

SEPTEMBER 1998

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD"

"SCIENCE"

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"WITHDRAWAL"

"EXTRACT FROM LETTER (A.R.H.)"

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

All Communications

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

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

**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"A GOING OUT"**

Our minds have been directed to Moses and Israel as they were led, under God's hand, out of Egypt. We are reading of this wondrous work in Exodus, as God worked on behalf of His people, leading them towards the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their faithful seed. Israel had sojourned in Egypt as a subject people for over 200 years since Jacob's arrival there, with 70 of his family, finding refuge from the famine. Over these years, they had increased to a great multitude. When they suffered under the oppression of Pharaoh, the Almighty led them to freedom with marvellous works. He speaks in both the Old and New Testaments of Himself as the one "who brought you out of Egypt" or "who deliveredst thee from the land of Egypt."

As we read Israel's experiences this last week, there can be no question who brought them forth. It was the Almighty! On the shores of the Red Sea, after Pharaoh and his army perished, Moses exclaimed:

“. . . I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Who is like unto thee. O LORD,...glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." Exodus 15:1,11-13

Indeed the Lord was glorious and fearful. He did literally lead His people forth from Egypt:

“. . . And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

Exodus 13:21-22.

There has never been seen such a work before, or since—surely a very visible evidence of His presence and His power, "to give them light." That pillar was there for 40 years as they travelled, until they entered the land promised (Cana). He had redeemed them to Himself through the Sign of the Passover lamb's blood upon the

door posts, as God commanded. This enabled His angel of death to identify and "pass over" those who obediently remained in their houses so marked. This signified the Lamb of God whom we are remembering this morning. By His victory over His mortal nature, Jesus Christ gave His life, shedding His blood, as a means of redemption for His believing brethren. This is our memorial feast, reminding us of His great victory and of our need for redemption.

Moses spoke of Israel's being guided in God's strength to their holy habitation. Sadly, they have lost that hope because of unbelief and disregard for His word, and for the rejection of His Son, Jesus, as the Messiah, ultimately crucifying Him. As Gentiles, we have been grafted into that hope of Israel, as Abraham's adopted children, through burial at baptism into Christ's death, thereby becoming heirs of the promises made to Abraham. As the brethren of Christ, guidance is given in our journey towards that promised holy habitation. Jesus Himself exhorted and comforted His disciples in His last days upon earth:

". . . Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions (dwelling places): if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:1-2.

Jesus has gone before, and we are striving to yield all our living in the hope of being with Him in His coming kingdom on earth.

How much we need that guidance, for by ourselves we would soon grow weary, impatient, and stray. To "guide" means to carry, to feed or to lead gently, as we find in Isaiah's prophecy, speaking of the good Shepherd who:

". . . shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah 40:11.

Do we not know even now that loving care which this Good Shepherd shows for His flock, gently leading with love and concern, that none be lost? David knew that blessing as he wrote:

". . . thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me and guide me.

Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me; for thou art my strength.

Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth." Psalm 31:3-5.

What faith David showed as he entrusted his very life into God's hands. Should we not also trust Him, truly convinced that He will provide, as Isaiah reminds us:

"... They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."
Isaiah 49:10.

His people of Israel indeed did not hunger or thirst in their wilderness journey, for God provided manna, bread from heaven, and water from the rock. Centuries later Paul tells us that they:

"... were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
And did all eat the same spiritual meat (manna);
And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."
I Corinthians 10:2-4.

What help, what blessing, what provision! What food, indeed in plenty, for all to partake! Yet, as Paul continues:

"But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." I Corinthians 10:5.

How could they act displeasingly as so many wonderful works had been done on their behalf—bread, water, cloud, fire, guidance—all for their welfare? Yet, most of Israel's people murmured, complaining as they were tested by God to prove their faith. An example is found in our recent reading concerning the manna. Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, for they did hark back to the "good food" which they enjoyed in Egypt, forgetting Pharaoh's cruel oppression, forgetting too the wonderful mercy of God's bringing them out of slavery. In mercy He had said:

"... Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."
Exodus 16:4.

