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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

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At the Table of the Lord

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD”

IT is striking how often the words: “they shall know that I am the Lord” occur in Ezekiel’s message. In the prophecy of Egypt’s downfall at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, who was used by the Almighty to bring judgment, God’s words tell us:

“Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezekiel 30:19.

Further the Spirit’s words:

“... I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezekiel 30:26.

Previously we have read God’s prophecy against Zidon:

“... Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.” Ezekiel 28:22.

How was God to be sanctified, to be glorified, and so be known? We are told:

“For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezekiel 28:23.

These mighty works came not only upon the Gentile nations, but also upon Israel itself. He taught first by pain and punishment, toward the end that they might respond to His great care and mercy; and in this blessing, their Lord would truly be known unto them:

“... When I shall have gathered the house of Israel ... they shall dwell safely ... **and they shall know that I am the Lord their God.**” Ezekiel 28:25-26.

Throughout Ezekiel we find this pronouncement uttered more than sixty times. How impressive! How clearly it is God’s purpose that Israel, indeed all nations, shall ultimately realise that He is the only and the total Greatness.

In this vein, and in realising how slow is the human mind in perception of Him, we turn to Isaiah’s words of promise:

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“... There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, ... the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”
Isaiah 11:1-2.

Here is One who **knew** the Lord, His Father; knew Him as Yahweh, the One who is the I AM, the all and ever powerful. This Branch, Jesus, is to reign in a kingdom which will be beyond our present grasp:

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: ...”
Isaiah 11:6-9.

How is this to come about: such a place of peace, of tranquility? Isaiah's words tell us clearly:

“... for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”
Verse 9.

All the earth shall know the Lord when Jesus and His saints are ruling over this earth: the Gospel sent forth and heard by many, God's judgments accomplished, and all rebels destroyed. These conditions will provide evidence of Yahweh's power, revealing what He is like; truly He will be known.

What does all this have to do with us, Brethren and Sisters? We may feel—Surely I know the Lord; surely I am striving to serve and obey Him, to please Him, to fear Him. True—but do we **really** know Him, we must ask? Do we yet know Him in all His glory, His power, His mercy, His righteousness? No—not yet. But do we see Him in our living, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves? Do we turn to Him, recognising that He alone can help in every possible situation? Do we know, as the messenger of the Spirit said to Mary:

“With God nothing shall be impossible”?
Luke 1:37.

And it was not! Mary brought forth Jesus, the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, contrary to all of man's understanding.

When we think that we may know the Lord, let us consider Job, of whom He testified:

“... Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?”
Job 1:8.

Surely Job being so esteemed must have known Him. But after a year of affliction, trial, and sore circumstances, Job's knowledge of Yahweh was greatly enhanced, as he revealed:

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“I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge ...?” Job 42:2-3.

What did Job have in mind as he spoke of “hiding counsel without knowledge”? Godly counsel is the sum of His wisdom. If we are not ever striving to know the Lord, can we find His counsel, His perfect wisdom, which we so badly need? This would seem to be Job’s conclusion as he continued:

“... therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.” Verse 3.

What things? Job’s concept of God, His counsel, His grace, His mercy and kindness — all that is the LORD — YAHWEH.

Job continued:

“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.” Verse 5.

Because Job through his great trial knew the Lord more fully, was he not a servant even more greatly beloved? Did he not find that this year of affliction was essential to more clearly knowing his Lord? Perhaps Job’s experiences can help us, for we long to more fully, more perceptively, more responsively know Yahweh. We need difficulties, hard experiences, sometimes pain, loss, and rebuke to make us truly realise His power, that surely “with God nothing shall be impossible.”

The nations surrounding Israel learned of the Almighty by His devastating power exhibited against them. They will again in a time not far ahead when Gog, that great enemy of Israel, and his associates, will be dealt with as the Lord said:

“I will plead against him (Gog) with pestilence and with blood ... an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.” Ezekiel 38:22.

