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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

“... HE HAD COMPASSION ON HIS PEOPLE ...”

We have seen in recent readings the decline of Judah and Jerusalem after the time of Josiah. The result of their turning from God to the serving of idols was captivity at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. During the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, God was long-suffering, seeking to turn His people from their evil ways:

“... The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:”
II Chronicles 36:15.

How enduring was His compassion—or His sparing, as the word means—for His people. How did He reveal this? He sent His messengers, prophets to show them, pleading with them to return to His way. What was their response?

“... They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”
Verse 16.

As the Almighty saw their rejection of His compassion, His wrath was kindled, and it was too late for remedy. We may question: How could His people reject His mercy, His reaching out in love—especially when it was so clear that the Lord Himself, YAHWEH, had sent these messengers? There must have been other considerations more important to them, for they continued in their own perverse ways. Is this not a warning for us, Brethren and Sisters? We too can be so taken up with our own thinking, our own desires, our own pursuits, that we can overlook or even crowd out the messengers of the Almighty, and thereby become subject to His wrath. God does indeed send messages to the faithful even today—through our caring brethren and sisters, through circumstances in which we find ourselves, through His word in exhortation, Bible classes, and by meditations on these. We must be alert, receptive to these which so clearly reveal His compassion. What a blessing, what a privilege is that divine “sparing.” Without it there is no hope—with it there is the possibility of eternal life in His kingdom, if we can hear and submit in the spirit that Jesus revealed: “not my will, but thine be done.” As we perceive the wonder that our Father should bestow such mercy, let us be sure we are respond-

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ing to His messengers, with gratitude, joy, and faithful reactions.

It is clear how Judah failed to do so, and as a result “there was no remedy.” Their captivity to Babylon came about, bringing utter devastation—the end of the nation, the temple destroyed, Jerusalem ravaged, the people taken into an alien land, to be servants and slaves. All this happened we are told to:

“... fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, (one of His messengers) ... to fulfil threescore and ten years.”
II Chronicles 36:21.

God’s words through Jeremiah explain this:

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, ... Nebuchadnezzar ... will utterly destroy them, ... and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”
Jeremiah 25:8-11.

These words were spoken prior to the first captivity or desolation of Judah and Jerusalem. They surely came to pass, for within a few years Jerusalem was in ruin. Yet in His tender feeling for Israel, there was yet hope held out, “to fulfil threescore and ten years”—and then this sorrow would end. As our brethren endured their captivity, their thoughts would be of Jerusalem, and the hope of restoration after seventy years, praying that God might show His compassion. They would carefully count the years. To believe that God would restore His people would take great faith, for their circumstances were desperate. Yet here too were messengers from God: Ezekiel, Daniel and others to bolster their conviction. As the seventieth year approached, the faithful would be waiting, watching, hoping, believing, praying, perhaps wondering how it possibly would be, for their subjugation to Babylon and later to Persia was complete.

It was only possible through God’s working according to His promise, in His mercy. Happen it did! We see this brought about:

“... In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus ... that he made a proclamation ...

All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God ... given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem ... Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.”
II Chronicles 36:22-23.

From an alien king came help and authority to return to Jerusalem. It happened in the first year of Cyrus, when we might have expected his mind would be taken up with more important

matters. But "the Lord stirred up" his spirit. It was the doing of the Almighty; and cannot He work as greatly even today? The faithful in captivity would have known of Isaiah's prophecy concerning Cyrus. As he became king of Persia, how they would anticipate and hope. And it came to pass. The king decreed: "... let him go up." How sure was God's word, how long-lasting His compassion! How grateful His captives would feel as they read the unbelievable decree of the king, "stirred up" by the Lord their God. We read of this response:

"Then rose up the chief of the fathers ..., the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised (stirred up), ... to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem." Ezra 1:5.

Further there were those who although unable to go up to this work, entered into it:

"And all they that were about them **strengthened their hands** with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered." Verse 6.

Again Yahweh stirred up some to go to Jerusalem, some to strengthen their hands. Those who did go up would know that the thoughts, the prayers, as well as the practical help of their brethren remaining behind were with them fellowshiping their work. Do we not, Brethren and Sisters, experience the same as we realise that all are united in a work, supporting, praying, providing in every way, so that it may prosper under His divine guidance? As under Zerubbabel and Jeshua the people went up to Jerusalem—over forty-two thousand strong to do this work—they would go with gratitude, trust, joy, and yet with trepidation in their heart; but they knew it was done of Yahweh.

