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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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**All Communications**

W. G. Butterfield  
72 Thames Drive  
Biddulph,  
Staffs  
ST8 7HL

J. A. DeFries,  
R.D.1. Forestville,  
New York 14062  
U.S.A.

## At the Table of the Lord

“... BE IT UNTO ME ACCORDING TO THY WORD ...”

**I**N our recent portions in Luke, the purpose of God accomplished in the birth of His Son is revealed for us. This was an event which the faithful had looked for since the days of Adam, when God promised a seed of the woman which would conquer the seed of the serpent. Divine promises since Adam's time—to Abraham, to David, through the prophets, in the Psalms—all pointed to this great event, the coming of the promised Messiah. One might expect that such a long-awaited happening would be accomplished with great acclaim, great celebration, great rejoicing. In the world, the birth of a child of royalty is much publicised and anticipated. Not so with the Son of God, born in Bethlehem of Mary, of the line of David, the tribe of Judah, in fulfillment of prophecy. We read of this momentous event:

“... She brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7.

To the world at that time, this was an insignificant event. Mary and Joseph were not well known people, could not even get into the inn. If they had been important people, Mary recognised as the mother of a king-to-be, would not immediate room have been made for them in the inn? Yet here was the birth of One who one day will change the world, will rule over it in righteousness, destroy its evil, redeem a people unto God forever—the greatest change, the greatest blessing the world will ever know; but there was no room for them in the inn!

Had we been in Bethlehem on that day, would we have been aware of what was transpiring? Perhaps—if we were looking for His coming, knowing it had to happen in Bethlehem, that the mother of the Messiah would be of Judah, in the line of David. Who did know it was to happen at that time? We do not know, except for Mary, and Joseph whom she would have told, and to whom an angel appeared. Also Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Zacharias her husband would be aware of the impending birth.

With these thoughts in mind, let us turn our attention to the one who knew exactly what was to happen—Mary. We are able to discern a good deal about her from what we have read these last few days. Through perceiving her spirit, her trust,

Brethren and Sisters, we can be helped in our struggles to be subject to our Father, as this record so clearly shows Mary to have been. We first hear of Mary as Gabriel came to her with a message from the Almighty. Gabriel was the chief messenger of God used to convey the Father's purpose.

In Daniel's time, he spoke of his work:

"... O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

... I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."  
Daniel 9:22-23.

Daniel was greatly beloved of God. Why? Was it because he had been faithful, fulfilled God's will, resisted the threats and temptations of the Babylonian adversary? As a consequence, Gabriel brought God's words to comfort and direct him. So it was with Mary. Can we then conclude that Mary also must have been greatly beloved, especially chosen of God for such a work as to bear the child of promise? How carefully God would examine, would discern the heart, as only He can; and only then would He choose Mary and send Gabriel to tell her of His purpose. We remember that Gabriel appeared also to Zacharias, the priest, as he served in the temple, to tell him that a son, John, would be born to him and his wife, Elizabeth. He said:

"... I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent ... to shew thee these glad tidings." Luke 1:19.

This same Gabriel came to Mary:

"... Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." Luke 1:28.

Can we imagine Mary's mind as the chief messenger of Yahweh spoke? The message was: "Hail (or be glad, be of good cheer, rejoice), thou art highly favoured." Favour we find is also used as grace. Mary was granted this blessing. Why was this? Her spirit, her mind must have been pleasing to the Almighty. Her heart, must have been toward Him. Accordingly she was visited, blessed, favoured. What was her reaction? What would be our reaction, Brethren and Sisters—glad, proud, awed? Mary, chosen because of her spirit, helps us to react in a way pleasing to God, showing at the same time why she was chosen:

"... When she saw him (Gabriel), she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be."  
Luke 1:29.

She was troubled, or as the word means, stirred up, agitated. She was disturbed in mind — perhaps feeling, Why should this happen to me? Why would Gabriel come to me? Casting about or deliberating in her mind, she revealed an humble, quiet, and very concerned spirit. Can we see why our sister was pleasing to her Father, and why God was with her? Gabriel, discerning her troubled mind reassured her:

“... Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favour with God.”  
Verse 30.

