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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

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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

“LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER . . .”

This morning we have been allowed to partake of these symbols—the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—perceiving Him as our High Priest, our Redeemer. There has been a renewed determination to please our Father, struggling to do as He has done. In this we often fail, yet can be covered by His office, His offering. As we value this great blessing, seeing in it God’s grace, we can be helped by Paul’s words read this morning:

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, . . . And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart . . .”
Hebrews 10:19-22.

To whom are we to draw near? To Jesus, to the One who is our High Priest, as we seek to be members of His body in a time of probation. But we do not also need to draw near to those who are His, to each other as members of that body, hoping to be bound together eternally? Do we feel drawn closer as we are permitted to partake at this Table—a few here and a few more across the sea? Does this desire carry over into our daily lives, do we all truly feel to be a body, an entity, separate members, yet closely knit?—as Paul urges:

“. . . Grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted (pressed together) by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:15-16.

What a wealth of spiritual help is here! To edify gives the thought of building a house. As there is a drawing near to one another, is there not a pressing together, a compacting, thus building up by that which every joint supplieth? Joint comes from

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a word meaning to fasten, that which ties together or connects the body, allowing each member to function as an individual part, but yet contributing vitally to the working of the whole. When we think of being compacted or pressed together, our mind goes to Psalm 122, which is a Song of Ascent, sung as those of like faith travelled together on the way to Zion. In this song we read:

“Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.”

Verse 3.

A city that is joined, coupled. This word is used in God’s instructions concerning the covering for the tabernacle’s holy place and most holy place—His dwelling place with His people:

“Moreover thou shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work . . . The five curtains shall be coupled (compact, joined) together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another . . . and it shall be one tabernacle.” Exodus 26:1-6.

It shall be one tabernacle, joined together according to God’s design. Is this how His house is to be built, to be edified? This work is the responsibility of all who seek to be a part of it. It can be accomplished only, the Apostle tells us, by “edifying . . . in love.” As we consider this thought, we find that Paul gives great help in our desire to edify one another in love:

“Let us draw near . . .”

“Let us hold fast . . .”

“Let us consider one another . . .”

Here are three steps to instruct us towards a closely knit house.

First, as we have seen, there must be a drawing near, a working for closeness, not only to God and to Jesus, but also to all who are His. Only in this way may we become joined as His body, still individuals, yet each one a caring and useful part.

Second, our brother Paul exhorts: “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith . . .” Hold fast is used as to seize, to keep, implying a valuing and therefore a determination not to let go or forsake, no matter what the cost. “Profession” is composed of two words which imply a speaking together — it may involve a covenant. Can we then read Paul’s words as “Let us seize upon and keep the covenant of our faith” — our saying together with Jesus that we will hold on to the hope He has promised.

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Thirdly Paul urges, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." What is involved here? To consider means to exercise the mind, giving the thought of careful perception not merely gazing upon. Jesus used the word when He taught:

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Matthew 6:28-29

Jesus desired that his disciples think carefully, studying the lilies to discern what He had in mind in this example.

Further in Acts, we read of Moses in the wilderness of Mount Sinai when he saw the burning bush:

". . . he wondered at the sight: and . . . drew near to behold it" Acts 7:31

Moses drew closer to behold, to consider, to discern what was this wonder. Would he not be awed by what he saw; would he not want to know more about it? As he carefully beheld it, the voice of God came to him.

Do these examples help to a realisation that considering one another, through careful consideration, rather than drawing a superficial conclusion. For what reasons we are exhorted to do this? Paul makes it very clear: "to provoke unto love and to good works." The Greek word for provoke is the base of our English word—paroxysm—meaning a sudden intense out-burst. This helps us to comprehend the meanings of provoke, which are to stir up, to excite. An example of its use is seen when, as Paul was at Athens, his spirit was:

". . . stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." Acts 17:16.

