

JANUARY 1988

A Monthly Magazine issued by

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”

“UNTO WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE?”

“THE LAW AND ITS SPIRIT DISTINCT FROM THE
TECHNICALITIES OF THE HUMAN MIND”

“A BIBLE CLASS”

“WHAT IS TRUTH?” (Part 26)

“AN ENQUIRY”

“THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD”

“NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS”

All Communications

D. Lancaster
227 Moston Lane East
New Moston
Manchester M40 3HY
England

M. C. Steiger
836 King Road
Forestville
New York 14062
U.S.A.

At the Table of the Lord

“... LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY ...”

THIS morning we have listened as one of Jesus' disciples asked: “Lord, teach us to pray”. Being a disciple he knew Jesus, and no doubt had prayed often; but as he saw Jesus in prayer, he must have perceived a lack in himself. We do not know who this disciple was, but he had been taught by Jesus, and this was part of Jesus' work, to teach of God's purpose and mercy, of the gospel concerning Himself and the kingdom of God. He taught by word, by example, by the miracles which he was able to perform. As we, seeking instruction ourselves in how to pray, might also ask — what is the most acceptable way to pray? This word *prayer* implies a resorting to or an approaching unto. To whom do we approach in prayer? Obviously it is unto God, our Father. We cannot actually appear before His heavenly throne for he is holy and we are flesh; so there is a need for a mediator—one who comes between, and Paul tells us in I Timothy 2:5—there is “... One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;” God has in mercy provided an approach unto Himself; more too, a redeemer who can make prayers acceptable and carry them as incense before God, that they may be heard. In meditating about this, we realize that only through a covenant a fellowship, between ourselves and God can there be approach unto Him. How few there are who can truly know this invaluable blessing, for few indeed are in that covenant relationship. There have been some exceptions to this, such as Cornelius where God knew the heart, but of many millions of prayers spoken each day only a very few are received by God, and these only through Christ who sits at His right hand.

Going back to Luke 11:1 and the disciple's words: “Teach us to pray”, possibly by these words we perceive in ourselves the need to increase our care and understanding as we pray. One can say, “I pray every day and I have for many years.” Perhaps that disciple had done this, but somehow he felt he lacked.

The prayers of Jesus are not often revealed to us, but a few are recorded. One such was as He agonized in the garden just before His crucifixion, as He said:

“... Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

Luke 22:42.

THE REMNANT

In response we see that:

“... there appeared an angel unto him from heaven,
strengthening him.” Verse 43.

Still Jesus struggled to submit — it was very hard:

“... Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his
sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down
to the ground.” Verse 44.

His suffering was intense and so, “he prayed more earnestly”. *Earnestly* means stretching or extending self. He strained Himself to the utmost, seeking help to submit to His Father’s will. And mercifully, being strengthened, He was enabled to carry on through that great humiliation and pain to His death. We have remembered this in the bread and wine here this morning, and rejoice that He can now carry our prayers into the presence of His Father. Paul shows us how effectively He can accomplish this work:

“... we know not what we should pray for as we ought;
but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with
groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the
mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for
the saints according to the will of God.”

Romans 8:26-27.

With *groanings*, we are told. This means being in a strait and greatly pressed. The Lord Jesus can enter into our stresses and fears because He has known them all Himself. Only He, in His experiencing and overcoming, is able to receive our human cries and make them acceptable and pleasing to our heavenly Father.

So let us look carefully and find the help we need by the way in which Jesus answered that plea of His disciple. He said to him:

“... When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be
done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our
daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive
every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into
temptation; but deliver us from evil.” Luke 11:2-4.

These words are commonly known as “Thy Lord’s Prayer” — a simple, short prayer, but what a lot it teaches. Today it is repeated word for word by literally millions of people. Beads are used to keep count of the sequence and the required number of times it is recited. How empty! Can such mechanical prayers be of any efficacy? Jesus in this regard said:

THE REMNANT

“After this manner therefore pray ye ...” Matthew 6:9.
He gave us a pattern, not exact words often repeated, for He also taught:

“... When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” Matthew 6:7.

