

MAY 1995

A Monthly Magazine issued by

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"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
THE LORD HATH CHOSEN

Reading in Chronicles this week, we are touched by an example of David's spirit expressed in his words as he gathered to himself all the heads of Israel. The king realized that his time of probation was ending (1 Chronicles 28:1). What was in his mind as he looked upon this assembly? Our reading this morning reveals his thoughts:

"... Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building:" I Chronicles 28:2.

David's heart-felt desire from the beginning of his reign was to build this very special house for the ark and for God's footstool, His dwelling place with His people. He had prepared meticulously for that building, revealing a great care and a fervent desire to be about that work. He expressed this in a song of ascent, ruminating upon God's purpose in this house and in His "greater" house:

"I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.... We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy." Psalm 132:4-9.

David's hope was tangible and very near to his heart: to enter into the temple, to worship at the feet of the Almighty, God's footstool. This hope involved more than a magnificent building, for in faith he looked forward to the time when the spiritual ark of the covenant (Christ) and God's footstool (His resting place with His people) will be a reality in His kingdom on earth. All this, when His children's labors in the climb up to Zion will have been accomplished. Of that time David in faith wrote:

"The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubim (the mercy seat): let the earth be moved. The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. Exalt ye the LORD our God and worship at his footstool, for he is holy." Psalm 99:1,2,5.

He fervently worshipped the Almighty, but not in the house he longed to build:

"But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood."
I Chronicles 28:3.

What a great disappointment this would be! He might have reasoned: I made war, but I always asked, Shall I go up? - or - I have also shed blood, but at your command (except for one time). Although his desire was thwarted, David accepted God's decree not to build His house. He continued to prepare for its ultimate building by his son, as God permitted. Our brother looked at the greater picture promised in the covenant God had made with him - those "sure mercies of David" - which assured him of a Son who would bring to pass all his purpose.

David's spirit and his perception is patent as he spoke to those elders of Israel assembled before him. He would not build this house:

"Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel."
I Chronicles 28:4.

Why did God like David to make him, the youngest son of Jesse and a lowly shepherd, king over all Israel? God who looks upon the heart knew he was "a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). David already had exhibited that dedicated heart as he had earlier endured Saul's persecution, and through all his reign he had waited on the Almighty.

To his gathered people David spoke: "The LORD God of Israel chose me ... to be king over Israel for ever." Yet, then he stood before them, anticipating he would soon die. How then could he reign for ever, or for the "Olam" - meaning perpetually or without end? Being of Adam, he knew he must die. He knew too from God's earlier promises that the Lord's greater Son would rule over all the earth, and that David himself, if accounted faithful, would rule as a king with Him. How solid was his faith in these promises, confident in mind, and rejoicing that he was to be king over God's promised and perfected kingdom of Israel. It was the word of the Almighty God.

Our brother continued to speak to his assembled brethren of God's plan:

"And of all my sons (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father." I Chronicles 28:5-6.

Here was confirmation of those promises: a son who also would be God's son, and who would build His house and sit upon His throne. David recognized that Solomon was chosen as the "typical" fulfillment of these promises.

In addition, David reminded Israel of God's purpose in his son:

"Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, IF he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day." I Chronicles 28:7.

Again, the promise of an eternal kingdom! Why did God in His infinite wisdom select Solomon over the many other sons of David? When Solomon was born to David and Bathsheba:

"... he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD." II Samuel 12:24-25.

Jedidiah - beloved of the Lord. Before his birth, God's plan for Solomon was settled: to be king in David's place, pointing forward to the greater Son of David, of whom He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Therefore, before all the elders of Israel, David instructed and encouraged his son:

"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." I Chronicles 28:9.

The Almighty does indeed make inquisition as to what rules in the hearts of those whom He chooses. Is it circumcised? Are there any idols there? Is it single in its purpose to be subject only to Him? He also understands "all the imaginations of the thoughts." The natural thoughts are those which the mind works or fashions and

which pertain to self - and how it can be served; while spiritual thoughts are concerned with how God can best be served. Our Father well understands the human mind and looks to choose that mind which is able and in free will can submit to His thoughts. Solomon in the beginning of his reign exhibited excellent thinking, pleasing to God. So when God said to Solomon: "Ask what I shall give thee" (II Chronicles 1:7), he requested:

"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?"
II Chronicles 1:10.