God gave clear directions concerning the gathering and eating of the manna, to prove them. Would they gather it as He told them, or would they follow their own ways? Moses reminded them:

"... Let no man leave of it till the morning." Exodus 16:19.

Being so tested:

"... they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them."
Exodus 16:20.

Others, too, contrary to the command, went to gather manna on the sabbath, and found none. How telling a lesson for us, Brethren and Sisters, as we depend upon "the bread from heaven"—Jesus—for our spiritual strength. It is only granted for the benefit of those fervently desiring it, and who seek it as God directs, not as we might desire.

Again, Israel murmured, growing thirsty as they found no water. For this, they were ready to stone Moses, blaming him for their lack! But was it really a test of their faith in God's promise? Moses appealed to Him: "...What shall I do unto this people?..." He was directed to take his rod along with the elders of Israel and go to Mount Horeb (Sinai). There God said to Moses:

"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. . ." Exodus 17:6.

Moses obeyed, and water was caused to flow out of the rock at Sinai, coming down through the wilderness to where Israel was camped. It would be a stream of considerable volume to provide drink for the millions of Israel and their flocks! Again, God's mighty work was done in mercy to provide for His people, even though they murmured against Him, asking Moses: ". . .Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?" This was a desolate place, without food or drink; yet, there was the cloud, the fire, the manna and the water to fill their needs. We might ask: How could they murmur with such evidence of God's presence? The manna was there every morning (except on the sabbath). At first, they accepted it, indeed rejoiced as the provision for their hunger! But as it was eaten day after day, they grew weary of it, feeling that it was the same every day, and they liked the delicious food of Egypt better—again complaining to God and to Moses:

". . .Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread."

Numbers 21:5.

Such continual complaining, moaning and thanklessness caused God, in anger, to bring judgment upon them for their persistent unbelief. This went on throughout their wilderness journey, with the result that only two of the over 600,000 men who came out of Egypt were allowed to enter His promised land.

Let us think upon these things, brethren and Sisters. We are being led out of this evil world, and are striving to be subject to our Father. We do not have the cloud, the fire, the tabernacle; but we do

THE REMNANT

have sure evidence that it is God who delivered us, and stands by to guide, providing for all our needs, as well as the assurance of an "abiding place" in His kingdom soon to come. But this is possible only on His terms—that we deny self and submit to His word. Let us in love, gratitude and trust, be sustained by the sure promises of our Father in heaven to His faithful children.

"...They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat or sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

Isaiah 49:9-10.

Let us put our lives into the hands of the One "whose mercy endureth for ever"—looking to Him in all our trials and needs, and also in our joys, which are many.

J.A. DeF

"OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD"

As part of our daily portions we have read Psalm 107, a pruned song written by David wherein everything superfluous has been removed to clearly bring forth the mind of the Spirit, and of faithful David.

However, with this in mind, there is a phrase repeated four times in this psalm, in the 8th, 15th, 21st and 31st verses, as the Spirit through David, endeavors to impress upon our minds the importance of this message:

"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

This word "goodness" as used here, gives the thought of "bowing down". What kindness and graciousness that God should so condescend to call out a people to serve Him, showing what He requires through His word. To "praise" is the thought of "opening the hand", reaching out to God for help with the perception that only through Him can strength and deliverance be derived. Previous to the 8th verse repetition is such an example:

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."

Psalm 107:6-7

THE REMNANT

Man cannot determine his own destiny nor devise his own salvation, for being flesh his end is the grave. Only as men approach unto God with an open hand, in supplication and praise to Him, is help from the Almighty granted. Again previous to the next repetition in verse 15 is the need to pray for deliverance emphasized by David:

"Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder." Psalm 107:13-14

As His people were under persecution and cried unto Him, He delivered them from their troubles, loosing their bands of captivity.

