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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"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

"HAST THOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB"

Once again our thoughts have been directed to consider the mind and the spirit of Job. He suffered great affliction as God allowed hard circumstances to encompass him, thereby revealing the character of this man who held fast his integrity, and who in dreadful trial still eschewed evil. We often wonder how Job was able to hold up under the repeated disasters which came upon him, and how he could endure under the false accusations and spurious help that his "friends" inflicted in his misery. Of Job we read:

"...Ye have heard of the patience of Job..."

James 5:11

Almost everyone has heard and spoken of Job's patience. James who lived hundreds of years after, cites his example for those who seek to please God. It is striking that this word patience is found nowhere in the book of Job. Indeed in all the Old Testament it is only mentioned three times. This is not to imply that Job was not patient; nor does it mean that patience is not a virtue which the Almighty looked for in those whose example is preserved as a testimony. Perhaps this tells us, Brethren and Sisters, that patience involves more than we may realize, and that we may not be aware of all that is required to develop it. Thus we can be helped to more fully discern its implications as we consider Job's circumstances.

We do not know much of this man's exact position. He did live in the land of Uz whose precise location cannot be identified, but it is thought to be west of the Euphrates. Nor are we told in what time period Job lived. However, we do know from chapter 1:3 that he was the greatest man in the east, and that he was esteemed not only as a man of importance, but He was also of great integrity; one who was upright, feared God and eschewed evil. Under challenge from the adversary, he was called upon by God to prove that totality of heart and spirit. He did so in spite of the adversity which so cruelly beset him. What enabled him to resist strong temptation, and by great determination retain his integrity? If the qualities that contributed to his patience can be examined and understood, we can be helped to follow his example. It would appear that there are many aspects which combine to establish patience and which are seen in our brother, Job.

In our portion for today, we find help as Job responded to his "friends", Zophar, Bildad, and Eliphaz. What forbearance he showed, what submission to God's hand, and yet not yielding at all to their taunting remarks:

“What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.”
Job 13:2-3.

To reason comes from a root — to be right — and is also used as be convinced, to maintain, to plead. Job understood the need to call upon God, the source of all strength and reason. He further said to his “friends”:

“Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.”
Verse 13.

To whom did Job wish to speak? No doubt he spoke that his “friends” might hear, but most urgently to the Almighty as he desired to “reason” or be right with God, to experience His correction and guidance. He acknowledged that what came upon him was not simply “chance”, but God’s hand at work allowing it, and his desire was to find out — why? What is it to teach me? How am I to change? What is God working in me? Job then asked:

“Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?”
Job 13:14

What did our brother mean by this? Perhaps taking one’s flesh in his teeth conveys the thought of biting one’s tongue or lips — thus holding back fleshly reactions, bearing pain and ridicule, and keeping silent before God. This was also conveyed as Job spoke of his desire to offer up his life to God in total and righteous submission. This spirit is clearly expressed in his next words:

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”
Verse 15

Was there not a complete readiness to put his lot in God’s hand, trusting that whatever was best for Job, the Almighty knew and would bring to pass? Trust, used here, means to hope, to stay, to wait. The Almighty used this word as He reassured His people.

“My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people:...and on mine arm shall they trust.”
Isaiah 51:5.

Again those who hope, stay, and wait know that God will move on behalf of His own. Is this a part of patience — a waiting, a trusting, a believing as Job expressed: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust

(wait) in him"? I will not push my own thoughts or desires, for they may not be His desire for me. I will wait even though it may mean my death.

This submission makes us think of Abraham when he so willingly offered Isaac in obedience to God. He trusted in God's promise of a seed to be in Isaac. Do we not have a clear evidence of that trust as he replied to Isaac: "...My son, God will provide himself a lamb..."? Genesis 22:8. Abraham, as Job, trusted in God's word, although it seemed that Isaac whom he so dearly loved would be slain. He knew God's promise of a seed would not fail, even if Isaac had to be brought back to life. He would obey God whose word never fails.

