

FEBRUARY 1975

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

HAST THOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB?

THIS IS MY BODY... BROKEN FOR YOU

GIVE THE MORE EARNEST HEED

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

JURY SERVICE

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“THE LORD STOOD BY”

WHAT A HELP it can be for us as we read the works of Paul, our brother, who suffered at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees for the name of Jesus. How steadfast was his spirit as he went up to Jerusalem, knowing that difficulty and trial awaited him there. He was no stranger to persecution and trouble, for II. Corinthians 11 : 23-28, tells us of all he went through for the name of Jesus :

“ . . . in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons . . . in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck . . . in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen . . . in perils among false brethren ; In weariness and painfulness . . . Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

How could he manage it, we might well ask ? For we suffer at times only in a small measure by comparison to what Paul knew. Yet, brethren and sisters, we do find it difficult ; we do sometimes question, why should it be ? Perhaps we can be strengthened by the help that Paul found in his difficult trials. Let us, then, look to his experiences. In Acts 27, we read of Paul's perilous journey by ship to Rome. He was to go to Rome because he had appealed to Caesar when his people sought his life ; God had also shown him that he must go to Rome. Acts 23 : 11 :

“ . . . the night following *the Lord stood by him*, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul : for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”

We have also just read in Acts 27 : 23 and 24 :

“For there *stood by me* this night, *the angel of God*, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul ; thou must be brought before Caesar ; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.”

Does this help to perceive Paul's source of help, granting him strength, courage, determination to continue to honour God, at whatever cost might be required ? Paul must have been very aware of God's angel standing by and so greatly helped. Can we, brethren and sisters, be *as* aware of His presence standing by ? For He does stand by—all of us have experienced His presence. We can't see Him ; we can't see, perhaps, His messenger ; yet, He *is* there in time of need to show us what we must do, to strengthen us, to reassure

us, to chasten us, perhaps to hinder ; but *always* to chasten us, to indicate His desire for us.

Can we stand with Paul on the deck of that ship, tossed about by the angry seas for days, knowing that if the captain had listened to him, they wouldn't be in such a dangerous position ? Yet, in faith, believing that God would care for him, for God had clearly shown Paul that he must go to Rome ? In addition, there appeared by him the messenger of God who said, "Fear not, Paul". How helped, how blessed Paul would feel at the sure evidence of God there to sustain him in the face of this very real danger ! Don't we often find, brethren and sisters, in the middle of sore trial that something comes along to reassure ? It comes from God, for the circumstances are so impressive that it can't be merely coincidence. As we look back over our lives, over even the last week, we can sense that the Lord was standing by. Sometimes this help comes through a brother or a sister, a messenger of God ; or sometimes it comes through startling circumstances ; but, however it comes, if we are perceptive, we can discern His standing by. Does it increase our faith ? Does it make us more determined to do His will, to please Him ? If so, He will *continue* to stand by. If we do not respond, if we do not perceive or receive the message, how displeasing to God and what a great hindrance to any spiritual growth !

Let us look at another experience of our brother, Paul, II. Timothy 4 : 16 :

"At my first answer, *no man* stood with me, but all men forsook me . . . "

How alone Paul must have felt—perhaps forsaken—but we read in verses 17-18 :

"Notwithstanding *the Lord stood with me*, and strengthened me . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom . . . "

What was this lion from which Paul was delivered ? Possibly even an actual lion, for the Romans took delight in destroying their captives by feeding them to lions or perhaps the lionlike emperor ; but perhaps more probable, the lion was the one Peter writes of in I. Peter 5 : 8 :

"Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a *roaring lion*, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Surely, we all fight that lion—our very flesh nature—which can

devour us. We *can* be delivered from the very mouth of that adversary, because the Lord is standing by if we seek Him, and pray for His presence.