Can we imagine Paul's fervour of spirit as he preached in Athens, seeing their need and striving to meet it? Must we not, Brethren and Sisters, work with the same zeal as we consider one another to stir up into love and good works? How can we do this? By example, by selfless observation and thought for another's needs, and by working to provide for them. It reminds us of Jesus' teaching regarding those at His right hand at the Judgement. To these He will say:

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“ . . . Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in . . . ”
Matthew 25:34-35.

Those found faithful replied:

“ . . . Lord, when we saw thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink? ”
Verses 37-39.

Jesus’ response was:

“ . . . In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”
Verse 40.

To fill such needs, there first must be a considering, an awareness of, and then a strong desire, a quickness to fill that which is lacking. How perfectly this will provoke love. Does not the one receiving respond in love to the one who considers, discerns, and does? This mutual helping one another edifies the body, causing it to become more fitly joined together, compacted, pressed together; in short—built up in love.

The Words of the Apostle John help our striving to provoke unto love:

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he (Jesus) laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

I John 3:16-17.

Our Father saw his need, and provided His Son to be the Redeemer. His Son saw our needs and gave Himself. As we discern this grace, this love, we must see needs and be ready to lay down our lives for our brethren, be ready to fill a need, to strengthen, to encourage, to feed, to house, to comfort — whatever may be required. Our brother James also teaches:

“If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be yet warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give him not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”
James 2:15-16.

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Prayer is not enough. A giving of those things which are needful is required. Are we ready, Brethren and Sisters, to put our own lives aside, to accept at times inconvenience, interruption, foregoing what we want ourselves, and often labouring greatly for His sake? Is this not provoking to love and good works?

In thinking about this, the words of Paul come to mind as he spoke of the importance of love.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”
1 Corinthians 13:1.

These instruments make pleasant sounds, but are of no consequence—so is speech without love.

“Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries . . . and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.”
Verse 2.

Without the motivation of love, faith and understanding count as nothing.

“. . . Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, (as an offering), and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”
Verse 2.

Can we see why it is so necessary that we consider one another to provoke unto love and good works? We all need stirring up, for we tend to be complacent, not fully considering, failing to fully discern. This is especially needful as we think about our High Priest who through His sacrifice, His filling of our needs, mediates for us in the most holy place, God’s presence.

What help Paul imparts, strengthening our struggle to be members of His body. Let us respond to his exhortation, draw near, hold fast, and consider one another—and by so doing this, be joined more closely together, edified in His house. Paul further writes:

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . . but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as we see the day approaching.”
Hebrews 10:25.

The assembling together, the exhorting (encouraging, comforting) one another applies not only to our meeting together today, but really to our whole living, if we are seeking to be among those assembled forever when the day is no longer “approaching”—but is here.

J.A.DeF.

Magnify the Lord

While reading in the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, one cannot help but be impressed by the prophecy against Gog that God has given concerning the last days. We have read in the 38th chapter of Ezekiel of those nations who will be allied with Gog: Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, Libya, all united to bring about the downfall of Israel. Today we can recognise these names as countries with radical governments, known for a brand of terrorism which strikes fear into many nations. God will use Russia and her allies to threaten the land of Israel, for the purpose that His name be magnified in the sight of the rest of the world:

“And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face.

For on my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel, So that the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the heavens, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. (Ezek. 38:18-20).

Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.”

This prophecy against Gog is helpful to us to recognise how closely God has His eye on Israel, and that even during this threatening time when Gog will be unleashed against that land, God is there to direct the outcome.

