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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

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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
PRISONERS OF HOPE**

As we listen to God's word through Zechariah to those few in Jerusalem laboring to build again His nouse, we bring to mind their situation. God's people had been captive in Babylon for seventy years, as He ordained, because of their failure to obey His commandments. Now, in accordance with His promise, they were permitted to return to Jerusalem as the Lord moved Cyrus king of Persia to declare:

"... The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem....

Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, ... and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." Ezra 1:2-3.

About fifty thousand returned and began this great work of building. However, strong adversaries arose and caused that work to cease. The Almighty, mindful of His people's need, sent His prophets Haggai and Zechariah, to stir them up to resume the work. His message to those workers was to put away any fear of their adversaries and to remember that He, the Almighty God, was with them. We have read the result as Jeshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor led their brethren in getting on with the building, sustained and inspired by the prophet's words:

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, king of Persia." Ezra 6:14.

In God's mercy the words which so uplifted and inspired our brethren to resume and complete their divinely-given work, are preserved for us. Let us give them our earnest heed, placing ourselves in their situation. Cannot we too be lifted up in our work of edifying His house now, in the hope of becoming part of that eternal house of God when Jesus returns? Our recent reading speaks of this hope:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just,

and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zechariah 9:9.

Israel then had no king as they labored there in Jerusalem, subject to Gentile whims. But they had God's promise, the sure mercies covenanted with David, of a son, a king, a throne, a kingdom, and a house. Even as Zechariah spoke, Zerubbabel their governor of the line of David was there to lead (Matthew 1:12). The thoughtful could discern from his presence that God's purpose and promise were indeed viable before their eyes, even in the midst of captivity and oppression. They were exhorted to "rejoice greatly" and "shout". How difficult to do this in their dire circumstances: the work stopped by the great power of the adversary. Why should they rejoice and shout—or to triumph, as the word implies? God reminded them of their hope:

"... behold, thy King cometh unto thee...."

Their King, their Messiah, the promised Redeemer, seed of Abraham, and greater son of David was sure to come. Look to that hope, keep it before your eyes, and you will be sustained, was God's message to His embattled people. Reinforcing Zechariah's words, Paul helps us also to envision that promised day when:

"... the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:

... and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

I Thessalonians 4:16-18.

Through God's word, seen in Zechariah, and in Paul's writings also, we are reminded to keep our eyes fastened on the greater picture, the glorious and sure hope set before us, enabling one to look beyond present hard circumstances to the time when the King will return. Jesus Himself encouraged His brethren to discern present events which portend His coming:

"... when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Luke 21:28.

Let us not keep our mind's eye fastened to the earth, to present things, but rather, look ahead to that hope which is so sure. David did this as he exclaimed:

THE REMNANT

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; ... and the King of glory shall come in."
Psalms 24:7.

Zechariah too reminded our brethren of these wonders:

"... he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."
Zechariah 9:10.

Lift up your heads, rejoice, shout! How improbable such might have seemed to those in Jerusalem, yet it was promised by the Almighty and thus it was and is sure. God further encouraged:

"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."
Zechariah 9:11-12.

He provided hope of escape, a sure deliverance. How? by the "blood of thy covenant", His son's very life, the promised Messiah. Their King did come, and will again, in glory. By the conquering of His flesh nature, a great victory, the covenant of the seed promised to Abraham and David was fulfilled, a seed which would "deliver thy prisoners (of sin and death) out of the pit."

Prisoners in a pit remind us of Joseph cast into a pit by his jealous brethren. In that dark place he feared for his life and yet was sustained, trusting in God and remembering the promises to his fathers; remembering too the visions given to him. In that dark and empty hole, so like a grave, he would plead in faith for deliverance—truly a "prisoner of hope."

Now we turn to Jeremiah, another who witnessed of his hope and trust in God, and was cast into a dungeon, threatened with death. Yet, sustained by hope, he was delivered:

"I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon (pit).
Thou hast heard my voice: ...
Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not:
O LORD, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life."
Lamentations 3:55-58.

God does in mercy sustain those who are prisoners of hope, delivering as they turn to Him.