The Almighty, pleased with the king's heart and his desires, replied:

"... Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour ... but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, ...
Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour....."
II Chronicles 1:11-12.

Solomon began his reign wholly seeking to honor and obey God from a "willing mind" and a "perfect heart." He built God's house, carefully following the pattern divinely given to David. In this work God was pleased; as Solomon dedicated the temple, God revealed His mind:

"... the house was filled with a cloud ... for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God."
II Chronicles 5:13-14.

As the king reigned in great power, riches, and honor, the imagination of the thoughts of his heart began to ponder other things. So he became no longer "constant" to do God's commandments (I Chronicles 28:7). Constant means a cleaving to and holding fast. The record of Solomon's later years exhibits a great change:

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father."
I Kings 11:4.

We remember that David had exhorted him:

"... know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: ..."
I Chronicles 28:9.

Solomon failed as the flesh's thinking began to deflect his first desires away from that perfect heart and willing mind.

How readily we can perceive the contrast in spirit between David and Solomon. Both were chosen by the Almighty; both were given a vital and holy work; both were beloved of God. David, with a heart perfect in its desire, served God right to the end of his life, cutting away those "imagination of the thoughts" which would surely lead away from God. Solomon began with the same mind, but along the way failed, allowing his thoughts to stray in other directions - perhaps aided by his great riches and power which allowed him to fill every desire, until he lost the hope of redemption. He had forgotten his father's admonition:

"Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it."

I Chronicles 28:10.

Take heed, perceive, have respect to the great work given, be constant and DO IT. How much, Brethren and Sisters, we too need to take heed, for God now in these last days has chosen a few out of this evil world, to do His work, to honor Him, and to know His great blessings - a few whom He knows are well able to serve Him faithfully, as did David. Through the ages He has called a few who have developed minds and aims determinedly fixed on the sure promises made to David, to Abraham, and to all the faithful - a Son, a house, a throne, and a kingdom. We, Brethren and Sisters, have been so called. Whether we will know and experience the accomplishment of God's purpose with His chosen ones, depends upon the singleness of our hearts, the determination of our thoughts, and our utter dependence on and loyalty to our Father. Paul helps us in this struggle:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal ...) Casting down (demolishing) imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

II Corinthians 10:3-5.

What was Christ's obedience? Was it not this single determination of His heart - "nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42)?

Let us remember, Brethren and Sisters, that we are called to his great work of becoming like our Lord Jesus Christ.

J.A.DeF.

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

For our instruction James writes of the need for faith in one's living. However, he makes it clear that faith alone is not enough to please the Almighty:

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." James 2:17-19.

Faith or belief is necessary, but unless accompanied by works, it is not acceptable, for as James explains, even the devils "believe and tremble". Just such an example is recorded in Matthew where during His ministry, the Lord Jesus removed so called "devils" or "evil spirits", the common term at that time for the afflictions of the mentally or physically infirm:

"And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters." Matthew 8:28-32.

These afflicted men knew of God and that Jesus was the Son of God. Also they clearly had some knowledge of Jesus' work and His power to heal but were not in faith united to Him.

Returning now to James who further instructed by questioning:

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" James 2:20.

This important question is posed to one vainly claiming faith but full of self and spiritually empty before God. To further his theme of the need for works, the apostle uses two examples from the scripture:

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

James 2:21-23.

Abraham's faith coupled with works, in this instance the offering of his son Isaac, was imputed unto him as righteousness and made him a friend of God.

James also refers to Rahab, one not of Israel by birth, but who in faith believed in Israel's God and by hiding the spies, exhibited her faith with works, clearly embracing the spirit of truth:

"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

James 2:25-26.

The Lord Jesus speaking in parables taught of the coming judgment that will determine those who will be acceptable or unacceptable before Him:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"

Matthew 25:31-34.

How were those, blessed to be at the right hand, determined from the unworthy ones placed on the left? Jesus explains:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Matthew 25:35-36.

All these actions or righteous works were generated from faith, yet the righteous question their Lord saying:

"... when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matthew 25:37-40.

They who questioned were truly unperceiving of their actions - they were done as a spontaneous part of their normal way of living - not from obligation, but because they saw a need and willingly endeavored to fill it. We contrast this with those whom He refused and placed on His left hand, who had no feeling for the needy:

"Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal." Matthew 25:44-46.

