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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

"I WILL STAND UPON MY WATCH"

HOW impressive are the words of the Almighty's prophets as they faithfully brought His message to His people. Recently we have considered these words delivered by Habakkuk and Zephaniah. These men are sometimes referred to as "minor prophets". Certainly they are not as well known as Jeremiah, Ezakiel, Isaiah — but they were the messengers of the Almighty to His people, sent to sustain, to warn, to comfort and to correct them. Both Habakkuk and Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah, and were contemporary with Jeremiah's early work. The record confirms this:

"The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah...in the days of Josiah....."
Zephaniah 1:1

Of Jeremiah we read:

"The word of Jeremiah...To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah...in the thirteenth year of his reign."
Jeremiah 1:1-2

The chronology would indicate that Habakkuk's prophecy took place concurrently with Jeremiah and Zephaniah. It is striking that there were three active prophets in the days of Josiah. Why would this be? It may be that God, knowing the needs of His people and their king, "rose early" and sent these men of God to work with Judah as the end of the nation's existence drew near.

We remember that Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; ten years later he began to repair the house of God, removing the idols and false altars. Jeremiah had begun his prophecy five years earlier. Could it be that Jeremiah's work influenced Josiah's mind and spirit, helping him to honor God and to bring reform to Judah? It would also appear that the word of God through Habakkuk and Zephaniah influenced Josiah. What was God's message through His servant Zephaniah?

"I will utterly consume all things from off the land,... I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
Zephaniah 1:2,4.

A warning and opportunity for any who would hear. He continued:

"Gather yourselves...O nation not desired; (margin: that hath not shame)... before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon

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you,...Seek ye the Lord...seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger."

Zephaniah 2:1-3.

Here was a promise of safety in the time of God's anger. The Almighty further promised through His prophet a covering for those who sought Him with true faithfulness and obedience.

"The remnant of Israel shall...feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid...the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more...I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out;..."

Zephaniah 3:13,15,19.

Here was confirmation of God's care for Judah and Josiah, backing up the work of Jeremiah.

And then came Habakkuk, speaking of the burden upon Judah. Habakkuk's words make it clear what a grief these people were to the Almighty:

"...how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear!...Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance?...the law is slackted,...the wicked doth compass about the righteous;...wrong judgment proceedeth."

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Prophetically the judgment to come was revealed:

"...lo, I raise up the Chaldeans,...which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs."

Verse 6.

God's judgment would come upon Judah and Jerusalem shortly, destroying the city, the temple and taking the people into captivity. As Habakkuk observed the evil which was multiplied in Jerusalem during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, and into the early years of Josiah, he wondered at God's long suffering:

"...wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?"

Verse 13.

The prophet did not understand this, but he resolved:

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and I will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved."

Habakkuk 2:1

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Habakkuk knew God had a purpose, and was therefore ready to watch and to wait for His revealing and correction. God answered with a vision, saying:

“...Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”
Habakkuk 2:2

What is meant by “that he may run that readeth it”? We find “run” used as “post” for example in the decree of Ahasuerus regarding the Jews:

“...the letters were sent by posts unto all the king’s provinces,...”
Esther 3:13

Could we then read the Almighty’s word to Habakkuk as: “that whosoever may read the message, let him speedily carry the message abroad”? The message was one of judgment upon evil doers - those who served idols, or made their neighbours drunken; those who were teachers of lies. As Habakkuk watched and waited upon his Father and perceived, he did run, hastening to Judah and Josiah with the word of God. The work was urgent, and the prophet perceived his responsibility to God and to God’s people.

That Habakkuk’s work bore fruit unto God’s honor is seen as we turn to II Kings chapter 22. Josiah, then about 26 years old, “heard” the prophet’s warning. He decreed that the temple should be repaired, the abominations of idolatry cast out, and that God’s house again be sanctified unto Him. As this was being done at the king’s command, the book of the law was found in the house of God. This book of the law must have been unused and neglected for it to be misplaced. It was read to Josiah, and as he perceived the dreadful lack:

“...he rent his clothes.”
II Kings 22:11

and commanded:

“Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all of Judah,...for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us,...”
II Kings 22:13

How quickly his heart was touched and he responded! Was he made ready by the patient works of Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk?

