Elohim. He had heard their discourse. He was acquainted with the existence of the Tree of Knowledge, and the Tree of Lives; and knew that the Lord God had forbidden Adam and his wife to eat of the good and evil fruit; or so much as to touch the tree. He was aware from what he had heard, that the Elohim knew what good and evil was experimentally; and that in this particular, Adam and Eve were not so wise as they. But, all this knowledge was shut up in his own cranium, from which it could never had made it's exit, had not the Lord God bestowed upon it the power of expressing its thoughts in speech.

And what use should we naturally expect such a creature would make of this faculty? Such an one, certainly, as its cerebral constitution would enable it to manifest. It was an intellectual, but not a moral creature. It had no "moral sentiments". No part of its brain was appropriated to the exercise of benevolence, veneration, conscientiousness, and so forth. To speak phrenologically, it was destitute of these organs; having only "intellectual faculties" and "propensities". Hence, its cerebral mechanism under the excitation of external phenomena, would only develop, what I would term, *an animal intellectuality*. Moral, or spiritual ideas would make no impression upon its mental constitution; for it was incapable from its formation of responding to them. It would be physically impossible for it to reason in harmony with the mind of God; or with the mind of a man, whose reasoning was regulated by divinely enlightened moral sentiments. Its wisdom would be that of the untutored savage race, whose "sentiments" by the desuetude of ages, had become as nothing. In short, we should expect that, if the faculty of speech were bestowed upon it, it would make just a use of it, as Moses narrates of the serpent in the garden of Eden. It's mind was purely and emphatically a "Carnal Mind," or a more shrewd description than that of any of the inferior creatures. It was "very good;" but, when he undertook to converse upon things too high for him; to speak of what he had seen and heard; and to comment upon the law of the Lord, he lost himself in his dialogisms, and became *the inventor of a lie*" (Elpis Israel Logos edition, Page 81-82).

The answer then, is that the Serpent was endowed with a "very good" quality of reasoning, but due to it's animal sentiments, it deduced wrongly, and came to incorrect conclusions of things. Christ's disciples are likewise to possess the sagacity of the serpent, yet must beware, yet they also become lost in their intellectualism, and lead others astray through serpentine reasoning.

CAM

“In view of the fact that God commands that NO graven images be made, how was it that God commanded Moses to construct a image made of brass in the form of a Serpent?”

R F

The passages in question are as follows:

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I Yahweh thy Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Ex. 20:4-5).

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Num. 21:8-9).

The apparent contradiction is resolved, when the purpose of the statues is observed. Israel were not to make graven images for the purpose of worshipping them, but yet they were to make various statures as part of the worship of Yahweh. For instance, in the Temple, there were 12 brazen oxen (1 Kings 7:25), as well as the cherubim which had faces of the ox, lion, man, and eagle. The brazen serpent is another case in point; Yahweh commanded it to be made, but not to be worshipped. In the record, none of these things are described as being “graven images”. Israel however, in their rebellion, appeared to have considered the serpent to have had intrinsic magical properties, for they worshipped it in the days of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:4), causing the king to break it in pieces to demonstrate it’s intrinsic weakness.

The raising up of the serpent upon the pole in the wilderness typified the raising up of Messiah. This we are explicitly told by Christ himself:

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jno. 3:14-15).

It is ironic that amongst the Churches around us, particularly in Catholicism, the Cross is itself worshipped as if it has some form of magical powers. Folk wear the sign on chains around their necks, as if it were a “good luck charm,” expecting it to increase their fortune, just as did Israel of the Brasen Serpent. Yet all these things are vanity, and shall perish at the appearing of our Master from Heaven, when every man shall cast his idols of silver and gold to the moles and to the bats (Is. 2:20), as they themselves flee “to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of Yahweh, and for the glory of his Majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth” (Is. 2:21).

CAM

ALLEGED BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS (1)

On an internet discussion group, an anonymous contributor posited a number of alleged “contradictions” and “failed” Bible Prophecies. We shall address them in this, and forthcoming issues (if Yahweh Permit) as follows:

Aaron and his children were supposed to be priests forever (promise of God according to the “prophet”) but after Eli they were no more!!

The Promise:

Exo 40:15 "And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an EVERLASTING priesthood throughout their generations."

As failed promise or prophecy, Moses himself stands accused by his own standards (the test of a "prophet" Deut 18). This means that the very genesis of the god of Abraham myth (found in the 1st 5 books of the bible) cannot be trusted.

Answer:-

Firstly, our correspondent errs in supposing that the priesthood ended with Eli. Eli, as he appears in the Biblical Record himself had no entitlement to officiate as a Priest. This can be determined as follows:

Abiathar, the High Priest in the reign of David, is described as being: “one of the sons of **Ahimelech** the son of **Ahitub**” (1 Sam. 22:20).

Now, Ahimelech, Abiathar’s father was “of the sons of Ithamar” (1 Chron. 24:3). And Ahitub was Eli’s grandson (1 Sam. 14:3). Hence Eli was of the sons of Ithamar—whereas the priesthood could only legitimately come through Eleazar (Num. 20:25-26; Num. 25:11-13). Somehow, in a manner not disclosed, the lines had become crossed, so to speak, so that the sons of Ithamar, including Eli assumed the role of High Priest, which they had no entitlement to do. So we read that later, “Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto Yahweh; that he might fulfil the word of Yahweh, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh” (1 Kings 2:27), and Zadok the priest, who **was** descended from Eleazar, was made High Priest in his stead (1 Chron. 6:4-8, cp 1 Kings 2:27, 35).

