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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 BE WITH THEE"**

For the past several days we have been with our brethren in Israel as they reached the end of their forty years' wandering. They were about to enter the promised land under the divinely appointed leadership of Joshua following the death of Moses. Joshua could well have felt overwhelmed by the responsibility of this work. How greatly, in that mind, he must have rejoiced at God's welcome words of assurance:

"... as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them." Joshua 1:5-6.

Here was God's unshakeable promise, and He continued to encourage our brother:

"... be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Joshua 1:9.

What thankfulness would fill his heart, and through him Israel's as well. Indeed He was their God, and it has been clearly shown in recent readings how His presence was with them—leading, defending, encouraging and chastening. True, it was a formidable task that Joshua faced: occupy the land, conquer seven nations "greater and mightier" than they. Yet the Almighty had given assurance that they would indeed be cast out (Deuteronomy 7:1). God did go with Joshua and his people, not just in promise; His presence enveloped them through the ark which went whithersoever they went. That presence, seen in the pillars of cloud and fire, had been very evident as they left Egypt and through their wilderness wandering. We are not told whether this continued when they came to the land and made preparation to enter. It is known that the manna ceased after they had crossed the Jordan and had been circumcised as God commanded at Gilgal, following which they kept the passover. On the day after, the manna ceased (Joshua 5:11-

12). The need for it was gone as they were blessed with the stored up "old corn" of the land. It is possible the pillars of cloud and fire ceased also as Israel no longer journeyed. However, God's promised presence never left them as they set out to overcome those nations.

Help to better understand may be found as we go back to God's given plan for the ark (Exodus 25:10). It was the first of the instructions given to Moses regarding the building and the furnishing of the tabernacle. This reveals to us its significance in God's purpose. The ark was the center of all His plan, the heart of His dwelling place where He spoke to Moses from between the cherubim:

"... there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony. . . ."

Exodus 25:22.

The ark was not large being about four feet in length and a bit over two in width and height. Called the "ark of the testimony" it held within the two tables of testimony given to Moses—the law "written with the finger of God". It was known also as the "ark of the covenant" to which they had joined themselves:

"...if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. . .ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . . ."

Exodus 19:5-6.

The ark, made as Israel sojourned at Sinai and heard the voice of God, continued with His people almost constantly for some nine hundred years until the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, after which it disappeared.

Our readings for the last two days have shown us the power surrounding that ark of testimony and covenant. As Israel prepared to enter the land, there before them was the Jordan which flowed from Adam to the Dead Sea. This great river daily poured millions of tons of water into the Dead Sea, almost thirteen hundred feet below sea level, and as a consequence it had many rapids as it descended. At the time Israel came to the river it was overflowing

its banks (Joshua 3:15), and so was especially deep and more rapidly flowing than normal—a substantial and fearful obstacle before God’s children. They halted and remained there for three days (Joshua 3:1-2) no doubt seeking God’s help and guidance. This was given, for as those days passed the command went forth among those assembled:

“...When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.” Joshua 3:3.

The instruction continued telling them that there should be kept a space of two thousand cubits between the ark and the people. Israel was to:

“...come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.” Joshua 3:4.

Here was a sign to the Almighty’s children and for us also. The ark, Christ, at the appointed future time was to come, a Savior. His life and obedient death was to occur some two thousand years before the rest of His people would be delivered from the river of death which flows so relentlessly to the grave. This deliverance would be possible only by following Him, who now has gone ahead, that His brethren might know the way, through which they have not yet passed. Jesus confirms this wonderful figure given to Israel here at the Jordan:

“... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6.

We are told further wonders of that time and occasion; as the Levites bearing the ark entered the violently rushing river:

“...the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap . . . and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.” Joshua 3:16.

What an awesome sight, countless tons of water held back by that power involving the ark, itself so small in appearance but so great a representation of God's might, of His testimony, and of His covenant! Through the ark the flood waters of death were halted, and out of them was taken a memorial: twelve stones were removed from the river of death, speaking of God's spiritual Israel whose rescue from the grave is made possible by the Almighty's power and that of His Ark. As a reminder to all Israel and to us, God further commanded Joshua, and he:

"... set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day."

