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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

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

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**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD**  
**"TAKE HOLD OF MY COVENANT"**

For the past several weeks we have been reading the word of God directed to Judah and Jerusalem through the prophet Isaiah. He prophesied for 62 years, during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Of these four kings who heard this witness, three paid no heed, for they served idols. Hezekiah gave earnest heed to the same words, and in obedience served God. Why the difference in response? Hezekiah, moved by godly fear, had a receptive heart and so came to rely upon his God in times of trouble as well as in tranquil periods, and was thus strengthened in all his circumstances. Can we not find help as he did? Our circumstances are different, but are still God-given opportunities to prove our trust. What does our Father find as He looks into our hearts? Is there not room for improvement, especially as we compare ourselves to His Son whom we have remembered this morning? Let us give more earnest heed to our recent readings in Isaiah, as God spoke to Hezekiah and his people of Judah. In chapters 36 through 38, we have seen help provided for them as Sennacherib, King of Assyria, was prevented from capturing Jerusalem; indeed, his army did not so much as shoot an arrow there. Also at this same time, Hezekiah became ill unto death, but prayed through Isaiah. God answered his plea:

“. . . Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

And this shall be a sign unto thee . . .

Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward

...”

Isaiah 38:5-8.

As God’s word miraculously came to pass, what assurance and strength Hezekiah knew. He owed his life, his reign and his health to God who in mercy answered his supplication. Let us listen to that word recently read:

“Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it, that keepeth the sabbath from polluting

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it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.”

Isaiah 56:1-2.

Speaking to Judah generally and to Hezekiah as well, the Lord continued:

“Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.”

Isaiah 56:3.

What is a eunuch? It is one who is rendered impotent. Concerning a eunuch, Moses’ law said:

“He . . . shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 23:1.

Yet God spoke through Isaiah:

“For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;

Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”

Isaiah 56:4-5.

This appears to be a contradiction of the law, but is not God speaking of those whom Jesus said: “. . . have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” (Matthew 19:12)? How can this be done? Isaiah makes it clear. Firstly, by keeping the spirit of the sabbath, looking to the seventh day’s fulfillment in the kingdom of God. Secondly, by choosing “the things that please (God).” To choose involves a selecting or accepting those things in which God is pleased. He spoke of Jesus: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Finally, the acceptable spirit of a true “eunuch” is seen in one who “takes hold of my covenant”. To take hold is also used as to seize, to fasten upon, or to be urgent — giving the thought of a strong desire, to cherish their covenant with the Almighty. What then is a covenant? It is making a league with, joining in agreement with, or keeping a vow to do so. We have an example as Moses brought the law, given him on Mt. Sinai, to his brethren. As they heard God’s word:

“. . . all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.”

Exodus 24:3.

Here was a covenant, a vow between God and His people. He, God, would lead and care for them, and they would honor Him. Moses

then offered a peace offering upon an altar which he built, and:

“ . . . took half of the blood and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.”

Exodus 24:6-8.

Israel vowed to “take hold” of this covenant, confirmed with the sprinkled blood. However, they did not take hold of it for long. Less than 40 days after their making this vow, Moses returned from Mt. Sinai bearing the tables of the testimony, and came upon Israel worshipping a golden calf, an idol, contrary to God’s first command:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

Exodus 20:3.

Moses, seeing their idolatry, in pain and anger threw down the tables of stone, destroying them. These tables contained the covenant, and this act of Moses was a condemnation of them for breaking their solemn vow, bringing God’s wrath and judgment upon them.

Isaiah also spoke about the son of a stranger — one not having the hope of Israel through a covenant relationship. Under the law concerning the passover feast, commemorating Israel’s deliverance from Egypt:

“ . . . the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof.”

Exodus 12:43.

The stranger had no part in the passover because he was not one of God’s covenanted people. However, we read further:

“But every man’s servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.”

Exodus 12:44.