Daniel knew deliverance from the mouth of the lion, Daniel 6 : 22 :

“My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me : forasmuch as *before him innocency was found in me . . .*”

Is this what God looks for before He will stand by ? Must not innocency be found in us by the One who knows all, sees all ? Innocency means to be clean, pure, or cleansed. None of us *is* pure, and clean by nature ; but as we can turn to God, seeking His covering, we *can* be made pure in the blood of the Lamb. To be cleansed, as Paul, as Daniel, we must be ready to suffer for His name’s sake, trusting in Him, looking for His presence, standing by ; resisting the lusts of our flesh which can devour as a roaring lion ; and be so aware of how weak we are without Him.

HEZEKIAH

In our portion in II. Kings 20, we read of Hezekiah, king of Judah who so notably experienced God’s standing by, having been saved from the army of Sennacherib, king of Assyria ; not by his own strength, but by God’s presence, II. Kings 19 : 35 :

“And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand . . .”

Here was marvellous and miraculous deliverance by that angel of God, standing by His faithful king.

Later Hezekiah experienced the hand of God to help when he fell ill unto death, and prayed that his life might be spared. The answer came through Isaiah, His messenger, II. Kings 20 : 5-6 :

“. . . Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will heal thee . . .”

And there were added fifteen years to Hezekiah’s life, a blessing granted of God ; and as a sign to him, the shadow on the sundial went backwards ten degrees, v.11, a sure evidence of God’s standing by. We know of Hezekiah’s wonder and gratitude at this blessing ; and also of his faithfulness. But, even so, being flesh, it was not long after this that he failed, boasting to Babylon of his great wealth and power ; apparently overlooking that it was his, only because of God’s mercy to him, not because of his own power. Yet, even in

Hezekiah's failure, a messenger of the Lord, Isaiah, stood by to correct and chasten him, II, Kings 20 : 16-18 :

“Isaiah said . . . Hear the word of the Lord. Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house . . . shall be carried into Babylon : nothing shall be left saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee . . . shall they take away ; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

Bad tidings—the judgment of God because of failure—yet, what was Hezekiah's reaction ? Verse 19, “Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.” Here was a response, an awareness that God had sent a messenger to chasten him, to keep him from the “roaring lion”, his own flesh seen in pride of possessions and wealth. How blessed we are brethren and sisters that the angel of God can stand by to help us in His way. We have felt His approval ; we have seen His hindrance. Do we respond as Hezekiah did, “Good is the word of the Lord” ?

We find further help in the words of Zechariah 3, where God speaks of Jesus as typified by Joshua, verse 1 :

“ . . . he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.”

We know that Jesus wounded the serpent in the head, resisted the adversary, and so got the victory over that adversary, His flesh. In verses 5-7, we read of Him :

“ . . . Let them set a fair mitre upon his head.”

The mitre on the head of the high priest was inscribed with the words, “Holiness unto the Lord.”

“ . . . So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And *the angel of the Lord stood by.*”

Was this Jesus' strength ? We know that all through His life, in every faithful struggle, help was given. As He agonised in the garden, “there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him.” The message was, Zechariah 3 : 7 :

“ . . . If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk *among these that stand by.*”

in every faithful struggle, help was given. As

“These that stand by”—His messengers, His people ultimately

to be gathered to Him when He returns. Will we be there, brethren and sisters ?

Does not Paul help in II. Corinthians 4 : 13-14 :

“We having the same spirit of faith . . . also believe, and therefore speak ; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall *present* us with you.”

This word “present” is also used as “stand by”, helping us to see that He will eternally “stand by” those raised up and approved at His judgment. Literally, He will stand by, for such blessed ones will be allowed in His presence eternally because they have besought and perceived His standing by in their time of probation. Paul continues, verse 17-18 :

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment (though it didn't seem like a moment, while Paul was on that storm-tossed ship), worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

The Lord's standing by may not easily be seen ; but by faith He can be seen and can bring for us eternal life, if we, as Paul, can be so strengthened.

Brethren and sisters, let us work for this awareness and readiness to hear and be corrected ; and do let us hold fast to the One who *ever* stands by.

J. A. DeF.



“Hast thou considered my servant Job?”

