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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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"IT IS ENOUGH"

How soberly impressive is the history of Judah and Israel after the Kingdom became divided by God. At that time two tribes remained under Rehoboam and the rest, ten tribes, were drawn away by Jeroboam. Previously Israel (all twelve tribes) had become a great nation, with God's blessing, during the reign of David and Solomon. However, because of a decline in faithfulness, distress and trouble came from God upon His people. This past week's readings have covered about 80 years of this tumultuous period. In these years seven kings (Jeroboam through Ahab) reigned over the ten tribes (Israel). There was no continuing line of kings due to four changes in lineage during these years. In Judah, as divinely ordained, during this same period there were three kings—Rehoboam, Abijam and Asa—all in the line of David.

It was a time of turmoil and intrigue, especially in the ten tribes, with plotting and scheming as many vied for the throne. It was a time of departure from the word of God, as both kingdoms continued in their worship of idols, bringing hardship and trouble to their kings and their people. There was warfare between brethren as Israel and Judah struggled for supremacy

Some 60 years after the time of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, during Ahab's reign over Israel, God, no longer patient with this wayward people, introduced His prophet Elijah who brought God's warning:

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

I Kings 17:1.

This judgment on Israel soon began and Elijah continued his work among them. Ahab was a wicked king as he:

"... did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

... he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him."

I Kings 16:30-31.

It was to this idolatrous king that Elijah carried God's word of the drought to last "... these years, but according to my word." It was not for a specific period, for its length depended upon Ahab's

response to the chastening. It was indeed a sore plague upon the ten tribes, bringing suffering and starvation. Elijah, however, was fed for a period by ravens, a wondrous provision for him. Later the widow of Zarephath, whose oil and meal miraculously did not diminish, shared this food with Elijah—all in God's merciful care. The plague lasted three years and all Israel suffered greatly. Only Elijah, the widow and her son would be spared the privation. In due time God spoke further to Elijah:

"... Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth."

I Kings 18:1.

When the evil king saw Elijah, he spoke in angry accusation:

"... Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

I Kings 18:17.

He blamed Elijah and God for the devastation which had come upon Israel, rather than himself and the people who worshipped Baal in defiance of God's commands. To show Ahab that the Almighty was the only true God, Elijah asked that 450 prophets of Baal be gathered to Carmel, as well as 400 prophets of the groves. Then he spoke to all the people there assembled:

"... How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."

I Kings 18:21.

They were unabashed and unbelieving! The prophet then proposed that the priests of Baal prepare an offering and that he would do the same. Both were to put their offerings on an altar but put no fire thereto. He then challenged the priests of Baal:

"... call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God ..."

I Kings 18:24.

Baal's priests, after great efforts, failed to bring fire down upon their altar. Having built his own altar, Elijah instructed to pour four barrels of water upon the altar and on the wood. This was done three times. Then with great care, at the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah prayed:

"... LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word."

I Kings 18:36.

In response to the prophet's work and faith, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. Those witnessing this remarkable evidence hastily shouted: "The LORD, he is the God" (Verse 39). Further, Baal's prophets were later killed by the hand of God's prophet. Elijah then spoke with forceful conviction to Ahab the king:

"... Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain."

I Kings 18:41.

Soon after, there was an abundance of rain, ending the drought and Israel's suffering.

Yet Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, continued to threaten Elijah so that he fled for his life, greatly discouraged at the continued rebellion of Israel. In his distress he cried unto God:

"... It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers."

I Kings 19:4.

Can we not, Brethren and Sisters, understand Elijah's feelings, for after having done so much, his enemies still sought his life, there was no relief; indeed, his position seemed to grow worse. He would feel: How can I continue to witness and struggle against the evil? We, too, may feel in times of trouble or affliction: I cannot go on—it's too much. But should we not realise that only our Father knows what is sufficient as He, in wisdom and mercy, requires us to endure until He, in His time lifts the trial? Trials come to His people according to His purpose. He is ever watching, waiting, desiring to see a willing and right reaction. Then and only then, as He deems it so: "It is enough"—and the trial can be lifted. It may seem long, arduous and painful, but let us hang on and continue our efforts that He may perceive the desired results.