As this power is felt and its strength appreciated, clearly it can be compared to none other, nor can any other magnify itself; none other can sanctify itself in such a way. Will it not be abundantly manifest that the Lord indeed:

“... will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord?” Ezekiel 38:23.

Gog will be forced to acknowledge the Lord in all His power; the nations will know Him for what He is: the immutable, eternal Yahweh.

Israel as a people have not known Him as Yahweh in spite of His care and love for them. As the hand of the Lord is seen, as His mighty acts are accomplished in the earth, their perception of Him as the Lord will change:

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“When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people ... and shall be sanctified in them, ... then shall they dwell in their land ...

And they shall dwell safely ... when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them ... and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezekiel 28:25-26.

All this is yet to come—and perhaps, Brethren and Sisters, some of us may still be alive to see it; others will be made alive again to witness it. Ultimately the whole earth will come to acknowledge Him.

Paul expands these thoughts about Israel in Hebrews, speaking of the new covenant with the house of Israel:

“... This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ... I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: ...” Hebrews 8:10.

Does not this involve a knowing, a receiving, a recognising that Yahweh is the Source of all good, all righteousness, all mercy, all power, and all love? Going on, Paul amplifies this:

“... I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” Verse 10.

The result of this changed relationship will be:

“... They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” Vs. 11.

A perfect and a blessed state! Is it because there is now a knowing of the Lord? And as all the faithful of all time are to become blessed in the Israel of God, shall they not have learned in a measure through their probation, and shall they not now know perfectly, what Yahweh is like?

We think of the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, where the Almighty revealed to His people some of His own qualities, and what He wanted them to be:

“Speak unto all the congregation ... and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord Your God am holy.”

Leviticus 19:2.

He continued to reveal Himself through the commandments which He gave:

“... When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners ... neither shalt thou gather the gleanings ... Thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am Yahweh.” Verses 9 and 10.

This was to help His children to be like Him: thoughtful of

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the needs of the poor. Going again to His law, we are told:

“Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am Yahweh.”

Leviticus 19:14.

Fear God: to know Him is to fear and reverence Him. How easily, and perhaps naturally cruel and selfish, man is tempted to gain by cursing the deaf or putting a stumblingblock before the blind. Who would ever know or see? But wait—“Thou shalt fear the Lord.” Why? Does He not see what is being done? Does He not defend these frail and weak ones? Remember, He says, “I am Yahweh.”

Perhaps as we begin to understand in the true sense, God’s expectation of His people — “Thou shalt know that I am the Lord” — we can begin to perceive how different, how utterly perfect is His plan and His promises.

For ourselves, Brethren and Sisters, how great must be the desire and effort to bear all that He places upon us — to draw near to Him and to His — to perceive that the Father whom we are striving to serve and know has promised of Himself and His Son that:

“... Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, ... and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and ... wipe away all tears ... no more death, neither sorrow ... neither ... any more pain.”

Revelation 21:3-4.

And all shall know that He is YAHWEH.

J.A.DeF.



Temptation

PAUL in writing to the passers-through, his Hebrew brethren who had embraced the word of God, wrote to encourage them and bolster their faith. He recognised how difficult it was to maintain faith during the struggles of life's probation, especially the striving to be as strangers and pilgrims, separate from the world. In Hebrews 11:13 Paul in speaking of the efforts of the past faithful who had sought the hope embodied in God's word, says:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Those faithful of old, who struggled to keep God's word, recognised the need to be sojourners only, separate from the world in which they lived, in order to bear the rigours required of them as children of God.

Paul's words can be just as encouraging for us today as we struggle to serve God. In Hebrews chapter 2 verse 18 we are reminded of God's provision of Christ to help us pass through:

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

Here is real encouragement, that in God's purpose a means of being helped or succored to overcome our temptations has been granted.

Temptation we remember, led to the original sin as we read in Genesis 3:1-5:

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.