“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”
(Job 42 : 6).

MEDITATIONS ON A BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

THE CLASS FIRST LOOKED at the divine testimony concerning Job, who is described as :

“ . . . perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” (Job 1 : 1).

Job was of our nature, sinful and no doubt at times guilty of sin, for “there is no man that sinneth not”. Yet the trial that came upon him can scarcely be looked upon as a punishment when the divine estimation of Job is so high. But the difficulty remains, at least for a time, when Job finally confessed :

“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

How can this statement be reconciled with the character God gave him, and holds him up as an example of patient faithfulness :

“Ye have heard of the patience (endurance under trial) of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord ; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (James 5 : 11).

The trial of Job was severe : loss of all possessions, of family, and finally of health. How did Job react to such an indescribable calamity ?

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”
(Job 1 : 21-22).

SATAN

How much have certain sects made of the reference to Satan in the record. They look upon it as proof that there is a Devil or Satan, ever working in opposition to God. We should probably have difficulty in identifying the “Satan”, if it were not for what Jesus wrote to the Ecclesia in Smyrna :

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of *the synagogue of Satan.*”
(Revelation 2 : 9).

In this message we see that there had been a division in Smyrna. Those upholding the Truth, although apparently weak and poor, were told they were *rich*. It would seem that the majority who left the Truth were still holding meetings, claiming to be spiritual Jews,

but Jesus says that their meeting place (the meaning of synagogue) was that of the "Satan" or adversary. Adversary to what or to whom? Clearly to the Truth and to Christ, although doubtless they could boast like those of Laodicea that they were :

"Rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing."
(Revelation 3 : 17).

Apostasy from the Truth usually shows this symptom : pride in works, numbers and other riches.

Of what the *Satan* was in Smyrna there can be no doubt. Jesus tells us that it was those who had left the Truth, although still claiming to uphold it, in that they said they were *Jews*. What a great claim that they were Jews inwardly ! But Jesus refuted the claim, and exposed its falsity.

God has from time to time upheld the *poor* and confounded the *rich*, showing the wisdom of His choice that He :

"Hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (I. Corinthians 1 : 27).

And so in the letter to Philadelphia there is this remarkable and confirmatory statement :

"Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie : behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that *I have loved thee*."

Because thou hast *kept the word of my patience*."
(Revelation 3 : 9-10).

The brethren and sisters in Philadelphia were mortal, sinful and must have been guilty of sin from time to time, but their walk was in the light, and consequently they must have put away sin in the appointed way, and received the great tribute of being, *loved of God*.

Those who have experienced divisions will know how cruel the Satan can be, by his wiles make wrong appear right. This has been the history of the Truth from the time of Eden, when the first parents were seduced by the serpent—truly an adversary or "*Satan*".

The cruelty that Job experienced at the hands of those who doubtless claimed to uphold the Truth is unbelievable.

"They . . . made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to *comfort him*." (Job 2 : 11).

Their start in this alleged mission was one calculated to add to Job's grief.

“They rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.
So they sat down with him (Job) upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him.”

Silence on the part of the adversary can sometimes be more cruel than words. But when they did speak what dreadful charges and innuendoes they made against Job :

“Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent ? or where were the righteous cut off ?” (Job 4 : 7).

How biting was the sarcasm :

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth : therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.”
(Job 5 : 17).

Job’s response in the midst of his inconsolable grief is of a godly pattern :

“Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.” (Job 6 : 24).

No evidence was forthcoming from those brethren who dreadfully accused and abused Job. They drove him to distraction, making him wish he had never been born. He was caused in desperation to feel destitute and his search for God seemed in vain. He could not consent to accusations which he knew were not true, and referred to his former works in the Truth.

“I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor and the cause which I knew not I searched out, and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.” (Job 42 : 7).

Elihu, apparently young, arrogant, and self-important joined the brethren—Satan and made some vicious accusations. He said :

“My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.” (Job 34 : 36).

