

JUNE 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"



"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"PURIFICATION"

"THE FREE LIFE THEORY"

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"PREDESTINATION"

**"SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE
WORLD"**

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"



All Communications

**W. G. Butterfield,
72 Thames Drive,
Biddulph,
Staffs.
ST8 7JF**

**J. A. DeFries,
146 Gardner Street,
Fredonia,
New York 14063
U.S.A.**

**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"BEARING HIS REPROACH"**

This morning our minds have been directed to three men sent by God: Nehemiah, Jonah, and Peter. To each one God gave a work; each in doing that work faced adversaries, and each reacted in his individual way. Considering their works can bring benefit, Brethren and Sisters, as we may have opportunity to serve God in a particular way. The first essential is effort to subdue our own flesh—with its carnal leanings, temptations and fears—which is inherently weak. Then, too, a work in His house is given that one may rise up to edify, to sustain and to strengthen that house in whatever way the Almighty permits. Each one of whom we have read had an opportunity important in God's purpose. It was also important to their own hope of salvation! We may feel our work is very minor compared to that of Nehemiah, Jonah, and Peter. Must we not realise that whatever God gives is important to His view of His children? He does know our frame being but dust, yet He places upon us that which He knows we are able to perform, both in our daily living and also in our duties for the Truth. He oversees; He tests. He is also a merciful Father, giving strength as needed. He has called us to be His very own, now in probation, but His eternal sons and daughters if we can learn and conform to His Son's example—the One whom we have particularly remembered a few moments ago. Let us look closely at these three men to whom our attention is being directed in our portions for today.

NEHEMIAH—We do not know much about his background, but we are shown much concerning his mind and spirit. Although a captive, he had become cupbearer to Artaxerxes; King of Persia. This was an honorable responsibility for a Jew, a captive. It was a safe position for a worthy servant who benefited by the king's favor. Therefore, he was free from the persecution and reproach that many captive Jews might endure. In that position, no doubt brought about by God's hand, news came to him concerning the state of Jerusalem and of his people. They had been in subjection to Babylon since approximately 588 B.C. Many were allowed to return to Jerusalem under Jeshua and Zerubbabel, and nearly eighty years later, in the time of Ezra. Their situation was still precarious as a messenger from Jerusalem came to Nehemiah saying:

"... The remnant that are left ... are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire." Nehemiah 1:3.

Nehemiah wept, mourned, fasted and sought God's help:

"Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments... yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place (Jerusalem) that I have chosen to set my name there.

O LORD, ... be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name...."
Nehemiah 1:8,9,11.

Having done this, Nehemiah could have been content to remain in Babylon as cupbearer to Artaxerxes, sharing the feeling and fear for his brethren in Judah and Jerusalem. But he did more! With some danger to himself, he sought the king's help who, under God's hand, granted willing assistance by allowing Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem with letters from himself, materials for the work, and an armed escort to ensure his safe arrival. Grateful, Nehemiah followed through on the formidable task of rebuilding Jerusalem's devastated walls. Adversaries arose and threatened the work; other difficulties beset him. With faith and trust in God, the work was carried on as he urged his brethren to work together, and saw that they were armed against the adversary who was determined to hinder this work of God. Finally, with great labor:

"... the wall was finished... in fifty and two days.

And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof ... they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God."

Nehemiah 6:15-16.

In less than two months their concerted and willing labor was finished, confounding their "hinderers". Truly it was "wrought of our God" with His approval and their obedience and trust. This morning we have further read how, in obedience to the law read to them, those in Jerusalem rejoiced and kept the feast of tabernacles. Of this joyous occasion we read:

"And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness."
Nehemiah 8:17.

This was a return to obeying God's command to Moses after the deliverance from Egypt. It seems apparent that they had forsaken the dwelling in booths, which was an important part of the feast of tabernacles, until once again deliverance was granted and a remnant of Judah returned to their land from this latter captivity. How helped Nehemiah and those who returned from the Persian

captivity would feel as they entered into those booths for the appointed seven days, in remembrance and joyful thanksgiving to God. How encouraged we can be, Brethren and sisters, at the spirit of this steadfast leader, whose Hebrew name is "Nechem yah"—comfort of Yahweh. May not our comfort be as Nehemiah's if, as he did, we try to do God's will, whatever hardship and reproach may come? Let us do it, ever grateful for the privilege and promise.

