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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"

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WORLD"**

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

All Communications

D. Lancaster,
227 Moston Lane East,
New Moston,
Manchester M40 3HY,
England.

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

**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
“LUKE, THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN”**

Today our attention has been directed to the record of Jesus' life and work by our brother Luke, who also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. These two books are addressed to "Theophilus" (Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1). Luke may have been writing to a particular individual, or more likely, he had in mind all true "friends of God" as the word means—those who desire to show their love for Him by obedience to His commandments. We are indeed indebted to Luke for these writings, a work inspired by the Almighty. Let us then seek that spiritual support so graciously granted.

First of all, it is helpful to realize that Luke's writing probably was done between A.D. 63 and 68. Matthew wrote his gospel shortly after Jesus' death and resurrection; while Mark's work was done about the same time as Luke's. John's gospel was penned shortly before his exile to Patmos, where he received the Revelation. Luke was not numbered among the twelve apostles (Luke 6:14-16). Indeed, he is mentioned by name only three times in the scriptures. He must have been a humble-minded man, not mentioning his own role which, we will perceive, was considerable, especially in relation to Paul.

Luke tells us why he came to record Jesus' works:

"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order most excellent Theophilus,
That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou has been instructed." Luke 1:3,4.

God had granted to Luke, we are told, "perfect understanding of all things from the very first." These words—"from the very first"—is a derived phrase meaning "from above" as used by Paul in speaking of:

". . . Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Galatians 4:26.

Also James spoke of God's blessing on His children:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17.

Luke, then, had from the Father a clear perception of God's purpose and ways, and was moved to write them to all the "friends

of God." His perfect understanding continued and increased through having experienced certain things under God's hand. This understanding he determined to record "in order" or, as the words mean, "through searching diligently." This he did for an important cause:

"That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou has been instructed." Luke 1:4.

By our brother's careful zeal and faith, we are greatly helped to know the certainty of God's word. Let us strive to perceive Luke's spirit, hidden to a certain extent as he spoke little concerning himself, but made evident by his works. It may help to put what we do know about Luke in chronological order. The first hint we have is in his own words in Acts as he wrote of Paul, who had received a vision directing him to Macedonia (Acts 16:9). Luke recorded this:

"And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia.
... loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;"

Acts 16:10-11.

This word "we" reveals that Luke accompanied Paul in his journey to and work in the Grecian cities. It was at Philippi that he saw Paul and Silas brought before the magistrates, beaten with many stripes, cast into prison, and placed in stocks (See Acts 16:23-24). God delivered them by causing a mighty earthquake. These events led to the conversion of their jailor "believing in God and all his house" (Acts 16:34). The brethren soon were released by the magistrates upon learning that they were Romans. As they perceived the miraculous working and results of God's intervention:

"... they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." Acts 16:40.

Witnessing this, Luke would be awed and inspired as he saw God's hand so obviously at work on behalf of His witnesses.

We next read of Luke's continuing association with Paul:

"And we sailed away from Philippi ... and came ... to Troas ..."
Acts 20:6.

Thereafter, he accompanied Paul, teaching in Troas, Assos,

Miletus, Philippi, Tyre and Jerusalem (Acts 20:5—Acts 21:13). The Apostle had been warned not to go to Jerusalem lest the Jews deliver him to the Roman (Acts 21:12). However, Paul answered:

“. . . I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 21:13.

In all these experiences, Luke was present, arriving with him at Jerusalem. Upon their arrival:

“. . . the brethren received us gladly.
And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.
And . . . he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.”
Acts 21: 17-19.

Luke witnessed and participated in this work with the Gentiles, being strengthened in understanding and faith as he experienced God’s hand at work on their behalf. No doubt he also came to know and greatly love his brother, Paul.