And then the angel told what the Almighty had in mind—to make her the mother of His Son, the One who was to be the fulfillment of all the promises of God. How overwhelming, how it would fill Mary with fear and doubt, not of God, but of her own worthiness. How can I do it? Why me? Her immediate reply was a natural one:

“... How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” Vs. 34.  
We remember the prophecy:

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”  
Isaiah 7:14.

Immanuel—God with us. Mary no doubt knew this prophecy, but in wonder and amazement may not have perceived it, especially in relation to herself! The arch-angel reassured her, concluding:

“For with God nothing shall be impossible.” Luke 1:37.

How hard it is to hang onto this conviction, Brethren and Sisters, this trust and belief in His power and His mercy. Gabriel reminded Mary, and reminds us, that even if it seems not capable of being accomplished in the natural course of events, with our Father nothing is impossible, for He is the Source of all power. In time of trial, of doubt, of questioning, let us remember these words of the Spirit; let us strive to accept them, trusting in that power as did Mary in her total acceptance:

“... Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word ...”  
Luke 1:38.

Are not these words tangible evidence of Mary’s faith and trust? How like the words of the Lord Jesus as He agonised in the garden just hours before death, as required by His Father:

“... Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”  
Luke 22:42.

He endured, He overcame because He sought to do His Father's will. Mary was one who moved in that same spirit, and so was highly favoured to become the mother of Jesus, from whom he inherited His mortal nature. If this spirit—"be it unto me according to thy word"—can be ours, can we not hope for His favour, His grace?

Let us strive to understand Mary's mind as the child grew in her womb. Would she not be filled with awe, wonder, perhaps fear, at the wondrous changes in her life? How she would care for herself in this work and prepare in joy for that child, ever thoughtful and aware of the magnitude of her work and privilege. As time went on, she was delivered of the Lord Jesus in that manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. For Bethlehem, this was a quiet event—no shouting, no rejoicing in the streets, for few would be aware. The exception was a group of shepherds tending their sheep in the hills, to whom an angel of God appeared and said:

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ (Messiah) the Lord." Luke 2:11.

The shepherds hastened and:

"... made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." Luke 2:17.

What about Mary? We are shown that:

"... Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." Luke 2:19.

Ponder involves careful, thoughtful considering; and this is just what Mary did—keeping all these wondrous things in her heart, thinking what they meant—How must I act as the mother of the promised Messiah? How can I possibly fulfill these responsibilities to bring up this holy child in the way He should go?

Then there was Joseph's and Mary's experience as they went up to Jerusalem when Jesus was eight days old, to offer Him to the Lord as was required for the firstborn. Simeon, a faithful and just man, moved by the Holy Spirit, prophesied concerning the babe, and we are told:

"... Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him." Luke 2:33.

And then Simeon prophesied concerning Mary:

"(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also) ..." Verse 35.

Mary was to know great sadness and anguish, as 33 years later:

“... there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother ...”

John 19:25.

How grieved she must have felt as she witnessed the death of her Son; yet she knew that this was required of Him to fulfill all righteousness. Was she able to endure the agony, the anguish because from her pondering in her heart, she knew and accepted all things? Her heart WAS involved; it was moved by what she had been told, what she had seen, and what she knew the future held for her Son and for herself. Yet her natural “mother’s feelings” must have been deeply torn.

Perhaps as we have been given a little better insight into this tender mind and humble spirit of our sister, we see why she was chosen to be the mother of the Lord Jesus, and so faithfully carried out her responsibility. No doubt she impressed upon the child Jesus that He was a special person, the Son of God, having a great work and responsibility. She would love and encourage him, guiding and preparing His mind for the life of sacrifice that was to be His.

In being helped to perceive Mary’s spirit, can we not better strive to be like her — accepting, trusting, grateful, and so sustained in trial and hardship? In sadness and concern she pondered in her heart. Let us face our circumstances as did our sister, allowing our hearts to humbly respond to the One who is the God of all mercy and comfort—and who is our Father.