Joshua 4:9.

Death still claims all men; there is no escape except through the "ark of God's covenant". These twelve symbolic stones, still in the river, speak of death's everlasting hold on every mortal except and until Christ, the Ark, returns and redeems from death those who, after the symbolism of Israel at Jordan, faithfully follow that ark. What a wonderful token of God's mercy toward His children we have been allowed to take hold of. Let us not forget the promise and hope which was there given to His faithful children through this foretaste of God's grace. As this important passage of Jordan was finishing, Joshua commanded the priests, "come up out of Jordan". They did, and:

"... the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before."

Joshua 4:18.

Seemingly the river was unchanged, but millions of people had safely passed over and now had the memorial out of the waters: twelve stones to remind them of their miraculous deliverance. This was so:

"That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever."

Joshua 4:24.

There on the west bank as Joshua and Israel looked back at that river rushing to the Dead Sea, would they not be awe-struck at the vast strength of His hands and rejoice in His working for them, fearing lest they fail and that Power turn away?

As Israel moved toward the city of Jericho, the Gentile stronghold which barred their way into the land, they were instructed by God in a simple and clear manner. He told them to compass the city six days, bearing the ark, blowing trumpets, proclaiming the presence of Israel and their God. The Almighty commanded through Joshua:

“Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice . . . until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.”

Joshua 6:10.

Can we picture the circumstances? Six days the ark, carried and accompanied by the priests blowing trumpets, and the company of Israel over six hundred thousand strong, marched around the city, once each of six days. Those in Jericho could see them, but no sound of battle or threat was heard, only the trumpets. A foolish way to conquer a city, the defenders of Jericho might reason as each day passed without event. Their fear might have diminished as humans tend to grow complacent when the threat of danger appears to subside. But wait! On the seventh day the ark encircled the city seven times, and when the priests blew the trumpets, at Joshua’s command all shouted, and:

“ . . . the wall fell down flat . . . and they took the city.”

Joshua 6:20.

So few words, but what an awesome occasion, revealing the Almighty’s power displayed through the ark, which brought destruction to that Gentile city. Doubters have and will attempt to explain this away, but we can receive it with trust and assurance. His wonderful works at Jordan and Jericho were real and our brethren in Israel knew its wondrous reality.

Today we believe that the presence of God leads the way and His Ark, the Messiah, mediates for His people. We perceive this not

tangibly as in Israel's time, but nevertheless surely. Jesus has fulfilled the promise in that ark of testimony. He is the unfailing witness to God's word promised from the beginning. He, the Ark, fulfills also the aspect of "covenant", having perfectly kept his vow, thereby becoming the first of God's chosen to do so without failure. It is touching to consider what great things He has done for His people and to honor His Father.

There is a day coming, soon it is believed, when the reality of these portentous events will be manifest as the Kingdom of God is established on earth in the name of Jesus Christ. Let us, Brethren and Sisters, look to that Ark now in gratitude and reverent obedience, considering how greatly we are blessed and privileged, and how indeed unworthy we really are. Shall we not strengthen our efforts as these thoughts are weighed over, and take courage and hope for what will become a reality? And, if we are worthy of His mercy, we shall be among those with the Apostle John, who saw in vision:

"... the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament. . . ."

Revelation 11:19.

J.A. DeF



THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS WILL PERFORM THIS

In Isaiah we read of the perilous circumstances surrounding Hezekiah king of Judah. The king of Assyria had sent his messenger Rabshakeh to Jerusalem with a great army. Assyria had already captured Samaria and taken the children of Israel captive and was now come to conquer Jerusalem and her people. Standing outside the walls with an uncountable array of soldiers he challenged:

"... Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you.

Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the land of the king of Assyria?"

Isaiah 36:13,14,18.

He purposely did not speak in his own Syrian tongue but in the language of the Jewish people so that all the inhabitants of the city would hear his message and fear.

What did Hezekiah and the people respond in answer to these taunts?:

"But they held their peace, and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not."
Isaiah 36:21.

Hezekiah's trust was in God, and this alone caused him to command silence in the face of the enemy, for it was said of him:

"... he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses."
II Kings 18.6.