Our hope, and the promise extended, is that those who overcome may have a part in the purpose of God in those last days. But what we must recognise is that if we are to share in the glories of the end, we must be certain that we make God an integral part of our everyday living now. How merciful God is, for He makes known unto us what He requires and how we can be a part of that hope. We should evaluate very carefully our place in His sight that we do not fall short of His expectations of us. The Lord Jesus in Luke 21:25-28 spoke of his time as prophesied in Ezekiel and how it would effect many in the earth:

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

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Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when those things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

At this time of the coming of the Lord Jesus we see that the purpose of God is to reveal His great strength, having His son coming in power and great glory to establish the kingdom on earth. As we look around us and see the circumstances as foretold in prophesy lining up, we are encouraged that the time of the end is drawing near, and that as God has spoken, it will just as surely come to pass. Jesus spoke about discerning the time at hand by giving an illustration using the fig tree in Luke 21:29-31:

"And he spoke to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;
When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.
So also ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

In this example of the fig tree, or any tree for that matter, we know the time and the season by observing the state of its foliage. Likewise we can discern the time and season concerning the fulfillment of God's word by observing the state of the nations around us. As we see signs that the coming of the Lord Jesus can not be too far off, are we as prepared as we should be? How is this done?

In the prophecy in Ezekiel chapter 38, we see that God's purpose is to eventually magnify God. If we seek to magnify God each day in our living then our minds will be prepared to stand before Him in hope. To magnify or make God large in our living is a great responsibility for those who are in a covenant relationship with Him. We read of this responsibility as spoken of by Paul in Hebrews 2:1-3:

"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.
For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward,
How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

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How should we escape if we fail to recognise the help God provides through His Son the Lord Jesus, whom we remember each first day of the week in the bread and wine at the Table.

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.” Heb. 12:25.

The word of God can help us be steadfast and not shaken by the events which come to pass in the earth, especially those predicted by the 38th chapter of Ezekiel (verse 19) “Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel.” We are tested everyday to see if we can be shaken from the path of God. Will we hold fast?

David experienced the same circumstances as we today, and we read of his desire to magnify God in I Chron. 17. 16-17, as he responded when given the promises by Nathan the prophet:

“And David, the king, came and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou has brought me hitherto?

And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant’s house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God.

And verse 20 and 24:

O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

Let it even be established, that thy name may be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and let the house of David, thy servant, be established before thee.”

David tried to put God first in his living and was known as a man after God’s own heart. Was it because he first humbled himself, and even though a king, looked upon himself as a man of low degree, bowing before the mightiness of God? With this type of spirit, God was then pleased to bless David, granting him the promises given Abraham and Jacob before him.

God has given to us as well the promises of David, an escape from death if we can serve Him and magnify Him in our heart. How can we do this? Perhaps David tells it best in Psalm 34.1-4:

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“I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it, and be glad.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

David was preserved and “delivered from all his fears.” Likewise, He will deliver us from our fears, as we live in a world bent on its own destruction, but only as we put aside our fleshly worries, and replace them with trust in Him, magnifying and glorifying His name daily.

M.C.S.

Peace through God

In an illustration from the book of Judges we can see how the people of God were afflicted for seven years. They had turned from God in doing evil and so they were put in fear through oppression. The enemy had no mercy; all it wanted to do was destroy. There was no vestige of consideration for the vanquished; nor the slightest sensible approach to the despoiling of Israel in tempering such action which could have benefited the despoilers in the longer term.

“And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them;

And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no

sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor ass.

For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it.

And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.”

(Judges 6:3-6)

It usually takes difficulties and despair for a people to be caused to reconsider their ways, and this was the outcome at the time under consideration.

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“And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites,
That the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel,—”
(verses 7-8)

The prophet reproved Israel, pointing out that God who took them from bondage in Egypt could have prevented what had happened at the hands of a lesser power. He also pointed out that they had been warned not to respect the Amorite worship but had not obeyed this divine injunction. They were then left to think this reproof over. But God is very intreatable, unlike men. They were not to be left indefinitely in this miserable condition which found them hiding in caves and dens in the mountains.

