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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
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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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(continued)

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"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

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**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
THE SPIRIT OF POWER, AND OF LOVE, AND OF
A SOUND MIND**

This morning we have listened to Paul's words to Timothy, his "dearly beloved son" and his "own son in the faith". From these words, we see the depth of the apostle's love for him. Timothy had joined Paul in his work with the Gentiles in bringing many to the hope of Israel. The apostle's second letter to Timothy was written near the end of his life, we are told:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. . ." II Timothy 4:6-8.

Soon to die, Paul wrote to Timothy, needing the comfort of his presence:

"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:
For Demas hath forsaken me . . . and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.
Only Luke is with me." II Timothy 4:9-11.

Paul at that time was a prisoner in Rome, soon to be brought before the authorities because of his witnessing. He longed for Timothy in this time of proving; yet mindful of Timothy's own responsible work and trials, he wrote:

"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears,
that I may be filled with joy;" II Timothy 1:4.

We do not know what caused these tears; possibly they were because of Paul's imprisonment in Rome and his approaching death. How close these brethren were in mind and spirit, in love one for another! In that love Paul continues as we have read this morning:

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." II Timothy 1:6.

To "stir up" in the original speaks of life and fire, giving the thought of keeping the spirit of life within burning brightly. That fire of life was kindled in Timothy as Paul laid hands upon him. In Acts 8:17, we perceive how the "laying on" of the apostles' hands invoked the power of the Holy Spirit in them, and brings to mind

Jesus' prayer for His brethren:

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;" John 17:19-20.

Was this the case as Paul had conveyed the Spirit's power and responsibility to Timothy, sanctifying him, appointing and empowering him to the work? The Spirit's power, the gift of God, His grace, is seen in Jesus Christ. Paul's exhortation as he wrote to Timothy was to keep that spirit fire burning, destroying the flesh, thereby offering up a life which would be a sweet smell unto God.

Speaking of that gift of grace, Paul continued:

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." II Timothy 1:7.

Our Father, in His infinite mercy, has given to His called-out ones a spirit of hope and trust. The fear Paul mentions involves timidity and a lack of faith—both destructive to spiritual growth and works. Jesus used the root of this word "fear" when He spoke to His disciples in the ship threatened by a great storm. They cried out: "Lord, save us: for we perish." Jesus replied, as they feared for their lives:

". . . Why are ye fearful (timid), O ye of little faith."

Matthew 8:26.

Jesus pinpointed the reason for their timidity—"little faith". For some time He had been teaching His disciples and doing miracles. He had just exhorted them:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Matthew 7:7-8.

God's care and provision has been ever available, if sought in faith. In their lack of faith (timidity), the disciples believed they were to die and called upon Jesus to save them. He did this, but rebuked their fear with—"O ye of little faith."

Cannot lack of faith rob us of confidence in our Father's care, and therefore deprive us ultimately of eternal life? Help is found in the Apostle John's vision of the holy city, new Jerusalem, representing the bride of Christ, in God's own words:

“... It is done. I am Alpha and Omega. . . . I will give unto him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
Revelation 21:6-8.

How powerful is the life promise of God; and equally so, the warning for men who fail in their faith in Him. But the Almighty gives to those who, like Paul and Timothy, serve in faith the spirit of “power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (See II Timothy 1:7). These gifts were in Paul’s mind sufficient, enabling Timothy to:

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

II Timothy 1:13.

From his own experiences, the apostle sought to encourage and help his brother with these words. Let us consider these divine gifts promised to those whose lives are dedicated to His service.

POWER—to be able, or to be possible. A derivation of this word was used by Jesus when His disciples asked Him, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus’ reply was:

“... With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible (with power).”
Matthew 19:26.

Jesus wholly knew God’s power. Paul also had this trust which grew in him from the time of his conversion on the way to Damascus. The Almighty has bestowed a measure of and a sufficiency of power to enable those who strive to serve Him in sincerity and truth to do so. As Jesus was about to ascend unto His Father, He reminded His disciples:

“... Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
Acts 1:8.

They did receive an increased measure of the Holy Spirit, enabling them to further witness after Jesus ascended. That Holy Spirit we do not have as they did; yet there is, as promised, a power working with us, through His word, through His hand guiding our circumstances as we seek to honor Him. We are to be His witnesses now, a few seemingly powerless to the world. To help us in that

determination we think of the words spoken to John in visions:

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.” Revelation 11:3.