Assyria was a thorn to Hezekiah and his people. Their enemies blasphemed the God of Israel, defying His power and denying His ability to help them. When the men of Jerusalem brought this message to the king:

"... he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD."
Isaiah 37:1.

These actions expressed his humility and grief as he went before God seeking help in prayer. While so doing, he sent the elders, clothed in sackcloth to Isaiah the prophet beseeching his help as well:

"It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left."
Isaiah 37:4.

They did not rush to take up arms or gather the people against the Assyrians, but instead in humility and subjection debased themselves with sackcloth, entreating Isaiah to pray for them asking for God's deliverance.

Because of their trust and faith in Him, an answer to prayers came swiftly through His prophet:

"By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

Isaiah 37:34-36.

Think of an hundred and eighty-five thousand men dead overnight—no battle, no noise and confusion, no weapons, simply found as dead corpses in the morning! What a miraculous display of God's might and power on behalf of His people. Had not Hezekiah trusted and prayed in humility, the outcome might have been very different. But because of his yielding spirit, he and the people were spared the agony of battle and the Lord became their sword and shield, fighting for those who feared and obeyed Him:

"For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this."

Isaiah 37:32.

Though His people be weak and seemingly defenceless, He has promised His care and comfort to those who turn to Him for help. This was Hezekiah's hope that if he submitted in trust, and turned to God with fear and trembling, the Almighty would likewise turn to him with power and might to deliver—"the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this".

God delivered Jerusalem because of His promise to David and because of Hezekiah's submission and faithfulness, for during his reign he endeavored to walk in His ways and to turn the people to righteousness:

“And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.”

II Kings 18:3-5.

Before Hezekiah’s time the people had fallen into idolatry, adopting the pagan practices of the nations around them. Yet the King moving in fear, removed the groves and high places, cleansed the temple and ordered the holy services done by the priests and Levites to begin again. He brought the elders and the people to sacrifice burnt offerings and wrote letters to all Israel and Judah encouraging the celebration of the passover at Jerusalem. Through these actions of faith and obedience he endeavoured to reflect during his reign a measure of the holiness that had been promised at the end of God’s purpose. Isaiah speaks of this righteous government and its ruler:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

Isaiah 9:6-7.

Again, “the zeal of the LORD of hosts”—the only power able to establish that perfect kingdom to be ruled over with judgment and justice, without the thinking of the flesh entering in. A great hope and one which Hezekiah tried in measure to emulate while king of Judah.

How much this speaks of what our zeal should be as we are reminded of the mighty acts done for those like Hezekiah and of

what awaits in His Kingdom of peace for those who fervently hear and do His word today. As we consider Hezekiah's circumstances and what a great test he faced, our own difficulties pale in comparison. Yet the reward held out is the same.

Rabshakeh mocked the God of Hezekiah but was destroyed by the zeal of the Almighty. How much we can be helped as we call to mind these events and the example of Hezekiah's trust. That same deliverance is awaiting those who look to Him for help, trusting in the zeal of the Lord of hosts which can and will perform all things.

M.C.S.



PARTIAL INSPIRATION—THE TROUBLE OF 1885
(continued)

Letter to R. Roberts from B. C.

"I take this opportunity of expressing my earnest sympathy with you and sister Roberts in your defence of the truth, and I pray God to continue to give you strength and wisdom to do battle with all adversaries, under whatsoever guise they may be. I thank our Father in heaven for the knowledge I have of the truth, but I am obliged to subscribe myself as one not decently educated, but like our Master's eleven associates—an unlearned and ignorant man.—P.S.—since writing the above, I have heard "Father Ignatius". His doctrine is evidently Anglicised Romanism, with a strong dash of Revivalism. all his exhortation to us was to 'get Jesus, and let him save our undying souls.' Oh, dear, dear, dear! If people would only 'get Jesus, in his own appointed way', and recognize what they are, and what the Scripture tells them they are. Father Ignatius is only another decently-educated know nothing."

