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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"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME"

**"DR. THOMAS ON THE SUBJECT OF
ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR BAPTISM"**

"WHAT IS TRUTH?" (PART 23)

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

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At the Table of the Lord

“THOU HAST DEALT WELL ... O LORD”

THIS morning we are reading the 119th Psalm, the longest of the Psalms, having one hundred seventy-six verses. In the Hebrew each set of eight verses begins with the same letter; each one conveys a particular help to be perceived to those seeking and sensitive to God's word. For example, in verses 65-72, each verse begins with the letter *TETH*. We find verses 65, 66, 68, 71 and 72 begin with the word *good* (“towb” in Hebrew), which starts with the letter *TETH*. From this, can we not conclude that these verses have to do with that which is good? What good? Whose good? David tells us clearly:

“Thou has dealt well (good) with thy servant, O LORD,
according unto thy word.” Psalm 119:65.

How did the Almighty deal in goodness with David? David was greatly blessed, and God gave him certain promises — “the sure mercies” of David. In addition he was anointed king over Israel, given the plan for the temple, and greatly esteemed by his people. Of David, also, it is recorded that he was “a man after his (God's) own heart”. We can understand how David would respond to these blessings:

“Thou hast dealt well with thy servant ...” Verse 65.

Thus he desired to express his mind in this psalm or “pruned song”—as each verse, each set of verses provides its spiritually granted help and direction for us. Let us, Brethren and Sisters, look upon our own situations: Do we always feel that the Almighty is dealing well with us? Can we rather enter into David's mind as he wrote these words, rejoicing in God's provision and goodness? We have recently been reminded of David's hope:

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and
for his wonderful works to the children of men.”
Psalm 107:8.

As our brother looked back over his experiences he would recall the many occasions when God had surely dealt well with him: the lion and the bear, Goliath, deliverance from Saul, help against his enemies, made king, sure promises, his son, Solomon.

There were other goodnesses granted as well — things *we* might not in our natural thinking consider as good. In this regard is prayer was:

“Teach me good judgment and knowledge:...” Verse 66. Yes, David would long for these qualities. We find the word for *judgment* is not the usual one, but one meaning advice, discretion or reason. David used it as he spoke to Abigail after she helped him to act wisely in regard to Nabal, saying:

“... Blessed be the Lord ... which sent thee ... And blessed be thy advice (judgment) ...” I Samuel 25:32-33. The advice was Abigail’s but she was sent of God to help him use good judgment in difficult circumstances. David could have resented this from the wife of Nabal, but he quickly perceived its good wisdom. We do not naturally possess this good judgment and so must be taught it by our Father, as was David.

Going back to David’s plea, “teach me good judgment”, we find this word *teach* comes from a root meaning to goad, and implies a rod used for discipline. God in His wisdom teaches at times by goading or by disciplining, or by directing—sometimes forcibly—as with Paul who “kicked against the pricks”.

Further revelation of how God “deals well” with His servants is seen in another aspect as David said:

“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.” Psalm 119:67.

A poignant but needful part of God’s goodness is to be recognized in the affliction which He bring upon His servants. David knew this keenly when it was caused by his grievous sin regarding Bathsheba and Uriah. Years later, Absalom, his son, usurped the throne and David was forced to flee from Jerusalem. As he fled, Shimei cursed David, and Abishai his servant sought to kill him. David’s reply was:

“... Let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me *good* for his cursing ...”

II Samuel 16:11-12.

David was learning, and part of that learning came through affliction. Would he ever go astray in the same way again? He had to bear affliction the rest of his life and would ever keep it in mind, even rejoicing that God “hast dealt well” with him. Seeing what his reaction was to this affliction, could we feel as David:

“It is *good* for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.” Verse 71.

David had recognized that it was affliction which goaded him, and thus he *learned* to value God’s requirements:

THE REMNANT

“I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” Psalm 119:75.

