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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

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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

“HEAR THOU . . . FROM HEAVEN”

There is cause to marvel at times how regularly and appropriately we find the spirit food provided, exactly according to our needs, as the Almighty looks upon His people with Fatherly care and desire.

The record of Solomon speaks to us today. He was born to Bathsheba and David after their first child died, following David's grievous failure to abide by God's commandments. When his second child was born David named him Solomon, or in Hebrew, Shelomoh from shalom, meaning favor or peace. Because of his immediate reaction after his failure, David experienced peace and favor with God. His simple words were: "I have sinned against the LORD" (II Samuel 12:13), and the Almighty accepted him. Indeed he gave Solomon a further name, Jedidiah (beloved of Yahweh) II Samuel ch. 12:25. Years later, at David's death, Solomon was anointed king. In the fourth year of his reign he began to build the house of the Lord, a charge given to him by David (in partial fulfillment of the promises from God). In seven years the temple was completed as thousands of Israel united to share this work as carpenters, hewers of stone, carvers, engravers, and many other skills. The house of God was built according to the pattern given to David in writing by the Almighty (See I Chronicles ch. 28:19). Thus the earnest and willing builders could go to His written word where all building questions or problems would be resolved, not according to David or Solomon's plan, but God's. Is it not the same with all those called to become a part of His house today? If there is question concerning how the house can best be edified, we have God's written instruction, His word. Let us go to it, absorbing it daily to help as we labor to conform to His perfect pattern. Let us look forward to the assembling of that spiritual house when each hewn stone, each timber, each integral part, indeed each member, will have been prepared beforehand, having been:

“. . . fitly framed together . . . unto an holy temple in the Lord.”
Ephesians 2:21.

There will be no misfits, for all will have been carefully shaped and judged to be suitable before being joined. There will be no sound of hammer, axe, or tool of iron heard (I Kings 6:7); no

correction needed, as each part will fit easily and precisely into its planned position, fitly framing the house of God. Now is the time of yielding ourselves to conform. Each one is a small piece, each is now being hewn, sown, hammered, cut or polished (sometimes with pain), whatever is needed to fit into the Master's pattern. We wait for the time of its building, hoping to be a part of God's promise, the sure mercies of David, if we have conformed when the greater Son of David returns to assemble all who are fit to be a part of His house.

Returning now to Solomon's time, after seven years the house was finished, the ark was brought into the Most Holy Place, and the people:

"... praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: . . . that then the house was filled with a cloud . . . ;

So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God."

II Chronicles 5:13-14.

Here was a wondrous and sure sign of God's presence, just as the cloud and glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34), which Moses dedicated at Mt. Sinai. That same cloud led Israel through the wilderness, guiding their way, a covering, a protection and a sure sign to His people. What an assurance it would be to Solomon and his people, after their years of building (God's presence clearly evidenced) for the glory of the Lord to fill the house. As they all watched in awe, they would rejoice: God is with us! He has accepted the work of our hands; the building is indeed "fitly framed together."

As the house was dedicated, Solomon:

"... kneeled down upon his knees . . . and spread forth his hands toward heaven,

And said, O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts:"

II Chronicles 6:13-14.

He did keep His covenant with David, in providing a son, a throne, a kingdom, and a house, a foretaste of that which is to come when the greater Son of David returns to assemble His house. Our hope, our goal is to be a part of that promised and everlasting house, not,

however, let us remember, through our own righteousness, but only through His mercy, if we walk before Him with all our hearts.

As Solomon prayed, he besought the Almighty:

“Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplications, . . .

That thine eyes may be open upon this house . . . upon the place whereof . . . thou wouldest put thy name there; . . . hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.” II Chronicles 6:19-21.

Solomon knew the vital importance of forgiveness, for he experienced the fleshly weaknesses and failures to which all men but One succumb. His mind was to place himself and his people in God’s hands, seeking His mercy, the One who “forgiveth all (our) iniquities; who healeth all (our) diseases” (Psalm 103:3), as we sing in our anthem. The king also prayed that as Israel failed, the Almighty would hear:

“. . . if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;

When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; . . .

Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel . . .”

II Chronicles 6:24, 26-27.

He keenly recognized the conditions under which the Almighty would hear and forgive. It was not a form of actions or words. There was the need to turn back to Him, their God, to confess His name, to pray and make supplications. These are clear evidences of repentance, of a contrite spirit and a broken heart which is so essential for His mercy. Solomon spoke of the need to “confess thy name.” What does this involve? **Confess** is a word used to praise, give thanks, or thanksgiving. This is much more than simply acknowledging God as the Almighty. How can we confess His name in a way which is acceptable to Him? Our reading for tomorrow gives us an example:

“Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the

house.

And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves . . . and worshipped, and praised (confessed) the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." II Chronicles 7:1, 3.

As Solomon and Israel saw God's glory, His presence filling the house, they were overcome with reverence and awe. Israel at Sinai had witnessed the lightning, the thunder, the smoke, the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain shaking. As they realized God's terrible power in fear:

". . . they removed and stood afar off.

And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." Exodus 20:18, 20.

In backing away, with humility, they confessed with godly fear the name of Yahweh, acknowledging His power, His majesty and the glory which makes up the Yahweh name. In Solomon's time, Israel saw this same power in the fire that came down and consumed the sacrifices, and in the glory that filled the house of God, which Solomon had been allowed to build because of his faithfulness and love for God.

We remember it was not long after Moses was given the pattern for the tabernacle, indeed before it was even built, that Israel sinned. When Moses returned from his forty days in the mount, he found Israel worshipping a golden calf and listening to these words:

"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Exodus 32:4.

They were not confessing, praising God's name, but worshipping a lifeless golden idol. It is a grievous thing to realize that here 500 years later, after the dedication of God's house, Solomon began to accumulate wives, riches, horses, increasingly delighting in these temporal things to the lessening of his love for God. Shortly thereafter he died and according to his own words was:

". . . and old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished." Ecclesiastes 4:13.

Why did he allow his many pagan wives to lead him astray, so that

he built temples for their pagan gods, Chemosh and Molech? Was it because he had lost the fear, the awe, the knowledge of and most of all, the love for God, failing to confess His name, to praise Him, and to obey Him, the Almighty and everlasting God of Abraham and David? Did he fail to keep in mind and heart the need for confessing His name, as he and Israel had expressed from their hearts, when the ark was brought into the newly built temple?

We meet here, Brethren and Sisters, to give praise to our Father, to confess His name. We do not see lightning, fire, or hear a voice; we do not meet in an "exceeding magnificent" house (I Chronicles 22:5); but He does hearken to our cry and to the earnest prayers offered up here. His eyes are open to this small portion of His house, and He does forgive *if* we are truly aware of His mercy, grace, and power; if we are truly confessing His name, praising Him as Yahweh, the Almighty, the One who is good and whose mercy does endure for ever. Let us be determined to carefully and consciously confess His name, not only in words, but in obedience, subjection and humility, striving to follow the example of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus, whom we have remembered here this morning. Let us heed the words of Paul given for our help:

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."
Hebrews 13:15.

J.A. DeF.

A BIBLE CLASS
"BE MORE READY TO HEAR"
(Ecclastes 5:1)

Our subject comes from the writings of Solomon, the son of David, who was sometimes called the "Preacher" — the wisest man of his day, being endowed with great wisdom by God. Solomon's writings in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes often contrast the ways of the spirit with those of the flesh, and such is the case in our verse under consideration:

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil." Eccl. 5:1.

This thought of "keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God" reminds of God's instructions to Moses as he approached the burning bush:

"... Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Exodus 3:5.

The house of God is in a sense "holy ground", and so one should look to his walk in order to be in accord with His word. How can we know if we are walking rightly? God does not leave us in doubt, but has given His Word as signposts to show the way:

"Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD." Proverbs 8:32-35.

Our verse under consideration is such a guide, giving warning and instruction to keep one on the path of life.

To be "more ready to hear", one must not be speaking but listening, alert for the Spirit's direction, for we know from James that the tongue is an evil member needing the spirit's control:

"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and

setteth on fire the course of nature; And it is set on fire of hell.” James 3:5-6.