That being so, the priesthood did not end with Eli as our correspondent assumes; it continued long after, into the reign of Solomon and beyond through the descendents of Eleazar and Zadok—even till the time of Messiah’s mortal ministry, for up until the day of the temple’s destruction in AD70 there were priests who “served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5).

But it is true that the Levitical priesthood did finally come to an end, being replaced with Christ as an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:11,12). What then, do we make of the earlier promise that it would be an “everlasting priesthood”? Simply this; the Hebrew word translated “everlasting”, does not always convey the concept of eternity. The word *Olahm* literally signifies an *undefined*, or concealed, duration of time. In many cases, it is used to describe time without end (cp Is 45:17 etc), but in other instances it is also used in a more limited sense, to describe a previously unknown, or undetermined duration. As with most words, the sense must be confirmed by the context. Some examples follow:

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were *of old* (*olahm*), men of renown.”

Here, “of old” clearly does not convey the sense of “since eternity”, as these men of renown had a distinct beginning with their birth (see also 1 Sam. 27:8, Josh. 24:2, Is. 44:7).

“Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever” (Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:7).

Again, quite plainly, the sense is not “he shall serve him for all eternity”, for the maximum time of his service - however long that might be - would terminate with his death. Here, the word is used in the sense of an *undetermined, or unknown duration of time*, which would come to an end in due course.

“Remove not the *ancient* landmark, which thy fathers have set.” (Prov. 22:28; 23:10).

Here, the landmarks are not “from everlasting,” as there was a time when they did not exist. They were set up by the fathers - whenever that may have been.

“and who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the *ancient* people?” (Is 44:7; cp Jer 5:15).

Again, here the people did not exist for all eternity; they had a beginning, in the ultimate sense, in Adam, and the sons of Noah.

Some further verses where the word *Olahm* is used in a limited, not eternal sense are as follows:- Lev. 25:32; Deut. 32:7; 1Chron. 16:15; 1 Chron. 28:4; Eccl. 1:10; Is. 42:14; Is. 46:9; Is. 64:4; Jer. 28:8; Mal. 3:4.

Here is the solution then:- the promise was that the priesthood was to be an *Olahm-lasting* Priesthood; the duration of which was hidden, or unrevealed. But it would come to an end in due time, with the inauguration of Messiah as a priest after the Order of Melchisedec.

Chris Maddocks

Secretary's Notes

- As appears to have become the norm. of late, we have been beset by many problems with the production of this issue; not least the failure of our printing equipment. This has had to be replaced at substantial cost, and we are grateful to the generosity of a number of readers which has enabled this. However, the total cost has not yet been met, and so further contributions which readers may be able to make in order to make up the shortfall would be gratefully received.
- With the publication of this issue, we are pleased to be able to announce that all of our booklets (as per back cover) are now once again available, having had to be produced again following the failure of computer equipment, and the subsequent loss of data. All of our publications are now also available on-line at:

www.christadelphian-waymark.org.uk

These can be downloaded free of charge, or the hard-copies ordered on-line.

- Also, whereas previously the magazine was only available in hard-copy within the UK, we are now able to supply it anywhere in the world. Overseas subscribers can pay for their subscriptions securely by credit/debit card on our website, address as per above. We would also take this opportunity that free subscriptions are available to any, who for any reason cannot remit the requested amount of £7.00 per annum.
- It has been brought to our attention that a number of subscribers have not received publications that they have ordered: in such cases it appears that the orders sent have been lost in the postal system. If any reader has not received an order, please forward it again for it to be fulfilled at no extra cost.
- A reader has forwarded copies of daily reading plans for *Eureka* and *Elpis Israel*. We will gladly make these available free of charge to anyone who would like them. Please contact the Secretary, details as at back cover.
- Please note that the Secretary is now able to receive faxes once again; the fax number is the same as our home telephone number: 01322 380340
- Subscribers are reminded that regular Sunday Exhortations by e-mail are available at no cost. This service has proved to be helpful for small ecclesias and individuals in isolation, or those who cannot regularly get to an ecclesia to break bread. Would any who wish to subscribe please forward an e-mail to:

exhorts@christadelphian-waymark.org.uk

Chris Maddocks

Nature of Jesus and God

“Jesus” means “Yahweh is salvation/will save”. “Christ” means “God's anointed one”. Many names are used when talking about, and referring to Jesus. He is known as the Son of God, the Son of Man, and the Son of David. 1 John 2:1 calls him "the Righteous One". He is also known as "Lord" in many places (Colossians 3:17 for example), and "Saviour" (see Titus 2:13). He is also referred to in Isaiah 9:6 as, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace".

Jesus' life fulfilled God's promises made through the Old Testament prophets (see Bible Basics pages 226-227). The good news that he brought mankind was God's offer of a new covenant of salvation.

The doctrine of the trinity is not supported by the Bible. The concept of Christ being co-equal and co-eternal with God is quite easily proved false with just two scriptures.

Jesus had a beginning, because he was begotten of the Father. We are told in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". Therefore Jesus is not co-eternal with the Father.

The Father is greater than Jesus. John 14:28 tells us, "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I". Therefore Jesus is not co-equal with the Father.

