

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

The Living Way

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**Upholding the Original Christadelphian Faith concerning:
“The Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12)**

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

“My God, My God, Why hast thou Forsaken Me?”

These words form the start of the closing dialogue of our Lord Jesus Christ at the climax of his suffering, when he laid down his life for his friends. But the question frequently arises to many a sincere Bible Student; "Why, at the climax of his perfect obedience to his Father's will, did our Lord utter such words?" Was it that in the depths of suffering - in the intensity of his final moments of agony, the Lord experienced a moment of doubt, and felt that his Father, his God had actually deserted him? That he had been left alone because of some element of imperfection within his life of holiness? Duncan Heaster, in his book *Beyond Bible Basics* claimed our Lord's utterance of these words to be indicative of an "intellectual failure" in his understanding - to the point that he actually "doubted himself to be the Messiah". But this simply cannot be so. Not least, because the words used were not merely the cries of desperation, the sorrow of a man feeling alone and rejected in his sufferings - they were a deliberate citation from a Psalm of David. Rather than to presumptuously attribute "failure" to the Son of the Most High God therefore, our wisdom rather lies in seeking to learn why our Lord chose to cite these words and to perceive the lessons which might be learnt for ourselves.

That the Lord Jesus had a constant awareness of His Father's abiding presence throughout his life - and particularly at the climax of his sufferings - is clear from his own words to his enemies: "when ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: ***the Father hath not left me alone;*** for I do always those things that please him" (Jno 8:28-29). These words are most significant in the light of our present considerations: when the enemy had lifted the Son upon the cross, then they would know that God was "with" him - that his Father had "not left" him "alone." The sufferings to come at Calvary were therefore not seen by our Lord as a time when God would depart from Him, but rather those events themselves would be a testimony that he had done no miracles under his own strength, but that of the Father - Who had not left his Son alone in his hour of greatest need.

And indeed, this was the case. As a mark of the Father's Displeasure against those who so despised his Son, who sought to extinguish the true Light of the world, "from the sixth hour there was darkness" imposed upon all the land (Mat 27:45), until 3 hours later when our Lord gave his last breath. And that time - the very instant when our Lord gave up the Spirit, again the displeasure of Heaven against the enemy was given vent, in an earthquake, tearing apart the rocks - and more significantly ripping asunder the temple veil (Mat 27:51). These events spoke strongly of judgement - and witnessed to the coming destruction of the Lord's murderers, the utter desolation which would take place when the stones of the Temple would be torn apart (Mat 24:2), and the temple worship would end.

Truly it was that in all the events which took place at our Lord's offering up of himself, God was with him, displaying His Power in a most dramatic way. Even a Roman Centurion and his companions bore witness to the Lord's Divine Paternity in beholding

these wonders, for it is testified, "when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things which were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the son of God" (Mat 27:54). They knew that Christ was not alone, but that God was his Father, whose presence was testified by these events.

THE LORD'S CONFIDENCE IN HIS FATHER'S PRESENCE

Our Lord had full cognisance that all men - even the disciples would forsake him at the last moment. Yet he also had the confident assurance, being the antitypical Joshua, that the Father would not leave him, nor forsake him. So he told the twelve: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and *yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me*" (Jno 16:32). There can be no doubt therefore, for those who receive the Lord's sayings with child-like simplicity. At the time when all men forsook him - the time of his greatest need, he was not alone, because his Father was "with" him. As the Spirit of Christ through Isaiah spake of our Lord's afflictions: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For *the Lord Yahweh will help me*; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. *He is near* that justifieth me; who will contend with me? ... Behold, the Lord Yahweh will help me ..." (Is 50:6-9). Here is the prophetic spirit of our Lord upon the Cross - one of the utmost confidence in the Father's "help", knowing that "He is near", not having left His Son alone.

And again, the words of David speaking of the Christ could be no more emphatic in this regard: "David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption ..." (Acts 2:25-27). This is the Spirit of Christ facing his death upon the cross: "I foresaw the Lord always before my face ...". God was always at his right hand. God never left him, nor deserted him in his time of need - and he was ever mindful of that fact. Indeed, it was this vision of having the Father always before his face that enabled him to endure the suffering of the cross; albeit despising the shame thereof.

IN WHAT SENSE DID GOD "FORSAKE" CHRIST?

But how then, do we reconcile this with our Lord's citation of Psalm 22:1 "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" How can it be that Christ perceived himself to be "forsaken" - yet also maintain the utmost confidence in His Father's abiding presence? The answer is to be found in the recognition that throughout the life of the Lord Jesus, God was with him in more than one sense. Not only was He with him in the sense of providentially watching over him, providing angelic ministers as needed, and giving Paternal care - but also in that His Holy Spirit was placed within him. God was with him in that His Holy Spirit dwelt within him, enabling him to perform many miracles. This was the testimony of Nicodemus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man doest these miracles that thou doest, *except God be with him.*" (Jno 3:2). Again, the possession of the Holy Spirit is linked by Peter

with the fact that God was with him, speaking of "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; **for God was with him**" (Acts 10:38).

So then, the real question is, In what sense did God "forsake" Christ? In His continual watching as a Father caring for His Son? Or in the removal of His Divine Power from the Lord's weak, and battered frame? Clearly the latter, for note our Lord's words carefully - he did not say, "my Father, my Father, why hast thou forsaken me" (Luke 23:46 although he did use this term at the last, saying "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit") His form of address was significantly different; he said "My God (El), my God (El), Why hast thou forsaken me?" - where the Hebrew "El" signifies Strength, or Power, speaking of the source of all power, even the Almighty Himself. The Power, the Divine Strength which had dwelt in the body of Christ, as a temple (Jno 2:21), was evacuated, that the victory would be seen to be that of Christ himself, and that the Eternal El would not become defiled by dwelling within a body of death. At the last, that Spirit which had enabled the Lord to perform so many miracles, bestowed upon him like a dove at the time of his Baptism, as he ascended from the watery grave, was sent forth as at the time of Noah, to return when signs of new life were found, when it would once again be bestowed upon the Son - but this time for evermore.

This perception of things is confirmed by the Psalm itself, for whilst it begins with speaking of El departing (the Hebrew & Greek in the NT merely signifies to leave, and is not always used with the connotations of "forsake") from the Anointed of the Lord, it also speaks of the Messiah's continual trust in his Father's continual care and presence: "Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help", his own disciples having forsaken him (Ps 22:11). Again, "be not thou far from me, O Yahweh: O my strength, haste thee to help me ... deliver my soul ... save me ... I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee" (Ps 22:19-22). These tender pleas to the Eternal Spirit who always remained with his Son, although now no longer in him, are expressive of the mind of our Lord upon the Cross - at the time of his deepest agony - which he experienced for our forgiveness. They give us a privileged insight to the Lord's innermost thoughts, and firm confidence that God would deliver him, that he would be raised, that he would be permitted to appear before his brethren once more. And even so it was. "He was heard in that he feared" (Heb 5:7), his prayer was answered, and his desire was fulfilled.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

When we behold The Lord's steadfast confidence in the Father at such a time of extreme circumstances - how can any man, save the unenlightened fail to reflect upon his own personal faithlessness in feeling deserted and forsaken, in far less extreme circumstances? How can we fail to be ashamed at our own lack of courage, and conviction in the Lord's promises when we meet times of far less hardships? Yet we can take comfort in this, that the Lord's desire was fulfilled - he did declare His Fathers' Name amongst his brethren, and the Apostle gives us great cheer and encouragement in his commentary upon the matter: "it became him, for whom are all things, and by

whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the ecclesia will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb 2:10-13).

We who are Christ's brethren, are amongst those for whom the Lord suffered these things. We are unashamedly confessed by him to be part of his family, if we seek to follow after him. Let us therefore, not be charged with the folly of accusing the Father's Son with "intellectual Failure" at the time of his supreme display of faithfulness and trust in His Father's presence, but let us rather behold the example of our Lord - and seek to follow it, that we might also follow him into glory.

Christopher Maddocks

The Chronological Order of the Book of Revelation

The following work endeavours to give an overview of the Chronological layout of the Book of Revelation [The apocalypse]. We find that the Revelation treats developments from a point in time, and then leads up to the coming of Christ in four differing ways.