This word for “power” is different but gives the same idea of ability, even though clothed in the sackcloth of humility. Of these early witnesses—prophets and apostles—the Spirit continues:

“These have power to shut heaven . . . and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues. . . .” Revelation 11:6.

The power of His witnesses, such as Elijah and Moses, was not of themselves, but God acting through them. However, ours today is a sackcloth witnessing—working, hoping, praying for the day of Jesus’ return, whose power then will confound all the enemies of His Father. Those with Him, where we hope to be, will rejoice:

“ . . . We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” Revelation 11:17.

Let us then, sustained by His hand, feeling a measure of His power on our behalf, more fully use our resources to keep alive and growing that inner man of spirit until Jesus returns to gather to Himself all those who look to Him, believing.

LOVE—God has given the spirit of love, revealing His own for us in giving His Son as the mediator and redeemer whom we have remembered this morning. It is a feast of love, God’s love, the love of Jesus for Him and for us, making possible our hope of salvation. If and as we perceive these facets of divine love, must there not emanate a joyous response for God, for our elder Brother, and for all those who are God’s? The spirit of love which fulfills the law is revealed touchingly for us by Paul in I Corinthians 13—words we know well and must never cease to nurture and show forth. It is the “Spirit of love” which binds together His people, of which Paul speaks:

“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.” Colossians 2:2.

This hope of the gospel is a mystery to the world where the true love for God and for His is not really known. It will be found only where there is heartfelt submission to Him, and where each

member submits in righteousness to one another in the faith. If steadfast to the end, these are to be forever united to Jesus because they have manifested this spirit of love during their lifetime:

“... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Matthew 25:34,40.

These words of Jesus, do they not convey the true and sincere spirit of the love to which we must rise, Brethren and Sisters?

Going back to Paul's words— A SOUND MIND implies a disciplined mind, one which is therefore sober and temperate. Such discipline prevents the mind being carried away by the distractions of fleshly desires. Paul, writing earlier to Timothy of the qualities to be found in those who are overseers or elders in the ecclesia included, among others, the need to be “sober” (I Timothy 3:2)—a mind not frivolous or changeable, but established and settled according to the Word.

The Almighty, then, has not given to His children “the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7). These spirit gifts from the perfect Father above can help us do as Paul exhorts:

“Hold fast the form (or pattern) of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.”

II Timothy 1:13-14.

The pattern of sound words reveals God's plan to guide His people. By the laying on of his hands, thereby bestowing the gift of the Spirit, Paul greatly enhanced this pattern in Timothy.

We all, Brethren and Sisters, in a measure receive that gift and need to stir it up, to insure it continues living, that its fire may consume the old, natural man, leaving only that which is pleasing and acceptable to our Father and His son, our head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

J. A. DeF.

UPRIGHT IN HEART

Our readings in Chronicles reveal the mind and spirit of David as he neared the end of his life. At this time, he reflected upon his desire to build a house for the Lord. However, because he had been a man of war, this privilege had been denied, leaving this work for his son Solomon, who as a type of Christ would be known as a man of peace. Nevertheless, in order to have a part in this work, David made great preparations—collecting and laying aside all manner of costly items needed for the building.

David then called upon the people to also offer goods and volunteer their services as craftsmen in the same dedicated spirit:

“Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. . . .And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?

“Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king’s work, offered willingly, Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.”

I Chronicles 29:2,5,6,9.

He rejoiced at the people’s favorable response, at one with his own, displaying both gratitude and thanksgiving to God for His many blessings bestowed upon them:

“Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.”

I Chronicles 29:10-12.

David knew that Solomon was to succeed him as king, but realised it was God alone who rules from the heavens and appoints over the kingdoms of men whomsoever He will. In this same submissive spirit he expressed thanksgiving for the privilege of giving back to God what He had so graciously bestowed:

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.” I Chronicles 29:14-15.

Their desire in giving these gifts was to be a part of His great house and share in the blessings promised to its members:

“O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.”

I Chronicles 29:16-17.

David knew that God tries the heart daily, testing and proving the spirit of man, taking pleasure only in those who struggle to walk in His way as Solomon later expressed in the Proverbs:

“They that are of a forward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.”