God	Jesus
“God cannot be tempted” - James 1:13	Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are - Hebrews 4:15
God cannot die. He is immortal by nature - Deuteronomy 32:40; Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 6:16	Christ died for three days - Matthew 12:40; 16:21
God cannot be seen by men. We, in our imperfect natures cannot see God - 1 Timothy 6:16; Exodus 33:20; 1 John 4:12; John 1:18; John 5:37	Men saw Jesus - many passages including John 1:18
God never gets tired or sleeps - Isaiah 40:28	Jesus slept - Mark 4:37

The record of Christ's conception and birth does not allow for the idea that he physically existed beforehand. In Luke 1:31-35, it is emphasised that Jesus would be the Son of God on his birth; evidently the Son of God did not exist before his birth. Note the future tenses used here.

John 3:16 records that Jesus was the "only begotten Son" of God. If Jesus was "begotten", he "began" when he was conceived in Mary's womb. If Jesus was begotten by God as his Father, this is clear evidence that his Father is older than he. God has no beginning (Psalm 90:2), and therefore Jesus cannot be God Himself.

Jesus had to be crucified, and raised again. This had to be, so that the Old Testament prophecies would be fulfilled. Jesus was created as a physical person - he had a human nature. Because of this, he had to die. For we are told in Hebrews 9:27, "man is destined to die". However, Romans 6:23 tells us that death is the wage of sin. Therefore, due to Jesus' sinless character, he could not remain dead. So, he was resurrected. This shows the righteousness of God. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God was showing His love for the world and saving humanity from sin and death.

People say, "If God was a good God, then He wouldn't have let Jesus die". They do not see that God had to let him die because He is a righteous God. Because Jesus had a human nature - and therefore was able to sin, even though he didn't - God had to let him die. However, because he is sinless, God raised him! Thus, God does not and cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead is a major New Testament theme (for a few examples, see Acts 5:30, 31; Acts 3:13,15; Acts 2:24, 32, 33; John 17:5; cp. 13:32; 8:54). If Jesus were God Himself, then all this emphasis would be out of place, since God can't die. If he were God, Jesus would not have needed saving. Because it was God who exalted Jesus, demonstrates God's superiority over him, and the separateness of God and Jesus. The evidence is overwhelming - Christ was of our human nature.

One of the clearest summaries of the relationship between God and Jesus is found in 1 Timothy 2:5, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus". In addition to this one God, there is the mediator, the man Christ Jesus. That word, "and" indicates a difference between Christ and God. 1 Corinthians 8:6 also states that, "There is but one God, the Father". Christ being the "mediator" as mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:5, means that he is a go-between. A mediator between sinful man and sinless God had to be a sinless man, of a sinful human nature.

There are a number of obvious differences between God and Jesus, which clearly show that Jesus was not God Himself.

By nature God cannot die, be tempted etc. It's evident that Christ was not of God's nature during his mortal life. He was therefore totally of human nature. It's vital that Christ was tempted like us (Hebrews 4:15), so that through his perfect overcoming of temptation he could gain forgiveness for us.

The wrong desires, which are the basis of our temptations, come from within us

(Mark 7:20-23), from within our human nature (James 1:13-15). It was necessary, therefore, that Christ should be of human nature so that he could experience and overcome these temptations.

The Gospel records provide many examples of how completely Jesus had human nature. It is recorded that he was weary, and had to sit down by a well (John 4:6). "Jesus wept" at the death of Lazarus (John 11:35). This shows us that Jesus has human emotions. Throughout our lives we are expected to grow in our knowledge of God, learning from our trials that we experience in life (James 1:2-4). In this, Jesus was our great example.

BAPTISM

However, it is not just surrounding the trinity that we disagree with others. When we consider baptism, it is important that we acknowledge that others have different ideas of baptism, and what it entails, than we do.

There's a widely held view that baptism can be performed, especially on babies, by sprinkling water on their foreheads. This is in stark contrast to the Biblical requirement for baptism. Firstly, babies being baptised cannot possibly be right. We should only be baptised if, and when, we are "ready". Only we can make the decision. When we are babies, we don't know the Word of God, therefore how can we know that it is truly what we believe in? We can't make the decision to be baptised - we're not old enough to be sure it's what we want.

Baptism is for people who know what they're doing, why they're doing it, and who believe the Gospel message. How can a baby believe and understand the Gospel, acknowledge they sin, and repent for these sins? They can't.

The Greek word "baptizo", which is translated "baptize" in the English Bible, does not mean to sprinkle; it means to completely wash and immerse in a liquid. There are clear "clues" in the Bible that baptism is total immersion. See Matthew 3:16, Jesus "went up ... out of the water". Baptism is a burial (Colossians 2:12), which implies a total covering.

One of the reasons for baptism by immersion is that going under the water symbolises our going into the grave. This associates us with the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-5). Because salvation has been made possible only through Christ's death and resurrection, it is vital that we associate ourselves with these things if we are to be saved. The symbolic dying and resurrecting with Christ, which baptism gives, is the only way to do this. Sprinkling does not fulfil this symbol!

Laura Burdekin

1 Corinthians 12

A Sunday Morning Exhortation by Bro. R. Roberts.

BELOVED BRETHREN AND SISTERS, —There are several things in this chapter interesting and important to be understood, but not apparent on the surface. To discern them it is necessary to have distinctly in view the people to whom the Epistle was written, and the time and circumstances under which it was written to them. If we were to read it from a modern point of view—that is, if Paul were discussing principles applicable to modern circumstances—we should make many mistakes. Paul is discoursing on a situation of things existing in his own day, and having no parallel in our experience.