J.A.DeF.



## Applying His Word

**A**S we read of the experiences of the Lord Jesus, we are impressed at his application of the word of God, particularly as He was tried and overcame by that written word. To apply the word of God during our probation is a necessary requirement, therefore, we can be helped as we look to the example of the One who did so perfectly.

As we look at the experiences of the Lord Jesus, we find many who did not think He was applying the word of God. We find that some of those with whom He had contact, felt He was blaspheming, yet we know from Matthew 5: 17-20 that His desire was to fulfill, not destroy:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Til heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

We see from Jesus' words that His desire was that the law be lived and applied to perfection. At the time of the Lord Jesus, it was the scribes and Pharisees who felt He was not living within the framework of the law and on many occasions tried to subtly trap Him to prove He was not obeying that law. However, the Lord Jesus was able to resist them on every occasion.

One such example is recorded in Luke, concerned His disciples plucking ears of corn and eating them on the Sabbath:

“And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;

How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?" (Luke 6:3-4).

Also on that same Sabbath day, Jesus healed the man with the withered hand and stilled the accusations of the scribes and Pharisees with the thought:

"Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? (Luke 6:9).

And what was the response of the scribes and Pharisees?

Verse 11 of this same chapter tells us:

"And they were filled with madness; and commanded one with another what they might do to Jesus."

Jesus' application of the word was one of spirit—the spirit of the law. The scribes and Pharisee's reaction as one of madness shows how void they were of that spirit, but instead were controlled by their own fleshly adherence to the letter of the law.

When we go to Genesis 2:1-3 we read regarding the Sabbath:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

It was at that time man was instructed to regard the Sabbath as a day of rest and take into his heart and mind God's work and purpose for the benefit of mankind—all being good.

When the law was given at Sinai we read that Moses was instructed to record in the law these words regarding the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11):

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

The Sabbath was to be sanctified — made holy, and this is what the scribes and the Pharisees perhaps thought they were doing. Yet, Jesus' application of that same law allowed the doing of those things which were right, clean and holy. How positively the Lord Jesus was able to apply the spirit of the law while the scribes and Pharisees revealed that the spirit was not in their minds, only the application of the flesh's thinking to benefit or protect their own position.

In Luke 4:18-9 we see what the work of the Lord Jesus was as He quoted the words of Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Jesus' work was to do those things that would allow the spirit of God's word to be received. Who would receive it?—the poor, the brokenhearted and those held captive by their flesh. All those seeking release would appreciate the promise of “the acceptable year of the Lord” to come. This time speaks of a rest which will come when the Lord Jesus returns to fulfill all that has been written in the law and the prophets from the beginning. Paul speaks of this in Hebrews 4:7 as he reminds us of the need to labor as the means to attain unto that rest:

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Here in Paul's words is revealed once again is the understanding and the need to apply the word of God and labor in that word if we are to attain unto that rest. If there is no hope, faith or belief, then no labor is counted toward acceptance unto that acceptable day of the Lord that Jesus spoke of. When we look at these words of Paul in Hebrews we find how much he stressed that those labors be “mixed with faith” (verse 2). Did the Lord Jesus find this ingredient present in the scribes and

Pharisees? No, on the contrary, He rebuked them for their narrow minded keeping of the letter of the law and overlooking the more important aspects of the spirit. Was it because they felt so justified in their interpretation of the law that they forgot that they were poor, blind, brokenhearted and captive to their flesh, and in need of a spiritual release? We can see how dangerous it is to fail to apply the spirit of God's word, for without that spirit there is no hope.

Let us heed then the example of the Lord Jesus and seek this help from God's word—His word which we can rightly apply if we truly reveal a faith in that word, that word made flesh—the Lord Jesus. As Paul reminds us in Hebrews 4:14-16:

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Let us reveal then this confidence (as the word bold is rendered) as we struggle to apply His word.

M.C.S.



## Mercy in the Wilderness

**W**E find a most extraordinary circumstance related in Joshua 5:5:-

“Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.”