These tests and trials in varying degrees are placed upon His children to see if they will look to him for deliverance, and praise Him through prayer and obedience in their living.

David was one who praised God with his whole heart, and as a result was delivered from persecution and distress, relying on God's goodness and power. Praise to Him is again recorded in Psalm III:

"Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion." Psalm III:1-4.

Though he knew God's deliverance many times throughout his life, David in humility still marvelled at His condescending kindness:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained:

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." Psalm 8:3-5.

Paul used David's words to teach his Hebrew brethren of Jesus, the One whom David had seen and spoke of in faith.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than an angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man . . . For both he that sanctifieth and they who are

sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Hebrew 2:9,11

This oneness spoken of here by Paul is possible only through belief in the Lord Jesus. As the Saviour, He is the end of God's goodness revealed to man, and in fact the only means through which man can approach Him.

Just as Jesus was not ashamed to call His followers brethren, so too will they who are now called by His name, be gathered into families—brethren and sisters of Christ united in fellowship, under the Father's care.

Today through His calling we are privileged to know the love of brethren and sisters, as we are joined together in His family, in unity of mind and spirit, through His word and his Son. This family bond is but a foretaste of the eternal joys that await those found approved at Christ's judgment seat, when His brethren and sisters will be granted the blessing of life everlasting, reigning with Him as kings and priests in His kingdom on earth.

As we strive, Brethren and Sisters toward this end, let us not forget the many mercies we have been granted, and with our whole living endeavor to praise our heavenly Father through obedience and humility in the spirit of David who cried out so often:

"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men!"

M.C.S

SCIENCE

For over a century science has undermined the respect for God's word that was formerly held. Many no longer believe in a Supreme Being.

Those who would strive to maintain faith need all the more, in these times, to look to what God has preserved in His written witness.

Job, that man of patience, in the midst of severe trial and difficulty, heard the voice of the Most High, and sublime providence has ensured that we in these last times can consider what Job was told:-

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
declare, if thou hast understanding." (Job 38:1-4)

This question might well be asked of the scientists who profess to know what happened hundreds of thousand years ago. Man was not there, how then can the scientists know and be sure?

Yet they produce charts and instil school children with their delusions which result in an absence of faith in those who are so taught.

It is preposterous that those who are immersed in the wisdom of this world, should maintain there is no God. If this be so, why then do we have such a wonderful earth, a jewel of wisdom and grand design? The American Space Agency has investigated the moon and the planets, but there is no life or design, as we know it upon earth, in such spheres. There is nothing else like this good earth.

The voice of God calls upon us to consider His creation:-

"Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

Job 38:5-11)

Consider the earth rolling around the sun, never failing in its momentum. Where did the earth come from? The scientists put forward a theory that the earth and other spheres were as dust in space, later brought together by gravitational attraction, eventually resulting into objects of solidity. How can man possibly know this?

Look again at God's declaration:-

"Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days: and caused the dayspring to know his place;

That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken."

Every twenty-four hours there is a dawn (the dayspring). The blessing of light comes after the night, without which there would be no life. Consider the chaos if the earth was to orbit the sun as the moon orbits the earth. Man never sees the other side of the moon, because in the way it rolls around, it only presents to the earth one face. If the earth did the same, having a turn like its satellite, one part of the earth would be always dark, and the other part always light. The consequence would not be a good earth as we know it. But God tells us that He has "commanded this morning, . . . and caused the dayspring to know his place." So the north and the south, the east and the west gets its share of light, and as a result has life.

This is a wonderful thing. But scientists, coldly calculating their proud theories, take it for granted.

These teachers of men do not have that which the truth of God shows to all who would respect the Creator. As so called intellectuals they tell their scholars of the various ages of the history of mankind. The Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age etc. If only they had paid more attention to the divine record. Note the following:-

"Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." (Genesis 4:2).