Why is affliction so needed by our fleshly selves? The word comes from a root meaning to *press down*, and is used as to abase, chasten, humble, gentle, and caused to submit. These are processes which the human mind hates and resists. It is hard to accept as good, even though given of God, but David learned to accept it and expressed his mind:

“... in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.”

II Samuel 22:1.

Even as David was delivered, shall we not be also if we can accept and learn, contrary to nature, but essential to the spirit man? David's gratitude is seen here:

“Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy *gentleness* (affliction) hath made me great.”

II Samuel 22:36.

The difficulties experienced caused David to be increased — he grew. How? In godliness, in gratitude, in spirit. Was not this affliction part of God's great goodness? And so David could joyfully say that God had dealt well with his servant.

God also *dealt well* with Israel as he led them through “that great and terrible wilderness”. He said to them through Moses as they were about to enter the land.

“All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land ... And thou shalt remember ... all the way which the Lord ... led thee ... to humble (afflict) thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, ... he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna ... that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord ...”

Deuteronomy 8:1-3.

Affliction is then a means of proving, which God used with Israel and uses today with His children. What was the mind of Israel as they were under His care in the wilderness? Their response to affliction would clearly reveal this. They murmured, complained, provoked God; they did not learn to submit, and never grew in discerning that man does not live by bread alone. In contrast we think of Jesus in the wilderness as He endured without food for forty days. He was clearly tempted to use the power of the Spirit just received, to satisfy His fleshly needs. He could turn stones into bread, but submitted saying:

THE REMNANT

“... It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Matthew 4:4.

Jesus was afflicted, gentled, and He overcame — glorifying God by submitting. Indeed He:

“... learned ... obedience by the things which he suffered.”

Hebrews 5:8.

What a sustaining for us as we, striving to be obedient in a time of testing, know the help of His word, and realize that God indeed “hast dealt well” with those seeking to be His servants.

In our portion for today, in Leviticus 16, we are shown further evidence of God’s dealing well with His people, as He made provision for the day of atonement. On this day, once a year the high priest went into the most holy place to make atonement first for himself and then for his people. This speaks clearly of Jesus’ work, who once through His death entered into the presence of God to make atonement for Himself and His people through His blood shed. Israel was to keep this holy day as a reminder of God’s purpose in a promised Messiah. How well God did deal with His people, to provide this hope through the taking away of transgression, and so “making one” again. In connection with this day and all it meant to Israel instruction was given:

“... Ye shall *afflict* your souls It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall *afflict* your souls ”

Leviticus 16:29, 31.

And in another place God added:

“... Whatsoever soul ... that shall not be *afflicted* in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.”

Leviticus 23:29.

How vital that each of God’s children should *afflict* his soul on that holy day! This does not mean to be bowed down and discouraged as we may think of affliction; but as the word is used—gentled, humbled, ready to submit—aware of God’s great mercy. This comes only as we realize how bereft we would be were not God in this way merciful in *dealing well* with us.

As we by experience learn and grow, can we, with David, acknowledge from our hearts:

“It is *good* for me that I have been *afflicted*; that I might learn thy statutes.”

Psalms 119:71.

Statutes are His appointments, decrees ordained for our good—all of which, as we observe them with care and gratitude, are instructions to make us better servants, indeed sons, and more like the One of whom He said:

“... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17.

J.A.DeF.

“Too wonderful for me”

PERHAPS no other reading in Scripture captures the essence of man's relationship with God as does Psalm 139, written by David. This is a psalm which reveals the understanding of what man is in the sight of God and how he is perceived by the Father. The words of this psalm are a help to us that we may better perceive our dependence upon God. The Father knows and is aware of all that happens in His creation and is mindful of those called out to be given the hope of a Kingdom to come.

As we read the first few verses of this psalm we understand how closely God watches over His little ones. The psalm is entitled, “To the chief Musician”, or as that translates, “To the One Who Overcomes”.

“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off.

Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”

(Psalm 139:1-6).

God condescends to look down upon man and reveals a hope for life everlasting through the promised Messiah, and this David thought too wonderful. A lofty goal and the ability to attain unto it seems difficult to achieve. Yet, here is the key that a child of God must possess, namely, humility and understanding in order to submit to His hand.

What is also wonderful is that God knows what is in man and helps as He looks within us. How truly blessed we are that the Most High God should be mindful of us. In verse 23 we read:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:”

Here is the conclusion of the matter in David's mind—the need to recognize that God looks within His children, knows their hearts and will place His hand upon their circumstances to lead them. In verses 8-10 of this Psalm we read:

“If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

How much we can be helped if we can have such a willing spirit and be more circumspect desiring to be right in God's sight.

In Psalm 131 David's words are likewise helpful as we read:

"LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes, lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever."

These three verses summarize the essence of the spirit of one seeking to attain unto Zion which was the hope of Israel. God called out a people to make known unto them His purpose — to reveal to man that the flesh must be put down in order to serve Him in spirit and truth. David in these verses compares himself to a weaned child—one subject, not proud or haughty—a spirit well-pleasing to his Father. The same spirit was seen in Job, a man of great integrity but one who needed God's hand upon him to more fully perceive. In Job 42:2 we read:

"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."

Job came to perceive that he had not considered all that God had done for him — had not fully realized just how wonderful that hope was. What did he ask of God? To hear him as the 4th verse says:

"Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Job humbled himself as he saw the true magnificence of God's glory and allowed the mind of the spirit to take over to help him think differently about his relationship with God. His integrity was important, but more was required — a fuller perception and a greater dependence upon God.

Such knowledge is wonderful and we must perceive with awe the marvel that God would condesend to some to make known His purpose. What this should work in us is a need for humbleness and contrition, recognizing that we can only serve as His hand is upon us. Psalm 139:14 continues with this thought:

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

Is this what David and Job came to realize as we must as well? Can we see from the title of the Psalm, “To the Victor or One who Overcomes”, that we must have the need to overcome always before us if we are to have any hope of attaining unto the promised rest?

“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!” (Psalm 139:17).

As God looks upon us He knows what we need, but only as we submit in His service can we be made aware of our shortcomings so they can be corrected.

In Psalm 138 in David's desire to praise God he says:

“Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.” (verses 6-8).

How much we need to perceive, as we see God working with us, the need to value His presence and allow His spirit to rule in us to help put down our flesh, knowing what a blessing it is to be covered by the sacrifice of His Son the Lord Jesus. We are encouraged in this work for as David, we must recognize this hope is “too wonderful”, but we know also it can be attained as there is submission to His hand, for only in this way is the hope of victory possible. Let us then value His ever searching presence and knowing counsel.

M.C.S.

Dr. Thomas on the subject of Essential Knowledge For Baptism

In challenge of an assertion by the "Expositor" magazine on the same subject.

IMMERSED INFIDELITY

"Some of the less important 'things concerning the kingdom,' in addition to those pertaining to Jesus Christ, may be comprehended and believed before baptism; the more the better: but we do affirm that the gospel does not necessarily require faith in them before that ordinance. But it does demand faith in Christ—in all the different attributes of his character." — Expositor p.519.

HERE is a new law, and, to our mind, a perfectly incomprehensible one. The lawgiver divides the elements of the gospel into more important and "less important things;" and pronounces "the things concerning the kingdom of God" as compared with the "things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ", to be less important than the latter. Having decreed the relative importance of the elements of gospel-faith, he proclaims what must be believed for justification, and what may be dispensed with. The "less important things of the kingdom", which he treats as very secondary and indifferent affairs, "may be understood and believed," but adds, "we do affirm that the gospel does not necessarily require faith in them, before that ordinance." Having settled this point by proclamation, he then decrees what is alone essentially prerequisite before immersion to make it valid, in other words, for remission of sins in that act. "It demands" says he, "faith in Christ;" which faith he elsewhere defines to be belief that Jesus is Son of God.