The situation is very simply described. A number of people in Corinth, brought up in a mixed state of philosophy and idolatry, had believed the testimony of Paul on the occasion of his visit to the city, concerning the resurrection of Christ, and the benefits offered to those who should believe and obey the risen Master. Their belief was based upon the signs and wonders by which Paul's word was accompanied. God gave testimony to the Word of His grace in signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 1: 2), so that their faith “stood not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2: 5). After they believed, the Holy Spirit was given to them also, by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, so that they also were able to speak with tongues, work miracles, prophesy, speak in the words of wisdom and knowledge, etc.

Paul stayed with them a good while, even “a year and six months” (Acts 18:11), for Christ had told him that he had much people in that city (verse 10). After Paul left them, various questions began to arise among them as to duty in this and that, in the new position in which the Truth had placed them. Some held one opinion and some another upon the various matters that arose. There were also sectaries among them—men who did not rise to the breadth and greatness of the unity that was in Christ, but conceived petty partialities for certain leaders and teachers. Some said “I am of Paul,” as against others who boasted to the disparagement of Paul, that they were of Peter; while others again made Apollo the watchword, and others, “Christ”.

The existence of such a state of division in a community blessed with the gifts of the Spirit, will appear inexplicable to those who have not realized that those gifts did not override the judgment and temperamental peculiarities of the possessors; but were restricted to the particular function appertaining to them. A speaker of tongues was the same individual in the manifestation of character as if he had not received a supernatural knowledge of the languages. A worker of miracles was not made infallible by the impartation of the power to heal. Those having the gift of knowledge, wisdom, etc., would be reliable guides; but they do not appear to have been deferred to, to their full extent. And this would be accounted for by the probable argument that one man with a gift of the Spirit was as good as another with a

different gift. Thus the man having the power to interpret tongues, if he differed in judgment with the brother who had the word of wisdom, might feel justified in maintaining his own opinion on the ground that he also having the Spirit, had as much right to form a judgment of the matter as another having the same Spirit in another form. In this distorted state they appear to have written to Paul to give his mind on the various questions raised.

This fact comes out in the first verse of the seventh chapter: "Now concerning the THINGS whereof ye wrote unto me". The last ten chapters including the one that has been read, follow this sentence. It is, therefore, probable that they deal with questions that had been asked by the Corinthians in their letter. Indeed the style is decidedly indicative of this fact. Take the first verse of the chapter read for instance: "Now concerning spiritual gifts"; this is not the way a man writes who is dealing spontaneously with the subject. It is just the style of a man who is answering questions that have been submitted to him; who having done with one, is proceeding to another. It is, therefore, probable that Paul's judgment had been asked on the matters discussed in the chapter. This supposition greatly aids the comprehension of it.

"Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led" (verse 2). This allusion to their antecedents prepares the way for the attitude he is about to take as their teacher, and also lays a basis for the argument he is about to advance. As much as to say, "Ye know that apart from what I brought to you, ye were idolaters, without hope, without inheritance in Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise. The gifts that ye have, were acquired by you in connection with my gospel. Therefore, I and my gospel are the standards by which the questions in agitation must be decided. 'Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed'" (verse 3).

Now how came Paul to have to make this apparently superfluous declaration? Obviously, because there were some among the Corinthians calling Jesus accursed, who professed to speak by the Spirit. How could such a thing be? This is only to be understood in view of the surroundings and extraction of the Corinthians. The Grecians had been termed the philosophers of the world. The Corinthians lived in one of the principal cities of the Greeks, and at one of the principal seats of philosophy. It was very natural, therefore, that philosophy should crop up in their midst as a perverter of the phenomena connected with the Spirit.

Indeed, in the case of another Greek ecclesia—that at Colosse—he expressly says, "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit". Now upon what principle of philosophy could any man take the attitude of a detraction of Jesus, and yet claim to be speaking by the Spirit? I could understand such a case to arise in this way. A worldly thinker, brought in by the preaching of Paul and the novelty of the gifts, remains submissive to apostolic principles for a while, but bringing his

secular philosophy to bear, aided by intercourse with the philosophic alien, gradually comes to regard the gospel movement as but a peculiar form of the universal truth. Such a man would come to esteem highly the writers and thinkers and orators of Greece, and to contend that although there was doubtless good in the apostolic system, and a greater measure of good than in paganism, that yet as a whole it was narrow and unphilosophical; that Jesus, dying by crucifixion, was accused by the very system which he said he came to fulfil; that it was unreasonable to suppose that God intended an accused man to hold the position of supremacy taught by the apostles, especially to the exclusion of “the wise and good” men of philosophic fame.

The inspired teachers of the ecclesia would of course oppose such a doctrine; and decline to argue it philosophically, might assert the authority of the Spirit in them as sufficient to close the mouth of the objector. In answer to which the objector might say, “I also have the Spirit; I received it equally with you; in fact all men have the Spirit—the poets and philosophers of Athens, as well as the apostles, and therefore we have as much right to maintain our convictions as you”. If the man or men were clever and loquacious, their words would stagger the faith of some, and be difficult of confutation. Accordingly Paul was written to: “Can a man have the Spirit who calls Jesus accused?” Paul’s answer is “No”! and on the general question of all men being inspired, he says, “The things of God KNOWETH NO MAN, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received NOT THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (3: 11-12).

The next statement of Paul I understand also to apply to the cavils of the same objector: “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit”. The necessity for making that statement might arise in this way. In dealing with the man calling Jesus accused while claiming to speak by the Spirit, the spiritual men of the ecclesia might point out to him that but for the Spirit coming into their midst by Paul, they never would have known about Christ at all. In answer to which the caviller might contend that the knowledge of Christ was as much a thing of natural cognition as any other matter of history. They would say that although they knew it first by Paul, that was a mere accident: he happened to be first on the ground; but that if he hadn’t come, they would have heard of so stirring an historical incident in some other way.