**WHY DID JOB SAY—“I ABHOR MYSELF, AND REPENT IN
DUST AND ASHES” ?**

The difficulty is perhaps made the greater by the final testimony of Job by the Almighty. In God’s condemnation of Job’s evil brethren He said :

“My wrath is kindled against thee (Eliphaz) and against thy two friends : for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.” (Job 42 : 7).

In these few words God's choice of Job as a faithful brother was upheld: the cruel jealousy of his brethren was condemned who were caused like the Satan in Philadelphia to acknowledge their error and seek the forgiveness of the grievously injured, of whom they must recognise that God has said "*I have loved thee.*"

This, however, for a moment only increases the difficulty of why then Job should "repent". Job, though righteous, never was self-righteous. He was arrested like his brethren by the august presence of Yahweh in the awesome whirlwind. What overwhelming power this showed! What inscrutable majesty. Recent happenings in the tornado-stricken city of Darwin, West Australia may convey a slight idea of this divine power.

When Job was in the presence of such power, however righteous and faithful he had been, he could not help exclaiming:

"For who is he that hides counsel from thee, or who keeps back his words, and thinks to hide them from thee? And who will tell me what I knew not, great and wonderful things which I understood not?" (Sept).

He could not answer God, therefore said:

"Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." (Job 40:4).

The word "*vile*" in our version may give a wrong impression. Job was no villain. The original carries the idea of awe, meaning "O my judge".

Who of all would not feel like this? Overcome by the exceeding majesty and power of Yahweh. Even Daniel felt similarly when he was brought in vision into the presence of Angelic glory:

"A great quaking fell upon them (his companions) and so they fled to hide themselves.

Therefore I was left alone . . . and there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." (Daniel 10:7-8).

God's holiness and majesty is so great that mortal eyes cannot behold him and live. There is no faithful brother who has not been brought by some experience to feel the excellence and mightiness of the God of heaven, who has not felt a sense of weakness and unworthiness because of his sinful propensities. This was so with Daniel, and likewise with Job, who as a righteous man felt keenly his native iniquity.

Paul speaks for us all in this respect :

“O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?” (Romans 7 : 24).

Job was wrongly accused, endured his trial, and finally showed he was a faithful brother, and that his jealous adversaries were evil. By his experience of the mightiness of God he could say (as perhaps many can) :

“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee.” (Job 42 : 4).



“This is my body . . . broken for you”

THERE WAS NO GREATER THING that Jesus could have done for His friends than He lay down His life for them. “Greater love hath no man than this . . .” He said, before He suffered the death of crucifixion at the hands of His own people.

It was the time of the Passover feast in Israel and Jesus we read, greatly desired to eat it with His disciples before He died ; a death that He knew God required of Him, and at this time. As they gathered together in that upper room prepared to eat the Passover Jesus took the opportunity of putting to them clearly in words they could understand the meaning of the feast as it concerned Himself, as the Lamb of God.

The Passover originated in Egypt on the night prior to the deliverance of Israel by God from the power and influence of the Egyptians (though the death of a redeemer was signified from the beginning as in the offerings of Cain and Abel), the night in which Egypt was smitten with the last and most fearful of all the plagues, the death of the firstborn in every home. Exodus, chapter 12, describes most vividly the details of that dreadful night.

“Take a lamb for each house—a lamb without blemish—keep it until the fourteenth day—kill it in the evening. Take the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post. Eat the flesh, roast with fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Eat it with loins girded, shoes on your feet, staff in your hand, ye shall eat it in haste—it is the Lord’s Passover.”