So began an outcome which started quite unostentatiously, but concluded in great and terrible things:

“And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.”
(verses 11-13)

We see from these words Gideon was one who showed a potential for resistance against the enemy of the people. Furthermore we see that he respected God in fully believing that God had indeed taken the people from the bondage of Egypt and furthermore it was because God had hidden Himself from them that they were now suffering. This attitude showed Gideon's strength in the Lord, hence the reply of God's messenger:

“And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have I not sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

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And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.”
(verses 14-17)

Gideon respected God, but he was not a proud man. His words to the angel show no self confidence and also that he did not feel to have any position. Additionally he sought for a sign, for guidance, so that he might be assured that God was indeed working with him. Gideon also felt that it was not sufficient to ask for a sign for indication; he also must do something—not just stand still and wait. So in his words which have been preserved on record, there is exhortation for us.

“Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come to thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it;

And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.”
(verses 18-20)

It is easy to pass over these things without fully realising their import. “My family is poor in Manasseh . . .” But not so poor that Gideon would hold back, in such a circumstance, what he hoped would lead to the good not only of his own house, but also all the people of God. So a kid of the goats was taken and unleavened cakes from the produce which yet remained from the encroaches of the enemy. This required expedition, for the messenger of God was waiting under the oak tree.

Now came the test:

“And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and unleavened cakes; and there rose up a fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.

And Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, Oh Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.

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And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”
(verses 21-24)

Gideon had not previously realised that the messenger of God was one belonging to the host of heaven. He trembled now at the revelation. But the reply was that there was peace between the Great and Merciful God and himself. Yes, peace between God and the one chosen to further the work of God, for the benefit of the people of God. Gideon's belief and desire was to emphasise this. So he builded the altar in that same place, and named it Jehovah-shalom. Shalom (peace) margin of Bible—“The Lord send peace”.

Here was testimony: for with the enemy there was no peace. But if there was peace with God then surely there was now hope of ultimate peace. The Lord send peace to the people, after so long a time. This work of building the altar was to the honour of God and as an emphasis to his brethren that it was to God they could look for blessing, who would not fail them if they were at peace with Him.

So began the divine outworking for the deliverance of the people of God from fear and suffering.

Events move on, as Gideon responded to divine guidance. But that which was false in the midst of the people had to be struck down first if they were to have peace with God.

“And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it:

And build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.

Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.”

(verses 25-27)

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Here is demonstrated courage in weakness. No head-on clash with those who supported that which was dishonouring to God; but no failing to do what was required nevertheless. The prudence of Gideon is an exhortation and instruction.

It was too late in the morning for the supporters of the wrong to attempt to protect the falsity which they had embraced in their midst. It had been chopped down, so what could their anger avail it now?

“Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it.

And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.

Therefore on that day he called Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.”
(verses 30-32)

So, is exhortation from all those years ago, showing what can be done for the Ecclesia of God; and how peace can be attained through peace with God.



The Vineyard of the Lord

“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 in me 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.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” (John 15:1-4)

It is most interesting and enlightening to note the words of the prophet Isaiah written some centuries previous in chapter 5:7:—

“For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah (i.e. those giving praise to God) (are) his pleasant plant: . . .”

Giving power and authority to God’s word as Jesus no doubt endorses the prophet when he continues in John 15:5—

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: . . . for without me ye can do nothing.”

Without the Lord Jesus we can do nothing, yet if we are obedient nothing is impossible.
Verses 7-8 continue:—

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

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Here we are clearly shown that the only way that God can be glorified is by obedience, and therefore bearing much fruit, i.e. of the Spirit. Verse 16 is a most important verse: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, . . .” We need to think carefully about these words for it shews the wonderful privilege extended to those who will be obedient and keep his commandments and also a great principle or fundamental of the Truth—that this privilege is not for everyone as proved by John 6:14:—

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“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Also Acts 15:14:—

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”

John 15 emphasises the privilege for it says at the end of verse

16:— “. . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it unto you.” which takes us back again to verse 7—“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you” these are qualifications—“ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”—again providing that the asking is according to Truth.

