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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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All Communications

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

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

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

"A LITTLE CHILD"

This week our minds have been directed, in I Kings, to the history of Israel under Solomon. In Solomon was the first fulfillment of the promises to David involving a son, a house, a throne, a kingdom. But this was only a foretaste of the true fulfillment which can come to pass only through the greater son of David, Jesus Christ. As David was about to die he spoke to Solomon:

"I go the way of all the earth: . . . keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes . . . that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest . . . That the Lord may continue his word . . . saying, If thy children take heed to their way, . . . there shall not fail thee . . . a man on the throne of Israel."

I Kings 2:2-4.

How David would rejoice at the prospect of Solomon taking over his throne and building the house of God, for which David had spent so much time in preparing materials. Having been given God's plan for that house, he would be able to visualise it with joy. How full of a greater meaning this would be to David. As he was about to die, he would have the sure hope of serving God eternally, as part of that spiritual house which Jesus would assemble at His return.

Perhaps we can think of David at the judgment seat of Christ, rejoicing at the accomplishment of God's purpose and at the joyous prospect of eternal life with His Lord. Yet might he not see his son Solomon, resurrected to that same judgment seat, but cast out—condemned to suffer in the world, and then to die the second death from which there is no escape. He would know that the judgment of Jesus was right and just. Perhaps, Brethren and Sisters, as we read of Solomon's works and thoughts, we can discern how and why he failed, and take heed to our own living, lest we also fall short.

Solomon received from God—wisdom, riches and great honour in his forty years' reign over Israel. He, in the beginning, was humble, feeling his own lack of strength and direction, seeking divine help. In answer to God's kindness:

". . . Ask what I shall give thee . . ."

I Kings 3:5.

Solomon's reply was:

". . . I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." Verse 7.

What a lowly, seeking mind. It reminds us of Jesus' words:

". . . Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

Luke 18:17.

David also expressed such a pleasing view:

"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

Psalm 131:1-2.

A weaned child is one who has attained a certain amount of growth, now partaking of more solid food—one who has learned to accept other than what is most wanted, but still dependent, needing help, comfort and guidance. "Of such is the kingdom of God," Jesus said. What a great help for us as we think on this spirit of David, of Solomon, of Jesus, aware that without it, like Solomon, we "know not how to go out or come in."

In this spirit the king of Israel asked only for wisdom and understanding:

"... to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad ..."

I Kings 3:9.

The Almighty, pleased with this child-like spirit, granted great wisdom; and in addition—riches and honour which Solomon had not sought. In this he admonished the King:

"... if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days."

I Kings 3:14.

So this son of David, with God's gift of wisdom, now came to understand how to go out and come in, and could discern between good and bad. He used that understanding and found favour with God and with men.

In contrast to this auspicious start, Solomon's mind toward the end of his forty years' reign was very different:

"But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh . . . he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart . . . and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David . . ."

I Kings 11:1-4.

He built high places for false gods and:

"... did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord . . ." Verse 6.

What a far cry from his early words: "I am but a little child: I know

not how to go out or come in. . .” Yet, having been given true wisdom, he could discern between good and bad.

This was not enough. Why? “His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God.” This word perfect is used as full, peaceable, whole—showing that he was not completely one with God; other things having entered in, alienated him.

David failed—sinned grievously, but his heart could be touched; he could say to God and to his brethren and sisters: I have sinned, I have failed, and then turned from the failure by showing works meet for repentance. Solomon’s heart at the end of his life was affected, but not by God:

“ . . . his wives turned away his heart.”

I Kings 11:3.

This occurred even after God’s warning concerning strange women:

“Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.”

I Kings 11:2.

And then we see the result:

“ . . . Solomon clave unto these in love.” Verse 2.

