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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"IMMEDIATELY THE COCK CREW"**

As erring humans, are we not upon occasion caused to be dismayed for failing to do what is right? There is no one who has not (except Jesus), and so the Father has given us help. This morning through our reading in Mark we find "instruction in righteousness" from the circumstances of Peter's denying the Lord Jesus in the high priest's palace. Asking ourselves—How could he have done this?—we think back over Peter's work. He was one of the original disciples called to be an apostle. Jesus clearly summoned him and his brother, Andrew:

"... Come ye after me ... " Mark 1:17.

In odedience, they immediately:

"forsook their nets, and followed him." Mark 1:18.

To follow requires a walking in the same path. These two, moved by the spirit which they perceived in Jesus, willingly joined Him. Jesus had promised: "I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). This was to become their work. It would involve a lifetime of good example and, with time, a diligent preaching of the gospel, which is a calling to the hope of salvation and glory, when Jesus Christ ultimately takes on His work of judgment, to separate the good from the evil.

To help Peter and others whom He called, Jesus taught and was a perfect example for three and one-half years before His crucifixion, so that when He was raised up to His Father, they could carry on as "fishers of men", proclaiming the hope of salvation through their Savior. Peter was close to Him, and when in discussion He asked His disciples: "... Whom say ye that I am"? (Matthew 16:15)—Peter replied:

"... Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:16.

He knew God's purpose in Jesus, the Messiah, the Anointed One, sent as the atonement for any who believed in Him and sought to obey God's word. Peter's perception, however, would appear to have been incomplete, for he did not fully discern what God required of His Son as the Messiah. When Jesus shortly spoke of this, that He soon must:

"... go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things ... and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Matthew 16:21.

Peter refused to accept this:

“... and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” Matthew 16:22.

His thinking was of the flesh, revealing he did not clearly perceive that Jesus must die, unblemished by sin, to become the promised Redeemer. Jesus, being flesh like ourselves, realized these words could hinder Him, and clearly told Peter:

“... 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.

Peter was not reasoning in a godly or perceptive manner, and the rebuke must have smitten him. Thinking it over, he may have reasoned that—he had left his work as a fisherman, had followed Jesus for two years; certainly his affection (savour) was set upon Jesus and God’s work. All this was true, up to a point, but his lack was clearly seen in his acting like a Satan, an adversary to Jesus, hindering, making His struggle harder to do God’s will. Thus Jesus sought to help Peter and the others with these words:

“... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24.

Peter did not deny his feelings. His thinking was fleshly because he did not fully grasp what was required of Jesus, and therefore he could not yet follow or relate to Him in this trial.

One year later, at the last Passover feast, Jesus instituted this Table at which we partake of bread and wine. He did this to help His disciples and those who would follow them, to keep in mind His offering of Himself—the unblemished Lamb, the atonement, first for Himself and then for His people. As He did this, after the betrayer (Judas) had been exposed and had left, Jesus spoke these meaningful words:

“This (the wine) is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.” Mark 14:24.

He also added: “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). It was a memorial feast, to remind His people of God’s purpose fulfilled in the offering, the unblemished Lamb of God. After partaking of the bread and wine, He and His followers left that upper room, moving out to the Mount of Olives where:

“... Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night . . .”
Mark 14:27.

To be offended means to stumble, fail or to be enticed to sin. Again Peter strongly responded:

“... Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.” Vs. 29.

And then Jesus spoke these warning words to Peter:

“... Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.”
Mark 14:29.

And Peter, still unheeding:

“... Spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise . . .”
Mark 14:31.

He was confident, was he not? Certainly he was sincere in his determination to stand by Jesus. He did “follow” when Jesus was apprehended and taken to the high priest’s palace, albeit “afar off” (at a distance) Mark 14:54. Why was he lagging behind? Was he fearful lest he too be required to answer before the high priest? He stayed behind as John with Jesus entered the palace, but God knew, and one of the maids accosted him:

“... And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.”
Mark 14:67

Peter, moved by fleshly fear, strongly contradicted her:

“... I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest.”
Mark 14:68.

He knowingly denied that he was with Jesus. And then “the cock crew” (Verse 68). This should have sharply brought Peter’s mind to Jesus’ warning: “... before the crow twice . . .”—giving him the opportunity to stand by Jesus, thereby making amends. But we have read how the apostle failed Jesus the second time (Verse 70). Upon being accused the third time:

“Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.”
Mark 14:70.

Peter’s reply was forceful as:

“... he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.” Mark 14:71.

