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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"PARTIAL INSPIRATION—THE TROUBLE OF 1885
(continued)"

"PURPOSED IN HEART"

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"A BIBLE CLASS"

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WORLD"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

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**"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"
"WE KNOW WHAT WE WORSHIP"**

This morning we have heard Jesus' words as He spoke to a Samaritan woman on His way from Judea to Galilee. His words are a help today as we are trying to be like Him, hoping for eternal life with Him when He returns. As this Samaritan heard His words, she realized that Jesus was no ordinary man, remarking: "I perceive that thou art a prophet" (John 4:19). Being of Samaria she had a smattering of knowledge concerning God's truth and so stated:

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; . . ."

John 4:20.

This mountain is disclosed as being near:

" . . . a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there. . . ."

John 4:5-6.

Further, we find a marginal reference which reveals that:

" . . . Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem (Sychar)

And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." Genesis 12:6-7.

This woman, to whom Jesus spoke, claiming Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as fathers of the Samaritans, continued:

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

John 4:20.

She obviously believed that the Samaritans, offcasts of the Jewish nation, also worshipped the God of Israel, and she doubted that it was necessary to do this at the temple in Jerusalem. This clearly was untrue and the Lord Jesus answered:

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22.

Knowing something is to perceive or understand it. The Samaritan woman did not perceive that she worshipped false gods, idols, while the faithful Jew knew he worshipped the only true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of David, and the Yahweh of Israel. This Lord God had made a covenant with Israel, had made His promises to Abraham and to David, all of which revealed His purpose and His Truth. He promised a land, a kingdom and a throne, a Son who would be a Savior and King, and

a great and numerous seed to people this kingdom and land. Truly it was as Jesus spoke: "Salvation is of the Jews." The hope of Israel is the means of salvation for all who embrace and live by it in accordance with His word. Today salvation is still of the Jews, not of natural Israel, but of Israel which is spiritual, those who rejoice in the promises to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ through whom Gentiles have been brought into Israel's hope. There are few "Christians" who would accept that "salvation is of the Jews". In fact, as we look at the present world, we see a significant increase in anti-Semitism, a polite name for hatred of the Jews. In Europe—chiefly Germany—murders, tortures, riots and mutilations are on the rise, mainly in hatred of the Jews. This, only fifty years since Hitler's evil determination to exterminate them as a race, resulting in over six million destroyed in what is now known as the Holocaust. In Poland, there are at present about five thousand Jews in contrast to the three million four hundred thousand who lived there in 1939. Even in the United States, there is a similar growing movement against Jews. The world finds it difficult to acknowledge that these people have a right to consideration, much less to believe that, in truth, salvation is of the Jews! Yet this will come to pass as God's purpose in His Son is revealed and fulfilled when He returns to establish His kingdom; all the earth, including the natural Jew, will have opportunity to convert to God's way. The prophecy of Zechariah makes this clear:

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."
 Zechariah 8:20-23.

Brethren and Sisters, we as Gentiles by birth, are particularly blessed in these last days to be permitted to know this hope of salvation that is of the Jews. Since Christ, this hope may be had only by baptism into His death, and rising from the waters a new man with new loyalties and thus becoming "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). Can we understand Jesus' purpose in telling the Samaritan woman, "We know what we worship"? How few there are, and have been through the ages, who

truly worship the God who has made this possible. How few even know God's ordained purpose in Christ, a Jew indeed, of Abraham's seed!

To worship faithfully the God whom we know, we are allowed here this morning. We sing hymns, we listen to His word, we pray for His mercy, we partake of His Son, and we renew our vows before Him. Is our worship acceptable? Is He pleased? Is it a sweet smell unto the Father, a praise, a giving of glory due unto His Name? We need to examine ourselves and our doings carefully. Worship involves the thought of humbly bowing down, doing homage, adoring. Jesus helps us to take hold of this:

“... true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
John 4:23-24.

The word used for spirit is “pneuma” or breath. Breath is essential to life. We know that illnesses such as pneumonia, which cause difficulty in breathing, can result in death. Jesus tells us, “God is a Spirit”—breath. How is this so? His first work with man involved that Spirit, His breath:

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”
Genesis 2:7.

In the recent reading of Ezekiel 37, we have been shown the vision of a valley full of dry bones in which there is clearly no life. In this vision, Ezekiel looked at these bones as God commanded:

“And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the LORD God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”
Ezekiel 37:8-10.

