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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"

"FROM 'THE APOSTOLIC WITNESS'"

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It is essential that scripture should be interpreted by scripture, but the selection of passages to support a preconceived notion is not interpreting scriptures with scripture."

The Editor of "The Remnant" having selected references which seem to him to establish his case, withdraws behind this ill constructed barricade and pontificates "there comes a time when enough has been said." This may be acceptable to his readers, but will not deter an honest investigation of the Word. There is an avoidance of the fact that the Greek word KLEROS is given an alternative rendering in a number of passages, and that it is related to an obtaining by Christ of a more excellent name than the angels, and the receiving of an inheritance on the principle of faith.

Let it be remembered that our critic objected to our original article "Apostolic Tradition and Ordinances" on the grounds that we associated intelligent choice with the selection of Matthias by the disciples; and then let this question be pondered: Was there no difference between the indiscriminate action of heathen soldiers casting lots upon Christ's vesture quoted on three occasions by the Editor of "The Remnant") and the manner of selection exercised by the disciples, when conscious of the heavy responsibility which lay upon them, they earnestly besought the Lord, before they gave forth their lots. The difference IS marked in the word itself. In the references provided by our critic, the word translated "cast" is the Greek word BALLO, meaning to throw, whereas the word employed to describe the disciples action "to give forth" is the Greek word DIDOMAI used variously to mean — adventure, bestow, commit, to supply, to suggest, to appoint, to be the author of a thing, to attribute, to ascribe, etc., all of which when used in association with human actions involve the exercise of intelligence.

It is because we recall our own history which coincides with that of "The Remnant" that we emphasise that serving brethren are NOT leaders (as "The Remnant" still supposes) and the necessity for every brother or sister to exercise an enlightened intelligence (which "The Remnant" derides) when discriminating between brethren upon scriptural principles. It has been plainly stated in previous replies, that the appointment to office may be good or evil designs, for even in apostolic times men appointed by the Holy Spirit did not remain faithful, Acts 20:28,30. Therefore

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the fact that prominent individuals were responsible for division contrary to the word on the one hand, and the introduction of heresy on the other, has no relevance to the issue raised by the Editor of "The Remnant".

In conclusion, the Editor of "The Apostolic Witness" has no objections to discussing the divisions of either 1971 or 1954. However, we suggest that in order to show good faith, Mr. W. G. Butterfield should be willing to give some straight answers to straight questions.—This tactic of avoiding the point immediately at issue does not presage any good arising from discussing other matters now 30 years remote.

We quote this latest extract from the Magazine "Apostolic Witness" so that our readers who have been following this matter may judge for themselves.



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

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”
(Matthew 24:22)

The above is what the scripture declares and is from the mouth of Christ himself. Scientists would challenge this. The following is what is being propagated:—

“The nuclear winter theory is being widely and uncritically canvassed by certain scientists who should know better. They are “selling” it in an emotional rather than a scientific spirit. The theory is simple, perhaps too simple. The idea is that smoke from burning cities and forests would ascend to the stratosphere to form a great black cloud which the sun would be unable to penetrate. Agriculture would cease since plants would be deprived of sunlight. There would be a tremendous drop in temperature. Even the power stations that remained intact could not supply adequate electricity. Those who survived the bombs would perish of starvation and cold. This may sound plausible at first sight. But there is at least one thing wrong with it. There wouldn’t be enough smoke to block the sunlight. Fifty per cent of the land areas of the countries likely to be involved in a nuclear exchange are not covered by forest or brush. They were in the Middle Ages when seventy or eighty per cent of the land was indeed covered by forest. But today the true figure in the hemisphere is very much lower.—Any clouds of smoke would be hot and would radiate warmth to the earth’s surface from which it could not escape. This principle, by which a planet can be warm even if its atmosphere is opaque is known as the “greenhouse effect”. It takes the most extreme form on the planet Venus whose surface is twice as hot as the standard kitchen oven.—The conclusion is clear. Neither academic studies nor natural “experiment” indicate that nuclear war, fearful tragedy that it would be, would mean the extinction of the human race.”