We remember that he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. How could there be “love” in such a case? Would not his heart be totally divided? Perhaps he took so many to satisfy his pride, his importance. But they unquestionably turned away his heart. Turn away comes from a root to stretch or to bend—and is used as decline or pervert. Obviously the king’s heart was not single in purpose as was that of David his father. How did this decline from the spirit of “I am but a little child” start? Soon after Solomon became king, we are told he:

“ . . . made affinity with Pharaoh . . . and took Pharaoh’s daughter . . . ”

I Kings 3:1.

To make affinity means to give away in marriage. The daughter of Pharaoh was one of many strange women. Solomon knew the danger involved in such a relationship, for he often warned against such:

“My son, give me thine heart . . . For . . . a strange woman is a narrow pit. She . . . increaseth the transgressors among men.”

Proverbs 23: 26-28.

What changed him? Was it pride, riches, honour, and a lust to acquire a name as the greatest king in the East? Was his heart lifted up;

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did he now feel he knew how to go out and come in; was he no longer a little child? God was angry with him:

“... because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel which ... had commanded him ... that he should not go after other gods ...”

I Kings 11:9-10.

It is important to realise that Solomon knew this was not right, for he:

“... brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David ... because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come.”

II Chronicles 8:11.

Should she then have dwelt in his heart if his heart was one with God? No! It was a sad end for Solomon who had so much promise as the son of David, and had been given so much wisdom and understanding. Yet we can see this was not enough to prevent his downfall; his heart had to be totally involved—joined to God—and it was not:

“... his heart was not perfect with the Lord ... as was the heart of David his father.”

I Kings 11:4.

This was a very low point for Israel also, as we have read today. There was a division into two parts because Rehoboam, Solomon's son, continued his father's oppressive ways—not heeding the counsel of the elders, or being as a little child. Thus Jeroboam reigned over the ten tribes, while Rehoboam continued as king over Judah and Benjamin. Jeroboam was selected by the Almighty who also told him:

“... it shall be if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways ... to keep my statutes ... as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house ...”

I Kings 11:38.

He did not heed God's word; indeed he became one of the most evil kings of Israel. Why did this happen? We are told that when he became king he:

“... said in his heart ... if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again ... unto Rehoboam ... and they shall kill me ...”

I Kings 12:26-27.

This was the fleshly reasoning of his heart: If the people obey

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God's commands regarding the sacrifices, I will lose out. Again it was pride, desire for power, a putting aside of what the Almighty had told him, and the result was:

"... the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold..."

I Kings 12:28.

Of whom did he take counsel? Certainly not of God nor of His prophets, for it led only to evil. Jeroboam said to the ten tribes:

"... behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

I Kings 12:28.

We cannot help but think back to another time—another calf—when Israel was only a short time out of Egypt. At the people's wish, Aaron made a golden calf and said:

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

Exodus 32:4.

So Jeroboam did also, and he:

"... ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast in Judah..."

I Kings 12:32.

Now there was no feast in Judah on the fifteenth day of the eighth month; the feast of tabernacles was on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Again we see a similarity with Aaron's failure, for at Sinai:

"... Aaron... said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord."

Exodus 32:5.

Israel came to Sinai in the third month (Exodus 19:1), and Moses was forty days in the mount; so the time of this feast would be the fourth or possibly the fifth month. At that time the only feast ordained by the Lord was the Passover in the first month. The works of Aaron and Jeroboam were not of God. However, there was a great difference: Aaron's spirit could be touched—he recovered himself from his wrongdoing. But Jeroboam's spirit only became harder.

Why did both Aaron and Jeroboam make calves? The word calf means a young bull. One of the gods of Egypt was the "sacred bull" of Apis. Israel at Sinai had just been delivered from their long sojourn in Egypt, and had been exposed to the idols of Egypt. When it appeared to their fleshly thinking that Moses had deserted them, they sought to go back there, and relied upon the gods of Egypt. This was in spite of God's wonderful words to them:

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

Exodus 19:4.

