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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 that ye be not deceived"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

EARTHEN VESSELS

This week we have been allowed to hear the words of Paul addressed to his brethren in Corinth. He began his letter in this way:

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God . . . unto the church . . . which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:”

II Corinthians 1:1

Saints—we find the word means holy, or consecrated ones. These words then, are addressed to all who are striving to be holy, consecrated unto God—now in a time of probation, and looking with hope to the time when Jesus will gather to Himself those whom He judges to be holy, accounted worthy to be saints with him for eternity.

Paul was an apostle “by the will of God.” An apostle is one sent, set apart, a messenger. Paul surely was “sent” for when we consider the New Testament, how much of it is his work. He was in this position “by the will of God.” **Will** involves desire, delight, pleasure. It **was** God’s desire that Paul should be his messenger to the brethren. We remember how he was called of God as he journeyed to persecute the followers of the Lord Jesus in Damascus. The great light from heaven blinded him, and a voice spoke.

“. . . Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”

Acts 9:4.

As Paul responded, “Who art thou Lord?” the answer came:

“. . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”

Verse 5.

Can we imagine Paul’s consternation at these words — obviously not ordinary words or ordinary circumstances. Paul knew that Jesus had died; yet here was His voice saying, “I am Jesus.” In his bewilderment he responded simply:

“. . . Lord, what wilt thou have me do? . . .”

Verse 6.

How submissive, how relying upon the One who spoke! This was the manner in which Paul was called to be an apostle “by the will of God.” Also, we remember the further words spoken concerning him by God.

“ . . . for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel:

For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.”

Acts 9:15-16

A chosen vessel—and chosen in such a remarkable way!

By this experience, Paul was determined to be a vessel fit or meet for God's use, and so gave himself fully to the work which his father required: to go to the Gentiles, as those in Corinth—to go to kings as to Agrippa, Festus, yes—even to Caesar, and to go to the children of Israel. In our recent portions, we have read of his love for those in Corinth, an ecclesia he and Appollos had labored to establish as we are told in Acts 18:1-11. We are shown how Paul:

“ . . . was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.”

Verse 5.

He also testified to the Gentiles when the Jews opposed his teaching. In this work, Jesus appeared to him and spoke:

“ . . . Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.”

Verses 9-10.

As a result:

“ . . . he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”

Verse 11.

The apostle had a close relationship with his brethren and sisters in Corinth, having been instrumental in teaching them the way of life. Can we see why he wrote as he did to those so near to his heart? His words are preserved for our help today as we strive to be, with Paul, chosen vessels unto God, meet for His use.

“GOD . . . HATH SHINED IN OUR HEARTS . . .”

How blessed we are to have such help, granted by the Almighty, preserved for over nineteen hundred years for strength and sustaining. Let us hear the Apostle's help:

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light

of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

II Corinthians 4:6

The light did **literally** shine upon Paul to give the knowledge of the glory of God through Jesus Christ, a knowledge which sustained him in his work. However, that light has shined out of darkness since the Creation, when God separated the light from the darkness as His first recorded work with this earth. It is an everlasting sign to all who strive to be aware of the Creator's desire and purpose. Ever since that time, He has given knowledge of Jesus Christ; and by that knowledge has separated out of darkness the children of light such as those in Corinth, as well as those few today who are allowed to meet together and to partake of His Son, the One the Light who has in all things given glory to God, as He declared:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 17:4

How greatly blessed we are, Brethren and Sisters, that God has allowed that light to shine in our hearts, to reveal the darkness there; and to enable us to remove it, cutting off the flesh and striving to be circumcised in heart.

To help us in this struggle Paul, a chosen vessel of God warns:

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." II Corinthians 4:7

Do we not need to remember that we are indeed earthen vessels? What is involved in this? First of all, a realisation that we are to become fit for His use, for He has called us, not as dramatically as Paul was called, but He has caused the light to shine into our hearts, to the end that our hearts of flesh might be converted to spiritual hearts.