Their neglect was plainly an example of faith without works.

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." James 2:24.

Belief in the Lord Jesus as a Mediator who intercedes on His people's behalf is essential as one comes to God in prayer. However, belief is simply not enough, for only those who add to their faith a spirit of love in their living through good works, will receive acceptance from the Father.

The works of one's faith will be the basis of determination at the Lord Jesus' judgment seat - and acceptance or refusal will be decided by deeds done or not done. Endeavoring to do the will of God by following the Lord Jesus is our determination. Exhibiting love to His little ones and thus to Him, is the duty of all those seeking His blessing. To this end, let us be sure our faith becomes justified with good works and then an integral part of our living as we endeavour to grasp the hope of life eternal extended so mercifully.

M.C.S.

UNBELIEF

In Charles Darwin's book of 1872 he said, "I believe that animals are descended from at most only four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number." This immediately challenged scriptural explanation which goes on to show that "the LORD GOD formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field ---" (Genesis 2:19-20). This clear account is regarded as too simple by many.

Of course, once doubt was raised about the Bible Genesis evidence, it was not long before other doubts began to circulate. For example, the gospels have been called into question; a sample of this from a book about Christ, will be seen in the following extracts:-

"The complete accuracy of the recording of the sayings attributed to Jesus and to others is doubtful ---. The Gospel stories of the Jewish leaders' plot to seize Jesus and bring about His death appear to be a fabrication. The words put into Pilate's and Jesus' mouths at His trial were certainly invented for, before the trial started, Jesus' followers had fled ---. All four Gospels are anti-Jewish in tone and they have the same political bias; to dissociate Jesus from His racial and national background, to obscure the political aspects of His career, and to throw the blame for His death on to the Jewish leaders instead of the Romans --- anything that appears contrary to the Gospel theme is probably true, and --- statements which seem to confirm it were probably invented ---."

What a blatant disregard of the evidence is seen in such a comment, and other comments like it. In a direct answer to the above it is clear that when Jesus was made a captive Peter followed, and also John, who was known to the high priest. (John 18:15) Disciples and relatives witnessed His crucifixion, and His followers still met together, talking to one another of those remarkable events surrounding Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Though Rome had added Judea to its empire, Jewish leaders had considerable control of Jewish affairs, so much so that Rome had great difficulty in crushing the Jewish revolt of A.D.70.

How refreshing it is to read the testimony of a lover of truth, who wholeheartedly upheld the veracity of the revealed word of God:-

(R. ROBERTS) - PROPOSITIONS

1/ That the New Testament narratives are the narratives of men who were personal companions of Jesus Christ during the three and a half years of His public work on earth (as proved by their acceptance as such by an unbroken line of believers from that day to this).

2/ That they are, therefore, the testimony of eye-witnesses to the things recorded (as involved in the nature of the case, and as required by the qualifications of an apostle specified in Acts 1:21-22; also verse 8; 2:32; 3:15; v 32; 10:39; John 15:27; 2 Peter 1:16; and many other places).

3/ That said eye-witnesses were men of sufficient capacity to judge whether they truly saw and heard the things recorded (as proved by the ability of the narratives themselves).

4/ That they were men of truth and honesty (as proved by the character of the work to which they devoted themselves - the work of turning men from sin to righteousness - and by their submission to loss of goods, liberty, and life for the sake of their testimony).

5/ That, therefore, the record of Christ's miracles and resurrection, and of the miracles wrought by the apostles in His name, is true.

6/ From which it follows that it is more than true, namely, that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, entirely reliable as Divine, because Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit to qualify them for the work (John 15:26-27; 16:7-14; Acts 1:4-5; Matthew 10:19-20; Luke 21:15).

7/ Therefore Christ is the only hope of man, because He declared that He was the only "way", and that all rivals are "thieves and robbers". (John 14:6; 3:18; 10:8-18; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 15:20-22; Eph. 2:12-14).