The Almighty did continue to provide help, relief and assurance for the one who felt he was alone in the work. Elijah was caused to go to Horeb (Sinai)—"the mount of the Lord"—where God appeared to him and gave him a further work. Also he was given a faithful companion, Elisha, who would be anointed in Elijah's place after he was taken away. In the meantime, Elisha was to be his fellow-worker and companion. Thus the Almighty showed his weary and distraught servant that he was not alone, that he had a further work to do, and he had a brother to share it, encouraging and strengthening his trust in God. Elijah continued as a prophet to

Israel for another ten years in the company of Elisha, whom he would encourage and instruct. Then he was taken away by God in a whirlwind (II Kings 2:11), and Elisha, by taking up Elijah's mantle, became God's prophet for another 50 to 60 years. He, as Elijah, was persecuted but always under the covering of God, symbolised in Elijah's mantle which he wore. He was cared for and continued to proclaim God's word.

Here were two men, faithful witnesses for over 80 years, in a time of trouble and turmoil in Israel. Both were hated by the evil kings of that time, of whom many no doubt felt as did Ahab: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Yet His prophets endured, witnessing to God's word and righteousness, thereby revealing His power as that word came to pass. At times no doubt they would feel in weariness: "It is enough." It seemed more than they could bear, especially as their work brought no real response in Israel. Yet they continued as His witnesses with power. Their efforts remind us of Jesus' words to John on Patmos concerning those who do His work:

"... I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy . . . clothed in sackcloth.

And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: . . .

These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: . . ."

Revelations 11:3, 5, 6.

Elijah through God's power did shut heaven that it rained not for three years. When later threatened by the soldiers of King Ahaziah, Elijah twice caused fire to come down from God to consume the fifty sent to arrest him (II Kings 1:9-12), thus revealing that he was a "man of God" (Verse 9). His companion and fellow-worker Elisha, was given a similar power, enabling him to perform miracles that demonstrated God's power.

Can we not, Brethren and Sisters, profit by the example of these two men of God? May we not also feel discouraged and dismayed at what may seem to be very grievous trials, making circumstances seem harder than can be borne? Yet there is a great power working on behalf of those who are His—a power to lift up and strengthen in faith, when we may feel: "Is it enough." So let us hold fast our trust in the Almighty who governs, placing upon us what He knows we need, given according to our capacity, and making available to us power to endure. In His wisdom that help is there. He watches and when timely, provides. In today's idolatrous

and troubled world, are we not blessed and privileged to be allowed to do His work, witnessing by our living under Him, by our work and submission? Let us then take courage, lift up our heads, longing and trusting in the Lord Jesus' return to cleanse this world and to destroy the rebellious and their evil. Then will He establish the promised kingdom of His Father, over which He will reign as King, and with Him, His faithful ones as kings and priests.

Indeed, then it will be spoken in a very different sense, the words of gratitude and joy:

"Is it enough"—God's will be done.

J. A. Def.

THE PROMISED REST

Paul's writing to his Hebrew brethren is an ardent appeal—a call to those schooled in the teachings of the law and prophets, to recognise the fulfilment of what they had been taught, in the person of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. Here was the One of whom their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had seen, in faith, the One who would usher in the promised rest for the earth and for God's people at the end of His purpose. This hope Paul declared to them through the gospel message:

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

Hebrew 4:1.

From the beginning, God spoke of a rest promised to the faithful. As a sign, He rested on the seventh day, teaching man of the hoped for rest and restoration to come in the kingdom age. This wondrous gift of an eternal inheritance is only possible through belief in His Son, the Savior. What the faithful of old were required to see through the eyes of faith, many of Paul's generation had been privileged to see in the flesh:

"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds:"

Hebrews 1:1-2.

This belief in His Son, the "heir of all things" and fulfiller of the promises to the fathers, Paul perceived to be lacking in these Jews. They were unwilling to take the leap of faith necessary from the law which was intended as a schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ.