As we think of vessels, our mind goes to Paul's words to Timothy:

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour."

II Timothy 2:20

Honour—we find means esteem, value, precious. Paul does not imply that the wooden and earthen vessels were to dishonour because they were not made of precious metals

such as silver and gold. Rather, he shows us that each vessel — whether gold, silver, wood, or earth — had its own particular use for the master; and whether to honour or dishonour, depended upon how well it fulfilled the work intended. Paul brings this out for us:

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and **meet for the master’s use**, and **prepared** unto every good work.”
 II Timothy 2:21

To be a vessel unto honour as we seek to be in His house, there must be a purging of anything which could bring dishonour. **Purged** means to be cleansed thoroughly, to be accomplished by forsaking that which is displeasing in God’s sight. As this purging works God’s purpose, that which remains is sanctified. This purging then brings about a change so that each vessel becomes “meet for the master’s use.” This word **meet** also means easily used or profitable. To be such, each vessel must be suitable for the work the master has in mind. It must be “prepared unto every good work.” As we strive to become “meet” vessels, do we not need to realize that this privilege of serving Him profitably can only be accomplished by subjection to his will, in the spirit of Paul as he recognized that “we have this treasure (of light) in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us”?

“ . . . WE ARE THE CLAY, AND THOU OUR POTTER . . . ”

How fitting is the thought of earthen vessels, for they **are** made of clay, under the hand of a potter. Precisely how is this done? First the potter searches for a source of clay—a particular kind of earth which **can** be shaped without breaking. For example, gravel, made up of sand and stones, is not capable of being formed. Having found suitable clay, next the potter treads it, as we are shown by the prophet Isaiah:

“ . . . he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.”

Isaiah 41:25

Speaking of the natural process, why does the potter tread the clay? To break it up, to blend and homogenize it; perhaps a bit of water being added to make it more formable. The potter then takes out of the mass of clay a suitably sized lump, estimating how much he needs. As he selects it, it is just that—a lump: shapeless, but he already knows its potential. Next it is placed upon the potter’s wheel which he spins and so

begins to shape it. With his hand he works it to the form he desires, carefully moving it, contouring it a bit at a time, applying pressure here or there, to conform it to his plan. The right clay can be formed without breaking. If there are impurities, such as stones or pebbles in the clay, the clay will be imperfect and is discarded. As the vessel is removed from the wheel, it has the desired shape, but is very weak and fragile; the process has only begun. The potter may then apply a glaze to brighten up or smooth up its surface, and then the whole vessel is carefully placed in an oven to dry and set the clay in the desired shape. It is significant that without this fire, the vessel upon which the potter has put so much thought, care, and effort is of no practical value; for it has no strength and is unable to withstand any hard use. How telling this process is, as we seek to be vessels meet for the master's use. We must be pliable, flexible, easily shaped; we must be free from impurities, and must be made according to the potters plan, not our own; and under his care, must go through the fire of affliction to become a profitable vessel. This figure is used to help us, speaking of the natural:

“Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?”

Isaiah 29:16

Such a situation is indeed upside down, for **can** the clay form itself? Again, Isaiah shows us what our mind should be as we experience the Father’s hand in shaping:

“But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”

Isaiah 64:8

How helpful to realize that, if faithful, we are solely in His hands. He alone can shape us. We have no control over it; indeed if we feel we do have control, are we not turning things upside down? Are we really questioning our shaper, our Father? Let us remember these vessels are to be meet, profitable for **His** use. Can we see why Paul, a chosen vessel, helps us as he said:

“... we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency (abundance) of the power may be of God and not of us.”

II. Corinthians 4:7

How humbling to see that all the “good” we are—all the worthy accomplishments to which we attain, are by God’s hand and not of our own excellence!

We must remember too, that being earthen vessels, of clay, we can be broken and discarded. We are flesh subject to all its weaknesses and failures. God in His mercy reminds us of this as we, with Paul, experience thorns (prick or goads) in our flesh. Paul wrote of his own weakness.