We are all sons of Adam, Brethren and Sisters, made prisoners by the law of sin and death, condemned to die because of this. We have, however, the promise of deliverance from the grave through the life of Jesus Christ poured out in perfect obedience. In the grave three days, He rose again and is now at the right hand of God to mediate for His brethren. He is our hope, our fortress, our refuge in time of trouble, the One of whom Zechariah exhorted:

“Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: ...”
Zechariah 9:12.

A strong hold is a fortress, a fenced city, a wall, a refuge. Can a greater such be found than the One who has so promised “by the blood of thy covenant”?

David, trusting in that same covenant, cried out in hope:

“Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.
The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;
Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.” Psalm 28:1,7,9.

This man, a prisoner of hope, knew great joy in God’s merciful promise. It was his salvation in time of affliction and distress. David continues in Psalm 30:

“I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up....
O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.
O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.
... in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Psalm 30:1-5.

And so with Zechariah these thoughts continue:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: ...”
Zechariah 9:9.

This hope is our hope, Brethren and Sisters! We have remembered His first coming, His life, His victory at the Table this

morning, enabling us to wait and look more eagerly with hope to His second coming when every faithful prisoner of hope will be released from the grave. John saw this in vision as the Lord Jesus:

“... opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit...

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power.

... and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold....”
Revelation 9:2,3,7.

Let us go back to our brethren in Jerusalem who, inspired and enlivened by the prophets' words, again took up the work of building God's house, putting aside their own work, their fears, and doubts. With this inspiring message to increase their zeal, the house was soon finished, all by God's help and promise. Zechariah reminded them:

“The LORD of hosts shall defend them; ... they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.

And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.” Zechariah 9:15-16.

As prisoners of hope, let us, Brethren and Sisters, lift up our heads, looking to the freedom which is promised. Then there shall be, as never before, great rejoicing and shouting in triumph as our “King cometh ... having salvation.”

J.A.DeF.

THE WICKED IS DRIVEN AWAY

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death". Proverbs 14:32.

How often we find in our study of the Proverbs, a comparison between righteousness and its attributes, in contrast to the wickedness of man's flesh nature. Through Solomon's wisdom, we are allowed to further examine this important spiritual teaching that we may grow in a greater understanding of God, and what He requires of His people:

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death." Proverbs 14:32.

The word "wickedness" comes from a prime root "to be wrong" or "to spoil". Solomon explains that the wicked or those in wrong are "driven away", or pushed down as that word "driven" means. In contrast to this thought our verse continues, "but the righteous hath hope in his death", implying there is no hope in death for the wicked.

The sentence of death was placed upon all flesh, both the wicked and the righteous—a legacy given all men because of Adam and Eve's disobedience. However in referring to the wicked, that word "driven" or pushed down, gives the thought of a burial with no hope of resurrection, unlike the righteous who have a hope or refuge, as that word means:

"In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge." Proverbs 14:26.

With no fear of God, the wicked are denied the hope of His care and the refuge granted of an escape from eternal death.

"Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place:
For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief." Proverbs 24:15-16.

To "fall into mischief" gives the thought of being completely overthrown by calamity, unlike the just man who though he falls, can recover himself through repentance and God's mercy:

"Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;
For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out." Proverbs 24:19-20.

God's prophet Jeremiah witnessed against the wicked, pointing out the evil doing of the priests who had a responsibility to lead the people in righteousness:

"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.
Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doing, saith the LORD.
For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.
Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD."
Jeremiah 23:1-2,11-12.

We can imagine the peril of one walking in a dark and slippery place with nothing for support. So is the way of the wicked, who because of their unwillingness to fear and obey, also lose the guiding support of His care and protection. Their year of visitation will come at Christ's judgment seat when all accountable will be judged according to their deeds. In that day, evil will receive its just recompense and the righteous, the blessing of eternal life as the reward of their obedience.

When the wicked pursued David, he cried unto God for deliverance, not taking matters into his own hands but patiently waiting for His righteous vengeance:

"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.
He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.
How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.
They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah. My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved."
Psalm 62:1-6.

David describes the wicked as a "tottering fence", the same word as used for "driven away" in our verse under consideration.

He waited upon the Almighty's care, confident of God's justice to come upon the oppressor. The righteous, striving to please Him, have the assurance of His care and a hope as they die in the promise of resurrection through Christ's covering. With perception of this promised covering, David in Psalm 9 entitles this pruned song, "To the chief Musician (the Victor) upon Muthlabben (the death of the Son).