FIRST: Chapter 6 starts at about AD96 (the time when John received the prophecy) and progresses through **chapters 7,8 and 9** to the return and work of Christ in **Chapter 10**. [Rainbowed Angel v1; 7th Trumpet v7; and 7 Thunders v4].

SECOND: Chapter 11. Takes us back to AD 312 (v3 Constantine) and forward to the Seventh Trumpet (v15) when Christ begins his Reign on earth.

THIRD: Chapter 12 Takes us back to AD 312 and then progresses through **Chapter 13 to Chapter 14**; which is the Saints in Glory.

(7th Trumpet, 7th.Vial, & 7 Thunder Periods) and at war—"Winepress of the wrath of God".

FOURTH: Chapter 16 Begins with the pouring out of the 1st Vial- the start of the French Revolution 1789; and progresses to the 7th Vial which includes the pouring out of the wrath upon Rome- (the latter-day Babylon) by Christ and the saints.

We hope that the tables and accompanying Chapter refs. will be of some help; but of course we need to have some familiarity with the pioneer material that we find in Eureka; the exhaustive exposition by John Thomas and the brief explanation in the 13 lectures on the apocalypse by Robert Roberts.

Les Fern

READ EACH COLUMN VERTICALLY

<u>SEALS</u> 1 TO 6	7 th . <u>SEAL</u> PERIOD COMMENCES AD 324 & RUNS TO THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM			
AD 96 TO AD 324	<u>TRUMPETS</u> 1 TO 5	6 th . TRUMPET AD 1062 TO 2 nd .ADVENT		7 th . <u>TRUMPET</u> SAINTS AT WAR Rev 10 & 11
Revelation chapter 6	AD 395 TO AD 932	Rev. chap 9	<u>VIALS</u> 1 TO 6	7 th . <u>VIAL</u> SAINTS AT WAR Rev 16
	Revelation 8 & 9		AD 1789 TO THE 2ND.ADVENT	
			7 <u>THUNDERS</u> SAINTS AT WAR Rev 10	

Revelation Chapters 6 to 10 open the seals from **1 to 7**: and sound **trumpets 1 to 7**. A Period from 1st. Seal (AD 96), to the 7th. Trumpet (Saints at war)

Revelation Chapter 11 is from **AD 324** (7th seal period) to the **7th. Trumpet** (Saints at war)

Revelation Chapters 12 to 14 are from **AD 324** (7th seal period) to the period of the 7th. Trumpet (Saints at war)

Revelation Chapters 15 to 16 are from the 1st.Vial (AD 1789) to the 7th.Vial (Saints at war)

READ EACH COLUMN VERTICALLY

	Trumpets 1 to 4 Western	(west) Holy Roman Empire	Vials 1 to 5		7th Vial war to:
	***** AD 395 To AD 476	2 Horned Beast (13:11-18) AD 800	1789 - 1809		The Millennium
Seals 1 to 6 Pagan Rome	*	Papal Horn Subdued AD 1868	6 th Vial	Gather Nations to	
AD96 to AD324	*		1832 TO	Armageddon	
	*****	Trumpets 5 to 6 Eastern up to Ottoman Empire	5) AD 632 to AD 932 6) AD 1062 To 1453		

Rev.1-3 The 7 letters to ecclesiastis

Rev.4 Sets the scene

Rev.5 Introduces the 7 sealed scroll

Rev.6 opening seals 1 to 6 [see tables above]

Rev.7 some detail re. the 7th. Seal period (re. 6th.Trumpet)

Rev.8 Opening 7th. Seal (which consists of the 7 Trumpets) Trumpets 1 to 4 [see tables above]

Rev.9 Trumpets 5 & 6 from AD632 Mohammed death to AD1453 fall of Constantinople- Byzantine empire.(vv5,10,15) [see tables above]

Rev.10 Blowing of 7th.Trumpet (v7) and 7 Thunders (v4). All works of the multitudinous Christ at war. [see tables above]

Rev.11 Going back in time to AD 312 (v3) and forward to the 7th Trumpet (v15) multitudinous Christ at war. [see tables above]

Rev.12 Some detail of 6th. Seal period (“woman clothed with the sun” v1; “war in heaven” v7).

Rev.13 Regarding Period AD 476 (Gothic Kingdom) to AD800 Holy Roman Empire established

Rev.14 Saints in Glory. (7th Trumpet, 7th.Vial, & 7 Thunder Period.) and at war- “Winepress of the wrath of God”.

Rev.15 Setting scene for the 7 Vials.

Rev.16 Vials 1 to 7 poured out 1789 to Multitudinous Christ at war, [see tables above]

Rev.17 Setting scene of 7th. Vial

Rev.18 Some detail of the Judgements of the 7th vial period.

Rev.19 Some details of Saints victorious over the nations.

Rev.20 Some details of Christ and the Saints victorious over the nations + Details of the rebellion at end of Millennium.

Rev.21 Details of New Heavens at end and beginning of Millennium.

Rev.22 Details re. the Millennium.

Man in Society

Man, in the history of his race, presents himself to our notice in two states - the *social* and the *savage*. The social is his *original condition*; the savage, that into which he has sunk as a consequence of licentiousness. At his formation, Man, who was made male and female, was propounded to be "very good;" and appointed to live in society, because it was "not good for him to be alone". The primeval society of Eden was constituted of divine and human elements - of God, the Elohim, man and woman: of God, "whom no man hath seen;" of the Elohim, whom he hath often seen; and of man and woman, the perfection of flesh and blood. This social state was free and devoid of evil; yet was in its liberty not absolute, but restrained and regulated by law. Though "very good" and undefiled by sin, man was not permitted to do as he pleased without restriction. A law was given to him by his Creator, expressive of the divine sovereignty over society, and his position in the social state. Hence, society is a divine institution, originally characterised by intelligence, goodness, law, and liberty. Woman belonged to man, because she was his own flesh and bone, and given to him of God; and they both belonged to God, because He had formed them for himself. Society, therefore, belongs to God; so that whosoever hath the honour of membership therein is free to do whatsoever he pleases that is not contrary to the letter and spirit of His law. This is the liberty God permits in society, which is his. Beyond this man must not go if he would continue in the divine favour. Law is the boundary line between liberty and licentiousness. He that crosses it *diabolises*, and takes the first step in the descent, which terminates in the anarchy of the savage state.

From the constitution of society, then, at the foundation of the world, we see that law was an essential element of the social state; and that social liberty is freedom retrained by law. Absolute liberty, or freedom unrestrained by law which defines "order" and "decency", has no place in the divine plan. Man aimed at this. He virtually asserted, that he had a right to do what he pleased with the Tree of knowledge as with all other trees; but experience at length proved to him that he had no unconditional rights; but a right only to do according to the law. He did as he pleased, and in consequence lost the favour of God, as will all others who pursue a similar course.

The existence of society depending upon the maintenance of law, it behoves all intelligent and wise people to cooperate to that end. If flesh were not sinful, or if all men were wise and good, the knowledge of the requirements of the divine law would be sufficient. They would know and do. But flesh is sinful, very sinful; and all men in society have not intelligence, nor faith sufficient to walk by, nor wisdom, nor a love of order, nor a sense of decency; therefore, a simple knowledge of what God requires in society, or a simple reference to what the law says, is not enough to answer the necessities of the case. Law cannot apply itself, it must, therefore, be placed in the hands of an administration, that lawlessness may be restrained, and decency and order maintained in society.

THE SAVAGE STATE

The savage state is the opposite to the social in every particular. The "philosophy" of the Gentiles, "falsely so called," teaches that the savage is the original condition of

man; and that society has grown up out of it as a result of necessity. One who believes in the Bible, however, discards this as mere foolishness. Divinely constituted society is the primeval state; and savage life is the extreme consequence of a departure from its laws. It originated in transgression of God's law, or sin, which, before the flood, acquired with such force as entirely to corrupt the way of the Lord, and to fill the earth with violence. Its career was similar to that catastrophe; and where it was not antagonised by divine interference, but allowed in its fleshly inworking and manifestation to acquire absolute sway to portions of the human race, it reduced them to the condition of the natives of New Holland and the Feejees. The "liberty" of these aborigines is absolute. They do what is right in their eyes upon the principles of "*liberty and equality*" in the abstract. They are without law to God, and know no rule but the necessity of their own lusts. They are nature's freemen, democrats of the largest liberty, who, under the impulse of desire, edify themselves without regard to the sensibilities and wishes of the unfortunates who fall into their hands.

