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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

Welcome Meeting

Speaker: Bro. Colin Hollamby

Our Dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ The Christadelphian movement has for the past 145 years, clung very tenaciously to a very wonderful and unique doctrine, and that doctrine, brethren and sisters and young people, is the doctrine of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is that doctrine, brethren and sisters, to which this bible school is going to be devoted, because we are going to come to the words of not a 'mere man', we are coming to listen to the words of a person who said that, 'this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent'. And therefore, the words that we are going to consider together, brethren and sisters and young people, are very high words. They may be simple words, but they contain very profound things, and the profundity of them will be seen because they are so simple, and sometimes, brethren and sisters, the very simplicity of what the Lord taught, is not understood by us, because we are looking for something different. We only need to stop a while and to think about what our Lord Jesus Christ said, and everything He said, demands that. And unfortunately, in the world in which we live today, we don't seem to have time for that anymore. We're too busy doing this and that, or going here and there, even if it might be to an ecclesial function, and even if it might be, young people, to a youth function, important as they might be in our lives. But to stop for a while, and listen carefully, is a very great matter in our lives today. And, unless we stop and listen, we will never descend to the depths and neither will we attain unto the heights, of what the Lord Jesus Christ hath said.

Sometimes, we just sit back and marvel at the language, but what we need to do, is to give thought to what is said. It is a very wonderful occasion this week, brethren and sisters, because we feel quite strongly that it does follow on very much from the previous talks here at Silver Star bible school. Some of you will well remember that last year, the Deity in three aspects was considered. That was Deity before He was manifested in flesh, the Deity as He was manifested in flesh, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Deity as He will be manifested in spirit in the age which is still yet to dawn. And this week, we have to concentrate our minds and affections, yea, all our facilities, brethren and sisters, because it will demand them, upon the words, which He Himself said, 'they are Spirit and they are Life'. They are very different words from another man. There is not another man who could ever make the boast that 'the words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life', but the words of our Lord Jesus Christ are so. It is only upon the basis of our understanding of the divinity of that man, that we will be able to come to grips with any of the messages as given.

We'd like to set the scene, brethren and sisters, by turning to two or three quotations. The first one is in John chapter 1. We know what John 1 is all about, it talks about a very wonderful dimension. It talks about something which we very often hold in an air of mystery, but there's no need to hold it in such an air. The only thing it does is to create a grand aura of the pervasiveness of the power of the Deity. And it is in verse 14 the verse to which we refer, because in verse 14 it tells us that 'The Word was made flesh, and the Word dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth'. We are not, brethren and sisters, this week, and young people, considering a man. We are looking past the figure that walked on the earth for three and a half years in intensive service, some 1960 years ago. We are not looking at a man, we are looking at THE WORD. And it is the Word of the person who said that His own Words were spirit and life, that we are to concentrate our faculties upon this week. And those matters that are contained in this verse 14 of John 1 say that, 'He was a person, who when He was truly unveiled, only set forth the Word.'

When anybody truly apprehended that person, they could roll away the veil of the flesh, and they only saw the Word of the everliving Deity (they saw nothing else) and they saw the fullness of grace and truth, as it walked before them for 3 ½ years upon the earth. We think of another quotation, it's Colossians 2 and verse 9, we won't turn to it now, brethren and sisters, but it says there that 'In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily', so that we are looking at an unique person, a special man; there has been no other of his kind ever to walk upon the earth. He was the 'only begotten Son of the Deity.' It marks Him out straightaway, brethren and sisters, as a marvelous person to study. The scriptures describe Him as the 'altogether lovely one', and when we are constrained by the speeches that He made, the discourses that He set forth, and the words that He spake, we are constrained to love Him, because we see in Him, every form of the beauty of the Father. The fullness of that grace and truth that only resides with the Father, and which only has resided in one other man in its entirety, and it's Him, who we want to consider together this week.