Going back to Job's mind, he continued:

"...but I will maintain mine own ways before him."

Job 13:15

What did our brother have in mind? Would he go on in his own ways which might not be God's ways? The word maintain is the same as "reason" in verse 3, which we have seen is used — to be right, to be convinced. We could read Job's words: "I will correct mine own ways and make them right before him." God testified that Job was perfect, upright, fearing Him, and eschewing evil. These are the "ways" which Job struggled for and resolved to maintain, seeking always his Father's loving correction. Again, is this a vital part of that spirit quality which is patience? Are we prepared, Brethren and Sister, to move in this spirit of Job, that even though it may "cost my life" I will trust in Him, upholding His way, enduring under, waiting for His hand in whatever conditions He may see fit to allow?

Again we marvel how Job could bear up under this suffering and distress? His words help us:

"...I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

Job 19:25

God's purpose to be accomplished in Jesus Christ His Son lived in Job's mind and heart, helping him to grow in trust and waiting in the conviction that:

"...though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Job 19:26

How would Job hope to see God? His words which we have heard this morning tell us:

"...all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my

change come."

Job 14:14

What was the change Job waited for? Short range, it would be a change from his immediate affliction and adversity. But looking ahead to the Almighty's purpose, he would long for the great change which will be sure to faithful men — a time when the flesh is gone with all its suffering, testing and tears put away; a change from mortality to immortality — from flesh to spirit. Job's hope makes us think of John's vision in the Revelation. He was shown the triumph of Christ and His saints over the adversary, and one of the angels said:

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Revelation 14:12

What was the faith of Jesus? Was it that by justifying God in overcoming the flesh unto death, He and all the faithful, who through Him would be granted atonement, would know deliverance from death and the supreme blessing of God's kingdom? Jesus did perfectly overcome as we have remembered at this Table this morning, and now sits glorified at God's right hand, waiting for the appointed time to gather His saints to Him — all having shown that same trust in His Father's word.

How difficult it is to develop and sustain that patience which is based on trust. There was Saul whom Samuel had instructed:

"...thou shalt go down...to Gilgal;...seven days shalt thou tarry (trust), till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do."

1 Samuel 10:8

Saul did trust for seven days, waiting, but as the seventh day wore on and no Samuel, with the Philistines pressing sorely, his trust faltered. He took things into his own hands and offered a sacrifice, intruding into the priest's office, failing to persevere for the coming of Samuel, who did appear before the day was over. He therefore was to suffer the loss of his kingdom, and ultimately his eternal life. How easily trust can fail as our circumstances pressure and it appears there is no way out. Yet in similar and worse situations, Job retained his integrity — his oneness with God's mind. Can we see why James esteemed Job's patience?

David, although he failed more than once, also revealed a wholeness of trust in God. He expressed this spirit of patience in Psalm 37, revealing for us the many aspects of which true patience consists. He said, "Fret not thyself..." (Verse 1). To fret is to glow or blaze up, and is used as burn or wax hot. It causes one to grow angry, to lose balance. This is exactly how the flesh reacts to

seeming injustice. How can we stop fretting? By trusting, by seeking, by submitting, knowing that evil-doers will “soon be cut down” (Verse 2). David continues to describe patience. “Trust in the LORD, and do good:...” (Verse 3). Trust as used here implies a running to Him for refuge, and hope in the future which He has promised. “Delight thyself also in the LORD” David further instructs (Verse 4). To delight involves a being soft or pliable, finding pleasure and contentment, with the thought of yielding to the Father as to the potter who is molding His people. “Commit thy way unto the LORD...” David counsels (Verse 5). Commit in the Hebrew is galal (to roll), which brings to mind Gilgal where the men of Israel under Joshua were circumcised before entering the land, and the Almighty said:

“This day have I rolled (galal) away the reproach of Egypt from off you.”
Joshua 5:9

Here Israel committed themselves to the renewed covenant with God by the cutting off of their flesh.