And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

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This temptation was the test of man's obedience to God. Eve's response was one which allowed the flesh to get the upper hand as the 6th verse says:

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her: and he did eat.”

Eve looked on the fruit, saw it was good and saw the opportunity of being equal to God, which appealed to her fleshly pride as John says in I John 2:16:

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

These lusts are very real and are the components of all temptation which can lead to sin.

Paul's desire for his brethren was to remind them that though temptation is very real, there is help to overcome it. We must recognise likewise that temptation is a test or trial of our faith. We may think God places us in circumstances to try and test us, but we see in James 1:13-14 that this is not so:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:
But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.”

If we go back to that first temptation in the garden, we see how there was a drawing away through lust. It was not God who tempted, but the flesh drawing them away because there was a desire for more than what God thought needful. Looking at I Corinthians 10:13 we are helped to see more clearly exactly what temptation is:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Here is explained the two sides of a situation which has faced man from the beginning. On the one hand temptation is common to man because of the flesh, but on the other hand, there is an ability to overcome that temptation and a way to

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escape. We are going to be tempted, this is what is common. Yet in that temptation we see the purpose and need for it as we go again to James 1:2-4:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations; 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.”

We see from this what is to be learned when we are tempted and fail. We are to see that as there is a recognition of failure that there can be growth in faith as we think upon the help God provides. This is to work patience in us. At the end of the test we are to be found wanting nothing. This is obviously not the flesh's thinking but the Spirit's.

Paul saw this happening in his Hebrew brethren as he witnessed their struggle as Jews to embrace the doctrine of Christ. Paul in Hebrews 4:14-16 tells further of the succoring available:

“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.”

This speaks of the succor or help provided if we hold fast in the struggle against temptation, knowing that the One who has overcome and knows our situation can provide exactly what is needed. As we look to Hebrews 3:6 we are told by Paul:

“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Again the place of Christ is explained and the need to hold fast unto the end. This help comes as we value Christ's provision as our high priest and our source of assistance and relief. In the Lord Jesus' own words in Matthew 26:40 during one of His great trials, when He came and found His disciples asleep, we see His understanding of temptation:

“And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour.?”

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Here is brought out the help we can receive in temptation, — “Watch and pray”. His struggle was to overcome and He was able to do so by watching and praying perfectly. His words then come as a further help to us, as we find ourselves failing in weakness. How much help can be provided in the midst of trial and temptation as we look upon the frailty of our flesh and recognise the need to overcome.

The Lord Jesus is waiting with help and succor but only as we call upon Him and struggle in a desire to be part of His household eternally. Let us keep these thoughts in mind as we face temptation, having faith that only through Him who suffered and overcame perfectly can help be granted to us.

M.C.S.



Nazarites Purer Than Snow

(Lamentations 4:7)

THE chapter from which the above subject is taken begins with the words:-

“How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed.”

We know of course that gold does not tarnish or become dim. Therefore these words are metaphor to describe the change from golden glory and beauty which overtook the people of God because of their departure from the living way.

Jerusalem contained the resplendent temple of Solomon, it was the receptacle of the divine law. The custodian of the precepts of the Most High when all outside was dark and ignorant and devoid of truth.

Jeremiah had seen the decline of the people of God, even while the beauteous edifice of the temple remained. When Joseph died, Jeremiah began his lament for he knew that the end was approaching. A time when edifice as well as people would be brought down to the ground. Blackened by the smoke of the Chaldean fires which would make the destruction total. Before that event the suffering of siege however was to be experienced. If those leaders of the Jews had listened to God's word through Jeremiah, how much those people of Israel would have been spared, and the city of Jerusalem delivered.

Zedekiah had been exhorted to capitulate to Nebuchadnezzar, but he and his leaders rejected the advice and so the strong city underwent the famine of siege, which Jeremiah lamented:-

“The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them.

They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills. For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands were overthrown on her.”
(Lam. 4:4-6).