God is a Spirit, that power which gives life and also takes it away, as Solomon wrote:

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (breath) shall return unto God who gave it.”
Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Our life is in God's power. As we recognize this, Brethren and Sisters, let us take that which He has granted and dedicate it unto Him, seeking to lay it at His feet, as did Jesus so perfectly, saying as He suffered and died in obedience:

"... It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the spirit (pneuma)." John 19:30.

His entire life was given in worship to His Father, a bowing down in the spirit of (Abba, Father... not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36).

At the Table this morning, we have remembered His victory over Himself. Having partaken of Him in spirit, have we strengthened ourselves in His mind and determination, to live and to worship the Father in that same fulness of spirit?

Going on, we ask: How can one worship in truth as well as in spirit? The word "truth" combines two thoughts: nothing hidden, and also transparent or clear, free from deception, hypocrisy or guile. This was how the Lord Jesus gave His life to His Father, and commands His brethren and sisters to do likewise. To worship in truth, one must know God, His purpose and His word. It was to this end that Jesus prayed for His brethren:

"... This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." John 17:3,8.

To worship God in truth as well as in spirit involves a receiving of all His word, bringing one's living into conformance with that word, and nothing hidden or held back. The law helps us to perceive how this applies to our every-day lives, a high calling indeed! God commanded Moses:

"Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy." Leviticus 19:2.

God commands His people to be like Him, true and sanctified, without guile. He gave to Israel, and to us also, practical examples which, if done in the right spirit, would help them to grow in holiness and to serve Him as He desired:

"... thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field. . . . And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, (rather, leave the gleanings for the poor, the fatherless and the widow). . . .

Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie. . . .
And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt
thou profane the name of thy God: . . .
Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock
before the blind. . . .
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: **I am Yahweh.**"
Leviticus 19:9-12,14,18.

God desires that His children be like Him, serving in spirit and truth, freely giving their lives to Him, and to His people, and doing "good unto all men". For us this means we strive with great care for His holiness, and we learn to give thoughtful and selfless care to others.

David was human, failed, and often needed mercy. Yet he knew whom he worshipped, striving to do it in spirit and truth. On the occasion of his bringing the ark up to Jerusalem, he exclaimed in a psalm of thanksgiving:

"For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods,
For all the gods of the people are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.
Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.
Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.
Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."
I Chronicles 16:25-29.

How clear was David's perception of Israel's God! He could say, as Jesus said to that Samaritan woman: "We know what we worship." Truly David did worship the Almighty in spirit and truth, thereby helping us to more fully perceive how we can offer our lives before Him, learning to worship in a way which is acceptable and, we hope, pleasing. If we can do so, Brethren and Sisters, we will know and keep the hope of that salvation which is of the Jews. When Jesus returns to judge and gather to Himself all His brethren and sisters, they will rejoice in His presence, being able to worship perfectly in the "beauty of holiness". How great is our privilege and the responsibility it brings, because God has allowed us to join in Jesus' quietly confident words:

"WE KNOW WHAT WE WORSHIP"

J.A.DeF.

Partial Inspiration—the trouble of 1885 (continued)
R. Roberts on “Inspiration of the Old Testament a necessity.”

“ - - It is not supposable that God would superintend His spoken word in the midst of Israel, and leave unsuperintended that which was reduced to writing which was to fulfil a much more extended and lasting purpose than the verbal message delivered in the people’s ears.

That He has done so is manifest from the composition of the books themselves. They are not in the style of human books anywhere, either as to the selection of topics or the manner of their treatment. There is a brevity—a conciseness—a chasteness—a majesty—an unsparing impartiality—a leaving out of matters of mere human interest—a keeping of God forward,—that are to be found in no writings of men in any country or any age, so far as they are known.