Circumcision had been a most important feature in the life of Abraham's seed from the time of Abraham. Abraham had been told:-

“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised,

And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.”

(Genesis 17:10-14).

Later we find that when Moses had received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt something very dramatic occurred:-

“And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt; and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

And it came to pass by the way of the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.

Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the fore-skin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

So he let him go: than she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.”

(Exodus 4:20 & 24:26).

This account shows that God does not overlook failure even in one whom He has chosen. Zipporah put the matter right and so Moses was allowed to proceed in his mission. But the words of Zipporah give us cause for thought, said reproachfully by her because of the ordinance of circumcision, Moses perhaps had

given way previously because of his wife's distaste for the Israeli ordinance. She was pulled up forcibly now by the threat to her husband's life, and would have time to reflect upon this later, even though she was agitated at the time.

But now at the end of forty years there were thousands upon thousands uncircumcised, for though the people of Israel had kept the ordinance even in Egypt, they failed in the wilderness to do so. For forty years God had borne this failure. Here is a mark of the patience and forbearance of the long suffering God; it tells us most clearly of His wonderful character.

But as Israel were about to enter the promised land God came to Joshua with His message:-

“At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.”

(Joshua 5:2-3).

If God had not instructed Joshua no doubt it would still have been overlooked, and they therefore would have gone in uncircumcised. Let us note it was not Joshua that rectified the failure, the help was of God.

“And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.” (verses 9-10).

As we consider the implications of the information given in this account do we not see that God, for forty years, gave of His merciful provision to the uncircumcised who were in “the wilderness”?

A shaft of light shines down, do we not see, from that time to our day and generation? We, the uncircumcised gentiles, are also called into the wilderness position, and do receive of God's special provision to the day of the land and the kingdom. What forbearance, mercy and love is shown by this.

When the Kingdom is reached the people of God will enter His land with the flesh cut off, and it will be as the result of God's instruction and power given to Joshua (Jesus).

We look again at the ancient record:-

“And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

## THE REMNANT

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And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canan that year.”

(verses 11-12).

The special provision for the people from God never once failed, though the people failed God. Again in this we see the greatness of God, and the wonder of His great goodness. His provision will not fail until the very day when that provision will no longer be required.

When Israel had begun to be established in the land, and they found themselves in the circumstances of that new position of blessedness, then the manna ceased. It was at this time that a remarkable experience occurred:-

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” (verse 13).

Joshua did not know whether the man brandishing the sword was friend or foe. Jericho, the accursed city, loomed up in his vicinity; was this man an enemy whose intention was to resist the establishing of the people of God in God's Kingdom? The man, who had suddenly appeared assured Joshua:-

“And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?” (verse 14).

Joshua was filled with reverence. If this captain of the heavenly host of the Lord had appeared to him, he must have a message to convey. “What saith my lord unto his servant?” Let us note that “the Lord” in the phrase “host of the Lord” is spelled with a capital, whereas when Joshua says “What saith my lord”—“lord” is in ordinary lettering. Lord with the capital is Jehovah which, as we know, is the name of the Eternal God; lord in the ordinary lettering is Adon which means master. Joshua realised here was one to respect as a messenger of God, but he was well aware that it was not appropriate to address the angel with a name which described the great God of heaven. But the angel did have a message:-

“And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.” (verse 15).

What was holy about that place? The Trinitarians say this armed man was no other than the Son of God, Jehovah, the second person in the sacred Trinity, the Captain of the salvation of God's people, anticipating His incarnation and assuring Joshua of success in this war. But we have already noted there is a considerable difference between 'Lord of the hosts' and 'my lord'. Here the simple truth outshines everything else. We are caused, by the veracity of God's record to compare this incident with the experience of Moses:-

“And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.”

(Exodus 3:2-6).

Now we cannot mistake who this apparition was, for the explanation is given in Acts 7:30-34:-

“And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him.

Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.”