Had the gods of Egypt delivered them? No! It was the Almighty who confounded the gods of Egypt in saving His people, but how quickly they forgot. How easily we, too, can forget when trial comes, depending upon our own thinking—forsaking the counsel and command of the only One who can truly deliver, and then failing in some way which brings distress and sorrow.

Our portion in Jeremiah tells of those left in Jerusalem after its fall to Nebuchadnezzar. Again they put dependence upon Egypt as they sought to escape, contrary to God's directions through Jeremiah:

"If ye will still abide in this land (Jerusalem), then will I build you, and not pull you down . . ."

Jeremiah 42:10.

And a further warning:

"So shall it be that with all the men that . . . go into Egypt . . .; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence . . ."

Verse 17.

Those in Jerusalem would not hear the warning of the Lord, but did what they wanted; they defiantly went to Egypt, and later died there by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar when they had sought to escape.

We see, Brethren and Sisters, how the influence of Egypt led Aaron and Israel astray; the influence of Egypt led Jeroboam astray; the influence of Egypt led those survivors in Jerusalem astray. Do not these things stir us as we perceive that all who took things into their own hands and looked upon the world around them (Egypt) with longing and lust, went contrary to God's will? They suffered consequently, and knew immeasurable loss because their heart's concern was for self—not for God. We must remember the counsel of God through Jeremiah:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart . . ."

Jeremiah 17:9-10.

Only God knows the wickedness of man's heart; thus He gives commands which restrain it, circumcise it, minimising the fleshly desires which can so easily deceive. Let us give heed to these commands, Brethren and Sisters, recognising how much we need them in our desire to be "but a little child"—trusting and dependent upon the counsel and love of our Father.

J. A. DeF.

"I AM WITH THEE TO DELIVER THEE"

We have begun again to study the work of Jeremiah—a prophet appointed of God to a special charge. He was especially chosen or

appointed as a witness to Judah and Jerusalem, for his name means "lifted up or appointed of Yahweh."

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5.

He was to reveal God's word that those who heard might fear and turn from their evil ways. It would be a great and fearsome responsibility to relay God's message of rebuke, for many would resent his presence and his preaching, and in fear of this reaction Jeremiah said:

". . . Ah, Lord GOD: behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 1:6-8.

The Almighty, knowing man's frame, knew Jeremiah might fear, and in love said, "Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee" and again in verses 18-19:

"For, behold I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

And they shall fight against thee: but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee."

Jeremiah 1:18-19.

He would be strengthened of the Spirit and become as a "defenced city . . . an iron pillar . . . brasen walls"—immovable to withstand both the adversary without and his natural fear and anxiety within. He did carry out the ministry given, and suffered greatly as he witnessed against Judah and Jerusalem, but as promised, was delivered by the Almighty, and now sleeps in hope of the final deliverance promised through Christ. This is the help and encouragement preserved for us today—that God is a Deliverer and will provide for those that are His.

The comments from the Table this morning likewise reminded us that from the beginning, when man failed in obedience to God's word, He provided the hope of deliverance through the covering coats of skin. A means of forgiveness granted through the shedding of blood—pointing forward to the deliverance by Christ—the One who would save His people through the shedding of His own blood.

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From the first fall in the garden, a barrier was placed in the path leading to eternal life, because of the flesh's disobedience to God's word and a readiness to listen to its own reasoning and fear. An example of which can be found from our recent portions in Samuel, as we read of Israel's fear before the defiance of Goliath and the Philistines as they came out to battle:

"And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid."

I Samuel 17:10-11.

The Scriptures record this Philistine's height at over nine feet, garbed in battle dress of brass mail which the average man would have difficulty lifting, let alone fighting in, and bearing a spear like a "weaver's beam" for length. A sight that filled those seasoned men of war in Saul's army with fear and trembling. Although this was the army of Yahweh—the Living God, they had trusted too long in their own strength and were not attuned to believing in God's deliverance close at hand. It took a youth, a simple shepherd boy, to teach them of the power there could be in trusting God. With faith fortified through his earlier experiences with the lion and the bear, David met Goliath's challenge saying:

"This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; . . . that all the earth may knoweth that there is a God in Israel.