JONAH—Now we turn to Jonah, known to all the world as an example of one bringing "bad luck" and therefore to be avoided. Yet, God has preserved this record, and chose him for a work:

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." Jonah 1:2.

Nineveh was a great power, the forerunner of Assyria, Babylon and Medo-Persia—all rabid adversaries of Israel. Can we imagine what the Ninevites might do to a Jew who came and cried against them? This must have come to Jonah's mind as he contemplated God's clear command: "Go to Nineveh." He tried to run away, to hide from God, but to no avail. He may have felt: It is too much; I can't do it. They will kill me; they hate Jews. Jonah feared the reproach and suffering that would surely come, and so he fled by ship from the Almighty. As we know, for this he suffered and, in terror, prayed for deliverance from the fish's belly. His prayer was heard, and he was rescued by his God. The Lord again said:

"Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." Jonah 3:2.

This time, in fear, Jonah did so, warning the wicked city of its approaching ruin within forty days, unless it repented of its evil works. Nineveh and its king "heard" and did repent. God revealed His mercy to those who heeded His word, even if they were not his chosen people. Instead of rejoicing at this, Jonah was "very angry" (Jonah 4:1), and asked God: "Take, I beseech thee, my life from me" (Verse 3). Why was he angry? Perhaps because his warning prophecy did not come to pass. He was not hailed as a great prophet. Or, he may have desired that Nineveh, Israel's great enemy, be destroyed. Whatever the reason, he was wrong, lacking in trust and submission that God would do His will. Jonah faced a different adversary than did Nehemiah. He faced his own self-will, his fleshly thinking, his lack of trust, and a stubborn determination and pride. This record is preserved to help us reverence our God, and trust in Him when he in effect directs us to "Go to Nineveh". We have our own "Ninevehs" with which the Almighty tests us. Will

we go? Will we obey, believing that whatever comes, our Father knows and His purpose will be accomplished? Perhaps not as we may have thought, but as it was in God's purpose with Nineveh, which was in time destroyed, as the prophet Nahum reveals. The message of Jonah for us is to put aside our own thinking, go with God, deny fears and doubts, and obey, without looking for self-recognition.

PETER—Lastly, we have this morning considered Peter's words:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”

I Peter 4:12-14.

To be “partakers” means sharing in a fellowship of Christ's struggles, pain and sorrows. Peter speaks from experience with Jesus—sad ones—for we recall how he wept at having denied Him, failing to fellowship His suffering at that critical time. We remember too Peter's earlier reply to Jesus' statement that He must “suffer many things ... be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matthew 16:21). Peter, in response:

“... began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

Matthew 16:22.

He did not fully perceive Jesus' calling and work as the Lamb of God. In misguided love, he thought to be helping Jesus, comforting Him. Jesus' answer to Peter was:

“... Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence (stumbling block) unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

Matthew 16:23.

Unwittingly Peter was a satan, an adversary, as Jesus agonized to do His Father's will. He “savoured” or had set his affection on fleshly hopes rather than godly convictions, and thus failed to strengthen Christ by sharing His suffering. Further, as Jesus was led, bound, to the high priest's palace, Peter followed, but “afar off” (Matthew 26:58), remaining outside the palace until the Apostle John brought him in. It was just after this that Peter denied his Master three times. Why was this so? Did he fear for his life through

being associated with Jesus, afraid to fellowship His sufferings, to share His reproach?

After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared and sought to help Simon Peter with a searching question:

"... Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me...?" John 21:15.

At Peter's reply: "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee"—Jesus answered: "Feed my lambs." When Jesus twice repeated these words, Peter was grieved, feeling that He misjudged him. However, he had failed to savor the things of God. Peter, obviously troubled by Jesus' words, must have turned them over in his mind with anguish. Later, however, strengthened and more perceptive, and sustained by the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, he grew in faith, in trust, and was converted, as Jesus had previously told him:

"... I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:32.

Peter gave his life, feeding the Lord's sheep, strengthening his brethren. As Peter grew in his determination to bear reproach for the name of Jesus, he would remember Jesus' words:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile (reproach) you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11-12.

These three men—Nehemiah, Jonah and Peter—were given a work by God. As they went about it, battling adversaries, including their own fleshly thinking, what a help they are to us today, warning and yet sustaining us in our on-going determination to seek the Spirit to overcome the flesh, desiring to perform His work faithfully, and rejoicing as we remember Paul's words:

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

Hebrews 13:12-14.