8/ That, therefore, the Old Testament is the word of God, because Christ so regarded it, and because the inspired apostles declared that it was so (Matt. 5:17-19; John 5:39-47; 10:34-35; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

A BIBLE CLASS
"IN MUCH WISDOM IS MUCH GRIEF"

Ecclesiastes 1:18

As we consider this subject, our minds recall Solomon's spirit as he became king over Israel. In joy and gratitude he sought unto the tabernacle where he offered to God a great and heart-felt sacrifice. After this, God's words to Solomon revealed His loving approval:

"... Ask what I shall give thee." II Chronicles 1:7.

Solomon replied:

"... Thou has shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" II Chronicles 1:8,10.

The Lord granted the wisdom and knowledge Solomon requested, and in addition gave him abundant riches and honor, although he had not sought them. Solomon then grew in wisdom and knowledge. His fame was known throughout Israel and the surrounding lands. With this in mind we might ask, Why should this so blessed king, some years later write:

"For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Ecclesiastes 1:18.

These were God-given gifts. Why should they bring trouble and pain; also sorrow and affliction? Have we not read that toward the end of his reign the king forsook the divinely given wisdom and knowledge, seeking worldly satisfaction:

"... king Solomon loved many strange women....
Of the nations concerning which the LORD said ... Ye shall not go in to them ... for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.
And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.
... and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God...."
I Kings 11:1-4.

How far the king had departed from the humble spirit with which he began his reign! What caused such a downfall? Was it pride in his superior wisdom and knowledge as we might perceive from his words:

"... Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly..." Ecclesiastes 1:16-17.

Confident in his own strength, he allowed his heart to know many fleshly pleasures to the point of folly. Further insight into his mind is given:

"So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

And whatsoever mine eyes desired (the lust of the eyes?) I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour." Ecclesiastes 2:9-10.

Solomon did not restrain himself from any joy. Indeed, he wrote:

"I applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness."

Ecclesiastes 7:25.

With this revelation of Solomon's mind near the end of his reign, we can perceive that he had begun to be so confident in his own wisdom and strength that he felt he could experiment with what he knew was folly and madness, without falling away from righteousness. He therefore did not restrain his heart, allowing himself to enjoy whatever he desired. His own words written earlier in Proverbs should have warned him of such folly:

"Take fast hold of instruction; ... keep her; for she is thy life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." Proverbs 4:13-16,27.

"Take fast hold of instruction" - with its chastening, correction and discipline - for indeed it is "life." This helps one to pass not by, avoid and to turn from that broad way which leads to destruction.

God's instruction also tells one plainly: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Verse 18). Established in his own strength, this great and once-wise king did not turn from the world's enticements, becoming ensnared in multiplying strange wives who worshipped false gods; also in multiplying horses - the measure of a king's power - and riches, and seeking more fleshly pleasures. Ultimately this led to his downfall and total loss of God's way of life.

He felt he had "much wisdom" and "much knowledge" - as indeed he did in the beginning; but as he grew in greater goods, honor and reputation he came to trust in self. Sadly, at the end, he was forced to confess:

"In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." Ecclesiastes 1:18.

He realized finally that he had failed in cleaving to that path of the just, which, as he had earlier written:

"... is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18.

Let us keep hold of that clear and simple wisdom, light given by the Almighty, which alone leads to His "perfect day." Let us be trusting in and satisfied with the Father's wisdom, determinedly avoiding that which could take us from His way which is narrow, but which holds such beauty and promise. Let us never forget Solomon's own words of wondrous hope:

"He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good." Proverbs 19:8.

J.A.DeF.

MUNITIONS OF WAR (1917)

Extracts from a letter circulated privately by V. Hall

"That this question is assuming a serious aspect is evident to all of us. That it is likely to affect the brotherhood more seriously in the future than in the past, is also evident; especially should the war continue necessitating the re-organisation of the entire country on war basis, which at the moment seems more than likely. To say the least of it the situation is menacing --- the department of munitions is tending to coalesce with the War Department - to pass out of the region of private enterprise altogether into the hands of the Military authorities themselves: and who shall say it will not eventually become an integral part of Army Service - "an integral part of an organisation which is kept for the special purpose of fighting" - to which it is already veering? In which case we could not conscientiously enter the service or remain in it to make a thread to a shoe latchet.