Today there are millions of Jews throughout the world, still keeping the ordinances of the law, observing the holy days and feasts which pointed forward to Christ, while refusing to acknowledge the fulfilment made through the coming and subsequent death of the Lord Jesus.

Because of this same unyielding attitude, Paul reminded how many of their fathers had died in the wilderness through unbelief and were denied entrance into that rest:

"But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?"

And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Hebrews 3:17-19.

David through the Psalms, mindful of Israel's wilful history, spoke of this same lack:

"For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work . . .

Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

Paslm 95:7-9, 11.

David was specifically referring to Israel's refusal to believe the faithful report of Caleb and Joshua, who were among those who spied out the promised land. Because of Israel's faithlessness, after their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, God sentenced them to die in the wilderness, thus forfeiting the rest promised:

"Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:

Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. And the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed."

Numbers 32:11-13.

They did not enter because they refused to follow His word, therefore now Paul was appealing to their descendants.

God has promised a rest to the faithful—His word does not fall short, only man can alter that hoped for blessing, through lack of faith and disobedience to His word:

"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Hebrews 4:2.

The examples of those who perished through unbelief and hardness of heart are not preserved for the purpose of interesting reading, but for our admonition and instruction, that we may see with the eyes of faith, and learn from their mistakes.

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

I Corinthians 10:11-12.

Out of all that wilderness multitude, only Caleb, Joshua and those under twenty years of age, were allowed to enter the land—to partake in measure of that rest promised. We have the example of thousands who fell short, preserved for our help and instruction that we may hear and fear:

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

Hebrews 4:11.

The unbelievers in the wilderness doubted that God would provide as he had promised, and their unbelief became a self-fulfilling reality. They rejected the good report of the spies, allowing their fleshly fear and skepticism to get in the way of faith and trust in God’s word.

Let us be warned Brethren and Sisters from these helpful words of Paul to his Hebrew brethren, and in hope:

“. . . lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

Hebrews 12:12-13.

We need that spiritual healing which only He can provide—to be daily strengthened in faith through prayer and scriptural study in order to reject what our flesh urges. By doing so, we have the same hope promised to Israel—if found faithful through His mercy, we shall hear the welcome invitation, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). Herein lies the rest promised through Christ Jesus, to those that labour now in hope.

M.C.S.

JOHN'S BAPTISM

Extract from a recent article in a Christadelphian Magazine

“. . . the baptism of Jesus Christ . . . What did it signify? If “the pure and bright baptismal flood” represents his precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish, what is signified by the unlovely waters of the sluggish, muddy Jordan, sliding ever downward into the Sea of Death? What is it, but humanity itself? And if our baptism in his blood signifies our association with him in all his experiences, what is signified by his baptism in the Jordan? This is nothing less than a gracious identification with his brethren in all their experiences. John’s words imply (to Jesus) “You are so pure and holy that you are not one of us, and should not have to undergo the experiences of the rest of mankind.”

Jesus’ reply sets this logic aside: “Permit it: for if I am to fulfil all the will of God, I must associate myself physically with those I come to save.” When we are baptized, we are baptized into the Lord Jesus. When he was baptized, he was, as it were, baptized into us! This, in a nutshell, is the reason that Jesus insisted on sharing in the baptism of John. From the beginning, he was “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). It was yet another evidence that “he also himself likewise took part of the same” (Hebrews 2:14).

Of course, being mortal, he was doomed to die in any case: but this inevitability should not diminish our wonder at his choice. The fundamental facts about his nature could not and cannot be evaded. Nevertheless, he acted, not as a conscript, but as a volunteer: not so much because God demanded obedience of him but because he chose to obey.”

The Remnant’s Comments

There is certainly a difference between the baptism which Christ instituted and that which John the Baptist preached. This is made clear by the following:—

“And he (Paul) said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 19:2-5.

From this it is shown that John's baptism concerned a prevailing condition in those claiming to be God's people just prior to the revealing of the Messiah of Israel. This baptism, of necessity, had to pass, along with the law, because of the new covenant in Christ; hence the superceding of the baptism which John preached by baptism into the Body of Christ.