So, in that earliest time, men were farming and not as grotesque cave dwellers depicted by the scientists. Note also the further testimony of God-given capability:-

"And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: . . ." (Genesis 4:20-22)

So called Stone Age man, living a primitive life, sank into that condition by his own lack and apathy. He is well described by Job in eloquent words preserved by the Spirit, even for our time:-

"For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

To dwell in the clefts of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth." (Job 30:3-8)

The word of God gives to us the Truth. Men had an advanced aptitude from the Beginning. The Stone Age is a misnomer, and is still with us in the jungles of isolated places.

How sad it is that the world has allowed articulate men to persuade, by cleverly worked out theories, against the essential revelation which God has given and has preserved even to these last times as a blessing, promised in the Psalms:-

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Psalm 119:130).

A BIBLE CLASS

"HE THAT IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US"

(Luke 9:50)

The context of our verse under consideration was a response from the Lord Jesus to John, who related an unusual circumstance witnessed by himself and some of the other disciples:

"... Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us.

And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." Luke 9:49-50

The obvious question to be considered is, how could one perform miracles and not be one of Christ's followers? The same circumstance is recorded in Mark, providing additional details:

"And John answered him, saying, master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part."

Mark 9:38-40

It is important to examine this circumstance from the time frame in which it occurred. The gospel had just begun to be taught by Christ. It was a revelation and new liberation for those under the law's bondage, bringing men together in fellowship as the early ecclesias were formed. There were also many individuals who were commended by the Lord Jesus for their faithfulness, as they came to

hear Him preach and be healed through His power. One such individual was the Roman centurion who came to Jesus believing that through His word alone his servant might be healed. When Jesus offered to come to his house to heal the servant, the centurion with admirable humility and faith replied:

“... Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

Matthew 8:8-10

Here was a Gentile, not a natural born Israelite schooled in the law and prophets, yet one who recognized Jesus as the son of God and had faith in His ability to heal. How ironic that this Gentile officer should have such unwavering faith in Christ, while most of Israel, who had been taught for centuries of His coming, would not receive Him.

This man who healed through Christ's name may have been as this centurion—sure and firm in his belief that Jesus was the son of God, and though not one of the twelve, was granted power from God to heal in Christ's name, because of his faithful spirit. In addition, if devils were truly cast out, it could be done only through God's power, thus revealing His approval.

There were no doubt many in Israel who were impressed by the words and actions of the Lord Jesus, yet through fear of the elders, never openly confessed His name. The Pharisees, abusing their position of power, kept tight control over the people by casting out of the temple, any of whom they disapproved. Because of the elders, many had not the courage to acknowledge Jesus, nor accept His name as did this healer, though they may have believed:

“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

John 12:42-43

This same fear was evident in the parents of the blind man healed by Jesus, for they carefully worded their report of this

THE REMNANT

miracle to the Pharisees, when questioned:

"His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him."

John 9:19-23

Contrary to the example of those recorded here, this man, healing through Christ's name, did not fear to be aligned with the Lord Jesus, openly invoking His name.

In wondering why this man was obviously a believer of Christ yet unknown to Him and the twelve, we need to consider the circumstances of that time. As Christ first began His ministry, those touched by the gospel message would be drawn together to form ecclesias, called out from the world to be joined in fellowship as true brethren of Christ. This new order would take time to become established, and from there, its members would grow in understanding and awareness of all that God required, as babes growing from milk to the meat of the word.

Paul a few years later wrote to the early church at Corinth, emphasizing the necessity to come out and be separate:

"...what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty."

II Corinthians 6:16-18

After Christ's ascension to His Father, the disciples took up the responsibility of furthering His ministry, travelling abroad to preach the gospel and establishing ecclesias in various parts of the world. At this time, they also instituted the practise of meeting together on the first day of the week to remember the Lord Jesus and commemorate His sacrifice through the breaking of bread, as

taught by Christ before His death. This visible symbol of fellowship could not be effected unless the members of His body were joined into ecclesias, as brethren and sisters, working together in unity and love.