Josiah was also helped as he enquired through another of God’s messengers. The prophetess Huldah also spoke of dire judgments to come upon Judah, but Josiah was encouraged and comforted by God’s words, for she said:

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"Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place,...and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee,...thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place..."
II Kings 22:19-20

What blessing! How grateful Josiah would be for God's mercy revealed by these faithful ones. In gratitude and desire to please Him and help Judah, Josiah:

"...read in the ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And the king...made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD,...to perform the words of this covenant that was written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant."
II Kings 23:2-3

In addition, we are told how the groves, the idols, and the false altars were destroyed. Also Josiah burned dead men's bones upon the altar at Beth-el, which wicked Jeroboam had built - thereby fulfilling the prophecy made almost three hundred and fifty years earlier:

"...O altar, altar, thus said the LORD: Behold, a child shall be born...Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places...and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee."
I Kings 13:2

How great and wonderful a change was wrought in Judah by the words of these faithful prophets! How grateful right-hearted men of Judah would feel for their work and toward God who sent them. Were these men of God indeed "minor prophets" in their eyes? Should they not also be enlarged in our eyes, and also be examples, Brethren and Sisters, as they diligently carried the message of God to all who would hear?

We can better perceive their spirits in the prayer of Habakkuk as he "ran" with the message of God to his people:

"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth."
Habakkuk 3:1

It impresses that some of his words are like David's. His prayer is carefully "pruned" of excess, reflecting his perception of God's mercy and the meditation or wanderings of his mind as "Shigionoth" tells us. The title of Psalm 7 also reveals:

"Shiggaion of David..."

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We are shown the “wanderings” of Habakkuk’s mind and of David’s as they contemplated the mercy and grace of God. David said:

“O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.” Psalm 7:1

And Habakkuk’s words were:

“...O Lord, revive they work in the midst of the years ,... in wrath remember mercy.” Habakkuk 3:2

God did respond to the prophet’s prayer, as He had earlier to David’s. Both David and Habakkuk use the word “SELAH” - valuing what God had said considering the end of His purpose.

As we have seen God’s hand at work through His prophets, “rising early and sending them”, shall we allow their words to be as much a help to us today as they were to Josiah? Can we imagine the joy of those three prophets as Josiah turned to God and, with Judah, entered into a covenant with the Lord, acknowledging God’s deliverance in the restored Passover? Let us then listen, respond, rejoice in these words of God through His messengers. Let us determine to go on in the spirit of “SELAH”, looking to the end of His purpose, and joining in thanksgiving and praise to God. He is ever “in touch” with His people - if they are watching and waiting as did Habakkuk:

“...to see what he will say unto me...”

J.A.DeF.

FELLOWSHIP

JOHNS first epistle or letter is a help to us today as we struggle to keep our hearts fixed upon the purpose of God. John's intent in writing this letter is evident in the first chapter, verses 1, 3 and 4 as we read:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.
And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

With these opening words John sets forth his reasons for writing, that he might declare the name of Jesus Christ as the only basis of fellowship with the Father to any who would share in that union.

The end of the purpose of God we know is to be accomplished when the Lord Jesus returns. As we contemplate the nearness of that return our thoughts naturally turn to what our position will be then. Will we be found in that one true fellowship, that we may know the joy that will be bestowed upon His children? John tells us in the 4th chapter verses 2-3:

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God:
Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:
And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now already is it in the world."

At the time of John there were evidently false teachers leading some astray, but John clearly makes it known that fellowship with God and His Son can only be possible if it is acknowledged and believed that Jesus came in the flesh. How important this truth is, for without that understanding there can be no recognition of God's purpose, love and grace extended through His Son. Jesus was indeed flesh, born of a woman, but overcame all carnal impulses and has thereby opened the way into the Kingdom of God for His brethren and sisters. In confessing this truth, each believer is impelled to manifest that he strives to do after the example of Jesus by struggling against every impulse of that flesh nature.