There's one other quotation, brethren and sisters, that our minds go to as well, and it's in John chapter 17 and verse 3. We've already looked at this verse, or rather we've alluded to it, for He said, 'That this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true Deity, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent'. So that our position in the kingdom of God is depended upon knowing those two illustrious beings, those two altogether lovely and powerful persons. Because, they are people, and the person of the Father, not only the character of the Father, but the personality of the Father as well, brethren and sisters, will shine through in the words that He spoke. It will shine through in the very emotional responses that He made to the circumstances of His daily life, and therefore, to know the Father is to know the Son and, as the Son said, 'He that hath seen Me, He that hath perceived Me, hath perceived My Father also'. Because they were one. This man was the Son and associate of Yahweh, and it is a position that has belonged to no other man before or since.

We'd like to go back to the 139th Psalm. In Psalm 139 we have a very beautiful prophesy of some aspects of our Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 139 and it tells us in verse 13 that the Spirit of Messiah is saying to the Father 'Thou hast possessed my reins', and we probably all know that the word for 'reins' is the word 'kidneys'. It's only ever found in the plural form in our bibles. 'Thou hast possessed my reins' and in the understanding of the Jewish people, the Orientals in general, they understood that the heart was the centre of the intellect, of course, they were not saying that that's the place where we think, but they used the heart as a figure of their intellect, and they used the kidneys as a figure of the emotions. So, when in the spirit of Messiah the psalmist says, 'thou hast possessed my reins' it means, brethren and sisters, that totally dominating over the very emotions of the Son, were the emotions of the Father. And that is an altogether high concept. It means to say that in every circumstance in life into which the Son fell, He was not only displaying the character of the Father, but He was displaying the emotional feelings of the Father as well. He was the express image of the person of the Father, and these words go on to say in verse 14, verse 13 concludes by saying, 'thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.' And verse 14, 'I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made' and we very often quote those words and we say that it applies to human beings. And it does, but it doesn't just apply to us, it applies in a very special way to the Lord Jesus Christ. The word 'wonderfully' here has actually been rendered 'to sever' when Yahweh made a distinction between the people of Israel and the people of Egypt during the plagues. When He said, 'I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, that's the word He used. So the psalmist is making a prophesy of the 'separate way' in which the Father would go about fabricating the Son in the womb of his mother, because that's the idea of those words in verse 15, of 'being curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth' and what the Father was doing in the womb of Mary, brethren and sisters, by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, was to make this man, the Son of God. And it's here that we cannot stress enough, that we must maintain that Christadelphian doctrine, not that it's Christadelphian in origin, but we are the only religious group on the face of the earth, brethren and sisters, who have ever come to grips with that doctrine. And it is under very serious threat of being obliterated in our midst. We don't understand it and we are afraid of it, because it makes Jesus Christ something different from us, and people say that He had an advantage. He had a grand advantage, brethren and sisters, and He must needs have a grand advantage, because it was in the purpose of the Deity, that He should take up a role that was offered and asked of no other man, before or since. And therefore, when we turn to a place like the 50th Psalm, we are able to extract from it, some very wonderful lessons, some very profound principles, that we might be able to carry them with us during the week, so that we might understand what He said, because it is the stimulation of the understanding that the Deity delights to see in His creatures. He wants to be able to see growth. He does not want to see stagnation; He wants to see our minds expanded; He wants to see them lifted up; He wants to see us rise to the heavenlies in Christ; He does not want to see us satisfied, self-satisfied and indolent with our own station in life before the Deity. It's got to be, brethren and sisters, an ever-growing situation in our life, and it will only ever grow by us becoming more familiar with, and meditating upon, those words which are Spirit and which are Life.

So that in Isaiah chapter 50 and at verse 4 we read that 'Adonai Yahweh hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary:' (and what does it say? We will never find in the bible, where Adonai Yahweh gave Him the biceps of a wrestler; we will never find in the bible where Adonai Yahweh gave to Him the legs of an athlete; we will never find that He was endowed with the fingers of a jewelry craftsman; we will never find that He was given the facial looks of a film star; neither was He given the voice of an entertainer. HE WAS GIVEN THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED. He was given the tongue of the learned so that He might speak a word in season to him that is weary, and brethren and sisters, where is the person that you have ever met, who is able, when you are fainting, fainting in things of the Spirit, where is the person, who with words, is able to succour you in that situation? Have you ever met a person like that? Well, here is a man who was endowed with the tongue of the learned. The tongue of the learned so that He might be able to succour with discourse, him that is weary. That means to say something to us, brethren and sisters. We all remember the words of James for example, don't we?