We can infer from “vain repetitions” the thought of to prate, to babble—sometimes a confused, meaningless sound. Here words, whether many or few, cannot make prayer acceptable to the One who searches the hearts.

Do we not, Brethren and Sisters, need to ponder these teachings of Jesus, examining ourselves and determining to be most careful and aware of our great privilege in approaching unto the Almighty?

Jesus also speaks to us of another aspect of prayer—the need for importunity (Luke 11:5-10). Importunity is not vain repetition, but rather it is enduring continuance in appeal, keeping in mind how wise and merciful God is and how greatly we lack and so need Him. Jesus added to this thought:

“... Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you ...” Luke 11:9.

Prayer, as we are shown, is not simply a matter of asking, although this is necessary. There must be a seeking, a searching, a reaching out in need; and a knocking—a “beating on the door”—in anxiety to find that only true help. To be importunate in prayer may seem presumptuous, imposing upon our Father, for we are but His creatures; yet Jesus teaches this need. Let us take it to heart and pursue it with humble minds and with trust.

Our Father knows that sometimes what we pray for is not right or best for us, and He may respond in a way that shows why He does not grant our desires. Paul found this as he experienced a “thorn” in his flesh, from which he longed to be freed. He recognized it as:

“... the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” II Corinthians 12:7.

How could a thorn in the flesh, a physical affliction of some kind, restrain Paul from being so exalted? If he were inclined to be lifted up, this messenger of his fleshly nature would prick, hurt, possibly disable—reminding that he was weak, vulnerable and perishing. How much we need such reminders, Brethren and Sisters, to help us keep our perspective as to what really matters in our lives, which we give to serve God. Yet Paul “besought the

Lord thrice" that this troubling condition be removed. He prayed with importunity, yet the thorn was not removed, as the Almighty responded:

"... My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Verse 9.

It was in God's gracious purpose that Paul had this reminder of his mortal weakness, helping him to realize that when he was weak in the flesh, then was he able to be strong in spirit. What a help this mind can be to us as we may feel the need for deliverance from a "thorn" and may pray fervently for its removal. Our Father knows best what circumstances are right, and positions us exactly for our good. We need then to accept our circumstances when it is shown that they are from Him, and then we need to pray for strength to endure and learn from them.

Jesus asked the question:

"Is any sick among you? ..." James 5:14.

Who of us has not been sick, without strength, in some way infirm or shaky? The Spirit's help is revealed for us:

"... let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5:14.

Sickness applies not only to fleshly ills, but also may involve a spiritual weakness. The remedy is clear — prayer and an anointing by those who have the responsibility for His children's welfare. Of what does anointing with oil consist? Is it not a pouring in of the strength of His word — the spiritual oil which heals, much like the good Samaritan did for the one who fell among thieves (Luke 10:33-34)? Through the power of prayer and this loving application of the word of God, healing can be found as His unlimited power is brought to bear, if He so wills. As with any sickness, patience, a degree of pain and discomfort may be experienced; but the promise is clear—our God will heal.

There is one more aspect which must be considered, namely that prayer is not only to be a seeking of help, and a giving of thanks to Him. It also must include praise, in recognition of His glory, holiness, mercy and grace. David was one who knew great blessing from the Almighty, and responded with acceptable praise—blessing, reaching out, glorifying in the One to whom all praise is due for always:

"Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praise unto my God while I have any being." Psalm 146:1-2.

As he recognized the power of God working on behalf of Israel, David was moved to sing:

“The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.” Verse 10. Brethren and Sisters, as we contemplate His mercy that we are allowed to approach Him through His Son, as we perceive the power that prayer can bring to bear, let us join in the plea of Jesus’ disciple:

“Lord, teach us to pray.”

For we must realize our own lack, and therefore yearn to more acceptably give praise and glory unto Him who provides for our every need, and has revealed for us blessings beyond understanding.