This is the extremity arrived at by the uncontrolled working of that principle called, "sin in the flesh". Cannibalism, however, is but the extreme manifestation of that "liberty" contended for by some, which impels them to a gratification of their own selfishness and vanity at the expense of the order and decency of the social state. The latter is sin modified in its display by circumstances, which restrain it by present consequences from murder and theft; but leave it rampant in the manifestation of "hatred, variance, jealousies, wraths, strifes, divisions, sects, envyings" which though thought little of by the carnal-minded, as effectually exclude from the Kingdom of God (Gal 5:19-21).

Now, by comparing the savage and social conditions of man, it will be perceived that, in his transition from the savage to the social state, he sacrifices, as he ascends the scale of being, more and more of what the natural man calls "his liberty". The nearer his approximation to primeval excellence, the more is the liberty of the flesh restrained, and reduced to a minimum. Between society divinely constituted, and the purely savage state, there are many intermediate social conditions. Greek, Mohammedan, Papal, and Protestant Socialisms, are sin, or the flesh, variously displayed - incorporations, in other words, of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." In which the works of the flesh are manifested with little rebuke. It is for this cause that they are glorified by the multitude which is religiously tolerant only of that which condemns "what they have no mind to". Still we see in these barbarians the liberty, or rather the licentiousness of the savage state considerably retrenched. Law and legal administration are recognised and obeyed; for experience has proved that without these, human society cannot exist.

THE SOCIETY CONSTITUTED OF GOD

The practices tolerated in the ecclesiastical organisations of the world, cannot be permitted in a society constituted of God. Variance, jealousies, strifes, envyings, and so forth, must be abstained from. No member of such a society is at liberty to indulge in these, or in any thing tending to them. The law of love that proceeds forth of Zion

positively and absolutely forbids them. The savage, the barbarian, the Papist, the Protestant, are free to serve sin; but not so the Christian; he is free only to serve righteousness, as a humble and faithful servant to God, who esteems that man most highly who is the least subservient to the lusts, passions, and instincts of the flesh. Therefore it is written: "Mortify (or put to death) your members which are upon the earth;" "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service". "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice; and be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." "Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil". "Be ready to every good work; speak evil of no man; be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness with all men;" and "Let all things be done unto edifying".

Absolute liberty, which is licentiousness, does not belong in God's society. The members of it surrender some of their individuality for the benefit of the whole, of which each person is a very small part. This is a first principle, and there can be no society without it. Now, that portion of individuality which each forgoes, he transfers from himself to the functionaries of society in assenting to their appointment, or in applying for admission, and in being received, into a community where they exist; so that he consents that he has no right to do individually what pertains to them officially. Functionaries, then, are the acting members of the body, administering to its social requirements - its eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet; while the body in which they are placed itself is constituted of the generality of its constituents. These things being understood, there will be no difficulty in comprehending those which more especially pertain to what is commonly termed "a church".

THE DIVINE CONSTITUTION

A church is a society constituted upon principles divinely revealed. It is a company of believers organised for the worship of God, the support of the truth, and their mutual benefit. Union is strength; but there must be union in fact, or association is incorporate weakness. It is not good for Christians to be alone; therefore it is a privilege and a blessing for those who are partakers of the divine nature to be together in society. They afford the truth a local standing; they give it utterance, minister to its necessities, encourage one another, and assist the poor.

Baptism organises believers of the gospel of the kingdom into the One Body of the Lord. In the beginning, this consisted of 120 persons, with the twelve apostles as their eyes, ears, mouth, hands and feet; their eldership, in short, which comprehended all their office-bearers, who attended to the ministry of the Word, and to the serving of tables. When the 3.000 were added to this church, they continued under the apostles' sole administration of things spiritual and temporal, until the seven assistants were added to the twelve, to relieve them of the secular concerns. Deacons, therefore, were not essential to primitive church organisation, seeing that they were only added to meet the exigencies of the case which arose sometime after Pentecost. The apostolic eldership was infallible, having been imbued with the Spirit from on high, which

guided them into all truth, and made them what they were. Their administration was, therefore, the "ministration of the Spirit", by which each of them were endowed with the "word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," "faith," "the gifts of healing," "the working of miracles," "prophecy," "discerning of spirits," "kinds of tongues," and "the interpretation of tongues." This was the Model Church, which was of one heart and one soul, and great grace was upon them all.

The churches among the Gentiles were formed after this model; that is, with an eldership or presbytery embodying the spiritual gifts. These gifts were not common to all the baptized, but to those only which constituted the eldership; and, perhaps, the deacons, who may be indicated as the "helps." Those who had the spiritual gifts were the spiritual men, or "members" of the body "in particular". The elderships of the churches, however, differed from the Jerusalem church, in that each particular elder did not possess all the nine gifts, as did each apostle; but only some of them. The gifts were distributed among several for the profit of the whole body. These supernaturally endowed persons, by the particular gifts they had received, were constituted "apostles" of churches, "prophets," "evangelists," "pastors," and "teachers". They were all elders, but of different orders. Apostles ranked first; the prophets next; then the teachers; and after them the helps and governors; so that the ruling elders obtained the lowest rank in the eldership, and acting, therefore, under the direction of the ministers of the word; yet, though these diversities obtained, they were exhorted to have the same care one for another.

It was the function of these elderships to edify the body of Christ. In other words, the body edified itself through these "members in particular," who constituted in each society the branched candlestick of the church. The unction of the Spirit burned in them, shining as lights, holding forth "the word of truth." All these gifts worked that one and the self-same Spirit, "dividing to every man severally as He willed." The gift most to be desired was that of "prophecy", or the faculty of speaking by inspiration to the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the hearers. The eldership had a plurality of prophets, who might all prophesy in the meeting, provided they did so without confusion. The Corinthians were desirous of "spirits," that is, of spiritual gifts, by which they might be distinguished. They appeared to have desired the gift of tongues above all others; but the Apostle exhorts them to desire that of prophecy; and whatever they acquired, to seek the acquisition of it, that they might excel to the edifying of the church.

NO PLACE FOR DEMOCRACY

From this brief outline, it is evident that democracy had no place in the apostolic churches of the saints. The Holy Spirit constituted certain of the saints overseers, that they might feed the flock of God, and minister to all its necessities, as the pillar and support of the truth. As the prophets and teachers were ministering in the church at Antioch, the Holy Spirit said unto them: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." In this way the rulers and instructors of the body were appointed by the Spirit, and not by the brethren at large. The Father, the Son, the

Holy Spirit, the eldership, and the brethren in general, were the elements of God's society in apostolic times. The Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit, through the eldership, was the authority established in the church. Democratic republicanism would have been subversive of this; and, if tolerated, would have produced confusion and every evil work. The authority of the people and the authority of God cannot coexist. All things of God, and as little as possible of man, is a principle characteristic of the social state originating from heaven, in Eden, in Israel, and in the church. Decency and order can only be maintained by the authority divinely appointed and sustained by the wise and good. This co-operation suppressed turbulence, and put to silence the foolish talking of the wise in their own conceits, who thought more highly of themselves than they were entitled to.

THE APPOINTED ELDERSHIP

The respect and consideration that was due to the elders is clearly set forth in the Epistles. "We beseech you, brethren," says Paul, "that ye know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and that ye esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." "Let the elders that rule well be counted worth of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." Again: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. Obey them, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Salute them all."

On the other hand, the elders are exhorted to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; nor for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither *as being lords* over the heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

After the manner of these exhortations were decency and order maintained in the churches of the saints; yet even with this divinely constituted authority, the heady and highminded could scarcely be restrained. It was the ministration of the Spirit, not in word only, but in power; yet evil found admission, and became the "Mystery of Iniquity, secretly working." The power could punish, and did punish, even unto the infliction of disease and death, and could also pardon and heal the penitent. It was evidently, however, not exercised to the full, but with considerable longsuffering and forbearance; though in many instances, it was pushed to extremities, as a terror to the evil disposed.