And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands."

I Samuel 17:46-47.

What a marvellous witness David made that day, and with his victory over Goliath, revitalised the spirits of all Israel, so that they "shouted" and pursued the Philistines, killing many and spoiling their goods:

"And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines,"

I Samuel 17:51-52.

At a later point in David's life, when he fled to Gath of the Philistines to escape from Saul, he wrote in the Psalms of his continued trust in God as his Deliverer:

"In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. For thou has delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

Psalm 56:11-13.

The margin renders "light of the living" as "light of life". God's word is given to provide man with a healthy spiritual life, that through obedience to His precepts, one may endeavour to walk before Him in righteousness. David stumbled many times while on that path, but through humility and repentance, was able to recover himself because of his absolute belief in the power of God to deliver.

Troubles, obstacles and disappointments will certainly come in this life to prove our resolve—to show God if we will hope in the mercies He has promised to those who endeavour to walk in obedience after His precepts and hope to be at the end, delivered finally from the curse of sin and death that all flesh inherits. John wrote of this final deliverance which he was permitted to see in vision:

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Revelation 21:2-3.

Jeremiah and David both experienced God's saving grace in their living and trusted in His final deliverance promised to all those who now call the Lord their Deliverer.

M.C.S.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM..."

(Eph.4:5)

The implication in the above words, is that only those of the "One Lord (and the) one faith" are appropriate for the work of the "one baptism".

Baptism is certainly not to be regarded as something of a haphazard tradition. Baptismal care is shown in what happened to Apollos, who was "mighty in the scriptures". He went to Ephesus, whose ecclesia had been told there is only "one baptism". But he had only received the baptism of John, even though he had been:-

“...instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord ...”

Acts 18:25

Faithful Aquila and Priscilla took him into their care and “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” Obviously they ensured he had the appropriate baptism, for the record goes on to reveal there were others who were lacking of appropriate baptism:-

“... Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, (Note they were disciples)

He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Spirit SINCE YE BELIEVED? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.

And he 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 19:1-5

We see from the above scriptures, it is not sufficient to be instructed in the way of the Lord; a correct baptism is also essential. We ask the question, if there is one of a different fellowship, having been immersed into the traditions of that fellowship, can he go to the fellowship which is upholding the Truth without being baptized, merely by the reason of having already been placed under the water by those he was with? Surely his immersion was at a time when he needed to know “the way of God more perfectly”?

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Colossians, told the believers that they were “complete in him” that is Christ. But if one, having been put under the water by a fellowship not in unity with those of the “one faith”, and then been embraced by such that have deviated from the Truth, how can that one be in the position which is described by the Apostle Paul? as follows:-

“Buried with him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him . . . Let no man beguile you . . . not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

Colossians 2:12-19

Would God allow one called to His Truth, to be immersed into a fellowship which is not "holding the Head" nor is "knit together", in the fellowship of the "One Body"? Whatever knowledge such might have, the true position of 'believing and being baptized' (Mark 16:16) has not been attained, and the only way to correct this is for help to be accepted as illustrated by what happened to Apollos, with obedience to baptismal requirement.

We sadly quote now, from an ecclesial magazine that needs to show more perception, as follows:-

"...when someone is baptized outside the ecclesial framework, the ecclesia ensures that baptism followed an acceptable confession of the same Faith: 'We recognise as brethren, and welcome to our fellowship, all who have been immersed (by whomsoever) after their acceptance of the same doctrines and precepts'."

"Following baptism (or an application under the circumstances discussed above), the right hand of fellowship is extended by the ecclesia on behalf of the wider body of believers throughout the world. Thus baptism is the individual's response to the call of the gospel, and extending the hand of fellowship is the ecclesia's response to one who has been baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19) "for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38) Fellowship can only be extended to an individual who accepts the same fundamental beliefs as us and who is prepared to fellowship consistently on the basis of them . . ."

