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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"SONGS OF DEGREES"

"FULL OF NAMES"

"THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, & FORGIVENESS"

(R. Roberts)

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

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**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
STRANGE FIRE**

In reading Leviticus, our minds are directed to God's instructions concerning the Levites, including Aaron the high priest and his sons. These directions were given to Moses during his 40 days on Mt. Sinai. What a responsibility was his, lest he forget or omit any part of God's directions concerning His people. How careful Moses would be lest he fail, causing Israel to lack in any way.

The first seven chapters of Leviticus have to do with the offerings to make atonement for His people. Having established the necessity and having shown His mercy in the provision of these sacrifices, God then instructed Moses:

"Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread;
And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done."

Leviticus 8:2,3,5.

Obedying God's instructions, Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons for the service of the tabernacle. First, he washed Aaron and his sons with water (Leviticus 8:6). Then he clothed Aaron and his sons with the holy garments of their service. Moses next:

"... poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him. And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses."
Leviticus 8:12-13.

Further, at God's instructions:

"... Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him."

Leviticus 8:30.

Thus Aaron and his sons were "made holy" (sanctified) and their hands filled (consecrated) to do the work of the tabernacle.

Having accomplished this necessary preparation for serving in God's house, Moses said to Aaron:

"... Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for

a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD.

... for to day the LORD will appear unto you."

Leviticus 9:2,4.

Up to this time, Moses had offered the offerings; but now Aaron and his sons, being anointed, sanctified and consecrated, were to begin the offerings and take on the work of the tabernacle. We can perceive how carefully they would do so, greatly blessed at the privilege of serving God, and yet with fear lest they fail in any way to offer acceptably before the Lord. As the priests completed the required offerings:

"... Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offering.

... and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."

Leviticus 9:22-24.

Here was powerful evidence of God's being pleased with Moses, with Aaron and his sons, as they began their work of the priesthood, glorifying God, and thereby bringing His blessing upon His children. Their reaction was to shout with joy, and to fall on their faces in awe, gratitude and reverence to their God. Thus began their appointed work. Aaron as the high priest would enter into the holy place, wearing his vestments. There the light of the candlestick would reflect in the jewels of the breastplate worn over his heart. There he would offer the incense upon the incense altar, as a sweet smell to the Almighty. Would not Aaron rejoice and be thankful for the great privilege, and also recognize his great responsibility? He would perceive how it pointed forward to the work of the High Priest yet to come — Jesus Christ — who was the anointed of God, offering up His life, His blood as a means of sanctifying His people. As we, Brethren and Sisters, are allowed to serve God in accordance with His word, striving to follow the example of our High Priest, we pray beseechingly for His help to do it faithfully before Him. Let us move with care and love, as well as with fear lest we fall short of what He looks for in His people. Is it done with joy, and yet with awe that God should so bless us? Let us remember that He has called us to be a sanctified and consecrated people for this work.

Sadly for Israel, trouble arose to mar this work so graciously

given:

“ . . . Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.” Leviticus 10:1.

Nadab was Aaron’s firstborn, in line for the high priesthood. Abihu was the second. They were clothed, consecrated and anointed to serve as priests, to participate in the offering of the sacrifices — all under the leadership of Aaron, the anointed high priest. As such, they had holy responsibilities, but also certain restrictions placed upon them. In offering “strange fire . . . which he (God) commanded them not” — they failed to sanctify God. His instructions concerning the offering of incense upon the incense altar were very clear:

“Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning:

...

And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it (the altar) . . .

Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.” Exodus 30:7-9.

It was the work of Aaron only to offer the incense upon that incense altar; Nadab and Abihu failed as they took it upon themselves. This failure to sanctify God brought instant punishment:

“ . . . there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.” Leviticus 10:2.

How could they have dared to offer “strange fire before the LORD”? Especially as they had just seen how:

“ . . . the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people.

And there came a fire out from before the LORD and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat . . .”

Leviticus 9:23-24.

Was there not a lack of fear, of reverence and awe at the power of God? Was there a lack of perception that this was the ordained work of the high priest — to offer the incense? Did they fail to realize how this offering of the incense pointed forward to the work of the High Priest yet to come — Jesus Christ — as God’s mediator to offer His people’s prayers before His Father? We can see why it was called “strange fire” — for it was not in accordance with His arrangements. Of this Moses spoke to Aaron as he grieved for his sons’ deaths:

“ . . . This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the

people I will be glorified . . ." Leviticus 10:3.