In all this we are helped to perceive God's greater purpose in this going up under Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Zerubbabel was in the line of David from which the promised Messiah was to come, as we are shown in the geneology of the Lord Jesus:

"... After they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel."

Matthew 1:12.

Also in God's words to Zechariah we learn more of Jeshua, the high priest:

"... Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua (Jeshua, Jesus) ...

And speak unto him, saying, ... Behold, the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord."

Zechariah 6:11-12.

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Under the Almighty's hand, a remnant went up to rebuild His house and His city, led by two who believed and foretold of the greater governor and priest who would yet establish His house, His city for ever. Here was hope, promise, compassion bestowed upon His people; here is hope for us in seeing how this stirred up His people. Can we also be stirred up to be about His work now—lifted up, inspired, and strengthened in our determination to hear His words, to heed His messengers? For surely He speaks to us through the experiences of our brethren and sisters of old. Let us look further to the words read today:

“... When the seventh month was come, ... Then stood up Jeshua ... and Zerubbabel ... and builded the altar of the God of Israel, ... and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord ...”
Ezra 3:1-3.

For the first time in seventy years, His people were allowed to offer upon the altar of God in Jerusalem. All this happened in the seventh month—a month filled with meaning to Israel; for in this month was the day of atonement and the feast of tabernacles. These feasts speak of the purpose of God to be accomplished when the Messiah returns. Can we enter into the minds of our brethren, full of awe and thankfulness as they gathered by that newly rebuilt altar, offering for the first time, then later keeping those feasts as we are shown:

“They kept also the feast of tabernacles, **as it is written**, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required.”

Ezra 3:4.

How wonderful that God had “stirred up” Cyrus, had stirred up their own spirits to work for this great restoration! As we are permitted to enter into their rejoicing and gratitude, let us resolve to be alert for His messengers, through whom He speaks to us—“rising up betimes and sending.” Let us be grateful and responsive for His compassion—His mercy, pity, forbearing, sparing—all because of His love and desire for His people to know His blessing eternally—all done to His glory.

J.A.DeF.

Remember God's Covenant

AS we read in the Chronicles of the various kings which ruled over God's people, the righteous reign of Hezekiah provides an important lesson to us who are striving to serve God today. We find in the record of II Chronicles 29 that Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign and his reign lasted twenty-nine years. Further in verse 2 we are told, "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord."

Immediately in the first month of his first year of rulership, he repaired and opened the doors of the house of God and ordered that the priests and Levites sanctify themselves as well as the temple. In these important initial activities of Hezekiah, he sought to lead the people of Judah and Jerusalem by example. We are told in II Chronicles 29:10:

"Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us."

By these words, Hezekiah was asking the people to consider the position they were in because God's wrath was upon them. They were in trouble, they were a source of amazement and scorn to those around. He said to them as verse 8 says:

"Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes."

Hezekiah knew if he could instill in the people a desire to remember the promise of God's covenant with them, He indeed would turn the cursing into blessing. Hezekiah did certainly inspire the people to turn from their waywardness and again embrace God's Truth. The response of the people in verse 31 was:

"... And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings."

They brought sacrifices in abundance and kept the Passover to signify their desire to be at one with God. In this turn of events, verse 36 tells us:

"And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly."

The immediate response of the people pleased God and so the course was set to once again make God foremost in their living. The Lord quickly responded with blessing. Victories over the Philistines and the Assyrians were won, and now instead of being captives, they were free.

How much difference the actions of one faithful man can work in the sight of God. Does this not speak to us of the responsibility we have likewise to move in faith? When we consider all those faithful spoken of in Hebrews, yet with the promise and reminder in regard to the need of faithfulness today, we must be awed as verses 39 and 40 of Hebrews 11 reminds us:

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

How marvellous is God’s covenant, and how critical it is for us to respond in faith as we struggle each and every day. We must be constantly mindful of this hope which can inspire us in the midst of trial and testing.

Even though Hezekiah’s initial actions were righteous, his testing by God did not stop there. We know of his failure in regard to showing the ambassadors of Babylon all his sustenance and wealth, as well as that of the house of God. He constantly tries His children to know all that is in their hearts, to test the bond and the strength of their ties to Him. This is a life long effort, yet there can be help given to overcome if God’s mercy can be brought to mind. He will forgive if we again seek to do our part in the covenant relationship. If we can humble ourselves, God can help us to prosper, as obviously Hezekiah’s example reveals in II Chronicles 32:26.

“Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.”

Further in II Chronicles 31 verses 20-21 we read:

“And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God.

And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.”

He prospered because he sought God. To prosper literally means, “to push forward”. The thought of pushing forward reveals there is no room for sitting back or being complacent, but rather speaks of the life long effort there must be to please God.

There are many examples in the Word of those who pushed forward or prospered by remembering their covenant relationship with God. We can look at David for instance in I Chronicles 22:11-13 as he spoke to his son Solomon:

“Now my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee. Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.”

The message of these words is similar to those of Hezekiah. We can see the key to prospering can only be achieved as God is sought, and His word followed. David counselled Solomon to “dread not, nor be dismayed” because he realised the trials which life bring may do just that. It takes a heart of courage to push forward, trusting in God to guide and direct. As David confirms also in verse 14 of Psalm 27:

“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”

On the surface, these words mentioned above, instructing one to wait on the Lord seems to contradict the need to push forward. However, we must consider that God gives guidance in which way to push forward, so that waiting upon Him, displaying an alertness for indication, is the means by which the strengthening of faith occurs. James confirms this in the first chapter of his epistle verses 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.”

Here we see the importance of patience, for growth in faith is not a one time effort. We see that pushing forward and waiting upon God, through seeking Him, go hand in hand. This was how the faithful of old found success, how Hezekiah was able to prosper when he moved in accordance with God’s word.

The message to us is unmistakable. Our heart must be intent upon seeking to maintain that covenant which God’s Truth provides, a relationship which depends upon our faithfully seeking His help towards the hope of serving Him eternally.

M.C.S.

Offer No Strange Incense

(Exodus 30:9)

THE Mosaic altar of burnt incense is referred to in the Revelation symbology:-

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.” (Rev. 8:3-4).

This quotation tells us clearly what that ancient altar and the incense represented. It is a symbol, as shown, of the prayers of the saints through the mediatorship of God’s Angel or High Priest. In the Pentateuch we read:-

“And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.

And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.

And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.

Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in a year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord.” (Exodus 30:6-10).

The time referred to when the blood was to be shown upon

the altar of incense was the day of atonement. As we read:-

“And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about.

And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.”

(Leviticus 16:18-19).

What then would be the forbidden strange incense which Israel was not to offer? Would it not be anything that was not compounded according to the Divine formula? We are told what happened to Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1-3:-

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them and they died before the Lord.

Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.”

In this incident it was not strange incense—but it was strange fire. Whatever was done however, we see, had to be according to the Spirit's instruction. The incense was to be according to what had been instructed by God, and the fire, the emblem of the spirit, had to be of the altar of burnt offering, and not from a strange source. So there was to be neither strange fire nor strange incense. The formula of the incense is referred to as follows:-

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight:

And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy” (Exodus 30:34-36).

What then was, and is, the spiritual instruction as typified in the law of Moses? The incense, or prayer, was to be associated with the fire of the spirit, through the altar, where the High Priest mediated before the Holy of Holies, where was the presence of the Most High. To have introduced anything other than what God had laid down as the requirement of the Truth, would therefore have denigrated the prayer, and the Priest, and also his mediatorship.

Of course, as we have seen, the day of atonement registered the fact that the life of the sacrifice was very much associated with the prayer, for upon the horns, that is, the four pinnacles

of the altar of incense, the altar of prayer, the life was to be seen and displayed by being smeared with the poured out blood of the slain.

How could, and how can, something strange then in this context be brought into such an at-one-ment through the sacrificed life, which represented and represents Christ? Can something not in accordance to the Spirit's requirement be allowed to come in and join in what is to be a united worship and supplication? Would this be an honouring of the intercession of the faithful High Priest? This lesson from the Mosaic law of so long ago marvellously shows a principle for these times. Prayers of those who do not ascribe to the truth of God are not to find a place in the worship of the people of God, nor can the written prayers of such be taken up and used, however eloquently expressed, in seeking, through the High Priest (Jesus) the favour of God.



A Bible Class

“WHEREFORE DOTH THE WAY OF THE WICKED PROSPER?”