What a lovely mind this man David, our brother, exhibited. Lastly he wrote:

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him.”

Psalm 37:7

To rest is a forbearing, a quieting of self or being silent — all part of submitting and thus waiting patiently for Him. Each of these attributes is part of patience. All these things David practiced, and we see the same qualities in Job. Let us summarize them briefly to help us more fully understand and remember, perceiving what power is in patience. Involved is a refusal to fret, a trust in the Lord, a delighting in Him, and a resting as we wait upon Him. In addition there is for us to think upon: forbearance, determination, “biting” our flesh, seeking God’s reasoning and counsel. Patience is all this, and more — our lifetime offering to God.

While patience is mentioned only seldom in the Old Testament and not at all in Job, we have been helped to see the larger view and to perceive a bit more of what Job exhibited all through his trial. The Almighty has asked a question which in the original reads:

“Hast thou set thine heart upon my servant Job...?”

Job 1:8

Let us consider and set our hearts upon his example in hope of finding favour with the Almighty now in probation, and His approval for eternity when Jesus Christ returns.

J. A.DeF.

JOEL'S MESSAGE

We have read recently the prophecy of Joel. Like other prophets, these words were not his own, but were spoken at the direction of God in order to instruct His people. The essence of the words of all prophecies was to make known to God's people that if they repented and changed their ways, He would be pitiful and show mercy and grace.

The word of the Lord that came to Joel foretold of desolation by a nation which would be "strong and without number". Judah had strayed from God, taken for granted the blessedness of being separated unto Him and had become polluted in His eyes. Because of this they were to be brought down, God's judgments leaving nothing untouched until there was left only desolation upon desolation as depicted in the words of Joel 1:4.

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."

This was a prophecy to help, if God's word could be taken into their hearts and minds. Joel provided that help, a man whose name means "to whom Jehovah is God", emphasizing to the people then and to us today, the paramount importance of God's place in our living.

Joel was a messenger appointed to sound an alarm in Judah as we read in chapter 2:1.

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;"

He went on to warn of a great people who would come down upon them in verse 2:

"...a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations."

This spoke of a vast destroying force likened to a great fire bringing in its wake much sorrow upon the inhabitants of Judah. There would be no escape from this destruction for it was to be brought about by the hand of God as verse 11 says:

“And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?”

This destruction of God was to come as a judgment upon those who had turned away from His paths, those who had profaned their place as His people. The force behind this destructive power is the same as that which would render mercy to those who sought the safe haven of his care as Joel 2:12-13 relates:

“Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.”

In these words is seen the solution of their dilemma: “rend your heart, and not your garments”. There must have been merely a surface honoring of God, a lip service which had no depth of conviction. Yet Joel offered comfort for any who could repent and change their ways, for to them would the grace and mercy of God be extended.

The words of Joel sent at that time to persuade the people of Judah, seem to have more than one meaning for they also refer to the ultimate “day of the Lord” as in chapter 2:28-31:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:
And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.
And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.
The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.”

God’s word offers hope to those who struggle to be children of Yahweh, to whom “Jehovah is God”, for to them only is deliverance promised.

At a later time the Lord Jesus spoke of this same Comforter to come upon those left to do the work of ministering. When that

power of the Spirit came upon the apostles enabling them to speak in various languages, they were accused of being drunken, but Peter used the words of Joel to explain in Acts 2:15-17:

“For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.
But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

Peter used these words of Joel to preach to those learning of the Lord Jesus, that He was the Messiah, having been crucified and then risen from the dead to become the redeemer of all who would call upon His name. What was the response to his appeal? Verse 37 explains:

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

The answer given by Peter was in the same spirit as given by Joel during his day — repent, change your ways and if your heart is toward Him help will be given.