The prevailing condition in Jewry at the time of John was that Israel were astray. Hence John's call to those claiming to be God's people to metaphorically "come out" to the wilderness and repent. His cry was "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). John was working under the influence of the Spirit, as Luke records, ". . . the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Luke 3:2-3). The pith of his message was "Bring forth . . . fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father . . ." (Luke 3:8). Note, to repeat, this repentance was "for the remission of sins." The position was that those wishing to please God and find His mercy, were to uphold the message of the Most High through His witness John, by submitting to John's baptism, not trusting in their descent from Abraham. In this they accepted that they were members of a nation that were astray, and that they needed to show repentance of their being in such a position as that irrespective of being descendants of faithful Abraham. (Repent, metaneo, to think differently.) This was to be in the spirit of Daniel who said:—

"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.

And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments."

Daniel 9:3-5.

Daniel made no excuses for himself, he was a member of a nation, the nation of God, who had failed. And so it was, at the time of John's baptism; Jesus also was a member of that nation, hence His words to John concerning baptismal necessity, when John showed reluctance to place Christ under the water, "Suffer it to be so now:

for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). It was right what John was doing, it was a necessary work of God and had to be upheld. Hence after this Jesus took up this work as recorded in John's gospel record:—

"Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."

John 3:26-27.

". . . Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples)."

John 4:1-2.

The work that the disciples of Jesus went on to do at that time was still the "baptism of John", it prepared the way for the "new wine" referred to in the parable of Jesus. The good news of the Kingdom, through Christ, at a time of the failure of the old Kingdom, and its eventual demise. This promised a restoration of the Kingdom and an ultimate citizenship therein for those who would think differently and accept the gospel of Christ; and the ratification of this citizenship would be in baptism into Christ after He had completed His saving work.

A BIBLE CLASS

“The Day Cometh That Shall Burn As An Oven”

(Malachi 4:1)

This final chapter of Malachi speaks of the end, when the judgments of God will come upon the earth. Our verse under consideration likens this time to the fierce burning of an oven, as the prophet warns:

“For, behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

Malachi 4:1.

It is clear these judgments are not to come upon God’s chosen, but upon those who have knowingly failed to serve Him—the proud, wicked and disobedient. They will be as the stubble which is left as waste after the harvest is reaped, and as stubble they will be burned;

“The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: . . .”

Zephaniah 1:14-15, 17-18.

We know from the Revelation, that the judgments to come will take many different forms, but the final work of the Spirit will consume all that is unacceptable before Him. This makes us think of the words of Peter, who speaking of that day of judgment said:

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise,

and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

II Peter 3:7, 10.

This fire brought down in judgment is a spiritual cleanser, leaving behind only the purer elements while consuming the dross—removing all that is worthless in God's eyes.

Malachi was the last prophet to speak to Israel, and going back to the beginning of this book he exposes those who are the wicked, admonishing:

"A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?"

Malachi 1:6.

They either denied or did not recognize how they polluted His precepts, displaying both a lack of repentance and perception. Therefore they were classified by the Almighty as worthy to receive the fierce judgments to come in the day of the Lord:

"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?"

Malachi 3:5-7.

Again there was no perception of their wrongdoing. In contrast are those who fear the Lord and endeavour to obey His word, and of those Malachi speaks:

"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that fear the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Malachi 3:16-17.

They “spake often one to another”—united in faith and belief they were one body, closely knit together, sharing their lives, coming alongside in both joys and sorrows. These, His people, shall be considered “jewels”—precious in God’s sight and beautiful to behold because they reflect the light of His word. This was promised when He offered His covenant to Israel at Sinai through Moses:

“. . . Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”

Exodus 19:3-6.

Returning to Malachi (3:16), the prophet speaks of a “book of remembrance,” wherein is written the names of those who have in their living, “feared the LORD” and thought upon His name—these are called of God, “my jewels”, and He will spare them as His own son.

From the nineteenth chapter of Revelation we read further of this final judgment—John’s vision of Christ and the Saints seen as the Conqueror upon the white horse, who along with His army clothed in white linen, bring the Spirit’s vengeance upon all those opposed to God and His people:

“And I (John) saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Revelation 19:19-20.