J.A.DeF.

Unto what is the Kingdom of God like

IN OUR portions in Luke chapter 13 verses 18, 19 and 21 the Lord Jesus asked this question:

“... Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

The Lord Jesus used the example of a tiny mustard seed and a lump of leaven, both of which grow to many times their original size, to speak to us of what the Kingdom of God should mean in our living. It should grow to become an enormous presence, overshadowing all of our thoughts and plans, with all of our energies focused on the hope of entering into it. Jesus tells us in this same chapter, verse 24, of yet another characteristic of the Kingdom of Heaven:

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

Why are there only a few saved and the rest not? The Kingdom of God is exclusive—held out for only those who strive to conform their living to what God requires. We find that when we are tested, we are given an opportunity to reveal to God what is in our heart and mind. When we are in the midst of trial and testing we are tempted. Temptation is a lure to go against God’s word. We may know what God requires, but the readiness to follow it will determine if we are to be accepted into that Kingdom of rest that God will establish. How important it is to realize that it is not God who tempts us but our own fleshly natures. In James 1:13-15 we read:

“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:

THE REMNANT

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

The Word was given through the grace of God to apply His teachings in our living. The Lord Jesus is a perfect example of One who used the Word with power as He was tempted in the wilderness. He was sorely tried, as we are, yet was able to overcome in *each* circumstance through the Word of God. In Luke 4:2 we learn of His testing after baptism in the Jordan:

“... Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.”

This was a severe trial, one that is almost impossible for us today to imagine—going without nourishment for forty days. At the end of those forty days He would be sorely tempted to turn stones to bread. The Lord Jesus knew that within Him was the power to do so, and besides who would see Him—He was alone. He did not allow the craving of His flesh to interfere and thereby use that power for mundane matters, but remembered the words in Deuteronomy 8:3:

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did they fathers know; 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 doth man live.”

Just as the Lord Jesus, we too can be helped in our hour of temptation, but only as the Word is applied, and the flesh controlled.

Jesus' second temptation was no easier as we read in Luke 4:5-6:

“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.”

Again, Jesus knew that the power was within Him to take the kingdoms of the world now, instead of waiting for God's purpose to be accomplished. He used the Word yet again to say to His flesh in verse 8:

THE REMNANT

“... Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

He knew the kingdoms of earth would one day be His, not when He chose, but rather as God knew the time was right for His will to be accomplished. Perhaps the words recorded in Deuteronomy 6:13 came to the Lord Jesus' mind:

“Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.”

How pleased God would be with His Son as He saw the yielding of Jesus' fleshly impulses to the will of His Father. The Lord Jesus knew that only by the name of the God of Heaven could present help come, and ultimately His own honoured position in God's Kingdom. The Almighty is the only means of true strength and support in times of trial and testing. Jesus knew that one could not give license to the desires of the flesh and expect God's help in times of difficulty.

The final temptation was perhaps the hardest for the Lord Jesus as we read of it in Luke 4:9-10:

“And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:”

Here we find the words “it is written” used, but this time by the flesh to subtly tempt in a very rational manner. Jesus no doubt knew these words from the Psalms:

“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

Psalms 91:11-12.

How easy it is to justify doing what our fleshly nature would like by twisting God's words to suit our own purposes. Yet the Lord Jesus was able to control this type of reasoning, allowing the Spirit to subdue His flesh.

We too must depend upon the Word and use it wisely to overcome temptation, using His Truth to straighten our living into that narrow way which, although too constraining for the flesh, leads to the Kingdom of God. If the Word fills our living, leaving no room for the thinking of the flesh, it can be like that tiny mustard seed or the lump of leaven, growing until it fills the whole of our existence.

M.C.S.

The Law and its Spirit distinct from the Technicalities of the Human Mind

It is recorded in Deuteronomy 21:10-13:-

“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive,

And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails;

And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father, and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.”