This thought echoes our subject, and the spiritually wise will endeavour to bridle his tongue in order to control the flesh knowing:

“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraining his lips is wise.” Proverbs 10:19.

One reason people don't hear is that they are too busy speaking themselves, or interrupting instead of listening — not showing respect for another's opinion. Is that being ready to hear? the tendency of the flesh is to be wordy, and today many political speakers are often purposefully ambiguous — concealing their true motives and interests. There are few world leaders who speak simply and directly with honesty.

The Lord Jesus' warned of the same inclination when approaching God in prayer:

“... when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

Matthew 6:7-8.

The “sacrifice of fools” is a rush of empty words — spoken without perception or care for what is required. A fool offers what to him seems satisfactory, not listening for guidance or direction from God, and therefore his sacrifice is unacceptable.

One who did not listen carefully to God, is seen in the example of king Saul. Instructed of God's plan by the prophet Samuel, he was directed to attack the Amalekites and utterly destroy them and all their possessions:

“Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”

I Samuel 15:1-3.

God's instructions were very specific — He was avenging a wrong done to Israel by Amalek, using Saul as His weapon. However, when Samuel came down to meet with Saul after the battle, it was obvious the king had not heeded nor obeyed God, for Samuel asked:

“... What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”

I Samuel 15:14.

Saul had spared Agag, king of the Amalekites, and saved the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord. His was a “sacrifice of fools” because it was done in disobedience and would therefore be unacceptable to God. Samuel asked him:

“Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?”

I Samuel 15:19.

To “fly upon the spoil” suggests an eagerness or lust for gain, not heeding God's instructions but out of greed, following his own instincts. Samuel rebuked Saul:

“... Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

I Samuel 15:22.

In addition, Samuel was commanded to convey:

“... Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king... The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.”

I Samuel 15:23, 28.

How carefully we must heed the spirit's teaching — to listen intently instead of speaking, following His guidance rather than rushing blindly in our own wisdom remembering, to “be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools.”

M.C.S.

THR RESTORATION OF THE JEWS

(Dr. J. Thomas 1852)

Restitution is not simply a return of the race, but *the setting up again of institutions that once existed there* — the restitution or restoration of the kingdom again to the Twelve Tribes: this is the re-institution, or restitution spoken of by all the prophets from Moses to the revealer of the Apocalypse to John. No Gentile powers can accomplish this, though aided by all the Jews on earth: for the Restored Kingdom exists under *an amended Mosaic code*, whose emendation (*diorthrosis*) can only be defined, administered, and adapted to the exigencies of the world, by the King of Israel himself, and his associate priests and kings.

Our worthy friend of the *Advent harbinger* is, no doubt, very anxious for the appearing of the King in power and great glory. So am I, and for more reasons than need be expressed. But we must take care not to allow our wishes, or desires, to lead us to conclusions not in harmony with the testimony and sound reason. I would have no delay: but I am compelled to confess that there will yet be some. The working out of the approaching judgment upon the principles illustrated in God's past dealings with nations, and empires, requires time — a dozen years at least; and in these days of steam and electricity how much may be accomplished in that period!

This brief delay will, perhaps, be the salvation of many; for, how numerous are they who are praying for the appearing of the Lord, who have not even begun to prepare for his appearance. Let us not therefore be impatient of arguments that do not confirm us in our wishes. "Thy will, O Lord, not mine be done!" should be pre-eminently the disposition of the student of the prophetic word.

I see a war among the powers resulting from an antagonism to French ambition, which must precede the battle of Armageddon; the Great City has also to be divided into three parts; and the Feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Image have to be fashioned into shape out of the materials that exist. This requires time; and during this time the colony is forming and prospering *to tempt the spoiler* to his destruction by the stone power, on the mountains of Israel.