In Jerusalem, Paul was persecuted by the Jews, rescued from them by the Romans and imprisoned pending trial before the Roman Governor. He was jailed first in Jerusalem and later in Caesarea, remaining there for two years (Acts 24:27). Having appealed to Caesar, Paul then was sent to Rome. Luke records for us;

“And when it was determined that we should sail unto Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius . . .
And entering into a ship . . . we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia . . .”
Acts 27:1-2.

Having remained with Paul in Jerusalem and Caesarea for his years of imprisonment, Luke now stayed with his brother on the long and dangerous journey to Rome, sharing perils of storms and shipwreck, and witnessing Paul’s miraculous deliverance from the viper’s bite on Melita. He knew, too, the warmth of fellowship as their brethren from Rome:

“. . . came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and the three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.”
Acts 28:15.

Can we understand now what this faithful and loving com

panion must have meant to Paul, standing by him, sharing his persecution, tribulation, yes, and his blessings? In doing so, would not Luke grow in faith, trusting in God, and determining, as had Paul, to put away all fleshly considerations to the serving of God and God's people? The Apostle expressed his love as he wrote from prison in Rome:

"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you."
Colossians 4:14.

Understandably, he was deeply loved by Paul. He was by profession, a physician, a healer, but no doubt had little time to practice as he steadfastly stood by Paul, healing and caring in many ways. Paul wrote from Rome (A.D. 64), when he knew death was near:

". . . I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
II Timothy 4:6-8.

Nearing the end of his work, a prisoner in Rome, and soon to be killed in Nero's persecution, he was alone in Rome, except as he wrote:

"Only Luke is with me. . ."
I Timothy 4:11.

Faithful to his beloved brother, Luke stood by Paul supporting, comforting and encouraging him to the end.

Over these many years of fellowshipping Paul's work along with his afflictions and persecutions, Luke would come to know the power, the loving kindness and the protection of a Father for His faithful witnesses. Inspired by this deeper perception of the Father's merciful provision, he was enabled "from above" to write of Jesus' life and victory, as well as of the record of the Apostle's acts.

Can we not profit, Brethren and Sisters, from our brother's spirit and labour revealed for us through his long faithfulness and love for his brethren, who spoke of him as "beloved"? Luke is an example, helping us to come alongside each other, sharing trials and joys, hardships and comforts, in whatever the Almighty deems fit for us. Can we take hold of the support and example given today

as we read again Luke's word:

"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first (from above), to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." Luke 1:3-4.

He could be speaking directly to us, Brethren and Sisters; do let us hear him.

J. A. DeF.

"I REJOICE IN THY SALVATION

Recent readings in the first book of Samuel relate the circumstances surrounding this judge's birth, while revealing the faithful spirit of his mother Hannah.

Hannah, one of Elkanah's two wives, was barren and desperately desired a child. As Elkanah's household went up to worship at Jerusalem, Hannah, out of deep longing and grief, poured out her supplications to the Lord;

"And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD, of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."
I Samuel 1:11.

She prayed with zeal and determination and God heard her cry, giving Hannah and Elkanah a son, whom his mother called Samuel, meaning "asked of God." Hannah had prayed, "remember me"—seeking God's intervention on her behalf, with importunity, and because of her persistence and fervor, her prayer was answered. God knew her faithful spirit and the goodness of her heart, which is revealed for our help, in her words of thanksgiving:

"My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation."
I Samuel 2:1.

Here is revealed an important aspect of Hannah's faith as she said, "I rejoice in thy salvation"—not a rejoicing only because her petition had been granted, but a daily rejoicing with sure belief in the salvation promised by the Almighty to His people. Her steadfast witness continued:

"There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."
I Samuel 2:2.

The word "rock" as used here means refuge or deliverance. Hannah was confident of God's deliverance, whether it be in answer to her petition or the future deliverance promised to all who hope in the fulfilment of His purpose with this earth, when a righteous kingdom will be established and ruled by His Son. To the unbeliever, Hannah says:

“Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.” I Samuel 2:3-4.