John further writes in verse 15 of chapter 4:

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

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This is true fellowship - a dwelling with God, with His Son and with a people who contemplate the same hope, sharing a covenant relationship with the Father. God made known this covenant from the beginning - a means of life made possible. In Deuteronomy He spoke of that covenant through His servant Moses in chapter 30 verses 19-20:

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:
That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

This is the essence of the covenant which speaks of the blessing of life that can be known by those who obey His voice and have fellowship one with another through His Son, confessing their allegiance to Him above all else. The Lord Jesus' own words attested to this as He instructed His disciples in Matthew 10:32

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

How much we need to cherish the mercy of God extended, valuing the covenant relationship offered by our Father. This requires heeding the words of the Lord Jesus to confess Him in our living by putting down the impulses of our flesh natures just as He did perfectly. This is difficult to do, for it causes hurt and humiliation to stop the flesh in its headlong rush to be gratified.

Paul tells us how important this confession is in Romans 10:9-11:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

To confess Him with our mouth is not enough - it must be done with our whole living, so that our every word and deed is a testimony to Him. As we endeavour to confess His name, let us value the fellowship we are allowed to share with our Father through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and through this great mercy, one with another.

M.C.S.

CORRESPONDENCE ON THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST (from P.P.)

A member of The Nazarene Fellowship (a former Christadelphian) has again written a very long letter to this magazine which is rather too large to publish in full. However we will endeavour to relate the essence of its reasoning as follows:-

EXTRACTS FROM P.P.'S LETTER

I will endeavour to reply honestly and scripturally to your comments but if as stated in your final comment you are leaving the final decision to your readers of who was right Turney or Roberts, you should at least refrain from the policy of Roberts against Turney by the misrepresentation of his teaching. You have in fact misrepresented what I wrote in my reply to G.T. in the Magazine "Bible Searcher and Witness" Editor, P. Reekie, in regard to Dr. Thomas's bewilderment and his question as a result, "How could sin be condemned in the nature of Jesus if it did not exist there?" You say on Page 54, "The Nazarenes ask this question" when in fact I was quoting Dr. Thomas. It may appear a small error in your reading but consider how much harm R. Roberts did in his misrepresentation of Turney by discouraging people from reading his Lecture on "The Sacrifice of Christ", and thus forcing them to the extreme view that Jesus was a polluted offering and under sentence of death because he was flesh and blood and also in need of Redemption, having to cleanse himself by death etc. You object to the Nazarene Fellowship Statement that Jesus was born with a life unforfeited to sin, but neither your objection or reasons are substantiated by the scriptures, neither by Dr. Thomas. You say "When Jesus was born he was already on a course (unlike Adam) that would inevitably lead to death. As Jesus grew up he was ageing, therefore he was dying." We do not deny this, seeing he was human. But you add, (unlike Adam) which is to contradict scripture and also your own pioneer Dr. Thomas where, in Elpis Israel, under the heading "Man in his noviate" speaking of Adam's nature at creation, "It was not constituted so as to continue in life for ever, independent of any further modification", and after some further explanations and reasons he concludes with the precise statement, "He was capable of death." Dr. Thomas therefore has answered the simple question you present i.e: "If the body of Jesus was not sin-stricken, condemned, why was he dying?" The obvious answer is simple, "Because he has a nature like Adam's was at creation - a nature capable of death but not on account of Adamic sin. This is where R. Roberts, his followers, and in fact the whole of Christendom went astray in believing that Adam's former nature at creation had been changed to something inferior in order to bring about the return ultimately to the dust. In fact this was not involved in the Divine statement, "In the day thou eatest thereof

thou shalt surely die," which means Judicial inflicted death - the very death Jesus suffered willingly, "The Just for the Unjust" to bring us to God. How then can you make such a foolish statement as the following, "The only escape for Jesus was by his death upon the cross." I ask you, How can anyone escape physical death by the experience of that very thing? Was Jesus in any way better by dying on the cross than by dying a natural death? In either case God would have raised a sinless man, but the natural death of Christ would not have paid Adam's debt to the Law in Eden, neither has his death on the cross prevented us from dying a natural death, but you appear to wilfully blind yourselves to what it has done, because a man has come in his own name, and him you intend to believe, error and truth combined. Now to your heading of

"WHAT ROBERT ROBERTS SAID"