A PETITION PREPARED BUT LATER ABANDONED

At the time of the Boer War the British Government experienced difficulties in recruiting enough men for the military services. As a result the Arranging Brethren of the Birmingham Temperance Hall Ecclesia, mindful that conscription might be introduced, advised that the subject of such a possible eventuality be discussed in the pages of "The Christadelphian". However, before the matter got any further, the Boer War ended. Nevertheless the Editor of the magazine believed that the issue should still be gone into, though a few opposed him stating that a petition of conscience to the Government was not necessary. These declared:-

"Don't make an agreement with Caesar - - - . Let us be faithful, and not take the sword; but we want nothing to do with the gathering of a mixed multitude praying Caesar's friendship."

Most Christadelphians looked to the Birmingham Meeting for leadership, and so an assembly was called on 4th December 1902 to go into the matter. As a result the Arranging Brethren were asked to devise the text of a petition to Government, and to use some of the wording R. Roberts had used in this connection in 1878. In due course the following was drawn up:-

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

The humble Petition of the People called Christadelphians, praying for the exemption of Petitioners from compulsory Military Service. SHOWETH AS FOLLOWS:-

- 1/ That your petitioners are a body of religious people known as CHRISTADELPHIANS: who are looking for the early personal advent of Christ to set up a divine government over all the earth and to give an immortal nature to his friends who will be associated with him in the government.
- 2/ That they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, on the ground that the Bible, which they believe to be the word of God, commands them not to kill; not to resist evil; to love their enemies; to bless them that curse them; to do good to them that hate them; to pray for those who despitefully use them and persecute them; and to do to men as they would men should do to them. Consequently, your petitioners entertain the conviction that

they are debarred from taking any part in the conflicts that arise between nations. They recognise and discharge the duty of submitting to the laws enacted by the governments, where these laws do not conflict with the laws delivered by the Deity to His servants in His Word; but where human laws conflict with those that are divine, they feel themselves compelled to follow the example of the apostle Peter, who, before a judicial tribunal in such a case, declared that he must obey God rather than man.

- 3/ That in view of prophetic revelation concerning the coming "time of trouble" your petitioners apprehend a possible resort to some form of compulsory military service in the country, subject to the jurisdiction of your Honourable House.
- 4/ That they, therefore, pray your Honourable House to grant them a legal exemption from compulsory military service, subject to such conditions as your Honourable House may think fit to impose.
- 5/ That conscientious objection to military service has been a peculiarity of your petitioners since the beginning of their existence as a body, and it is not an opinion professed to suit an apprehended emergency.
- 6/ That your petitioners have proof of this last allegation in their possession in the shape of writings current among them for many years, advocating these principles; and, further, in the shape of documents, going to show that a similar petition was granted to their brethren in Richmond, Lunenburg, and King William Cos., Va., and Jefferson County, Miss., by the Confederate Congress, during the American Civil War of 1860-64, and was also presented by their brethren in the Northern States to the United States Congress at the close of that struggle, when conscription came into force.
- 7/ Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray your Honourable House that they may be exempted from compulsory Military and Naval service, and that your petitioners may have such relief in the premises as to your Honourable House may seem meet.

The above work remained a good base for any subsequent petitions for a later need. Birmingham at the time organised petition sheets for signatures which were distributed to the ecclesias. Amazingly

the response to this effort was lukewarm! And as Lord Morpeth, the Member of Parliament for South Birmingham, who had been asked on behalf of the Christadelphian community to present the petition, stated it was unlikely that conscription would be introduced, the matter was allowed to lapse. The majority believing it would be inopportune to present such a document in a time of peace.

It would certainly have been wiser to have pressed on with this work so far advanced, which would have corroborated the stance that it was "not an opinion professed to suit an apprehended emergency." Especially as it was believed "that in view of prophetic revelation concerning the coming 'time of trouble'," it was apprehended that the country could ultimately resort to some form of compulsory military service.

Sure enough this was not long in coming to pass, for little more than a decade later The Great War commenced, bringing about a severe trial for the ecclesias, from which, however, they were delivered through His Overruling Grace.

"A MAN'S GIFT MAKETH ROOM FOR HIM"

(Proverbs 18:16)

Consideration from the book of Proverbs conveys to us the wisdom of the Almighty through Solomon, and is given as a guide for our spiritual strength and welfare. Our particular verse for study at this time has to do with an aspect of giving gifts:

"A man's gift maketh room for him, . . ." Proverbs 18:16.