The one who appeared to Moses we are told in no unmistakable terms by the account in acts was an angel of the Lord. But if Moses was to take off his shoe in Mount Sinai, how

much more Joshua was to do so in the promised land. Sinai was the Lord's and so was the land of promise. Neither Moses nor Joshua could redeem these places, or the people to be associated therewith, so they took off the shoe. As it is recorded in Ruth 4:6-11:-

“And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his show, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have brought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.”

What a wonderful help of assurance are these former events, not only to the faithful when Judah was dispersed, but to we gentiles in these last times. We cannot look, nor are we required to look to Moses and his successor for our redemption. A greater One has come, as promised to Abraham of old, in whom all the families of the earth can find blessing. We are in an uncircumcised state (metaphorically) even to this time, for we are still in the flesh.

But Jesus will ultimately lead all His people into the land of blessing, of whom He is the Redeemer. Then will come to pass that cutting off of the flesh in the giving of that new life from above. As it is written:-

“... the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

(1 Cor. 15:52-53).

## “Evil Communications Corrupt Good Manners”

(1 Cor. 15:33).

“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3).

Jesus did not give a direct answer, but interposed with the words:-

“... Take heed that no man deceive you.”

This answer must have sunk deeply into the heart and mind of the Apostle when he says when writing to the Corinthians:-

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”

What then are evil communications which corrupt and deceive? An alternative rendering of this phrase is — sinful i.e. evil communing or talking together corrupt profitable or useful habits or manners. Evil speaking surely is speaking that which is not right according to Truth hence the Apostle continues — “Awake to righteousness, and sin not ... .” To help further we need to consider the context in which Paul speaks:-

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preach unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

From this we can see that the specific point to which the Apostle is pointing is—resurrection from the dead contained in the gospel, the good news, and that Christ rose from the dead, and is closely allied to baptism in that baptism is really a figurative death and that without resurrection that can be no hope for anyone. So we read in verses 12 and 16-17:-

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:  
And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet  
in your sins."

This verse 12 shows the most disturbing fact that there were some among the Corinthian Ecclesia that had subverted the gospel (for which the Apostle had so earnestly laboured) in that they had allowed themselves to be deceived into believing that there was no resurrection from the dead.

In writing to Timothy we read of the earnest plea of Paul, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust ... ." and what had been committed if not the gospel — and continuing to Timothy "... avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." Surely a specific instance of evil communicating—and continuing—"Which some professing have erred concerning the faith ... ."

The Apostle continues in the same strain in the second letter to Timothy:

"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.  
And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom was Hymenaeus and Philetus;  
Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."  
(2 Tim. 2:16-18).

It is interesting to read Dr. Thomas's comments on this:-

"The immortality of the soul was the insidious teaching or principle by which Hymenaeus and Philetus subverted the gospel of life and incorruptibility by Jesus at the resurrection, so that they affirmed that the resurrection was past already, because there was no future resurrection of the dead seeing that upon their hypothesis, there was none needed."

These vain babblings essentially opposed to the knowledge of God which some in Corinth were destitute, had invaded their minds and so the Apostle had to remind them that they must not allow themselves to be so deceived and added—"Evil communications corrupt good manners" which was tantamount to saying—Anything which is against the gospel teaching will rob one of salvation.

"Ye are saved by the gospel—if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you."

## What Is Truth? (John 18:38) Part 7

### THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

**W**HY evil? Many have philosophised about this question, wondering why there is so much suffering in the world.

The simple and reasonable answer was given most clearly in the very beginning. Evil is the product of sin, whether it be sickness, violence, injustice, famine, grief or whatever else afflicts the human situation. In the beginning it was declared:

“And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth; wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat; and it was so.” (Genesis 1:29-30).

Everything in such a situation was very good. All the animals fed upon the vegetation of the field, there was no carnivorousness. But when man transgressed, then as God had forewarned, evil came, even to “the fish of the sea ... the fowl of the air, and ... every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (verse 28) over which man had been given “dominion.”

Man’s sin brought the knowledge of evil as well as the previous experience of knowing only good, and from that time until now suffering has deprived man of the full enjoyment of the good things which God gave and still gives.

