

- 1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
- 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
- 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.
- 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
- 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.
- 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.
- 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices
- 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
- 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.
- 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
- 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
- 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.
- 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.
- 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
- 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The evening before writing this I watched the latest episode of ITV's long-running crime series *Midsomer Murders*. Here we have a sleepy part of rural England, a collection of idyllic villages, where well over 200 people have been bumped off over the years. If I say that some of the villagers that we encounter appear to be a little eccentric, that is to put it very mildly indeed. Among the most eccentric – and a few of them give the impression of being barking mad – are the local clergy. No wonder some of their churches are sparsely attended. Some of them are definitely too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly use. Then there's the old comedy series *All Gas and Gaiters*, featuring the Bishop of St. Oggs, the Dean, the Archdeacon (who was slightly too fond of his glass of sherry), and the horribly heavenly-minded Bishop's Chaplain Noote, superbly played by the one-and-only Derek Nimmo.

Thank goodness for *The Archers*, Radio 4's long-running 15 minutes per weekday evening soap, set in the village of Ambridge in rural Dorsetshire, somewhere in the West Midlands of England. The local vicars have played a large part in some of the story lines over the years, including the current incumbent Alan Franks. Too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly use? After all, isn't that what Paul told Christians should be like, at the beginning of the third chapter of his letter to the Christians in Colossae?

No, Alan Franks definitely has his feet on the ground, and comes across as a thoroughly likeable, caring, compassionate and patient man. Which brings me back to Paul's command to 'Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.' It's not about *Midsomer Murders*' vicars, nor about Bishop's Chaplain Noote. Read what Paul says and you'll discover it's about a different way of living. The 'heavenly-minded' way – the way of resurrection, the way that baptism anticipates – is all about the quality of our relationships: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness.

That is what resurrection life is all about – how we live in the here and now every bit as much as looking forward to what we commonly think of as 'going to heaven when we die'. Then cast your mind over that list of resurrection life-qualities again: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness. There's something really rather attractive about them, isn't there? Now cast your mind further, and identify the people you know who exemplify them; I'm sure everyone can think of at least a few.

One final thought: wouldn't it be nice to think that this is the sort of thing other people can see in *you*! Why not make that something you keep coming back to in your prayers. Pray it, and then do expect the Lord to get on with his resurrection work in your life in answer to your prayer.