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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"

"THE RICH YOUNG MAN"

"THE MEDIATOR"

"HOW A LIE EVOLVED"

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"DIVINE TESTS"

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

"YE HEARD A VOICE"

This morning we have listened to Moses' words as he, at God's direction, prepared Israel to enter the land of promise after 40 years of wandering. He reviewed the law for his brethren, for their circumstances were about to change, since they would no longer dwell in "tabernacles" but would soon settle in the land promised to Abraham. There at Jordan he reminded them how 40 years before, back at Sinai: "... ye heard a voice" (Deuteronomy 4:12). It was God's voice which indeed did instill great fear in their hearts. Moses further reminded his brethren as they, much later in fear, spoke of that occasion:

"... we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth."

Deuteronomy 5:24.

Then, awestruck and sorely afraid, they asked rather that Moses should hear the Almighty's voice and convey the message to them:

"... speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it."

Deuteronomy 5:27.

We remember that Moses had said 40 years before at Sinai, as they had heard God's voice:

"Fear not, for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not."

Exodus 20:20.

The Almighty was testing His people: Would they continue in their vow to "hear it, and do it"? Now, 40 years later as they camped at Jordan about to enter the land promised, there remained alive of that multitude only Moses, Joshua and Caleb. Over 600,000 had died in the wilderness. Why? It was because of unbelief, thereby failing to hear God, evidenced by not truly hearing and doing what He required. They were afraid, they realised God's voice is fearful and powerful, but in a time of proving, their terror of the adversary overcame that godly fear.

Let us, for a moment, contemplate the power of the Creator's voice. In the beginning God's voice caused this earth, as we know it, to be formed:

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided (separated) the light from the darkness."

Genesis 1:3-4.

For six days the Almighty spoke, "... let there be ..." There was no man to hear, but at that time the world came into being. Also, on the sixth day He spoke, saying:

"... Let us make man in our image ..."

Genesis 1:26.

So man was divinely created of the dust of the ground. To His creatures, God spoke:

"... Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Genesis 2:16-17.

Adam and Eve "heard a voice." Eve later heard another voice, a beguiling and subtle voice, a crafty voice, the voice of the adversary, the serpent, asserting:

"... Ye shall not surely die."

Genesis 3:4.

At God's hand and time, Adam and Eve did "surely die," revealing the lie of that beguiling voice. That serpent "voice" still speaks in enmity against God's voice. We have abundant evidence that all men do die, and it is because of failure to obey God's voice. Our cemeteries are full! Men recognise that death is inevitable. A few have the hope of escape from that grave through Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman. He experienced death as he submitted to God's will, but was raised to become a mediator and redeemer, the Victor over death, as we have remembered here this morning.

Down through the ages a few have truly listened to a "voice" which speaks to those striving to be God's people. Those who love Him struggle to obey that voice, recognising it as the source of all strength, wisdom, hope and salvation. Perhaps the experience of some who have heard that voice can help us to faithfully respond to His hand, as His eyes are indeed upon His children. David, hearing it, was moved to write:

"Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."

Psalms 29: 1-2.

David experienced wonderful help, in times of trouble, in good times, and even in the times of his own failures. He sought that voice and found help to become, in God's eyes: "... a man after mine own heart" (Acts 13:22). David continued to speak of the voice of the

LORD (Psalm 29:3-9) as he witnessed the wonderful works it performed, and he concluded:

“The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea the LORD sitteth King for ever.

The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.”

Psalm 29:10-11.

This conviction was David’s strength; His trust in God’s guidance and care in all his living, enabled him to please God. Moved by awe of that voice, must we not hear and do what He commands?

When thinking of God’s voice being heard, our mind goes to Elijah, the prophet through whom the Lord spoke to His people Israel. They did not hear and do! Indeed King Ahab and his wicked queen Jezebel, sought Elijah’s life. Discouraged by these adversaries (the seed of the serpent), the prophet fled “for his life” and cried out:

“... It is enough, now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”

I Kings 19:4.

God, in loving care, directed him to go to “Horeb the mount of God” (Verse 8). There he experienced God’s immense power in the wind, the earthquake and the fire (See Verses 11-12). The Lord was not directing these powers against Elijah, but rather he heard:

“... after the fire a still small voice.”

I Kings 19:12.