Thus we are helped to perceive the seriousness of failing to sanctify the Almighty through the awesome deaths of Nadab and Abihu!

Moses then instructed the grieving Aaron and his two remaining sons:

"... Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled.

And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses."

Leviticus 10:6-7.

Further, Moses instructed Aaron and his sons to eat the meat offering that remained (verse 13). When Moses diligently sought for the goat of the sin offering, he found it had been burned instead of eaten, and he spoke to Aaron and his sons:

"Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place; ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded."

Leviticus 10:18.

Aaron replied:

"... Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and if I had eaten the sin offering to day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?"

Leviticus 10:19.

"Accepted" is also used to be comely, or pleasing. Aaron recognized that it would not be pleasing to God if he ate the parts of the sin offering (which were his and his sons by God's word), for he felt himself unworthy to do so because of his sons' disobedience in offering "strange fire before the LORD." How perceptive and fearful he was, as he explained to Moses, who:

"... when (he) heard that, he was content."

Leviticus 10:20.

Moses was satisfied that Aaron's reasoning was right, that in reverence for God he should not partake of the sacrifice, especially as Aaron felt a measure of responsibility for the offense to God by his sons.

Can we not find particular help from these circumstances? How important it is that our offerings, our service, our behaviour be in complete and willing obedience to God's word, never deviating

from it because of our own weakness, desires or convenience. Paul helps us to develop this mind as he with love wrote to his Roman brethren and to us today:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present (yield) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

Romans 12:1-2.

Paul makes it very clear that our “reasonable service” involves a denying of self, to be a living sacrifice, which is holy, acceptable to the Almighty. “Reasonable service” is made up of two words: (1) to serve, minister or worship; and (2) ‘logikos’ — according to the word. Unless the offering of our living is according to God’s word, it cannot be holy or acceptable, even as Nadab and Abihu’s was not. Thus “they died before the LORD” having “offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.”

Let us, Brethren and Sisters, remember Moses’ words to Aaron:

“. . . This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.”

Leviticus 10:3.

How very carefully must we walk before Him!

J.A.DeF.

“SONGS OF DEGREES”

In our daily reading program, we have read the fifteen psalms entitled “Songs of Degrees”, written by David. These psalms encourage the spirit man to look beyond the cares and concerns of daily life, elevating the mind to look up to the hope held out by a merciful Father. Of this hope David writes:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?” Psalm 24:3.

An important question which the man of spirit must contemplate. David provides the answer in the following verse:

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”

Psalm 24:4-5.

The promise of this eternal “blessing from the Lord” must always be in the forefront of the mind in order to direct one’s living to that higher plane.

Looking specifically at a few of these Songs of degrees or ascent, we read in Psalm 125:

“They that trust in the LORD shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.” Psalm 125:1.

Here David speaks of the hoped for inheritance of salvation that will be granted to the obedient upon Mount Zion. However, he reminds that to attain unto this promise takes a “trust in the LORD”, that He will provide for our every need. He has perfectly provided for our spiritual needs through the gift of His Son the Lord Jesus, who now sits on His right hand as our Mediator, bringing our prayers to God with empathy.

Knowing as we do the captivity created by the bonds of our flesh nature, David speaks of the hope held out:

“When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.” Psalm 126:1-2.

David was prophesying particularly of the captivity to be experienced by the children of Israel in Babylon, but also generally of the captivity which holds all men fast to the desires of their flesh, without the intervening discipline provided through the Word of God. Yet there is promised a release from the flesh’s bondage and

its eventual end — death:

“The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

Psalm 126:3-4.

During probation, there will be tears — from disappointment in failing to be obedient, from sorrow and the pain that life can sometimes bring. Yet to those who carry this “precious seed” of a hope in His word, and endeavour to walk faithfully before Him, is promised a final harvest of joy if found approved at Christ’s judgment seat. David speaks of them bringing their sheaves with them — the fruit of a successful spiritual life, sown as seed while in probation.

What a lofty inspiring hope this is — and no doubt the reason why David penned these Songs of Degrees, to encourage the spirit man to keep his eyes focused upon the goal ahead.