She realized that God alone judges the hearts and minds of those who seek His help, while the strength of those who trust in their own might is soon broken. Those meek in spirit, who look to the Lord for help and support, will be sustained through importunate prayer and obedience to His Word.

A woman who desired a child as much as Hannah had, would certainly long to keep him close, nurturing and caring for her son until he reached maturity. Yet true to her vow, she lent Samuel to the Lord as a priest for his lifetime, in thanksgiving for the gift of his birth—a selfless and generous spirit shown in return for the fulfillment of her petition.

We read of David, another like Hannah who appealed in prayer for the Almighty’s help and displayed the same faith in His salvation:

“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.” Psalm 13: 1-3, 5-6.

Did he question at times God’s presence there to help? Yes, through the weakness of his flesh, David felt, as do we all at times, alone and overwhelmed in the midst of troubles, yet with strength of spirit could also recover himself saying:

“I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.
I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” Psalm 16:7-8.

Hannah and David sleep now in hope, awaiting the return of the Lord Jesus and a resurrection to judgment. If approved, they

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will as members of His body, be mercifully granted the gift of eternal life, because during their lifetimes, they rejoiced in His salvation.

Must we not also rejoice in that salvation, directing our prayers through our Mediator the Lord Jesus—that Rock upon which all hope is established?

M.C.S.

BE NOT DISCOURAGED

(Dr. J. Thomas)

“Men have been commanded to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season, to contend earnestly for the faith and so forth, as the means appointed for the separation of this people. Testimony and reasoning, or Scripture and reasoning out of the Scripture, are the spiritual elements constituting the spiritual agency for their “sanctification of the Spirit.” This spiritual agency is just adequate to the numerical completion of this people, termed “the fulness of the Gentiles” in Rom. 11:25, and no more. It is adequate to the accomplishment of this, for this result is that for which the word was given; and Jehovah saith it shall accomplish it. It is not adequate to the conversion of all the world. This is a result never contemplated in the premises. If God had designed the conversion of all nations as such in the absence of His Son from the earth, He would have instituted a system of means adequate to such a result. The spiritual agency was more potent in the days of the Apostles in that it consisted not only of a declaration of the testimony, and a reasoning out of its points, but a confirmation also of the reasoning by signs, wonders, miracles and gifts. Here were God and man visibly co-working in the separation of this people for His name. Yet with this more potent spiritual agency the world could not be converted; nay, a multitude even of those who were primarily turned to God turned from Him again; and that too while the apostles lived, and while the gifts of the Holy Spirit continued to be bestowed. The gifts were discontinued for two reasons; first, because they had answered the purpose for which they were originally given; and secondly, because through the working of the Mystery of Iniquity Christians proved themselves unworthy of the glorious indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their midst. The testimony was confirmed; but the confirmation of the reasoning has been withdrawn, and the spiritual agency for the completion of the work begun at the house of Cornelius, reduced to what we see.

Now the nearer we approach to the apocalypse of Jesus, the less influence will the word be found to exercise over the mind of the general public. We ought not to be discouraged at the fact. The time is fast approaching for the Gentile branch to be broken off; and for Israel to be grafted in. The branches of Israel and Judah were broken off because of unbelief—because they did not fear the name of Jehovah their Elohim—the Jehovah-Spirit manifested through David’s Son—nor believe the gospel of the kingdom preached in his name. For this cause the brotherhood of Israel and Judah was broken by the Roman power, and a day of grace granted to the Gentiles. But these have proved as faithless of the truth as Israel. There were many Jews in Jerusalem and Palestine who believed

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with unexceptionable fidelity the things apostically delivered; still their faith was only enough for their own salvation; and altogether inadequate to avert the judgment of God from the nation."

AN ISSUE RELATING TO SIN AND THE OUTCOME

A recent magazine has referred to differences relating to the above between J. J. Andrew and R. Roberts towards the end of the 19th century, and it seemed appropriate that this magazine should also place certain facts before our readers to clarify what was involved at the time, and what is still important to a right understanding of the Truth.