The technical mind would say, “What about keeping separate from the alien?” “No fraternising!” Here is an example of how the law of God shows a careful balance in His requirements. Israel certainly were not to take aliens into marriage with their sons, nor give their daughters to marriage with the alien. But in the particular feature of God’s instruction as above quoted let us note:

1/ There had been war with the enemy, who had been vanquished before Israel. Therefore in such a circumstance it had not been a fraternising.

2/ The beautiful woman was already a captive. In other words had already been brought among the people of God by reason of the prevailing circumstances of the battle.

3/ When the warrior was caused to favour the young woman, was that not the result of a natural feature of life, which was God-given from the beginning?

It was therefore of God, so in those circumstances mercy and love was to be shown to the captive. Let us face the fact, the woman captive was a young woman in great need. Note the wise dealing of God’s law in defining how the situation was to be handled:-

“And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.” (verse 13).

The raiment which she wore when she was captured was replaced with more suitable apparel. Then she would no longer stand out noticeably as a captive.

THE REMNANT

Tender regard to her feelings was also to be given. She had been taken from her father and from her mother. So a period of adjustment had to be allowed. And as she perceived the kindness and the care and the love extended would she not be built up with reciprocal love for the one who had extended such favour? Would she not also be caused to reflect that this was the beneficent law of the God of Israel, unlike other nations, and so she would be impressed, would she not, with the life into which she was being taken? No other nation had such a law.

Where is there an unswerving technicality in all this? It is not there! It is not in God's law!!

So the young woman, out of personal calamity, had been given a fresh and blessed life, by God, the God of Israel! A life in which she would have her rights. A life in which she would be protected from exploitation, and given the one true hope. The evidence of this fresh start was given into her own hands — to which (according to her wisdom to perceive) she would gladly submit in response to the favour shown to her.

“Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails.” (verse 12).

She would admit by this, the shame of her former existence, as she felt shame because of her shorn hair. But then her hair would grow again, would it not, and her shame would be forgotten.

How beneficent then was the law of God, showing how merciful He is to the ignorant and the needy, and the Gentile, which we also are in these last days, but in His kindness have been brought near to His law, and to His blessing.



A Bible Class

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God vain.”

(II Corinthians 6:1)

In looking at the context of this sixth chapter of II Corinthians, it can be seen that Paul is exhorting the brethren in Corinth to recognize the precious position they hold as children of God, and therefore to be separate and walk in the light rather than in the darkness of the world. In the 14th verse Paul tells them:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

Perhaps the essence of Paul’s message to his brethren can be seen in the first verse of this chapter where he says:

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

The word “grace” means gift, and comes from a prime root meaning to cheer, but it may help to ask, what is this grace of God? Referring to the first instance this word is used in Scripture, it is Noah who was spoken of as one finding grace in God’s sight in Genesis 6:verses 6 and 8:

“And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

The ark was prepared by Noah and his family for the saving of any who would hear the word of the Lord and repent. Noah labored for 120 years to preach that word. It was available to any in the world who would hear, yet only eight valued it and were saved, only eight found grace in that generation. The saving grace of that ark we know speaks of Christ. If any will believe in Him, entering into His body, covered by His blood, the gift of life will be offered.

Paul’s words seem then to be a pleading with his brethren to value that word given to them and not drift back into their old unprofitable ways that could only lead to death.

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” (Hebrews 12:15).

Here Paul exhorts to follow after the things of the Truth even though not joyous at times, for through the chastening of the flesh which brings pain and tears, can come the receiving of that grace unto eternal life. God’s grace does not fail, only man fails as he disregards the diligence needed to seek God. The flesh can be a source of that bitterness for the desire of the flesh is to be

THE REMNANT

indulged—not chastened and restrained and when this is done, sometimes resentment and bitterness can spring up. A means of falling from that grace is illustrated by Paul in Galatians 5 when some yearned to institute the restrictions of the law, now done away with by the death of Christ:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ye are *fallen from grace*.

For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” Galatians 5:1-5.