A gift is given for different reasons: to show one's love, loyalty or gratitude. Whether a gift is acceptable and pleasing depends somewhat on the motive behind it. If given for a sincere and selfless purpose, without expectation of any material benefit for the giver, it is a truly "good" gift. The gift given seeking profit or benefit to the giver is like a bribe and evokes no warmth or gratitude. If given as an outward expression of regard when there is no real cordiality or respect toward the recipient, it is hypocrisy and therefore brings forth no true pleasure or gratitude.

Let us look to the Word for gifts which were pleasing to the receiver, and to God who knows each heart. Abigail's gift to David is an outstanding example of selflessness and love. David became very angry toward Abigail's husband for his churlish refusal to help David's young followers in their need (I Samuel 25:10-11). In indignation, David sought to bring vengeance upon Nabal. Immediately, when Abigail heard of her husband's behaviour and became aware of David's angry determination, she knew the harm it would bring to himself and to others' regard for him. She "made haste" to reach David, bearing the gift of food so greatly needed, and appealed urgently that he turn from seeking reprisal. Can we imagine what this meant for her as she approached him? She knew that Nabal would no doubt be angry with her, and that David might feel affronted by her approach. Yet she persevered, appealing to him humbly and beseechingly:

"That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: . . ." I Samuel 25:31.

David, moved by Abigail's supplication, put away his anger and wrong thinking. Clearly realising his danger, he responded:

"... Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee . .
 . And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou,
 ... Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to

thy voice, and have accepted thy person."

I Samuel 25:32-35.

David valued Abigail's gift, given in such a humble and loving spirit as she desired to save David from grievous error, not seeking benefit for herself. Her example can be a guide for us in the desire to give that which is pleasing and acceptable, not only to the one who receives the gift, but to our Father who knows our purpose and our hearts.

As we offer a gift, do we not need to keep in mind that:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights . . ." James 1:17.

In awareness of the great mercy from our Father, do we seek to give gifts to Him and to His? This reflects our love for Him and for His Son whom He gave as a gift of redemption. How then can we give acceptably? The law for Israel can help us, as they were commanded:

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: . . ." Deuteronomy 16:16.

These were to be times of rejoicing before the Lord for all His goodness. He further instructed:

". . . they shall not appear before the LORD empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee."

Deuteronomy 16:16-17.

All were to appear before the Lord with sacrifices, an effortful giving in thanksgiving and love for the Giver, as they were able. Able is a meaningful word, a joining of two words: one meaning something given, used for gift; the other meaning to yield, to serve or to fellowship with an open hand, conveying generosity, reflecting love and rejoicing for all His benefits. How can this apply in our lives? Paul opens up the thought:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present (yield) your bodies a living (lifetime) sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

THE REMNANT

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:1-2.

Gifts, heart-felt and perceptive, involving one's own efforts, are truly pleasing to Him, and as Solomon has revealed for us:

"A man's gift maketh room for him..." Proverbs 18:16.

To make room or to open wide tells us that such gifts open wide the hand of God to bless and to sustain, making room for the giver in His purpose promised to all those who truly love Him. This opening wide in turn makes one's own heart rejoice in His mercy and love; indeed, the heart of the giver is thereby also enlarged and warmed, as David expressed:

"I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."
Psalm 119:32.

As this comes about, one's heart is opened wide to the Word of God, and that heart gradually becomes spiritually circumcised, the flesh cut off, and filled with joy and reverence for God, an all-encompassing warmth within one's self. From such a heart comes acceptable gifts to God and to His people, and thereby a loving bond is strengthened. Such blessing can be known only as the gift is given without regard for self.

Let us heed Paul's words and so come to know true gladness of heart:

"... remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Acts 20:35.

J.A.DeF.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER OF A.R.H.