Extracts from *The Christadelphian* 1895

A reply to "Sin and its removal" (P.R.)

"The Editor of the "Sanctuary keeper" (J. J. Andrew) has just issued a little pamphlet in which he endeavours to demonstrate that his teaching regarding sin is identical with that of Dr. Thomas.

The work is liable to give an erroneous impression for two reasons. In the first place it takes great pains to establish certain propositions which the "Christadelphian" does not deny; and in the second place, by giving partial quotations, it makes the Doctor appear to sanction views which were entirely remote from his mind.

I will, as briefly as possible, take up the various points at issue, and show that the main points of Christadelphian teaching which constitute our basis of fellowship have remained absolutely unaltered. The Editor of the "Sanctuary Keeper" gives a number of quotations from "Elpis Israel" regarding sin. He deduces as the result four propositions, which are susceptible of more than one meaning. Three features are involved in the issue:— (1) What is meant by constituted sinner? (2) What is sin in the flesh? (3) Is there any legal guilt attaching to Adamic condemnation which can be removed apart from physical change, as in the case of infants at circumcision? . . .

When these points have been settled the issue will be decided. First, with regard to the application of the word "sinner" to infants, Dr. Thomas gives it as a synonym for unclean . . . He says: "They will not be condemned to the second death because they were born sinners, nor to any other pains or penalties than those which are the common lot of humanity in the present life. They are simply under that provision of the constitution of sin, which says "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." "Infants die because they are born of mortal flesh and not because they have committed sin or are responsible for Adam's sin".

"Constitutional sinner" means (as employed by Dr. Thomas) in reference to Christ, that he stood related to a sin-constitution of things—a state of things arising out of sin without being himself a committer of sin . . . the term has been objected to . . . (but) the Christadelphian is exactly the same as it has always been.

The next point is the meaning of sin in the flesh. The following

quotations will show what has always been intended by the phrase.

"The nature of the lower animals is as full of this physical evil principle as the nature of man; though it cannot be styled sin with the same expressiveness, because it does not possess them as the result of their own transgression. The name, however, does not alter the nature of the thing." (Elpis Israel.)

Sin in the flesh was defined thus by brother Andrew in the 1874 "Christadelphian" page 122: "This knowledge in the sense of experience came into his (Adam's) flesh as the result of sin, and became afterwards a cause of sin in the flesh of his descendants, and on this account it is spoken of as sin in the flesh."

If brother Andrew will not accept this definition now, then he has completely changed; if he will accept it, then . . . (we are) not at issue with him with regard to this particular point.

We now come to the third point. Did Dr. Thomas or other brethren teach that the Adamic condemnation involved legal or federal guilt? or is there a moral aspect to the condemnation which could be removed in the case of infants by a ceremony designed for that object?

The following words are from "Elpis Israel" page 115, immediately following a quotation given in the pamphlet under review. "There is much foolishness spoken and written about 'original sin'. Infants are made the subjects of a religious ceremony, to regenerate them because of original sin . . . If original sin, which is in fact in the flesh, were neutralized, then all baptismally regenerated babes ought to live for ever, as Adam would had he eaten of the tree of life after he had sinned. But they die, which is proof that the regeneration does not cure their souls, and is therefore mere theological quackery."

This is conclusive on the point at issue. If the condemnation were individual, involving legal guilt, then the idea of a religious ceremony to remove it from infants, such as brother Andrew teaches, would be eminently reasonable. But the Doctor ridicules the idea, and thereby shows that he regarded the Adamic condemnation purely as a federal matter, not as a condemnation which required to be individually postponed or warded off in the case of infants.

We now come to the question of sacrifice. In his efforts to show that the "Christadelphian" has changed its teaching regarding the sacrifice of Christ, brother Andrew actually quotes a passage from the December number of 1894, which is itself a quotation from 1873!! It is just an instance of how completely a man may be blinded by his advocacy of a particular theory . . .