We may think the apostle’s cursing and swearing was in the way the world does—blasphemously and vulgarly using God’s name. These words “curse” and “swear” reveal that this was not so. The meaning of curse is to vow, to bind under an oath, as in Acts 23 when:

“... certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.” Acts 23:12.

Further, the word swear is to take an oath, even as God did when he made a covenant with Abraham:

“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.” Hebrews 6:13.

Peter then denied or refused his Lord the third time, vowing and taking an oath that “I know not this man of whom ye speak” (Mark 14:71). In this he nullified his previous words to Jesus:

“... Thou art the Christ, The Son of the living God.” Matthew 16:16.

Under God’s hand, “immediately ... the cock crew”—fulfilling Jesus’ warning words. What was Peter’s reaction?

“... Peter called to mind the words that Jesus said unto him ...” Mark 14:72.

In his fear, these words of warning must have been completely obliterated from his thinking as he so grievously failed. What brought them back to his mind? First and partly because the cock crew, but perhaps mainly because:

“... the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.” Luke 22:61.

Can we imagine Jesus’ expression, His eyes, as He turned toward Peter? Sorrow, disappointment, increased anguish—simi-

lar to His feelings when He had wept over Jerusalem, saying:

“ . . . If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”
Luke 19:42.

Less than twenty-four hours after partaking of the Passover feast, Peter had failed, and now saw the grief and reproach in Jesus' eyes as he so adamantly denied he even knew him.

Peter in time learned to deny himself; he did faithfully take up his cross and follows Jesus. Each time he would meet at the Lord's table, in symbol partaking of Him, he would remember that failure—denying Jesus in His time of need.

Do not Peter's actions warn and help us, Brethren and Sisters, to realize how weak is our flesh—feeble, impotent—even as our spirits are willing? We often fail, we do not deny self in spite of our determination. Why is this so? There are many fleshly reasons: pride, fear, complacency, desire for worldly things, or just being too busy. The flesh is subtle and can be very persuasive, very excusing. It completely erased from Peter's mind the vow he had so earnestly made less than twenty-four hours before:

“ . . . If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise . . . ”
Mark 14:31.

When tested, something else took over his mind. How easily this can happen, as we all have experienced. What is the antidote to this serpent's poison? Jesus' words which we have heard here this morning, in partaking of the emblems of His victory: “This do in remembrance of me.” What privilege—what blessing to be able to partake of His body and blood, bringing to mind how He overcame His flesh nature, and so became the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Our Father in mercy has called us to the hope of salvation, made possible by the sacrifice of His Son. Let us every day—not just the first day of the week—keep this grace in remembrance, producing our minds, enabling us more surely and faithfully to take up our cross. Let us follow closely, not denying Him, but denying self, and so walk in the way he has gone.

J. A. DeF.

"THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE"

In completing our Deuteronomy portion, we bring to a close one hundred and thirty-six days of reading God's word from the hand of Moses. He wrote five books, the first, Genesis which began with the Creation and ended with the death of Joseph. The second relating the "Exodus" of Joseph's posterity from the land of Egypt and revealing the law given by God to His People Israel. Leviticus, the third book, means "joined" and records the law in detail, emphasizing the spirit contained therein and the need to incorporate or join these precepts into ones living, if one would be closely joined to God. Numbers, the fourth book, was an enumeration of the people of God, those who in living according to the spirit of His law, could hope to attain unto the promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Finally, in Deuteronomy, the Law is repeated for emphasis, as well as for changed circumstances in the land, ending with the death of Moses.

These five books are a testament of God's work with man, beginning with his creation and the giving of a law or way of life, that through obedience thereto, could give the hope of eternal life.

We read of Moses' charge to Israel, condensing before them the final points of the law:

"Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.

For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

Deuteronomy 32:46-47.

These words allow us to look at God's Law with heightened awareness, knowing as Moses said, "it is your life," and if we can endeavour to walk after His precepts with submission and obedience. Moses further explains how our everyday life is tied into these words as he exhorted Israel:

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it." Deuteronomy 30:15-16.

There are two possibilities present — life and good or death

and evil, and the sole determinant is obedience or disobedience to His word. To emphasize this important fact, Moses proclaimed before all Israel:

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”
Deuteronomy 30:19.

Where there is obedience one can hope in the end promised—those same promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. His promise has not changed over the years nor has the test of the faithful. The rewards and blessings are held out to all throughout the ages who have struggled against the love of self and the pull of the flesh, to reveal a heart dedicated to serving the Father.