The first two lines contain the most unqualified statement that could come from a man who professed to know the God who revealed His various attributes to Moses in which was Love, Mercy, Justice and Truth. R. Roberts is here quoted, "In what way the righteousness of God was declared in the crucifixion of a guileless and sinless and perfect man. We must first of all ask who he was." It matters not one bit who he was if the description guileless, sinless, perfect, was correct; the Righteousness of God would not be declared in this way but the very opposite. It was not the Righteousness of God that put Jesus to death but sinners under the serpent power of darkness, the Prince of this world, after Jesus had in 33 and a half years by daily conduct, declared the righteousness of God in condemning sin. He then offered himself to God as a living and willing sacrifice so that His Father might give him up freely for us all. God would not have allowed him to be crucified for any other reason. 1) His willingness; and 2) That he (Jesus) would see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied - for the joy set before him. You say, "Jesus had the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit struggling within himself." There is not a word in Scripture to support that Jesus had two minds. Would Paul have said to the believers, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus" if two distinct minds of opposition were to be commended? Does not his own Father say of him, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity" (Hebrews 1:9)? Also, "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." (Hebrews 10:9)? Was iniquity bound to be in him in order for him to hate it? Was not this iniquity being manifested daily by and through the fleshly minds of the serpent generation by whom he was surrounded and hated? Was Jesus "carnally minded" as you suggest? or was he not indeed "Spiritually minded".

The Apostle declares the carnal mind (mind of the flesh) to be enmity against God, and to be "carnally minded" is death, but to be "spiritually minded" is life and peace. "I do always those things that please my

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Father", said Jesus. The spiritual mind of Jesus was continually warring against the fleshly (unregenerated) minds of the powers of darkness personified as the Serpent (The Prince of this World) and in consequence of this he said to his disciples, "But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (Not himself as you suggest). You suggest that because a man can be tempted, his flesh is condemned even for thinking or debating about things that are opposed to good conduct. Surely if such thinking and debating does not lead to unlawful action, then having been resisted it is not sin, but in fact it is to be Divinely commended. Why cannot you accept this? "Resist the Devil (Diabolos) and he will flee from you." You are therefore suggesting and implying that the Diabolos was in Eve and Adam at their creation, for if, as you say, "temptation" is the Diabolos in human nature then the temptation of the partaking of "The Tree of the knowledge of good and evil" was not optional in Adam and Eve's case as the Divine Law had implied. But you are bound to accept that the desire would have been in their minds to partake but they need not have done so, therefore the act of eating is the Sin - not the temptation or desire. Neither temptation nor desire can be termed 'sin in the flesh'. If the Diabolos was in Adam at his creation as your comments lead us to believe, then he was also in Jesus, who was of the same nature.

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We will now seek to reply to the points raised in the above remarks. For example the question is mentioned "How could sin be condemned in the nature of Jesus if it did not exist there?" The assertion is made that it was Dr. Thomas's question, but presumably it is also our correspondent's question seeing that he uses it.

There is surely a simple answer to this; when we consider that when Jesus was raised up to His Father's Spirit nature, all tempting thoughts then ceased in Jesus. But before that change of nature the tempting thoughts in the mind of Jesus were crushed and completely caused to cease by the final act of His giving Himself to that death upon the cross. Yet when Jesus was raised the third day and was met near the tomb by Mary Magdalene, He was caused to say, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father —." (John 20:17) Mary might have embraced Him in the emotion of the occasion had He not stopped her, then the emotion would have been very great, hence His quoted words. But later the same day He could say—"handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39) Does this not show that the risen Jesus still had the emotions of the flesh until He had ascended to the divine nature? Therefore there was the need for change of mind as well as change of body. God granted this to Him because Jesus had not committed sin. But there was no injustice of God in Jesus being born to die, for as the Apostle expresses it "—in my flesh dwelleth no good thing—." The unsinning Jesus had to die because

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(as our correspondent says) He was human with human propensities. But God in mercy gave Jesus the eternal life for which He asked because though His body was condemned His life (being perfect) was accepted and therefore was perpetuated. Jesus then was the fulfilment, in His life, of the lamb without spot and blemish, whose blood (or life) poured out, was the atonement. As a result God granted mercy to the Brethren and Sisters of His Son, to be His incorruptible companions of the future age, who in no other way could have had the mercy and forgiveness of such blessing. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22) The forgiven and redeemed glorified saints, are for Christ.