“ . . . lest I should be exalted above measure . . . there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me . . . ”

II Corinthians 12:7.

To **buffet** means to curtail, to chastise, or to punish. This thorn or weakness—this hinderance in the flesh—was a constant, nagging reminder, a message always there, bringing to the mind of Paul that he was flesh.

We too, are dying creatures, we need His strength, His hand. Paul prayed thrice that this thorn might be removed, and God responded:

“ . . . My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

II Corinthians 12:9.

Where there is a recognition of the weakness of the flesh, strength in the Spirit grows. Paul continued:

“ . . . Most gladly therefore will I rather **glory in my infirmities**, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Verses 9-10.

How alien to our natural thinking, and what efforts we must put forth to recognize this and to yield.

Paul, a chosen vessel, responded, worked, pleased God, recognizing that the work, the knowledge, the blessing was granted to him as an earthen vessel, and only in the great love and mercy of the Father.

Can we, Brethren and Sisters, be sustained by his words and by his spirit as we struggle to be vessels unto honour, receivers of His grace, becoming gradually—meet for His use? Then we can hope to be as Zechariah foretells:

“In that day . . . the pots in the Lord’s house shall be like bowls before the alter.”

Zechariah 14:20

J. A. DeF.

THE FEAR OF GOD

We have read in Proverbs of the words of God given to Solomon to share with those who could perceive the understanding and instruction within them. The first few verses of the first chapter of Proverbs tell us to “know wisdom and instruction”:

“To know the wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgement and equity;

To give subtly to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.”

These words were helpful to those who heard of them in Solomon’s time, and they are helpful to us as well, as we seek to learn what God requires of us, as we endeavor to be His children. In our portion this morning in Proverbs 4:7 we are told:

“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.”

It is more than wisdom that is required. Rather it is the understanding or the application of that wisdom that God looks for in each one of us. Many in the Scriptures knew this wisdom but in not applying it, failed. If we go to the first chapter of Proverbs the 7th verse we find the essence of God’s wisdom and the application of it:

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

This fear spoken of is not a fleshly type of fear, but rather a godly fear working in us a desire not to fail before God, a striving to please Him. Perhaps we are shown the essence of this fear, or rather its purpose when we read in Ecclesiastes 12:13:

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.”

When we look up the words in this verse we find that “conclusion” means to terminate, “whole matter” is translated as arrangement and “duty” means perfection. How much this speaks of the arrangement we have with God and how our fear is an important part. To express this fear is to

show that we are appreciating God's word. In applying that word we are putting down our fleshly tendencies and displaying Godly fear. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 2:1-5 the relationship there is between understanding, knowledge, wisdom, and fear.

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee,
So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding,
Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures;
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”

This makes it clear what our work must be in the special arrangement we have with God. Our work is the seeking of wisdom and the search for understanding. The 6th verse goes on to tell us:

“For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

Only as we recognize our need to submit and apply God's simple words of instruction will He then open them fully to our eyes showing their hidden meaning and wisdom. We also read of God's care for His children in Proverbs 14:26-27:

“The fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge.
The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.”

Is this perhaps the understanding and knowledge that we are to have, that if we can move in the fear of the Lord our experiences can be a help and a strong confidence to us. “To depart from the snares of death” reminds us that the only means of salvation comes from God.

These words help us to keep in mind the blessings that God gives to those who fear Him as Solomon says in Proverbs 28:14:

“Happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.”

This happiness or blessing that the children of God have is the knowledge of His hope, that eternal Kingdom that we hope to share in, but only as we fear Him.

In Psalm 147:11 David tells us:

“The Lord taketh pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his mercy.”