(Jeremiah 12:1)

HOW understandable it was for Jeremiah to ask the above question in relation to the circumstances in which he found himself, while striving to respond to the call and work given him of God. God’s charge to Jeremiah is recorded in Jeremiah 1:5 saying:

“... I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

Jeremiah did this work faithfully, and suffered for it at the hands of those against whom he witnessed. In Jeremiah 11 verses 19 and 20 his inner thoughts are revealed:

“But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be more remembered.

But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.”

Jeremiah may well have wondered, when will God deliver His judgment on those who were evil? Indeed, why do the wicked seem to prosper?

Jeremiah was not the only one of God’s chosen people to question in this manner. David, a man after God’s own heart, reveals in Psalm 73 verses 3-5 this same mind:

“For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.

They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men”.

Job likewise pondered this question in Job 12:6:

“The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.”

Such can be the thinking of those struggling to be righteous, in the midst of sore trial and persecution, at the hands of those who are wicked. Yet, upon reflection, each of these righteous men was aware of the ultimate conclusion seen in God’s purpose, as David’s words state in Psalm 73:17:

“Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their (wicked) end.”

and verse 27 ...

“For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.”

David, Job and Jeremiah all knew that the wicked would come to the same end—death without hope.

God has, since the time of the fall in the garden, placed the curse of death on all flesh, upon the wicked as well as the just. But in God’s sanctuary there is hope. Such a perspective allows His people to value their calling and understand this as a trial of their faith. Since the beginning, the wicked have appeared to prosper as the flesh has reigned unrestrained. God has given time to work out the salvation of those few who in each age die in hope. Many more in the world die in their wickedness but without hope. How evident it is that evil will be paramount in the world, because it is a world that lives to itself and not unto God’s ways. Such prospering, however, is destined only to the emptiness of the grave. This brings to mind the words of Paul in I Timothy 6:7-9 as he speaks of the wicked and their lust for possessions in this life:

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

Jeremiah’s true understanding of his position in the sight of God and particularly in relation to the world around him, cannot be questioned. In verse 3 of chapter 12 he reveals this mind:

“But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.”

Jeremiah knew why the wicked prospered, but his desire was to be found acceptable with God and therefore he spoke these words to Israel, who were in a wicked and rebellious state. He knew that prosperity in this life was temporal at best, a fleeting memory. David relates this same thought in Psalm 37 verses 1-2:

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.”

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and verses 9-11 also:

“For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

How important then it is to be mindful, as was Jeremiah, of the natural prospering of the flesh and its evil intents. It is through such understanding that God’s people can realise, as did David in Psalm 37 verse 34 of the necessity to:

“Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.”

M.C.S.



“Let him be as an heathen man”

(Matthew 18:17)

THIS subject concerns how the Ecclesia is to treat those of the Ecclesia who have just been withdrawn from. The words are: “... if he neglect to hear the Ecclesia, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” One translation renders the phrase—“If he pays no attention to the community treat him as a Gentile or tax-collector.” Another term used by the contemporaries of Jesus to describe a certain despised class of people, was the reference to “publicans and sinners”. Sinners were the Jews who lived like Gentiles, not observing the Kosher requirements of Moses, and other laws, which often were traditional. They were classed with Jewish collectors of the Roman taxes, and certain other types, as outside the pale of decent society. Strict Jews would not eat with such persons. Yet Jesus **did eat** with publicans and sinners.

So what is the difference of the application to those withdrawn from, as distinct from the despised with whom Jesus had contact? Perhaps we should look at the original wording. Heathen is *ethnikos*: in our times we have heard this word used in “ethnic minorities”, those naturalised citizens of foreign extraction.

Now a person who was withdrawn from in those early days, when Christ gave His advice, would **not** have been regarded as an ethnic. But Jesus says — **if he has neglected** to hear the Ecclesia, he **must** be looked upon as the ethnic, or someone quite foreign to the Ecclesia, whatever the Ecclesia’s regard for such a person has previously been.

Why is this? Is it not because it is so easy for us to think someone withdrawn from is in some way different, or on a different plane from the ordinary man in the street? Long association for example, could influence this attitude, but it is a weakness we must guard against. Hence the advice of Jesus when the situation has gone beyond the final stage, that we are to try to regard such as we would the stranger. Not an easy thing to do.

There is also the original word translated publican to consider. It is *TELONES* from *Telos* or *Tello*. Now in the case of present day betting, or what is called the Racecourse Turf Accountants, these are sometimes referred to as “tellers”. Now we know what the general respectable view is about those who make their living in this way. It is as though there is something tainted about that way of life, even if, in other respects, such

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may appear to lead a life of probity, or of generosity in their affluence. But Christ said of the disregarder of the Ecclesia—“Let him be unto thee as the publican”. Those who reject the Ecclesia are to be viewed as tainted. How then can it be accepted, as propagated by some, “once a brother always a brother”. Such a view denies the instruction of Matthew 18.