This circumstance of one given God's power, though not known by Christ's followers, was a reflection of an earlier time, when the gospel was first preached and before the Lord's table had been established. It does not give license for one joined in fellowship to go off on his own, or absent himself from the one body and the Lord's Table.

We know from the Scriptures, that it was difficult for those of natural Israel to grasp the necessary transition from the law now fulfilled in Christ, to the gospel. It meant leaving behind the ordinances they had so long observed, such as the sacrifices and the keeping of the sabbath. So too would the understanding gradually come to mind of the need to be joined together in one fellowship, leaving behind the old order still kept by the Scribes and Pharisees.

God in his mercy was patient and longsuffering, revealing what was required to these early brethren through the diligent ministrations of His disciples and apostles. In those early days, their work was to lay the foundations of His house, and for their faithful labors these early brethren will be rewarded with a eternal place in His holy city to be established as the center of the Kingdom of God on earth, as seen in vision by John:

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Revelation 21:14

No one can thwart the purpose and power of God, as Jesus well knew, therefore, he counselled His disciples to "forbid him not". As this man healed in the name of Christ, Jesus recognized, as must all who trust in God's power that:

". . .there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Acts 4:12

M.C.S.

WITHDRAWAL

In an article of the main ecclesial magazine, an assertion was made recently that needs questioning. (as follows)

"...Let us all remember that withdrawal of fellowship is not excommunication—indeed, we can never do that. The object of withdrawal of fellowship is reconciliation; to bring the offending brother to a better attitude of mind. Above all we want our brother to admit his wrongdoing and to repent, i.e. to come to that better mind, so that the precious emblems of God's love might once more be taken by him and thereby shared by all of us together.

Think of our Lord's gracious words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" remembering also that he was the Lamb of God's providing which bears away the sins of the world. . ."

The English dictionary explains withdrawal to mean SECLUDED, and excommunication to mean EXPEL FROM COMMUNION. It does seem to us that these words virtually have the same meaning.

It is recorded in 1 Timothy 6:3-5:—

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing. . . destitute of the truth . . . from such withdraw thyself."

In the original Greek the word is APHISTEMI i.e. TO REMOVE. Another reference to withdrawal is in 1 Thessalonians 3:6:—

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you. . ."

Here withdraw in the original Greek is STELLO i.e. TO REPRESS: ABSTAIN FROM: AVOID.

The word excommunicate does not appear in the Authorised Version, but Anathema Maranatha is directly given, as follows:—

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus, Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." (1 Corinthians 16:22)

Anathema means TO DECLARE A BAN. Maranatha means OUR LORD HAS COME, implying divine judgment is coming. The

article which has raised our questioning is kindly in its tone, but how misleading a kindly tone can be. Not that we would assert that after withdrawal there is no more hope of repentance. But is it not evident from the scriptures quoted, that withdrawal from fellowship is a dire situation in which to be, and in that position there is no hope? We therefore believe it does a disservice to those going "out of the way", to say "withdrawal is not excommunication".

This tendency to smooth away some of the necessary dread in which the scripture would have us warned, shows a failing to perceive the full implication of what fellowship means.

The tacit implication that all "fellowships" have something in common, and that all are to be regarded as Brethren, is the flaw in human reasoning that promotes the belief that "withdrawal is not excommunication".

Continually there is movement of some from one "fellowship" to another. So the new ecclesia, of the new "fellowship" accepts the one withdrawn from by those of the "fellowship" to which he previously belonged. In this change baptism is not required, his previous immersion being accepted as valid, albeit that the new "fellowship" would not have those of the other faction at their Communion Service because of their believed failure. The withdrawal by his previous fellowship is in effect, then rescinded as a result of "satisfactory discussion"; and so the offender is welcomed into his new fellowship. A basis of putting himself right on the issue with the previous fellowship is obviously shelved.