"The comprehensive definition of Sin is, "That which is not of the will of God." 1 John 3:8 says "He that committeth sin is of the devil for the devil sinneth from the beginning." If that beginning was Adam Son of God then we identify the one by whom sin entered the world. The Devil = Adam. I would like to consider Gen. 1 where God said "Let us make man in our image after our likeness." The making was in three stages:-

1/ So God created man in His own image in the image of God created He him.

2/ Male and female.

3/ God blessed them and said unto them - - - .

Genesis 2 outlines the making of items 1 and 2 but all is silent regarding item 3. Alas! cursed is the ground for your sake. In the November "Christadelphian" Clement Hinde wrote, "That the divine blessing was and remains conditional upon obedience." I think we both agree!

Had Adam and Eve continued obedient in their state of espousal, proving their fear of God, which Prov. 1:7 says is the "Beginning of knowledge", then divine access to the tree of knowledge would have been their wedding day and what it revealed to Adam the devil would have been blessing to Adam obedient, populating the earth with sons of God to have dominion over the work of His hands. God's will was thwarted and Adam the devil produced a host of devils in his own image and likeness.

1 John 3 goes on to say that "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil," that were corrupting the will of God.

In the new creation Jesus was born of the "Will of God". Joseph obeyed in taking Mary instead of divorce and Mary as handmaiden of the Lord. Her words reflect her knowledge of Gen. 1. "All generations will call me 'Blessed', " instead of cursed labour to feed the struggle of mankind. The promises to Abraham look to the unfulfilled promise in Eden coming upon all nations.

As we take the bread and wine the cup of wine is termed the cup of "Blessing". In John's gospel record ch.1 records:-

"Those that received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God. - - - Which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man (Adam) but of God."

God's will was not done in Eden but delayed until Jesus Christ displayed the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person (Heb. 1). He was "appointed" heir of all things in contrast to Adam and His offspring who had no legal right to dominion over

the work of God's hands. Their birth contrary to God's day of blessing . . . "What is not of the will of God is sin," so with no access to the tree of life, death overcame them and still does. We all as devils in Adam are without God and no hope. In Adam all die. - - -

Babes and children all die because of no access to the tree of life. The access was lost through one man's transgression. Through Christ it will be restored. The flesh profiteth nothing for sooner or later its lack will bring our final. I suggest that when man fell short of the glory of God a halt was called to His purpose. - - -"

The Remnant's points for consideration on the above

Sin, certainly, is the definition of all that is against the will of God. Our correspondent quotes from 1 John 3:15, "He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning." The Bible quotation goes on to declare, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil."

Now our correspondent states, "If that beginning was Adam son of God, then we identify the one by whom sin entered the world - - -. The Devil = Adam." We would submit for consideration, a need to look back even further. What were the "works of the devil" in the beginning? The words of Christ supply the answer. To His rejectors Jesus declared, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." (John 8:44-45). What then was the first lie? Was it not the lie of the serpent, "Ye shall not surely die"? (Genesis 3:4). Additionally the serpent went further in encouraging the sin of Adam and Eve by suggesting that if they went against God's law and partook of the forbidden fruit, "--- then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods --- ." Of course the serpent is not to have all the blame, for man and woman listened and through lust allowed their desire to overcome their respect for the law of God. However the serpent became the symbolic personification of all that goes against God, and rightly is declared as a "murderer from the beginning" for through his reasonings he brought about the deaths of Adam and Eve. From that time the devil has been in all that have descended from those first parents; all have succumbed in one way or another, even as the first man and woman, to desires that go against the will of God, or in any case die, as our correspondent states, because they have "no access to the Tree of Life." Only One Man has triumphed over the devil in resisting perfectly all false reasoning and evil desires. So fulfilling

the promise of God given in the Beginning, that a Saviour would come to 'bruise the serpent in the head'. Jesus the Second Adam succeeded where the first Adam failed, and will ultimately put down and restrain all things which go across the law of God:-

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled - - - ."

(Rev. 20:2-3).

The serpent personifies everything that is opposed to God. Darwinism is as much the devil as each sinful individual, or as nations united together in evil purposes.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it."

(Amos 8:11-12).

