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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

“ . . . BECAUSE THEY RELIED ON THE LORD . . . ”

The history of Israel and Judah after the time of King David is recorded in II Chronicles which we are now reading. It was David and his son, Solomon, who brought Israel to the height of its power. This was possible because of David's trust in his God, his obedience and desire to honor Him. Solomon was moved at first by this same desire, and so Israel prospered. As we read further, there can be seen a declension from these high standards which pleased the Almighty. There was instead a striving for that which pleased themselves — a reaching out for power, material possession, and self-satisfaction. How wise is our God to record this history for our help today as we strive to honor and obey Him. In the days of these kings, Israel was a nation, known and feared as a power in the earth. There were many evidences of God's presence and power with them, giving them every reason to be thankful and to serve Him faithfully. However, this record reveals how few actually did so. We today, so very few, may find it hard to understand how His people in such blessed circumstances could fail to put their trust in Him. Perhaps, if we look carefully at this history, help can be found enabling us to more fully turn to our Father.

After Solomon, Israel was divided into two people — the ten tribes and the two tribes. The warfare that resulted caused the children of God to fight against their brethren — also His children. How sad for the Almighty as He observed the consequences of human weakness and lust. Yet He was there to support, to stand by those who would turn to Him.

In a recent portion, we have seen the warfare between Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, king of Judah; and Jeroboam, the idolatrous king of Israel — the ten tribes. Jeroboam's army numbered eight hundred thousand, while that of Abijah's totalled four hundred thousand fighting men. These were heavy odds against Abijah and Judah. Yet the king put his trust in the God of Israel as he said to Jeroboam:

“ . . . God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.” II Chronicles 13:12.

What was the result of this faith?

“ . . . the children of Israel fled before Judah:
and God delivered them into their hand.” Verse 16.

Truly this was a great victory for Abijah and his people. How was it possible?

“ . . . the children of Judah prevailed, *because they relied upon the Lord God* of their fathers.” Verse 18.

Numbers meant nothing in this conflict because Judah relied upon their God. To *rely* means to lean upon, to rest, to stay, giving the thought of being supported.

How clearly this great victory would speak to the faithful in Judah! If there is a leaning upon the Lord, resting in *His* strength, there can be a prevailing against any adversary no matter how strong. We are faced with adversaries, the strongest of which is our own self, with its fleshly desires, fears, weaknesses, tendencies — not honoring to the Father. When these characteristics raise their heads must we not, Brethren and Sisters, discipline our wayward hearts to rely on Him, with the knowledge that He is fully aware, wanting to help us prevail? God can be *our* captain even as He was over the armies of Abijah, if we are willing to lean upon Him. Abijah reigned only three years; yet, by his experience, we are helped to face whatever adversities God may bring to prove our trust.

“ . . . *WE HAVE SOUGHT THE LORD . . .* ”

Following the reign of Abijah, Asa ruled over Judah for forty-one years. He must have been impressed by the prevailing of Judah under God's hand, for he took away the idols, the groves, and the images. As a result of this faithfulness, the record is:

“ . . . because we have sought the Lord our God, . . . he hath given us rest on every side . . . ”

II Chronicles 14:7

Here was a blessing, quietness, and peace which can only be found where God is sought and searched after. Yet in the midst of this period of rest came a test:

“ . . . there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots: . . . ”

II Chronicles 14:9.

This seemed an overwhelming force — almost double Judah's five

hundred and eighty thousand men, Asa, trusting in his God, cried out in prayer:

“ . . . Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we *rest* on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.” II Chronicles 14:11.

Asa rested or relied as the word means, on the Lord. The result?

“So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.” Verse 12.

How momentous the victory for Judah, but only because of their reliance upon God.

In our struggle to get the victory over our flesh which is great in strength, there can be a prevailing, but only as we lean on *His* strength, *His* wisdom, *His* word.

The Spirit of God speaking through His prophet brought to the king this message very clearly.