"I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever."

Psalm 9:1-2,5.

It is because of that covering provided in the "death of the Son" that the righteous have the hope of resurrection and life eternal. God will not forsake His people, but has provided the death of His Son as a means of propitiation for sin and a means of escape from death for those who love and follow Him:

"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsion, Selah.

The wicked shall be turned into hell, (the grave) and all the nations that forget God."

Psalm 9:10,16-17.

Let us heed the instruction of the Psalmist contained in the words "Higgsion, Selah"—meditate upon it, considering the end of God's purpose.

M.C.S.



DOWIEISM

In the early days of the ecclesias of these last days, a certain one, George Dowie, came to prominence in Edinburgh. Not only did he have support in Scotland, but also in Yorkshire, Nottingham and South Wales. He produced the first Christadelphian hymn book, the "Disciples Choral Service of Bible Tunes."

His views however became over tolerant, and a letter written by David Watson, of Dundee (1866) revealed the degree of laxity that was developing, as follows:-

"As to the life question, I said that we of Dundee gave it very little prominence, so much so that I had never heard, or had paid no attention to the fact that men do not possess immortal souls, until I had been a considerable time in the church, and now I think that I have been engaged, either more or less, at the immersion of every one in Dundee, since I cast in my lot amongst them, and never has their opinion been asked on this subject. Only in one case, that of Thomas Scott, clerk, was it spoken of, and because he gave it a very prominent part in his confession, it was spoken of as an error, but we allow great liberty of conscience in such matters which are not essentials. You (or rather brother John) say that there is no future life except in Christ which is an assertion only, and a very unscriptural one, of which he ought to have been aware."

R. Roberts was very concerned about such a view, and the Birmingham Ecclesia following meetings in Edinburgh on the matter agreed the following resolution on 15 August 1866:-

"- - - the ecclesia having heard read to them, and having considered the report of a discussion on the bearing of the immortality of the soul on the one faith, which took place on Sunday, April 8th, Sunday, April 15th, and Sunday, May 6th, among those in Edinburgh styling themselves "Baptised Believers in the Kingdom of God", and meeting in Union Hall, 98 Southbridge, the ecclesia consider it their duty, as witnesses of the truth, to disavow and hereby disavow and refuse all connection with the said so-called "Baptised Believers in the Kingdom of God", and request the Secretary to write to George Dowie, Secretary of the community in question, apprising him, for the information of himself and the said community, of this their solemn decision."

R. Roberts personally went to Edinburgh in November of that year to interview Dowie and his "Brethren", chiding with him for tolerating belief in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, a personal devil, and eternal torments, the pre-existence of Christ, and in participating in politics. Courageously he told Dowie that he was undermining the foundations of Christadelphianism which had set them apart from other religious beliefs and practices.

Later R. Roberts declared that Dowie and his adherents:-
"--- makes a profession of the truth, but covertly gives it the

lie. It kisses it with the mouth, and with the hand stabs it to death. In words it protests friendship and agreement, but in actual working it makes greater havoc than the Adversary - - -."

R. Roberts had hoped to have had a detailed account of the discussion he had in Edinburgh, so that it could be published in his magazine. But the Dowieites in Edinburgh refused to allow it. Nevertheless on returning to Birmingham he wrote out from memory a report of what had taken place; the following is an example of how R. Roberts assessed the situation:-

"The Dowieites as a class, believe nothing with much cordiality or confidence. Uncertainty is the synonym of Dowieism, in reference to all divine things. They are not sure about anything, except a few things that it were worse than childishness to doubt. Their want of positiveness and enthusiasm is an insult to the truth; their ignorance of some first principles, is criminal in men assuming their position before the brotherhood. Their influence is a spiritual leprosy, which all earnest sons of God will flee. The next thing we have to say is, that in its attempted definition of "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ", there is an imperfectness and an indefiniteness incompatible with that clear and cordial state of enlightenment, which alone can form the basis of the fellowship they claim."