We read in Hebrews II of some who moved in that godly fear:

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.
(verse 7)

Was God pleased with Noah? Was he pleased with his expression of fear? We would have to assume so, for it was only Noah and his household who were saved from death, hidden by God in that ark. It was well for Noah for he knew the true happiness of having the hope of God, and it can be the same for all those who like Noah, apply God's word with Godly fear. We can think of many, Moses, Abraham, Jacob, David, all who operated in Godly fear and so stood out from those among them, and for their diligence were mentioned in that eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

In Hebrews 12:28 we read:

“Wherefore, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear;”

Here we read how our hope is tied with the fear we are to have of God if He is to be served acceptably. How much this fear is to help us show forth to God what is within our hearts. As Paul says in II Cor. 7:1:

“Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

Again, the thought is expressed of the whole duty of man in God's sight is to complete or perfect the work of the spirit upon the flesh. God's message is loud and clear to us, that He looks for us to move in fear of Him, subject to Him and then will He reveal His word and wisdom to us.

“The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him, and he will show them his covenant.” Psalm 25:14

This word secret means intimate or consultation and this closeness can only come through the perfection that the Lord Jesus has demonstrated to us. Only as we try to purge our flesh as He has done, remove its traces from our living, can we come close to God in an intimate and loving relationship with our Father.

M.C.S.

BEHAVIOUR IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

The subject of idolatry, that is, placing false worship before the true worship of the Lord God is referred to in the book of Deuteronomy. If there were any amongst the people falling into idolatry, God's people had a duty to do

And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:

Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones till they die.

At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

The hands of the witness shall be the first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.”
(Deut. 17:4-7)

These words show that there is a right way and there is a wrong way of going about such a work as so described. If there was only one witness action must not be taken on uncorroborated evidence. The words of that witness might be thought true. The witness might be a credible person. But, no! Action taken on the words of one witness would be wrong. These words of the Old Testament are clear, are they not? Has this instruction always been followed? There have been occasions when men have placed something before the welfare of the Ecclesia and the honour of God. Such matters in which there has been failure, even to these last days, show us how natively blind to the word of God is human nature. The instruction of God's word is clear and well defined, and from the earliest times, but has been ignored to the downfall of many.

Some matters of judgement are not easy to decide, but help can always be received by going about things in the right way.

“If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgement, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose;

And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgement:

And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee:

According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgement which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left." (verses 8-11)

Some matters need counsel from afar. In the case of Israel they would seek to those at Shiloh, and at a later time, to Jerusalem. An application for these last days can be seen in this teaching.

Ecclesial autonomy has been the modern cry. In other words let each Ecclesia do its own. Israel were taught not to 'do their own' in **difficult** matters; but rather seek help and counsel from brethren in another place. How wise is this because fresh minds can indeed help; and avoid a possible tendency of bias to creep into a judgement.

When matters were difficult, those at a distance, in Shiloh, could not be influenced by their personal emotions, as would be a possibility of those nearer to a situation. Another striking point that emerges from the ancient record is as follows:—

"And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel." (verses 19-20)

Here was instruction for subsequent leaders of the children of God. They were to take heed to the divine record, for there is always a danger of the heart becoming lifted up above the brethren. And what if it does? Would such a one listen to the counsel of his brethren? So there would be a turning to the right hand or to the left hand, and because of a lifting up the benefit of brethren's counsel would be lost through being ignored and suppressed.

Yes, it is clear instruction from the earliest times. There is no excuse for those who have forgotten, or ignored such instruction.

Again we have some sober comments of deep counsel:—

“For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net,, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.”
(Eccles. 9:12)

Men can ignore God’s good instruction. Men can go against it even. But what will happen when the evil time comes? Will they escape or will they be snared? Will they struggle to no avail in the tangle? Does not the history of the truth supply the answer? How much better to have wisdom, and be fortified by counsel. As it is written:—

“Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.”
(verse 18)

A very meaningful event is recorded as follows:—

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry;
And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.
And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.”
(Mark 11:12-14)

This was not petulance on the part of Jesus. But rather to be a lesson to all His disciples then and now. When Jesus comes hungering to see fruits in His people, what will he see? Will He find a profusion of “leaves”, but nothing substantial for His requirements?