“ . . . the Spirit of God came upon Azariah . . . and (He) said . . . Hear ye me, Asa . . . The Lord is with you,

while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; . . .

Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.” II Chronicles 15:1-7.

Asa and Judah did work; the idols, the groves, the images were removed, and an oath was made to serve God:

“And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them:

and the Lord gave them rest round about.” Verse 15.

There were twenty years of rest, of ease, and blessing because of trust, leaning upon their God, and serving Him. But again came a test. Baasha, king of the ten tribes, came up against Judah and built Ramah to blockade it. There is no mention of how strong the army of Baasha was; but Asa, after twenty years of rest, quickly sought the help of Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, rather

than that of his God. Why would he fail this time to rely upon God? Could he have forgotten the victory of Abijah over Israel some forty years earlier? Had he forgotten the rout of the Ethiopians twenty years prior? Had the twenty years of rest taken away his awareness of God's presence and protection, as well as the danger which besets? Whatever the reason, Asa failed to rely upon his Father. We are told by the Spirit through Hanani, the prophet:

“ . . . Because thou hast *relied* on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand.”

II Chronicles 16:7-8.

How easily the human mind is lulled into a sense of security, of self-sufficiency when times are good. Then in times of testing, of affliction, it may frantically search for every possible source of help, except in simple humility, the One Source which never fails, is always there.

“THE EYES OF THE LORD . . . ”

The word of God through His prophet Hanani reminded Asa and ourselves that God's presence is always there, all-wise, with perfect help if we turn and rest in His love.

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them *whose heart is perfect toward him.*”

II Chronicles 16:9.

How can the heart be perfect? The word used here does not mean without flaw; but rather, is used as peaceable, full, quiet, being made ready. Our hearts *are* not perfect; only One has been able to show an unblemished heart to His Father. But if our hearts are seeking to be at peace with God, and making ready to receive Him, the fleshly tendencies cut off; if our hearts are quiet, not agitated, but rather leaning upon Him, then God who looks into such hearts, shows Himself strong on their behalf. What are the eyes of God which run to and fro throughout the whole earth? Does not Revelation 5 tell us clearly:

“ . . . in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which *are the seven Spirits of God* sent forth unto all the earth.”

Verse 6.

The eyes of the Lord comprise the complete Spirit of God which is *everywhere*. Can anything or any one escape these eyes? Can any of us hide anything from Him? We remember Paul's words:

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. . . is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; for all things are naked (no covering, not hidden) and opened (laid bare) unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

Hebrews 4:12-13.

How searching, how revealing, and thus, how useless for man to try to hide or cover up a heart which is not striving to be perfect before God. It is helpful to see that the words “with whom we have to do” are, in the original, “with whom for us is the word.” It is the word of God which lays bare the thoughts and intents of our hearts. The word is with us — and certainly for us — for our eternal joy and victory. In our Father's care, He shows us by His word what we are truly like, how we are perceived in His eyes. Is He pleased with what He sees? Will He make Himself strong on our behalf, Brethren and Sisters?

As we have been so clearly shown, it is possible only if our hearts are determined to be at rest, at one, leaning upon Him.

“ . . . *HE WAS IN A RAGE* . . . ”

Enhancing our realization of how difficult it is to develop a perfect heart, and how the word of God can reveal us for what we are, we have the example of Asa's response to the words of the Spirit through Hanani:

“Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for *he was in a rage* . . . because of this thing . . .”

II Chronicles 16:10.

The king was, as we learn, boiling up with wrath. This is the response of a heart ruled by passions rather than subject to the will of God. Jesus spoke of the effect of anger:

“ . . . Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: . . . ”

Matthew 5:22.

Did not the words of the Spirit through Hanani lay bare Asa's heart, revealing that it was indeed not perfect, because he no longer leaned upon the Lord? Instead, he trusted in his own judgment, resting upon the flesh which could not provide support.