We would hope that our valued and respected friend the editor of *The Expositor* is not the author of what we can but consider the crude speculations that appear in that paper from time to time, on "*Valid Immersion*." We shall consider some *incognito* as the writer, and the editor as the "*medium*" merely through whom the unknown's imaginations find their way into the august presence of an "enlightened public!"

Now, from said *Il signor Incognito* we differ entirely upon the subject of his lubrications; nor do we think that he has much faith in them himself, or he would not speculate so tortuously to satisfy himself, with his own conclusions. The gospel, he says, demands faith in Christ before the act, in order to make immer-

sion valid baptism. But, if *Il Signor Incognito* be the person Madame Rumor suggests, then we do know, on the testimony of one of his most intimate friends, to whom he made the declaration, that he does not even deem any faith before baptism necessary to make immersion valid. Upon his premises, the dipping of a non-believer, sorry for his sins, in water into *three names*, is valid baptism. This, however, is at variance with some things he has printed; but men's private admissions are not always indetical with their public declarations. He and our informant were talking about "the Unity of the Spirit", styled also in the same chapter "the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:3,13). In the conversation, our mutual friend directed his attention to the position he occupied many years ago as a member of the *Christ-ian Sect*, which was the so-called "School of Christ" in which *Il Signor* was a disciple. His friend demanded of him whether the "*One Lord*" was the only lordly element of the spiritual unity of that pretended school of Christ? Whether he did not know that there were many lords in that school; and that, as he valued his standing in it he dared not go contrary to their authority? This being admitted, his friend proceeded and inquired further, if the "*One Faith*" were an element of the spiritual unity of that school? "*Oh*" said *Il Signor*, "**WE HAD NO FAITH!**" "What!" exclaimed his friend, "*no faith and your immersion valid?*" *Il Signor* started with suffused countenance, but made no reply! The mouth of the sack being momentarily relaxed, the cat leapt out, and the bag was found empty.

Now, if the gospel demand faith in Christ before immersion to make it valid, as appears *in print*, what becomes of the validity of *Il Signor's* immersion, who had no faith? Truth, like murder, will out; and we are betraying no confidence in publishing it here; for we are only doing *what his friend spontaneously suggested*, and REQUESTED US TO DO. We believe *Il Signor's* private admission, and that when he was immersed and was a disciple of that sectarian school, he had no faith. This is his declaration, not ours; and is for us the key of all the contradictions and tortuosities of the speculations found in the articles on "Valid Immersion."

Now behold how *Il Signor* IN PRINT condemns the validity of the immersion which *in private* he confessed had *no faith* to rest upon. "We hold," says he, "that no immersion is valid unless it has been administered to a true believer in the gospel." — (Mark 16:15-16)—Expositor p.21.

But the same writer who holds this says he had no faith; *Ergo*; his immersion is invalid, himself the judge.

2.—“If the immersed were not sincere, and *did not die to sin and live to God* in the ordinance, then their immersion was not valid.” — *Ibid.* p.22.

But the writer says he had no faith; and it is presumable that he will not say that a person dies to sin and lives to God who has no faith; for “without faith it is impossible to please God;” and he that does not please him is “dead in trespasses and sins.”

Ergo; he being without faith was dead in sin when immersed; and his immersion was not valid, he being judge of his own case.

3.—“Our experience, we presume, is in harmony with J. B. Cook’s, & c. We believed with all the heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We also fully and unfeignedly repented of all our sins: then we were immersed, not into a sect, or the errors of a sect, but with the understanding that in the act we put on Christ, confessed him before the world—that we manifested our faith in his death and resurrection—that we took on us the badge of a disciple—in a word, that we separated ourself from or died to the world, and unreservedly *consecrated ourself* to Christ, to hear, believe, and follow him. Our will was sweetly lost in his.—*Ibid.* p.154.