He says the tongue can no man tame. It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison, well, we're looking at a man that tamed it, but, is James right when he says 'the tongue can no man tame'? He's right. He's absolutely right, brethren and sisters, but there was a man who was given the tongue of the learned, but it wasn't a man that tamed it. IT WAS THE WORD THAT TAMED IT. And so, if it is true, as James goes on to say, that the tongue is an unruly evil and full of deadly poison, and that we are all fully aware that it is the hardest member of the body to control, so that James could go on to say, 'that if any man is able to control the tongue, he is able also to control the whole body'. He's saying this, that it is the hardest member to control, but if it is the hardest member to control, brethren and sisters, it must be the best member to control. And if it is controlled, it must therefore, be the most useful member of all. And that's what we're going to see during the week. We're going to concentrate on words; we're going to concentrate on discourses; we're going to look at discussions; we're going to look at parables; we're going to look at stimulating ideas. We're going to look at things, brethren and sisters, that will lift our minds to the heavenlies in Christ, and that's a very difficult thing to do in us, in a distracted world in which we live. But, do it we must, and our minds must be lifted up to that, and so, what we are looking at is instruction. What we are looking at is learning. And if we don't think we're going to learn, we're wasting our time at a bible school, aren't we? We say that particularly to our young people, and what we appeal to you young people to do, is to go to your classes willingly and listen, because it is far better to listen than the sacrifice of fools, says the wise man Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5. And when we listen we must apply our hearts to understanding it, so that we might be able to be faithfully taught what we are required to do, and above all, in the exercise of that wonderful member, the tongue.

Try to think, brethren and sisters, all week, of what the wise man Solomon says about the tongue, because there are many things he says about the tongue. We'd like to just run through a few psalms where the tongue is mentioned and then, a few of the proverbs where the tongue is mentioned. We won't turn them up, we'll just read some of the verses and not ever all the verses, but the main aspects of the verses. In Psalm

73:9 we have a picture of the tongue. Arrogant, boastful, godless; we see throughout the Psalms that it is vicious, it's malicious, it's razor sharp in it's deceitful ways. It's able to be serpent-like and the Psalmist clearly acknowledged when he prayed to the Deity that he might set a bar, set a gate at the door of my mouth, he acknowledged the grave danger in the power of the tongue. Death and life, says Solomon, in Proverbs 18 and verse 21, 'death and life are in the power of the tongue', and as we are going to consider together, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ this week, we will see that grace was poured into His lips, and therefore, out of those same lips came grace, came truth, came knowledge, came understanding, came wisdom, so that life was in the power of His tongue. There was not death in the power of our Lord's tongue; there was only life that He was giving forth all the time.' The tongue of the just' says Solomon, 'it as choice silver'. The tongue of the wise is help, the tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright'. 'A wholesome tongue is as a tree of life'. 'Whoso keepeth his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles' and 'a soft tongue brakes the bone'. It's an idea, brethren and sisters, that we need to think about very carefully. Here, the wise man, Solomon, in chapter 25 and verse 15 said, 'A soft tongue brakes the bone'. Do we believe that? We don't believe that really, do we? But, it's true; and if we look at some of the discourses of our Lord Jesus Christ, we'll see that it's true. We'll find, brethren and sisters, that they were just few and simple words and they crushed people, because whenever the Lord spoke to anybody, He had one intent in mind, and it was the person's good. And negatively He never had the idea in mind, of placing somebody on good terms with themselves. The whole of His ministry, brethren and sisters, was designed to make people feel uncomfortable, because it is only by making people feel uncomfortable that they are ever likely to do anything about their situation. The false prophets, we read in our readings just the other night, brethren and sisters, in Jeremiah chapter 23 and verse 16, the false prophets don't listen to them, said Jeremiah, 'they make you vain'. And when you feel that someone is speaking to you, and your flesh feels comfortable, brethren and sisters, wrest assured, it's not true. The Lord never aimed to do that, and He never ever did that. He only ever made people feel uncomfortable, because that was His whole design in life, it was His calling. And He was succouring those who were fainting by those discourses that He made.