It is remembered how Israel grew tired of the manna in the wilderness and scorned the gift of life-giving food that God had provided for them. They became absorbed by the everyday problems which confronted them and forgot the gift or grace of God. Here is a warning given, that overlooking that great gift can, because of preoccupation with the hustle and bustle of day to day living, result in losing that grace. Paul feared for his Corinthian brethren that they might do the same, and so he was beseeching them to open their hearts and value this gift of God and become better sons and daughters of the Almighty—a privilege granted to only a few. If someone today was given a very costly gift, would he turn his back on it or look on it with indifference? How much more should there be an appreciation of the greatest gift of all—the hope of eternal life, bought with the blood of Jesus Christ.

To receive this grace of God, one must actively seek it. All fail when the flesh overcomes in times of weakness, yet this grace is seen in the provision of a sympathetic High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who knows the trials and temptations facing man, and can mediate to the Father that sincere prayers for mercy and help may be heard.

“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.”

(Hebrews 4:15-16).

THE REMNANT

How important that this grace be sought from the one source that it can be found, and how gracious of God that He should reach down to man offering the gift of life — indeed this is the grace of God. How needful that this gift always be regarded it as something irreplaceable and precious in one's living.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. (II Peter 3:18).

M.C.S.



What is Truth? (John 18:38) Part 26

JACOB GOES TO MESOPOTAMIA

WHAT a trial arose for Isaac and his family as a result of the words of blessing which had been spoken by Isaac to his younger son. It is recorded:-

“And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.” (Genesis 27:41).

The hatred was so intense that the thoughts of Esau were ultimately revealed in the words that he spoke. His mother then became alarmed, and determined to send Jacob away to her family at Haran. Jacob loved his mother and so obediently responded to her advice, being also afraid of his brother Esau. To Isaac Rebekah said:-

“I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: (whom Esau had married) if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?” (verse 46).

Isaac readily agreed to the counsel of his wife; had not he been blessed with a wife from Mesopotamia. So he spoke to Jacob pertinently:-

“Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padam-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother’s father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother’s brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham ...” (Genesis 28:1-4).

Though Isaac had been very fond of Esau he realised the hand of God was with his younger son. He was the one through whom the purpose of God would work out the ultimate salvation of the faithful.

So Jacob set forward on the long journey to Haran, not knowing what was before him. It was a journey of faith, a faith which God would encourage. So we are told:-

“And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went towards Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” (Genesis 28:10-12).

God, in the vision, was at the top of that ladder, and as His messengers came to and from the earth, Jacob heard the voice of God giving to him the promises made to his father and to his grandfather. Thus Jacob was greatly encouraged to continue his journey, so he proceeded on his way the next day, and in due course arrived, under the protection of the God of his fathers, in the land of Mesopotamia.

An Enquiry (from an interested reader)

“I would also appreciate any information which you have relating to John Thomas’ and Robert Robert’s emphasis upon democracy in ecclesial life, especially with regard to serving brethren, and business meetings of ecclesias etc., as this subject is of great interest to me.”

In response to the above we publish the two following articles.

ECCLESIAL ORGANISATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
(The Christadelphian 1881)

Brother J. W. Thirtle says: “The editorial remarks on ecclesial organisation in the May and June number of the *Christadelphian* might well be regarded as conclusive against the opinion that the serving brethren in the assembly of believers should be called ‘elders’ and ‘deacons’. It is beyond dispute that these English words have meanings different from the Greek works they represent, and therefore to use either expression would be misleading; while to argue that these designations are *Scriptural*, and that the terms ‘presiding brethren’ and ‘managing brethren’ are not so, is not so correct as it seems. An ordinary English dictionary will describe a ‘deacon’ as one who attends to the secular affairs of a religious community, or as an officer under the ‘elders’. It will also tell us that the office of ‘elder’ was one which included pastors and overseers, and these were elected to take office on account of their age and experience. Anyone acquainted with the New Testament will know that these descriptions will not hold good of the *diakonos* and *presbuteros* we read about in the epistles. The Greek word, *diakonos*, is, in the authorised version, translated “minister” 20 times, “servant” seven, and “deacon” three times. It means plainly one who serves or waits upon. The verb, *diakoneo*, which is rendered “minister unto” 15 times, “minister to” one, “minister” seven, “administer” two, “serve” 10, and “use the office of a deacon” two times—means simply to wait upon or serve; while the noun, *diakonia*, rendered “ministering” three times, “ministration” six, “serving” one, “service” two, “ministry” 16, and “administration” two times—means service, attendance on duty. It mattered not in