There is however a trait to which all human nature falls is prone, for the word of God may be received at first with joy and wonder yet the mind can become dulled and after a time take for granted the wonderful hope extended. It is in mercy then that this word of God through Joel comes to remind and say, “turn ye even to me with all your heart”. One who can cry for help reveals a pliant spirit, a heart that can change from error and be turned to Him.

This message of Joel then is a timely message of hope for all. Many have desired such help in times of despair — perhaps none more eloquently than David, who in dire straits rent his heart as he cried out for deliverance in Psalm 61:1-4:

“Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.
From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
For thou has been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.
I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah”.

THE REMNANT

It is at hard times like these that God looks to see if we will rend our hearts and cry unto Him for help. David knew the help and deliverance of God on many occasions and spoke in reverence of his hope in verse 5 of this same psalm:

“For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.”

An heritage is something precious handed down throughout the years. God’s heritage is the hope of eternal life, which He has graciously extended throughout the generations of mankind — the hope that Peter offered to those who would listen and that Joel offered to those at his time to those who would rend their hearts and turn from their wickedness.

This message of Joel brings hope to us today as he says in chapter 2 verse 32:

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”

Outside of that call there is no hope of eternal life. Let us then be mindful of Joel’s message and determine to, “turn ye even to me with all your heart”.

M. C. S.



A BIBLE CLASS

“YET IN IT SHALL BE A TENTH”

Isaiah 6:13

In considering this particular facet of God’s word, it helps to examine the background of Isaiah’s time to better understand this message of the Spirit to him. The prophet had seen a vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne, above which stood seraphims who cried:

“...Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” *Isaiah 6:3*

Who were these seraphims? The word comes from a root — to be on fire — and so they are associated with spirit fire. In a vision seen

by Ezakiel, the cherubims were also associated with the fire of God's Spirit as:

"...a whirlwind came out of the north,...and a fire infolding itself,...out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures..."
Ezekiel 1:4-5.

It would appear that both the seraphims and cherubims depicted glorified living creatures, infused with God's Spirit to do His work, and to exalt His name.

Isaiah's humble and perceptive reaction to his vision was:

"...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips,...for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
Isaiah 6:5.

He recognized his unworthiness in contrast to the holiness and glory of God. Because of the prophet's discerning humility, one of the seraphims took a coal from the altar and laid it upon his mouth, saying:

"...Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."
Verse 7.

Isaiah experienced and valued the power of that spirit's fire which cleansed his lips and removed sin, in preparation for the work the Almighty had in mind. As the LORD asked, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' — Isaiah's response, inspired by what had been shown to him, was immediate: "Here am I; send me." (Verse 8) The Almighty then sent him to Israel with the message that they had failed to see and to do the will of God. Isaiah naturally asked, "How long?" will this work continue, and was told:

"...Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate...and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land."
Verses 11-12.

All this would unfailingly come to pass. Not many years following, the king of Assyria took the ten tribes into captivity; still later, Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and led Judah captive. Yet never forgetting His few children, God in mercy comforted:

"But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return..."
Verse 13.

THE REMNANT

This indeed came to pass. Under Zerubbabel and Jeshua, a small part (about 50,000) returned after the seventy years' captivity. Moreover, the prophecy looks forward, for all Israel of the spirit, to the second coming of Christ when a remnant, a small part, will be accounted worthy of everlasting life, living and reigning with Christ in His kingdom, eternally brethren and sisters, children of God.

In addition, the tenth is associated with the tithe, the best part, which under the law was offered to God by His people and given to the Levites. A further tenth in turn was offered by the Levites to the Almighty, and given to Aaron, the high priest. In this offering there can be discerned the purpose of God, to take out of mankind the best part for His purpose, a tenth, a remnant, to belong to His High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He returns. In this regard the prophecy of Ezekiel helps as he speaks of the tragic time of Israel's captivity:

"I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it (the nation):
and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and
I will give it him."
Ezekiel 21:27.

The Lord Jesus, the one whose right it is, will rule over the kingdom of Israel restored — God's kingdom promised through the ages. With Him will reign His saints as kings and priests — thus making up the tenth, the best, gathered and perfected.