But the writer of the above says he had no faith! Which statement is to be received? The printed or private one? We take the latter as most in harmony with the mode in which men who join sects “get religion.” *Il Signor* puts J. B. Cook in the same category with himself. No doubt with all propriety. They were then religionized upon the popular principle; and it is notorious and undeniable, that faith is a thing of tenth-rate consideration with sectarians of the day; in truth, that in the scripture sense of the word, *Il Signor* is right, ~~they~~ *they have no faith.*

Ergo; from the premises, *Il Signor’s* testimony is contradictory; so that the discrepancies must be interpreted by what is notorious in the theory and practice of all “Christendom” to which he belonged.

4.—“To make the subject more plain we will state it thus:

- a) A person cannot scripturally believe what he does not understand;
- b) He must believe the gospel before being qualified for immersion;
- c) Therefore he must understand the gospel before he can be a fit candidate for immersion.”—*Ibid.* p.104.

But the writer says he had no faith: therefore he did not understand: he did not believe before he was immersed, for he says he had no faith; he was, therefore, not qualified for immersion.

Ergo, being himself judge, his immersion was not valid.

But, leaving *Il Signor's* condemnation of his own immersion as invalid for want of faith, we remark that we have proved in a previous article, that the gospel teaching *does* necessarily require faith in the things of the kingdom before immersion. *Il Signor Incognito* says he affirms that it does not; but that it does demand faith in Christ! Now this is to us incomprehensible; and amounts to *it does and it does not*, if the Signor's words be tried by the doctrine of scripture. "*The Christ*" is a phase representative of a doctrine. In Acts 8, Philip is said to have gone down to Samaria, and "*preached the Christ to them.*" Now, when the inquiry is made, *what things did he preach, and what things did the Samaritans believe when he preached the Christ, or Anointed King, to them?*—what other answer can be given than the statement recorded in the twelfth verse? The only answer that can be given is, that when Philip preached the Christ, "he evangelized the things concerning *the Kingdom of God, and the Name of the anointed Jesus.*" This was preaching the Christ apostolically. It was preaching "*the things*" concerning those two grand subjects — the Kingdom and the Name — around which they concentrated in rays of light and glory. What right has any man to separate what God hath joined together; and for the sake of shoring up his own rotten foundation, to subdivide them into more and "less important", and to teach that this may be left out of faith, and that may be kept in; this is not so essential, and that is indispensable, & c.? Who authorised *Il Signor Incognito* to dispense with any, yea, with all of these things; and to say that the only item absolutely indispensable to justification by faith in baptism is the belief of the paternity of Jesus? It is not extraordinary. that men will not be contented with things as they stand in the Bible? Why not accept them in the order and matter as they appear; and not be everlastingly tinkering the word of God to make it respond to the contradictory and carnal dogmas and commandments of men? Can any unsophisticated and ingenuous man read the above words, and affirm that the things Philip preached were all resolved into the phrase, "Jesus is the Son of God?" Or, that "the things of the Kingdom of God" were not necessary to be known before baptism? The testimony interpreted in candor and truth, chases such conclusions into the outer and rayless obscurity of the dead.

For a man to be justified by faith in being immersed, that

faith must include the kingdom of God and the Name. If it were not necessary, Philip would not have sought to develop such a faith in the Samaritans; nor would Luke have recorded the matter of their faith as he has. But Philip preached, and Luke wrote with their Master's words well remembered — "Seek *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." He did not say, "Seek first the righteousness of God and his kingdom," as men perversely read it. The kingdom first, the righteousness after; for *God's system of righteousness is only for those who believe his promises concerning the kingdom.* Luke did not, therefore, write that "the Samaritans believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Name of the anointed Jesus, and the kingdom of God." This would have been to put the cart before the horse, which has become the universal practice of the world. He understood the truth too well for this; therefore let no man meddle with the text, for there lives not the man that can improve it.