Brethren and Sisters, let us keep clearly in mind that indeed the eyes of the Lord do run to and fro throughout the whole earth, searching the hearts of those who are trying to be His, searching our hearts — each and every one. He makes Himself strong for those who in all circumstances, submit and lean upon Him. The adversary is so very strong — we must be aware — yet impotent before the power of the One with whom we have to do.

J.A.DeF.



DISCIPLES INDEED

The words spoken by the Lord Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him are a help to us as they remind us of our place in the purpose of God. Jesus said in John 8:31-32:

“ . . . If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Summarized in these two short statements is the desire of all those striving to be children of God, to be disciples of Christ.

As we closely examine these words of Jesus, we find that the word “continue” means “to stay in a given place or state” and gives the thought of abiding or dwelling. This speaks of the fellowship with Christ made possible by the Word of God. As John 1:1 so often reminds us.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”
and the 14th verse . . .

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

To continue or to dwell in that Word of God is essential, for only by abiding in Him can we have the hope that God purposed from the beginning, and established in His Son.

It is helpful to consider how we can abide in Him and Jesus provides an example in John 15:4-8.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit if itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Only as the Word of God dwells in us and we be closely joined to Christ, can we bring forth fruit and be disciples or learners, meaning "to understand". Why is this so?

The first three verses of this 15th chapter of John explain:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Can we see why abiding or being joined to that true vine is so important, particularly in regard to the need for purging? The term purging means to cleanse or prune, the act of removing that which if left would smother the growth looked for. This procedure speaks of the cutting off of the flesh, so that the fruit of the spirit might be revealed.

Going back to that 31st verse of John chapter 8, Jesus tells us that if we can abide in Him and understand, then are we His disciples *indeed*. There is emphasis placed on that word "indeed" and we find that it means not concealed, nothing hidden, transparent.

This speaks of the process of purging out anything which could mar the purity of the man of spirit. Our hearts and minds must be clear, letting the word of God and His love shine forth freely. Jesus reminds us of this in John chapter 15 verse 9 where He continues to speak of love:

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love."

How important that we grasp firmly unto these words "continue ye in my love", stay or abide in my love, for that love involves the application of the Word of God. Jesus continues in the 10th verse:

THE REMNANT

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

Can we see how loving one another is tied into abiding in that Word, for it is clear that we can be disciples of Christ only as we love one another. In John 4:7 we are told clearly of this love:

“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

verse 10 . . .

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

The immensity of God’s love can be understood from the above words, that even before we knew of Him, He loved us and offered His only Son as our Redeemer. How unworthy we are in our fleshly state, of such an unselfish love as this. Can we translate this love shown to us, to one another? Paul explains why we must in I Cor. 13:1.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.”

If our attempts to do good are done with any motive other than love, then they are counted as worthless, nothing in God’s sight. What is true love like? Let us read of it in I Cor. 13:4

“Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth”

verse 13

“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

We see that in God's purpose with mankind that the crucial element whereon all is based is love, and it is this same love Jesus was speaking of in John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The truth is love, a love which God shows to His people, those He has called to be members of His household, brethren and sisters of Christ. The truth can make us free, free from the bondage of sin and death because of the love which God extends to us in the person of His Son Jesus, who died that the way of life might be opened for those who believe on Him. This spirit of love which can set us free, is the essence of God's Truth.

“Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Do we see how that spirit can help us to behold ourselves as we truly are? The flesh is a subtle adversary for it attempts to smother that love which we need to nourish, and views the commandments of God to love one another as grievous, hard to bear, but we read in I John 5:1

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begot loveth him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."

Indeed His commandments can be kept if we have the love of God within us.

Can we then, going back to John chapter 8 look at these words so familiar to us and show God what is truly in our hearts?

" . . . If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Only our flesh can hold us back from attaining this freedom, so let us abide in that love of Christ and witness to God and each other as we show forth this love in abundance with a sincerity to continue in His Word.

M.C.S.