what capacity a person rendered SERVICE, *diakiona* properly covered the idea, and the person himself was *diakonas*—one who served or ministered. The term was not specific of any *kind* of work: it was applicable to the mightiest and to the weakest labourer.

In the early ecclesias, there were necessarily workers in various capacities. Those who took the lead in the work of organisation were, we know, appointed in such a way as men are not appointed today. Notwithstanding this, they were all ministers or serving ones. Did one proclaim the truth as Paul (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11) and thus do the work of a herald or lecturer; did one announce the glad tidings, discourse on the divine purpose, and contend for the Faith? did one do the work of an apostle or in any way further the work of the truth? there was *serving*, and the one who was engaged therein would, without reference to his particular duty or work, be styled *diakonos*. We read that Christ was a *minister* of the circumcision (Rom. 15:8); Paul the Apostle was a *minister* of Christ (1 Col. 1:23; Eph. 3:7); and we find that on one occasion, addressing his disciples, Christ said: 'He that is greatest among you shall be your *servant*.' (Matt. 23:11). In all these cases, we meet with *diakonos*. The word is not a title, it conveys no idea of an official, but is a denominative of one who serves. The preacher, evangelist, lecturer, exhorter, the labourer in any department, whether managing, presiding, or door-keeping brother, each one *serves* the great body of the brethren, and answers to the *diakonos* of the ecclesias of old. Certainly then, when serving brethren can be referred to by designations which define their duties, there is no need for the use of an indefinite word the meaning of which is generally greatly misunderstood. The English word, 'deacon' has come to us through the Latin language, and therefore, as might be guessed, has nothing but an ecclesiastical history; it has been invested with a signification foreign to the simple word found in the Greek Scriptures, and, as a matter of course, conveys an unscriptural idea.

It has been precisely the same with the words *presbuteros* (elder—'presbyter') and *episcopos* (overseer—'bishop'). These words defined the duties of certain serving ones, or *diakonoi*. Those who discharge the duties connected with the appointments were not, however, dignitaries in the sense modern bishops and presbyters are; on the contrary, they were instructed not to deport themselves as lords over the charge allotted to them, but to become patterns to the flock. From a careful observation of several passages in the Acts and Epistles, it will appear that the

episcopoi (or overseers) were *presbuteroi* (or elders); and again the *presbuteroi* were *diakonoi* (or serving ones); There were, however, many *diakonoi* who were not elders or overseers; indeed, any *ministering one* was *diakonos*. Peter tells certain 'elders' to tend the flock of God, 'exercising an oversight.' These were then *episcopoi*, and it is laid down that overseers must not be novices (1 Tim. 3:6). The 'elders', then, were not 'babes in Christ.' Paul also calls the 'elders' of Ephesus 'overseers.' (Acts 20:17-28). When their peculiar appointment is taken into consideration, it is certainly not surprising to find them engaged in conference with the apostles and ordaining decrees which resulted in the Body of Christ being strengthened in the Faith, and the numbers of those being saved being increased (Acts 15:16).