The little pamphlet under review ends by saying that so long as the Editor of "Christadelphian" "teaches that our position by

birth does not require a justification by blood shedding, he is making a false claim," in maintaining that he is in harmony with Dr. Thomas. This is hardly a fair statement of the case . . . Why was it necessary for sin to be condemned in sinful flesh innocent of transgression? If brother Andrew takes the same view as Dr. Thomas, as he claims, he will reply, "No other reason can be given than that God willed it". (See *Elpis Israel*.)

If we ask why it was that the Holiest of all could not be entered without a perfect sacrifice, the same answer must be given. If then we ask whether God would have required a declaration of his righteousness, if Christ had been the only one to enter life, we ask a presumptuous question. If God's purpose had been different His will might have been different. As it was, He required Jesus to submit to a sacrificial death, consequently a violent death was necessary for his own redemption. To say that this involves the idea of substitution is the very height of absurdity . . . Substitution is not involved by the position brother Roberts took against the Renunciationists, but brother Andrew is running dangerously near it now when he speaks of the violent death "incurred by Adam and inflicted on Christ." . . . The denial that God's wrath is upon all because of Adamic sin has also been regarded as a change; but if we turn to the "Christadelphian" for 1873 we find words infinitely stronger than any that have been employed in the present controversy. "The wrath of God," says brother Roberts, "is not revealed against us because Adam sinned (as the apostacy and Renunciationism teach), but because we ourselves transgress." . . . If we turn to the "Christadelphian" for 1874, the same idea is expressed . . . "No one is born under condemnation in its individual application; that is, no one is condemned as an individual until his actions as an individual call for it." The refusal to apply the word sinner to infants has also been quoted, but we find that in 1874 brother Roberts made an exactly similar refusal, and for the same reason, i.e. the wrath of God associated with the idea . . . there has been a great deal of misrepresentation . . . the change is really on the side of those who deny the responsibility of the unjustified. (We) set forth . . . propositions exhibiting the actual teaching of those who reject the new theory (i.e. the J. J. Andrew theory):—

(1) The Adamic condemnation is purely a racial, federal matter, which does not imply guilt in Adam's descendants.

(2) While men are in Adam, they are under the constitution of sin. When they are baptized into Christ, they have forgiveness of their sins, and come under the constitution of righteousness, in other words they remain mortal, but ordered to be immortal with an "if".

(3) The change which takes place at baptism is purely one of

relationship, and the freedom from the law of sin and death is prospective so far as actual results are concerned.

(4) Christ required redemption from Adamic nature equally with his brethren, and the mode of redemption which God had ordained was a perfect obedience culminating in a sacrificial death.

(5) Sin in the flesh is the evil animal principle which evolves transgression as well as natural corruption. It exists in the lower animals as much as in man, but cannot be called sin with the same expressiveness, since in their case it is not the result of transgression."

The difficulties in the ecclesia, leading to division, in which the above was a part, of course, concerned resurrectional responsibility. The Andrew faction contended that "all in Christ" will be raised to judgment and no others. Those who withstood Andrew took the simple yet profound position that "This is (the ground of) condemnation, that light is come." Those who knowingly reject the words of Christ will be raised to judgment and condemnation, irrespective of whether baptized or not.

The contention finally led to the amendment of the Statement of Faith (1898) as follows:—

Resolved

That we reaffirm Proposition 24 of the Statement of Faith in the following amplified terms, and that we fellowship those only who hold the same doctrine:

Proposition 24

That at the appearance of Christ prior to the establishment of the kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it), dead and living—obedient and disobedient—will be summoned before His judgment seat "to be judged according to their works"; "and receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad" 2 Cor, 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rom. 2:5, 6, 16; 14:10-12; 1 Cor, 4:5; Rev. 11:18.