God said let the Passover feast to be kept by Israel as a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt, kept as a feast by an ordinance for ever. The Lamb without blemish, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, all significant of the Lamb of God "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". It was the anniversary of that Passover in Egypt that Jesus and His disciples kept in the simple meal in that upper room. As an ordinance the feast was done away with in Christ—the law as in ordinances being fulfilled in His death; from henceforth do this, He said, in remembrance of me. Thus the disciples and the early churches continued, "breaking bread from house to house—every first day of the week." Few realise that in the purpose of God, Jesus had to offer Himself, that He had to die to show the righteousness of God, for He was of the same stricken nature carried by all of Adam's race. Not many believe the Scriptures which tell us that this is so, one of which declares :

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities : *but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*"

Was He not, after being baptised of John, led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tempted by His own fleshly desires? —from the agony of His own physical need of food tempted to change stones to bread (which He could have done) to the claiming of the kingdoms of the earth (which He could have had) if He had given into those desires? Wouldn't the scriptures be false and a confusion if Jesus had not really been tempted, and if He could *not* have failed in each trial?

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, was Israel's Messiah, of the Seed of David and the tribe of Judah, and, by the foreknowledge of God, the redeemer of all mankind, through His own overcoming and sinlessness and the faith of all who believe in Him according to the scripture. He was a special creation, the only begotten Son of God, yet as the Son of Mary "Son of Man", he carried the sinful flesh we all inherit, and through suffering even to the cross, He was granted victory over the grave and thereby, and for all who believe in Him.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept . . . every man in his own order : Christ the first fruits ; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." (Corinthians 15 : 20 and 23).

Man could not be redeemed by man, except by the One who bore the same sin stricken nature and overcame it perfectly, without sinning in thought, word or deed, Jesus could say, "which of you

convinceth me of sin ?” (John 8 : 46) though He was “. . . tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4 : 15).

Understanding His nature, one can realise the greatness of His work in overcoming the flesh and the world, “for there is no man that sinneth not.” (I. Kings 8 : 46). We read that it was for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, and as the typical High Priest of Israel :

“He offered first for himself and then for the sins of the people . . . and by his own blood obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9 : 7 and 12).

Jesus knew what had been foretold of Him by the prophets, He knew what was required of Him, if any were to be saved, and He offered Himself voluntarily. The hope of the reward is so great that only the life of the Son of God could obtain it, for “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins” and only the blood of the sinless One can cover the sins of those who believe in Him. Not in the fervent belief that Christ died as a substitute as is so widely held by Christendom ; but, according to the scriptures in full knowledge of why He had to die, so that in belief in Him and by baptism *into His death* we might in this appointed way associate ourselves with His sufferings in overcoming and by striving to make ourselves worthy of His sacrifice can we receive the forgiveness of God for the sins we commit daily, without which forgiveness we cannot hope to enter into the promised inheritance with Him.

How great is the blessedness of those who meet together in this faith, to whom Jesus spoke at that last supper.

“This is my body, broken for you.”

The bread is His body, through faith. How gracious of God to permit us to eat it as representing His Son, the firstborn of the dead. May we be worthy, and faithful to *all* His commandments until the day we shall stand before Him, at the Judgment Seat.

J.P.



“Give the more Earnest Heed”

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” (Hebrews 2 : 1).

THE GREEK WORD rendered “earnest” conveys more than perhaps is realised. It means “much more” in the sense of a super-abundance of hearing or listening. How prone human nature is to act in absolute opposition to such a desirable quality. To either fail to hear, or to be a long time in hearing. When feet drag over matters in which there should be more responsiveness it is because there is not a giving of “more earnest heed to the things which have been heard.” When it requires much labour on the part of brethren desiring to help before necessary things sink in and are grasped, it is because if there is any hearing at all this is very casual. A super-abundance of hearing on the other hand means fulness in the things which really matter.

Those who close their ears, and harden their hearts, who are difficult and unapproachable, are why they are because they do not fully perceive what God requires of them. How can the difficult and unapproachable ones be said to have a super-abundance of hearing? Yet without this quality there can be no improvement. The warning of Hebrews 2 : 1 is :

“Lest at any time we should let them slip.”
(i.e. let slip the things which have been heard).

All called to the Truth did hear at one time. But if the heedlessness takes over there cannot be a retaining of the good things already obtained. As the Bible margin expresses it, even the things given in the first place will run away as out of a leaking vessel. What a dreadful position to be in, to be empty of such things. But having lost, as some have, is not the end of the matter :

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation : which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ;

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will ?” (Hebrews 2 : 3-4).