"When individuals have joined us from other fellowships — as in all major reunions—it has only been after a wholehearted acceptance of our basis of fellowship . . ."

May we conclude with two questions. With a reunion at least one of the parties involved have had to change their beliefs. Have they then had to learn "the way of God more perfectly"?

And can a Body that does not "hold (to) the Head" rightly

pronounce over the immersed, that they are baptizing "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"? Especially when the One Body of the Lord is in existence to do such a work.

**THE FALLACY OF "IMMORTAL EMERGENCE"
REFUTED**

"The question is, "How are the dead raised up, and to what body do they come?" It must be admitted that "the dead" in this question are people who have once lived and are no more. It cannot be understood of those who have been dead and are now alive, as in the case of "the dead small and great standing before God (Rev.20:12), because it is the phrase of a disbeliever in the resurrection. It is parallel with the phrase in the other question in the same chapter (I Cor.15); "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (verse 12) which beyond question applies to those who are in the dust of death. The "dead" of the one question is "the dead" of the other.

Accepting this view the question on which Paul's whole discourse in I Cor.15 hinges, may be understood thus: "How is it possible that the dead can be raised, seeing life is extinct, and all that belonged to or characterised the person is dissolved? and to what body can they come, seeing the body they had is destroyed, and absorbed in the earth, AND ANOTHER body would not be the same one?" Or it may be understood another way: "Granting, in view of the evidence you have adduced, that the dead will rise, how is it done? and what sort of a body will they have in the resurrection?" Paul's answer is the illustration of the grain, which being an answer to an unbeliever, must be looked at from the unbeliever's point of view. The unbeliever puts grain in the earth, expecting a living reproduction. The fact that the sown grain must perish before he can have his crop, is no obstacle to his expectations. This is the fact laid hold of by Paul as the first answer to the objector's question. It is as much as if he said, "Here is a case in which, by your own admission, death precedes reproduction (for away from all abstract views of the case, the grain, as an individual grain, does perish, even if its perishing be but a transmutation of the form of life. Since, therefore, you believe in resurrection in that case as a fact because you see it, why should you be such a fool as to deny it in the case of men, seeing resurrection, in their case, is attested in the case of Christ?" Regarding the argument in this light, there is a force in it which an honest unbeliever would feel.

And if this is the argument, then "sow" undoubtedly means depositing the seed in the earth, for it must be put there in order

to "die"; and "sow", as applied to the dead, must have the same significance, because it is the sense of the word as applied to grain that gives the application of it to the resurrection. No doubt there is a want of complete parallel in the details because a seed reproduces itself by its inherent constitution when acted on by the soil, and dead bodies do not. Still, if it be that it is the FACT and not the MODE of reproduction, in the case of the dead, that is under discussion, the illustration will not appear far-fetched, nor is the logic of the argument weak.

On the question of the identity of the body, the illustration is equally forcible. A grain of wheat, though not the identical grain from which it has sprung, is the same for all PRACTICAL purposes. It is the same in its nature and relations though sprung from one that is dead every seed producing ITS OWN BODY in this sense is the universal rule: its own nature and its own form, though new as to atomic identity. This fact the unbeliever receives in the matter of grain; and, therefore, Paul contends he ought to have no difficulty in receiving a similar fact in the case of men. A man raised from the dead, though new as to the substance of which he is composed, becomes in the hand of God as easily the same man for all PRACTICAL purposes (such as memory, identity, love, praise, joy, etc., as the reproduced grain is the same grain for all practical purposes of taste, nutrition, etc. But here comes another objection, implied in the line of Paul's argument, though not expressly alluded to. The dead raised on the grain principle must be the same flesh as they were before, therefore mortal; and in that case, what advantage is gained by resurrection, seeing they must die again? And if not the same flesh, how can they be the same people? This objection seems to be answered by Paul's next illustration. "All flesh is not the same flesh": there is variety; there are different sorts of flesh and different kinds of glory. So in the resurrection though it springs (this is an admissible rendering of (the Greek original), the one adopted by Dr. Thomas, and after all more in harmony with the logical requirements of the context) in corruption, it eventuates in incorruption.