Letter to R. Roberts from J. L. of Kelso

"Before receiving the 'Light-stand', with your letter, I had read the Exegetist which was sent to me last week, but with what a different effect from 'the Christadelphian' and 'Bible Light-stand'. I attributed it to the learning, which is its characteristic feature, and I was in doubt whether to take it or not, for my desire

is to help in the maintenance of any brother such as he who is, in a manner, unfitted for many ways of making a living; but now that I have seen brother Shuttleworth's and your voice on the matter, and the way in which he speaks of you and Dr. Thomas, I cannot help him. Dear brother, you have my warmest sympathy in your present unenviable position. If there was nothing but this present life, you would break down, but the reward set before you will keep you faithful through all the hard and cruel sayings, of both friends and foes. It was for Christ's sake you did what you did in helping both those learned men, brothers Chamberlin and Ashcroft, and now that you are standing up in defence of the simplicity of the truth, they will say you are jealous. It is hard, but cheer up! There are those who can see through it all and who can appreciate your value as a defender of the truth."

Letter to R. Roberts from Bre. A. & B. of Heckmondwike

"The unanimous ecclesia here desire to express our earnest sympathy with you in the fresh crisis which has arisen in your contention for the truth in its purity, and we wish to assure you that we are with you entirely, as we believe all will be who desire the sincere milk of the Word rather than the wisdom of the world. We also wish to say that, while being anxious to support brother Ashcroft all we could, yet we had already decided that we could not subscribe to the 'Exegetist' before we knew that any correspondence had passed between you and him. We had, at a Bible meeting, specially discussed its contents pro and con, and were satisfied that we should not be justified in so doing.

We have no desire to remark upon brother Ashcroft's printed letter, except to say that he will have to manifest a wider and more accurate knowledge of the truth before we can accept his 'entire apparatus' in preference to the doctor's 'exploits', and we are amazed that a man who can give currency to the idea, in exposition of Jude 6, that the angels of God who, neither marry nor are given in marriage, fell from their high estate through falling in love with the daughters of men (!) should so deprecate the Doctor whose wondrous expositions of the Word are the theme of our continual thanks to God."

(to be continued)

A BIBLE CLASS

“The LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.”

Hosea 4:16

Hosea’s prophecy, while mainly against Israel (the ten tribes) also included Judah as chapter 1 verse 1 reveals:

“The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.”

Some background of this time may be helpful. During the time of the second king Jeroboam, Israel, the ten tribes, had turned away from God to serve idols. The kings after him continued in the same idolatry until approximately 721 when because of their backsliding their captivity came about through the king of Assyria. Judah was in much the same state, forgetting the law and practising idolatry similar to the surrounding nations until the reign of Hezekiah, who destroyed the groves and idols, cleansed the temple and turned the people back to God and His law.

The Lord sent the prophets Hosea and Amos to turn them from their evil, as well as giving warning of the judgments to come if they persisted. Both Israel and Judah before Hezekiah’s reform were in a deplorable state; they had turned their backs on the Almighty, indulged in every deviation of the flesh and so God’s pronouncement of their evil was given by Hosea:

“. . . the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.”
Hosea 4:1-2.

The priests as well as the common people had left His holy precepts and instead of leading and encouraging by example had abused their privileged position. Because of this shame, God’s judgment was directed at them as well:

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that

thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou has forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings."

Hosea 4:6,7,9.

Our particular verse under consideration continues with this condemnation:

"For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place."

Hosea 4:16.

If Israel was described as backsliding, why would God feed her "as a lamb in a large place?" Help to answer this question may be found as we look more closely at the meaning of the word "feed" used here. This word frequently means to feed or sustain with nourishment, but as used here means to waste, break or devour with evil intent. This same word is used by the prophet Isaiah foretelling of Judah's destruction:

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Isaiah 1:19-20.

Because there was a failure to submit and glorify God a devouring punishment was to come, but only if the faithful work of His prophet Hosea failed to touch their hard hearts. Understanding the meaning of this word "feed" as devour, our verse could be read as:

"For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will devour them as a lamb in a large place."

Hosea 4:16.