The event as recorded in Mark shows that a fruitless situation will be a hopeless one. It might be argued, ‘allow time for fruit — — — it is hardly time’. This will not do. The people of God should always be available to show some fruit. If there is none it is because they have not listened to counsel which is God’s working with His people to cause them to bring forth more than leaves.”

So wherever we look in God's word we see there is instruction. Advice from of old is just as apt for the needs of this time as for former times. But how many have merely produced a multiplicity of figurative "leaves", without the substance of the fruit of the spirit?—the fruit which must escape the individual whose heart is lifted up. A great warning indeed, concerning how to behave in the house of God.



“Now these are the commandments — — —”
“For the Lord thy God is a jealous God — — —”

“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgements, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it.” (Deut. 6:1)

Note—to teach you, for we all need to be taught, hence—and they all shall be taught of God.

“That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep **all** his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee — — —.”

“Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, — — —.”

So that hearing alone is not sufficient; there is work—doing—also to be done. What then is the instruction? verse 4:—

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”

And what needs to be done is—

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.” (verses 5-6)

Not just in the mouth, but “in thine heart.”

If these instructions are faithfully carried out, will we not be blessed likewise as promised in verses 10 and 11 and confirmed by the spirit of the Lord Jesus when it says:—

“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.” (1 Cor. 3:21)

But let us heed the warning in Deut. 6:12:—

“Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, — — —.”

This is the ever present danger, that when we have received of God’s blessing the tendency is to forget, that we like the children of Israel, have been brought out of Egypt (the world) and from the house of bondage (of sin and death). This is the danger, to forget that God has called us to come out and be separate, to the glorious hope of life eternal.

“For the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you—” (verse 15)

This is not the type of jealousy which is as cruel as the grave, but is a jealousy which is far removed from cruelty, rather the opposite when properly understood.

To deliver a man from death was, and is, the greatest condescension of God to mortal man. Granting eternal life means taking a man into God's eternal fellowship, without reserve and such abounding grace could only be safeguarded by the strictest enforcement of God's law which was perfect in that it condemned sinful flesh to die and ensured that sin could not enter into the kingdom of God.

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination —.” (Rev. 21:27)

So is it any wonder on these premises that God should be jealous of His unchallengeable supremacy? Let it be remembered that the Lord Jesus had to be without sin, to uphold the principal that had been set at nought, the principal of absolute submission. Hence—

“For the Lord thy God is a jealous God— — —.”

God has a purpose with the earth and with man, which will be fulfilled in due time. In the course of time God is preparing His people in the only way it is possible by submission to God's word, contained in His commandments and statutes and judgements.

“And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.”

(Deut. 6:25)



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

“Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood — — —.”

(Zech. 11:14)

The above prophecy comes before the final event when:—

“In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem — — —.”

(Zech. 12:8)

And:—

“— — — it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”

(verse 9)

In the meantime “the brotherhood” of the nation is much troubled. There has been a cry in Israel for a government of national unity. But at the time of writing this has not materialised.

Israel’s ruling Likud party is hoping to succeed in forming a coalition government despite this years inconclusive general election. But so also is the Labour opposition alignment. The latest figures show Labour to have more seats in the one-hundred and twenty-member Knesset (Parliament). There are however twelve other independent entities having various small numbers of seats with places such an evenly balanced government and opposition in a quandry when endeavours are made to form a stable coalition. The former Prime Minister emerged from the seclusion of his retirement to urge a national unity cabinet. Yet even he stumbled on the subject of who should be the leading party, saying that it should be the party of which he was the leader before his ill health caused him to resign. Some of the smaller parties such as Tehiya are uncompromising in their view that the government should uphold the principal of “Greater Israel”; in other words compromise over the territory with Arabs and Palestinians is not negotiable. Yet there is a need for unity because of Israel’s difficult economic position, and the desire for a continuing of the planned withdrawal from Lebanon.