Throughout 1867 ecclesias took action to withdraw from Dowie and the "Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God". Dr. J. Thomas applauded this, having already commented:-

"What have Dowie, Duncan and Fordyce ever done, but to pervert the little truth they have picked up by the way. I know how things work there. Envy and jealousies will operate where the human heart is not subjugated wholly to the truth. The natural man is jealous of the spiritual man, and dislikes all that is not conformed to his own image."

In contemplating these events of well over a hundred years ago, is there not a grave lesson for the present? R. Roberts was bitterly attacked by some at the time for his forthright actions, but if he had not done so where would the Truth have been? But now in this later time we find "Dowieism" still persists. Note what "The Testimony" Magazine has declared:-

“It is believed that there are those within our community who would like to see it changed in the following ways:-

1/ A much reduced Statement of Faith. One suggestion is to have just four items as follows:

The nature of God.

The nature of man.

The return of Christ to reign on earth.

Baptism of believers.

This would leave the way clear for those who believe in, for example the pre-existence of Christ, a supernatural devil, the possession of the Holy Spirit, and the death of Christ as our substitute, to be members of our community. There would, for example, be no need to believe in the promises to Abraham and David, nor in the special role of Israel in God’s plan, nor in the necessity for Divine judgment. A much-weakened view on the inspiration of Scripture would also be permitted.

2/ Stop claiming to have “the Truth”, since at best we can only claim to have a better understanding of Bible doctrines than any other sect. The idea here seems to be that all the churches of Christendom to varying degrees hold right doctrine, but the Christadelphians have proceeded further down the road of right understanding than others.

3/ Have an open fellowship, that is, meetings to which any professing believer in Christ can come and partake of the bread and wine. Actual membership of ecclesias, which would be necessary in order, for example, to vote in ecclesial affairs or speak from the platform would, however, be limited to those accepting the reduced Statement of faith at 1 above.

4/ Stop judging other professing Christians, since we are told in the New Testament not to judge our brother. What is meant by judging others is saying that their beliefs are wrong, or that they must change them to be saved.”

The “Remnant” has this question to ask. What are the publishers of “The Testimony” magazine doing about this situation? They (The Testimony) believe (therefore they must know) that they have some in their “fellowship” who want to change to a much reduced Statement of Faith. This is “Dowieism” returned, which R. Roberts so faithfully resisted all those years ago.

THE REMNANT

A BIBLE CLASS

"... OTHERS SAVE WITH FEAR ..."

Jude 23

Jude, under the Spirit's inspiration, wrote this message to his brethren who, like himself, were:

"... sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:" Jude 1.

To those so blessed he warned:

"... it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

This reminder was necessary because of certain who were "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (V.4). Jude used the word contend, which comes from a root word meaning to agonize, and involves fighting, laboring, and most importantly, striving to maintain the purity of the truth "once delivered unto the saints." In Jude's time (about A.D. 66) the Word was in danger of being corrupted by ungodly men. He brings to our minds some of those who had been adversaries, and he then summarizes their evil work:

"These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Jude 12-13.

With these dangers in mind, this close associate of Jesus and the apostles exhorted those faithful "sanctified" ones:

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith...
Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 20-21.

Do we not all need the mercy of the Lord Jesus, His mediation, His redemption? For without it we are lost, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians ch.2:12). How can we build up ourselves in that essential faith? Paul helps us as he speaks to his

Ephesian brethren:

“... I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” Acts 20:32.

It is through His word that we can be strengthened and edified so that the hope is kept firm and strong:

“... built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;
In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:20-22.

It is in this living hope that we are to “earnestly contend (labor and agonize) for the faith.” Our Brother Jude gives us particular works by which we can keep ourselves in that love of God:

“And of some have compassion, making a difference:
And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” Jude 22-23.

We know that God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (II Peter 3:9).

In discerning one who is falling, in need of help or building up, has not God made it our duty and privilege to provide whatever is necessary to bring forth repentance and thereby restoration to the hope of salvation? Regarding this work, Jude is careful to instruct us: “of some have compassion, making a difference.” Jesus, in Matthew 18:23-35, spoke a parable about a servant who owed his king the enormous sum of ten thousand talents, but had not the means to repay. His master commanded that servant to be sold, his family also, and all his belongings. But when the poor servant begged for mercy and patience, promising that he would pay all:

“... the lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.”
Matthew: 18-27.