When the original word “neglect” is examined a more significant meaning again begins to appear. It means “to make light of”. If there is a making light of something so great and wonderful, as salvation, then such deserve whatever is meted out upon them. How easy though for perception to wax dim, then the salvation which God

offered does not appear in its inestimable value in the mind as it really should. This state of mind arises when there is not a super abundance of hearing. It is not as though there has been a lack of provision to convince of the reality of the salvation which God holds out. The spirit emphasises what has been given in the words of verse 4 :

“God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

The signs in the days of the Apostles were wonderful indeed but in these last days those in the Truth have not been bereft of such things to help faith to increase. There have been great needs, and at times great sufferings, sometimes of long duration. Why ? Is the answer to that individually and collectively the Body might be helped to realise how great is the need of His salvation ; and therefore when it does finally come, how wonderful will it be. Sickness comes as part of the consequence of this natural life, sometimes it is painful and sometimes of long duration. This tells far more than words can convey, how great is the need to be delivered. When there is deliverance which surely comes in a measure even now, then the mind is helped to feel the earnest which God desires should be felt of the final deliverance which will most surely come to all those who are His. Sometimes deliverance can come with a suddenness that has a very sobering effect. The Almighty Hand snatches from peril, saves, delivers ! Here is a sign which tells and helps the mind to see how great is His Salvation. How important then is the exhortation :

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation (or make light of it) ?”

There is further help to see how good God is to His people :

“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man, that thou visitest him ?” (Hebrews 2 : 6).

What is man, that The Most High who has stretched out the heavens as a curtain should think of man and provide for him, and help him and protect him ? Yet God is mindful, and from time to time He shows this mindfulness in a tangible form, as well as through the wonderful word of His Truth. Suddenly it is found there has been protection and preservation. But then sometimes there has to be a waiting for His Hand, for that slow but sure out working which when looked back upon is seen as a wonderful, marvellous deliverance. What is “the Son of Man, that thou visitest him ?” “Visitest”, as looked at in the original is again helpful. “To inspect”, which by implication can mean to select. In natural life

when there is a desire to select something then it is certainly inspected. God does inspect ; goes to see ; i.e. in the infinite way in which He works, and as He relieves. But though all mankind are remembered by God in a universal provision which is very greatly and selfishly misused by man, God *does not* select all mankind. It was the Son of Man who was selected ; Jesus, who (verse 9) was made a little lower than the angels and was delivered from death ; saved ; given salvation and crowned with glory and honour.

He was relieved in the days of His weakness because there was a continual going by God to see Him. This word "visitest" then, speaks of a wonderful mindfulness, undoubtedly displayed toward the Son of God, which in itself is a sign and a promise of the same mindfulness exercised towards all those who belong to the Body of Jesus, the "Son of Man".

Can this be forgotten, can such a blessing be allowed to run away and leave empty and void of all that is eternally good ? So comes God's message to help, to warn against such a disaster :

"Give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard."

This is to enable God to effect the final deliverance as spoken of in verse 15, a deliverance for all belonging to The Son of Man, who through fear of death (i.e. are not blind to God's just condemnation) have been subject to bondage ; a bondage they have known they are subject to, from which there can only be salvation through Christ in being filled with an abundance of hearing and taking heed of the things concerning Him. D.L.



"The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the World"

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth ; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

(Revelation 13 : 11).

THOUGH LAMB-LIKE THE POWER above described is really dragonic and comes "up out of the earth". The Spirit thus describes its origin, emphasising that because *it is* from the earth, it is therefore earthly, sensual and devilish and but a forgery of the

Lamb of God who is in heaven, and came as a result of the blessing of heaven.