**“Necessity is placed upon me — — that I
might by all means save some”**

The nature of our flesh being what it is and the Spirit at all times being aware of all its failures we are continually exhorted to be mindful of the heavy responsibilities which are placed upon those “upon whom the end of the ages is come.” Under the guidance of the Spirit the Apostle Paul writes:

“For though I preach the gospel (the good news of the Kingdom of God) I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”
(1 Cor. 9:16).

It does seem that we, along with the Corinthians need to be reminded of the grave responsibility which is placed upon each one, and even when this duty is realised and no matter how far the realization has been that there is to be no glory attached to our efforts we must acknowledge that

“Necessity is placed upon me.”

This implies that there is a great work to be done in preaching the gospel, and that the work must be done willingly. The Apostle continues:

“For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.”
(verse 17)

What then is the driving force that should and must underly all our motives in any work that we do? Is it not the very belief — the firm belief, that the Kingdom of God *is* to be established that Christ is to return to set up His Kingdom, and that God *is* to fulfil *all* His promises even though at times our hopes seem to be far off. It needs *faith* to really believe in the gospel, for in faith and belief in God’s word is the only way that glory and honour can be given to Him, and nothing short of the faith shown by Paul as exhibited in his writings to the Corinthians will help us to avoid being a castaway, yea, “woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.”

Another danger is that we might preach the gospel unwillingly; i.e. as mere platitudes, without the firm conviction (perhaps

because of difficulties and trials which at times seem insurmountable) that the gospel is a reality. Trials and difficulties will come, for they are God's way of proving us, whether we shall preach the gospel willingly, no matter what the cost, and so, should we at times be heavily laden and perhaps feel that we cannot go on, let us pause and consider the record of Paul, as recorded in 2 Cor. 11:23-28 and take courage. Recording his experiences he says:

“ — — — in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft.”

“Of the Jews (those who should have known and preached the gospel) five times received I forty stripes save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.

In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren:”

What a character was Paul, what a man of faith.

“In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings, in cold and nakedness.”

And still he continues:

“Besides these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the ecclesias.”

What a terrific responsibility for a man — “the care of all the ecclesias” — that not a single individual should be lost.

What is my reward then?

Can we now be the more able to consider Paul's question in 1 Cor. 9:18 — “What is my reward then?. Truly (verily) he says “that when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge (being chargeable to none) that I abuse not my power in the gospel.”

It is not always realised or fully appreciated that to whom God entrusts the gospel there is a power that goes with it.

“Behold, I give unto you *power* to tread on serpents and scorpions (death’s servants) and over all the power of the enemy: — — —.”
(Luke 10:19).

The Apostle knew this and really *believed* it and no doubt these thoughts enabled him to endure. But was the Apostle only concerned for himself or was his main concern that of his brethren and sisters? No doubt it was the latter or perhaps both for he says:

“This I do for the gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.”
(1 Cor. 9:23)

Can we begin to see Paul’s reward in the work he accomplished “To the Jews I became as a Jew, — — — to them that are under the law, as under the law, — — — .”

To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ)— — —.”
(verses 20-21)

And for what purpose?

“ — — — that I might gain them that are without law.”
(verse 21)

Can we not see Paul’s mind ever with the gospel foremost in mind?

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: — — — that I might by all means save some.”
(verse 22)

Perhaps to get the full benefit of this verse the previous chapter needs to be read to see the beautiful character of the Apostle — “To the weak I became weak” — but suffice it to say here that his mind, his character, his very being was motivated by the reality of the gospel and that in all his efforts put forth, he had a reward even then brought about by the recognition of the needs of others.

The Apostle had that unique quality of the Spirit, of discernment — with the ever-present thought “ — — — that I might by all means save some.”

The mind of Paul is seen to be always reaching out to the needs of others, with God’s great purpose in view. And yet this faithful man reminds us:

“Yet though I preach the gospel I have nothing to glory of,” which of course is very true, for no one has anything to glory of, for everyone is only worthy to die, and except for the mercy extended we would certainly perish for ever.

“Yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel.”

Should we not always remember this and the great responsibility that is placed upon us? Does not the Apostle show us that it is not only the mere acknowledgment of God’s word that Christ is to return to set up the Kingdom of God that will assure us of a place therein. We have to believe — really believe, that God’s word is true and that there is a work to be done in each one of us, and that there is a recognition of God’s requirements and also to realise that we can lose the great salvation so graciously offered. This was Paul’s great fear when he says:

“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

But I keep under my body, (with all its fleshly thoughts) and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
(verses 26-27)

We shall be tried, as the Apostle undoubtedly was, but shall we exhibit a character like him, always striving with the thought in mind, the fulfilment of the gospel — “that I might by all means save some.”

J.S.



Baptism — an Act of Obedience by True Believers of the Gospel

This heading suggests there has to be true belief in the gospel (the good tidings) before there can be a baptism. Of immersions, there are many, but such is merely ceremony. Ceremony is of *no* efficacy, if the one participating does not know what the ceremony is about. Those who sprinkle infant children and call such a ceremony by the name of baptism have no conception of what is required. How can an infant either know or believe? Peter defines this consideration:

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”
(1 Peter 3:21-22)

The answer of a good conscience toward God — con (with) science (seeing).

Baptism then is the answer — or the response — of seeing with God.

That is, beholding or seeing as God sees, which obviously must be in connection with His Word. Hence participants must be able to see into the true message of the Bible, for if this be not the case, how can it be said they see with God?

Individuals, when they see with God, can be baptized. If they do not see with God they can only be immersed, which is no baptism.

In connection with this principle, there is the help seen in John Baptist's baptism.

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

THE REMNANT

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

(Matt. 3:1-3)

"Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

(verses 5-8).

Those who confessed their sins were obviously sincere. But could the Pharisees and Sadducees be sincere? Obviously not! Hence John Baptist's remonstrance:

"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

The fruits, which would take time to mature, would show whether they were sincere or not. How could such be repentant when John (through God's help) perceived what they were thinking?

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (verse 9)

So they came to John in a desire to act in accordance with what appeared to be a formality which would enhance their reputation with the people. John Baptist would have none of this. He desired to see a change in Pharisees and Sadducees before he would entertain them.

This stand of John Baptist, would not be popular with such. But for the sake of the truth John *had* to act in this way, otherwise he would only be placing such into a false position. Of course, John's baptism was to be superceded by baptism into Christ, after the death of Jesus, but principle is ever the same. What applied with John's baptism to repentance, applies also for Christ's baptism.

So how apt is the phrase:

'Baptism *is* an act of obedience by true believers of the gospel'

It is a way of escape through Christ if it is sought in sincerity. But it must be in sincerity, and not in a mock sincerity, of which the Pharisees and Sadducees were condemned.

From "The Apostolic Witness."

MANNER OF SELECTION

"How were they selected in order to be ordained for the ministry? There is an example in Acts 1 of the appointment of one to replace Judas, who had hanged himself, as a witness with the eleven of the resurrection of Christ.

The necessity for making such a choice was determined from the Word: "For it is written in the Psalms." Acts 1:20. It was made before the Holy Spirit came upon them, see Acts 1:8 and 2:4. Matthias was chosen by the giving forth of lots on the part of the whole body of disciples then gathered together, numbering about 120 persons.

The process of giving forth lots is different from casting lots by chance to determine a verdict. The two Greek words employed are completely different.

The same root word used for *giving forth lots* is used also in Acts 1:17, rendered in the A.V. '*part*', speaking of Judas' inclusion in the ministry, which was certainly not determined by the popular idea of drawing lots, such as making selection of the shortest straw. The root meaning according to Thayer is that of allotting either by chance or choice and the way in which the word is used by the Spirit is illustrated in Acts 17:4, where the word consorted in the Greek is "*threw in their lot*". Those who consorted with Paul and Silas at that time did so in response to the WORD preached unto them and believed, so becoming part of the "lot" or heritage: the flock of God. (1 Peter 5:2, 3.)