That He should have done so is in harmony with the whole situation of which the Bible is a part. The history of Israel is a history of the work of God in the earth—a work, overt, direct and visible, with collateral operations of providence branching out from His visible work on all hands. He called Abraham from Chaldea, He delivered Israel from Egypt; He gave them His law by open voice and shewing, on Sinai; He wrought miracles in their behalf in the wilderness and Canaan: He spoke to them for many generations by the direct word of inspiration in His prophets. The Bible is the literary consolidation and continuation of His work in their midst, and now to all nations; is it reasonable that He should leave this to human hands? --- The written history of God’s work is the principal part of the work of God in a day like ours. It is the principal illustration of His mind and will. In the writing of such a history, man would leave out that which was divinely essential—the record of man’s continual failures and sins—whoever might happen to be affected; and he would insert that which was immaterial—the mere political gossip of the age, tending either to human exaltation or depreciation according to the prejudices of the moment. And in all cases, he would be liable to err in his representations, and therefore could not be trusted to give us a writing on which the children of God could rely. Things might be “infallibly true” in themselves, as it is inaptly phrased: but the record of them for divine purposes is an affair of correct knowledge, divine discrimination as to what is important, and unsparing fidelity in the record of the things selected. All these things required inspiration. The things might be known in the mass without inspiration; but only inspiration could assort and select for divine ends. It is a question of the divine use of human materials, and for this, divine guidance was necessary.”

(to be continued)

PURPOSED IN HEART

In the book of Daniel we read of the circumstances surrounding those in bondage at Babylon, who like Daniel desired to be obedient to their God, and so were greatly blessed as they sojourned among a heathen nation.

What can we learn from their example to help us during our sojourn? Our trials are not of the magnitude of Daniel's but we are given a glimpse of why he was helped:

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

Daniel 1:8.

Daniel as a faithful Israelite observed the law of clean and unclean meats as set forth by the Almighty. The Babylonians did not recognize such restrictions and so among the foods set before Daniel and his three friends would be that which an Israelite would consider unclean. Yet, though a captive, Daniel "purposed in his heart" to serve his God and not defile himself with the king's meat, that he might know the help and presence of God.

Because of his faithful determination, God's hand moved for good toward him:

"Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs."

Daniel 1:9.

God caused Daniel to find favor with his captors because he had purposed in his heart to be obedient. We know of the difficult circumstances Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah faced, yet throughout, God was also strong on their behalf and brought them into favour with the king who was impressed by their forthright faith.

We think also of Noah who witnessed against the wickedness of his generation for one hundred and twenty years and because of his determination and purpose found favor with God:

"...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."

Genesis 6:9.

His walk or way of life was consistent with what God desired, for the Scriptures confirm that:

"...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

Genesis 6:8.

He was helped and delivered from the evil around him because his heart was purposed toward God.

Turning now to Moses whose experiences reveal his concern when God commanded that he lead His people out of Egypt:

“And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou has not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.” Exodus 33:12-13.

Moses was known by the Almighty because of his desire for God’s presence with him; even as Noah had done he sought God’s guidance and direction in all his living. As He was with Daniel, Noah and Moses, so will He surely be with those today whose heart’s commitment is to serve him, no matter what the personal cost. This can be done and we may ask, how were these faithful men able to put down the inclinations of their flesh? Solomon in his wisdom helps:

“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” Proverbs 3:3-4.

If as Solomon’s says, mercy and truth are within the heart, God’s preeminence will be reflected in one’s living and thus give honor and glory to the Father who will in return grant His favor and care.

What a witness these men were, not only to God’s people then and now, but to those observant around them.

Speaking of wisdom Solomon said:

“Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.” Proverbs 8:34.

True wisdom is God’s word put into use by those who strive to serve and please Him, enabling the heart to be fixed in purpose upon righteousness, desiring to move faithfully as did Daniel, Noah and Moses.

We see in the Lord Jesus the ultimate example of purposeful godly living even at the tender age of twelve. He had accompanied His family to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, but instead of returning home with them, stayed behind questioning the learned men at the temple. His parents, naturally worried because of His absence, did not understand that already He had set His heart to do the will of His Father in heaven:

“And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?
And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”
Luke 2:49,52.

Prior to His crucifixion as He and the twelve gathered to eat the passover He spoke:

“... With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”
Luke 22:15-16.

The surrendering of His life as the perfect sacrifice was near at hand, the final requirement of His Father’s will and so in agony praying for help, He concluded, “not my will but thine be done”. No matter what the cost, He purposed in His heart to obey and so “with desire” or purpose. He shared that last feast of love with His disciples, girding Himself for the final trial that lay ahead.

Because Daniel, Noah and Moses were determined in heart they were also separated from the evil in the world around them, hedged about and protected because of their faithfulness. Noah and his household were saved from the flood of destructions sent upon the rest of the world. Moses and the children of Israel were separated and cared for as they travelled through that terrible wilderness to the land of promise. Daniel and his three friends separated themselves, doing God’s will while living as subjects among a heathen nation. Their living glorified God and was evidence to those about them of their determined service to the Almighty.