Sodom for all its wickedness did not experience a long drawn out time of suffering and fear. But the Jews **did**, because of the obstinacy of their leaders and the weakness of others in

allowing such obstinacy. The still small voice of Jeremiah and those few who were with him, had their message carried away in the raging gale of the pride and disregard which prevailed with a people who would have it so, through their own lack of faith in God's message. So great suffering followed:-

“Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire;

Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick.

They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field.”

(verses 7-9).

Is this not again a similar metaphor to “gold (becoming) dim”?

The Nazarites of course were those who meticulously separated themselves from defiling things as a result of their vow. But it had become an outward display. A mechanical show of professed obedience. Inside, under the delicate demeanour and the long hair of the Nazarite, was an attitude which was not right, otherwise the disaster which made meaningless their vow, would not have taken place.

The time therefore came from God which made even their display of “righteousness” impossible. The defilement was all about such as the city became filled with corpses because of the diseases of famine, placing them in an impossible position. Therefore the metaphorically jewelled, polished “righteous” appearance of the Nazarite was smothered beneath the avalanche of divine fury when the avenging sword of Nebuchadnezzar, which was the judgment of God, encompassed the city of Jerusalem.

Is there not some instruction for the present in such an happening? For a mere, apparently, mechanical observance, which is but a show of righteousness, means nothing at all in the day of God's judgment. That time will reveal it for what it is really worth—as nothing more than another aspect of a form without true godliness.

Search Me O God

DAVID'S words in Psalm 139 verses 23-24 reveal the essence of spirit required to attain unto everlasting life.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

This “pruned song”, has cut away all that is not needed, only the essence of the Spirit comes through, the spirit of one man who was called, “a man after God’s own heart”. David’s desire was to have God search him, or penetrate his heart, He only being able to see and know everything about him.

David was very cognizant of his place in the sight of God, just as he said in Psalm 8:4, “what is man that thou art mindful of him”. This man, though close to God’s heart, often failed and saw mercy extended, felt God’s forgiveness, and was overwhelmed by the wonder that he could have the hope of eternal life.

David’s words in this 23rd verse “search me” show a recognition that he needed to be shown and be led in God’s purpose. He wanted his heart to be right before God, and if wrong he could then repent and turn from it. Many times David failed, yet the hallmark of his spirit was how quickly he turned from sin and sought forgiveness. On occasion, he transgressed to the point that his punishment should have been stoning — death! Yet, his spirit and desire to be at one with God allowed mercy and salvation to be extended to him. David’s need here was to have God penetrate and reveal his thinking—his heart and mind so that any wickedness there could be made known and turned from.

David made other references in the Psalms revealing a similar understanding of his relationship with God. For example Psalm 7:9:

“Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just; for the righteous God **trieth the hearts and reins.**”

The word “trieth” is the same as “search” used in the previous reference. To establish the just **is** to bring them near unto God. There must be a desire to be right in His sight, knowing that God will recompense good and bring justice upon the wicked. Also in Psalm 11:5 we read:

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“The LORD trieth the righteous; but the wicked and him who loveth violence his soul hateth.”

One who is striving to be righteous must realise that trials and tests will come to probe at those weaknesses in the flesh, pointing out what is necessary to overcome them. This is how God in His mercy and grace searches those who are His.

David sought to instill this important truth in his son Solomon, as he spoke in I Chronicles 28:9:

“And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found by thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.”

Recognising that man’s heart is so deceitful, in order to have God search one’s heart there must be a seeking for it and then a correct response to that which is revealed.

David realised he could not be a son of God without the Almighty’s searching. How necessary then to accept what God searches out, recognising the end result can be life everlasting.

M.C.S.



The Lord shall comfort Zion

HOW grievous must have been the words of the prophet Jeremiah as we read:-

“O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?”

As keepers of a field, are they against her round about, because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the Lord.

Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.” (Jeremiah 4:14, 17-18).