Proverbs 11:20.

The Lord Jesus did indeed delight the Almighty with His perfect obedience, walking in uprightness and fulfilling all that had been written, causing God to proclaim:

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17.

Aspiring to be upright, David endeavored to walk in the law of the Lord, following His precepts and statutes, for his goal was to:

“. . . behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”

Psalms 101:2.

Because he struggled to have a “perfect heart”, he was greatly blessed, but on occasion when he failed and was rebuked for his shortcomings, he responded with a repentant heart, quick to make amends and heal the breach his wrongdoing had caused, and once again serve only the Lord who had spoken thus:

“Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.”
Psalm 101:6.

How heart warming for David as he neared the end of his life to see the people willingly offer their goods to the service of the Lord's house, no doubt influenced by his example and faithful leadership asking over the years. His life helps us to reflect, as those of spiritual Israel, upon God's graciousness toward this man who sought to walk in uprightness of heart, and resolve that we too may reveal the same humility and willingness in all we do, offering those same spiritual gifts for His pleasure in hopes of becoming living stones of that eternal house. Let us then rejoice as did David, looking beyond this present life to what lies ahead for those who love the Lord and endeavor to walk in newness of life, putting away the tendencies of the natural man and striving to put on the righteous attributes of the spirit man as was David's prayer for his son Solomon:

“... give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.”
I Chronicles 29:19.

It is significant that Solomon's name means peaceful, for he was a type of the greater son of David, the Prince of Peace who would come in perfect righteousness to build the spiritual house of God, made up of living stones conforming to the pattern established by His example—brethren and sisters joined in the fellowship of serving the Almighty with willingness and uprightness of heart:

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”
I Peter 2:5.

M.C.S.

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

R. Roberts on the subject of
“the Bible Tested and Trusted—Trusted and Tested”.

“Before we proceed to take up the written criticisms that have come to hand, it will form a suitable prelude to this process, to report the verdict pronounced by an unbelieving railway station-master, to whom brother Ashcroft’s article was handed by a brother acquainted with him, with a request that he would read and report his impressions. The station-master returned the following comment in writing:-

“Mr. Ashcroft’s theory, that the Bible is inspired as to questions of doctrine though not as to matters of historical fact, in effect, claims that a document which is demonstrably and admittedly inaccurate where it can be tested, must be accepted as an infallible guide upon points of speculative opinion (where it cannot be tested). As he very ingeniously puts it, such a theory cannot be brought to any destructive test; but of what value is a theory which cannot be tested, and which is constructed with an especial view to avoiding any test?”

Quite so, “cannot be trusted where it can be tested, and cannot be tested where it claims to be trusted.” This puts the theory of the said article into a nut-shell as regards the shape it presents to calm logical faculty; and manifests the dangerous issues that lie concealed amid much plausible speech. We reject all complicity with such a theory. We strenuously maintain, on the contrary, that the Bible is trustworthy because divine throughout, as proved by every test that can be applied to it; that where it can be tested it shows it can be trusted, and that, therefore, it is to be trusted where it cannot (in a sense) be tested, as in the case of unfulfilled prophecy.”

(to be continued)

"BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN - - "
Matthew 24; 36)

The above words are in the context of Christ's response to the question " - - - what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3)

Nevertheless a gracious provision is given of scriptural pointers to the great day of His coming.

Hence in Daniel's prophecy, there is a specific mention of a period of time, following which there will be the outcome to which all the faithful have hoped and looked. As follows:-

" - - - the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones - - - and out of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceedingly great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them - - - and it cast down the truth to the ground - - -. Then I hear one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

(Daniel 8:8-14)

After Alexander the Great (the great horn) who had been welcomed in Egypt where he founded the city of Alexandria in 332 BC. There rose one of Alexander's most trusted Macedonian Commanders, Ptolemy the First. He founded a dynasty in Egypt, which during the next three centuries, would have twelve other kings bearing his name. Ptolemy attempted to seize Palestine in 320 B.C., entering Jerusalem by taking advantage of the Sabbath rest. But he did not secure complete possession until after the death of Antigonus Cyclops in 301 B.C. Even so, for years there was to be contest from the Seleucids (Syrians) to take control, and the Jews suffered in this struggle of the two powers; the sanctuary was affected, and the people were suppressed. This Ptolemy exiled over 100,000 Jews to Egypt. It was therefore in a measure, another exodus. So 301 B.C. is an important date. The Temple of Nehemiah and Ezra, undoubtedly was contaminated by the events that followed the take over by Ptolemy.