Who are we to believe? Christ or the scientist? Need such a question be asked to the devout mind? But what folly is seen in the thinking of clever men in these dark and evil times; surely another evidence of the indictment which is upon the human race.

In the Seventh Year (2 Kings 11: 1-4)

To the casual reader of the scriptures these verses would mean little more than history. But is this what they mean to us, i.e. just history? Surely not for if they are, then how much better off are we? So may we in the goodness and kindness of our God endeavour to lift up the cover, as it were, to be enabled to see what a wealth of prophecy and instruction is concealed in this apparent simple historic record.

Note verse 4—

“In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard . . .” — How significant — in the seventh year. Knowing how the figure seven is used in the scriptures to denote completion, surely taking our minds forward to the fulfillment of the purpose of God. Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers of hundreds — who were these rulers of hundreds? Let us turn to 2 Chronicles 23 where we find that they are named. May we also remember that God did not give names haphazardly especially to his servants, as we can confirm by reference to Numbers 1:5 & 17. So applying the same principle, what do we find?

Jehoiada	God knows
Azariah	God is keeper
Jeroham	Loved
Ishmail	God is hearing
Jehohanan	God is gracious
Azariah	repeated — Why?
Obed	Serving
Masseiah	Work of God
Adaiah	Pleasing to God
Elishaphat	God is judge
Zichri	Renowned

What a wealth of information do we have here to us tell us that — Jehoiada — God knows — God knows them that are His. i.e. those who He is keeping. i.e. those that are loved. For God does hear and is gracious to those who serve Him. This is the work of God to gather those who are pleasing to Him. Yes, truly God is the Judge and His people will truly be renowned at the return of His beloved Son when the kingdom will be established. Again, we

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may ask why the name Azariah is repeated — God is keeper. Do we find the answer in Genesis 41:32. “For that the dream was doubled (or repeated) unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” And what are those renowned under divine guidance to bring to pass.

We read in 2 Chronicles 23:--

“And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

“And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the House of God. And he said unto them, Behold the king’s son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David.” (verses 2-3)

“But let none come into the house of the Lord, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord.

“And the Levites (those who are joined) shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever else cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.” (verses 6-7)

“Then they brought out the king’s son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king.” (verse 11)

“And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the Lord’s people.

“Then all the people went into the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

“And Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David.

“And he set porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in.

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“And he took captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the Lord: and they came through the high gate into the king’s house, and set the king on the throne of the kingdom.” (verses 16-20)

Can we mistake the prophecy and the instructions that the return of the Lord Jesus to set up the Kingdom of God, with the destruction of the Kingdoms of men — i.e. the false woman of Revelation 17 as typified by Athaliah — is certain because it is established by God and He will shortly bring it to pass.



Fighting against God

How clear was the warning given to one who made claim to be an Israelite, yet he was a man who served himself and not God.

“But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the Lord, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their Business.

And they burn unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the Lord our God; but ye have forsaken him.

And behold, 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.”

(2 Chron. 13:10-12)

Was the warning heeded? No it was not. Jereboam king of Israel to whom the warning was addressed trusted in the arm of flesh and his own strategy. Had he not twice as many men in his army than the king of Judah against whom he fought? Furthermore he had a very clever scheme prepared. He sent some of his soldiers behind the king of Judah's front line, for in the plentitude of his numbers he could afford to divide his army. But he had overlooked one vital thing. However powerful a man is, whatever pre-eminent position he occupies he cannot fight against God. We see what happened:—

“But Jereboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them.

And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.

Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jereboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand.

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And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.

Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers.”

(verses 13-18)

Thus courage for God, faith in God's help, prospered the far weaker party in this schism and trouble amongst those claiming to be the people of God.

The emphasis in this account is that it was God who overthrew those in opposition.