In considering this article, our readers will note there was a degree of deep reasoning involved in the controversy. The Andrew faction sought to show that "the unjustified" i.e. those not baptized could never be responsible to the judgment seat of Christ. All their reasoning was to this end, that young persons with knowledge of the Truth who died in their youth, or others with understanding, who for one reason or another did not attain baptism would be left to rest in the dust of the earth, even as the babe. It was a comforting fallacy for those who had lost young relatives by bereavement, but

a deception nevertheless. The focus of the error is seen in what was placed before a business meeting of the London Ecclesia in 1894:—

“That Christ having been raised from the dead through his own blood, it necessarily follows the dead in Christ will be raised through the same blood, and, as a consequence, that the blood of Christ is not available for the resurrection of any who have died in Adam.”

In looking back to the loss such an issue caused, the Remnant would respectfully suggest that it conveys the lesson of the great need to be ever alert to new ideas which appear plausible, but in reality undermine the Truth.

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“A word spoken in due season,
how good is it!”
Proverbs 15:23

God’s Word in the Proverbs gives help and guidance for His people in dealing with the everyday practical considerations of life. Knowing our frame, He provides direction and moral strength in the warfare between the spirit man who seeks to please Him, and the sinful tendencies of carnal nature.

Such help is provided in the fifteenth chapter of Proverbs which teaches the importance of speaking wisely—imparting and thereby enabling one to receive God’s wisdom through counsel.

The following references bear out the value of the Spirit’s counsel:

“A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.” Proverbs 15:1.

“A fool despiseth his father’s instruction, but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.” Proverbs 15:5.

“Without counsel purposes are disappointed, but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.” Proverbs 15:22.

Our verse under consideration gives particular help in this same direction:

“A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!” Proverbs 15:23.

This phrase “due season,” gives the thought of time, or

something suitable for the occasion, making us think of the Spirit's teaching in Ecclesiastes of an appropriate time:

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."
Eccl. 3:1, 7-8.

A man of spirit knows that at times it is not wise to speak, while at other times, he knows he must, when he might prefer not to. "A word spoken in due season" gives the thought of counsel given with perception and care at an appropriate time when it will be most helpful. If we give advice bluntly, without thinking or weighing the circumstances carefully, we may not be speaking out of love but rather getting a grievance off our own minds. We must ask ourselves, do our words edify and build up, or are they critical, scolding or pulling down?

Solomon gives additional help concerning this thought of "due season":

"Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!"
Eccl. 9:17.

The thought of eating in "due season" is not satiating self to excess, but eating only enough to fortify and strengthen. So too is a "word in due season"—advice or counsel spoken thoughtfully with discretion to strengthen one in the ways of God. One who shows love and care when giving a word in due season, must perceive what is needed to spiritually feed another.

We all at times need the help of "a word spoken in due season," for our flesh is prone to weakness and can often blind or deceive our sensibilities in matters close to our heart. A brother offering a kind word of advice, may help to redirect our thoughts back to the straight and narrow path, in this daily war which the spirit man fights against his carnal nature. Solomon gives the Spirit's wisdom regarding this hard fought struggle:

"Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war."
Proverbs 20:18.

And . . .

"A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth

strength.

For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety." Proverbs 24:5-6.

How good is a "word in due season"? immeasurably so if perceived with a humble spirit and given in love to help another. Conversely, Solomon warns of the danger when there is no care taken for a brother—where godly counsel is not give:

"Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14

Abigail we remember, was one who met David with a "word spoken in due season" when he was in danger of taking matters into his own hands against her ungrateful husband Nabal. David and his young men had protected Nabal's shearers while they were in the fields near Carmel. Needing provisions for his company, David sent messengers to Nabal, hoping he would respond with gratitude for his help and care. Instead, his selfish refusal provoked David to take vengeance, and with swords girded, he and four hundred of his young men rode to confront Nabal:

"Now David had said, Surely in vain I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath required me evil for good. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light . . ." I Samuel 25:21-22.