What help is available in these last days as we in zealous purpose of heart seek to guide our lives according to His wisdom, looking toward the promised hope which has sustained our brethren’s commitment to God through the ages.

M.C.S.

DAWN, DIVORCE AND DIVISION

Recent information reveals considerable turmoil over the question of divorce and remarriage. It seems wise to examine this especially in regard to the question of fellowship.

On the 6th June 1940 the Clapham ecclesia (formerly Berean, now Dawn) laid down their position as follows:-

“An applicant for immersion who is legally married should be accepted (notwithstanding the annulment of any previous marriage), subject to a good confession of the faith and an understanding by the applicant **THENCEFORWARD TO UPHOLD THE LAW OF CHRIST IN THIS** as in all other respects.”

This resolution concerned the upholding of marriage and the rejecting of divorce. The statement went on to say:-

“The South London (Clapham) Ecclesia will not knowingly extend fellowship to any who hold views contrary to the foregoing, or who although themselves not holding contrary views, are prepared to fellowship those who do so.”

The great majority of ecclesias in Britain formerly called Berean upheld the above resolution. But there were very few in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand who were prepared to agree to the stand taken by Clapham, which included a statement that:

“A Brother or Sister of Christ who, being divorced after becoming responsible to the law of Christ, takes another husband or wife during the lifetime of the former partner commits adultery; and in such circumstances no profession of repentance can be recognised whilst the sinful alliance continues.” Also, “suing at law for the enforcement of any right whatsoever, including divorce, is contrary to the teaching of Christ.”

Matters came to this head through a “Sister” in Los Angeles

obtaining a legal divorce from her husband on the grounds of desertion. The ecclesia withdrew fellowship from her for going to law, but soon she brought to the lectures a man whom she had interested in the Truth. Eventually he asked for baptism; when it was pointed out that the Sister had been withdrawn from on the matter of her divorce, and therefore if he married he would be involved in transgression. He said he recognized this and gave assurance on the matter, and so was immersed. Later, however, this couple married and the Los Angeles ecclesia withdrew fellowship. The couple continued to attend meetings (but could of course not take part in Communion). Eventually in September 1938 they made a written application for re-fellowship, and by a majority vote, the Arranging Brethren decided the couple should be received back into fellowship. Within months they were again withdrawn from by majority vote because of considerable opposition from other members who contended that a mere expression of repentance was insufficient, and that so long as they continued to live together fellowship should not be granted, because the "Sister" had been divorced. There was a minority not of this persuasion, these were allowed to remain in fellowship. But this led to prolonged controversy, and eventually the ecclesia in Los Angeles was split into various groups. Clapham in the meantime had become involved. It had been argued that Clapham Presiding Brethren had sympathetically written in 1933 concerning another case (in California) which was similar. The couple therefore should be received back into fellowship though living together; because of the advice given in the previous case. The Clapham Presiding Brethren in 1939 however found they could not uphold this. So came division, the Bereans were split and the Dawn Christadelphians became established as a result.

Since that time divorce, generally, has been made easier amongst the nations because of major changes in legal procedures for obtaining divorce. In 1977 "unreasonable behaviour" by the respondent was a sufficient reason for splitting a marriage. Even two years separation became sufficient for a decree nisi, without the need for an appearance in Court.

It was about this time that "the United Methodist Church" formulated a religious ceremony aimed to "recognise the reality of divorce." The new Methodist ritual said, "Dearly beloved we are gathered here to solemnise the end of one time in your lives (ie. the couple's) and the beginning of another." This was the first

denomination to advocate such a ceremony, purported to be for the "easing of the pain of a marriage break up." (This was reported in the Los Angeles "Times").

There was strong criticism of this failure of the Methodist Church to help their members to apply Bible principles that can keep marriages together. The charge was made against this church that "they openly flout Jesus' command 'What God has yoked together let no man put apart.' (Matt.19:6)."

But now, as the years have passed, laxity over marriage and divorce has generally become even more pronounced. The retrograde effects are seen in the violent and unprincipled behaviour of the young. The instability of family life has had a marked detrimental effect upon the children.

How surprising it is then to find "Dawn" have once again become involved in trouble over a marriage separation issue of a husband and wife in the ecclesia, when it is so evident that there is a very great need for the world to uphold the principle of marriage, now so disastrously neglected.