“. . . and it came to pass that God smote Jereboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah --- and God delivered them into their hand.”

Man, of himself, could not have achieved out of such a weak position such a victory. It was God who did it. Is this record, then, not preserved to these times to help us trust in God? The adversary can do more than God will allow. If everything seems untoward His people it is not hopeless at all, for God can do anything, achieving for his people what would be impossible of men.

Moving on through the scriptures we read a detailed description of events which not only have happened but are yet to happen. A time is coming when the unconverted people of God are to suffer from a very powerful adversary. What that adversary will fail to know or understand, is that it cannot fight against God. Being atheistic in its state belief it obviously will not take God into account at all, solely trusting in the arm of flesh. So we read:—

“He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.” (Daniel 11:41-42)

Here seems to be invincible power. But the one mistake made by the Northern power is its failure to perceive that there is a far greater power in heaven.

“But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

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And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.” (verses 4-45)

“. . . non shall help him” because none will be able to do so.

Here is something again to help us in our low estate and weakness. However powerful the adversary the adversary can only do so much as God will allow; at the right time according to God’s wisdom, the work of the adversary can and will be thwarted.

Proceeding to the New Testament we are told of the work of another adversary. A most powerful enemy. The enemy referred to is Death! The first stages of death had set in for Lazarus.

“Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.” (John 11:1-3)

Jesus did not respond immediately to the appeal made. This is a reminder of how God has worked in the past, and how he does work. A situation is allowed very often to go on for a while; it is only in due time that God intervenes, as we have already seen from the earlier quotations. So we read:—

“Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

And when he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.”

(verses 5-6)

He loved them; the fact that the scripture says this certifies the fact. Yet He tarried. It is the same when God tarries. This is not the evidence that God does not hear or does not care. It is because He has a purpose in letting matters develop, just as Jesus likewise had a purpose in tarrying; it was certainly not that he did not care.

So, following two days in the same place Jesus said to his disciples:—

“. . . Let us go into Judea again.”

(verse 7)

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But in Judea was the opponent, the adversary, with great influence, so the disciples warned Jesus:—

“His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again?

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them. Our friend Lazarus sleepeth: but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking rest in sleep.

Then Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazaraus is dead.

And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

(verses 8-16)

Thomas was pessimistic, they were going into the lion's den, nevertheless Thomas was prepared to die with The Master. He had not really perceived what Jesus had been saying. If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. Nothing can cause a fall, or bring the servant of God down, if he is walking in the light. Working then in the light, and for the light should not be deterred, even though the adversary threatens. It is a different matter if the man walks in darkness and so does not see where he is going. Then he will fall, as Jereboam of old fell, and as the Northern Power will fall.

Jesus was not reckless, but He did have faith to know that God, and the work of God, cannot be thwarted, even though the workers be weak and few.

By the time Jesus had arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had already been in the grave four days, held in the strong clasp of the enemy — Death. But what a lot can be done for those who believe:—

“Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

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Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”
(verses 24-27)

When Jesus defeated death and raised Lazarus what could the opponent do to Jesus and His disciples in the face of such evidence? So the opponent went away to machinate against Jesus for another time.

But ever the lesson emerges from the divine witness of the Word of God, that man cannot fight against God; at the appropriate time God will deliver!



Repent

By the time this article is in print, we will have returned again to the beginning of our portions (God willing). As we do, I am sure there will be a renewed determination to seek the help which is found through this Word we are given as a means of strength and knowledge and understanding of the things of God.

We start in Genesis, the beginning, and there revealed is God's creation which was created in its perfection and goodness. The second portion is in Psalms, the pruned songs of David which speak so often of the Lord Jesus. The last reading is in Matthew, one of the Gospels, declaring the good news of the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. So much help and sustenance can be derived as we study these inspired words.

The Gospel speaks of the life of Jesus, His birth, baptism and His proving. He was that Light which was in mind on the first day of God's creation, that Light that was divided from the darkness and was so perfect in its purity.