God’s people were not unaware of what God required of them, as we read in Jeremiah 5:5 & 9:-

“... for they have known the ways of the Lord, and the judgment of their God, but these have altogether broken the yoke (the balance) and burst the bonds.

Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this.”

Such were the terrible warnings of the evil to come—even to all who know God’s way and refuse to hear.

“Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand what they say.

And they shall eat up thine harvest and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: and they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees. They shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.”

But if we are wise then our fear can turn to joy as we meet together to call to remembrance the death of Zion’s King, the Lord Jesus and it is part of our joy to re-contemplate the hope that God has given concerning the end of Zion’s desolation at His manifestation in power and great glory.

“... I will not make a full end with you.” (verse 18).

They are no vain words that we sing — “The Lord shall comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness **shall** be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.”

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God who established the desolation, will bring to pass revival and prosperity and gladness, He has promised it. Hosea 6:1 says, "He hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten and he will bind us up." And Isaiah 60:10:-

"... In my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee."

Also in Jeremiah 31:10 — "... He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock." and in Isaiah 54:7-8: "... For a small moment have I forsaken thee ... But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

The desolation of Israel seems a small thing in the estimation of the present world. They do not know that all the troubles and distresses of the nations are the result of the absence of divine government. They cannot appreciate the incalculable goodness that will come to all people with the return of the Lord Jesus and the rebuilding of the House of David. The Truth—if we have learnt it in its fullness, has taught us all these things, and therefore leads us to sigh and cry for the day of promise, when God's land will no longer be desolate. When God's people will no longer be wanderers in the earth, when the nations of the world will no longer walk after the imagination of their evil hearts, but will rejoice in the law that will go forth to the ends of the earth from David's Son, enthroned in glorified Zion.

The present days however, for us, are days of mourning, but to such as mourn for Jerusalem these words are addressed:-

"Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her." "Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her. ... that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." (Isaiah 66:10-11).

"... I will extend peace to her..."

"... So will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (verses 12-13).

Is it any wonder then that we should pray for the peace of Jerusalem? How can we then, with the knowledge of what God's purpose is with regard to Jerusalem, have any interest other than the prosperity of her places in which God is known as a refuge? The purpose of God is a glorious one for His people, as the prophet Jeremiah tells us in Chapter 23:3-6:-

"And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

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And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”

Can we then profit from this divine record preserved to our day and generation so that we may be encouraged to go forward helping and strengthening each other as we see the day of our Redeemer fast approaching. These are days of sorrow and mourning, but it will not always be so. Wonderful things are in store for the faithful. Yes, as we sing, Wonderful things are spoken, Jerusalem of thee. The oath i.e. God's word, cannot be broken and we its joys would see.



What is Truth? (John 18:38) Part 8

THE SACRIFICE AND THE TREE OF LIFE

IN the garden of Eden, in its very midst, was “the tree of life”. No other description is given of this marvellous part of

God’s creation, but we can be sure that it had the wonderful properties of life for man and woman. With God there is no “shadow of turning” from what He has designated; and therefore the God given name “tree of life” meant exactly what God had said about it. But the first man and woman, following their transgression, could no longer have what they could have had before. The pronouncement of death upon them because of sin was not to be reversed.

But the great mercy of God now shined forth. He could have taken the “tree of life” away. But He did not do this because God yet desired to show another aspect of His wonderful purpose with His creation.

“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.”
(Genesis 3:22-24).

So the tree of life remained, but the way to it was omnipotently barred. The “flaming sword” of God guarded it from every angle, and man was driven away eastward from Eden.

But what God had barred from man, could ultimately be opened for man again. That is why the “tree of life” still flourished in Eden until in the course of time Eden became completely changed from all its earlier glory.

The lesson therefore was and still is, that life is not absolutely taken away, but the way to eternity is barred. So much for the teaching that death is the gateway to life; God does mean what He has declared and preserved on record. But there could be a reversal, hence the continuing presence of the “tree of life”. In the meantime, also, a mitigation of the horror of that downfall, through faith in God’s demonstrated mercy, was provided.