The focus of the difficulty is conveyed in the following statement:-

"Whilst appreciating that your statement in the January (1992) issue concerning the West Norwood Ecclesia's problem was intended to be impartial, we feel there is an implied criticism of the section of the ecclesia which has sent out the recent communication to Recording Brethren, so an explanation seems to be necessary.

We consider that we were under an obligation to circulate such a communication. The matter which has been troubling the West Norwood Ecclesia obviously involves fellowship. The issue involved whether it was scriptural to fellowship and break bread with a divorced brother AND sister when there was no legal impediment to their remarriage.

As we do not accept the theory of "ecclesial Autonomy" advocated in certain other fellowships, all ecclesias in our fellowship must eventually be involved - - -.

We therefore feel that it is less than just for you to state "one side has chosen to involve the whole Fellowship

in what was the problem of one ecclesia." - - - A referendum was taken upon a statement drawn up by those not in favour of having a divorced couple in fellowship, which revealed that the Ecclesia was fairly evenly divided."

The reaction of the "Dawn" Editorial to this was:-

"Whatever opinions may be held upon the problem that gave rise to this controversy, the fact is that there is at present no case requiring a decision - - -. Withdrawal is not an ultimate sanction to be imposed necessarily, when agreement on a difficult issue proves to be unattainable.

There is an understandable desire on the part of many brethren and sisters to maintain a position of neutrality on the problem - - - each side should respect the views of others - - -. Let us remember that the Scriptures do not speak with approval of "them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned - - -."

So "Dawn" was prepared to leave the matter unsettled, with consequent disunity, and doubtless there are members of Dawn in this state even though others have now decided to withdraw.

The following are examples of action that has been taken:-

"It has been unanimously agreed by the members of the Forest of Dean Ecclesia that we cease to be in fellowship with the Dawn Christadelphians - - -. The sad decision has to be made as we are in total agreement with the statement made by the Norbury Ecclesia as set out in their booklet "What God hath joined together." . . .

"Having carefully read the Norbury Ecclesia's booklet "What God hath joined together" and also all the literature produced by those not agreeing thereto we the undermentioned - - - formerly of Dorchester Ecclesia wish to confirm that we have withdrawn from the Dawn fellowship - - -."

The Remnant's Final Comment

Other ecclesias have also taken similar action, so obviously this has been a very serious matter for "Dawn". But why let matters get into such a state? It ought not to be seen as a difficult issue. How can a husband and wife meet at the Table of the Lord, professing unity, yet be so disunited themselves on a clear principle of Truth " - - - let not the husband put away his wife" (1 Cor.7:11) "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matt.19:6) Even if in a marriage there have been previous differences and hurts, where is the necessary forgiveness and reconciliation in a situation, as stated, of "a divorced brother AND sister when there was no legal impediment to their remarriage"? It is as though the previous marriage commitment, and mutual responsibility to it, has been thrust at one side, and a considerable number of members support this, or if they do not, still fellowship those who do.

Here then is evidence of failure to support the doctrine of fellowship, which concerns loving unity of Brethren and Sisters; an important feature of which is forgiveness and reconciliation. The failure to uphold this has obviously brought disaster to "Dawn".

Our readers are invited to write to us for our free booklet "The Doctrine of Fellowship - what does God require?" and for our article "A Timely Question" (on Divorce).

"A BIBLE CLASS"
"Who Is My Neighbour?"
(Luke 10:29)

We see from the context of this tenth chapter of Luke that a lawyer had posed a question to the Lord Jesus asking, what must be done to inherit eternal life? Jesus in return asked, "what is written in the law?" The man knowing the law answered:

"... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Luke 10:27.

But he then went on to ask, "... who is my neighbour?" To illustrate, Jesus told a parable of a man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, who falling among thieves was beaten, robbed and left for dead. Along the way passed in turn a priest and a Levite, both Hebrews who though teachers of the law, passed by without rendering help. The third to pass was a Samaritan, one normally despised by the Jews, who took compassion upon the man, dressed his wounds and brought him to an inn and paid for his care. Jesus then asked the lawyer:

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." Luke 10:36-37.

His parable taught about the practical application of the spirit of the law—the reflection of compassion and kindness to others as is seen in the Almighty.