The forbidden fruit was the fruit of the “knowledge of good and evil” and man still metaphorically, seeks to know more and more in this vein. The hideous devices he has produced, which have given him the feeling of having god-like power under his control, brings more evil with the “knowing” or experiencing of such things. Then rises up the reproachful cry of man to his Maker — “Why does God allow such things?” How unjust this thought, when man, from the very beginning, is to blame for all the ill in the world, which has got worse because of mans’ increasing sinfulness, which God still bears because of His merciful longsuffering.

This situation in which there is “sorrow” and the “cursed” ground, with “thorns also and thistles” brought forth, is comparatively, though of a seeming long duration, only a temporary circumstance in the earth, as compared with eternity.

When Christ the Son of God, died upon the cross, He demonstrated in Himself why there is evil. It is because of sin and its consequent corruption, and when sin is removed and suppressed from the earth, then the creation of God will return to that former experience in which everything will be “very good.”

“... the cow and the bear shall feed ... the lion shall eat straw like the ox ... the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp ...

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:7-9).



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

“If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you ...” (Malachi 2:2).

This world which lays claim to a considerable amount of religion is in fact grossly dismissive of the simple profound truth of the declared word of The Almighty. The eminent leaders of the great churches are continually endeavouring to equate Biblical veracity with scientific theory, their vapid explanations of how people are to interpret the story of the Bible have in essence a considerable undermining effect. People are caused to be dismissive of the truth, having been assured by those who are supposed to know, that what they read is in reality folk lore fairy tales, which, however, are to be regarded as containing intrinsic allegorical profundity. It is a sad and dark situation, implying that God has hidden His declared self in fictional explanation.

A modern intellectual has written as follows:-

“... Christianity is a revealed religion. But modern secular man will not be open to receive the revelation while the Church (for example) persists with a Christology that cannot be sustained in a society that knows about evolution.

Church leaders have to choose either to talk painlessly to the dwindling company of the religious, or to make the painful changes that may expose the growing secular majority to a possible revelation. They cannot do both at once.”

It would seem that this is an advocacy for more theoretical evolutionism by church leaders. Even so the dilemma of endeavouring to make God’s word fit into scientific theory is exposed. God, however, clearly warns how He views the disregard of His divine record, and let not the reader think that the quotation from Malachi has no reference to these times. “If ye will not hear ... to give glory to my name ... I will even send a curse upon you.”

A curse is already very evident as world leaders toil with the nuclear horror which threatens all mankind. How sadly impotent is recent endeavour to preserve life from the effect of poisons of nuclear fission. Nordic scientists have set up what is being termed as a gene bank. It is in the snowy Arctic archipelago where the genes of fifty thousand Scandinavian plants have been deposited in the perma-frost a little over five hundred miles from the North Pole. It is the hope of those involved in this

project that after nuclear devastation some survivors might be able to open the cache to start agricultural production again with the sturdy seeds so deposited. They are in a six foot by twelve foot metal container padlocked in a cave six hundred feet beneath a mountain near Spitzbergen, which is filled with labelled test tubes containing seeds from plants native to Scandinavia including wheat, barley, oats and rye, also berries and fruits. Being so far beneath solid rock the view is that the fire will not destroy, and the natural frost will preserve.

What is overlooked is that in the event, the fire could melt the frost.

Yes this age is veritably cursed. It has not heard God's word; rejecting Him by now accepting an explanation of God's wonderful creation and purpose which is not in accordance with what He, in His infinite mercy, has caused to be placed on record. This in itself is a sign of these last days, for it is also a fulfilment of what He has proclaimed by His prophets of old time.

### 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, Hamburg.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Encouragement is felt at the moves being made by some desiring to make themselves right with God. In this work so vital to eternal life the Father's help and clear guidance is sought that the Truth may be upheld to His honour.

Gratitude is felt for the bonds which unite us to our brethren and sisters from afar in this shared work and responsibility of His House.

**J.A.DeF.**

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

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 10.30 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

It is a good thing to perceive help in various endeavours to do the work of The Truth. For then we can feel gratitude for merciful overruling which is assurance of the guidance we so greatly need.