Later, however, that servant, unmindful of the mercy shown to him, in turn demanded of a fellowservant who owed him a small sum: “Pay me that thou owest” (100 pence), and cast him into prison when he could not (Verse 28). When the master learned of this

hardness he rebuked him:

“... O, thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, ...
Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy
fellovservant, even as I had pity on thee?”

Matthew 18:32-33.

Therefore the wicked servant was himself cast into prison,
and Jesus made clear:

“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if
ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their
trespasses.”

Matthew 18:35.

There must be compassion, realizing that any who strive to
serve the Lord God are “unprofitable” to Him—in constant need of
the Father’s compassion.

Jude continues to instruct how carefully we are to discern
“making a difference” or distinction:

“... others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire;
hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” Jude 23.

There are times when immediate, drastic action is needed to
save one who is in danger of perishing. “Pulling ... out of the fire”
involves a caring effort to gain, lest the fire destroy and there is loss
of spiritual life. In true love for that one in danger there could not
be neglect out of a false sense of “kindness”. For in addition, faithful
servants are their brothers’ keepers and as such have a responsibility
to be watchmen, as the Almighty reminded Ezekiel:

“... if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the
trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come,
and take any person from among them, he is taken away in
his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s
hand.

So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman ...
therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn
them from me.”

Ezekiel 33:6-7.

When a brother or sister is in imminent danger of the fire,
there must be fear and earnest desire to snatch him out, expending
careful strength and time in love for God and for him, to save—
“hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” For unless these
defiled garments are “made white in the blood of the Lamb”
(Revelation 7:14), the hope of salvation is lost.

Let us always be aware of our own failures, needing at times to be plucked out of danger; be aware, too, of God's mercy in providing His Son to do so as our Mediator. In response to that compassion, let us in loving gratitude and always with fear "earnestly contend" against the advisory—man's own flesh nature—whether it be the enemy within ourselves, or in another who is also struggling to walk in the way of eternal life.

J.A.Def.



**"TO THEM WHO BY PATIENT CONTINUANCE
IN WELL DOING" (Romans 2:7)**

This consideration and the context in which it is used, concerns those given the knowledge of God's word and who will consequently face His judgment, both Jew and Gentile, for as Paul reveals, on that day the great Judge will:

"render to every man according to his deeds:"

Romans 2:6.

Our verse goes on to say that God's mercy and approval at that throne of judgment will be granted to those:

"... who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:" Romans 2:7.

If glory, honor and immortality are what the man of spirit spends his life aspiring toward, God in His mercy will give him at the judgment exactly this—eternal life. This means an unceasing struggle against our carnal minds for they are:

"... contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;"

Romans 2:8-9.

The meaning of "patient continuance" gives the thought of bearing under, making us think of the endurance required in the constant warfare between the spirit man and his flesh. Such patient continuance in well doing reveals to God what is truly in a person's heart, as there is endeavor to put down the natural inclinations through trial and good works. Paul speaks elsewhere in Romans on this subject:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”
Romans 5:1-5.

As the Holy Spirit works, it brings various circumstances to try man’s resolve. To one who finds himself in trial and testing, the Scriptures teach that patience is required to endure. This is required not just once or twice but continually throughout a lifetime—a constant bearing under in order to glorify God with obedience.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”
Hebrews 10:36-39.

And how is this patience brought near perfection? James explains:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”
James 1:2-4.

What a marvellous provision that patience rightly nurtured can work within one to fulfill that hope of eternal life in God’s mercy. It is a lifetime work.

The thought in the last part of the 5th verse is helpful, as it speaks of a “day of wrath” to come. In that day there will be a righteous judgment, unlike man’s, for the Lord Jesus sees into each heart and nothing will be hidden.

“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."
I Timothy 5:24-25.

At that time of judgment, the books will be opened and the fruits, both good and evil, of all will be revealed. No longer may mankind deceive, hiding that which is within, for all will realize that:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."
Jeremiah 17:9-10.

As a result of the Lord Jesus' judgment, there will be two classes of people. At His right hand will stand the approved, those: "... who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:" Romans 2:7.

And those at His left hand, condemned because they:
"... are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, (and upon whom will come) indignation and wrath."
Romans 2:8.

No matter who, if one is responsible, he will be judged.