Moses’ words are over 3,000 years old but the principles are as current today as the day they were spoken. This gentle man is an example of one influenced by that word—it permeated every aspect of his living. In this same vein he instructed Israel to do likewise:

“... lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.
And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:
That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.”
Deuteronomy 11:18-21.

If His word is before our eyes and upon our hands, directing every task, if we can apply His wisdom in all our doings, then our every word and action will be balanced with the knowledge of what God expects of us. Moses said “set your hearts”—put the entire focus of your living into being obedient, for the result of not doing so is destruction—“therefore choose life”!

After his lifetime of 120 years it was said of Moses:

“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.
In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and to all his servants,

and to all his land,
And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror
which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.”

Deuteronomy 34:10-12.

We, too, endeavoring to preserve His word in our hearts, can come to know God as Moses did, almost as if it were “face to face” — knowing what He looks for in a faithful man and reflecting it in our living. We must keep that word ever before our eyes, allowing the spirit man to grow within, hoping then to see that land one day and share in the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and faithful Moses.

M.S.C.

RESURRECTIONAL EMERGENCE

Over the years some have propagated the belief that the faithful are raised from the grave in immortality. To receive positions of prominence in the Kingdom of God. But those deemed unworthy are to be consigned to complete destruction in a second death. This appears to be a tenet of a sect named the "Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith." These people originate from the days of Dr. J. Thomas when the founders of the "Church of God - - -" had contact with him. Some congregations of this sect use the Christadelphian Hymn Book and it has been said that there have been cases where members of the "Church of God - - -" have chosen to affiliate with Christadelphian ecclesias. We understand that the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (upholding the Unamended Statement of Faith) have been willing to hold seminars and programmes for the congregations of the "Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith" and there have been contacts between representatives of Christadelphians for Unity and counterparts from the "Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith", raising the possibility of a merger. A difficulty to this has been admitted as being a reliance by the "Church of God - - -" on a professional clergy.

The Remnant believes that the state in which those raised up for judgment are in, when they emerge from the tomb, is a very important truth. And that the doctrine of "immortal emergence" is erroneous, denying the Spirit's witness that "... we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ . . ." (2 Cor, 5:10)

What R. Roberts said on the above subject (1867)

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised in spiritual body."

These words constitute the great stumbling block with those who deny the judgment of the saints. Restricting them to the mere act of emergence from the ground, they naturally regard them in the light of an express affirmation that the body is incorruptible, spiritual and immortal from the first moment of its restoration; and that therefore judgment is anticipated and superseded by this silent proclamation of acceptance and that nothing lies between those thus rising incorruptible, and perfected salvation, but a joyous reunion with the Lord. The mistake consists in construing Paul's words too narrowly, and reading them as if he were dealing with the dramatic incident of the resurrection, instead of the state of existence to which the act of resurrection leads. Paul is not discussing the scientific aspect of the subject. He is not defining the process by which a dead man ascends from the depth of corruption to the

nature of the angels; the literal details are foreign to the subject before his mind. He is dealing with the broad question propounded by the objector; first, how (as a question of possibility) are the dead raised, and second, for (or to) what body do they come? The first point he disposes of by an appeal to a phenomenon which exemplifies the power of resurrection organically exerted; and the second he meets by challenging attention to the fact that there is great diversity of power and glory in the universe of God, and that dead people, in a future state, need not necessarily, therefore, be the corruptible flesh and blood they are in mundane life. This being so, "raise" must be taken in its widest sense, including, of necessity, the act by which the dead first resume bodily form and consciousness, but, at the same time, covering the whole process, whatever it may be, which leads to incorruption. It could not be that Paul intended to exclude any part of the process. It is doubtful if the question of process was at all present to his mind. This is suggested by the entire absence of allusion either to the judgment or the unfaithful. It was the broad question he looked at, viz, the position of those destined to be accepted, in relation to the two facts that they are to see corruption, and that God intends to promote them, in a renewed existence, to an incorruptible and immortal state. Paul affirms that as there is a difference of nature in different orders of being, and a difference between heavenly and earthly glory, so there is a difference between the present and future constitution of the saints, because the present is the earthly, and the future the heavenly; the present the animal, and the future the spiritual. The characteristics of the present state (of which death is but the conclusion) are corruption, weakness and naturality; from this the body will emerge at the resurrection in incorruption, glory, power and spirituality. This is true, without at all involving the conclusion that at the precise moment existence is resurrectionally renewed, and the saints will be in possession of these qualities. The resurrection, as a completed transaction, inclusive of the judgment seat of Christ, will, in the case of the righteous, ultimate in incorruption, glory, power and immortality. In a sense, they will attain to these on emerging from the ground, since they will never return to corruption; but, actually, they will be in the neutral state, to be determined for good or evil by the judgment.