Now, to this point I have endeavoured to show:

1. that the social was the original condition of man, on the principle that it is not good for him to be alone.

2. that in this state he was free, yet subject to law, which is an essential element of society.
3. that social liberty is defined by law, by which it is prevented from degenerating into licentiousness, which is liberty unrestrained by law.
4. that as law cannot apply itself, an administration must necessarily exist.
5. that man in society must needs surrender some of his natural or individual liberty for social protection from those who may be stronger than he, and for the general good.
6. that office-bearers constituting the administration are representative of that portion of each member's individuality surrendered for social need,
7. that these principles were incorporated in the churches of the saints established by the apostles,
8. that the churches of the primitive age were constituted by the apostles and evangelists, who, having gathered the baptised believers of the kingdom's gospel into distinct societies, ordained elders in them, who being qualified for the discharge of their several duties of teaching, feeding, ruling, and serving, by spiritual gifts, were therefore constituted by the Holy Spirit.
9. that the elderships were the many branched lamps in which the holy oil, or spirit, burned for the illumination and well-being of the generality.
10. that the existence of these spiritual elderships necessarily excluded from the church what, in modern times, is styled democratic republicanism.
11. that the principle upon which all church affairs were conducted is expressed in the sayings, "Let all things be done to edifying," and, "let all things be done decently and in order;" and "let your things be done with love." And,
12. that the churches edified themselves through their elderships, which were composed of "members in particular;" that is, of members selected from the "multitude," according to specified conditions.

One thing, then, is evident, from a review of the premises before us, and that is, that *there is no ecclesiastical organisation extant like that which we see existed in the apostolic age, and that of the elders who outlived the apostles.* And furthermore, that however intelligent and excellent of purpose and character certain Christian professors may be, *they could not by any unanimity establish one.* The reason of this is, that the gift of the Holy Spirit is a wanting: then, the Spirit called believers, and qualified them for the eldership, and though it instructed and ruled the body; but now, the Holy Spirit is neither in elderships nor people; at all events, neither of them afford any evidence of the fact, being more conspicuous for want of wisdom and knowledge, and understanding, than for the possession of them.

But, because we cannot have the ancient order which existed in the infancy and childhood of Christianity, (for which, indeed, it was specially designed,) is that any reason why, when "a measure of an age of the fulness of Christ" has been attained, and the ancient order discontinued, believers in society should have no order at all; but that A. B. and C., however incompetent in the estimation of all but themselves, should be at unrestrained liberty to violate all the principles embodied in that ancient order, and to set all the rules of courtesy and good breeding at defiance? Certainly not. This is

anarchy, and utterly disruptive and subversive of the social state. Men cannot live in society, literally, political, domestic, or Christian, where such licentiousness prevails. There must be system, and such an one too, as shall be a restraint upon the presumptuous, and a praise to them that do well.

A PRECEDENT FOR ECCLESIAL ORGANISATION

Seeing, then, that the divinely constituted order of things is not attainable, and some organisation must be established if believers are to cooperate in society, it evidently follows that the God of wisdom, knowledge and love, has left it to the most intelligent wisest, and best dispositioned of His sons, to devise a system embodying the principles of His ancient order, through which may be carried out most effectually His benevolence to His children and the world. The case of Moses and his father-in-law establishes this. God had said nothing to Moses respecting the daily judging of the people, which all rested upon his shoulders, to the certain injury of his health. Jethro perceived this, and though not an Israelite, suggested a division of labour, in the appointment of "*able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness*" who should be rulers with him, to judge the people at all seasons. "*If thou do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure.*" Moses took the advice; and though it is not written that God approved it, yet, as Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, we are justified in concluding that he did; for Moses would have established nothing contrary to His will, nor, if established, would it have been permitted to continue.

We are in the wilderness state, and in a somewhat similar position. God has removed the divinely constituted elderships, or branched candlesticks, and permitted his heritages to be despoiled and scattered. We are endeavouring to gather the dispersed together in divers places; but, in doing so, we find the times vastly changed. We are here and there companies, who profess to believe the same gospel as Paul preached, and, like him and his associates, to have obeyed it. We desire to be organised, but the Holy Spirit neither calls any of us to office, nor bestows on us any special gifts. If he prescribe to us no organization for modern times, and he have cut us off from access to the ancient one, it is manifest that, if we are to organize at all, we must do as Moses did, at Jethro's suggestion, and organise ourselves, if God command us so; and we infer he does, as he has not told us how to organize, yet exhorts through the apostle "*not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.*"

It might be objected here that this reasoning would sanctify all the ecclesiastical organisations of Christendom. But I say, no; because, in the first place, they are not organizations of Christians, their members never having obeyed the gospel, so that they are not Christian organisations; and in the next place, the organisations do not embody the principles of the apostolic one. No organisation can be acceptable to God which is not comprehensive of his children; while, on the other hand, I believe he would not be displeased at any system of rule and order they might devise primitive of their own improvement of heart and understanding, and growth in faith, humbleness of mind, brotherly kindness and love; and which would enable them to support the

truth, and sound it out effectively in the world; all which premises that their system embody the principles inculcated in The Word.

Who then should initiate the organisation of unassociated believers? I should answer, in view of Paul's instructions to Titus, He or they who have been instrumental in opening their eyes, and in turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is reasonable that he who has been able to do this, is more competent to "set in order the things that are not done, and to ordain elders," that any one or all the proselytes put together. He has in the nature of things more scriptural intelligence than they, seeing that they had been blind until he happily enabled them to see. The democratic mode of setting things in order, and ordaining elders, has been abundantly tried, and found wanting. It results in every evil work, and in all presumption and confusion. The vote of the majority puts men into office who are unqualified in every particular; and history shows that wherever this principle has rule in church or world, it invariably introduces turbulence, contempt of authority, and corruption; so that at length reaction necessarily supervenes for the prevention of the disruption of society which would otherwise certainly ensue.

THE APPOINTMENT OF BRETHREN

The things Titus had to "set in order" were the prophets, teachers, helps, governments, etc, which "God had set in the churches" according to a certain order. See 1Cor 12:28. In doing this, he constituted an eldership for the edifying of the body in love. If it were necessary that these men should have certain natural, social, domestic, logical, and doctrinal prerequisite qualifications, in addition to the gifts of the Spirit, to enable them to rule well, and to edify the body; how much more important in the absence of these gifts, as in these times, that the office-bearers now should be men of wisdom, knowledge, holiness of life and disposition, courteous, and well bred! Timothy was ordered "Not to lay hands suddenly upon any man;" and to let the deacons be tried before they were made permanent. This must be attended to now. The best men and the wisest must form the Wittenagemot of the church; which indeed ought itself to be as a whole an assembly of wise men; but experience unhappily proves that such a condition is the rare exception to the rule. If all the members of a church were intelligent, wise, disinterested, and wholly devoted to the Truth, the elder, overseer, or bishop's office would be a ruling and teaching sinecure; but this was not the case in the apostle's day, and it is much farther from being the case now. Men are more knowing than wise and prudent in all ages; and in proportion to their untempered knowledge and self-esteem, disposed to glorify and exalt themselves. The folly and turbulence and conceit of this class, which abounds in all communities, makes it particularly necessary that the very best men a church can afford should be appointed to its oversight.

As all things then, must have a beginning, it appears that the names of brethren of the class indicated by Paul might be unanimously inscribed on a list by the members of the church, and be handed to him who called them out of darkness, that he might acquaint himself with them, and see which of them it would be advisable to leave upon

the list for election. If two elders were needed, four or more good, apostolically characterised men might be inscribed on the list presented, which might be reduced, or not, according to the judgement formed of their eligibility by the scrutator who enlightened them. He might perhaps reduce the list to three. Two pieces of paper might then be each labelled "*For Elder*," and put into a receiver with a third piece which should be blank. The three brethren should then successively put in his hand, and take one, upon which they of course who drew the tables would be elected, not by the people, nor by the scrutator, but *by the lot*. This appears to me to be as near as we can come to a scriptural election; and I cannot but think, that "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," so elected would be approved by the Lord himself if present: and would certainly be deserving of all that respect and consideration the Scriptures claim for those who supervise the church. Brethren who would not submit to such men in the Lord should seek society elsewhere. A congregation's spiritual affairs might be safely confided to them, for all their endeavours would be to promote the welfare of their brethren, to diffuse the knowledge of the truth, to maintain order and decency, and to glorify the Father who is in heaven. But, if any better mode could be devised, all reasonable and truthful men would be ready to adopt it.