This office then was bestowed not by fortuitous selection, but by the exercise of the minds of believers who intelligently made choice between Joseph and Matthias, having requested the Lord to show in this manner of collective discrimination whom He had chosen; which was verified afterwards by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the twelve on the day of Pentecost."

REPLY

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you — — —."
(John 15:16)

The above words of Christ doubtless extend to comprehend all called to The Truth. But in a particular sense Jesus chose the twelve apostles. Judas Iscariot failed, yet:

THE REMNANT

“ — — — he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity — — —.”
(Acts 1:17-18)

It was required that Judas Iscariot be replaced to make up the twelve.

“And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all — — —, shew whether of these two *thou* hast chosen,

“That he may take part of this ministry and *apostleship*, from which Judas by translation fell — — —.

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

(Acts 1:24-16)

The record shows that the Brethren did not know which of the two selected ones should be chosen for the special position the Twelve Apostles held (and confirmed for the future ‘ye shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel’)

“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — — — must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.”
(Acts 1:21-22)

There was Joseph called Barsbus and Matthias,” — and the lot fell upon Matthias.” It was not the choice of men.

Lot — kleros, connection with Klao (to break i.e. “the lot”): an extension of the meaning is heritage or inheritance — “he divided the land to them by lot” (kataklenodoteo a derivative of kleros) Acts 13:19

Fell — pipto. to fall or light on.

It is shown by this instance that there is a limit to what members of an Ecclesia are allowed to do. God shows. But when men are allowed to take everything into their own hands then Nicolaitinism inevitably follows.

The Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World.

“ — — — and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” (Rev. 13:2)

The above words refer to “a great red dragon” giving support to a religious power.

The legal position in the Soviet Union from 1929 as stated in Article 124 of the Constitution is “the freedom to hold religious services and the freedom of anti-religious propaganda is acknowledged to all citizens.” Thus anyone may worship in place registered for worship. But public propaganda is only for the atheist; active endeavour to persuade fellow Russians to religious adherence can lead to gaol.

The Soviet Union is the first state in the whole of the world's history to make a dogma of atheism. Of course Communism in its varying forms extends beyond the boundaries of the Soviets; yet in Poland which is Communist, eighty per cent of the population are Church-going Roman Catholics.

On the other hand in Italy, the largest single political force in the larger cities is the Communist party.

How significant then the recent news of a revived Concordat between Italy and the Vatican under which Roman Catholicism will cease to be the State religion. This is called “a sign of the renewed harmony between State and Church.” The Pope has declared this arrangement as an “ideal inspiration” even though it ends many of the Roman Catholic Church's privileges in Italy. It is of “important significance”, were his remarks; so finishes in this formal way the dispute going back to the time of Victor Emmanuel and Pope Pious the ninth. Religious education is now something which the people are to ask for rather than have to accept. Yet this arrangement has not displeased the Vatican at all; so both parties are satisfied.

So further progress towards another divine prophetic fulfilment is indicated, when “the (red) dragon” shall “give him his power”.

News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK: Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread: 11.30a.m.

Sunday School: 1.30 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Orchard Park.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Thoughts and supplications are with those in illness or isolation, that comfort and healing might be granted if it is His will.

Gratitude is felt for the evidence of God's hand guiding in the work, both here and with our brethren across the sea.

J.A.DeF.

"PENTRIP" Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek:

We have been the recipient of literature by which contact a way is afforded to bear witness to The Truth; for this we are grateful.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Young People's Class: Sundays 2.00 p.m.

Bible Class: Thursdays 7.30 p.m.

Due to repair work in our usual room we have recently had to use alternative accommodation which entailed an alteration in the time of our Sunday Meeting.

However we have been grateful for the help which has enabled us to continue our Meetings without any great difficulty.