This lake of fire is symbolic of death—a consuming fire that destroys the flesh and from which there is no escape. As we have seen, those that love the LORD and seek to honor Him with obedience in their living have the hope of escaping that day of calamity and destruction:

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteous

ness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments."

Malachi 4:2-4.

"Remember ye the law of Moses"—remember God's word and follow it, for the hope of escaping this judgment is predicated upon obedience to it in the day that the Lord Jesus brings the fire of destruction from the Lord.

M.C.S.

THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE ECCLESIAS AND ECCLESIAL AUTONOMY

A letter to a main ecclesial magazine recently raised the subject of ecclesial autonomy as follows:—

“Apart from the actual lessons given by our Lord in the letters to the seven ecclesias, two important and overriding principles emerge from the opening chapters of Revelation, which are still relevant in our time:

1. The letters were the last inspired and authoritative directions given to the specific ecclesias.

2. Each ecclesia had to concern itself with its OWN affairs, though similar problems were common to a few of them. How relevant these facts were when we consider that false apostles were present among the brethren (Revelation 2:2) as well as other teachers of corrupt doctrine and immorality.(2:14, 15, 20).

Our forebears recognised these principles and wisely promoted what became known as the autonomy of ecclesias. Central management and hierarchy were shunned at all costs, recognising that we are all individual servants responsible to our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is unfortunate that this Scriptural position and the wise counsel of our pioneers have not always been upheld. The result has caused much grief and disharmony. Yet human nature is such that we do not learn from our mistakes. In an age when communication has advanced so incredibly, by post, telephone and electronic mail, the tongue of James’ warning (James 1:19, 20 and 3:5-6) has been extended by written or electronic publication—“a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8).

In common with all other recording brethren, no doubt, I receive a steady flow of unsolicited, unhelpful, even destructive communications, some of which appear in the guise of “contending for the faith.” May I appeal to all brethren who persist in the dissemination of other ecclesias’ problems, carefully and prayerfully to re-read Matthew 18. Perhaps we can all take to heart the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, “Have nothing to do with stupid, senseless controversies, you know that they breed quarrels, and the Lord’s servants must not be quarrelsome but kindly, to everyone, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness . . .”

The Remnants Comments on the Above

We just cannot see how the book of Revelation gives any licence whatsoever to the man-made idea of ecclesial autonomy. Anyone who suggests this viewpoint overlooks that when John wrote down the book of Revelation the whole of the message given to him was for each of those seven ecclesias.

Therefore each ecclesia would know of the wrongs emerging in their other fellow-ecclesias, and would be required to agree with the Spirit's findings relating to each. This would require those wishing to be faithful to take an appropriate stance in their judgment of those in fellowship with them. That all those ecclesias were in fellowship with each other is obvious in the fact that they all received the message, even though there was a particular message from Christ relating to the individual circumstances of each ecclesia.

It may be said, "How do you know that each received the whole of the book?" The book of Revelation proves it.

Ephesus was exhorted to overcome and directed to consider the promised blessing of the tree of life, of which the book of Revelation speaks. (Rev. 22:2)

Smyrna was assured that obedience would bring deliverance from the second death. (Rev. 20:6)

Pergamos was warned that the pertinent message addressed to them was from "he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." (Rev. 1:16)

Thyatira was directed to consider he "who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire." (Rev. 2:18).

To Sardis came the testimony of he "that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." (Rev. 1:4 and v. 16)

The message to Philadelphia promised the "new Jerusalem" for the faithful." (Rev. 21:2)

Laodicea were told they were being addressed by "the faithful and true witness." (Rev. 1:5)

Each of these passages quoted are what the ecclesias were directed to consider apart from what they were told about their own ecclesial states. If they had not received the whole of the message of the Revelation how could they have considered such things? The fact is that they not only received pertinent messages about their own standing, but were told of the things wrong in other ecclesias, and this required responsibility on those wishing to be right to uphold the judgment of God's word through His Son Jesus Christ, so that they might retain the fellowship of the Spirit.