There has only been one occasion in Israel’s modern history of a national unity government which lasted from about the time of the 1967 war up to 1970 when the arrangement fell apart.

The latest news at the time of writing is that the Shas party is offering to participate with Likud which is expected to draw other religious representative votes in the same direction. Thus Likud would achieve a total of sixty-one in the one-hundred and twenty Knesset, and under Israel's electoral law the President must summon the leader of the largest coalition, not the largest party, to form the government. Likud's Deputy Premier has promised if his party continues in power the law on "Who is a Jew" will be passed, granting the orthodox religious establishment in Israel the sole right to convert people to Judaism which would increase the influence of the orthodox establishment. Converts made by the Rabbinical section termed progressive would thus be in an invalid position. This law, if adopted, will be important, for it will determine who is entitled to Israeli citizenship on the grounds of having become a member of the Jewish religion.

Another minority voice has been raised saying it will press for a law for the expulsion of all Arabs from Israel. So, as can be seen, Israel is not in a happy political situation, "the brotherhood" is not there, and difficulties increase. But can it be other than this when the only solution is for the Messiah of the Jews to appear? To "pour — — — upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications — — —."

(verse 10)



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 and Orchard Park.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Our sister has returned from her visit to England, strengthened and refreshed by the contact with those of like faith. All here have felt a greater closeness of mind and spirit through hearing first hand of all our loved ones in England and Wales. How wondrous and to many, inexplicable, is this bond of unity born of God's Spirit and kept alive by care and appreciation for the great privilege we know in His Truth, and indeed by His kindness and mercy.

We are grateful to all our brethren and sisters for their help and hospitality extended.

J.A.De.F.

“PENTRIP” Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek.

Interesting contacts will continue and we are grateful for for health to carry on each day with the duties required.

What a help it is to have the preserved counsel of God's word, and the magazine which affords articles appropriate to timely needs.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, M/cr.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Thursdays 7.30 p.m.

At the time of writing the Ecclesia is looking forward to the occasion of the Fraternal Gathering and it is realised that though some will be inevitably absent, they will be present in Spirit.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

(Rev. 20:11-15)

John says in Revelation 20:11:-

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”

Probably one of the first considerations is, When will the great white throne be seen? Just previous to John seeing the throne in the vision, the great insurrection at the end of the Millenium is depicted, when those who have rebelled against the rule of Christ are consumed. In the past there have been two views of the time of this event. The first view is that the vision is going back once more to the time of Christ's return when the judgment will take place and His kingdom is established. The other view is that the great white throne depicts the judgment of the mortal population who are raised at the end of the Millenium to be given according as their works have been.

A great white throne, however, has its own special significance in whatever time it is seen. Throne depicts power and judgment: its whiteness depicts **its righteousness**. At the great white throne righteous judgment will be meted out. The One upon the throne is the One from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, which takes us to the words of Revelation 6:14-16:-

“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.”

These events are considered to be at the beginning of the Millenium, which seems obvious. But our attention is now directed to a description of those who are judged. They are

referred to as “small and great”, which reminds us of a previous consideration in Revelation 19:5 when from the throne proceeds the call to:-

“Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.”

We will perhaps consider how the small as well as the great, throughout all the history of the Truth, are brought to an equality if found approved, for even the smallest will equally share in the promised eternal life.

The books were opened, says John — the judgment will be according to the books; and we are assured in this way that this is not a mystical library, of which we can have no understanding, such as the great tomes of the judgments of Gentile lawyers over which they are incessantly arguing. The books which are to be opened are the books that we in our days have, as the word of God, which is the basis of how we judge ourselves now and as how we shall be judged then. The book of life of course is something different. It is the symbol of the infallible and divine record, preserved on something far more enduring than on the best vellum, containing the names of those chosen for life eternal because of obedience to His Law.