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“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (verse 21).

Undoubtedly man and woman walked in shame, and the large leaves of a fig tree, which they obtained, were inadequate. God therefore covered them in an efficacious way, but this necessitated the shedding of blood to provide the “coats of skins”. In other words God made provision through sacrifice, and man and woman felt eased in their guilt as a result, because God’s compassion was now revealed to them.

That compassion and kindness has never failed to have been shown, though for the most part mankind have not recognised it. When philosophy and pride caused deviation from simple truth the understanding of God’s purpose through His sacrificed only begotten Son was no longer really perceived. As a result doctrinely improperly covered shame remained, and the way to the “tree of life” continued to be eternally barred. But for Adam and Eve there was real hope of ultimate salvation at a future, distant time, for God had and would cover them, through the poured out life of His sacrifice.

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

“... the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof ...” (Ezekiel 38:13).

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings ...” (Revelation 17:12).

At the beginning of January 1986 Spain and Portugal joined the European Common Market. This increased the participators to twelve in number. Those looking at the signs of the times were caused to wonder why the change from ten to twelve. However early January brought some startling events. The relationship between Denmark and its nine colleagues (excluding Spain and Portugal) was reaching a critical stage. In Copenhagen strong objection emerged to EEC institutional reforms agreed in Luxembourg at a Common Market summit in December 1985. The formal assent to the reforms due for signing at the time of this article being written, seems to be in some jeopardy as Danish politicians call for a “non-binding” referendum of their nation on whether to accept the EEC Luxembourg so-called agreement.

A Danish spokesman said “In the final analysis we are looking at Denmark’s membership of the European Community—a referendum brought us into the community—a referendum will have to make the decision at this turning point.”

Difficulty in the Common Market however, did not end here. For suddenly the British Westland helicopter manufacturing company became a bone of contention in the British Cabinet and Houses of Parliament, and in the country generally. The company had become short of running capital in 1985 and two consortiums began to move in to shore up the ailing company. The Secretary of the British Defence Ministry favoured a European consortium comprising British Aerospace and G.E.C., Messerschmitt-Boel-Kow Blohn of West Germany, and Aero-spaciale of France, so that Westlands could continue as an undoubted European Company. Therefore not needing to rely on U.S.A. participation for what he decided was important helicopter supply.

Support, to a degree, for such a solution came from the British Parliamentary opposition, which, to an extent is anti-European. Whereas the British Government, which is supposedly pro-European, favoured the American United Technology Corporation’s bid, otherwise known as Sikorski-Fiat. However the British Government did not want European firms and govern-

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ments to perceive such preference so endeavoured to cloak its policies, fearing repercussion from Europe thinking Britain was not being loyal to its partners.

Events so transpired that there could hardly have been more publicity and damaging revelation, even though desperate attempts were made to hush matters up. At the time of writing American business interests have not fully succeeded, but it only seems a matter of time before Sikorski takes up the role it has coveted in the British Westlands Company.

If and when this takes place, even to the exclusion of some British firms, the cracks in the European alliance will not be in any way healed. Rather the reverse, with a movement away from Europe, but closer to the United States. So leaving the "Tarshish" confederation intact, while the "ten" powers continue to take up their own particular role and stance as the foreordained divine plan with this world, moves towards its conclusion.

News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK: Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.

Sunday School 1.45 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville, Orchard Park, Hamburg.

Alternate Week: Revelation Sunday.

God willing as this appears in print, we will have had our yearly Sunday School party. At writing we are looking forward to that time and its rewarding pleasures and lessons for young and old alike.

Our prayers continue for those in need of His help through illness or trials.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw, M/c.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

We are grateful for all the help we have received and continue to receive.

Our Sunday meeting has been put forward half an hour, to the benefit of all, due to the co-operation of the Hall staff.

The work with some still continues and we await the overruling outcome.