We remark, then, that the Christ cannot be preached without the things of the kingdom, neither can men have faith in the Christ without having faith in the things of the kingdom. A man may believe that Jesus lived, died, and rose again in Palestine many centuries ago; and that he was the Son of God: but this is not having faith in the Christ, for he may be ignorant of all the prophets teach about the King. On the other hand, thousands believed in the Christ, who rejected the claims of Jesus to be that Christ. *Non-Christian Jews to this day declare with all their hearts that they believe in the Christ;* but does any one suppose that they mean, that they believe, therefore, in Jesus? By no means.

The Samaritans, like the moderns, needed to be instructed in the doctrine concerning the Christ before they were addressed in reference to the Name of Jesus. Philip, therefore, began with them about the kingdom of God; and when he had enlightened them sufficiently upon this great, primary, and indispensable element of the faith, he proceeded to show them the relations Jesus sustained to the kingdom of God. This procedure was modified in the case of the Ethiopian, because, as *Il Signor* admits, this man was intelligent in the doctrine of the kingdom; or in other words, in the things concerning the glory of Christ. Hence, Luke, instead of saying that "Philip preached *the Christ*" to him, as he states in regard to the Samaritans, says, "he preached unto him *Jesus.*" He had *faith in the Christ*, which was the basis of his Judaism; but he had *not faith in Jesus* until Philip proved to him that the Son of Mary was He.

But, my friend *Incognito* seems bent on suicide. He says that the gospel not only demands faith in Christ, but faith "in all the different attributes of his character" — faith in all that belongs to the scriptural character *called Christ*. This he teaches, in the passage before us, is necessary before immersion, to make it valid. We accept the saying heartily. He is not content with faith in the different attributes, but he will have it "in *all* the different attributes of his character."

Now, upon this, remark, that the man who has faith in all the different attributes of the character called Christ, is a scribe instructed in all the things of the kingdom of God. It is an attribute of the Christ that he be *Seed of Abraham*, and *heir* with him of the Holy Land; it is an attribute, that is, it belongs to Christ, that he be Son of Judah, of David, and of Jehovah; it belongs to him, that he be King for Jehovah over all Israel, and the nations; it belongs to him, that he sit and rule upon David's throne, where priest never sat before, as Priest of the Most High God after the order Melchizedec; it belongs to him to be the founder of the world to come; it belongs to him to be the redeemer of Jerusalem, the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in; it belongs to him to appear before the nations in the character of Generalissimo of the armies of Israel; conquerer of nations is an attribute of his character; righteousness as such, is another; for "in righteousness shall be rule and make war:" it belongs to the character of Christ to be divine—God manifested through flesh; to have been the mortal Mediator of the Abrahamic and Davidian Covenants; to have been a suffering, wise, and guileless man, to have been sacrificial, and so forth. Group all these attributes together and you have before you "*the Christ*". Are *all* these different attributes affirmable of Jesus? Do they yet all concentrate in him? Do we read of their having been all manifested in his life? By no means. Some have been manifested; but the manifestation of the rest has been deferred till his appearing in power and great glory. Now, the things manifested pertained to Jesus in his mediatorial and sacrificial character; and as High Priest over the priestly household; while the attributes of the Christ not yet manifested in the life of Jesus, pertain to the kingdom of God in actual being.

But if the gospel demand "faith in all the different attributes" before immersion to make it valid, what becomes of the validity of the immersion of *Il Signor* and his companions, who had no faith! It is condemned by their own tradition. We are, then, after all said and done, perfectly agreed in this matter. *They have condemned their own baptism*; far be it therefore,

from us to breathe a syllable in its defence. Seeing, then, that they have destroyed their own foundations as completely as the Allies have the dock of Sevastopol, it is quite in place for us without incurring the charge of uncharitableness and presumption, to exhort them, if they can now say they have full assurance of faith and hope, in the words of Ananias to Paul, "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." That we may hear of this soon is the wish of their sincere friend the EDITOR.