The lawyer may have kept the law in the letter, but the Lord Jesus in giving this example, taught of the spirit and the necessity to reflect the love of God to others.

To further illustrate the spiritual context of neighbor or one nearby, we read another example in the Lord Jesus' teaching:

"While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched

forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!
For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."
Matthew 12:46-50.

This example illustrates that the aspect of neighbor or brother goes beyond the closeness of one's family, extending not only to the household of faith but to any in need. When the lawyer said, "who is my neighbour?" was he not being exacting, perhaps pinpointing his obligation, lest he do more than was required? The Lord Jesus purposely used the example of a priest and a Levite—two knowing the requirements of the law who yet turned away, while the lowly Samaritan, one with whom the Jewish lawyer would not normally associate, was the bestower of compassion and mercy, thus illustrating that knowing the law was not enough.

The lawyer's object was to tempt or test the Lord Jesus, not to learn, for we are given a glimpse of his real spirit:

"But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?"
Luke 10:29.

To justify means to be righteous and makes us think of the publican and Pharisee who went into the temple to pray:

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
Luke 18:11-14.

The Lord Jesus knew the mind of that lawyer and used this situation to teach his disciples and us today of the importance of showing compassion to all. This lawyer would be an expert in the law but he did not perceive the spirit of love which it taught.

In the book of Micah, recorded hundreds of years before the birth of the Lord Jesus, the prophet reflected the same mind of the Spirit:

“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:7-8.

Micah taught, as did the Lord Jesus, of the need “to do justly” unto others, not justify oneself as the lawyer attempted.

There is much help here for us today from a practical viewpoint in discerning “who is my neighbor”. Naturally those of the household of faith—our brethren and sisters, are the recipients of our love and care, but good works should not be limited to them alone but done for any in need. It may even be that a kindness done may be remembered, moving one to respond to the gospel message.

The greatest example of a good neighbor was the Lord Jesus who laid down His life as a perfect sacrifice for any who would believe on Him. The example of the kindly Samaritan is a help today, reminding us to do likewise, especially when we may be tempted to pass on by as did the priest and the Levite.

M.C.S.

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army - - -"

(Ezekiel 38:3-4)

Western nations have rejoiced at the break up of the Soviet Union, which was such a powerful entity in world affairs, and was greatly respected and feared.

It is now felt by many that the World has only one super-power left, which is the United States of America. But this viewpoint is contrary to ancient Biblical prophecy; the declared word and purpose of The Creator who rules over all.

Dr. Thomas had no doubt what the scripture reveals; he wrote as follows:-

"The prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog evidently relates to a power that is to arise hereafter; for the LORD says in his address to its chief, "In the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel - - -. Ezekiel's prophecy of Gog is an amplification of Daniel's concerning the king of the north - - -. Gog is to invade the land of Israel "from the north parts" and "in the latter days"; and the king of the north is to enter into the same country at the same time; therefore, as they come against the same enemy and at the same time, they must be one and the same power; --- Gog is styled the "Prince of Ros, Mosc, and Tobl," that is, Autocrat of the Russians, Moscovites, and Siberians, or of 'All the Russias.'"

Some may think that now Russia appears to be weakened, the prophecy perhaps is referring to a different outcome to that which was believed by Dr. Thomas. But consider a recent report out of Moscow which is so significant:-

"- - - Russia, despite urging a global ban on chemical

weapons, is still conducting her own research into deadly weapons. --- If history repeats itself, as it is wont to do, and if those whose aim is a return to law and order, and to reassert Russia as the great nation state, get any nearer the Kremlin, the only way they can prove their country's strength is through the military—the sole organisation which has ever had any claims to efficiency in this country's troubled history.

Those who live along Russia's ever-changing borders know what this means. Sweden and Finland, who preserved their neutrality throughout the dark days of the Cold War, are said to be considering applying for Nato membership, so concerned are they by the sabre-rattling they detect from Moscow. As Russian industry founders and the economy falls apart, the West should remember that this country is still a heavily armed and nuclear power. And it could scarcely be more unstable than it is now."

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

Opportunity continues in the witness to Christadelphians who have questions or problems in that body.

The troubling problems are many and varied. It seems clear that whatever "agreements" may be reached, no true solutions can be found without the understanding and application of the Almighty's teaching on fellowship.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

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

Considerable scope for a witness to The Truth is continuing to be presented. The response to our offers to provide information is encouraging.