Horeb is Mount Sinai where God had spoken much earlier to Israel from the midst of the fire, the cloud and the earthquake. In Elijah’s troubled situation, the Almighty comforted and uplifted His discouraged prophet, through that still small voice. He was directed to go about the work which God would have him do (I Kings 19:15-17), including the anointing of Elisha to become a companion and co-worker in that mission. In his time of need, Elijah was calmed and encouraged as he “heard a voice.” Can we not find help when events may seem to be “too much” for us, if we turn to our Father, listening for His “voice” by some indication, and thereby in gratitude obey what He in wisdom decrees for us?

Isaiah was another prophet who “heard a voice.” He saw a vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne, about which seraphims glorified Him as they exclaimed:

"... Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah 6:3.

His humbled and fearful reaction was:

"... Woe is me! for I am undone (silent, dumb): because I am a man of unclean lips, ... for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

Isaiah 6:5.

The prophet's lips were cleansed in the vision by a coal from the altar, and then he heard a voice:

"... Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? ..."

Isaiah 6:8.

In fear, yet faithfully and inspired by that voice, our Brother Isaiah responded, "Here am I; send me." Thus he began a work which extended over 60 years, sustained and directed by the Almighty as he witnessed to "Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Isaiah 1:1).

Turning now to the New Testament, we look at Saul (Paul) who became another of God's servants. He too "heard a voice" as he was on his way to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus:

"And as he journeyed ... suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: ..."

Acts 9:3-5.

Blinded by the light and overwhelmed by the voice, Paul fearfully answered:

"... Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? ..."

Acts 9:6.

He was fearful yet eager to submit to whatever Jesus required. What a change in Paul's life as Jesus spoke to Ananias, explaining:

"... he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Acts 9:15-16.

Dedicating his life to his work, Paul did suffer great things in the service of God and His Son Jesus. He obeyed that voice. We are shown how others who heard reacted:

“. . . the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”

Acts 9:7.

They were struck dumb with fear and lack of perception, while Paul's whole-hearted response was: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Thereby he glorified God and His Son, in the spirit of "we will hear it, and do it."

How do these things apply to us, Brethren and Sisters? We do not directly hear the voice of God as did those at Sinai, or as did Elijah, Isaiah and Paul. We do pray to God through Jesus Christ, seeking strength, forgiveness, healing, guidance and peace—perhaps feeling as did Elijah: "It is enough." If we pray believing, nothing doubting, can we not be helped as the Almighty responds? We do not directly hear His voice, but help can be given as each of us has experienced. Brethren and Sisters, let us keep our ears "tuned"—ready and longing to hear His voice, even if it is not what we want or seek. Let us remember, it is the Almighty speaking through His word or even through striking circumstances, which can direct our ways. Can we, like David, perceive the wonder and power of the "voice of the LORD" by which He performs all things, by which He communicates His will? Let us give earnest heed to it, as we live in these last days before Jesus returns to accomplish the purpose of His Father—the kingdom of the great God on this earth. We hope and long to have a place in it, having sincerely sought, although failing at times, to "hear and do" His will.

J. A. Def.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

We have read in our portion in Mark, the record of one who asked a logical question in regard to his future eternal life. This individual knew there was a promise or hope of everlasting life, for he came to the Lord Jesus asking what we ourselves might ask:

“And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

Mark 10:17.

In answer to his question, the Lord Jesus cited the law:

“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.”

Mark 10:19-20.

Being a natural Jew, this young man was familiar with the law, believing he had endeavoured to keep it from his youth. However the Lord Jesus, through the Spirit's help, perceived there was a lack:

“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”

Mark 10:21-22.

From this same incident recorded in Luke, we learn this young man was not only an Israelite who knew the commandments, but was also a ruler who may have had great influence and wealth. The Lord Jesus, able to look into his heart, saw the lack there and in love desired to help him perceive and overcome it. But when given the answer to his question, the young man was grieved for the prospect of losing his wealth was unthinkable. This incident occurred in the presence of the disciples for their help and admonition and is recorded for ours as well.

Jesus used the example of this rich young man to warn of the snare that riches, and all that the world offers, can present to one seeking eternal life. Those that place their “trust” in riches, or love the temporal benefits that this life can offer, have their eyes focussed on this, not on the hope of the one to come in the Kingdom of God.

“And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God!

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?"

Mark 10:23-26.

It was not wealth that the Lord Jesus was condemning, but rather the trust, love and confidence placed in riches or other worldly attainments. The great wealth of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is well known, as is Job, who had such vast riches that he was recorded to be "the greatest of all the men of the east." Yet these men were faithful examples of humility and obedience, esteeming the reward of eternal life far greater than all their earthly possessions. This could be why their riches did not interfere with their spiritual aspirations towards eternal life.