J.A.DeF.

PURIFICATION

We meet each first day of the week to remember the Lord Jesus and His sacrifice, endeavoring to walk after His example in faith. However, in order to partake of the promise of eternal blessing granted through His covering, our converted selves must be nourished and purged daily of sin, else the old man of sin will thrive and increase as John reminds:

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”
I John 3:2-3.

To be called the children of God is a rare privilege, requiring an ongoing work of purification from the flesh’s influence. To purify means to make clean or sanctify, and all who aspire unto the hope of Israel, must be spiritually cleansed during their time of probation—making this their life’s work by shunning the world’s ways and all its fleshly gratification. This is so different from man’s natural instincts, as Paul reminds of the importance of keeping separate from the world’s various seductions:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

II Corinthians 6:14-18.

Those who struggle to be separate are told, “come out from among them...and I will receive you”. How can this be achieved? Paul continues:

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

II Corinthians 7:1.

Here again is the work of purification emphasized—a cleansing from all filthiness of the flesh in order to attain unto the hope of approval. This separation of flesh and spirit is a lifelong process, as exhibited by the life of the Lord Jesus. We know it is not possible to follow His example precisely, for we daily fall short of the perfection He accomplished. Yet here God's mercy and love is extended, that forgiveness may be granted through His covering when we fail, and realizing it, seek atonement. We know flesh cannot please Him, and so with every struggle and small victory against the flesh's pull, the spirit man grows a little stronger, better able to face the next test.

The Pharisees made an outward show of piety and devotion, but it was merely a facade, concealing a spirit lacking in humility and brotherly love. Through the Spirit's power, Jesus knew their hearts and chastised them for their deception and their unwillingness to purify the inner man:

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are are full of extortion and excess.

Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."
Matthew 23:25-26.

How can one's heart be purged or cleansed? Paul explains in his letter to Titus:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,
we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
Titus 2:11-14.

Only those actively struggling in that purifying process can hope to be joined to Christ—to be called His brethren and sisters at His return. The world is blind to the hope of Israel and Christ's place as its future king—it is an entity unto itself, its people living for the moment with no thought of restraint or discipline upon their fleshly impulses. Those who struggle to follow after Him in love must walk differently, as James reminds:

"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. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

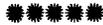
Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

James 4:7-10.

Let us in humility endeavor to walk after His example, working to cleanse ourselves by denying all fleshly lusts, so that when He returns, we may hope to be raised, like Him, to perfection.

M.C.S.



THE FREE LIFE THEORY

Controversy, particularly in Australia, continues on the subject of the Nature of Christ. It is interesting to note what was being said upon this subject over 100 years ago:-

"That the body of Jesus did not inherit the curse of Adam, though derived from him through Mary; and was therefore not mortal; that this natural life was "free"; that in this "free" natural life, he "earned eternal life", and might, if he had so chosen, have avoided death, or even refused to die upon the cross, and entered into eternal life alone; his death being the act of his own free will, and not in any sense necessary for his own salvation; that his sacrifice consisted in the offering up of an unforfeited life, in payment of the penalty incurred by Adam and his posterity, which was eternal death; that his unforfeited life was slain in the room and stead of the forfeited lives of all believers of the races of Adam."

The above reasoning is given in the October edition of the *Christadelphian* of 1873, under the heading of the "Renunciationist Theory", which was followed by R. Roberts' challenge to it, and condemnation of it. What was implied, was that God who was angry with sinners was propitiated on their behalf by a blood sacrifice, namely the death of Christ who had not sinned. He substituted himself to die for their sins, so ransoming them by His own giving of His life.

Writing on the subject of sacrifice for propitiation, it is significant to find what Dr. J. Thomas says about this in Eureka:-

"- - - Judaized Heathenism constituted what Paul calls 'a lie', and 'the Mystery of Iniquity'—a system of falsehood formative of the clerical order, which gave them a parentage like that of Jezebel. The principles styled Baal, (for Baal having no real existence, was only a system of ideas, so called, that lorded it over those who acknowledged it,) gave origin to the clergy who worship Baal and preach him everywhere. The Sidonians believed in immortal souls, in their going to heaven at death, and in a place of torment, where the wicked burned in fire eternally. They also believed in sacrifice to propitiate the Deity, and in making long and noisy prayers, by which to induce him to hear them. Our clergy have not advanced one step beyond this since the days of Jezebel. She believed these things, and were she personally in existence now, she could have no scruples in becoming a member of any clergyman's church - - -. They believe in a Jesus of whom she had never heard; but their belief in this other Jesus whom Paul did not preach, does not at all interfere with their hearty adhesion to the Baal-System of Ideas. Their eyes are full of Jezebel, and she was full of Baal."