The word of God through Isaiah speaks further of this tenth that is to return, describing it:

"...as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them,
when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the
substance thereof."
Isaiah 6:13.

A tree appears dead when its leaves are cast, yet unfailingly it bursts forth with newness of life in the spring because of the God-given force which, though unseen, is in it, waiting for its appointed time. So will be the return of God's tenth, drawn into His kingdom when the Sun of righteousness arises to accomplish this miraculous rebirth. This "substance" is there, its breaking forth is sure. It is also helpful to us that the word substance is sometimes used as pillar. It makes us think of Jesus' promise to the faithful in Philadelphia:

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of
my God..."
Revelation 3:12.

Everyone in that living temple of the Almighty, having overcome

through the blood of the Lamb, will be as a pillar in that house, the substance, the tenth, the holy seed which, having been resurrected and judged worthy of eternal life, can now unite in the words of the seraphims:

“...Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Isaiah 6:3.

J. A. DeF.



FELLOWSHIP AND THE DOWIEITE CONTROVERSY

(From “The Ambassador” 1867)

The Editor’s refusal to break bread with the Aberdeen brethren on account of their connection with the Dowieites, was the subject of warm debate at two meetings. He was closely taken to task for his conduct, which he defended on principles familiar to all who are alive to the bearing of the truth. His first answer was that the Dowieites were unfaithful to the Truth. This was met by a declaration that we ought not to judge each other. Now let us look at this for a moment, and we shall find that it is a fallacy of the most pernicious kind. That we are not to judge is true in the sense intended by Christ when he said “Judge not.” We are not to decide who of those, believing the Truth, are worthy or unworthy of eternal life; nor to carry out our conviction on such a point by repudiating those whom we may regard unfavourably, except when an open violation of the commandments of Christ takes place. It is Christ’s especial function to do this, and to separate the chaff from among the wheat, but it is not true that we are to shut our eyes to delinquency, and extend our fellowship without discrimination. In this we are to judge, in the sense of determining our duty toward those to whom we may stand related. We are to decide where fellowship should be given and where it ought to be withheld. If this is not a true principle, when arises the distinction between the ecclesia and the world? We come out of the world; we separate from the apostacy; we withdraw from the fellowship of both, and would, one and all, refuse to resume that fellowship by admitting parties belonging to either class into the ecclesia, and we would even,

without dispute, refuse to countenance a disobedient brother. Paul says to the Corinthians (1st Epistle 5:11), "I have written unto you NOT TO KEEP COMPANY if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

Again, to the Thessalonians, he says (2nd Epistle 3:14) "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Again, verse 6, same chapter, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which he received of us." Again (1 Tim. 6:3) "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, --- from such withdraw thyself." Now here are plain apostolic injunctions which cannot be carried out without forming a judgment on the matters involved. For how shall we know when to withdraw from another, unless we conclude that a state of things justifying it, exists? And how can we come to this conclusion without observing and considering the matters leading to it? This mental act is the very basis of the withdrawal enjoined. How then can it be condemned? When Christ said "Judge not," he did not forbid what his apostles afterwards enjoined. Is Christ against Paul? Those who deprecate a compliance with Paul's rules for determining questions of fellowship virtually teach that he is. To such we must not listen. If any man contends for a course of action opposed to what Paul commands in his epistles, he puts himself into a position in which, by Paul's command, we are to have no company with him. The Aberdeen answer to "judge not" is no reply to the allegation that the Dowieites are unfaithful to the truth. This fact continues to be a reason for avoiding their fellowship.

But it may be said that Paul's directions on the subject of withdrawal, apply only to matters of conduct, and not to matters of doctrine. To this we would reply, that if it does not apply to matters of doctrine, the Aberdeen brethren themselves have committed the very crime of which they accuse the Christadelphians; they are guilty of schism. Why have they left the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Morisonians, and the others?