It is a situation which allows one who is withdrawn from by one faction of Brethren, to be accepted into another faction of Brethren, and that nevertheless the Divisions, all are Brethren, so he is still a Brother. The boundaries therefore are blurred, and "withdrawal is no longer excommunication", as the offender is still a Brother, albeit in another faction.

What a haphazard situation it all is. And where in this is the consideration of Christ's important instruction?

"... if he neglect to hear the ecclesia, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican". (Matthew 18:17)

Where does the sentimental view "once a brother always a brother" fit in with this definition of Christ? Whatever the previous close association with the Ecclesia, Christ shows that withdrawal means the Ecclesia must, of a necessity, adjust its outlook towards such who "turn aside".

The Remnant therefore cannot accept the proposition that true "withdrawal" is NOT excommunication.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER (A.R.H.)

"The father of our race was a deliberate sinner, its results still manifest in the World of Mankind.

How manifest in the birth of Jesus is "the willingness" of Mary to be a handmaiden of the LORD. And Joseph a "just man", agreeing to abide by the angels bidding to stay by his lawful wife. She educated her son in God's word to embrace him in a true relationship with His real Father. To apply the word in changing the nature born of the woman to a mind to the glory of God.

John says that Jesus was to take away "the sin" of the World. I would suggest that this sin was, that He was of that line, His genealogy proves, who were born contrary to the "will" of God. Not a sin of His own making but inherited. Repentance, Moses taught, could gain forgiveness with the offer of the appropriate sacrificial lamb. By this offering of Himself He gave us the power to become sons of God by being baptized. A repentance and rising again to newness of life. This time born of "the will of God" through our saviour, Jesus, anointed at His own baptism by John with the voice proclaiming "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Remnant's comments

Our correspondent refers to "inherited" sin, and it is true that Jesus said of His contemporaries, "ye are of your father the devil". (John 8:44) But is it wise to use this term which is akin in its description to the dogma of "original sin"?

Augustine referring to the sin of Adam said "sinfulness inherited from Adam alone suffices WITHOUT ACTUAL SIN to bring man to condemnation. Infant baptism counts as the effacement of "original sin" as guilt. Concupiscence however, as tinder for sin, remains."

At the Council of Trent (1546) a decree was drawn up on "original sin" defining an agreed doctrine on the grace of Baptism, (Infant Sprinkling). This was a compromise between the Thomist(Augustinian) and the Scotist doctrines on the nature of man, and the consequences of the Fall. It said that the sin of Adam passes to all his descendants, and can only be removed by the merit of Jesus Christ which is conferred by Baptism. By regeneration of Baptism "original sin" and actual sins already committed are remitted. But there remains concupiscence as tinder of sin. This concupiscence though it comes from sin and leads to sin, yet is not itself sin.

There were modifications to this doctrine, when through the Reformation great import was placed on "Justification by faith". Martin Luther held that the infant is regenerated and saved through the merit of the faith of the infant's sponsors. Later he abandoned this view, saying that in Baptism infants themselves believe, for "if God can turn the heart of the wicked, much more can He turn the heart of a child".

This doctrine of "original sin" greatly influenced Luther's thinking which was "that since all men are born in sin" it is necessary that they should, as infants, be brought into the relation of grace; Infant Baptism therefore conferring an indelible "character".

But Luther moved away from the "limits on forgiveness" of those he challenged, to say that Baptism confers unlimited forgiveness of sin, and that post-baptismal sin does not require the special grace of a fresh sacrament (i.e. penance). Rather, he maintained, does penance throw the penitent back upon the all sufficient grace of God, of which he has been assured in his baptism. Is it wise then to talk of "inherited sin"? The scripture is clear in its definition of this subject:-

". . . every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

(Deuteronomy 24:16)

". . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. . ."

(Ezekiel 18:20)

". . . when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. . ."

(James 1:15)

What then of the dead infant? It certainly would not be dead if it was in the eternal purpose of God to receive of His grace, it has however died in the general mortality of the human race. And though it is perhaps difficult to understand (especially for bereaved parents), according to Solomon it is better off (if it is outside the purpose of God):-

(an untimely birth) ". . . he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.

Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known anything: this hath more rest than the other."

(Ecclesiastes 6: 4-5)

The implication is that such has been spared from the traumas that are part of human existence.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

"... the woman was... decked with gold..." (Rev. 17:4)

There is much discussion going on at the present time about a new currency in Europe. A European Bank undoubtedly will cause considerable financial change. Italy is one of the countries that has agreed to join this "euro" arrangement. Very little has been said about an involvement of the Roman Church in this procedure, but the Church does have an important financial role in Italy. The Vatican has its own Bank, called the Istituto di Opere di Religione which has a link to the Bank of Italy. It also has its own Mint which produces Vatican lira coins bearing the Pope's image. Through its own financial system the Vatican carries out transactions in many currencies and above all in the United States dollar. But it has now agreed to join the new currency, preferring the "euro" to the U.S. dollar. This is significant, for it does indicate that the Vatican intends to be a part of, and have a say in, European unification.

What a long way the Church has come from that earlier time, when it was founded in a time of persecution. It, of course, claims to be the Church of the Apostle Peter, and concerning Peter's demise, refers to John 21:18-19, which records a dialogue between Jesus and Peter, who was told of what would happen to him in advanced age:-

"When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

The Church tradition concerning this event, is that when Rome was ablaze at the time of Nero, for which Nero was held responsible, he (Nero) looked around for a scapegoat and blamed the Christians. Thereupon they were taken to be either crucified or torched, and among these was Peter. This carnage took place on what is now the broad piazza in front of St. Peter's, Rome. Peter was crucified, following which according to Roman law, which stipulated that the bodies of victims of execution must be delivered to the next of kin, the friends of Peter wrapped his body in linen, and then secretly conveyed it to a pagan burial ground in the vicinity of the place of slaughter. This cemetery was situated on a knoll called Vaticanus, the word meaning "soothsayer", because historically it

had been the place of an Etruscan oracle. Now St. Peter's Church, it is claimed stands upon the very spot, covering the bones of Peter, lying under the high altar of the Basilica, and so originated the name Vatican.

Such a history has greatly helped to gain eventual world wide respect for the Church, and this has furthered its ambitions. Though the Vatican City occupies only about a fifth of a square mile with less than a thousand residents, its influence far transcends its small territorial aspect.

Concerning Europe's continuing political integration, the *L'Osservatore Romano*, which is the Vatican's newspaper, praised the Italian Government's decision to adopt the new currency, saying the decision of eleven countries to bind themselves monetarily was historic and "a very positive step". The secretary of the Vatican Prefecture for Economic Affairs, declared that 'the Holy See would begin to pave the way for its own involvement'. A leader of the government said, he noted that the European Union had been born as a "fusion of German and Latin cultures" in the 1957 Treaty of Rome, and that Italy now stood at the delicate junction between Europe and North Africa, or between Christianity and Islam. "Italy's duty to Europe (therefore) is to make the Mediterranean a sea of peace". Italy obviously is expecting to play an important role in the future.

How significant all this is, especially as it gathers momentum. And the Vatican is certain to gain from it, increasing its wealth and influence a far cry from those early days of persecution and martyrdom.

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

It is planned, God willing to resume this month our general public mailing as the summer season ends. Supplications are for guidance and blessing in this work of witnessing.

With our brethren in Manchester, we rejoice in the continued improvement and help granted to our sister in her lengthy illness.

We are glad that our brother here has returned to nearly normal health, and are grateful that through it all he has been helped in carrying out his ecclesial responsibilities.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

In necessary counselling together, which takes place from time to time, we are most grateful for the help and concern of our Brethren and Sisters from across the seas. How very true is the scriptural definition that there is safety in a multitude of counsellors.

We are encouraged here by a continuing interest in our publications which comes from many parts of the world.