As for the evil which worked in Jesus, His temptation in the wilderness reveals His struggle against it. That it was in His mind is shown for example in the quotation:-

"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,
And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Luke 4:9-11)

Where was Jesus? Why, in the wilderness. Therefore when Jesus was "set—on a pinnacle of the temple—" it was all in the mind, by the promptings of diabolos,—"sin in the flesh—" (Romans 8:3) This cursed nature was pre-eminently demonstrated by Jesus on the cross concerning which He said:-

"—as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." (John 3:14)

This was further explained by the Apostle who said:-

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

Jesus on the cross therefore showed His killed serpent nature. He bruised the serpent in His head; which thinking finally ceased in His faithful submission to the death which was fore-ordained by God. Thus was declared the righteousness of God in condemning all flesh to die. As it is written:-

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins

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that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

(Romans 3:25-26)

Concerning the evil thoughts which work in all flesh, God's view of such thoughts was clearly shown from the earliest times:-

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth"

(Genesis 6:5-6)

Jesus had to combat the evil thought, hence His awareness of the struggle going on in the minds of others, therefore it was declared "—he knew what was in man." (John 2:25) An it is further testified of Him:-

"For we have not a 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."

(Hebrews 4:15)

On this subject of sin in the flesh our readers will perhaps consider some further quotations of how God looks at the hidden thoughts of the human mind:-

"Curse not the king, no not in they thought—" (Ecc. 10:20)

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:

Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him."

(Proverbs 24:17-18)

Our correspondent disputes the facts of the struggle which went on in Jesus's mind when he says: "There is not a word in scripture to support that Jesus had two minds." Surely in admitting that Jesus was human this must be so, but in Jesus having a wonderful spirit mind He crushed the mind of the flesh so that He did not act out the wrong thinking. The following testimony of scripture surely illustrates this:-

"And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit—."

(Luke 4:13-14)

One final point, our correspondent says: "—if as you say, temptation

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is the Diabolos in human nature then the temptation and the partaking of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was not optional in Adam and Eve's case as the Divine law had implied—" Our correspondent overlooks that the Tree of Life was also provided in Eden. Adam and Eve were not prevented from partaking thereof until after they had sinned; does this not show that there was a choice of obeying God, or their own inclination? When they sinned they became sinful creatures previously having the propensity to sin. If they had been obedient they could have had the fruit of life making them as the sinless angels, no longer having the propensity to fail.

It is necessary then for flesh to be ultimately changed. But how can that which has sinned and as a result is righteously condemned to die, escape the just divine sentence? Ultimately through Jesus, who in human body completely resisted the temptation to sin; who died in the way which He did to signify that human flesh cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. Who was raised to eternal life because His perfect earthly life was pleasing and acceptable to His Father, and therefore to Him are given all those who though born under the decree of death for sin, are reborn into the second Adam who is the Lord from heaven, and therefore are forgiven their sin because His life has become their saving and therefore cleansing life who are joined to Him.

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"...HIM HATH GOD THE FATHER SEALED"

Jesus spoke these words to those who sought Him after He fed the five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes. Following this miracle, many came to Him, not for His teaching, but as He told them:

"...because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

John 6:26

Jesus then exhorted:

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

John 6:27

The meats that perish are those fleeting satisfactions and pleasures found in this life which are of so little consequence compared to that spiritual food which nourishes toward everlasting life. This was the sustaining meat provided by Jesus as He with compassion taught, fed, and healed by miracles. It was for this work Jesus was sealed by His Father.

Throughout the biblical record we find that, literally speaking, sealing involved the use of a signet to identify or to authenticate. An example is found in Esther where King Ahasuerus commanded:

"Write...and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

Esther 8:8

How then did the Father place His seal upon Jesus, giving authority to His words and deeds? At His baptism when He received the Holy Spirit, and again when He was transfigured on the mount before His disciples, God spoke so that all heard:

"...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Matthew 17:5

He identified Jesus as His Son, enjoining all to hear His words. Let us then listen to Jesus as He spoke of further evidence which testified of His being the One whom God has sealed:

"Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness..."

John 5:33

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"...I have a greater witness than...John;...the works which the Father hath given me..." Verse 36

"...The Father himself...hath borne witness of me." Verse 37

"Search the scriptures;...they...testify of me." Verse 39.