*

What is Truth? (Part 23)

JACOB AND ESAU

IT IS recorded that Abraham married again after the death of his wife Sarah. The name of his new spouse was Keturah, and sons were born. But what of his son Isaac, the child of promise? There was as yet no grandson. Did Abraham then look to these other children of Keturah for the promised succession leading ultimately to the Redeemer, the seed of the woman? Indeed no. Abraham had learned to have patience and wait upon his God. His faith therefore did not waver:-

“And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.”

(Genesis 25:5-6).

His other sons could not be heir with his son Isaac. They were not in the purpose of God, just as Ishmael had not been. But Isaac clearly was, and so must be encouraged and supported in his sojourning in the land of promise. Therefore Abraham sent Isaac's brethren away. Not by cruel edict, but by wise persuasion and generous provision. That they went, is sufficient to tell us they did not seek after the life of faithful sojourning which had been Abraham's existence after God had called him, and which mode of life Isaac also held to.

But there was yet no son for Isaac. Where then was the promised seed? Well, God had wrought a miracle in that Isaac had been born in Sarah's old age. Could He not do the same again?

“And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.” (Genesis 25:21).

Rebekah bore twins, a divine overruling, and there were to be no other children. But how significant was their birth:-

“And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”

(Genesis 25:23).

Thus were born Jacob and Esau, and Jacob was the younger.

A Bible Class

“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.”

Proverbs 19:11.

THE verse under consideration is taken from the wisdom of Solomon and is often found in the Proverbs, exemplifies the spiritual virtues that God is pleased with. This instruction is given by an all-wise Father to edify His children in righteousness.

The first part of this verse is most helpful as it is understood that the word “defer” means, to put off something that one naturally desires to do. One who recognizes the danger of anger and what it can lead to, is certainly wise to defer or put away anger, and in so doing reveals discretion.

A man cannot transgress or sin against himself, but only against others, or against God’s commands. The word “pass” means to cross over or to overlook. In the sight of God it must be recognized that all transgress, but in His mercy God has provided a means of covering sin through the sacrifice of His Son. The Lord Jesus did not transgress but suffered as he achieved perfection and left a pattern to follow in order that His brethren have the hope of reaching that promised inheritance. The man of forgiveness who can pass over or forgive a transgression is Christ-like in this quality.

How is it his glory to pass over a transgression? The word “glory” means to shine or gleam and reminds of the light of the Spirit which illuminates the darkness of the world. When a man can put away or defer his anger when he is transgressed against, he shows a Christ-like attribute — well-pleasing to God and a glory as the Almighty sees His word being accomplished. Some examples are seen in Matthew 5:21:

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: ...”
(Matthew 5:21-22).

In these words the Lord Jesus was preaching that there was the letter of the law and the spirit. When we think of a transgression without a cause we think of the Lord Jesus who did not transgress, but was faulted by others in hate. When He deferred His fleshly anger He pleased God who could say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). In Matthew 6:14 it says:

“But if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:”

Forgiving is essential if there is to be a passing over of a transgression done against us. There can be no hope of achieving glory in God's kingdom if one cannot forgive now in this life. If one cannot forgive those who transgress against him, how can forgiveness be expected from God when there is a transgression against His word? An illustration of this point is seen in Jesus' teaching as recorded in Matthew 18:23-35 where he relates the parable of a compassionate king who forgave his servant's gross debt, but that same servant being hard in spirit, laid hold on a fellow servant and without mercy exacted all that was owed him—a pittance in comparison to his own debt. His actions brought wrath upon him and he was delivered to the tormentors because he had not reflected the mercy of the king. Jesus concludes with these words in verse 35:

“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

We can see in this example how God views those who desire forgiveness of Him but do not do so in return to others.