When the disciples had earlier argued among themselves over who was to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus placed in their midst a little child—an example of the gentle spirit of humility that God looks for in His people.

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them.

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:2-4.

He taught the disciples that only those with guileless sincerity and simple child-like trust, could hope to enter the Kingdom of God. This rich young ruler with his power and worldliness, was the exact opposite. Jesus hoped they could discern the difference and change their thinking accordingly.

This word "converted" as used by Jesus, means "to twist or turn around in reverse". What needs to be reversed? The natural thinking of the flesh, full of pride and self-motivation, which must be converted into the humble, trusting thinking of a child—who looks to his Father with unquestioned faith and obedience.

When the rich young ruler hailed the Lord Jesus, he called Him "Good master", perhaps in an effort to ingratiate himself:

"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."

Mark 10:18.

In an example of perfect humility, He who had never sinned, or failed in any way to please His father, would not claim that title, instead declaring, "there is none good but one, that is, God."

Only by taking this lesson of the rich young man to heart, endeavouring to "convert" our natural fleshly thinking and resisting a love for the things this life offers, can we hope for God's mercy and in the blessing promised of eternal life which we so earnestly seek.

M.C.S.

THE MEDIATOR

A scholar of religious repute recently described how he battled with an unbeliever. His remarks are as follows:—

“ . . . I was involved in an academic debate with another philosopher. Our exchange was in the form of a book in which we took turns to present our cases for atheism and theism, followed by chapters criticising one another's arguments. There was no clear victor, nor did either of us change our minds about the central question of whether there is a God . . . This set me thinking about what might be said to someone who asks with open heart and mind, ‘What reason can you give me to believe in God’? In Hebrew scripture and accounts of the early Christian Church we read of “proof contests”: Jews or Christians in dispute with pagans might find themselves challenged to invoke their God to prove His existence or power.

Scripture warns, however, that God will not be tested and it might therefore seem impious to seek that kind of sign. God's will is not something to be commanded . . . Nonetheless, I think it is legitimate to turn to Heaven and say, ‘If there is a God, show that it is so.’”

It is quite amazing that such a suggestion should be made from one who professes to uphold scriptural belief. The sweet psalmist of Israel could not help but be greatly impressed by the evidence of God:—

“Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.

He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Praise the Lord from the earth . . . Kings of the earth and all people . . . Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.”

Psalm 148:3-13.

The Creator has left boundless evidence of Himself and His creation.

The Apostle Paul, at a later time, appealed to this creative evidence, as he preached to the Gentiles:—

"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Acts 14:17.

The religious scholar in his discourse, goes on to say:—

"Christians believe in the communion of saints, in those who have died in grace and are blessed in the company of God. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the sanctity of the deceased may show itself through the efficacy of their intercession with God on behalf of the living. This is the basis for the requirement of an attested miracle in the Vatican process of canonisation. Contrary to a common misunderstanding, the belief is not that the saint effects a cure, say, on his or her account. Everything comes from God, but He may grant a petition raised in eternity on behalf of those living in time and this petition may be for the grace to help them to believe.

That idea allowed, may we not also approach God directly? Of course: Christ instructs us how to do so in the OUR FATHER. But this presumes prior belief. What of those for whom the need is to know whether there is a Father which art in heaven? Here I return to the agnostic and the call to Heaven: "Show yourself." Understood now as a plea and not as an order, it is not impious . . . Those who seek reason to believe in God, and are looking for something that will show itself in their lives, would do well to enter into a speculative covenant with the God who they are not sure is there. Live as if dependent on the Father in Heaven and follow the commandments, and God will enter the open heart and that fact will become clear."

This important religious scholar, who has so written, reveals a profound lack of understanding. Jesus emphatically declared:—

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

John 4:24.

There is no compromise in this declaration of Jesus, to allow for the theologian's reasoning of "Show yourself;" as a means of unbelievers becoming convinced. Such a phrase expresses unbelief, even though God's word clearly shows God. But there is a greater ignorance revealed. The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy declared:—

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

I Timothy 2:5-6.

Again Paul declares:—

“... Jesus the mediator of the new covenant ...”

Hebrews 12:24.

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession ... Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy ...”

Hebrews 4:14-16.

To say there can be other mediation that this, ignores scriptural teaching. Such philosophising is scripturally judged.

(For) “... if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Isaiah 8:20.

“... without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them the DILIGENTLY seek him.”

Hebrews 11:6.