If the stranger was circumcised, it signified his acceptance and belief, thus he was permitted to eat of the passover, was covered by the blood on the door post, and was saved when the angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites. Circumcision was a token of the holy covenant, which God had made earlier with faithful Abraham:

“And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Genesis 17:11,14.

Circumcision clearly was a token, a sign of a covenant made which involved putting away the tendencies of the flesh and choosing to serve God. If the sons of a stranger joined themselves to God in this way, He promised:

"Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

Isaiah 56:7.

Thus, we perceive that whether a eunuch, son of a stranger, King Hezekiah himself, or children in Jerusalem — whoever would "take hold" of God's covenant came under the care and protection of the Almighty. The spirit of those doing so was: "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient."

Isaiah's help was provided for Hezekiah two years before the siege of Jerusalem came about, and before his grievous illness. This was to sustain him for things to come. He prayed for help as the invasion threatened and his illness began:

". . . Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore."

Isaiah 38:3.

Had not the king sincerely sought to hold fast to the covenant and to rely on God? The Almighty replied:

". . . I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city."

Isaiah 38:5-6.

What wondrous words to the king's ears! In addition, God in mercy gave Hezekiah a marvelous sign that He would do as He had promised:

"Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down."

Isaiah 38:8.

Impossible — one would say! But it did happen, reinforcing Hezekiah's trust in God's word. He, in awe, responded:

“What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years . . .”

Isaiah 56:15.

Here was a heart touched, the flesh overcome, as he determined to “walk softly” relying upon God, not himself, resolved to take hold of the covenant.

Do we, Brethren and Sisters, find help in Isaiah’s work with Hezekiah as he was so greatly blessed? We come here to remember the Lord Jesus each first day of the week, seek to repent of our failings, renew our vows, and take hold of the covenant — all made possible by His hard-fought victory over His flesh. We remember how He replied to James and John as they sought a seat at His right and left hand in the kingdom to come:

“... can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” Mark 10:38.

James and John promptly replied: “We can.” They believed that they could keep the word of God and take hold of His covenant, as did Jesus. Were not these confident two seeking honor for themselves, rather than submitting, as did Jesus, in the spirit of “not my will, but thine, be done”?

Brethren and Sisters, we are flesh — weak, failing, often offending God. But as the eunuch and the son of the stranger, we also can find His mercy, forgiveness, and know the hope of redemption when Jesus returns. He will judge those who have sought to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His baptism — those who have been determined to constantly seize upon His covenant. It is a sure promise only if we labor in love to do our part, and the blessing is beyond our imagination — great indeed!

*J.A. DeF*

### A WARNING FROM THE BOOK OF JUDGES

We have recently concluded the Book of Judges in our daily reading plan. The time of the Judges covered a period of approximately 400 years, during which God appointed various men to lead and judge Israel. When the judge was righteous and obedient, so too was Israel, however, the last verse of this book ends with a sober testimony:

“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Judges 21:25.

The guidance that God had provided through righteous men came to nought, for at the end of this period, every man walked in his own ways, not God’s. Israel’s devotion and service to God vacillated, depending upon the strength of their judge. When they were disobedient, God punished them with the sword of their enemies:

“And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.” Judges 2:13-15.

However, when they repented of their iniquity, He was merciful and kind:

“And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.”

Judges 2:18.

This record is typical of man’s flesh nature as it pursues its own desires at the cost of all else. Israel did not seem to learn from their difficulties, lapsing time and again into disobedience. Why was it allowed we may ask? It was a test allowed of God for those individuals called out to be His people, to determine if they would walk faithfully in His ways, regardless of the swell of disobedience surrounding them.

God’s desire was to keep the covenant He had made with

their fathers — to drive out of the land the alien inhabitants if they would walk before Him in obedience. However, because of their stubborn rebellion, he left those nations as a test for Israel:

“And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.”  
Judges 2:20-22.

The cause of God’s forsaking His covenant with His people has always been the flesh, which when in control, refuses to walk in His ways. The first breach between God and man was witnessed in the garden when:

“... the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Genesis 3:6.