These are very telling words, Dr. Thomas showing the error of believing in a Christ whose sacrifice appeased the Almighty. Because of the controversy with "The Renunciators" the following appeared in the January issue of the Christadelphian of 1874, written by J.J. Andrews:-

"1/ That we believe that the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ, being the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the fruit of David's loins, and made of a Jewish woman, thereby inherited the consequences of Adam's sin, including the sentence of death passed upon the whole race of which he was a member, and that therefore he did not possess a life free from the Edenic Condemnation; that through having God as his Father, he was enabled, although tempted in all points like as we are, to render perfect obedience to the Divine Will; and that in consequence of that obedience he was raised from the dead and endowed with eternal life by the power of God.

2/ That in view of the Apostolic injunctions requiring us to be of one mind, especially in regard to the doctrine of Christ, those who cannot endorse the foregoing resolution, and believing that

Jesus Christ came in the flesh free from the Edenic sentence of death, are hereby requested to withdraw from fellowship until they become of one mind with us on the subject."

The Renunciationist ideas have continued in a community called the "Nazarene Fellowship" which includes among its membership a number of former Christadelphians. But this is not a Christadelphian sect; however they believe that the "Renunciationist" theory is right, and important, as propagated by its introducer Edward Turney. But this man's ideas have also emerged in Christadelphia from time to time, being spoken of as "clean flesh" doctrine.

Of course the truth of the matter is that Christ came to uphold that God was right in the condemnation of sin in the flesh, and to show forth the infinite goodness and mercy of God in allowing a way of escape from death through forgiveness in His Son. Reasoning against the notion of Christ's "Free Life" is well summed up in the following proposition:-

"Paul says that God sending forth His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, 'condemned sin in the flesh'. (Rom. 7:3), how could this have been done if there be no such thing as 'sin in the flesh', and if Christ was 'not sinful flesh but a likeness of it?'"

A BIBLE CLASS
"FOR UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN
OF HIM SHALL BE MUCH REQUIRED"

(Luke 12:48)

The Lord Jesus often used parables to teach, as He did in our verse under consideration, which emphasized the need to be prepared for His return, "for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." (Luke 12:40).

In this parable He spoke of a wise steward who:

"...his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." Luke 12:42-44.

However, should the steward be foolish and neglect his responsibility to the master, abusing the goods with which he has been entrusted, then will he be held accountable in the day of his lord's return:

"The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes. . . . For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Luke 12:46-48.

The duties of a steward are greater than that of a servant—he holds a position of trust, having been given the responsibility of his master's goods—to provide for his household "their portion of meat in due season", or sustenance for all, as would his lord. This brings to mind Joseph's position as steward in Potiphar's house:

"And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured."

Genesis 39:2-6.

Much responsibility was given to Joseph as a steward or overseer in Potiphar's house, so much so that Potiphar, "knew not ought he had save the bread which he did eat". All had been given over to Joseph's care, such was the position of trust he held with his master. When Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph he:

"... refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Genesis 39:8-9.

He was trusted by Potiphar and was aware of his responsibilities as a faithful steward. Therefore, in integrity and respect for his master, as well as his love for the ways of God, he refused her wicked entreaty.

We too are given much by a merciful Father, and if endeavouring to be good stewards will use that which has been given into our care, that its power may increase and abound within, giving glory to Him:

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

I Peter 4:10.

What is the gift we have received? We are stewards of His grace—the gift of His Son as a means of eternal life to all, who believing in Christ's covering, endeavor to follow after His example, as Paul urgently reminded his Ephesian brethren:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us,
Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

And hath reaised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:4-8.

In writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, Paul likewise taught of this great gift:

"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. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." I Timothy 1:6-7.

To "stir up" means "to keep alive the fire", and if we are faithful stewards, our labor and love is to keep the fire of the spirit burning within, not letting it go out through neglect. It must be ever burning to consume the flesh, as exemplified by the fire which burned continuously on the altar of sacrifice:

"And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings.