HOW A LIE EVOLVED

A book was published in 1899 called "The Riddle of the Universe." The writer, a biologist, was regarded at one time as an equal with Charles Darwin in the science of evolution. His theories however were eventually largely put at one side, though one particular idea of this man (E. Haeckel) did persist, emerging time after time in new textbooks explaining how an organism develops from a simple embryo.

Haeckel published a series of drawings in 1874 describing how all species in their embryo stage look remarkably similar. His purported finding was to show that whether they be cows, pigs, rabbits, chickens, salamanders, turtles, fish or humans—they all start life as the same simple shape, developing their own particular appearance when they are at a later stage. This development, said Haeckel, recapitulates the rise of man from a primitive state. "During its rapid evolution an individual repeats the most important changes in form evolved by its ancestors during their long and slow palaeontological development." Some of these drawings by Haeckel, somewhat modified, can still be found in "Grays Anatomy," and also the medical student's textbook "Development of Biology."

Now, it has been found, that contrary to what Haeckel affirmed, the embryos of different species are in fact so different that the drawings Haeckel made could not possibly have been done from life. What he did was to take a human embryo and copy it, pretending that all the other life forms looked the same at that stage of their development. So this scientist's so called discovery was a fake.

Scientists have been worried about this revelation, because they fear it will give ammunition to anti-Darwin believers in Bible Creation. Well, this it certainly does! So called fundamental evolutionary studies are exposed as false. A lie, which many would still like to conceal, and will conceal, lest a huge evolutionary teaching enterprise be overthrown.

A BIBLE CLASS

"A man goeth to his long home"
Ecclesiastes 12:5

This quotation is from:

"The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem."

Ecclesiastes 1:1.

The "Preacher" was Solomon who was given the work to "assemble" his people to teach as the word means. The title of this book (Ecclesiastes) also conveys the same thought of a purposeful coming together. We remember Solomon's humble spirit as he became king when his father David died. When invited by God: "Ask what I shall give thee" (II Chronicles 1:7) his wise request was:

"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?"

II Chronicles 1:10.

In response, God gave to him great wisdom as well as great wealth and honour. Israel prospered and grew strong under his rule: but as he neared the end of his 40-year reign, he realised he had been led astray by his many wives and concubines who worshipped idols, as well by the riches and honour he had come to love and had piled up:

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God . . ."

I Kings 11:4.

He himself recognised this and has given us the conclusion he had reached:

"Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished."

Ecclesiastes 4:13.

This a serious indictment, for to admonish means to enlighten, involving a warning, or a teaching. Solomon would not be admonished and therefore fell from God's favour. In his old age, he wrote this poignant and grave warning:

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Ecclesiastes 12:1.

As we carefully ponder his words: "Better is a poor and a wise child"—was he realising his own very wrong position? he had allowed himself all the pleasures, all the "wants" of his life:

“... whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy: ...
Then I looked on all the works that my hands have wrought,
... and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11.

He did not restrain his heart, but gave it full reign to have whatever it wanted. Too late, he realised the folly of his ways as he expressed:

“... the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;”

Ecclesiastes 12:1.

In this connection, we think of Barzillai's thoughtful words, as David offered him a place in Jerusalem with himself:

“... How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?”

II Samuel 19:34-35.

As Barzillai had experienced, there was now no pleasure in his days. All was vanity and vexation of spirit. Even so was it in Solomon's days, for he felt his hope of redemption was lost through failing to restrain his “heart from any joy.” As he contemplated his position (Ecclesiastes 12:2-5), he recognised as his time neared the end that:

“... man goeth to his long home ...”

Ecclesiastes 12:5.

What is one's long home? The Spirit makes it clear:

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (breath) shall return unto God who gave it.”

Ecclesiastes 12:7.

The Almighty in the beginning formed man of the dust of the ground, and He:

“... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Genesis 2:7.

Thus man became a living being who would continue to live as long as he had breath. For when the breath is taken away by God, the man dies. In the time of Noah, because of the evilness of man,

God decreed that all living creatures on earth, save Noah and his family, should perish:

"And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, . . . and every thing that is in the earth shall die."

Genesis 6:17.

The "long home" of which Solomon writes is the grave, to which all men are condemned. It is a long home, the "olam" or eternity for those who are not responsible through knowledge of God's purpose. For some whom he holds responsible, there is hope of escape from that long home, through resurrection from the grave when Jesus returns to judge them. If judged acceptable, they will live forever as His saints, brethren of Christ, for "olam", their "long home." If turned away at Jesus's judgment, these face stern rejection, divine punishment, and a return to endless death, the grave—their "long home."