“It was pleasant to the eyes” — desirable to look upon, and so Eve disobeyed, even though God had said not to eat of it or even touch it. This repetitive pattern of disobedience exists because of the flesh nature uncurbed, and will continue to do so until the end of God’s purpose is accomplished, when all flesh is consumed by the Spirit. God looks for man to control his fleshly desires, to exhibit restraint out of love for Him. Nehemiah wrote to help those in his own time in this same regard:

“So the children went in and possessed the land and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land . . . Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.”

Nehemiah 9:24, 26-27.

We cannot fully comprehend this mercy because our own flesh is

not naturally merciful. Our mercy is often short lived and abruptly discontinued when we are offended — such a pale comparison to the Spirit's merciful longsuffering to His people:

“But thus said the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.”

Isaiah 49:25-26.

Right from the early days of man there was rebellion, yet God's mercy was extended to one family, who because of their faithfulness, found grace in His sight. Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives witnessed for one hundred and twenty years against a faithless generation who mocked and ridiculed their message from God, a time similar to that described at the end of the Book of Judges:

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

Genesis 6:5-6, 11-12.

What a vivid picture is painted as we imagine the cries and distress of those struggling in the waters as the flood rose — clinging to the last vestiges of high ground as the unrelenting waters deepened, fulfilling God's wrath upon a disobedient and rebellious people. At that point, it was too late for repentance. They had been given one hundred and twenty years to turn from their wickedness — a merciful provision, yet they did not hearken. John writes of a similar circumstance to take place at the end of God's purpose, when His wrath will be fulfilled upon the disobedient and unrepentant at Christ's return:

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every

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bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Revelation 6:15-17.

Indeed, who shall be able to stand? Only those who have struggled to restrain their flesh nature, walking in love and obedience before Him during their time of probation, will through His mercy, be able to stand before the Lamb in that day.

Let us heed the warnings given, lest we stray from the Father's precepts and lose His mercy and our hope of life, becoming as those recorded in Judges, who did that which was right in their own eyes.

*M.C.S*

**ON ENTERING INTO A NEW YEAR (R. Roberts)**

The long blank which stretched before God's servants of the Mosaic dispensation, and sickened the heart of Daniel as he contemplated its weary length and desolation, is now in the past; and we are in this position that we look backwards and trace the slow chariot wheels of history as they have tracked their (gory) course along the highways of Gentile times, and we look forward and are almost startled at our instant proximity to the end afore determined and spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began. This is a position full of anxiety and thrilling interest to all who fear God and hope for his salvation; and one of startling moment to those who live in the profession of the truth. --- We are on the eve of mighty events in relation to the history of the world and the destiny of mankind.

The position of affairs political justifies that presumption; but this is not the place to enter upon demonstrations which make this apparant ---. Whether their termination will be marked by instant disaster, or only by the complications which will ultimate in the revelation of the Son of man and the down fall of the kingdoms of the world, it is difficult positively to decide; but of this there can be no doubt ---. The Mighty One of Jacob grant that all who profess the truth, may continue sound in the faith, unspoiled by the vain deceits of doctrine which are rife in the world; and having been baptismally washed in the blood of the Anointed shed for the remission of sins, may they develop the fruits of the spirit in all purity of mind and affectionate zeal to their own salvation and His everlasting praise. The God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ grant that when he returns --- he may find all his servants waiting for their Lord, their lamps carefully trimmed with the oil of the spirit, and the loins of their walk and conversation begirt with the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints.

**"IT IS - - - THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE."**

(Jeremiah 30:7)

In 1772 a wall of separation arose around the Jews in Russia, the Ukraine and Poland. Jews were forbidden residence in any other place outside of the communities they were already living in. This geographic restriction became known as the Jewish Pale of Settlement. An official statute to this effect was drawn up in 1804. This was the ghetto. Jews who dared to venture beyond these confines were arrested and punished, unless they had special travel and residence permits.