All testified of Jesus, sent as the Messiah to redeem and atone for those who believed on the Son of God come in the flesh. Jesus Himself tells us:

"...This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6:29

Since these words were spoken, Jesus died, was raised, and ascended to His Father, as a further confirmation that the work He did was of God. Let us then ever hear the words of this sealed One, striving to labor for "the meat which endureth unto everlasting life".

Paul, expressing his own sturdy faith, wrote of the sureness of God's promise:

"...God...to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:
That by two immutable things...we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:" Hebrews 6:17-18

These immutable things: first - His unfailing word which promised a Redeemer; and second - Christ, having overcome, now made immortal as fulfilling that promise. What does this have to do with ourselves? Paul brings it down to today's living:

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever..." Hebrews 6:19-20

Through the victory of the One so sealed, those who believe in Him have an anchor in today's troubled world. That anchor is God's purpose expressed so well by Paul:

"That in the...fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ...In whom also we have obtained an inheritance...That we should be to the praise of his glory..." Ephesians 1:10-12

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To those who trust in Christ, Paul reminds and inspires:

“... After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession...”
Verses 13-14

Thus God’s promise is that those in present probation, with all the faithful from the beginning, are, through His victory, identified as His brethren, children of God. These are by the Spirit sealed, which is an earnest or a pledge that if they continue in that trust and obedience, the promised inheritance purchased with the life of Jesus may be theirs. Truly such a hope can be an anchor in the struggle to overcome, determined that we will not stray, lest that seal be removed and so all the promised hope lost.

Let us then, rejoicing in the provision of the One whom the Father has sealed, unite in labor for that “meat which endureth unto everlasting life...”

J. A. DeF.

TAKE HEED THAT YE BE NOT DECEIVED

“—be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,—” (Ephesians 4:14)

How vitally important it is that we “be not tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

We need to consider the question in Matthew 24:3 put by the disciples to help us to understand what the Apostle is really saying:

“—Tell us—what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

Let us take note of the Lord Jesus’ answer:

“—Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”
(verses 4-5)

We need also to bear in mind that this question was asked by those who believed in the Kingdom of God and salvation, and is it not a fact that the history of the Truth is mainly one of deception, of men and women being tossed to and fro and being carried away with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

When we consider that being carried away - i.e. departing from the faith in any particular is apostasy, because it denies what God has said and to declare otherwise is to make God into a liar. In the great apostasy of Christendom at the present time there is scarcely any element of the true faith as one section is opposed in some particular to the others. This should alert the mind to the seriousness of apostasy, that departure from the faith means departure from God. “—being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, without God in the world.”

The apostasy rejects all condemnation, although it be of God. Various factions or sects have different beliefs, that is, different from the Word of God and thus being deceived by the poison of the serpent which destroys the importance of separation and of condemnation by saying, ‘we must not judge, this must be left to Christ’; whilst totally ignoring that the Lord Jesus said “Judge righteous judgment.” and so matters of dispute are glossed over as not affecting their eternal future, and all of different persuasions are regarded as brethren ‘once a brother always a brother’ - they all are accepted as brethren.

It is not realised but by the few, that the head of Christendom today

addresses the populace of the world as "my beloved brethren" and is thought to be most generous and kind - so men think - but fail to realise that by this means the whole world is deceived, and so the warning of the Lord Jesus and the Apostle - "take heed that ye be not deceived" is brought forcibly to mind. Hence the Apostle's words to the Ephesians - that we be not tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

Surely the Apostle was most anxious that the wonderful hope of eternal life for the faithful should not be lost, as it must surely be if we allow ourselves to be "carried about by every wind of doctrine", and so the vital importance of this subject is better understood when it is realised that every division going back to 1875 and before and also since, to 1923, 1933, 1954 and that there are at the moment some twenty or more groups declaring they have the Truth, but separated because of some divergence of belief, when it is realised that this sad state of affairs has been brought about by their being "tossed to and fro" and having been "carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." We are enabled to perceive what was foretold so long ago. These things are written for our admonition and learning.

Seeing then that there are these twenty or more groups professing that they have the Truth, logic demands that only one can have THE TRUTH. Twenty could be wrong but certainly twenty could not possibly be right. Hence the divine warning - Take heed that ye be not deceived.

J.S.

A CORRECTION FOR ENDEAVOUR MAGAZINE READERS.