This would give rise to the point met by Paul’s declaration, “Can a man know that Jesus is the Lord without the instrumentality of the Spirit”? The truthfulness of Paul’s answer is apparent in many ways. To see or hear of the power of Christ was not to be made to know that he was the Messiah, the Lord. The Pharisees saw him but did not believe. His appearance conveyed no intimation of the fact. As the prophet had predicted, “He had no form nor comeliness; and when they saw him, there was nothing in him that they should desire him”. His Messiahship required to be testified by the Spirit and confirmed by the Spirit. It was not to be known apart from this. Hence when Peter confessed that he was the Christ, Jesus said “Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven”. How? Not by the spirit

going into Peter and mechanically convincing him as it were (for the “Holy Spirit was not yet given” in that sense, John 7: 39); but by the testimony the Father gave to Jesus on two notable occasions in the presence of Peter, and on one of them before a multitude. At his baptism and transfiguration, “A voice came from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear ye him”. No man could know apart from the Spirit that Jesus was the Lord. When men heard the apostles afterwards, as the Corinthians heard Paul, they heard the Spirit, for the Spirit was in them, as Jesus had promised. The co-operating works of the Spirit (in healing, raising the dead, speaking with tongues, etc.) were evidences of the testimony, being the Spirit's testimony; but apart from that testimony, no man could say that Jesus is the Lord. As a matter of human knowledge, it was unattainable; and therefore the philosophic caviller was sporting himself with his own deceivings in contending as many do in our own day, with Renan at their head, that the Lord Jesus was a mere phenomenal manifestation of moral power, to be recognized and understood on natural principles

But Paul's words in our day are greatly wrested from their meaning. They are made to teach that no man can say that Jesus is Lord unless he is personally and supernaturally illuminated by the Holy Spirit. This is a self-evident absurdity. We all here present confess that Jesus is the Lord; and we do it heartily, with joyful and grateful emphasis, yet we deny that we are subjectly illuminated in, the way contended for in orthodox circles. We are only illuminated in this way, that the Spirit uttering its voice in the earth, 1800 years ago, and causing its words to be recorded, has furnished us with evidence that convinces our understandings that Jesus is the Lord, and apart from the means it instituted to this end, we never would have known the fact, and therefore could never have stated it. In this sense, still, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit, but this is a very different sense from the orthodox sense which requires that God shall inspire us before we can know His truth, although He has sent inspired preachers for the very purpose of causing us to know that faith might come by HEARING their word. Furthermore, the people who claim to be thus inspired, it is easy to show, do not confess the Truth revealed by the Spirit concerning the Lordship of Christ in many important elements. We must take care, while steering clear of the atheistical philosophy of ancient and modern times, not to run into mistakes in the opposite direction, which are only a little less ruinous.

Paul's remarks on the unity in diversity of the gifts of the Spirit may also be understood as a reply to the same class of objectors while furnishing information useful to those not in that position. When the official brethren of the ecclesia claimed in the controversies that arose to speak with authority in the name of the Spirit amongst them, the caviler of the class in question, of whom so many specimens are to be found in modern times, might well be supposed to say, “You talk of the Spirit, and you point to the various things that are done, but we cannot see in them an evidence of the Spirit. They are more like the feats of conjurors. If it were one Spirit, would it not show itself in the same way in every person having it”? “Like causes produce like effects”, they might say, with the dogmatic sapience of a philosophy

which has proved itself so many times in opposition to the Truth. “How can we answer this?” the Corinthian believers may be well imagined to ask Paul. The answer is: “There are diversities of gifts, but THE SAME SPIRIT”. And there is more philosophy in Paul's answer than the ancient philosophers knew. The law is found to operate even in the natural body which he afterwards makes use of as an illustration. Hearing is different from smelling, and tasting from seeing, and feeling different from both. Yet if you examine the nerve-substance employed in the generation of these different sensations, you will find it is exactly the same in all cases. Put it under a microscope, or test it with chemics, and you can discern no difference in the constitution of the nerve-fibre of the ear, eye, nose, tongue, or skin. And the vital energy developed from the blood by the secerning vessels, and supplied to these various functions, is exactly the same—“different manifestations, BUT THE SAME SPIRIT”. Go wider still. Range the broad domain of nature, examine all phenomena, and you get at last to what is now termed scientifically the “co-relation forces;” that is, you come to see that the various powers denominated heat, light, strength, cohesion, gravitation, etc., are but the manifestation of a common, primal, simple, indefinable force: “different manifestations BUT THE SAME SPIRIT”. Why is the same force one thing in one relation and another in another? There is no more philosophical answer than the one given by Paul: “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally AS HE WILL,” The will of the Spirit—the appointment of the Creator—is the ultimate explanation of all things. The Corinthian philosophers were, therefore, not so wise as they imagined when they pointed to the diversity of the gifts as a disproof of the apostolic theory of the Spirit. In fact, it was a case of “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”.

Robert Roberts

Notes On John Chapter 4

The woman of Samaria at the well. The word “Samaria” occurs 13 times in the New Testament. The number Thirteen occurs first in Genesis 14:4. This chapter is a type of Armageddon, which means “a heap of sheaves in a valley for judgement” (See Eureka, vol 3, p 603-604). “Chedorlaomer” referred to in Genesis 14:4, according to Gesenius, means “a heap of sheaves”. As the king of the north against the king of the south, so in verse four “in the thirteenth year they rebelled” - which indicates that thirteen represents rebellion.