Fearing the consequences of David's retribution upon Nabal, Abigail set off to intercept him. Offering the provisions that Nabal had refused to provide, she fell down at his feet, beseeching in a gentle manner, reminding David not to take his own vengeance, but rather to wait upon the Lord:

"Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal . . . for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in these all thy days." I Samuel 25:26, 28.

She came bearing not only food, but also vital spiritual wisdom, fearing David in anger would act recklessly, and in killing

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Nabal, commit transgression and bring God's displeasure.
What was David's reaction—did he appreciate her concern for his spiritual well-being, or did he take offense:

"And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:
And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand . . . Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person."
I Samuel 32, 35.

When Nabal later died, at God's hand, the news reached David and he remembered faithful Abigail:

"And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife."
I Samuel 25:39.

Keeping in mind the example of Abigail who in care for David, lovingly rendered "a word in due season", let us endeavour to be as ready, both to fittingly give the Spirit's help, or which is also needed, receive it.

M.C.S.

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the Word.

“Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent’s root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.”

(Isaiah 14:29)

The above prophecy relates to the divine pronouncement that “. . . there shall come from the north a smoke . . .” (Is. 14:31) It of course related to a situation in the past that was to affect all Palestina when the king of Assyria came from the north to desolate the land. But Bible prophecy does have more than one fulfilment, and the indication of this is seen in the same chapter. For example:—

“And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety . . .” (verse 30)

“What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.” (verse 32)

So there is hope in Zion for the remnant of His people. Not a transient deliverance, but rather an eternal blessing. Now the prophecy speaks of a breaking of the power which threatened, only to see a greater threat springing from its roots. The symbolical cockatrice leading on to the more deadly “fiery flying serpent.”

With the break up of Russian Communism, the world uttered a sigh of relief, and an influence that bore down upon the situation in the Middle East was thought to be weakened if not completely removed. But look at what is emerging from the serpent power’s root.

Nato the power of the West has been thinking of expanding to create a greater military bloc. But this was soon to be shown to be objectionable to the new Russia. The Newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda revealed that the Russian General Staff of the military have produced contingency plans to counter any Nato expansion. There was a degree of political chill in the recent announcement that the Russian military are prepared to create an alliance completely separate from the West along Russia’s border with the West and into states that were formerly in the Warsaw Pact. An official of the SVR (the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service) declared that Russia would closely monitor all practical steps linked to Nato’s expansion . . . that Moscow is capable of reciprocal steps . . . and is prepared to amend its arms position by increasing conventional and nuclear forces in the North Caucasus

and Leningrad strategic areas. Also if Baltic republics join Nato, Russia is prepared to move forces into Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, and any attempt by Nato to obstruct such an action would be regarded as a prelude to nuclear war. For Nato to state that its alliance remains purely defensive is not acceptable to Moscow; if Nato goes beyond the position it presently occupies Russia will counter it.

Is there not a note of confidence in this political tone?" . . . Out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice."

So the cosmos of man's rule moves on towards the end known to the Divine Will. But there is hope, even though Palestina will suffer once more. God is in control, and has declared that it is He who establishes Zion, and those who respond to His Truth will find deliverance there.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. and Pleasant Ave.

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

Each passing year reminds us of Jesus' hoped for return to accomplish the Almighty's ultimate purpose with this earth.

As we witness the violence, the permissiveness and for many the fear which dominates the world's thinking and doing, it is clear that His return to establish a reign of righteousness is the only viable solution. May that day of deliverance soon come in accordance with the Almighty's will.

May our lives be subject to our Father, giving to Him and to His, that in that day we may be permitted to be with His Son, serving in perfection for eternity.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

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

Another year commences and the world at large makes it a time of jollification. But to a large degree there is an ignorance of what time really means. Essentially, as year follows year it is the divine indication of a sublime plan with this good earth which will most surely come to fruition. Therefore as year follows year the working out and the completion of that plan draws ever nearer.

Will this be the year of His return, for Christ positively declared ". . . ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."?