Though it springs in the animal form (on the principle that the deposited seed reproduces ITS OWN BODY) it is perfected in the spiritual... "this mortal putting on immortality..." (this "sowing" of verses 42 to 44 finds its counterpart in death - it would not follow that the "raising" was the first act of resurrection from the grave. That is, it would not follow that Paul meant

to teach that the bodies of the saints will be incorruptible as soon as they rise from the grave, because the adoption of the analogy of grain-sowing, in the matter of death, would necessitate the adoption of the analogy of grain-raising in the matter of resurrection, as to which we know that grain is not instantaneously reproduced, but comes after a process of sprouting and growing, and ripening, in accordance with which the resurrection would have to be recognised as a process, comprising, first the reappearance of the natural body, then judgment, and then the application of the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness, in the changing of this vile body to the likeness of the body of his glory. In either mode of exposition, the great doctrine of the judgment is preserved from the destruction which befalls it when it is believed that we rise from the grave immortal.”—(R.Roberts)

Footnote “The Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith”, whose beliefs are almost identical with Christadelphian beliefs, hold the doctrine of “immortal emergence” i.e. that immortality comes at the time of resurrection itself, though strangely they also assert that unworthy ones are consigned to complete destruction in a second death. There have been occasions where members of this church have chosen to affiliate with Christadelphian ecclesias. It is also reported that there has been a willingness of some Unamended Christadelphian ecclesias to hold seminars and programs for congregations of the “Church of God” Some have even raised the possibility of a merger, to the indignation of other Christadelphians.

Obviously on the issue of “immortal emergence” most Christadelphians believe these errorists are outside the scope of Truth; would that they might give the same careful scrutiny to other matters of error that have troubled their ecclesias.

A BIBLE CLASS

**“As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold;
so is a man to his praise.”**

Proverbs 27:21.

The Proverbs are the conclusions of Solomon, based upon a God-given spiritual wisdom—wisdom which cuts directly to the heart of a matter, clearly discerning between those spiritual attributes that are pleasing to the Almighty and the baser fleshly characteristics of the carnal man. Our verse under consideration offers the Spirit’s instruction for our help:

“As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise.”

Proverbs 27:21.

Silver and gold are both known as noble metals. When pure, they are soft and malleable, able to be beaten so fine they can be used as gold leaf as edging on the pages of our Bibles. However, to achieve this purity, silver must be heated so that the dross or impurities can be drawn off, leaving the pure metal behind in the refining pot. The same process applies to the heating of gold in a furnace, driving off through heat, the less noble elements in order to obtain pure gold.

The candlestick of the tabernacle for example, was to be made from pure gold as the Almighty gave specific instructions through Moses:

“And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same.”

Exodus 25:31.

Reading the details for the candlestick’s construction, it can be readily seen how intricate and beautiful was its pattern, with three branches on either side of a central shaft with bowls made to look like almonds with knops and flowers, and all to be made from one piece of pure gold, “it shall be one beaten work of pure gold” (verse 36). Only pure gold would lend itself to these complexities of design in the craftsmen’s hands.

This thought of removing impurities through the application of heat, leaving a pure noble product is used as an allegory by the Spirit to teach of man and self-praise. Self-praise is impure, being prejudiced by the flesh’s bias. However, using the fire of the spirit to control the tendencies of the flesh, it can be purged. There are numerous places in the Scriptures that speak of praise and it may be helpful to review one of these:

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

But he is Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God”

Romans 2:28-29.