This question is persistent and must be settled, and now is the time to settle it once for all while the door is still ajar. First and foremost we have the honour of the Truth to uphold and the service of Christ to fulfil diligently and with our whole heart. To provide for our own honesty in the sight of all men comes second. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" commanded our beloved Lord and Master, who in His teaching and by His example showed that every consideration of our natural life must be subordinated to, and controlled by, the Right-wiseness of God as expressed in His word. In other words that our lives - comprising all our thoughts and actions - must be subordinated to and controlled by the revealed will of God - "Not my will, but thine be done" - is the only consistent attitude for us to observe being brethren of Christ and children of God.

"Doubtful disputations" cannot long exist where this is fully recognised and acted upon. As far as we are concerned the morality and therefore the legitimacy of any particular work, or service, is not to be determined by the fact that such work or service is legitimate abstractly considered, or because such work is lawful under some considerations. No, the moral law by which our actions must be regulated and controlled, if we are to obtain God's favour unto eternal life, is on a higher plane altogether. The question, 'does such and such an occupation, or service, uphold the honour and dignity and holiness of our Divine profession?' is the true touchstone by which the legitimacy of our work or service is to be determined. If our occupation does not enable us to uphold the honour and dignity of our profession; if our occupation becomes 'a cause of reproach', if our work has developed an 'appearance of evil' - in the altered circumstances and conditions of the present

crisis; if our work is now regarded by the Gentiles as inconsistent with our profession; if our present occupation in consequence 'gives the adversary occasion to speak reproachfully'; if our work gives offence to the brethren, and is 'a cause of suffering to the innocent'; if it is likely to jeopardise our future, freedom and liberty in Christ Jesus, in compromising our position 'in the eyes of the authorities' (who would not scruple to seize upon any apparent inconsistency in our attitude, or fail to use to the uttermost any precedent afforded by a few of our brethren's present occupation on high explosives or instruments of destruction - should opportunity offer or the exigencies of an evil situation make it possible for them to bring us or our brethren elsewhere into bondage); if our present work is so exacting in its demands as to jeopardise spiritual growth, or cause us to neglect our work and service of Christ in the Gospel as His accredited representatives in the present evil world; no matter if the work be only farm work or food raising the law of Christ and therefore the highest reason demands - yea, God Himself demands, does He not - that we should change our occupation without regard to the consequences of temporary loss and inconvenience? "The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment."



"BUT LET EVERY MAN PROVE HIS OWN WORK..."

(Galatians 6:4)

Paul in writing to his Galatian brethren implores them to remember their responsibility toward one another as members of God's household, notwithstanding that each must first examine his own works before he can spiritually help another. Our verse summarizes this thought:

"But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

Galatians 6:4.

To prove is to test or examine, imputing the ability to discern one's work by comparison to the standard set forth by the Spirit - the Lord Jesus Christ. The thought is used by Paul as he urges an honest self-examination before partaking of the symbols of the Lord's body at His Table each first day of the week:

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." I Corinthians 11:28.

This sixth chapter, written by Paul, addresses the outworking of a new life in Christ, which along with the blessings of hope and care from the Father, gives the responsibility of being our brother's

keeper, all done in love lest any should perish from that promise set forth. He begins by saying:

“Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Galatians 6:1.

Before another’s burden can be eased, each must examine himself critically, aware of the flesh’s propensity for self-deception, to be certain he is walking aright by the Spirit’s standards.

“For every man shall bear his own burden.”

Galatians 6:5.

This is a different word for “burden” used here, giving the thought of freight or capacity as with cargo on a ship. Just as a railroad car has the load limit written on its side, so too is our limit known by God, and being mindful of our frailty He will not put upon us more than we can bear but does require that the capacity be faithfully and fully utilized.

To help restore or mend another spiritually is an obligation taken at baptism as one becomes a member of Gods household of faith, to be done in the spirit of Christ, with meekness and gentleness, as we ourselves would like to be treated. To help ease the burdens of others and share in the labors of the ministry is a privilege and responsibility that Paul exhorts those in Thessalonica not to neglect:

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”

I Thessalonians 5:14-15.

In this regard, Paul’s brethren at Corinth were slow to extend the practical help needed in the ministry, and so, in love Paul wrote to show them their lack, citing the example of the Macedonians:

“Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to

the saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the word, and unto us by the will of God."

II Corinthians 8:1-5.

We prove the sincerity of our love by our own works done for others, as we make ourselves aware of their needs:

"Hereby we perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

I John 3:16-18.