As we strive to be found approved and to stand at His right hand, it must be realized that this blessed position will be given only to those who have continued in patience, showing forth good works even under trying circumstances. Though in every brother and sister the fleshly man will be the enemy until the end, with this mind good works spring from love for Christ and for His. They are done without thinking of reward. Consequently they will ask the Judge, "when did we do these things?" and He will answer:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40.

These deeds done in patient continuance were not done for personal gain or recognition, but done solely out of love for His little ones, and for this they have earned the love and approval of Christ. We think of Job, who endured for over a year while suffering patiently, but at the end was spiritually enriched for he said, "now mine eye seeth thee." The gift of immortality will be granted only to those who like Job have borne under not once or twice but all during their living.

M.C.S.

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World

"- - - Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences - - -." (Luke 21:11)

At the time of writing there is a report of another earthquake, a severe one in Russia's far east, with considerable devastation of buildings and of oil production. Famines also remain dismally evident particularly in Africa, even at a time when there is a surplus of food production in other areas. But Christ's words of prophecy relating to the end of the age also referred to pestilences.

Now undoubtedly medical knowledge has greatly increased, and powerful drugs have been discovered and produced to effectively deal with many diseases, nevertheless pestilences remain, some apparently newly emergent.

For example there was considerable alarm recently over an outbreak in the African republic of Zaire. So much so that the British Health Authorities alerted directors of public health at Britain's ports to be on the alert to ensure that visitors who might be affected with the Ebola virus should not enter freely. The symptoms of the disease are headaches and fever, but the consequences for sufferers from it are truly horrific. Yet this bug was only discovered in 1976. Carers of the sick have to wear protective clothing, and those ill have to be kept in sealed areas entered through airlocks. Death is almost inevitable from the particular strain which has its origins in the Sudan, but has now spread to West Africa and Kenya. But there has been a variation of this virus found in Germany and Serbia, which is almost as serious in its consequences as the African virus. It has been thought to have reached Germany through monkeys from the Philippines. Another strain has even appeared in the United States in a monkey laboratory.

But there are other strange diseases. For example Lassa fever, which emerged in Nigeria in 1969. It is air borne, with a death rate of one in three.

There is also the Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever. This was noticed just over 30 years ago and is common in the Middle East, Greece, Africa and Asia and is caused by tick bites. It is a severe disorder and a considerable number die after being bitten. Another fever caused by tick bites is the Omsk infection, found in Eastern Europe, and sufferers are affected by severe bleeding. Then there is the Russian Spring-Summer Encephalitis which is passed through unpasteurised milk, causing degeneration of the nervous system. However, there is a vaccine for this disease, as also for Kyasanur Forest infection found in North West India which attacks the kidneys and liver and is also passed by tick bites.

But deadly viruses are not confined to Europe and Asia, for there are some nasty strains in the New World. For example the

Bolivian Machupo Haemorrhagic Fever, which is carried by voles. Venezuela also has a similar fever called the Guanarito, and there is the Junin Argentinian Haemorrhagic Fever, also carried by field voles, which is almost always fatal. Rats also cause trouble in South America transmitting the Haemorrhagic Sabia disease.

Medical experts are worried about the possibility of a new strain arising that may be hard to detect, but could develop to spread quickly and easily. So for all the medical advancement, with new and more powerful drugs, there are still pestilences as well as earthquakes and famines, even as Jesus warned in giving signs for the last days. It indicates that the present dispensation will not be able to eradicate the evils of infections causing ill health. This eradication will only come to pass in the future time:-

“- - - when the times of refreshing shall come from the PRESENCE of the LORD.” Acts 3:19.

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
and Fredonia
Alternate Week: Revelation Study

Correspondence with Christadelphians concerned over questionable practices and beliefs gives opportunity for witnessing to the unchanging simplicity of God's Truth "which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

The invitation to the general public offering the "Prophecy" booklet has once again brought gratifying response revealing that serious-minded people fear for the state of mankind and for the world's future.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

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

Communications and requests for literature are still being received from Christadelphians far and near.

Also there is a continuing response from the general public for our booklet on prophecy. This is encouraging.

We are grateful for the success of medical treatment for our Sister in the States, who has been particularly in our minds during recent months.