The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." Leviticus 6:12-13.

As long as we constantly bring the sacrifice of our living, putting to death the old man of sin "dying daily", that fire is there to burn as a sweet smell to God, keeping in mind "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required". As stewards of the Most High, we have been given the greatest gift possible, therefore we must faithfully deal with our Master's goods with wisdom and responsibility, knowing He is watching and looking for our faithful stewardship in return.

M.C.S.

PREDESTINATION

"--- whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate ---."

We are in receipt of a letter that sadly thinks back upon tragic circumstances of infant deaths as a result of disease or accident. Of young people whose intelligence has been blocked by infirmity or premature death. As our correspondent declares "these all died because of God's righteous judgment." That judgment is defined in Paul's declaration:-

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression ---." Romans 5:12-14.

This judgment takes in all, in its scope, whether infant, young person, one in full vigour, or the aged. It is the condemnation of sinful flesh.

A question might be raised, could there be a subsequent hope for a dead child who had not reached an age to understand what God has offered for salvation in Christ? It is at this point that the words of Paul to the Romans come to our aid:-

"We are saved by hope --- we know that all things work together for good to them that love God --- called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son ---. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Romans 8:24-30.

We see from these witnesses of Truth that there is no responsibility placed upon those who don't know what the law of God requires. But on the other hand without "hope" which is a result of being "called", salvation cannot be attained.

Could there be a second chance through resurrection to mortal life, some may say? But how could there be? "In that he (Christ) died, he died unto sin once" (Romans 6:10) There is no second efficacious sacrifice, for some future time, that failing perishing humanity may be given a "second chance".

The conclusion therefore must be that infants and others that perish in youth are outside the scope of God's eternal purpose. That some are predestinated to be part of that purpose is clear, "--- whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate ---." There are clear testimonies to this principle and the following is an example:-

"And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord - - -. And he cried against the altar - - -, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee - - -." I Kings 13:1-2.

Josiah was foreknown, and his work was foreknown long before he was born. Therefore he was predestinated, for the prophecy, being the word of God, could not fail, and so it also is with all the faithful whether named in the Bible or not.

David's reaction to the death of his child is an exhortation of submission and acceptance, as follows:-

"- - - because by this deed thou has given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die - - -. David therefore besought God for the child - - -. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died - - -. When David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead - - -. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat - - -." 2 Samuel 12:14-20.

When David was questioned about his taking of food when it was expected his grief would be the most acute, his reply gives profound instruction to us:-

"While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?
But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." 2 Samuel 12:22-23.

So the child died, ignorant of God's purpose, and not responsible to the knowledge of Truth. Perishing because sinful flesh is condemned to die, passing away because that child was outside the scope of God's eternal purpose.

Where then, may it be said, does "free choice" come into this? Was not that truly the position in "The Beginning" that man could choose to obey or disobey? It is so, and has been so ever since. But it is necessary to realise that The Most High in His sublime greatness, though giving free choice knows beforehand the direction

which His creatures will take, or would take. God in His omnipotence knows the future of all. Job realised this when he said, "--- he knoweth the way that I take ---." Job 23:10.

God knows the potential of everyone, and those who have sufficient inclination to respond to the call of Truth, will be given the opportunity of doing so. The fact that some fail of the grace extended by the Spirit, is because they choose not to maintain their ways before God.

The focus then should not be upon the position of those who pass away without knowledge, but on those who do, and have lived in hope. As the Apostle says:-

"--- he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved ---. In whom also we have obtained in inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Ephesians 1:4-11.

This wonderful purpose of the Most High must be accepted as just and true. Man needs to realise the lowliness of his position, and uphold that God is perfectly just, and not strive in his thinking to be against the revealed purpose of The Eternal. As Isaiah says:-

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?"
Isaiah 45:9.

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World

“--- the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: --- and upon all pleasant pictures (pictures of desire).” (Isaiah 2:12 & 16)

The politics of this troubled world seems to have had some success in the last few years as follows:-

1989: The end of the Cold War. The Berlin Wall brought down. Soviet troops left Afghanistan.

1990: East and West Germany re-united. Diplomatic relations restored between Britain and Argentina. Communism lost power in Lithuania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

1991: Ukraine voted for independence. Iraq defeated by a United Nations confederacy after its invasion of Kuwait.