What then of the publicans and sinners whom Jesus sat with? Well, they had never been in the Ecclesia had they? So is that not the reason for the difference in the application?



What Is Truth? (John 18:38) Part 10

“THERE WERE GIANTS IN THE EARTH IN THOSE DAYS”

The above words contained in Genesis chapter 6 verse 4 describing the time before Noah's flood, imply that whatever was meant by “giants in the earth” was a phenomenon not known in subsequent times. The original word which is rendered giant in this context is the Hebrew—nephil—which appears to be derived from a root which signifies to fall. That giants did fall in antediluvian times is without doubt a fact. But as far as can be ascertained gigantic skeletons of early man have never been found. Yet giant animals have indeed been unearthed. For here and there, either in the East or in the West, skeletons of huge forms of early life on this earth can be seen on display. Sometimes these relics have been found in conjunction with the remains of men and with man-made implements lying around their bones. Such discoveries are not to be regarded with amazement, the scripture is quite clear:-

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”
(Genesis 6:4).

Let us not mislead ourselves here over what is really a description of Apostasy. The angels of heaven cannot fall. Jesus said:-

“The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels.”
(Luke 20:34-36).

In other words there is no such thing as an immortal sinner. God is perfectly just. Adam was prevented by God from living indefinitely in sin; and angels prior to Adam likewise were not sinners in an undying state. Therefore the description of “sons

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of God” making affinity with “daughters of men” means there was a turning from the ways of God by people belonging to the family of God to be with those who were not of God’s ways. Corroborated again by the words of Christ:-

“... in the days that were before the flood they were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ...”
(Matthew 25:38-39).



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

“For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.” (Jeremiah 30:5).

In these latter days much talk goes on about peace. The new Soviet leader has made various propositions for removing nuclear weapons and eventually scrapping them by the end of the century. Of course Western powers would have to agree to do their part before Russia dismantled the great quantity of atomic rockets it possesses.

The trouble is that the Western leaders are afraid to take up the Soviet offer, saying that these awesome weapons they have kept the peace in Europe for forty years; but it is the peace of mutual terror. Is this peace? Of course not, it is the “voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.”

So the wrangling goes on with Russia making one kind of proposition for nuclear weapon elimination, and the U.S.A. countering the same by qualified suggestion and idea not acceptable to the Soviet Union. Russia has called for a halt to the sale of U.S.A. Trident D5 submarine launched missiles to Britain; but America has resisted implementing such a change of course. Yet without some such radical initiative it seems there will be an escalation of the nuclear danger, Russia matching rocket for rocket anything produced by the Western nations.

How truly the ancient prophecy expresses the present world situation, it is “... a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.”

Meanwhile as the wealth of the nations is poured into the metaphorical fire of a manufacture which has only to do with a burning, the economies of the nations are depressed. It is as Habakkuk expresses “... the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity.”

How sadly lacking in common sense is the world of men. It is an intolerably foolish, wicked yet very threatening situation. The British Medical Association has recently published the view that nuclear war would bring mass starvation for survivors not burned, who would also suffer cancer and other horrible complaints. The weather would become icy with the sun blotted

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out by the dust, so that any growth not affected by radiation would be inhibited. As exposure to radiation destroys natural immunity to disease those not obliterated by the tremendous explosions and the fire which follows, would become defenceless to those hidden microbic enemies and transmutations which would lurk about them.

How good is the Great God of this wonderful creation, when He declares that He will only allow men to go so far and no further; and who has provided His Son Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the World



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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 Study.

The annual Sunday School party was enjoyed by the children and brethren and sisters alike. The games, a short address and a bountiful meal were provisions to fill every need.

With thanks we again acknowledge God's kindness in permitting the very helpful counsel and sharing in the work by our brethren across the sea.

J.A.DeF.

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MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw, M/cr.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

Endeavours are still continuing in the hope that those we are working with may yet be allowed in God's mercy to perceive the requirements of Truth and so rectify their position while the opportunity remains.



ERRATA

April 1986 Magazine page 62 (middle of page) "... upon the world and example of the apostles" should read "... upon the word and example ..." etc.