In December 1987 an article appeared in the Endeavour Magazine which declared amongst other things:-

"When I was baptised, I had no idea there were divisions in Christadelphia, and it came as a great shock, to a one-year old convert, to come across ex-Christadelphian Frank Elston, leader of "The Master's Household" who considered that I was beyond the pale, belonging to the worldly mixed Temperance Hall Fellowship - -. Inevitably he fell out with his son-in-law, William Butterfield, who formed his own fellowship, "The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia - - -".

The Remnant then wrote to the Endeavour seeking explanation of how certain assertions came to be made. Finally a letter was received from the publishers, which said:-

"I am assured that the comments included in the article were written in good faith as reported in face to face meetings - -."

The Remnant now feels that it owes an explanation to any who might have been influenced by such an article, by saying the assertions made

therein about the Remnant are incorrect. For example, the division, in which undeniably William Butterfield played a part, was not as a result of his falling out with Mr. W.J. Elston, his father-in-law. We therefore publish the following testimony, obtained from those directly involved, to set the record right.

STATEMENT REGARDING THE 1954 DIVISION FROM THE EDEN (U.S.A.) ECCLESIA.

The Nicolaitanism present in the Nottingham Ecclesia (of the Ecclesia of Christ) was brought into the open in October 1954 after W.J. Elston was questioned on a judgment made seriously adverse to certain Brethren and Sisters of Eden and Nottingham and refused to answer over a period of some fourteen months. A journey to England in an effort to establish unity lead to:-

1. W.J. Elston's refusal to answer or discuss.
2. The calling of a special meeting of the entire Nottingham Ecclesia to discuss.
3. No notification of the meeting to the involved parties.
4. A condemning unheard of the work of questioning.
5. All this in disobedience to the commands of Jesus in Matthew 18.
6. As an outcome of the meeting the Ecclesias of Nottingham and England were ordered not to discuss the position or to question the accused wrong doers, yet were required to condemn them unheard.
7. In defence of these unscriptural actions a new doctrine was put forth condemning the work but not the worker, therefore it was stated Matthew 18 was not applicable.

Efforts in accordance with Matthew 18 to gain those in error went unheeded and withdrawal became necessary.

It will be seen from the above that there was a failure to obey the commands of Christ shown in Matthew 18 which are commands of love to gain and to help. There was also promulgation of a false doctrine that the work of Brethren and Sisters can be condemned, yet the brethren and sisters involved in that work are not condemned. Thus a method of circumventing the safeguards of justice as shown in Christ's teaching was formulated and accepted by the majority. The cry raised was that the minority were contentious, leave them alone. Such a method of silencing those who had questions to raise with the leadership revealed Nicolaitanism, a teaching which Christ says: "Which thing I hate."

"The Remnant" has published a booklet explaining the events in the Ecclesia of Christ leading up to the 1954 Division to help any seeking to judge who was wrong and who strove for the right at the time.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

" - - - he shall have power - - - over all the precious things of Egypt - - -" (Daniel 11:43)

The prophecy, of course, as quoted above, concerns conflict between North and South. It is so significant therefore, that even in the Arab world, there is something of a division between the Arab peoples to the north and those who dwell in the south. Though Iran is in conflict with Iraq, and not the southern Arab States, yet they have had cause to regard Iran as a hostile power. Consequently the six Gulf states have discussed co-ordinating the defence of their sea routes, oil terminals and coastlines generally. Iran has a huge population which is far more than the total of all the Gulf states hence their courting of Egypt which with a population of fifty million, is the only Arab country able to match Iranian man power.

How significant then, is this trend towards something of a political confederacy of Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia with the populous Egypt, as a front against hostile Arabs to the North. It is an alinement which will finally be subjected to the incursion of the great Northern Power.

News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK, Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30a.m.

Sunday School 1.45p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Hamburg.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Ecclesias both sides of the ocean are making plans and looking forward to a visit by one of our sisters from here. All brethren and sisters regard these privileged opportunities together as a blessing allowed in these troubled times - a binding and a sharing, bringing greater closeness and benefit to all. As God permits, this visit will begin in early August.

J.A. DeF.

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MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.30p.m.

We are so glad that this magazine is desired throughout the English-speaking world, enabling the witness to be widespread, bringing to the fore matters which we believe to be so very important.