SPEAKING BRETHREN

In some churches there are few that can speak; in others, there are many. As a general rule, brethren should be "swift to hear, and slow to speak;" for there are very few who can speak to the edification of any besides themselves. Some mistake talking for prophesying or speaking to edification, exhortation, and comfort. They talk at their brethren, to the greatest annoyance of those who listen to them, who, after they have done, are thankful, and feel no disposition to say, "Amen." These are "unruly talkers, whose mouths must be stopped," and to see that the time and patience of their brethren and the public are not unprofitably consumed by such. There is no worship in talking; and it should be remembered that a church convenes for worship and instruction, not to listen to unprofitable and random talk. James says, "be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive a severer scrutiny. For we the whole miss many things. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." Let then those who desire to hear their own voices, read the exhortations of the apostles, and add few words, if any, of their own, unless they have prepared themselves as workmen rightly to divide the word of truth, when they who rejoice in the truth will hear them gladly. He is a wise man who, with a small intellectual and scriptural capital, speaks few words; but shallow waters made a great noise; and so it too often comes to pass, that they who have the least depth are the most prolific of wordiness and volubility. Speech seasoned with salt is excellent; but if it have no savour, it is fit only to be cast away as unprofitable and vain.

In a word then, decency and order must be maintained; and, as far as I am individually concerned, I will identify myself with no organisation of believers in contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints that does not purge itself from the licentiousness which maintains the right of every man doing what is right in his own eyes, to the gratification of himself, and for the injury of the Truth.

John Thomas (1854)

Colossians – An Exhortation for Unity in Love (4)

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST – THE BASIS FOR RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

“You, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death” (Colossians 1:21,22)

In our introductory article, we saw how the first Chapter of Colossians introduces us to the theme of the Body of Christ - how the individual believers ought to be united as a single conglomerate whole by a mutual faith and love in things Divine. But this latter part of the chapter also describes how that the real basis for peace and fellowship is peace with the Lord Almighty first - the unity of believers follows after, as a natural consequence of this. Speaking of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle describes how the Father has “made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself” (Col 1:20). Yet it is one of the bitter perversities of the human mind, that the subject of the Atonement - the very means used by the Father to make peace - is used by many today as a source of disunity and strife. Ever since the days of Robert Roberts - yea, before this, even the times of the Apostles (1Jno 4:2,3), there have been those who have sought to bring in new theories to explain the Atoning work of our Lord - and with them, new controversies, and new divisions.

But why is there so much strife over such a vital, elementary first principle of our Faith? The blood of Christ is the very means of our redemption - it is, in Scriptural terms, the whole basis of peace, not disharmony, as the chapter under consideration describes. But it is a Truth that: “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: nether can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1Cor 2:14). The provision of the only Begotten Son of the Most High God, as well as being the supreme expression of Divine Love and Mercy is also the supreme expression of Divine Wisdom (1Cor 1:24), something which is naturally at enmity with the Carnal Mind; and therefore hard for the natural man to accept. The wisdom of God in providing the Lord Jesus is too simple for the wise of this world - it is foolishness in their sight (1Cor 1:18), hence they perceive a need to devise new theories - which in turn create new divisions. But true wisdom is to disregard the theories of men; and behold the simplicity of the Truth as revealed in Scripture, for only then can the unifying power of the Sacrifice of Christ be permitted to exercise its full influence over us.

RECONCILIATION - FOR BOTH JEW AND GENTILE

The Blood of Christ then, is the basis of reconciliation between man and God - and that in more than one sense. The Lord Jesus died “for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament” (Heb 9:15), that those Israelites who had become separated from Yahweh by their iniquities (Is 59:2) might find peace with Him once more. But the efficacy of the Lord’s sacrifice is not limited to Jews only, for

as Yahweh spake concerning him: “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolations of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Is 49:6). And as Paul spake unto the Gentiles at Colosse: “you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col 1:21). So it is, that in the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles find reconciliation - together: “he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph 2:14-16).

Note the great emphasis being placed upon unity in these words: - “in one body by the cross”, the Lord has made of twain “one new man”. The key idea then, is that just as it was by one offering, made in one body that provides salvation for all of mankind - “unto the ends of the earth”, even so the offering up of that body provides a basis for the families of both Jews and Gentiles to be unified as “one new man”. So it is the logical outworking of a recognition of our Lord’s work of reconciliation - unity amongst the Body of believers, for in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28)

In fact, the unifying power of the sacrifice of our Lord is taught at our weekly remembrance of what he did for us; in the emblems which we partake: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1Cor 10:16,17). Much nonsense has been written elsewhere on this verse, claiming that the Bread, rather than representing the Lord’s body which was sacrificed for us - “the body of his flesh” (Col 1:22), it represents the body of believers. But the Scriptures are clear that both emblems speak of our Lord’s death - Jesus took the bread and “when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me” (1Cor 11:24). No, the lesson drawn by the Apostle, is that just as there is one bread (i.e., the believers do not have a separate loaf each), even so those who partake of it ought to be one - one body, composed both of Jews and Gentiles.

ONE BODY - MANY MEMBERS

But this comparison between the believers and a “body” goes further than this. Just as in a human frame, there are many parts with varying functions and capabilities which join together to form a complete whole, so is the Body of Christ, “for as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many are one body in Christ, and every one members of another” (Rom 12:4-5). And again: “as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ ... For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not

of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" (1Cor 12:12-16). Even so, in the Ecclesia, there are many different tasks which need accomplishment - some prominent, others less so. But let not those who take a less prominent part in Ecclesial activities assume that they are somehow less involved than others - let them not feel that they are not truly part of the body.

In our day, much emphasis is placed upon Speaking, as being of paramount importance, to guide, teach and edify the Body. And maybe there is an element of truth in this. But why is it assumed that this is the main, if not only duty of the Ecclesia? The call of the Gospel is not a call simply to become eloquent speakers from the platform, but to develop the various attributes of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) in our lives - to seek first God's Kingdom and Righteousness (Mat 6:33). Not all members are speakers, even as not all members of the body are the ear, or the eye, or the mouth. Each have been given several abilities to be used in the Master's service, and all work together in a variety of ways, to ensure the general wellbeing of the whole. And this applies also to those amongst us, who we may, quite wrongly have a low opinion of: "those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another" (1Cor 12:23-25). Let us therefore, not judge one another according to the several abilities which God hath given, for it is He who has granted all that we have, whether they be possessions or talents. As the Apostle exhorted the Corinthians, that they ought "not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor 4:6-7). Rather let "the whole body" be "fitly joined together and compacted (knit together) by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph 4:16).

THE REVELATION OF A MYSTERY

Although it had long been testified that Gentiles would have a place in Yahweh's Plan of salvation (cp Gal 3:8), the extent to which this would be so, and the means whereby this would be brought about was hidden in a mystery to be revealed by the preaching of the Apostles. So the spirit through Paul describes it to the Colossians as "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:26,27). And again, to the Ephesians, the apostle spoke of the mystery "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph 3:5,6).

That Gentiles could have a hope of salvation through the promises of God to Israel was not previously unknown to “ages and generations”. This can be seen by the manner in which Gentiles were permitted to depart from Egypt with the children of Israel (Ex 12:38), and by the entry of certain Gentile men and women of faith, such as Ruth, Rahab, Caleb, Uriah, the Rechabites etc into the congregation. It was recognised therefore, that under certain conditions Gentiles could embrace Israel’s Hope, and become part of the congregation, in some cases, gaining prominent positions in the running and protection of the nation. But what was not revealed was the manner in which there would be a general invitation for Gentiles to become “fellowheirs” without becoming circumcised as Jews. Previously, for a Gentile to partake of Israel’s hope, they had to become proselytes (cp Mat 23:15, Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43), that is, to be circumcised, and be brought under the scope of the various commandments of the Mosaic Law. But what was hidden to previous ages, was the manner in which there would be salvation to Gentiles outside of the Law (cp Rom 3:30), through the “law of faith”. And one aspect of this mystery was the temporary cutting off of the Jews themselves, that in the intervening period before their restoration, Gentiles could be grafted in.

THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL’S BLINDNESS

This aspect of the Mystery was revealed by the Spirit through Paul to the Romans, who boasted themselves against the unfaithful Jews which had been rejected. “I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom 11:25). The brethren assumed that Israel had been permanently cut off, and that Gentiles were grafted into the olive tree in their place, and so vaunted themselves against the children of disobedience. But the revealed Mystery is that Israel were only cut off temporarily, that Gentiles might partake of the fatness of the Israelitish rootstock - the promises made to Abraham. Thus, the exhortation was given: “if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee ... be not highminded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee” (Rom 11:17-21).

We showed earlier how that both Jews and Gentiles of faith have been united as fellow-heirs, as one body in Christ. Here, a similar principle is illustrated, but rather than the analogy of one body, the figure of one plant, an olive tree is used. The plant is nourished and borne by the rootstock of God’s promises to the patriarchs, and it was because of “unbelief” of the fulfilment of those promises in Christ that the unfaithful were cut off. But the promises themselves remain, and require the ultimate restoration of Israel for their fulfilment - Gentiles only have a hope in that through faith they embrace the Hope of Israel. They are grafted into a rootstock that requires the bringing in again of the Jews in order that the Kingdom might be restored to them, and in order that their King might commence his reign. Therefore, rather than to boast against the natural branches, Gentiles must recognise their proper place as adopted branches - “wild” branches, tamed by the Gospel message to become suitable material to bear the

kind of fruits the master requires. This then is the true hope for both components of Christ's body, both Jew and Gentile. This is the revealed mystery, that Grace might be extended to the Gentiles, outside of the scope of the Mosaic Law, that being "grafted in", they might hope and long for the completion of the Olive Tree in the re-grafting in of the Jews. For truly, "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead." (Rom 11:15).

(To Be Continued)

Christopher Maddocks

Correspondence – The Nature of Christ

The following correspondence was first published in 2009 and is included for the benefit of our current readers!

I recently read the Logos and had a problem with one of the sections. Page 320 (2009) begins the section entitled Face to Face with the Enemy. Some of the wording I had a problem with was:

"The suggestions were evil suggestions out of a carnal mind, and this could not possibly have been generated from the mind of Christ, for he is the only son of Adam to have been completely free from carnal thinking"

"Even to consider displeasing God is a symptom of unbelief, ignorance and imperfect love. The suggestion of the tempter was sin. The rumination of the evil thought was sin. It was the thinking of the carnal mind which is enmity against God, something possessed in greater or lesser degree by all of Adam's offspring, except the Lord Jesus Christ who was always pure in mind and body. It is this quality that made him to be the perfect sacrifice for God and man. (p. 324).

I would appreciate some thoughts on these quotes and on the topic in general if you have time.

Love in the Hope,

J

Reply: -

Dear J

I share your concern, and discussed the Logos position with its editor some years ago, in response to similar articles published in Logos by another writer. The basic proposition is this:

- Proverbs 24:9 states “The thought of foolishness is sin ...” and so as the Master was “without sin”, he could not have had those thoughts. The concept is that Jesus could not have conceived a thought to transgress without an external tempter. Hence it is argued that the temptations in the wilderness could find an origin only in external influences. An article by Bro Thomas called “Tempter and Tempted” is cited as evidence for the position, but itself does not state this.
- The reasoning extends to Hebrews 4:15, where we read that Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”. Here, it is reasoned that the words relate to the “lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life” (1 Jno. 2:16) formula and is not concerned with where the temptations originated from.
- Again, the master’s prayer in Gethsemane is said to be not a prayer for the cross to be avoided, but rather that the experience would be over quickly. This was first proposed by HP Mansfield some years ago.

My response, which the Editor did not address is as follows:

Re: Proverbs 29:4, The word “thought” as in “the thought of foolishness” in the Hebrew implies not a passing inclination quickly dismissed, but an active consideration, or a desire that is dwelt upon. So it is teaching that to knowingly harbour foolish thoughts in the mind is sin. Jesus himself tells us this: “whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mat 5:28). Here, it is not a passing thought of how pretty a woman is, but it is harbouring that thought, “to lust after her”.

Re: Hebrews 4:15, it can be countered that if the source of Messiah’s temptations differed from ours, it cannot be accurately stated that they were “in all points” like ours - only in some points. Additionally (and crucially, GEM refused to comment on this) Galatians 5:17 states: “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these things are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” If it be allowed that Messiah experienced “the lust of the flesh”, as in 1 Jno 2:16, it must also be accepted that he also experienced how these two contrary principles war against each other in the hearts of those who would seek to do the Father’s Will (See also Romans 7).

Re: Messiah’s Prayer at Gethsemane, this is proof positive that Messiah did possess an independent “will” to that of his Father: Mark 14:36 reads:

“He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt”

Firstly, the words are specific: He was praying for the cup of suffering to be “taken away”, not to pass quickly. If words mean anything, this suggestion cannot be allowed. Also, this passage is specific in stating that Messiah had a “will” contrary to the Father, that he prayed might not be done.

In short, the reasoning expressed in *Logos* actually diminishes the Sacrifice of Christ, in that it diminishes the enemy that Christ had to overcome to being external only - whereas our enemy is greater, being both external and internal. It also means that if this is true, then Christ provides us with no example of how we can overcome the resident principle of sin in our members (Rom. 7), for he did not even experience it, let alone overcome it. And by making his experience of temptation different to ours, then that undermines the points made in Hebrews 4, which states it is precisely because of the sameness of his temptations to ours that he is able to be a merciful High Priest.

Finally, we ought to mention James 1:14-15:

“Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”

(See Deut 30:17 for the OT background for this). How does this apply to the Master? Sin, notice, becomes such by allowing lust to conceive, not by experiencing the initial desire. Messiah, like as his brethren, experienced the “lust of the flesh” but did not allow it to either draw him away, or conceive.

In short, the sacrifice of Christ was efficacious for all sin, whether its origin be external, or internal, because Messiah overcame it at its source – “sin in the flesh” - by passing through the grave, and having the victory over it in his resurrection.

As a final remark, the phrase “was always pure in mind and body” is also objectionable as it teaches the doctrine of “Clean Flesh” - i.e. that the Master’s flesh was clean, and not under the defilement of “the law of sin and death” such as ours. However, as the editor of *Logos* openly repudiates “Clean Flesh”, we can perhaps assume this phrase to be an oversight.

Christopher Maddocks

The Purpose of The Law

Our New Testament reading (1 Timothy 1) for today brings our attention to a particular feature of the Law of Moses, which, perhaps, we don’t often consider:

“... we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the *Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and*

disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and for profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine ..." (1 Tim 1:8-10).

This is an important aspect of the purpose of the Law: it was to bring condemnation upon the lawless and disobedient etc. It was an all-embracing piece of legislation, the purpose of which was to regulate the behaviour of a nation: the nation of Israel. Inculcating Divine principles and precepts, the Law was designed - in the first instance - to be a legal code by which the people were to live their lives. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Heb. 2:2), as it condemned sinners, and provided a means whereby Yahweh's righteousness could be seen to be upheld in the face of the lawless and ungodly. Concerning this aspect, Paul wrote to the Galatians: "Wherefore then serveth the Law? It was added **because of transgressions** ..." (Gal. 3:19).

The context of this passage of Galatians is a reference to the promise that Yahweh gave to Abraham (see verse 18). The Law was "added" after the promise was given, "because of transgressions" which needed to be dealt with in a judicial manner. Again, the Apostle refers to the Law elsewhere as being "the ministration of death" (2 Cor. 3:7), because it commanded death as the ultimate sanction against those who did not keep it.

In Romans chapter 3, we are told: "by the deeds of the Law there shall be no flesh justified in his sight: for **by the Law is the knowledge of sin**" (Rom. 3:20). This provides us with further information: not only was the Law designed to condemn, but also no man could be counted righteous (the meaning of the word "justified") through a faultless observation of it. Try as a man might, he could not render perfect obedience, and so was brought under it's curse.