It is therefore a simple reckoning to calculate 2,300 from that date of 301 B.C. which brings the reckoning to AD 1999, (the Jewish calender shows Alexander's death as 3454 and AD 1994 as 5754, again the reckoning is 2,300). By the completion of the time cycle " - - shall the sanctuary be cleansed;" and where will the Al Aksa mosque, situated on the Temple Mount, be then?

Jesus gives corroborative witness to this pointer, as an indication of the time:-

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (he) is near, even at the doors.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (Matthew 24:32-34)

In 1948 Israel, as a nation, revived; the Fig Tree of Israel that had been barked and cast away (Joel 1:7) again took root, and put forth its leaves. The generation that saw this happen will also see the completion of everything spoken by the Lord Jesus who said " - - - my words shall not pass away." The suggestion by some that the 2,300 days is literally, evening-morning, and therefore evening and morning daily burnt sacrifices, and so refers to a period which is only 1,150 should be rejected. The evening and the morning is clearly shown in Genesis chapter 1 as denoting one day, and the prophetic day undoubtedly defines a year.

A BIBLE CLASS
"HOPE DEFERRED MAKETH THE HEART SICK"
Proverbs 13:12

The Spirit through Solomon speaks to us of hope. What then is hope? The dictionary states it is "a strong desire accompanied by expectation". In the scriptures it comes from a Hebrew root meaning to stay, wait, or trust. Hope always involves faith that the desire will come. Paul helps in this thought:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1.

Through the eyes of faith, hope becomes real, substantive, and thus there grows a determination to wait for accomplishment. David was sustained by hope in the midst of sore trial:

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."

Psalm 42:5.

When we think of one supported by his hope, our minds go to Job who endured the agony of great and prolonged travail. He was unwavering:

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust (hope) in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him." Job 13:15.

Hope then is that which enables one to look beyond present painful circumstances to a promised release and reward, trusting and undoubting.

Human nature, being frail and prone to unbelief, can be disheartened if what is hoped for does not quickly come. God, recognizing this tendency, deals with it in our verse:

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: . . ." Proverbs 13:12.

Deferred speaks of a continuance, a stretched out interval of time. Hope for something which does not soon come to pass causes grief, pain and infirmity of heart. David experienced this and sought help from his God:

"In the day of my trouble I sought the LORD: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. And I said, this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah." Psalm 77:2,10,12,15.

Through prayers and deep meditation on God's mighty works and sure promises, David was able to reinforce his faith and stir up his hope, so enduring what was placed upon him in the certainty that God would surely deliver in His appointed time.

As we ponder hope deferred, Noah comes to mind. For one hundred and twenty years he witnessed and labored in building the ark, confident that God's word was unailing. The ridicule and scorn of those who observed his "useless" building might have brought a flash of doubt to his mind, but Paul reveals how our brother was sustained in this long deferred hope:

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Hebrews 11:7.

How important then that hope remains clear and strong in our hearts, that God's unchanging promises will surely come to pass, no matter how long His infinite wisdom decrees it be deferred.

Our Father's true kindness, reminding us to hang on, is seen as our verse under consideration continues:

"... when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life."

Proverbs 13:12.

The "desire" is that which is longed for. It will be wonderful and pleasing, as Solomon tells us: "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (Proverbs 13:19). The desire of those who are struggling to glorify God is life in His kingdom - kings and priests with Jesus Christ - no longer hindered by their nature.

Included in the vision given to John on Patmos were the messages from Jesus to the seven churches. In each one, the Spirit spoke to those struggling for victory over their flesh. Promises were made to those who would hear the message and strive to overcome. One such message was to Ephesus:

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
Revelation 2:7.

It is recorded that through the fall of Adam and Eve, the way to the tree of life was barred by the cherubim and a flaming sword. Through the sacrifice of Christ, the way to that tree has been opened, making possible eternal life for His faithful brethren and sisters when He returns. This is the hope, the strong desire and longing of those willing and working to please God. Paul helps our determination to wait in patience for that promised deliverance, even though hope may seem long deferred:

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?
But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."
Romans 8:24-25.