Of course these words of scripture apply to the moral state of ancient Israel at the time of the prophet Amos. But such gems of scripture certainly have an application to events of later times as so often seen in reiteration of Old Testament references in New Testament accounts.

The focus upon a "famine of hearing" is a powerful illustration of the consequences that result from a disregard of God's word. Peoples and nations that do so become morally starved, and therefore weak to resist the growth of evil.

That such is the state of the present world is very evident, not only from personal observation, but also by the lamentations of so called religious leaders who cannot help but express their concern.

The Chief Rabbi (in Britain), a few months ago made the comment:-

"A hundred years ago we had the faith but not the land. Today we have the land, but what has happened to the faith?"

He went on to explain that when Zionism was founded as a movement in the 1890's, this was to work for a return to the land. But when Biblical prophets spoke of this they meant a return to the faith

as well as to the land, the two were "inseparable". On the issue of Jewish renewal he declared "the enemy is inside, the loss of identity, of faith, of a compelling reason to want to hand on Judaism to our children." --- "Zionism was about the saving of Jewish lives, Jewish renewal is about the saving of Jewish life." --- "Is it possible that the greatest danger to Jewish survival will turn out to be, God forbid, not Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia, but our own indifference?"

The Jewish Policy Research recently stated that one in three Jews have ceased to have links with their synagogue and many are now willing to marry non-Jews. The survey found that those losing traditional values shared views widespread in society of lax sexual morality. Four out of five no longer believe their eventual aim should be to make their lives in Israel.

But what of the churches, which in earlier times, through large church attendances, had a moral effect on a large portion of the population? How significant were the recent words of a spokesman on religion, published in the National Press:-

"Nowadays, the Bible's great certainties have been diluted by sloppy but fashionable moral relativism. 'Thou shalt not ---' now reads: 'Whilst one should never be judgmental towards alternative life styles which have their own validity, they may under some conditions, be unpositive and so ---'."

The spokesman went on to declare that the truths spoken by Christ in first-century Palestine have been found wanting because their antiquity somehow makes them irrelevant to the late 20th century. While it was possible for Christian missionaries to make the word of God relevant and comprehensible to barbarian and pagan Saxon tribesmen or South Sea islanders, it was beyond the wit of modern Anglicans to do the same for their countrymen. Instead of decisive spiritual guidance, today's Anglican gets a sequence of episcopal "ifs" and "buts" which usually leads nowhere. There has been a watering down of the articles of faith. Bishops have played a vital part in undermining their own Church. Theological convolutions have left church congregations and many others bewildered. Men of stronger nerve and greater determination might have responded differently to the decline in religious faith. Traditionally the watchdogs of public morality and always ready to make forthright and authoritative judgments on ethical issues, the bishops, suddenly lost their voices.

Another religious commentator recently focussed on the way religion has gone, as follows:-

"We live after Freud, and what grandmother attributed to God is now 'anxiety hysteria'. In the 20th century, the Church handed over the province of nature to the scientist and the province of the heart to psychiatry." - - - "We compressed Christian faith into not much more than 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'" - - - "The real competition these days is the secular world. Churches begun in the Reformation era have been losing members. The dropouts are not going to other churches, they are going to no church at all."

Those who are now of an age to look back some fifty years see a tremendous change in the religious life of the nation. There is no comparison. No wonder, then, also, there is a great change for the worse in moral life. It is the Bible prophecy come true:-

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a famine - - - of hearing the words of the LORD."

The world is undeserving of the spirit benefit which the Bible gives, so its good influence is taken away, having been undermined in men's minds by science falsely so called.

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

As the efforts for peace in the Middle East inch forward, beset by terrorism and reprisals, we know that God's eyes are upon His land, and upon all who strive to be in Israel of the spirit.

May we wait in patience and faith remembering Jesus' words: "... be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:44).

J.A.Def.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursday: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

At the time of writing the ecclesia is looking forward to the proposed visit of Sister Lois Carter of Hamburg, scheduled 30th March to 22nd April.

Such visits encourage the fellowship, and promote the unity and the mindfulness of the welfare of each one, both far and near.