John 4:4 speaks of the Master: “he must needs go through Samaria”. He “must” - it was imperative as the chapter shows, “having left Judea and going to Galilee” (v 3). A good map pinpoints Jacob's well by the side of mount Gerazim: “this mountain” of verse 21. It was called Jacob's well, because it was near to the plot of land which Jacob gave to Joseph (Josh 24:32).

So, Jesus being weary sat, knowing that this Samaritan woman would come, for nothing happened by chance, especially this woman as we shall see.

“It was about the sixth hour”. We wonder why it was the “sixth” - which occurs six times, four times associated with the dreadful crucifixion of Jesus, this one in verse six, and the sixth in Acts 10:9: “Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour”.

Verse seven describes how there came: “a woman of Samaria to draw water” then came the first of seven sayings of Jesus. “give me to drink” followed by the first of six sayings of the woman. “how is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans”. Followed by the second saying of Jesus the whole over verse 10, ending with “living water”, which comes from “Yahweh, the fountain of living water” (Jer 2:13, 17:13) and will come from the bride as a well watered garden (Song 4:15; Jno 7:38). “Living water occurs just seven times in Scripture, 4 in the Old Testament, 3 in the New Testament.

The second saying of the woman verse 11-12 followed by the third saying of Jesus verse 13-14. This is one of many verses where the translators left out the word aion, age. Jesus did not say “never” but “the water that I shall give him shall not thirst in the age”. The same also in John 8:51-52. “If a man keep my saying, he shall not see death in the age”. Also, John 10:28, 11:26. The translators did this to keep hold of the serpents’ lie – the immortality of the soul.

The third saying of the woman verse 15: “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw”. The fourth saying of Jesus is in verse 16. “Go call thy husband and come hither” followed by the fourth saying of the woman (verse 17) “I have no husband” followed by the fifth saying of Jesus: “thou hast well said, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband, in that saidst thou truly.”

Now we begin to see why Jesus drew this woman, for she typified the Samaritans. We find the first occurrence of “Samaritans” in 2 Kings 17:29. When we go back to verse 21, we read that Yahweh rent Israel from the house of David “because Solomon led them to Idolatry (1 Kings 11:4-13). This was followed by Jeroboam, so Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria having taken the ten tribes captive into Babylon, he took five different nations with their gods and put them into Samaria “instead of Israel” (v 24) but verse 25 “they feared not Yahweh,” so he “sent lions among them, which slew some of them”, so the king was told that it was because they did not know the manner of the God of the land. So he commanded one of the priests to be taken back which would have been a calf worshipper from Beth-el, back to Bethel (v 28) who “taught them how they should fear Yahweh”. “So they feared Yahweh and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests” exactly as Jeroboam did and verse 33 “they feared Yahweh and served their own gods.”

Now we see why Jesus selected this woman, with her five husbands, answering to

the gods of the five different nations who then claimed to also worship Yahweh, who in fact was not their God, just as the man this woman was living with was not her husband.

The Samaritan woman through the corrupt teaching of the Bethel Priest believed that Jacob was their father (v 12) and verse 20 neither did they worship in “mounth Gerizim), but she knew that the Jews believed that Jerusalem was the place where men ought to worship.

Then we have the sixth saying of Jesus as he gave her of the “water of life” v 21-24, when he told her “ye worship ye know not” they worshipped “nothings” (1 Cor. 8:4) so that Bethel became Beth-Aven, meaning “beth-nothing”. “we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth; for the father seeketh such to worship him. God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” And as he had also told her in verse 21, “neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem for he knew that the Temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed.

The sixth saying of the woman is in verse 25: “I know that Messiah cometh – when he is come, he will tell us all things”

Verse 26 narrates, the seventh saying of Jesus: “I that speak unto thee am he”. In Verse 27, the disciples were amazed at him speaking to a Samaritan woman but didn’t comment. Verse 28 speaks volumes: “She left her waterpot”. She had asked for the water of life (v 15). She was now the carrier of the water of life (v 29-30). This is the reason why Jesus was not interested in what the disciples offered him (v 31-32) “I have meat to eat that ye know not of,” for he knew what the woman was doing, and he knew that the Samaritans were coming, “many” of them, verse 39, which he refers to in verse 35, “Say ye not, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest” referring to the multitude of Samaritans coming to see for themselves and to hear him. And notice the wonderful words in verse 36-38: “he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; the both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.” It will certainly be a wonderful time of rejoicing for all those “true worshippers” of verse 23.

In verse 38, the Master refers to the labours of the prophets, “other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours” which the disciples did. The Samaritans were overwhelmed with his wonderful teaching of the Truth, things they had never heard. No wonder they tried to get him to stay with them (verse 40) which was reduced to two days which resulted in many more believing the Truth, and knowing of a certainty that he was the Messiah which had so long been promised. So we see from this study how much there is in these wonderful Scriptures when we prayerfully “search the Scriptures”

Ted Bailey

“Meddle Not With Them That Are Given to Change”

*“My son, fear thou Yahweh and the king: and meddle not with
them that are given to change”*

(Proverbs 24:21)

In March 2005, a booklet entitled *“The Role of Women in the Church”* was circulated amongst UK ecclesias¹, in which the writer advocates a change in the commonly received practice regarding Sisters in the Body of Christ. In his introductory letter the Author, Bill Davison, writes:

“I do not think, with due respect, that Bible truth ends with The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith since the very word “Amendment” indicates that one’s understanding of scripture *can undergo change and be amended.*”²

Again, the conclusion of the booklet itself is:

“Bible truth is dynamic, not static, and the ecclesia of Christ must move from the 19th to the 21st century ...” (page 12).

