

473 The Christ-Wisdom and the Christ-Vine

In our recent Weekly Reflections we have dwelt on God the Father in His role as “the Husbandman”. He is patiently waiting until His chosen time has come for His Son to return once again to this earth, firstly for His true Church, His Bride, and secondly, some years after, for His covenant people the Jews. Meanwhile the divine Husbandman is caring, carefully and firmly, for the Christ-Vine, from which all believers in Christ grow as the branches. Those branches are to “abide” faithfully in the Vine so that they may bring forth spiritual fruit, and thereby bring glory to the Husbandman, our heavenly Father (John 15.8).

Now this call in John’s Gospel to faithfulness and obedience, leading to fruit-bearing and God’s glory, is of course a central theme throughout God’s Word, from the Garden of Eden onwards. Yet so often God’s people, under whichever divine covenant they are living and serving, “think better of it” and set out on their own way of “we know best”. The consequences of that sinful folly are never long in coming.

Some verses, right at the start of the Book of Proverbs, make the point very clearly, where “Wisdom” is calling out to the people of those days, and of these days too. Today we can see that this “Wisdom” comes from the Lord Jesus Himself, a not-yet-revealed Christ in the time of the Proverbs, but a fully-revealed Christ now (egs., I Corinthians 1.24b,30 / Colossians 2.2end-3). So we read, “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, [saying], ‘How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and (how long) the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you’” (Proverbs 1.20-23, KJV).

How timely are these words! – for the “chief place of concourse” in our country is the House of Commons, where this picture of Jesus Christ crying out these words in that raucous chamber is so apt, His words being brushed aside in the general mood of “we know best” human wisdom!

In Proverbs 1 Wisdom continues to speak – “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock ... when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress

and anguish cometh upon you. Then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices” (1.24-31).

These are solemn words. Sometimes the Lord God does indeed reach the stage of allowing human, sinful folly to run its course, and He turns away in preparation for judgment. Do the news bulletins of our times not suggest that He is doing just this right now?

Amid the warnings there comes, as always, God’s gracious promise – “But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (1.33). No wonder that we pray for our leaders, in Church and State, that by God’s mercy a true sense of repentance and confession shall take root in “the corridors of power”, and duly bring forth the fruit of righteousness in this wayward nation.

And we pray for the rest of us too, as we seek to abide in the Vine and thereby bring forth God-glorifying fruit. Back in the Book of Numbers we read that the people were to “put upon the fringe of the borders” of their garments “a ribband of blue” (Numbers 15.38) - “... that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God” (vv.39-40).

Each of us could adopt, if we have not already done so, our own equivalent “ribband of blue” to go with us always – perhaps a ring, a badge, a pendant, a bracelet – as a discreet personal reminder that we too are to look, and remember, and do “all the commandments of the Lord”.

Such obedience shows that, by the grace of God, we are still hearkening to the Christ-Wisdom, and are still abiding in the Christ-Vine.

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