The Law was a code that brought "the knowledge of sin", for it condemned all who lived under it as sinners, worthy of death. It taught man that he was a sinner in need of forgiveness, and provided opportunity for man to humbly accept his position, and throw himself upon the mercy of the Lord to forgive. Romans chapter 7 expounds this aspect in some detail: by setting forth Divine standards as the basis for behaviour in life, it gave a knowledge that those things which natural men do, are sinful. So the Apostle taught:

"... the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:12-13).

Without Law, there is no measure, or standard, by which sinful acts might be demonstrated to be sinful. Without Law, there is no awareness that certain behaviours

are not acceptable, and are to be repented of. But once the Law enters in, those behaviours are seen to fall short of Divine Glory, and are declared to be sinful. So it is, that a prime function of the Law of Moses was to bring a knowledge of sin.

This leaves us with a problem: if all the Law did was to condemn, how could those who lived under it be forgiven? Hebrews 7:19 provides the answer:

“... the law made nothing perfect, but *it was the bringing in of a better hope*” (marginal rendering)

Once a man was convicted as a transgressor of the Law, that Law could not make him whole, or righteous. The Law brought a knowledge of sin, but could not remove it. However, it “was the bringing in”, or introduction, “of a better hope”. The Law itself testified of how a man could be made righteous – not by any provision from within itself, but rather by a principle of righteousness by faith and the grace of God. So, Romans chapter 3 instructs us in the passage which we quoted earlier:

“therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, **being witnessed by the law** and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:20-22).

Returning to Galatians, the full verse 19 reads:

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions till **the seed should come** to whom the promises were made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal. 3:19)

This passage demonstrates that the Law was intended to be a temporary arrangement, until Messiah should come. Since the promises to Abraham were made firstly, and pre-eminently to his Greater Seed, “which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16), the promises could not be given until he was able to receive them. Once he came, however, the Law was to be replaced by a ministration of righteousness, through which a man might be saved. Again, we read a few verses later on: “... the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal. 3:22).

Here is an interesting aspect: condemnation was brought upon all who were subject to the Mosaic Law for a stated purpose: that purpose being “that the promise by faith” might be granted to the faithful. This provides us with some insight into the Law of Moses, and it also explains why the promises were made to Abraham before the Law, when it came into force after it. Men were condemned to death as sinners – what should they do? They knew of the promises to Abraham, and so had to exercise faith in those promises – even though they would not have known the precise details by which they would be fulfilled. The Law, in its central system of sacrifice and

ordinances for sin foreshadowed the day when Messiah would come as the Seed of Promise. Men were under condemnation, and in their hapless situation, they would need to confess their sins, and their own inability to save themselves. Exercising a godly sorrow that leads to repentance, they recognized their own sinfulness and the need to throw themselves upon the grace and tender mercy of the Lord for their forgiveness.

We find then, that the Law was inadequate in it's inability to bring salvation in itself. There was a fault associated with the Law: "for if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second". But what was that "fault"? Nothing in the Law itself, for it perfectly performed the purpose for which it was given. The apostle continues: "for finding fault *with them*, he saith" (Heb. 8:7-8). The fault was man, and his inability to keep the ordinances of God. How could man be saved if he was "without strength" to overcome? This was the "fault": the Law could not save sinful man. So we read in this same chapter of our Messiah: "but now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). The "more excellent ministry" of Messiah is "better", for it made provision for men and women to forsake their sins, and be saved.

Concerning this aspect of the Law, it is written that it was: "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). Sometimes we wonder how much the average Israelite would have understood regarding the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage helps us: the Law was "a shadow". When we see a shadow, the most that we can discern is the outline, or silhouette. We know nothing about the details. In the case of a shadow of a person, we can see that it is a person, but we don't know what colour skin he has, what his hairstyle is like, whether it is a man or a woman, or many other things that can be seen in full light. The Law was that shadow cast back from the shining of divine glory before Christ. It shows none of the minute details; indeed, these were not made known until much later, when the true light had come. Nevertheless, as a "schoolmaster", it brought the people forward to the substance that cast the shadow, even Messiah himself.

Matthew chapter 23 records the Master's reproof to the scribes and Pharisees:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law: judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Mat. 23:23).

From these words, we learn what the "weightier matters of the Law" were. Indeed, when we go through the list, we might be surprised!

1. Judgment: we are familiar with this aspect perhaps more than the others. As we cited earlier, "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward" (Heb. 2:2).

2. Mercy: is not a quality we readily attribute to the Law, but we have seen that in its condemnation of sinners, it made them turn to the mercy of God for forgiveness.
3. Faith: in our day, it is fashionable to speak of Law versus Faith, or as it is also put: Legalism versus Faith. However, the Mosaic Law was not something separate and in opposition to Faith. In fact, one of its weightiest features was Faith: it taught men and women to trust in the Abrahamic covenant, and have faith in the promises made so many years earlier.

A passage which epitomizes all that we have considered thus far is Ephesians 2:8-9:

“for by grace are ye saved **through faith; and that not of yourselves:** it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast”

This is the position that those who lived under the Law would come to recognize, as they learned to trust in Yahweh, being without strength to save themselves.

The example of Abraham is a case in point. Romans chapter 4 demonstrates how that Abraham was justified (considered righteous) through his faith, not his works alone:

“If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham **believed God**, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:2-3).

The example of the father of the faithful, is that belief, not obedience to Law will give salvation. But what specifically was it that Abraham believed in? The chapter continues concerning him:

“who against hope believed in hope ... and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body **now dead**, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet **the deadness** of Sarah’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom. 4:18-20).

Here was Abraham’s faith – life from the dead! Naturally speaking both Abraham’s body, and that of Sarah, were impotent. They were unable to produce life by natural means. But Abraham believed that God would perform those things that he had spoken, and so gave Him Glory. Interestingly, the passage proceeds to speak of our own position of faith, describing how Righteousness was imputed to Abraham:

“Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him **that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ...**” (Rom. 4:23-24)

Notice the point here, Abraham's faith was in life from the dead (as also expressed in his offering up Isaac as a sacrifice (Heb. 11:17)) – and so is ours! We therefore “walk in the steps of that faith of our Father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12), believing in the promises, and thereby giving glory to God our saviour.

Turning back to the position of those who lived under the Law, we saw that the people were all condemned by it. But the Sacrifice is just as efficacious for them, as it is for us. Time is no barrier. So we read the following testimonies:

“by him all that believe are justified from all things ***from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses***” (Acts 13:39)

“and for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions ***that were under the first testament*** they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15)

“when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law ...” (Gal. 4:4-5)

So it was that through faith in the things that the Law testified concerning the good things to come, men and women will be saved from their sins. Whereas “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4), by faith in what they foreshadowed, the people would be saved through the Sacrifice of Christ, just as we are.

As we come each Sunday to the emblems of bread and wine, depicting Messiah's death till he come, we do so as members of two families, yet one. Christ has “made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph. 2:14). Both Jew and Gentile come together in a common need for forgiveness through the sacrifice of Christ. We learn that salvation is established upon better principles than the code of laws given by Moses, though that Law testified of it.

So it is that “we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle” (Heb. 13:10). The law gave the priests a right to partake of certain of the altar offerings, but it did not grant them a “right” to eat from the Christ-Altar. We come in faith, to that altar, to partake of the benefits of the sacrifice that is laid upon it through grace. “Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Heb. 13:12-13). We seek salvation in the recognition that we cannot become righteous, and so find forgiveness by any other means. We delight in the law of liberty in which we operate, and look forward to “better” days to come. We eagerly anticipate that time when by contrast to the fading glory of the Law which was to pass away, righteousness will be given to us, and we shall be partakers of that ever increasing glory of the Lord though the Spirit throughout the ages to come.

Christopher Maddocks

Notes on the Book of Revelation (1)

The following notes were prepared by the St Helens Ecclesia, following a series of Bible Classes on the subject. We propose to serialize them for the benefit of our readers!