We read in Matthew of the early days of the Lord Jesus' preaching, of the first words of His ministry which proclaimed:

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. 4:17.

That word “repent” means to think differently, to think outside of the flesh, to ponder the things of the spirit to work toward perfection as is explained in Matt. 5:48:

“Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.”

God's desire is that we be complete—or perfect, coming from a prime root to set out for a definite point or goal. How much repentance plays a part in looking to the point or goal, for without it, we have no hope in our fleshly bodies of reaching it.

Jesus spoke these words proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of heaven some 2000 years ago, yet it has not occurred as yet. It would be easy to say—it has been all these years and Jesus still has not come again — and so relax our vigil. But instead, we must set our minds on the goal which God holds out for us, and work patiently with that end in mind.

We are told in James 1:3-4:

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

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How much this speaks of the need to wait and persevere, the need to have the determination to think differently, to repent. Patience must be there, and if it is to work that perfect work, it must be displayed in all our living. Peter's words are a help to us in I Peter 5:10:

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect. stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

Just as Jesus suffered the trials and temptations of his flesh, we too will be tested and suffer as we attempt to following the ways of God.

We remember as we have read, the simple words of the Lord Jesus — “Follow me . . .” (Matt. 4:19). Likewise in our Genesis portion we have read of Noah, who, in his determination to follow God's ways moved in faith.

“Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” Gen. 6:9.

Obviously Noah followed the plan God had revealed to him, believed, and because of his faith was regarded as just and perfect in his generation. Isn't this how he repented, he thought differently from those around him, acknowledged that the kingdom of God was at hand, (actually only as far away as the number of years in his lifetime), and worked towards that goal.

Also Abraham is another example we will read about in the coming weeks:

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” Gen. 17:1.

Abraham's desire was to walk with God, and that walk was the process of perfection for him. His reward was the covenant promised of a seed that would one day be as the sands of the sea, a multitude of God's people inheriting the land promised and looking to Abraham as their founding father. How vitally important it is then to walk with God and how well David puts this thought in Psalm 1:1-2:

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”

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Again brought out is the need to walk in God's ways and the blessing it can provide for those who do. Also in II Sam. 22:31 David tells us what God's way is like:

“As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.”

God's way is perfect David tells us, and he commands that we perfect our ways if we are to please Him. How can we do this? First by looking in trust to Him, asking for the strength he can provide in order to overcome our flesh and perfect the spirit man within us. Isn't this really what was contained in Jesus' words “repent”, or think differently? Put down the flesh, trusting in the Spirit, and seek after the kingdom promised, following Christ's example in all we do. This is the same message that was given in The Old Testament as well, for in Micah 6:8 we read:

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Here in these words God tells us what is just or good, and what He requires of us — to show mercy or love, and walk in humbleness before Him. In thinking about the love we are to show it makes us think of the bond or tie which must be there between God's children. How much that bond depends on love, putting our own desires behind us and serving one another in humility and love. This is in a sense repentance, a thinking differently, for the flesh left unrestrained thinks only of itself, loves only itself, and naturally pays very little attention to any but its own needs. Here again we must show repentance.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Heb. 13:20-21.

We can be made perfect if we allow the Word of God to work in us, to turn us from our fleshly tendencies and instead to do His will. If we can as Jesus says, “Repent” or think differently, walking after His example we can share in the hope of a place in that everlasting peace to come, for surely “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

M.C.S.

At the Table of the Lord

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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Jesus' teaching concerning the good shepherd is a source of instruction and encouragement for us. He said:

"I am the good shepherd: and the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10:11.

He continued:

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." Verse 14.

How blessed we are, Brethren and Sisters, to know this privilege of being his sheep, to be known of Him. How are we known of him?

". . . the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." John 10:3.