1992: Civil war ended in El Salvador. An Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro looked at measures for the protection of the world environment. In Israel Yitzak Shamir was replaced by the more moderate Yitzak Rabin, with the hope of a Palestinian settlement.

1993: Israel's new Premier Yitzak Rabin shook hands with Yasser Arafat the Palestinian leader, in Washington. Europe became a single market.

1994: Nelson Mandela, the leader of the majority coloured population, became first president of a South Africa freed from Apartheid. The GATT Treaty (on trade) was signed by the political representatives of 125 Countries. Israel and the PLO signed an agreement for peace.

But though there has been political success there is still an ongoing decline in human behaviour. The actions of young people undoubtedly cause concern. Daily there are accounts of young people attacking, not only each other, but also the elderly and the frail. What a catalogue of crime it all is, and the platitudes of child psychologists are quite lamentable in some instances.

Some of the comments about the behaviour of the young are illuminating, the following are token examples of viewpoints and of the admitted deteriorating trend:-

“As the mother of three sons, I know that when the clock strikes 12 on their 13th birthday, your golden-haired boy becomes the creature from the black lagoon.

It is called growing up, and it's about defying authority, standing up for yourself, making decisions and claiming independence. And being as boorish about it as possible.”

Another mother, speaking of her son age 15, said:-

"He would prefer never to leave his room, 'If it were possible he'd have his food posted there."

A psychotherapist commented:-

"Wanting to be grown up but not having the confidence to wave goodbye to childhood causes problems—even minor crime. It's a time for mistakes. But it's appropriate they make these mistakes now—then perhaps they won't make them later."

A psychoanalyst and counsellor, giving guidance to parents, has said:-

"Don't worry too much. If you've done a good job up to the age of 12 in teaching them right and wrong, been loving and consistent, you will be all right. Be old-fashioned when needed; don't compromise on drugs or risky situations. Be prepared to negotiate—on bedtimes, pocket money. Explain that drink is a drug that can lead to problems, but let them have a glass of wine or beer at home. Be prepared to find that things have changed since you were young. Don't expect an easy ride if you are an authoritarian it will only get worse."

Expressions such as these, come from people who are more indulgent than in former times. The new psychological theories have brought about a loosening of discipline, and some of the coming generation have responded by badly treating their parents. One young person at the time of writing, a schoolboy, unknown to his parents, took his father's credit card, and went on a trip to Malaysia, on his father's account, and when eventually was brought back, wanted to know what the fuss was about. Another ordered pop concert tickets with his parent's credit card. "By the time he was caught he had seen them all," said a relative. A mother, speaking of her daughter recently, said she had turned into a horror overnight, influenced by a group she came into contact with when going into further education. The mother found substances in her daughter's room that indicated that others had joined with her daughter in certain smoking habits, which were a cause for her to feel alarmed. A psychiatrist, when consulted, said the parents had been too laid back, and therefore their daughter had to go that much further to rebel.

It is a gloomy picture and an obviously continuing decline of moral standards. Some have voiced that television programmes,

and video films, are having a detrimental effect upon young minds. Certainly there is more television than ever before with a multiplying of programmes by satellite channels. And shops are now filled with video cassettes. The horrors of some films undoubtedly must have a coarsening and hardening effect, as children become used to seeing portrayals of vicious acts and of blood lettings, cleverly made to appear real in startling colours as never before.

The peoples of the world have become accustomed to these things as part of their way of life, forgetting God's concern for His good earth, who has declared that the day of the Lord of hosts shall be:

“--- upon every one that is proud --- and upon all pictures of desire.”

Isaiah 2:12 & 16.

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

Response to monthly invitations offering the "Prophecy" booklet has been especially encouraging. This is a small but continuing witness to God's purpose. We are grateful to be so permitted.

Ongoing counsel with our Manchester brethren is most helpful and a token of the unity without which the work would not prosper nor please God, a reminder that in the multitude of counsellors (purposes) are established. (Proverbs 15:22).

Please note change of address on cover.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

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

Requests continue from various places for our booklet on the Doctrine of Fellowship.

The work also goes on in the endeavour to witness generally of God's great purpose with this good earth as revealed by Biblical prophecy.

We are grateful for the counsel of our Brethren from across the seas concerning a particular work which requires careful deliberation.