Apokalupsis, Apocalypse, is from *apo*, away, & *kalupto*, to cover or conceal. The word is applied to the ‘manifestation’ of the sons of God (Rom.8:19) & to the personal ‘coming’ (1Cor.1:7) & ‘appearing’ (1Pet.1:7) of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apocalypse was revealed in A.D.96, about the end of the reign of Domitian, as stated by Irenaeus. John was then a very old man ...

The Futurists on the other hand, would make the greater part of the book relate to the time of the end, & a personal individual Antichrist yet to be revealed, who shall only afflict the saints for a little time (3 ½ years literally) before the end. This view which is associated with a literal treatment of many of the symbols, is equally untenable. The Presentist interpretation, that makes the visions cover all the interval between the giving of the Revelation & the return of Christ, & the Millennial Reign upon earth of the saints with him, is the only one that conforms to scriptural precedent (Daniels visions as interpreted here & there by the angel), & will bear serious examination.

(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse abridged. page 1-2)

Dr Thomas points out in an article in the Herald:

“The Apocalypse is a revelation to Christ’s servants to show them the future ... “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him” (Psalm 25:14)—with them “who keep His commandments, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 12:17; 14:11).”

(Volume 4, Page 92)

Robert Roberts comments in 13 Lectures:

“The Apocalypse deals with scenes and events belonging to the earth and to the nations upon it—scenes and events which, in their general outlines, are the subject of Old Testament prophecy from the beginning, and which constitute the subject matter of the gospel of the kingdom.”

“It was sent to his friends.... It was intended for a class who in their knowledge of the purpose of God, as revealed in the prophets, possessed the key for the opening of this enigmatical and more elaborate exhibition of it in detail. None others could understand or make use of it.”

(Page 1-2)

Additional Comments:

The Apocalypse deals with scenes or pageants using colour graphic symbology. When trying to understand Revelation, we must remember, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” Rev 19:10 which comes from GOD “who... calleth those things

which be not as though they were.” Rom 4:17. “prophecy of this book” Rev 22:7,10,18,19 thus renders it all future to AD96 (Rev 1:3;4:1). only those who are in the faith and keep God’s commandments can hope to understand Revelation: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:3).

Rev 1:1. A REVELATION of Jesus Anointed which the Deity committed to him to exhibit to his servants things which must be speedily accomplished; and he indicated them by sign having sent by his messenger to his servant John” (JT Translation)

Revelation 1	Comments
<p>1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him,</p> <p>to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;</p>	<p>“Before God gave it to Jesus, Jesus did not know it (Mark13:32) Jesus knows as much as the Father pleases”.</p> <p>(RR 13 Lectures Page 2.)</p> <p>“servants ‘Literally, ‘bond-servants ‘whom he has ‘bought with a price’, even his own blood. ‘He that hath an ear ‘is invited to hear, & to join the ranks.</p>
	<p>This is subsequently to AD 96 Comp. ch.4:1, ‘things which must thereafter’. A most important thing to remember; forgetting which many anachronisms & absurdities have been propounded in interpretations put forth. “</p> <p>(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse page 2)</p> <p>“It is “A Revelation to Christ’s Servants to show them the future” ... “not all the world. ...sent to his friends” Things which Begin to come to pass.</p> <p>“....the Apocalypse was sent to seven ecclesiastical assemblies existing in Asia Minor in the time of John for the information of all who should afterwards listen. All were pronounced “Blessed” who should keep the things written in it.””</p> <p>(RR 13 Lectures Page 5.)</p>
<p>and he sent and signified it</p>	<p>“That is revealed it by many signs & symbols which He deems to be intelligible & enlightening to the ‘bondservants ‘aforesaid, as to ‘scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven ‘(Matt.13:52); who bring out of their treasures (the Scriptures) things new & old. ‘The Gospel of the Kingdom of God ‘which the Lord</p>

	<p>Jesus preached, is the only key to the Apoc. even 'the things concerning the Kingdom of God & the name of Jesus Christ', as preached by the apostles. Apart from an intimate knowledge of these things based upon 'Moses & the Prophets', it is not intelligible. The Apoc. does not harmonise with popular 'Christianity', & cannot be interpreted in harmony with it."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse page 2)</p> <p>"The use of sign or symbol is very characteristic of the divine mode of communication. The literal is the basis, but there is much garniture of figure from the very beginning. The Mosaic system was one elaborate system of symbol, as we learn from the NT."</p> <p>"The symbols of the Apocalypse are very graphic of the things symbolized; but it is necessary to realize that they are only symbols. Thus John, when he saw seven candlesticks, saw something that had no actual existence."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(RR 13 Lectures Page 4.)</p> <p>Much of the imagery in Rev. is borrowed from the OT. Examples of symbols from Mosaic System 24 Priests = Saints 4² Encampment = Saints in Military Mode.</p> <p>The angel was not Immortal, but a mortal Angel i.e. a mortal messenger. Enoch the 7th from Adam seems to fit (Jude 14). Enoch also plays the role of the 7th Angel See Rev15:1, 6-7; 17:1-7; 19:9; 21:6-9.</p>
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Rev 1:2. Who testified the word of the Deity and the testimony of Jesus Anointed, and whatsoever things he saw (JT Translation)

Revelation 1	Comments
2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.	Amplified: "Who has testified to and vouched for all that he saw [in his visions], the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ.

Comments: "Bare Record = Vouched for..."
Rev 22v8 Shows John was witness to the preaching of Jesus, Eyewitness to his death and resurrection.
"The only use to which we ever find "the Lord's Day" put, or "day of the Lord" (for the latter is the more correct form of the phrase), is to express an appointed day of the Lord's manifestation in some form or other, particularly the day appointed for the judging of the world in righteousness by Christ. This last is the day most commonly expressed by the phrase "day of the Lord" (Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; Phil. 1:6.)"

"Then the intimation: "I was in Spirit" (Rev 1v10), is conclusive against the common way of regarding this passage. The meaning of this phrase is illustrated unmistakably a little farther on. At the close of the first series of things shown to him, John heard a voice addressing him thus: "Come up hither, and I will show thee things that must be hereafter" (4:1), "and," says he, "immediately I was in Spirit, and, behold, a throne," etc. What this means exactly is shown in the case of another prophet, Ezekiel, who being also addressed on the occasion of being about to receive visions, says (Ezek. 2:2): "And the Spirit entered into me when he spake to me;" and again, "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me" (3:14). To be "in Spirit" is to be seized, covered or held by the Spirit of God for the particular purpose in hand -- generally a purpose of vision and revelation. Now, for John to be "in the Spirit on the day of the Lord," was to be present on that day in vision by the Spirit. The Spirit was John's constant companion, as Jesus had promised (John 15:26; 16:13) -- a Comforter, an Instructor, a revealer of things to come."

(RR 13 Lectures Page 7)

"The Son of Man then, seen by John when he turned to see the source of the voice, was not the actual Jesus, but a symbolic representation of him in certain relations, which become apparent in the messages sent to the churches or ecclesiasties of Asia."

(RR 13 Lectures Page 7-8)

Rev 1:3. Blessed he that knows accurately, and they who give heed to the words of the prophecy, and observe narrowly the things which have been written in it; for the time is near (JT Translation).

Revelation 1	Comments
<p>3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.</p>	<p>"There could not be greater encouragement to earnest seekers after the truths revealed than is contained in this verse. Also note the postscripts to each of the 7 epistles to the 7 churches 'He that hath an ear let him hear'. The main subject of the Apocalypse, like that of Dan's prophecy & those of the other prophets, is the history of the saints in their tribulations in the world, & the signs whereby they should know their times, & their true relation to the powers that be & should be assured of their ultimate triumph & the time of its approach with the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ according to his promise."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(CCW Notes on the Apocalypse page 2)</i></p> <p>A great comfort to the servants of God "he that readeth" ie. the reader at each Ecclesia who reads it to the congregation. The reader in a Jewish synagogue used to be called an Angel, "Messenger." In the days of John all reading was done aloud. Often the reader, (Angel, or Messenger) only had one copy of the letter. The message was from the Lord Jesus himself.</p> <p>The word "readeth" is Strong's 314. ἀναγινώσκω anaginwskw; from 303 and 1097; to know again, i.e. (by extension) to read.</p>

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