Paul, however, does not take this into account. He is not treating of details. He overleaps every item in the programme, and looks broadly at the fact that the destiny of the righteous, by resurrection, is the swallowing up of death in the victory of immortality.

That construction of Paul's words which makes Paul teach that the righteous come forth from the ground in an actually

immortal state, overlooks the question to which his whole discourse is directed: "How are the dead raised, and for (or to) what body do they come?" It is the state to which the dead arise that engages Paul's thoughts, and not the state in which they come. It is the broad contrast between the present and the consummated future that is present to his mind all the way through. He leaves out all details; takes no account of the judgment or the rejected class, but deals only with those who shall be saved, and the condition of life to which they will be exalted "in the resurrection." Jesus says "those who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life." (John 5:29) This in general terms, answers Paul's objector; the resuscitated dead do not come forth, as the Grecian or Sadducean philosopher supposed, to a flesh and blood state in which there will be marrying and giving in marriage; but, having been approved by the judge, they come to be changed from the image of the earthly to the image of the heavenly; to participate, in fact, in the resurrection of life, while those who have done evil, having been condemned by the judge, will share in the resurrection of condemnation. Paul leaves the latter class out of account, inasmuch as the aspect of the subject under his consideration does not present them to notice. He contents himself with declaring that so far as the accepted are concerned, their resurrection, viewed as an accomplished process, is incorruption, glory, power and spirituality. This is an answer to the question, "For what body do they come?" The "coming" includes their release from the prison in which they are bound, and their appearance in the presence of the Judge; the state to which they come is beyond this and that state is the one described by Paul.

This view of Paul's words (which harmonises this 15th chapter of the 1st Corinthians with all the New Testament besides) makes the word "raised" cover a considerable amount of ground. This is objected to by those who take the other view, but they object without a reason. It is true the word translated "raise" is used in the limited sense of a body coming to life and standing up: e.g.—

"Raised again the third day;" (Matt. 16:21) "Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead." (John 12:1). "He who raised up the Lord Jesus." (2 Cor. 4:14). "Accounting that God was able to raise him (Isaac) up." (Heb. 11:19).

But it is also true that the word is frequently used in a sense that involves a process. We give illustrations:

"God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). "He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." (Luke 1:69).

"And when he had removed him he raised up into them David to be their king . . . Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." (Acts 13:22-23).

In all these cases, the raising was more than a single act; it was the result of a series of acts performed with a view to its development. Now, if this is a permissible and actually-illustrated definition of the word in New Testament use, need there be any objection to its application in a case where the great body of Paul's teaching necessitates its adoption? The raising of the dead in incorruption is a process which involves their "coming forth," and their arraignment at the judgment seat of Christ, where the "crown of life", will only be bestowed on those counted worthy. The word "resurrection" covers the whole process.

A BIBLE CLASS

“He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man:
he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.”

Proverbs 21:17

At first reading of our subject, it appears to be warning against rejoicing in pleasure and also in savoring wine and oil—indicating that such actions are likely to result in poverty. Yet with a deeper consideration, the words of Solomon can be an encouragement to find pleasure in life, as well as to enjoy good food and drink.

Perhaps the key to perceiving the message of this particular scripture is: “He that loveth . . .” What do we love, that is, have real affection for or delight in? Upon what is our heart fastened—the things of the flesh or the things of the spirit? The Apostle John speaks meaningfully to us:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

I John 2:15-16.

Seeking and clinging to the wish for self-gratification may bring pleasure to the flesh, but how fleeting, for this emphasis in one's efforts can lead only to spiritual poverty and diminished hope of salvation in Christ. If one sets his heart upon the things of God there may be lack of material advantage and less gratification of the senses, but there will be a wealth of spirit which we can trust will lead us to the ultimate reward known to man—eternal life in the perfection of God's kingdom.

The word pleasure is associated with gladness and joy. A recent reading illustrates the rejoicing of one who delights to serve God and obey His commandments. Through Moses, He gave instructions concerning the offerings to be brought to the altar where he would place His name:

“. . . Thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices . . .

And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God . . .”