Solomon, in his old age, was aware that all the riches, honour and esteem he so eagerly sought was of no avail in finding a place among those accepted at Jesus's judgment. This provides help for us, as he wrote:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

Let us heed the warning of the Spirit through Solomon's experiences. He started out so well, humble, feeling; ". . . I am but a little child" (I Kings 3:7). As he grew older he lost that simple, child-like faith, rather filling his life with and rejoicing in material values and the pride of life—those things which greatly please the flesh, but offend God. Let us remember that our whole duty is to live as one of God's "little ones," not overfilled with temporal cares and goods, but subject to Him and to His word, sustained by the hope that our "long home" may be at Jesus' right hand for eternity.

J. A. DeF.

DIVINE TESTS

(From "The Christadelphian" 1878)

The apostle John, in view of false teachers, who had gone out into the world, found it needful to furnish his "little children" with a test, by which they would be enabled quite readily to try these spirits, whether they were of God or not; so says he: "Hereby we

know the spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, but is the spirit of anti-Christ." The same rule is a safe one to work by now, for there is this peculiarity about apostacy, that it repeats itself; that which is now has been before, the same in essence, though may be differing in the form it assumes—(I John 4:1-3).

Another test is supplied by John, who says again, "hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." In this case, the knowledge was to be acquired upon the following principle, viz: "They," says he (i.e. the errorists), "are of the world, therefore they speak of the world, and the world heareth them." "We," says he, "are of God, he that knoweth God heareth us (the true Apostles), he that is not of God heareth not us." Now what can be plainer than this, which was written not alone for John's time, but for ours also, that we might have our eyes open to the subtleties of "those who live in error," who, as beforetime, so now, are to be discerned by their worldly policy

Another infallible test of discipleship is before us in the fact noted by John, namely, that the devil's children live in sin and open disregard of the commandments of Christ; but that, on the other hand, the true children of God may be known by a manifest course of righteousness dictated by the love of the truth—(I John 3:7-10).

Isaiah also gives us a means of testing and ascertaining the true nature and value of what men may say and do: says he, "To the law and to the testimony—if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them. Here is given the true reason; the word is the light, therefore whoever speaks away from this is but a lamp without oil and devoid of any illuminating combustion or power of enlightenment in divine ideas—(Isaiah 8:16).

The Remnant's comments on the above

How helpful is the consideration that "... he that is not of God heareth not us." Efforts of preaching can be made with little or no results, but this should not cause a feeling of despair. To swell numbers in a Meeting is of no benefit at all if God is not giving to new participants a true and hearing ear. The errorists will get a hearing, as John explains, but what appears to be religious success when numbers increase in some societies, is not a criteria at all. The consideration does underline that response to truth is of God, and so preaching efforts, though necessary, and to be done with care, can only bring true response according to the overruling of The Most High.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“ . . . We will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven . . . ”

Jeremiah 44:16-17.

In 1517, on the eve of All Saints' Day, Martin Luther nailed a list of ninety-five theses to the door of the castle church at Wittenburg. This document criticised Roman Church practices, one of which was the sale of indulgences, and the following day was to be an occasion for such a practice. So began Lutherism, and nine years later his followers had become a powerful and well-organised faction, ever ready to present their articles of faith to anyone who would listen to them.

In England, Henry VIII was on the throne, and he wrote a book “Defence of the Seven Sacraments”; this work was a violent attack on Martin Luther and for this the Pope awarded Henry with the title “Defender of the Faith” which title has been carried over ever since by the successors to the throne! But by 1534 Henry himself had replaced the Pope in England. So the all-powerful church began to wain. Criticism of the Roman Church continued.

Early this century a protestant clergyman wrote the following:—

“Under the name of the ‘Mother of the gods’, the goddess queen of Babylon became an object of almost universal worship . . . (a practice condemned by Jeremiah—see Jeremiah 44:17) . . . The worship of the goddess-mother with the child in her arms continued to be observed in Egypt till Christianity entered. If the gospel had come in power among the mass of the people, the worship of this goddess-queen would have been overthrown. With the generality it came only in name. Instead, therefore, of the Babylonian goddess being cast out, in too many cases her name only was changed. She was called the Virgin Mary, and, with her child, was worshipped with the same idolatrous feeling by professing Christians, as formerly by open and avowed Pagans. The consequence was, that when, in AD 325, the Nicene Council was summoned to condemn the heresy of Arius, who denied the true divinity of Christ, that heresy indeed was condemned, but not without the help of men who gave distinct indications of a desire to put the creature on a level with the Creator, to set the Virgin-mother side by side with her Son. At the Council of Nice . . . (it was) held that there were three persons in the Trinity — the