Are not all these respectable, well-behaved people? plentiful, many of them, in gracious looks, kindly words, and good deeds? On what principle can they defend separation from them? Do not the orthodox communities believe the Bible, and profess the name

of Christ? Why have they come away from them? Are they not guilty of having "judged" these "sincere" professors of religion? Yes, in a sense, they are; and they have done quite right, for they are commanded to judge of themselves what is right, and act accordingly. The attitude enjoined in reference to sinful deportment, is also incumbent toward doctrinal defection. It is true the passages quoted above refer mainly to behaviour; but the same duty is elsewhere inculcated in reference to those who obstruct or oppose, or deny the truth in any of its doctrinal elements. 2 John 9-10 is a forcible illustration of this: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, (that is, the truth concerning Christ's manifestation in the flesh) receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Paul indicated the same duty in several places. Speaking to the Galatians of certain "false brethren unawares brought in," he says, "to whom we gave place by subjection—no, not for an hour." This was in reference to the Judaistical believers of Paul's time, who taught the necessity for being circumcised and observing the law. He says of them "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. --- I would they were even cut off which trouble you." (Gal. 6:9-12) He says something to the same effect to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. --- Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. 5:6,7,11) There is nothing more conspicuous in Paul's letters to Timothy, than his jealousy of those in the ecclesia whose influence was detrimental to the truth. He says, "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus ---. The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also ---. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom are Hymenaeus and Pliletus --- having a form of godliness but denying the power; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambre withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth ---. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived

but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned - - -. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2, 15-17; 3:5-8, 13-14; 4:2-4).

The same anxiety about preserving the truth in its purity from the corrupting influence of its loose professors, is manifest in his letter to Titus. Defining the qualifications of an elder, he says he must be a man "holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped - - -. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." (Titus 1:9-11, 3:10).

To the same purpose are the words of Jude. "It was needful for me to write to you that ye should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints; for there are certain men crept in unawares, etc." (verses 3-4). The Aberdeen brethren and the Dowieites themselves have shown their apprehension of these apostolic precepts by separating from the sects and denominations of the orthodox world. Upon what principle then can they object to the attitude of Christadelphians towards the Dowieites, on the supposition that the latter corrupt the truth? It is entirely beside the mark to raise the cry of schism; this is a false issue. It is not a question between schism and unity among those holding the truth; it is a question of truth versus error among those professing the former. The Dowieites are consistent in the position they maintain, supposing that their doctrines are the truth: but the Aberdeen brethren have not even that feeble plea. They believe the Dowieites to be wrong in many of their doctrines, and yet they advocate connection with them, although justifying separation from the sects. They do so on the ground that the Dowieites have a great part of the truth: but this is not a principle that can be scripturally defended. There is no authority for making one part of the truth less important than another. A reception of the truth on one point will not condone its rejection on another. Can we suppose that the Judaizers had no part of the truth? Did the Gnostics who denied that Christ had come in the flesh, reject the kingdom of God? Did not the unbelieving Jew hold the truth in great part? Yet Paul counselled withdrawal from them all.

(to be continued).

"OBEY THEM THAT HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU..."

Hebrews 13:17

Paul in his letter to the Hebrew brethren reminds them to consider their place in the household of God, particularly giving heed to the instruction of the Spirit, that they stay within the care of the Almighty. One facet of this advice is seen in verse 7 of chapter 13 in regard to elders where he exhorts:

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

The end of this conversation, speaking of the gospel, is of course the promise of a place in the Kingdom of God. Any deemed worthy of holding the office of an elder, one who spreads that word, would strive to be a shepherd, setting a good example in his living that others might follow. Likewise, those walking in the responsibility as elders gain respect for their care and labor in God's house as this work is carried out to honor the Almighty in love for their brethren and sisters. I Timothy 3:1-6 defines the office of a bishop or elder as follows:

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;
One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;
(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)
Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Verse 17 of Hebrews 13 under consideration then adds to this thought:

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for this is unprofitable for you."