Deuteronomy 12:6, 12.

Those who loved the Lord would bring their offerings, finding pleasure in knowing that this was pleasing to Him. We call to mind David's pleasure in bringing the ark up to Jerusalem:

“So David . . . brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.”

II Samuel 6:12.

He rejoiced in having the ark in the midst of his people, and felt exalted and honoured in being privileged to bring it up. However, in contrast, Michal, David’s wife, took no pleasure in David’s acclaim and obvious joy but rather, “she despised him in her heart” (II Samuel 6:16). To Michal, David’s dignity as king over Israel was inviolable and would bring her more pleasure than David’s spontaneous joy in glorifying God.

Turning now to the New Testament, Jesus’ words illustrate how that loving the pleasures of the world can make one poor. Conversing with the rich young man who had asked:

“ . . . Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

Matthew 19:16.

Jesus replied that he must carefully keep God’s commandments. The young man answered:

“ . . . All these things I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?”

Matthew 19:20.

Perceiving this self-confidence and knowing that his riches afforded him much pleasure, Jesus responded:

“ . . . If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”

Matthew 19:21.

This young man, loving all he owned, even more than loving God:

“ . . . went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”

Matthew 19:22.

He was rich in this world’s goods and pleasures, but poor in the things of the spirit which can lead one to God’s kingdom. It was as Jesus taught on the mount:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:3.

Those who find joy in the things of the spirit are often poor in

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a worldly sense, but rich toward the Father and His children, having a hope of eternal life through loving God and denying self. Thus they take up their cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24). Delighting in the spiritual, they will also rejoice in the wine and oil—the daily provision of our God, both natural food as well as the strengthening nourishment of the truth which the Almighty provides. David reminds us:

“He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.”
Psalm 104: 14-15.

Those who love the things of God strive to please Him by willing obedience; as a result, they may be poor in this world, or lack in other ways. However, they have the hope of being included with those blessed and approved when Jesus returns to gather to Himself those who are not rich (as is the man of the world), and who have struggled, denying natural wants and leanings. Such will share when:

“... the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”
Isaiah 51:11.

This is the pleasure, the joy which the people of God desire and work toward. In that delight, they forsake the riches and pleasures of this world. They that hope and trust in the Almighty for present blessings as well as trials, are sustained by their faith in Him.

J. A. DeF.

ELOHIM

In a recent magazine an article stated:—

“The work of the Elohim, carried out over the course of six days according to the wisdom of the One Eternal Spirit was completed.”

We may of course have misunderstood what was being implied, but we would respectfully ask that if the writer was suggesting that the work of creation was conducted by the Eternal through His angels, the following scripture be taken into consideration.

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

(Psalm 33: 6-9)

There is no licence in the above to allow for an interpretation that angels helped to form the Creation. The scripture is clear about the work of the angels:—

“Are they not ALL ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

(Hebrews 1:14)

That they were in the Beginning to behold the glory of that which God had formed, is also clear:—

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof:

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it. And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors.

And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and

here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place . . .” (Job 38: 4-12)

Thus, God ascribes the creative work to be His own, even as the book of Genesis testifies, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). There has never been any proof that the word Elohim which describes the Eternal has implied the incorporation of God’s angels in the great creative work. That Elohim can refer to angels in scripture, is accepted. Being messengers of God they have represented Him before weak and mortal men, who cannot see God and live. But God is so great, that when He spoke in the beginning that was sufficient. “He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” Men cannot possibly comprehend God’s greatness. The impact of His omnipotence is becoming more and more evident as the extent of the heavens above is further realised. Scientists have made the following admission:—

“The size of the Universe as a whole did not become clear until the 1920s. Before then, astronomers had thought that the Milky Way encompassed the entire universe. But in the early 1920s, an American astronomer, Edwin Hubble (1889-1953), confirmed for the first time the existence of galaxies beyond our own.”

Concerning the vastness, of which the nations of men are as but “a drop in a bucket,” it has been suggested that the critical distance for the boundary of the observable Universe—though not necessarily the boundary of the Universe itself—is believed to be about 15,000 million light years from Earth.