The outward appearance is not always a true reflection of the heart. Man can be fooled by the outward demeanor but not God, for he examines the heart, to see whether a man’s praise is directed to self or sincerely towards Him. The Almighty as the Refiner, knows when there are fleshly impurities present, and will bring to bear the fire of adversity and affliction to see if those baser elements will be driven off through humility and subjection to Him in time of trial.

Gold plating is another process known to the refiner and craftsman, whereby a thin coating of gold is applied to a baser metal. The object on the surface looks like pure gold, but once the outer layer of softer gold wears away, the common metal is exposed for what it is—something neither attractive nor precious in value. Some people are like this—they possess a thin veneer of spirituality that under duress wears away, leaving a baser carnal element exposed. This is why God as the Refiner, tries those who are His in the Spirit's fire, giving an opportunity to drive away the flesh's baser characteristics, that they may be replaced with the pure gold-like qualities of the spirit, so pleasing to Him.

God spoke to Ezekiel of His people, who because of disobedience, had lost their preciousness in His sight and become as dross:

"Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver.

As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you."

Ezekiel 22:18, 20.

Speaking through the prophet Zechariah regarding the time of the end, the Almighty has said:

"And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

Zechariah 13:8-9.

By going through that fire of the Spirit, the "tried" remnant will be found as a praise unto Him.

How do we apply this help from our consideration to ourselves today? Only as that fire of the Spirit works to remove those impurities within our nature, can we hope to become a praise to the Almighty. If we endure the trials and tests of adversity that are sent and emerge with a greater understanding of our own frailty and a desire to draw closer to the Father, subjecting every facet of our living to His approval, can we be seen as having burned off the dross of our inherent nature.

The perfection of Christ's overcoming was seen in figure throughout the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle, where the purity of those precious metals glowed with beauty. From the sockets of silver, vessels of gold, gold threads woven into the fabric, pure gold applied to furnishings as well as instruments made of pure gold, all spoke of our Lord Jesus, whose faith came victoriously through the fire of affliction thereby finding approval in His Father eyes.

Let us endeavour, Brethren and Sisters, to become such vessels, meet for the master's use, having grown spiritually through trials and testing hoping to become a praise unto Him.

M.C.S.

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

This mysterious number referred to in the book of Revelation, was examined by Dr. J. Thomas. The scripture declares this defining number is:-

"... the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred three score and six."

(Revelation 13:18)

Dr. Thomas wrote, "... the Latin Imperial Executive became extinct, when the Western Roman Empire was superseded by the Seventh Head and the Ten Gothic Horns, A.D. 493. Three hundred and six years after, A.D. 799, it was revived by Charlemagne, when the Latin language, which by decree of Pope Vitalian, A.D. 666, was made the religious tongue, began again to assert its supremacy in the state. Vitalians was an early move towards the ecclesiastical development of the Latinity of the Name. The Centuriator Bale says, 'Vitalian sent monk orators into England about A.D. 666, which from Christ's birth is the number of the beast, that they might confirm waverers in receiving the papistic faith... He commanded Latin hours, Latin songs... rites, etc., all to be performed in the temples in the Latin tongue, according to the Greek word LATEINOS, which by numerical letters fulfills the predicted number of the beast'..."

"Dr. Henry More expresses it, they Latinize in every thing. 'Mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls are conceived in Latin. Nor is scripture read in any other language, under popery, than Latin. Wherefore the council of Trent commanded the vulgar Latin to be the only authentic version. In short, all things are Latin; the pope having communicated his language to the people under his dominion, as the MARK AND CHARACTER of his empire!" (Dr. Thomas goes on to say) "If Dr. More, who himself

wrote in Latin, instead of saying, 'as the mark and character' had written 'as the name of his empire', he would have been correct. Thus no power upon the earth has so exclusive a claim to the name of LATEINOS as the Iconic Power of the Seven Hills. All that pertains to it is Latin, and names are invented and conferred upon things in view of that most striking characteristic. The names of many modern powers are the names of the languages of their executives and dominant races; as the French power, the Spanish power, the Greek power, the English power, and, as in the case before us, THE LATIN POWER. Their several languages are characteristic of each; no wonder then that the Latin, the tongue in which the Image speaks, should be selected by the Eternal Spirit as the basis of its name."