Then in 1827, in an attempt to Russify the younger generation, a compulsory armed service period of twenty-five years was established for Jewish recruits. Boys from 12 to 18 years were required to be draughted into the Russian Army by officials of each Jewish community. By this it was hoped that an entire generation of male Jews would be weaned from their religion and be led to accept the creed of the Orthodox Russian Church. In England, Sir Moses Montefiore, who was financial adviser to Queen Victoria, decided to intercede with the Russian Tsar, but nine years elapsed before he got consideration, when in 1855 a new Tsar agreed to abolish the draught requirement.

But the situation in which the Jews were placed did not really change until the Russian Revolution. On March 12th, 1917, the Tsar's government was overthrown by workers in a general strike assisted by troops that had just returned from the conflict with Germany. Eight days later the Provisional Government abolished the Pale of Settlement, by legal decree. But nothing was done to immediately implement it. Jews had to wait for the Bolshevik Revolution of October 25th (November 7th, Western Calender) 1917. The Soviets within a few days issued the "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia". This announced the "abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions, and the full development of national minorities and ethnic groups". The Soviets were opposed in this by the "White Guards", who represented elements loyal to the deposed Tsar. These were led by monarchists, priests and aristocrats who were anti-Jewish. They spread the lie that the new Soviet government was a "Jewish government" pointing out that Trotsky and Zinoviev (members of the new party) were Jews. As a result, during the Civil War that ensued, there were large-scale massacres of Jews by the White Guards in many cities, especially in the border regions. The Soviet

government branded such anti-Semitism as an aggressive weapon of a counter-revolution, and on August 9th, 1918, Nicolai Lenin signed a decree, issued by the Council of People's Commissars declaring "Any kind of hatred against any nation is inadmissible and shameful --- . The Council of People's Commissars instructs all Soviet deputies to take uncompromising measures to tear out the anti-Semitic movement by the roots. Pogromists and pogrom-agitators are outside the law."

So came about protection for the Jews, as the Bolsheviks prevailed; their power lasting for almost the rest of the century.

But now the Communists are displaced, and this undoubtedly is according to divine overruling, for the Jews are no longer secure in the new Russian order. It is a sad reversal for those Jews who left for Israel at the end of the 1980's, but who then returned to their Russian homeland when they found that living was difficult in Israel, and their new life there was very expensive. No doubt their reports on their return to their fellow Russian Jews had a deterring effect. But now the Russian economy is in difficulty with economic woe and a break-up of the Russian banking system, causing the devaluation of the rouble. Jews who decided against moving to Israel are thinking again, calling at the Israeli Embassy in their hundreds for help to emigrate. It will not be easy for them, for they will have to learn Hebrew, and retrain themselves for the new culture, but life too in Russia is not easy. It is reported that about 80 Russian Jews are daily making an approach; and the Israeli Prime Minister is pleased, recently saying: "It's what we are here for: the gathering of the exiles." Already 20 per cent of the population of Israel is of Russian extraction, so this per-centage will increase. This is a very significant situation, heralding:-

"--- the time of Jacob's trouble --- ." (Jeremiah 30:7).

for hostile Arab nations look askance at Israel's increasing population.

But there is divine security for Jews: for the word of God will not fail, which promises concerning the coming trouble:-

"--- he (Israel) shall be saved out of it." (verse 7).

**A BIBLE CLASS**

“The Answer Of The Tongue Is From The LORD”

Proverbs 16:1

We find the wisdom of the Spirit throughout the Proverbs, penned by Solomon the son of David. God’s instruction has been preserved that we too may be guided, as was Israel, in the paths of righteousness, and be helped to:

“. . . know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:”

Proverbs 1:1-5.

This word “discretion” gives the thought of “able to choose” with the Concordance rendering it as “a plan”. We could then read this verse as: “To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and a (wise) plan”.