Father, the Virgin Mary, and Messiah their Son—what does (this) argument amount to? It just amounts to this, that if Christ be admitted to be truly and properly God, and worthy of Divine honours, His mother, from whom He derived merely His humanity, must be admitted to be the same, must be raised far above the level of all creatures, and be worshipped as a partaker of the Godhead. The divinity of Christ is made to stand or fall with the divinity of His mother . . .”

(Alexander Hislop.)

But what do we find today? Eighty years since the above was written, a leader of the Anglican Church recently had this to say:—
“In the new calendar for use in the Church of England for Advent Sunday 1997, there is for the first time since the Reformation a ‘red letter’ feast day for ‘The Blessed Virgin Mary’, on August 15.

The matter was debated and contested to the last. So why all the fuss? August 15 is in the minds of most Western Christians associated with the dogmatic definition by Pope Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus* of the belief that the Blessed Virgin having finished the course of this earthly life, ‘was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory’. Anglicans have always been wary of such definings of dogma, not least when it has to do with Mary. Yet the plain fact is that there can be no other response to the rhetorical question: if Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, is not in heaven, where is she?

Perhaps the best and most straightforward statement is the Salvation Army’s ‘Gone to glory.’ And such a statement would in no way be incompatible with the thrust of the prayers for the departed in the Book of Common Prayer . . .”

What an amazing change of viewpoint from one of the top ones of the Anglican Church, as compared to A. Hislop’s comments of eighty years ago.

Meanwhile the present Pope, visiting Paris, has announced that Ste. Therese of Lisieux, a co-patroness of France alongside Joan of Arc and Virgin Mary, would be made a Doctor of the Church in October. This Therese of Lisieux, who died a hundred years ago, now joins in this doctorate, Catherine of Seina and Teresa of Avila. The Pope is presently arranging to visit Brazil and Cuba in the coming months. He undoubtedly is expecting a successful visit in the American region, even as in his visit to France. For on St. Bartholomew’s Day, as he held Mass, there were nine hundred thousand people packing the Longchamp racecourse in Paris where

it took place. This particular day brought into memory the massacre in 1572 of thousands of Protestants by the French Catholics at that time. The Pope referred to that sixteenth century religious atrocity, using this opportunity to declare that "Christians did things (then) which the Gospel condemns." He called for inter-faith unity. The crowd assembled before him was reckoned as one of the largest in the history of Paris.

This growing popularity of the Roman Church is very significant. Even the Lutherans are changing their minds. They have taken a step towards lifting their antagonism towards Rome. The largest Lutheran church in the U.S.A. has declared it is in agreement with the Catholic church "that all persons depend on the grace of God, and not on human merit for their salvation." Delegates to the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have overwhelmingly voted to approve this statement. More than five million people are involved in this, as also the Church of Sweden. It means that 16th century Lutheran condemnation of Catholic teachings no longer apply, for the declaration was the work of an international group of Catholic and Lutheran theologians. A Lutheran spokesman has stated that this step can fundamentally change the attitude of Lutheran and Roman Catholics world wide. Following this a plan was also approved by the Lutherans to share clergy and Communion services with the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. and also the United Church of Christ and the Reformed Church in America. So inter-faith unity, called for by the Pope, is taking place; and as this change gathers momentum the Roman Church will take the pre-eminent position. The prophetic words of the book of Revelation come to mind; concerning a unifying at the time of the end; referred to as that which "... was, and is not ... (which) shall ascend out of the abyss ..." (Revelation 17:8.)

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

Correspondence with Christadelphians continues to reveal lack of knowledge, confusion and/or disregard of the vital doctrine of fellowship. We are grateful for the opportunity to witness to this essential teaching which principally preserves the purity and simplicity which is the revealed purpose of our Father, for His Truth and His people.

Supplications are made on behalf of those needing to be healed and for the comfort in difficult circumstances.

J. A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

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

As winter approaches we think of ecclesial work that has proceeded over the months since the winter of last year.

We have endeavoured to increase our magazine mailing, and to a degree have accomplished this.

Also an ongoing work with several has brought about discussions, and we have been profoundly grateful for counsel and guidance enabling us to handle such work discreetly and wisely.