So, the contents of the booklet are designed to exhort the ecclesia to “move” forward with the times; to progress away from “Victorian tradition”, because Bible Truth itself is “not static.”

Various claims contained in the booklet are:

“The subordination of women was similar in this country in Victorian times when the Christadelphian faith was established. Father’s word was law. A wife did what she was told. The view that women were inferior in status to men had long infiltrated into Christian sects and denominations, and was adopted by Christadelphia” (page 6).

“We, in our beloved Christadelphia, have a huge source of untapped talent, namely our sisters in Christ. It is high time they played a more prominent part in our worship and fellowship, as did women in the 1st Century church. For example, reading in public from Holy Scripture and praying in meetings; and

¹ And subsequently placed on the Internet, on Duncan Heaster’s “Carelinks” website.

² Note that this is factually incorrect; as we have shown in a previous issue, the Amendment of the BASF was not because of a change of understanding, but because an issue had arisen which required a written clarification of a particular matter which hitherto had not been addressed in the BASF—namely, Resurrectional Responsibility.

... serving the emblems on a Sunday morning ...” (Page 12).

“In the modern world, where women participate in all walks of life, it is a hindrance to the gospel to use out-of-context passages to restrict women’s service to God” (Page 3).

“taking 1 Corinthians 11:4,5 at face value, it is obvious that women participated in public worship in the Christian church at Corinth. They prayed and prophesied in the same way as the men did” (page 5).

The inside front cover reads:

“This short study has been written in the hope that its readers will be able to acknowledge that some Christadelphian traditions regarding our sisters owe their existence more to Victorian tradition than to clear Bible teaching.

I find it difficult to grasp how a Bible-led community can oppose godly sisters in Christ participating in public prayer and praise to our Heavenly Father and our Saviour Jesus Christ, when we assemble together for worship.

Bible Truth is dynamic not static. May we be guided by the Holy Spirit into the paths of truth and righteousness, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Whilst Bill Davison prays for Holy Spirit guidance of a sort which is not available in our day (see our booklet: *Prayer and the Holy Spirit*), we prefer the real guidance which comes from the Word. We prefer to study the Scriptures to show ourselves to be approved of God, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15) - for any “correction” of our understanding can only come from the Authority of that Word—as it is written: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, *for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). What was true in the day it was written is equally true now, for the oracles of Yahweh are the only source of absolute Truth available to us today (Jno. 17:17). We must then compare Bill Davison’s claims against the revealed Word—and when we do so, it is a sad fact that we find them wanting.

Before we examine his claims regarding Scripture, we ought to firstly refute the characterisation of our early community which the author presents us with. He speaks as if our early brethren were steeped in Victorian Tradition—certainly with respect to the role of sisters in the ecclesia. So, he claims that “*The view that women were inferior in status to men had long infiltrated into Christian sects and denominations, and was adopted by Christadelphia*”. Whilst it might suit the writer’s cause to characterise the 19th Century brotherhood in that way, it is factually incorrect. As we shall see, the brotherhood’s position on the role of sisters had nothing to do with a perceived “inferiority” of women, but is because Scripture itself

teaches different roles for male and female believers to adopt. In fact, writing in 1879, Bro Robert Roberts soundly refutes such a notion:

“I have heard some speak contemptuously of the sisters as “mere women, only fit to nurse babies, and look after the pudding.” Against such a doctrine every true brother will earnestly protest. It is not only degrading to her whom God has given us for “an helpmeet”, but it is inconsistent with the Gospel which teaches that there is neither male or female in Christ: that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

... Sisters are never likely to develop into noble servants of Christ if the door is shut in their face, by a theory which would consign them to cradles, pots and pans. I do not mean to suggest that cradles and pans are incompatible with the higher duties any more than the hammers, whoe lasts, or baking troughs of their rougher brethren, but a doctrine which would tie them all the time to these, is an offence and a mischief ... but to insist on confining sisters to these, would be to ignore that fact that they have brains as well as bodies; and that men have other needs of help-meetship besides those of knife and fork. Such a boorish doctrine would destroy companionship, where brethren need it most, and unfit their wives the highest function of motherhood, which is to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In fact, it is a doctrine to be opposed and detested as much as any hurtful doctrine may be. The man who holds it, and much more the man who preaches it, deserves to be deprived of every social advantage, and to be shut up in a cave. This, in fact, is his destiny at last.”

(Robert Roberts, Seasons of Comfort).

These are strong words indeed! Rather than to sanction the notion that sisters were somehow “inferior”, Bro Roberts states that “the man who holds” the idea, “and much more the man who preaches it, deserves to be deprived of every social advantage, and to be shut up in a cave”!

But returning to Scripture, what does the Bible teach concerning the role of sisters in the ecclesia? The following passage appears relevant:

“... let the woman *learn in silence with all subjection*. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (1 Tim. 2:11-15).

From this passage then, it is quite plain that whatever roles sisters may have within the ecclesia, they must involve “learning in silence”. In other words, they ought not have a role which involves teaching, but rather learning.

The author of the booklet in question attempts to dismiss both of these passages as follows:

“Note, ‘quietness’ and ‘silent’ are the same Greek word *hesuchia*. This does not mean ‘keep your mouth shut’ but something like ‘do not chatter’ or ‘do not gossip’. In 2 Thessalonians 3:12 it is translated ‘settle down’. This instruction by Paul does not forbid a woman to pray or preach (prophecy) in church, but is a reminder of good behaviour and manners” (page 5).