The history of the beast of the earth is a formidable one showing that by deception it has been able to exert powerful influence upon the policies of nations. In the fifth century its growing influence was seen when Pope Gelasius determined to curb interference by the Byzantine emperors. He insisted that the civil and "spiritual" powers should have mutual independence, stressing however that the "spiritual" power was superior, just as the life to come was more important than the present life. This move, in the subtle way in which it was conveyed, really took away the mutual independence propagated by the papacy and made the civil power dependent upon the Church. At the time a document was produced called the Donation of Constantine. It was greatly used by the church to bolster its authority. The document stated that in the days of Constantine before he quelled paganism and exalted the church, he suffered from leprosy. As a cure he was advised by his pagan priests to bathe in the blood of babes. Constantine shrank from such cruelty. As a consequence the Apostles Peter and Paul appeared to him in a vision and instructed him to seek out Sylvester the bishop of Rome, who at the time was in hiding. The bishop baptised the emperor who was thereby completely cured. Constantine then retired to Constantinople saying that secular power should not detract by its presence from the papal authority. The document then affirmed that Constantine conferred upon the pope primacy over Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem and temporal jurisdiction over the whole of the West. Approximately a thousand years elapsed before it was revealed that the Donation of Constantine was a forged document, and that Constantine had given no such authority.

About the time when this came to light Martin Luther was raised up as one of the instruments in the working out of world affairs which are, of course, foreknown by God. When Luther challenged the infallibility of the pope, the pope summoned Luther to Rome, but Frederick a senior member amongst the electors of the Holy Roman Empire and prince of Saxony, in whose domain Luther dwelt, resolved that Luther should not be sent to Rome, but rather have a hearing in his own country. Luther could easily have suffered death at the stake for his challenge, but the lamb-dragon power was immersed at the time in the manipulation of the imperial election. The Holy Roman emperor Maximilian died in 1519 and a successor had to be elected from amongst the kings of Europe. The pope was very reluctant to have a ruler, in a strong position, raised to such an office. Francis the First of France was strong, so was Charles the First of Spain, but Frederick the protector of Luther was a minor

prince and so the pope felt he was suitable, so about that time the papacy hesitated for almost four years before they excommunicated Luther who turned out to be one of the forerunners in the uprising of Protestantism. As it happened the Hapsburg Charles the First of Spain did become the emperor. But he still could not act against a subject living in the country of another prince. Such action required the consent of the Diet, which was to convene in January, 1521, in the city of Worms on the Rhine. But at that time the Diet was reluctant to act before giving Luther a hearing. It seems somewhat significant that the papal representative at the Diet discovered that the bull of excommunication against Luther named other individuals also, and one of these was Ulrich von Hutten the German nationalist leader who at the time was in a position to swoop upon the Diet with armed forces. The pope's representative was afraid, and sent an urgent message to Rome for a substitute bull naming only Luther. But there was now a newly elected pope and he could see the possibility of a conflict between the Hapsburg emperor and the papacy developing. Therefore Frederick, Luther's lord, might still be useful. So the pope did not hasten to send a new bull with only Luther's name mentioned. The Diet thereupon declined to ban without trial one not publicly excommunicated by the Church. So the Church's obsession with political manoeuvring at the time gave the protestors the scope to gain power. Their influence grew, so that to this day the Roman Church has never retrieved its supreme religious position that it lost.

But its power grows, for the voices of protestors have grown weak. They protest only in name, and extend the hand of friendship. But the evidence of its lamb-dragon characteristics are still evident to the thinking mind. Towards the end of last year (1974) the leader of the Roman Church, dressed most impressively, having a silver hammer adorned with gold, knocked upon the "Holy Door in St. Peter's". The door being opened as a result was to signify the commencement of the "Holy Year". Six million visitors are expected in Rome as a result of this.

Much is said by the Vatican on the subject of world peace. Impressive phrases about world brotherhood are used. So the appearance of a lamb is displayed, but at times the dragon tone can be discerned by those who are kept from deception.