A single lamb alone in a large place can easily be seen and taken without the natural protection of the flock. Here is a severe warning to Israel and Judah that no matter how strong they felt,

God would destroy those who had turned from Him. Had they allowed themselves to be protected and hedged about by His law, they would know His blessing and care, but instead they sought out the broad or large way reminding us of the words of the Lord Jesus:

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Matthew 7:13-14.

They were headed for destruction because of their own actions, yet Hosea’s message was one of hope that some might hear and repent and turn from their wickedness:

“O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou has fallen by thine iniquity.

Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.”

Hosea 14:1-2.

If they would only hear Hosea’s message and renew a right spirit within themselves, God would deal kindly and mercifully and so instructed the prophet to extend this hope:

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.”

Hosea 14:4,9.

In His longsuffering, God provided the prophets with words of warning and rebuke when first Israel and then Judah strayed from His ways, extending in love the hope of forgiveness if they would repent and turn back to Him. Yet for all His care, the imagination of their heart remained evil, showing the strength and will that the flesh can exert. Both Israel and Judah in time were taken captive and scattered because of their defiance to God’s warning that He would “feed them as a lamb in a large place.”

M.C.S

The Comfort of the Truth on a Sad Day

In the beginning God declared in His righteousness: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:19) Through the Apostle Paul it is declared:- "The wages of sin is death- - -." (Romans 6:23) Again:- "ALL HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Nevertheless God did not create this wonderful earth for all to die. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave I will be thy destruction." (Joel 13:14) But there is a qualification—"Man that - - - understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." (Psalm 49:20)

Understanding is essential to salvation. "We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple - - -. for this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." (Psalm 48:9 & 14)

Those whom God will guide He will ransom. "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for He shall receive me." But—"Be not afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased. For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: His glory shall not descend after him - - -. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light." (Psalm 49:16-17 & 19)

So as we stand at this grave today we can but marvel at the light which God in His infinite mercy has given.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God - - -. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:1 & 4-5)

"But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13)

Death, then is not the end for those who see the light. Through Christ, the Son of God, is the ransom from this grave and from death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith - - -. He

that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2:10-11)

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life---. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." (Daniel 12:2-3)

"And I beheld ---. And they sung a new song --- saying, Thou --- hast redeemed us to God by thy blood ---. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth ---. worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing." (Rev. 5:6-12)

This was the sure hope of the one who we see consigned to the ground at this time. It is not the end—the resurrection WILL come, for Jesus has declared with words of hope,—“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore - - - and have THE KEYS OF THE GRAVE AND OF DEATH.” (Rev. 1:18)

Baptism and Baptisers. Dr. Thomas 1835

“- - Difficulties have arisen in the minds of some, as to the administrator. They misunderstand me as contending for a re-immersion, where the administrator turns out to be a deceiver, false brother, or otherwise. Now my position concerning this, is as follows; namely, that no administrator of a Christian institute can be acceptable to God, which is enacted by a clergyman or lay person of any other congregation than that in which is to be found the Christian Ordinance of Purification for Sin; that is, the Jews might just as lawfully have appointed a Moabitish Priest of Moloch, to administer the Great Annual Sacrifice of the Atonement as the Christians recognise the immersion of a Sectarist, by a clergyman or lay person of the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Romanist, or any of the “names and denominations” of the Anti-Christian world. The sanctifying effect of baptism does not flow from the administrator, but from the blood of Jesus Christ, to which the subject has access by faith and immersion in water, which together constitute baptism. But on the other hand, where a denomination once Christian has abandoned practically the testimony of the apostles and prophets; and has substituted the text weavings of a clerical head loom; the remission of sins by a voice, feeling, or sight; the harum-scarum

madness of the camp, the bench, or the altar; and is ruled by clerical or denominational, instead of apostolic constitutions—there, that is, wherever such practices prevail, there is credulity, their institutions and abomination, and their administrators, as Paul calls them, the “accursed” preachers of “another”, and therefore, diabolical “gospel”. Immersion by such administrators, and in such a church, I contend is as invalid as the Jewish sacrifices after the propitiation of Messiah.