Dr. J. Thomas, then, in his exposition, illustrated the numerical value of the Greek lettering of LATEINOS which comes to a sum total of 666.

However, since Dr. J. Thomas wrote the above, a Second Vatican Council has taken place (1962 to 1965). This produced a new Catechism of the Catholic Church, of almost 700 pages, with an extensive index. Through it a door of rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants was opened, and a dialogue Mass was introduced. Lay people in the churches, therefore, began to hear the service in their own vernacular, and on occasion even received the wine as well as the bread. A vociferous minority resented being deprived of their Latin mass, but the change instigated by Pope John XXIII prevailed. What then of Lateinos, has it come to an end?

How striking was the recent report that Latin remains the official language of the Vatican State, and all official documents, including papal pronouncements are translated into Latin by a staff of Classics specialists. A Vatican commission has been labouring for eight years to produce an up-to-date Latin dictionary. It has finally appeared having the name LEXICON RECENTIS LATINITAS, it includes 15,000 Latin neologisms. Such information underlines the effectiveness of Dr. J. Thomas' expository work of so many years ago.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

"And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters..."

Deuteronomy 28:53

This pronouncement upon God's people, for disobedience, was a curse. Obviously it was not, and is not, something of which

God approves. It is the result of wickedness. When His people were righteously inclined, God promised blessing, as follows:

“... the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body...”

(Deuteronomy 30-9)

The life process is God's blessing. To cut this off by abortion, is to despise His work of creation with man, who is created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27). Man has listened to “seducing spirits” (I Timothy 4:1) which have philosophied away the standards of the devout inclinations of a few decades ago. As a result there have been more than 177,000 abortions in England and Wales last year, and this number is increasing. Thus responsibility is undermined, particularly where young people are concerned, so loose morals begin to prevail. The gradual decline is outlined by the salient points of law change:-

1861. Offences Against the Person Act made it illegal to deliberately bring about an abortion.

1936. A move was made to change the law, so that it would be legal for doctors to operate to bring about abortion.

1938. A doctor was acquitted of so doing; case law becoming established, that abortion was allowable if to protect a patient's health.

1966. A Private Member's Bill was placed before Parliament to allow abortion if two doctors agree pregnancy would put a mother's health at risk, or if there was to be a risk that the prospective child would be born with a handicap.

1967. The Abortion Act became law.

1968. The above Act came into effect on April 27th.

1974. A Committee reviewed the act and suggested that termination should be limited to no more than 24 weeks.

1990. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act confirmed the above limit.

The scale of the evil is revealed in the figure of five million abortions being carried out since the Abortion Act became law in 1967.

Thinking people deplore the widening trend of loose morality, and the break up of marriage. But what can they expect when age-old moral stability is shaken or discarded?

It is a fulfilment of the warning words of scripture for the last days:-

THE REMNANT

"... they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, (so) God gave them over to a reprobate mind..."

Romans 1-28

"... in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be unholy..., without natural affection..."

2 Timothy 3:1-3.

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

Response to mailing of invitations for our booklets continues, not in large numbers, but enough to encourage continuance.

Recent serious and successful surgery for one of our sisters, along with an unusually good recovery, brings gratitude for His gracious care.

Interest in the booklet dealing with the history of the Christadelphian body continues. We are thankful for the privilege of this work.

J. A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

To hear of the progress, after surgery, of one who has had a limb problem for many months, is a cause of profound consolation. The injunction to pray for another is indeed a meaningful instruction. And as help is received, it is clearly shown that The Eternal is One that is near; and truly is the God of all comfort.

The work continues here of circularising in a particular sense, and also in a general sense to the public at large.