Let us hold fast, hear and do, patiently trusting that in the Father's due time Israel's hope will be reality through the glory and outworking of Jesus' return. Isaiah's words lift us up and strengthen our resolve:

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces: . . . the rebuke of his people shall he take away . . . for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."
Isaiah 25:8-9.

Truly "the day of the LORD cometh", when all who endure will be united as the bride of Christ, rejoicing with Him that their long deferred but never quenched hope is at last realized.

J.A.DeF.

BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT

In Luke we have read the familiar circumstances surrounding the final trying hours in the Lord Jesus' life. He knew the work God had appointed and agonized in the garden for strength to endure the events soon to take place. Jesus knowing all to come upon Him was God's will, submitted:

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

Luke 22:42.

How few at that time knew the true will of God regarding His Son, Jesus, yet the Word had spoken from the beginning of One to come as a Savior—One who would fulfil His word perfectly, thus opening the way for others to attain unto salvation through belief in Him. Jesus knew pain and suffering would accompany this work and so prayed for the strength to say - “thy will be done”. Judas' betrayal, the cruel interrogation before the chief priests, His appearance before Pilate, who recognizing His innocence endeavored to release Him, were all experiences He prepared for through prayer. The last test ahead was death, to which He voluntarily surrendered in order to fulfil His Father's will.

As they led Jesus away, a great company of people and of grieving women followed. In care for them even knowing death was imminent, He warned of struggles to come:

“Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”

Luke 23:28-31.

Even during His final hours He taught those who might “hear”. He warned His followers that tests and trials were to come, and indeed for those who follow Him, they continue unto this day. For Christ's brethren and sisters, God allows adversity to try their hearts, probing the sincerity of those desiring to confess His name, seeking the hope of salvation. He knows the infirmities of His

brethren and sisters for He endured His own adversity on the way to Calvary.

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”
Psalm 37:37.

As we come to the table each first day of the week to remember our Lord and Saviour, we think again of His example as the perfect man. He who crushed every fleshly tendency to the point that as He hung dying on the cross, He was able to sincerely ask, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”. Under such great distress it is natural to hate one’s persecutors, yet He recognized that only through His death could the purpose of God be accomplished. Added to this was the painful knowledge that His own people would not receive Him as their Messiah - nor do they today. His example reveals the mind and spirit necessary to crucify the natural man within as His words exhort:

“But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,
Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.”
Luke 6:27-28.

The Lord Jesus Himself put in practise this teaching as He gave Himself on the cross. It is a reaction of the flesh to resist those who mistreat it, yet He has left a different example for those who will “hear” and apply His words to their living. At the end He was surrounded by enemies as even the Jews scorned His teachings, treated Him with contempt, and orchestrated His betrayal and crucifixion. Yet for these he prayed before His death. What an illuminating example to us who are so easily prone to failure and often find ourselves in circumstances which encourages the flesh to seek its own.

We remember He said, “they know not what they do”. Indeed they were ignorant but we are privileged to know what God requires as revealed in the Word. How then can we best strive toward His example?

“Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.
And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”

Luke 6:30-31.

The world speaks of these words as the "Golden Rule" - an apt label, for the words were given by One refined through the fire of affliction yet who emerged as pure as fine gold. But this can be done only where there is submission to God's word, which allows the flesh to be overcome.

With His spirit power the Lord Jesus might have wondrously confounded His enemies. He could have come down from the cross, but this would have been a fleshly reaction and fail to fulfil the purpose of God. How much we can learn from Him, recognizing that our circumstances are controlled from above, also that time and chance do not work upon the children of God. We can rest in the knowledge that all that comes our way is known by a merciful Father who will not give more than we can bear as He requires in us a striving for perfection. Jesus fulfilled God's word on the cross enduring pain, suffering and humiliation as He prayed for His persecutors, all in order to complete the work set before Him. His holy example speaks of our need to resist the inclinations of our human nature, to control and put them down as James exhorts:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. . ."

James 4:7-8.