Moses received a plan on Sinai to be taught through the spirit of the law — a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ. He was also given a pattern to build the tabernacle and all its vessels. David too was given a plan to build a temple for the Lord, so that it be done under God’s guidance and direction and not his own. It was vital that all be done according to God’s plan, teaching of the spiritual house to be completed at the end of His purpose through Christ:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:” Ephesians 2:19-21.

God set forth this plan from the beginning, offering it as a free will choice that those who follow it may live eternally.

Going back to our verse under consideration Solomon writes:

“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.” Proverbs 16:1.

This word “preparation” means “arrangement”, from a prime root meaning “to set in order”. The margin helps as it interprets this verse as:

“The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the

answer of the tongue is from the LORD.”

Proverbs 16:1.

Because man’s heart is flesh, it can be acceptable before God only as the fleshly impulses are cut off or circumcised. After the flood, God accepted Noah’s offering of thanksgiving, reaffirming the natural state of man:

“And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.” Genesis 8:21.

The flood was an outworking of God’s plan to destroy all those with an evil heart — the self-serving and unrepentant, who would not hear Noah’s witness. The man of flesh views his ways as right in his own eyes, because he has not the counsel of the Spirit within him:

“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.” Proverbs 16:2.

If we value God’s plan, establishing it through obedience, in our hearts, then His spiritual influence will guide our actions and the words we speak. The Lord Jesus gave similar advice to His disciples who had God’s plan within them:

“But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit.” Mark 13:11.

These thoughts are very similar to our chapter in Proverbs as Solomon continues in the 3rd verse:

“Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.” Proverbs 16:3.

The tongue and the heart are closely bound together, for if the heart is circumcised by the spirit, the tongue will speak with care and restraint, in obedience to God’s word and plan. The uncircumcised heart however rebels against His plan and chafes at the restrictions placed on the flesh by the spirit. It knows neither love nor humility as it pursues its own path and plan, all evident from one’s tongue.

Endeavoring to walk after His precepts and plan, let us take to heart the Spirit’s wisdom granted through Solomon, committing our works to the Almighty and trusting in His mercy in hope of becoming part of His eternal household when the Lord Jesus returns.

M.C.S.

### THE BAPTISM OF DR. J. THOMAS

A question which might be asked is, who baptized John the Baptist? An explanation is not given in the scriptures, but we can be sure of this, that John himself was immersed, for even Jesus was not exempt from this divine requirement, Jesus saying, “- - thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

Coming to a consideration of Dr. J. Thomas in the early time of the Truth in these last days. Dr. Thomas was put under the water by Walter Scott (a Campbellite) in 1832 much to the indignation of Dr. Thomas' father, who was a baptist preacher, at that time residing in Cincinnati. Dr. Thomas soon perceived the doctrinal errors of Campbellism, and so began a periodical called “The Investigator and Independent Advocate of the Truth”, which ceased after one volume was produced. Having moved to Louisville in Kentucky, he then (in 1845) began another periodical entitled the “Herald of the Future Age”. But by 1847 he became the subject of a vigorous attack in a periodical called the “Protestant Unionist”, and was accused of disturbing the minds of his co-religionists in New York on certain doctrinal matters as seen in his writings and preaching activities. Instead of being discouraged, Dr. Thomas applied himself even more energetically to his study of the scriptures. This led him to the conclusion that at the time of the Campbellite immersion, he was unaware of the real significance of the gospel. This led him to write:-

“The question immediately flashed within us, ‘When you were buried in baptism, were you saved by the hope?’

We had to confess we knew nothing then about the hope; that the covenants of the promise were a hidden mystery to us, and that beyond what we have stated, we were entirely in the dark upon the subject.”

So in 1847 he asked an unidentified male follower to baptize him saying:-

“I desire you to immerse me. All I ask of you is to put me under the water, and pronounce the words over me, ‘Upon confession of your faith in the things concerning the kingdom of God and name of Jesus Christ, I baptize you into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.’ I do not ask you for any prayer or any ceremony. All that is necessary I will do for myself, except the mechanical part of putting me under the water, and your utterance of these words.”