The good shepherd recognises them because they know his voice; they know He will care for them, feed them, protect them. Simply put—they respond to Him. Why does He continue to know them? Because they evidence that they belong to Him. If there is no valuing of His care, His protection, His tender correction, then He will know, and may we not believe we belong to Him? As He calls, are we hearing — Him and His as well? Do we willingly follow Him, trusting for green pasture and living water, as well as the peace even now that passeth understanding? Do we perceive that in His presence there is protection, direction, blessing, perfect care and love? Thus as Paul tells us:

". . . The Lord knoweth them that are his."

II Timothy 2:19.

Often in the scriptures God uses shepherds to instruct his people. It is natural that He should do so, for Israel was a pastoral nation, having many shepherds. As a result, they would be familiar with a shepherd's work, and so could perceive the lessons offered by the Almighty's instruction and counsel. Though we today, naturally speaking, are not pastoral, let us seek that help as spiritual sheep of the Father's flock. Let us enter into the minds of those faithful in Israel who looked to the shepherd promised of God. As an example, we read of Moses' selfless and

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caring words as he accepted that an entrance into the land was denied him. At that time he:

“. . . spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord . . . set a man over the congregation, . . . that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.”

Numbers 27:15-17.

His first concern was for his people, his flock, lest they be left leaderless. The Almighty answered Moses' plea:

“. . . Take thee Joshua . . . and lay thine hand upon him . . . And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded . . .” Verses 18, 23.

Joshua, we recognise, was a promise of the Lord Jesus Christ; indeed his name translated into Greek is Jesus. He was chosen to be the shepherd of Israel, to lead them into their inheritance.

The Father has provided shepherds in His mercy and care for His own through all their history — shepherds who led, nourished, encouraged, and chastened. Some of those so appointed were David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The list is long and is a living evidence of God's eyes always being upon his people, providing for their needs, particularly their spiritual needs. David actually was a keeper of sheep when chosen by God to be Israel's king. When Samuel was directed to the house of Jesse, seeking the one whom God had selected, he considered each of Jesse's sons assembled before him. He started with Eliab the eldest, but none of these were suitable. Finally he asked:

“Are here all thy children? . . .” I Samuel 16:11.

Jesse replied:

“. . . There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep . . .” Verse 11.

David was chosen because God knew his heart. Could it be that being a shepherd helped David develop a heart that was near to that of the Almighty's? He tells of his experience while keeping his father's sheep:

“. . . Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear . . . Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: . . .

The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me . . .”

I Samuel 17:34-37.

Here was faith, trust in the Shepherd of Israel, because he had experienced His care and protection as he was faithful in his

duties as a shepherd. We recognise David's spirit expressed in his words:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 23:1.

As we go about our work, whatever it may be, let us pursue it in the spirit of David — trusting, clinging to the shepherd who cares for us so graciously, listening with care for His indication and guidance. He knows us so well, knows our spirits, and all our needs. In perfect judgement and mercy He provides exactly what is right, but only if we look to Him, staying close to hear His voice, and ready to obey. David tells us again how totally he depended upon his Father:

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadeth Joseph like a flock; . . . Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." Psalm 80:1,3.

Most sadly we sometimes turn or drift away from our Shepherd, thinking we know better, and having other things which preoccupy. As a consequence, we stray and suffer. Part of the shepherd's work is to watch, to discern those who may be thinking to go their own way — and to turn them back to the care and protection of the flock, of the sheepfold, sometimes with a necessary sharp prod. David experienced this from God as he failed on a few occasions. Perceiving this, he was moved to cry in time of such distress:

"Turn us again, O God . . ."

Psalm 80:3.

How many times the Almighty does turn us from the way of ultimate death, back to Him, to His flock, and to awareness. How grateful we should feel for that mercy, that Shepherd whose rod and staff chastens and corrects, so bringing us back to him.

God in His purpose promised His people One who would be their shepherd for eternity. We are shown this through the prophecy of Isaiah as He comforted His people:

"Behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; . . .