In Proverbs 16:32 we read further of the wisdom of Solomon:
“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”

One who can rule his spirit is one who has it under control, and can exercise discretion when faced with circumstance which may make fleshly reactions flare. To remember one's own failings and need for forgiveness will help to control anger and to reveal a Christ-like spirit. The spirit of Stephen at his death shows how he looked beyond the injustice done to him to see the bigger picture ahead in the hope of the kingdom, when he would be glorified with all the saints of the new heaven and new earth.

M.C.S.

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

"The burden of the desert of the Sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease."
(Isaiah 21:1-2).

The trouble in the Persian Gulf continues. As a harsh wind sweeping its torrid breath over a desert land, so the destructive striving of Iran and Iraq continue to exact their terrible toll.

Treachery is very evident. When the Khomeini regime displaced the Shah, the people of Persia thought their lot was to be improved. It was a false hope.

The two oil rich nations have tumbled heavily. In 1975 Iran and Iraq, wealthy and flourishing, made an agreement rectifying their ancient border demarkations which included allowing Iran about a half of the marshy area of the Shatt-al-Arab, which was Iraq's waterway to the Gulf. In return for Iraq agreeing to the adjustment Iran promised to cease from helping the Kurdish rebels in Iraq. But a year later the Shah's position began to slide eventually to be displaced by Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini. This brought in Shi-ite Mohammedan rule which posed a threat to the government of Iraq which is Sunni-Muslim. It was not long before Iran was again helping the Iraqi Kurds and the Shi-ite underground subversives in Iraq.

Iraq as a result began to prepare for war. By September 1980 it was ready, hoping for a quick decisive conflict, for Iran had weakened its military force by executing its army officers who had been in control of the forces from the days of the Shah. Soon all the Shatt-al-Arab was back under Iraq's control, and other border areas that had been relinquished previously. But a quick victory did not materialise. The Ayatollahs succeeded in whipping up a religious fervour of fanaticism amongst the Iranian Pasdaran, the Revolutionary Guards. They fought back desperately out of the ruins in the frontier territories and ground the Iraqi forces to a halt, and began to push them into retreat. By the middle of 1982 Iraq had lost the territory it had regained, and then announced it was relinquishing Iranian territory in the interest of peace. Since that time Iraq has been mainly on the defensive, increasing its army for this purpose.

Iran now remains obdurate in its intention of bringing about the downfall of the Iraqi government. Iraq, in retaliation is

THE REMNANT

continually seeking to cut Iran's exports of oil via tankers down the Gulf, thus depriving Iran of its oil income which is being used to finance its war. It is a very hard struggle for Iraq, for its enemy is getting nearer and nearer to the important city of Basra in the south, and in the north the Iranian forces are approaching the Iraqi military base in the Rowanduz Gorge. They have also been successful in the Kurdish mountains near the city of Sulaimaniya. The loss of life has been great and the suffering acute. But Iran remains firm in its hostile intentions to its neighbouring country. In fact it is becoming more and more a threat to other Arab countries as well, including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia which are pro-Western. Little wonder then that the United States is so concerned about this Arab conflict as to send its warships into the Gulf to protect oil tankers in the area.

The Western powers do not want Iran to win, hence for example their protection of ships going to and from Kuwait which is helping Iraq financially. This is tantamount to a supporting of Iraq, hence Iran's hostility towards the United States.

So the divine prophecy comes to pass, it is "the burden of the desert of the sea." "Besiege, O Media" but only for an appointed time, after which says the divine message, "the sighing thereof" will be made to cease.



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 and Hamburg.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

The work of witnessing goes on as continued inquiries give opportunity to testify to the falling away in these last days.

As help and guidance is given in the work of His house, both here and in Manchester, gratitude is felt for God's care and for the divine provision to counsel together in this important work.

J.A.DeF.

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MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw, Manchester.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

It is a cause of profound thankfulness when we are helped and delivered in our sicknesses and infirmities. The evident overruling care is a great encouragement to all that God indeed looks down and knows all our needs.