Again, there are those who (in effect) say that immersion in water, abstractly considered is baptism, and that as there is but one baptism, and not two, immersion ought not, therefore, to be repeated. Now, these persons profess to believe in baptism, with them immersion, for the remission of sins; hence, they must suppose that water washes away sins; which is of all absurdities the most absurd! “The garment spotted by the flesh” is purified or washed white in the blood of the Lamb; not in the water abstractly regarded. Such objectors need to be taught the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, for assuredly, they who plead thus against re-immersion, never knew the truth. Immersion is not baptism, neither is re-immersion, re-baptism, if they can possibly understand the difference, which one would suppose self evident to the merest tyro. It is the candidate’s firm assurance, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and that he rose again from the dead, that makes his immersion in water, baptism: if he does not believe this, and he can only believe it on Divine testimony contained in the scriptures, he is doubtless immersed, for that is a matter of fact; but he is not baptized, for that is a matter of faith. Do not let me be misunderstood here; no one can be baptized, if he have all the faith in the universe, unless he is immersed in water; and one may be immersed, and re-immersed fifty times, but if he be destitute of faith, as the thousands of the immersed fanatics of the Baptist denomination are, he is uncleansed, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, unsaved, and because he is unbaptized. Re-immersion therefore, ought to be repeated, in the case of such, provided always, that they have that assurance, of which they were destitute at their first immersion; a re-immersion upon said assurance is baptism to them only for the first time, and not a re-baptism as some erroneously imagine.”

Signs of the Times and of the End of the World

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”
(2 Timothy 3:1)

The world is rejoicing over the passing of the “cold war”. There seems to be hope in recent agreements reducing the manufacture of nuclear weapons, and in the scrapping of atomic devices that have been stockpiled. But one has only to look at the internal situation of each nation to see a dreadful deterioration of behaviour, which threatens the well being of the peoples and deprives them of real peace.

The prophetic record tells us that such dire things are inevitable, for:-

“---men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous---”
(2 Timothy 3:2).

So in many walks of life the “rich get richer and the poor get poorer”, for a selfish kind of covetousness prevails, and not only in the ruling hierarchy, for their policies have considerable support from the masses, who are concerned for their own sectional self interest. Nations are therefore divided, and the poor wickedly react in jealousy against what they see as injustice and gross exploitation. In Britain, as a result, there are riots with dangerous and unruly behaviour. Many are found to be:-

“- - - false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good - - -.”
(2 Timothy 3:3).

It is the time which the ancient Old Testament writing so graphically describes:-

“- - - the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people - - -.”
(Isaiah 60:2).

A British government spokesman recently said:-

“- - - the basic cohesiveness of the family unit breaks down, crime, degeneracy, violence, and horror break to the surface of our society. When parents give up caring, children, sometimes literally, run riot. Too many young people drift easily into a life of crime.”

THE REMNANT

From the United States comes the news of increased thefts and burglaries. Violent crime also multiplies, and motor vehicle theft is an increasing problem. A policeman speaking about one of the better areas has said, "People here own a lot of items that people from the city are interested in stealing to finance their drug habits."

It is a terrible situation, for such behaviour is getting worse. But it is what the scripture has foretold:-

"For men shall be--boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." (2 Timothy 3:2)

"- - -evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:13)

This is a condition that is overtaking the earth, and obviously man has not the answer how to eradicate such evil, as the crime statistics show. It is a sure sign of the approach of the end of the age, when:-

"- - - a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment- - -
And a man shall be as - - - a great rock in a weary land
Isaiah 32:1-2.

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

The death of our Sister Mary Slaney brings sorrow at the loss of her presence but gladness that she rests in the hope of eternal life when Jesus Christ returns to resurrect and judge those that are His. Thoughts are with those in Manchester who have so faithfully visited and cared for her. Each of us can testify that she has been a faithful friend and sister over many years.

Important and continuing work within the body is remembered in prayer and fellowship in spirit, trusting in our God for its outworking.

J.A.DeF

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sunday: 11 a.m. Breaking of Bread
Thursday: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

The death of Sister Mary Slaney on the 26th September brought to an end a sojourning in the Truth of nearly 50 years. Sister Slaney was buried at Dukinfield on 2nd October. She is missed, but the comfort is "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life - - -"