We agree that these words have no bearing on what women do “in church,” as the apostle is not concerned with “them which are without”, or churches of the heathen. His concern is with *ecclesias*, not churches - but it is interesting to note that much of Bill Davison’s argument rests on citations of various authorities of the churches, such as William Barclay, and Bishop Lightfoot, and others. He finds it necessary to turn to leaders of the apostasy for his expostulations - whereas we remain content with the Oracles of God themselves.

Here is the claim then: that when the Apostle was ‘moved’ by the Holy Spirit to write that women must “be in silence” in the ecclesia, he actually meant that women ought to speak, in the form of prayers and preaching. For the Greek word does not mean “silence” at all, but merely “something like ... do not gossip,” and is merely a reminder to show “good behaviour and manners”.

How accurate is this definition, when compared to the Spirit’s usage of the word elsewhere? The same word is used in Acts 22:

“... Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made *a great silence*, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept *the more silence*: and he saith,) ...” (Acts 21:40-22:2).

Notice here, there was a “great silence” made first. This would be something like not chattering, or gossiping, for everyone quietened down to listen to what the Apostle had to say. Yet the word used here is *not* the word that the Spirit through Paul used in 1 Tim 2. Then, when they all heard that Paul was speaking in Hebrew, “they kept the *more silence*” - and this *is* the same word as in 1 Tim 2. This shows the meaning of the word – not merely to quieten down, but to be “the more silent”, that is, *absolutely* quiet. The Apostle is quite plain then; sisters ought to be *absolutely* silent in the ecclesia - which is not at all in harmony with them speaking in terms of offering prayers, and preaching.

Another passage which appears relevant is 1 Corinthians 14:

“let your women *keep silence in the ecclesias*: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith

the Law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: *for it is a shame for women to speak in the ecclesia*” (1 Cor. 14:34).

Here, Bill Davison concedes that the word used means “keep quiet”, “refrain from speaking,” but attempts to dismiss the passage by stating that it was merely following local custom!

“The reference to ‘the law’ here can hardly mean the Law of Moses, but more likely means local custom”

And that is all he has to say about it!

But when the Apostle writes as also saith the “law,” he is referring to a “law”, not a mere custom. He cites “the law” as his authority for his teaching. What “law” is he referring to?

2 Timothy 2 furnishes us with the answer, for here, we read of the reason why sisters are to remain silent in the ecclesia: “for Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” So then, sisters are enacting particular principles to do with the beginning of the human race. At the beginning, Adam had a teaching role; he was to teach his wife to obey the Law of *Elohim* in Eden. Yet as events turned out, Eve taught him instead, as she taught him to disobey the commandment. So, rather than being a help meet for Adam, the woman became a stumbling block to him, causing him to fall from grace. Even so, by submitting themselves to the man, the woman is memorialising what took place, and reflecting what ought to have been the correct arrangement. This arrangement is, in fact, according to the Law - not the law of Moses, but Edenic Law:

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband *and he shall rule over thee*” (Gen. 3:16).

Here is the matter established from the beginning; the man was to “rule” over the woman. This was Edenic Law issued after the fall, and which both the man and the woman were expected to observe. Whatever roles women may have outside in the world, within the ecclesia that is the order to be observed; men and women working together, yet with different roles, for the good of the whole ecclesia.

This is a vital point to recognise; the issue is not one of whether or not women are inferior to men as Bill Davison claims; rather it is one of fulfilling Divinely-appointed roles. It is of the Father’s choosing that sisters do not have a teaching role within the ecclesia - but they can take full part in all other ecclesial roles, supplementing and supporting the work of the brethren.

Bill Davison is very good at making characterisations in his work. For instance, again he states that:

“I find it difficult to grasp how a Bible-led community can oppose godly sisters in Christ participating in public prayer and praise to our Heavenly Father ..” (inside front cover).

However, nobody is suggesting that sisters cannot *participate* in public prayer and praise - we have never heard that proposal presented. The writer is here deliberately mis-stating the case - as he does all the way through his work - and it is significant that he has to do this in order to oppose it. Scripturally, Sisters **can** fully participate in prayer and praise - nobody doubts that - that is just not the issue! However, they cannot engage in a speaking/teaching role in the ecclesial environment.

The only evidence that Bill Robinson gives to support his version of ‘Women’s Lib.’ is that in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, women are spoken of as praying and prophesying:

“every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head ...” (1 Cor. 11:5).

However, there are a number of points to be observed here:

1. The reference to “prophesieth” indicates the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, as cited in Acts chapter 2:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit; and they shall prophesy ...” (Acts 2:17-18; see also 21:9).

Here, the “daughters” and “handmaidens” are prophesying *specifically as a consequence of receiving Holy Spirit power*. Therefore, the most that can be drawn out of 1 Cor. 11:5, is that sisters who are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and who are therefore not speaking their own words, but Yahweh’s can speak in the ecclesia. Clearly, this does not describe the current situation in ecclesias today.

2. The passage does not state whether or not brethren were present at the time. Thus, it might be supposed in the light of the other passages we have considered, that these sisters did not lead prayers or prophesy in the ecclesia in the presence of the brethren, but rather after the example of Miriam, Moses’ sister, to the sisters only.

In conclusion, rather than to follow the way of the churches as Bill Davison advocates, Christ’s brethren—and sisters—ought to humbly accept the different roles appointed for them, and work together for the good of the Body.

Chris Maddocks

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