We have shown that any server is *diakonos*. With Rome, however, only 'lay' helpers, or an 'order under the priests' were regarded as deacons. As for *presbuteros*, it is not a post that we have any authority to appoint a man to; further, we have no knowledge of the exact duties which devolved upon an 'elder', and should be no more justified in giving Presiding Brethren that designation than in calling Managing Brethren by the English title of deacon. Verily, power to appoint to posts of authority has not been vested in the Ecclesia of Christ; and titles and preferments may well be left to those religionists whose corrupt systems rest on dignity and emolument. Order requires that there should be brethren chosen to manage the affairs of the ecclesias and to preside over the meetings, and to designate these serving brethren (who are truly *diakonoi*, but yet not 'deacons') in the way we have been accustomed to is convenient and rational. To style those who attend to the 'secular' affairs of our ecclesia 'deacons', and those who exhort 'elders', is to take a leaf out of the book of that corrupt religion which, in defiance of the New Testament teaching, has made offices to suit its purpose, and on its own account defined the duties of those filling them. And it would never do to think of such a thing as that."

Ecclesial Notes (The Christadelphian 1884)

THE ECCLESIAL GUIDE

The *Ecclesial Guide* is a suggestion: not a mandate — which is not within the function of any (by Christ) unauthorised brother. It only becomes a rule when made such by an ecclesia

THE REMNANT

adopting it: and even then it remains outside the structure of an ecclesia's constitution. The ecclesia takes so much of it as pleases them, and makes it theirs. There must and there always will be rules of some sort in every body of people who have a collective and mutually-related existence. It is a question of rules that work for good or those that work for evil. If we could have apostolic bishops, it would be a relief: but where is the wisdom of playing at what we have not and cannot have unless God speak by the spirit?



Sings of His Coming and of the End of the World

“... they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, ... when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

(Revelation 17:8)

Towards the end of the year just passed a senior Anglican Bishop attended a ceremony in St. Peter's, Rome. It was the occasion of the beatification by the Pope of eighty-five British Roman Catholics who met the dreadful end of being hanged, drawn, and quartered for their religion between the years of 1584 and 1679.

Previously there had been agreement between the head of the Anglican Church and the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster. The Primate of the English Church stating:-

“Whereas in the past this announcement would have fuelled controversy and communal rivalry, today we can all celebrate their heroic Christian witness and together deplore the intolerance of the age which flawed Christian conviction.”

In reply to this the head of the Catholic Church said:-

“As our Churches move ever closer to each other, the story of the martyrs must not be seen as an embarrassing episode, but must take its rightful place as an important part of our heritage.”

The history is that in 1559, Queen Elizabeth the first was declared by act of the English Parliament to be the supreme governor of the Church of England. As a result Elizabeth sought to bring as many Englishmen as she could into a single national Church. Thus she severed herself from communications with the religious head in Rome. The Anglican Church then set forth its position in what was described as the Thirty-Nine Articles. This was not acceptable to staunch Catholics. This move by the queen was really more political than religious. Englishmen were not forced into rigid belief, but they had to be subservient to the royal supremacy, in their religion, of Elizabeth, and accept the Book of Common Prayer. The Catholics would not acquiesce to such a relegation of their bishop in Rome, and their position became very difficult when the pope excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570 and absolved her subjects of allegiance to her. The authorities then made staunch Catholics into traitors to the crown, and their persecution began. Catholics then attempted to hit back in plots to overthrow the monarchy. But Protestantism prevailed with the more zealous leading Catholics being severely

THE REMNANT

dealt with particularly between the years 1584 and 1679. Even the restoration times of Charles the second, after Cromwell, was a period of severe persecution of Catholic people who were later proved to have been harmless to the crown, and had been executed because of fabricated reports of their plotting against the monarchy by one Titus Oates, who when found out was sentenced to whipping in the pillory.

This reconciliation, after so long a time, and after such a history, is undoubtedly a sign of the seven hilled city moving towards its appointed place in world affairs.



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.

Advertising in Toronto has brought a surprising response, evidence of concern over the present day falling away. Contacts are being followed up in the hope that some may be moved to a greater awareness of what God requires.

Gratitude is felt for healing and help granted in response to many supplications.

J.A.DeF.

— — — — —
MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.

Thursday: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

As this new year commences we look back over the twelve months that have passed with thankfulness, for provision for the work of witnessing has not failed. Surely this is an assurance to us.