Feeling more assured that he had placed himself in harmony with what God required, according to the scriptures, he then made a “Confession and Abjuration” adding also a “Declaration” stating

his beliefs. This appeared in his periodical, the "Herald of the Future Age". At that stage his break with Campbellism was not complete, but became progressively more so, and those in sympathy with him increased in numbers, coming mainly from the Campbellites. By 1852 when Dr. Thomas moved from Richmond to New York a nucleus of associates, who were believers was set up at the Chelsea Hall, Manhattan. These met regularly, calling themselves the "Royal Association of Believers", who refused to use the designation of "Church", believing such a term as inappropriate to describe their position.

Dr. Thomas' statement of 1847 of his beliefs, is a foundation outline of the Truth according to what the Scriptures teach:-

1. The Gospel was preached first to Abraham in the promise that his seed would become a great nation.
2. The same Gospel was preached to Abraham's descendants in Egypt and in the wilderness.
3. The generation of Joshua also received the Gospel message.
4. The Old Testament prophets, especially Daniel, amplified and made more specific the content of this Gospel.
5. In turn, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles preached the Gospel prior to Pentecost.
6. After pentecost, the disciples and Paul preached Gospel that clearly consisted only of the "things concerning the name of Jesus" and the "things concerning the Kingdom of God".
7. The principal promise of the Gospel is the hope of life and incorruptibility in the Kingdom of God.

At the same time as the above Dr. Thomas designated the signs which would mark the true believer:-

1. Belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the anointed King of Israel and the Son of the one living God.
2. Belief that according to God's predestination, Jesus was crucified for believers' sins, buried, and risen from the dead.
3. Possessing the same mental disposition and mode of thinking that Abraham evidenced when he lived in hope of the fulfilment of the promise of a great seed.
4. Being immersed as a sign of enlightenment.
5. Denial of the present world because of the absolute hope of life in the kingdom after the Second Advent.

This understanding was the guide to Dr. Thomas' thinking for the rest of his life, and marked the belief of those who later became known as Christadelphians.

**RESURRECTION OF REJECTORS (R. Roberts 1873)**

“Will any be raised who have not come under the law of Christ?”

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Those who are ignorant of the law of Christ will not be raised. But those who are aware of it, and refuse to submit to it, are responsible, and will be condemned by it in the great day of retribution. Misapprehension of the subject arises from a loose understanding of the phrase “under the law”. It cannot be more exactly defined than in the words “bound to obey”. The Jews were bound to obey the law of Moses; the Gentiles were not, because it was not given to them: but the Gentiles are bound to obey the law of Christ, for Christ sent Paul to them for the purpose, calling upon them to obey. Before then, as Paul said at Athens, “God winked at the ignorance that prevailed BUT NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT.” (Acts 17:30). Where men are not aware of the command, they cannot reasonably be held accountable for their non-compliance; but when they are aware of it, it makes them responsible and amenable to life or death at the coming of Christ. Hence the gospel is either a “savour of life unto life, or death unto death.” (2 Cor. 2:16). To say that no man can be raised who is not technically “in Christ” is contrary to fact: for many were raised before Christ appeared (Heb. 11:35). That no man can attain to immortality out of Christ is true; but a man may easily come forth to renewed mortal life in that relation, as shown by the cases referred to, and as evident from their being permitted to live now at all. It is a mere question of whether justice requires it. Christ will raise the baptized unjust; and these are as much in their sins as the unbaptized rejectors of the word. Their unforgiven post-baptismal sins do not prevent their resurrection; neither will the unforgiven PRE-BAPTISMAL sins of presumptuous offenders against the light, screen them from the fearful hand of the living God in the great day of His now pent-up wrath. If a man insult God, he will have to answer for it.

**SIGNS OF HIS COMING**

“Take heed that no man deceive you.” (Matthew 24:4).