Last year a Greek Catholic Archbishop was found guilty of smuggling arms and explosives into Jerusalem for use by Arab guerillas and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for this offence. As a result the Vatican's Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem made the observation : "I don't think it is going to improve relations between

the Christian and Jewish community.” The Church’s position was that there should be “a very special kind of treatment given to the heads of Christian communities” when conflict with the law is involved. “The treatment accorded to a Christian community leader is expected to be rather different from that given to an ordinary man in the street.” Israeli authorities had been approached and asked for the Archbishop’s “liberation”. The spokesman for the Vatican went on to say :

“When Christ was born, the land of the Jews was occupied. They were under governors whom they considered foreign to them and they were looking at that time for a liberator, hoping he would be a great conqueror who would drive the occupiers out and give them back their freedom and independence. I imagine a good many of the Palestinians feel the same way today.”

So in this way the dragon voice begins to be discerned, speaking on behalf of Palestine guerillas and upholding in effect the action of the convicted Archbishop. How reminiscent of those early days when the Church claimed its independence along with superior “spiritual” power. How different to The Lamb who is to stand on Mount Zion (Revelation 14 : 1). So the thoughtful are enabled to discern another sign of these times indicating the return of The Lord Jesus to deliver those who follow “the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” (Revelation 14 : 4).

D.L.



Jury Service

MANY ARE THE TESTS which the Almighty brings upon His people to prove what is in the heart, whether we shall be a separate people, not conformed to this world, but to Christ.

There have been many discussions in time past whether it is right to serve on a Jury in the Crown Court of English Law, to sit and decide if an alleged offender is guilty, knowing that in the days of capital punishment it meant death, and in many cases imprisonment, maybe for life. It needs little consideration that no member of the One Body could possibly allow himself such a position ; yet in English Law there is no exemption on conscientious religious grounds, and the punishment which can be given for what is called "contempt of court" involves imprisonment until "purged" of the offence in the view of the High Court Judge.

The demand to appear on a Jury takes the form of a "Summons", an ominous word.

Recently one of our members received such a summons. The following letter was sent appealing for exemption :
The Jury Summoning Officer—Summons C75/604 :
Dear Sir,

I hereby acknowledge receipt of your communication dated 6th January, 1975 requesting my attendance at Chester Crown Court to serve as a juror on February 17th, 1975.

May I respectfully and humbly crave exemption from this Jury service on the grounds of religious conscience.

As a member of a body known as "The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia" (formerly known as Christadelphians) who sincerely and firmly believe that our calling is one to serve God and His Son, which primarily requires complete separation from all worldly affairs and associations, Our religious conviction forbids membership of any organisation or unions, etc., and the exercise of voting.

Further in striving to uphold Divine commands, my conscience does not allow for me to go to law with any, irrespective of circumstances and therefore I could not take part in the administration of the law.

Please accept that there is no desire at any time to disregard or show disrespect for the authority of those appointed to uphold the law of this land, and therefore seek your understanding and clemency.

May I add that our members in this country and Northern Ireland have received exemption from Jury Service.

Yours very sincerely,

The result may be published next month.

W.V.B.



News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK : Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread 11-30 a.m. Sunday School 1-30 p.m. Bible Class : Midweek, Forestville, Hamburg and Orchard Park. Alternative week : Revelation Study.

As the new year begins, we wonder what it will bring. Will Jesus return in 1975 ? What further testing will 1975 bring ? As we look back over 1974, we can see how God's hand has worked to bless, to chasten, to test, bringing joy and sadness, yet always with the knowledge that He knows what is right for us and brings it to pass in His own way not ours.

Our supplications and thoughts are with those who are ill, asking God's healing if it be His will.

The Sunday School Party is planned, God willing, for February 15th.

J.A.DeF.

NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN, Northern Ireland.

Breaking of Bread, Sunday 11-30 a.m.

Sunday School 2-0 p.m.

Bible Class—Wednesday evening.

We were grateful for the opportunity to visit Manchester and share in discussion and counsel as we strive to reach out towards the perfect unity in all things concerning the welfare of the One Body ; grateful also for the love and care received.

We have in our thoughts continually those who are in ill-health.

J.P.

OTHER NEWS OMITTED DUE TO LACK OF SPACE