To “rule over” means “to lead” and ties in with the thought of verse 7, “whose faith follow”. The thought of being “over” is not in a sense of overbearing or with Nicolaitanism (as lords over God’s heritage) but as the Lord Jesus is over the house of God, a bishop is a shepherd over his sheep who must exercise care for their well-being.

The word obey is used here as to agree, to yield to be convinced, giving a feeling of unity and trust to be built up between those who love one another. James 3:3 perhaps shows this application of the word “obey”:

“Behold we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.”

A horse will obey as a man guides and leads with the reins and it is in the same vein of thought that we read of the house of God respecting and following faithful elders who have the responsibility to guide them.

The scriptures speak of Ezekiel sent by God as a watchman to the house of Israel, and held accountable for their instruction. Yet in the household of God we are in essence all watchmen as we help one another along that straight and narrow way, for we are our brother’s keeper.

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”
Ezekiel 3:17-19

The same relationship is seen in the house of God as mentioned in I Thessalonians 5:11-13:

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish

you;

And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."

Elders being human can fail; we think of David and Peter as examples of two who did. God realized this would happen and made provision for this occurrence as recorded in I Timothy 5:1:

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father: and the younger men as brethren."

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."
I Timothy 5:17

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."
I Timothy 5:19

An elder can fail if he leads according to his own purposes instead of in God's way. However, because of the respect his work should receive, an elder when he fails, should be entreated with love.

Only one has never failed and how fitting that He is called the Good Shepherd. Peter exhorts as an elder, giving clear guidelines of how the flock of God should be led with responsibility and love.

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
I Peter 5:1-4

This spirit of obedience to those that have the rule is seen perfectly applied in the example of the Lord Jesus, who gave all of His obedience unto His Father. In that same spirit all of God's children are to regard their position within the house of God. As this message is valued and practiced, the true essence of fellowship can be experienced in being guided unto eternal life in God's kingdom, where those judged worthy will rule with Christ as elders, kings and priests over God's heritage.

M. C. S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever."

(Obadiah verse 10)

After years of hostility against Israel, during which time the Arabs hoped to crush the new Jewish state, a new tactic has now emerged. The chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation has been declared President of the independent state of Palestine (in embryo) at a special meeting of prominent Palestinians in Tunis. They declared support for Israel to exist as a state alongside a Palestinian Arab state, the two states to be set up in the territories now administered by Israel.

The United States which has given steady support to Israel, has been galvanised by what it thinks is a possibility of political solution as a result of changed Arab attitudes.

At the time of writing the President of Egypt has been visiting Washington to discuss Middle East difficulties. Followed by the Israeli Prime Minister as the next guest of the American President. Later the king of Jordan is also planning a visit to the U.S.A.

Israel of course, has a considerable problem with the uprisings of the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The new President of the United States therefore thinks this may be the time to work out a solution to the Middle East turmoil over Israel.

Israel being in difficulty with Arabs in its borders and Palestinian leaders adopting a new outlook does seem to be an opportune time for America to initiate a political break through of what has seemed an intractable problem.

All this diplomatic effort however overlooks the witness of the ancient prophesy. The solution of the age old enmity between Arab and Jew is of the Lord. The scripture clearly shows the outcome:-

"And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (the Arab peoples); and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

(Obadiah verse 21)

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. & Pleasant Ave.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.
Sunday School 1.45 p.m.
Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Hamburg
Alternate Week: Revelation Study

Deep gratitude is felt for the sustaining and healing of those in illness. The supplications of all are for their continued improvement.

Keen interest and enjoyment was shown by our scholars in the recent Sunday School quarterly address; the subject being, "The House of the Righteous Shall Stand" Proverb 12:7. A realistic demonstration along with the talk made the lesson one which will be clearly remembered by all.

J. A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.
Thursday: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

We have been blessed by the return to the work of those who have been absent through sickness. A cause for profound rejoicing.