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah 40:10-11.

What tender and fatherly care—what joy is promised to those who are called to be the flock of the good shepherd!

Even in the midst of Israel's captivity and despair, God was mindful of His people and of His promises to them. He speaks through His faithful prophet:

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“And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God . . .”
Ezekiel 34:23-24.

All this is still to come, for God in fulfilling His promises, sent Jesus His Son to live, to serve Him, and to die as the unblemished Lamb, who was even then a shepherd. He is to return in perfection, fulfilling these promises of the Almighty as we have already read:

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
John 10:11.

He has given his life for us, if we are striving to be sheep of his pasture. He is THE good shepherd — beautiful, fair, worthy. Only the Lord Jesus has been this, the worthy shepherd, the only one who perfectly has submitted to His Father. How great is our need for Him, and how great is our blessing and hope, as Peter reminds us:

“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” I Peter 2:25.

All of us were astray, and still go astray. We would surely perish were it not for the One who watches over His sheep. He knows where they are, is aware when they are in peril, and goes after them to bring them back to their haven in His flock, revealing to them their great danger. He is not only the good shepherd, but also the Bishop, the overseer of our living in this time of probation. How much we need that oversight, Brethren and Sisters, that care and correction. How blessed we are indeed; let us be sheep who hear and heed and follow.

THE SHEEP ON HIS RIGHT HAND

The future work and glory of the good shepherd is also revealed to us:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, . . . And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you . . .”
Matthew 25:31-34.

How will He know those who are His — who are faithful, who are sheep? He has said, “I know my sheep.” He is able to discern

THE REMNANT

their hearts and their spirits. They will have been part of the flock. They will have stayed close. They will have had needs and known needs. Theirs will have been filled, and they will have filled those of others. To these, His own at His right hand, Jesus says:

“. . . 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 25:35.

These works were done on behalf of the members of the flock, ultimately to be assembled around the good shepherd. To those who were truly a part of the flock, Jesus said:

“. . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”
Matthew 25:40.

As we strive to be counted among His sheep, shall we not remember the particular qualities of these gentle animals? They are not always clever and self-sufficient. They may seem weak and dependant at times—sometimes very unsure as to how to go. And yet they are sure of that perfect leadership and care; indeed selfless love is always present in their shepherd. So their obedience and trust is evidenced. With this in mind, let us take hold of Peter’s words of promise and encouragement:

“. . . When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” I Peter 5:4.

This is our hope, the crown of glory to be received from the chief Shepherd whom we know is soon to come. We are struggling to this end, and are helped by Jesus, who has given His life for His own. Let us then strive to remain close to this source of all help—the good shepherd whom God in His mercy and grace has provided to nurture the flock of God.

J.A.Def.



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.

Gratitude is felt for the communication and sharing in the work of our brethren and sisters in Manchester.

Supplications are on behalf of those who are ill, seeking the Father's healing and mercy as he sees fit.

Minds and hearts will be with all in Manchester on the occasion of their fraternal gathering.

J.A.Def.

"PENTRIP." Black Rock, Portmadoc

We must be grateful to the Almighty Creator for having cared for us in the severe weather of February, the worst in living memory. His kindness is very great at a time when His great power has been so much evidenced.

We are strengthened by the readings each day to hold fast and to seek to help each other in every way possible. Grateful for all letters received.

per D.L.

Sister Bessie Williams died suddenly on March 12th, 1985, and was buried at Treflys, Port Madog on March 16th, when about 30 persons were present including Brethren and Sisters.

Thus ends the witness in this place which has continued for over forty years; Sister is now sleeping, awaiting that happy morning which was the hope, when shall be brought to pass the saying that is written "Oh death where is thy sting, Oh where grave thy victory"?

D.L.

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

We have much to be thankful for in the accommodation for our meetings. At a time when renovating work is in progress at our usual hall.

Due however to the change in circumstances it may not be possible to have the fraternal gathering in the usual room.