How much is entailed in submitting, for it involves our entire living, as it did the Lord Jesus. We must hold fast during our time of probation, recognizing the importance of drawing nigh unto God as did His Son. When He was tempted God came to Him, strengthening and sustaining His spiritual thinking. Let us take this example to heart, learning from Him who pleased God in all things, seeking to submit our living to Him who can make all things perfect.

M.C.S.

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World

"For there shall arise - - - false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; - - - believe it not." (Matt. 24:24-26)

Recently, in the National Press, appeared a large advertisement; a "world news flash" from a certain "Sister Marie" purporting to be an astronomer, warning that Halley's comet is about to collide with the planet Jupiter.

A message is addressed to a list of world leaders saying that the astronomical event which will take place by mid-July 1994 will cause the biggest cosmic explosion in the history of mankind. There will be an immense flash in the solar system, so it will be wise, she advises, to close down Nuclear Power Stations by 1st July and all aircraft should be grounded. People should stay in cold cellars or basements to avoid any heatwave, keep curtains drawn, buy food for five days and keep pets indoors. Farmers should protect livestock by keeping animals in cool sheds and barns. People should also avoid travel in case the Jupiter blast affects traffic.

"Sister Marie" says this event (dated for between the 15th-25th July 1994) is a warning ultimatum from God to all governments to reduce the crime epidemic, destroy all pornography, and stop all wars, or face global extinction. She directs attention to the Bible prophecy of Isaiah chapter 24, which reads, "- - - the earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." (vs. 5-6).

Of course, it is true, what this "Sister Marie" says, there is dishonesty and fraud on a worldwide scale. There is drunkenness, swearing, bad temper, violent behaviour, drugs and porn. Indecent publications are on the increase. There is obscenity and immodesty in public or on films, videos and television.

"Sister Marie Gabriel" was born in the Byelorussian town now called Novgrudok in Poland, her parents were members of a wealthy family, but were caused to flee as virtually penniless refugees to England in 1947 as a result of the war. She was then educated at a convent school in North Manchester. Obviously she has a persuasive personality which has convinced some to provide funds for the expensive advertising that has taken place. "Sister Marie" also is aware of what she deems to be relevant scriptural passages in line with her thinking, referring to the gospel words of Christ "- - - there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in

the stars - - -." (Luke 21:25) She however is looking literally at biblical figuratives. Nevertheless scientists are saying that a comet really is set to collide with Jupiter, but it is the one described as "Shoemaker-Levy" (detected it is said March 1993) and not Halley's. This gives an apparent credence to her work, said to have been encouraged by visions she has had since 1984, causing her to write her book "Supernatural Visions" which was published last year, (with copies in Cambridge University Library and Oxford University Library).

But her comments such as "the world has only just a few months left to prepare for the most dangerous cosmic event in history" and that God must be appealed to "- - - to spare mankind from the gigantic fireball that will erupt from the hydrogen gas of Jupiter to wipe out nations who ignore God's ultimatum about drastically reducing the crime epidemic - - -" are reminiscent of the old teaching of a doomsday when the earth will be destroyed by fire. In it is shades of Seventh-Day Adventism, which believes that the earth will be desolate for a thousand years with dead bodies everywhere, while the righteous will have been removed to heaven, and Satan "circumstantially bound" on earth.

That such affirmations are being propagated at the present time is a sign of the times. "Sister Marie" it is said, "first printed (her) message seven years ahead of all astronomers and well in advance of all the most powerful telescopes" about the comet heading for Jupiter.

In such a context as this the words of Christ are significant, that they:-

"- - - shall shew great signs and wonders: insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

(Matthew 24:24)

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 annual Sunday School party was held on February 19th as scheduled. All enjoyed the games, the party food and the short address on "A friend loveth at all times" (Proverbs 17:17).

Mailing of invitations for the "Prophecy" booklet continues each month and though response is small, there is encouragement that one or two are moved to inquire.

Guidance and indication in His work and in particular personal trials is sought in faith, trusting that we may be granted His answer and help.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.
Thursday: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

As the year progresses, time brings no improvement in national or international conditions.

Governments are bereft of political solutions to the growing problems of violence, dishonesty and deceit.

The age of mans' rule has almost run its full course when divine intervention will displace the corruption in the "high places" of the world, to bring deliverance to those who have "no help from man at all."