And we'd just like to run through some of them that our Lord did, because they were wonderful things that He did with His tongue. In Matthew chapter 7 and verse 28 and 29, 'the scribes were absolutely flabbergasted because He spake as one that had authority, and not as the scribes'. We won't turn all these records up, but in Mark chapter 12, when He was confronted by the leaders of the day, they found out, that though they tried to entangle Him in His talk, that this man had stunning powers of reason. And when we see some of those things that He did with men of the flesh of those times, who would dare, brethren and sisters, to try and tangle a man like that in His talk, and you can see that these people were so completely overtaken by their own pride in the flesh, that they were prepared to try and match their wits against His. Remember when He was but 12, and He's speaking with the learned doctors in the temple, the learned men of the day, the cream of the Israeli leaders of those days, and He spake with them on even terms, and they were astonished at His questions and at His answers.

Have you ever thought, brethren and sisters, what might have happened to Him in later times, if in those speeches, if in those discourses with men at 12, He was even slightly overbearing as young men who are skillful might want to be? If He was the slightest bit overbearing in His words when He was a young man, they would never have listened to Him later. Not that they did anyway, but they certainly wouldn't even have given Him an opportunity if He was slightly overbearing in His attitude to them. And whether it was a case of stilling the storm as recorded in Mark chapter 4, or whether He was calming Legion, a raging madman; whether He was stilling a storm or whether He was calming an evil spirit in a man, He demonstrated a skill with words, which is quite unmatched and certainly unmarred. And so we can see, brethren and sisters, when He speaks to His Father in John chapter 17, we see a delightful simplicity of the choice of words that He makes, and yet a profundity of mind, that shines through when we think about what is being said.

We are going to sit at the feet of this man for a week; we're going to listen to what He's got to say; we're going to drink in the explanations perhaps, of what He meant by what He said, and that's what we want to get at most of all, during our week together. We want to find out what the Lord meant by what He said. And that means to say that our minds need to be just like blotting paper. Not that you, brethren and sisters, need to listen to what the speakers have to say in that sense. Their words are just words of flesh; they are not words of spirit and life, but they can direct you to what the Lord was saying. And in our endeavours, brethren and sisters, to bring to you, some of the wonderful meanings and to try and come to grips with the mind of the man. The mind of the man, whom the Father woke up, day by day by day, during all of His experience in those very early days, in infancy, in childhood. We read of that in Isaiah chapter 50, don't we? and at verse 4, where the record goes on to say, 'that Adonai Yahweh has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned'. And here we see the Father's altogether lovely superintendence of His Son. We see the very pathos of His own paternity showing through in those words. We are looking at the excellence of the Fatherhood of the Deity as morning by morning He woke Him up, and He poured wisdom into that little ear, and that little ear was working in its ability to receive the Father's wisdom, and there was never a time as Luke chapter 2 records that there was never a time, that that little ear was not filled with the wisdom of the Deity. And as He grew from day to day, learning the things that the Father knew He could accomplish, knowing perfectly the capacity of that little boy, He was able to do what was necessary. Adonai Yahweh was giving Him the tongue of the learned, so that He might be able to succour the fainting with discourse.

And when we come to a bible school, brethren and sisters, we may very all be admitting that we need succouring because we're fainting. And sometimes our hands are hanging down, aren't they? Sometimes our knees are feeble, and we think, well, what can we do for brother or sister so-in-so, they seem to be flagging in their spirit in the truth? Well, brethren and sisters, we haven't been given the biceps of a wrestler either, we haven't been given the legs of an athlete, and we may not be able to have the dexterity of fine

jewelry craftsmen, and it doesn't matter if we haven't got the looks of a film star or the voice of an entertainer. There's only one thing that really matters; and if we are going to be truly wise, we'll open our ear to the words that are Spirit and that are Life, and we will give ourselves wholeheartedly to knowing how to have the tongue of the learned, which is the most precious possession we've got, brethren and sisters, is our tongue. And when it's controlled, it will be help; it will be a tree of life; it will be a good savour and it will be able to give life, because in it, in it will be the wisdom of the Deity. That same kind of wisdom, brethren and sisters, that guided the man to whom Yahweh gave the tongue of the learned, so that He might be able to speak a word to him that is fainting, and that, by that discourse, He might be able to succour him unto life eternal.