When Jesus gave this warning He added:-

“For many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” (Matthew 24:5).

It was interesting to note a large newspaper advertisement last year which stated:-

“You have our sincere pledge that your name and address will never be used for funds solicitation, sold, or used for any other purpose. This ad. (is) paid for by a concerned private contributor. No group is represented.”

This advertisement proclaimed:-

“Eight compelling reasons why Christ is coming very, very soon.”

Now Jesus particularly warned to be careful not to be deceived by some who would come and proclaim the near return of Jesus from heaven:-

“- - - saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.” (Luke 21:8).

The eight compelling reasons listed in the advertisement were:-

- Israel’s rebirth
- Plummeting morality
- Famines, violence and wars
- Increase in earthquakes
- Explosion of travel and education
- Explosion of cults and the occult

The above six reasons seemed to be scripturally appropriate, but items seven and eight revealed how pertinent is Christ’s warning to be wary of those who would erroneously be claiming to be speaking on His behalf.

(Item 7):- The New World Order.

Increased centralization of world financial and political power is a prelude to the soon-coming world power system in the hands of “Antichrist, WHO WILL BE THE INCARNATION OF SATAN and who will deceive most of the world (Daniel 7:12. Matthew 24:15. Revelation 13).

This statement would be acceptable except for the phrase “who will be the incarnation of satan”; which implies that a “personal devil” will be at work in an individual or individuals controlling a

“world power system”. Belief in a “personal devil” of course, belongs to apostasy and not to Truth.

(Item 8):- Increase in both apostasy AND FAITH

The Bible predicts in the last days, “A form of godliness, although they have denied its power.” (2 Timothy 3:5). Today many churches deny the eternal truths of Scripture and power of the Holy Spirit, replacing them with ungodly, temporal and “politically correct” values. But also, a prophesied outpouring of God’s Spirit IS CAUSING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS WORLD WIDE TO COME TO TRUE FAITH IN CHRIST IN RECORD NUMBERS, virtually unnoticed by the media.

Now Jesus warned of “MANY” saying “the time draweth near”, but to this He added “GO YE NOT THEREFORE AFTER THEM.”

Item 8 of the advertisement certainly speaks of “MANY”, but what its assertion overlooks is Christ’s own words:-

“--- When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

The Apostle Paul also records, concerning the Second Coming:- “--- we which are alive AND REMAIN unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep --- the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive AND REMAIN shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord --- .” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

Jesus also likens the time of His Coming to the ancient time of Noah:-

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:37).

Peter referring to that ancient event declares:-

“--- the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, WHEREIN FEW, that is, eight souls were saved --- .” (1 Peter 3:20).

It will be apparent that the claim of the religious advertisement that “hundred of millions world wide (are coming) to true faith in Christ in record numbers” does not correspond to what is witnessed by the divine record of only a few who are ready for Christ’s coming.

Jesus was asked the question, “Lord, are there few that be saved?” He answered:-

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able; When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door - - - .” (Luke 13:23-25).

Truly Christ’s words are significant for these times:-

“Take heed that no man deceive you.”

### 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

As a new year begins, the world’s economics, politics and ethics provoke anxiety and uncertainty in many. What will 1999 bring? Are there any solutions to these overwhelming problems? Where can mankind put its trust?

The Word of God promises a sure solution — the coming of Jesus Christ to establish a world wide government of justice and righteousness. Will 1999 bring His return to fulfill His Father’s purpose with the earth? Let us lift up our heads in the great hope we cherish. It cannot be far off.

J.A.DeF.

**MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.**

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

At this time of the New Year the marking off of another year that has passed, with so much that has happened, and so many lessons needing to be heeded — the mind is caused to reflect upon the future. What will the coming months bring? Certainly the working out of the divine plan is nearer to its completion; and past events are part of that plan. But what a change is coming, greater than we can comprehend with our finite minds. One thing however is very clear, those who have His grace will be kept from the hour of trial which will see the culmination of the present system of things.