Psalm 84:11 says:—

“For the Lord is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

Great then is the responsibility of those who are called to be obedient.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

(John 15:16-17)

How important is this injunction and the warning in Galatians 5:14-15:—

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”

So the Apostle Paul helps further in verses 16-17:—

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

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and explains in Romans 8:1-2:--

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Does not this help us to understand what the Lord Jesus was teaching in John 15:—

“I am the true vine . . .”

“ . . . ye are the branches . . .”

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”
And finally in verse 16 — “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” to the end that “whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”



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

“THEN HE SAID UNTO ME, SON OF MAN, THESE BONES ARE THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL: BEHOLD, THEY SAY, OUR BONES ARE DRIED, AND OUR HOPE IS LOST: WE ARE CUT OFF FOR OUR PARTS. THEREFORE PROPHECY AND SAY UNTO THEM, THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD; BEHOLD MY PEOPLE, I WILL OPEN YOUR GRAVES, AND CAUSE YOU TO COME UP OUT OF YOUR GRAVES, AND BRING YOU INTO THE LAND OF ISRAEL.”
(Ezekiel 37:11-12)

These words concern “the whole house of Israel.” Is it not therefore significant at a time when the persecution of Jews in the the Soviet Union appears to be getting worse and hardly more than a thousand were allowed to emigrate from Russia last year as compared to over fifty thousand in 1979; and even a lessening of numbers is expected this year, that emigration from an unexpected quarter has been taking place?

Black African Hebrews have been snatched from the depths of famine in Ethiopia, under what has been termed “Operation Moses”. The Falashas originate from the Hebrew Colonists of ancient times who journeyed into Arabia and Ethiopia along trade routes of those days. Possibly by way of Egypt and the Yemen or by ship from Ezion-geber along the Red Sea. Their name Falasha means “stranger” denoting their distinctiveness. Before the time of Christ the Amharic-speaking people of Ethiopia were attracted to the Law upheld by the Falashas and some to a degree were converted to it. The historian Gibbon refers to this phenomenon saying that this revelation of the Mosaic code ultimately facilitated the spread of Christianity into Ethiopia from which came the Abyssinian Church. For nineteen hundred years however, the Falashas remained separate in their form of Mosaic religion, albeit reduced to a minority and to serfdom status.

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Now when famine has gripped the Sahel, Israel has risen to the occasion to help their Hebrew relations in the poverty-stricken regions of Ethiopia, airlifting vast numbers of them in secrecy to the land of Israel, helped financially by the Jewish community of the United States and Britain and other Western Countries. Orders had been given by the Israeli Authorities that every Falasha able to struggle to the point of departure, no matter how weak and sick, was to be rescued to Israel and given every medical assistance necessary.

Even when this secret operation came to light, bringing adverse reaction from Arab governments, and pressure on the Ethiopian authorities to prevent any further Falasha departure, Israel reiterated that neither economic hardship, political dispute or geographical distance would prevent the government from doing everything to bring to Israel the rest of the Ethiopian Jewish community!

To those who had reservations about the Falashas' black colour, Israel's spokesman said "There were no white Jews or black Jews. There are only Jews bound by our religion, and our historic experience has proved it." To the thousands of Ethiopian Jews not yet airlifted the promise has been given that "Never has a Jew knocked on a Jewish door and been refused help."

So the recovery of this lost "Hebrew arm" continues, truly a sign of the coming of that greater revival:

" . . . O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves. . . ."



THE REMNANT

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, Orchard Park.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Work here continues in hope, though we know not the end, but trust in our Father to guide and to reveal.

Gratitude is felt for help given during the "holiday season", for those of us who particularly are in a position to feel how different, yet blessed are His people.

J.A.Def.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Was pleased to hear that arrangements have been made for visits in early summer.

Am grateful for the help received in many ways, both in the reading of the word and in the writings of the early Brethren.

per D.L.

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

It has always been required of God's servants to continue the work, no matter how difficult, or how unrewarding it may seem. This should encourage us to press on in faith.

D.L.