Such calculations swamp man’s comprehensions, and also underline man’s position on this good earth. It is the earth that has been given to the children of men; the heavens are the Lord’s. Man is bound to this earth; space and time defeats him where the heavens above are concerned. He cannot break out of his terrestrial existence, whatever kind of space propulsion he invents. Hence God visits men and has appeared over the ages of His divine work through His angels, a fact testified by scripture and which faith must accept. To suggest then, without scriptural proof, that angels helped to form God’s creation in the Beginning, is to take from the simple comprehension which God has given to His creatures, that it was the Eternal God who “created man in his own image” to the joy of the angels. They who had been prepared to minister to those sons of Adam, who should become (through the Lord Jesus Christ who ultimately came as God’s Saviour) “heirs of salvation”. In upholding this Truth the fallacy that Christ had a pre-existence, and participated in the Creation, is denied.

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

“And the great city was divided into three parts and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” (Revelations 16:19)

Speaking upon that portion of the book of Revelation which concerns the future, Dr. Thomas declared:—

“The judgments of the seventh vial are all in the future. They are the voices uttered by the Seven Thunders, which succeed the lion-roar of the Rainbow Angel (ch. 10:3-4), and which issued from the throne—”.

He goes on to refer to a future judgment which will not leave any of the nations' dynasties, governments and institutions of church and state. He also speaks specifically of the above quoted verse as follows:—

“As a consequence of this shaking of all the nations, the Great City is resolved into thirds, and the cities, or states, of the nations fall. They fall because in the shaking, the Lamb and his staff with their army cast them down. The idea is expressed by Daniel in the words, ‘the thrones were cast down’ (ch 8:9). In other words, the Lamb and they that were with him conquered the Ten Horns, and took possession of their kingdoms. The kingdoms of the world became Yahweh's, and his Christ's. As to the ‘three parts’ into which the Great City Babylon is divided by the shocks of this great earthquake of nations, we are left without positive information. From the subsequent parts of the prophecy, however, it would seem that the Dragon might be reckoned as one third; the Beast, the Ten Horns, and the False prophet, the second third; and Egypt, Syria, Palestine and the East, the third third. This eastern third would be the first to fall under the dominion of the throne in Zion: ‘unto the daughter of Zion shall it come, even the first dominion; the Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.’ And the Ruler come forth from Bethlehem shall be the peace, when the Assyrians (Gog) shall come into the land.”

The thirds to which Dr. Thomas refers to reminds of the current situation in former Yugoslavia. For that area of the globe which had been unified for many years, has so tragically split up

into thirds. Religious elements are considerably responsible for the disunity so prevalent. There are Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Muslim aspects. Catholics in Croatia, Orthodox in Serbia, and Muslims in Bosnia. N.A.T.O. has been in action to attempt settlement of the area by force, and the U.N.O. has been trying, so far ineffectually, to get a political settlement. One of the difficulties in achieving a return to peace in the Balkans, is that there is no absolute unity in the so called coalition of nations that are attempting to help this war stricken area. Russia supports the Serbs, Germany supports the Croats, and the Muslims look to the east. The United States has been largely responsible for the bombing of Serbs by NATO war planes, and so obviously sympathises with the Muslims.

The situation has see-sawed. The Croats have succeeded in driving out the Serbs from Krajina in Croatia. But last spring's Muslim offensive against the Serbs around Sarajevo was turned into a disaster, bringing about the fall of Muslim Zepa and Srebrenica by the victorious Serbs. But at the time of writing, the Serbs are getting a pounding by Western power aircraft, to the relief of the Muslims.

One commentator recently made a pithy comment about the situation. He said: "Mosque and spire and onion-dome have risen above the smoke and bloodshed of tribal conflict for hundreds of years. The belief that outsiders can resolve these conflicts tempted but defied the arrogance of the Habsburgs, Hitler and Tito."

What is so significant however, is that the events in the Balkans are a sort of microcosm of what is yet to come. The "great city" will be found to have hidden cracks, and at the appropriate and pre-ordained time, in God's great purpose, it will lose its unity of a superficial kind, and be "divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations" shall fall.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIA

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, *Corner of Southwestern Blvd. and Pleasant Avenue*

Sundays: Breaking of Bread, 11-30 a.m.
Sunday Afternoon Class: 1-45 p.m.
Midweek: Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg and
Fredonia. Alternate week: Revelation
Study.

It is anticipated, God willing, that a new booklet dealing with orthodox religious doctrines in relation to the Scriptures will shortly be available for mailing to the general public. For this work which is in co-operation with our brethren in Manchester, we seek the Almighty's guidance and blessing.

J. A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

Sundays: Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.
Thursdays: Bible Class 7-15 p.m.

We are encouraged by the unstinting help of Brethren in the work of Truth. The sharing together in efforts that are made binds together in the fellowship and is the cause of profound joy.