Proving one's own work with self-discernment is so important that it is a primary requirement for any one to be given the office of an elder:

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.

And let these also first be proved: then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."

I Timothy 3:1,2,10.

This ongoing exercise is used by the Father to measure those who are struggling in faith to be pleasing to Him. How important as this refining process continues that each one look deep within his own heart to prove his own work.

M.C.S.

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World

“Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?” (Isaiah 29:15-16)

This age, by its attitude, says in effect, “Who seeth us?” God is not in all their thoughts. The schools teach evolution, which promulgates the theory “He made me not.” The lack of reverence for the teaching of the Word of God has brought about a sorry condition of things. A “turning of things upside down.” According to a recent survey there is unfaithfulness in one in three marriages, and this trend is getting worse. Divorce, as a result is on the increase. Meanwhile the young are becoming more violent, because the curb on them, at one time exercised by the more responsible parents, is lacking in a considerable number of cases. A recent report stated that one in eight youngsters aged 11 to 15 were drinking alcohol regularly, and one in seven of them has tried drugs. Their life-style was also promiscuous. On the top of this there is glue-sniffing and abuse of other solvents. Yet children have more to entertain them than ever before, with a proliferation of home games via Computer and Video. Unfortunately they are becoming addicted to video games, playing them up to 30 hours a week. With this kind of life style it is not surprising that the young also indulge themselves in violence.

A taxi driver writing of his experiences for a National Newspaper recently gave a frightening picture of things. He had picked up two young men and noticing one of them smoking said “I’d be grateful if you didn’t smoke.” Typically the young thug revealed his inability to control himself by a foul mouthed reply which meant “I’ll do what I like.” But his rudeness was not sufficient for him, for he reached for the handbrake of the car, and caused it to stall. “What are you doing?” said the taxi driver. “Shut it” he said. “I beg your pardon?” said the taxi driver. The reply was, “I said, grandad --- shut your mouth!” Shouting also at the same time to three more of his friends to get into the back of the taxi, making it overloaded. The taxi driver was then told “for the last time” to get on with his driving. The driver who suffers with his chest, said “I’m sorry, I can’t breathe.” He also told the thug that he was only licenced to carry four passengers and there were now five crammed in the vehicles. “You know what your problem is, grandad?” said this violent

young man, "You're old grandad, that's your problem. You shouldn't be allowed --- you're just too old!" Three of the doors of the car were then thrust open and out came this young mob to the driver's window. One thrusting his hand in to get the taxi driver's ignition key, which the driver had managed to hide. Angered by not finding it, he dragged out the taxi man onto the roadway, but by this time the thug was ready to fight anyone, so when one of the young men said, "Leave him alone," they began fighting amongst themselves. The driver thought this was his chance to get away, so he got up and started the engine, but was just not quick enough for the tough, who, with the words of an oath, smashed the side window of the taxi with his fist and grabbed the key, so again stalling the engine. If the police had not arrived at that point the taxi driver may not have survived this dreadful violence. But this is only one example of what is happening all the time. The more responsible civilians are now afraid to speak out and admonish young people over their behaviour for fear of retaliation, sometimes planned for days later, and which knows no bounds.

Surely, things are now turned upside down? But there will be an end to such works of evil. Wicked behaviour is as the potter's clay; it is coming from men that are "unformed"; brutish and ignorant, dull like a lump of clay. Without even the slightest semblance of the decency, which the scriptures hold up as so necessary for the welfare of mankind.

The ancient prophecy gives hope in context with its warning words as follows"-

"--- in that day (the day of the Lord) shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the HOLY ONE of Israel."

(Isaiah 29:18-19)

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

All are thankful for the steady recovery of our sister from necessary and successful surgery. The prayers of many have been answered in sustained recovery under our Father's care.

Invitations for the Prophecy booklet have been regularly mailed out over a period of nine months with a few responses.

The mailing after May 30th will be suspended for the summer but will be resumed in September, God willing.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

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

Successful medical treatment received by a Sister is a cause of profound gratitude.

At the time of writing we are also mindful of an arranged surgical operation for another Sister, to relieve pain and help mobility. The medical profession, of course, are skilled in these matters, but we believe there is a gracious overruling in our lives; and in such help we look to His overriding care.

Also in the work of His House we look for direction, and again indications which guide our efforts, give cause for thankfulness.