The Spirit's example of showing to the ecclesias that they needed to know what was going on in their other ecclesias cannot be criticised. No ecclesia was to be aloof from the undeniable judgment of that which was wrong. They were not to fellowship in any of the ecclesias what the word of God clearly declared the Spirit would disfellowship.

Footnote. The Remnant have a booklet on the "Doctrine of Fellowship" which will be sent freely if so requested, to anyone who reads our magazine.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORD

"... the earth is filled with violence ..." (Genesis 6:13)

The above quotation was the actual judgment of where mankind was at the time of Noah. Jesus referring to that situation said that it would be a similar situation at the time of His coming.

There has always been violence, but this century has seen a great deal of it, for example a rough list of events in which the British Army has been involved gives some illustration of the troubles Britain has faced.

1914–1918	The First World War.
1939–1945	The Second World War.
1945–1948	The Palestine conflicts.
1946–1947	Egyptian riots.
1946–1948	Indian riots.
1948–1949	West Germany and the Berlin airlift.
1948–1960	Malaya troubles.
1950–1953	Korean War.
1956	British attack on Egypt—Suez crisis.
1967	"Red Guard" riots in Hong Kong.
1969 onwards	Northern Ireland war with the IRA.
1974	Cyprus troubles, British evacuation of its nationals.
1982	Falklands War.
1991	Gulf War.

But violence is not confined to army involvements. It is seen in the towns and villages amongst the civilians, and even the country villages are not immune from it.

There is also another aspect of violence. At the time of writing it has been estimated that aggression in children's television programmes has risen by three per cent in the past year, even though Government regulators have asked for such programmes to be

reduced. Children's television programmes account for 22 per cent of all violent acts seen on the screen. When satellite channels are taken into consideration the figure rises to 34 per cent. The question has been raised, "Are there enough examples of negotiation to resolve disputes, as opposed to verbal and physical aggression? A special survey showed that nearly two-thirds of all cartoon programmes contained violence, and sadly it is not shown as a lesson that violence has harmful effects. An Independent Television Commission has voiced concern by stating that as cartoon materials increases, it will be necessary to look carefully at the situation. This study reveals that the main source of violence came from the television showing of cinema films, which account for 54 per cent of all violent acts, but a more precise survey revealed that American films showed an even greater degree of aggression, totalling a high figure of 80 per cent.

So the world is filled with violence, for it enters into the homes of the multitude. Half a century or so ago the peoples had to go out to the cinemas, but such a limitation no longer exists, and so the young people are being fed upon such things which now enter their lives day after day. It reminds one of what was said at the time of Noah.

"... God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Genesis 6:5.

Violence of course leads to other evils. The distribution of drugs in the schools is at an all-time high. A top officer in the police force has admitted that every single senior school in the city is affected by drugs. It is even worse in Britain than in Europe. It is also a rampant evil in the USA. Ten years ago only one to two per cent of school-age children used drugs. Now in the great conurbations more than half admit to experimenting with them before the age of 16. Nor is this problem confined to troubled, under-funded inner-city schools. Well to do families' children in the high class private schools are said to be just as likely to be taking drugs. An Assistant Chief Constable quoted in the national press, has stated that half a million young people are taking the rave drug Ecstasy every weekend, and there is no way that police could arrest all Ecstasy takers on such a scale as that. The distribution of such substances is not put down to drug dealers hanging about at school gates, but rather on friends passing on drugs amongst themselves.

It is little wonder that youth crime is increasing, with violence amongst such drugs dependents; they steal so that they can fund their habit, hence elderly people become vulnerable to the actions of many still attending school.

What a deterioration it is, but it does fulfil what Jesus predicted as a sign of His Coming.

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
 Every Third Week: Revelation Study

God willing, it is planned to increase our witnessing to the general public by mailing invitations to all postal patrons in area small towns. We ask God's guidance and blessing in this work.

For those in illness and trial, we seek the Father's comfort and healing, according to His will.

J.A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

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

Since the new year there has been an increased interest in our booklet "The Doctrine of Fellowship."

Our magazine mailing to Australia and New Zealand has also increased. This work does give something of a feeling that the work being done has some effect.