In another of these psalms, “A Song of degrees for Solomon”, David speaks directly to his son Solomon, who was commissioned to build God’s house from the materials David had accumulated. However, he speaks not only of building the physical house of God but also of the spiritual when he warns:

“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”

Psalm 127:1.

One can build a spiritual house within only as there is confidence and trust in the Master Builder. It is His plan, His blueprint that must be followed in order to achieve the end result of an eternal dwelling place. Man attempts to make modifications to God’s perfect plan, as illustrated by the hundreds of Christian sects throughout the world, all claiming to worship God and His Son. But if they do not adhere to His plan, are they really building to His glory? To those who endeavour to please Him by walking in His way, David says in Psalm 128:

“Blessed is everyone that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

Behold that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel."

Psalm 128:1, 4-6.

This 128th Psalm goes on to speak of a peaceful Jerusalem — a peace which can be achieved only during the Kingdom age, when it will be known as a city of peace for all people throughout the earth — the capital of the kingdom of righteousness ruled by Christ and His saints. There will be peace and prosperity flowing forth like a river from that holy city as under Christ's rulership, the earth and all her subjects, who hear the gospel message and choose to walk in its light, will be freed from the curse of disease, poverty and the unrighteous rule of men. It may seem a far off thought today as hostilities continue between modern day Israel and her Arab neighbors, but this is why David has written — to keep our eyes and hearts focused upon the blessings of God which will come to pass in that place.

These songs ascent were intended as a refreshing to the spirit mind, and a help to keep our focus upon that hope we are privileged to know. Our lives can become weighed down with many worries, brought on by illness, advancing age or the general stress of day to day work and life. Yet these psalms can lift the heart by helping us to remember the joyous hope of salvation promised to those, who found approved at Christ's judgment seat, will in His mercy, ascend that holy hill.

M.C.S.

“- - - FULL OF NAMES - - - .”

(Revelation 17:3)

The Revelation speaking of a world system incorporating many names, reveals that these are religious by the description that they are “blasphemy”; in other words, religious, but in the negative sense, as being against the True God.

The way religions are moving together is indicated by the secret meeting last January of diocesan bishops of the Church of England and their equivalents in the Methodist Church (the district chairmen and women). The meeting went into a plan to unite into a joint Church both factions. At the time of writing another meeting is scheduled at Huddersfield (by the Methodists) to see how to remove obstacles, by, for example, the creation of Methodist bishops, which would appease objectors.

Meanwhile the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican head, has joined with the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster in a number of ecumenical meetings. This can only mean that if Methodists unite with the Anglicans at this time when Anglicans are growing closer to Rome, then Methodists will likewise be drawn closer to the Catholics. This is a considerable move, as the Methodists are numbered to be well over a million people on their “community roll”.

It had been reported some time ago that “The Church” was bleeding to death at the rate of 2000 souls a week, and if the pattern continues, only one person in a hundred will be attending Sunday services in a little over a decade from now.

We ask the question, that if that was to occur where would be the fulfillment of the scripture, of a system full of religious names?

But it will not occur. Recently a celebrity who was a confirmed agnostic, applied, in a change of mind, to be baptized into “the Church”.

The comment was made:-

“Like many an Anglican Bishop, I can just about ‘believe’ — that is to say, I am full of doubt but trying”. - - -

“An escalation of faith mostly carries with it an escalation of doubt. I can see, as a Darwinist and a believer in Scientific progress, that I am an unlikely candidate for adult confirmation. But I daresay everyone is.”

This doubter, however, has been accepted by a local Protestant church.

Earlier in the year a special inter-faith Pentecost service was

held at the Millennium Dome in Greenwich, London. Along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster there was also the Moderator of the Free Churches' Council and a representative of the Religious Society of Friends. The Archbishop of Westminster said he had found the Dome to be a good experience. St. Peter's it might not be, but maybe it was time to start viewing it as part of God's creation, and not its antithesis.

Various plans are in hand to attract the young to religion, obviously to alter what has been a froward trend. For example, in June a Three Peaks Challenge was arranged, for walkers to climb the three highest mountains of Scotland, England and Wales, namely Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon. The Archbishop and two supporting bishops blessed this effort of scaling these mountains in a matter of 48 hours for the purpose of raising sponsor money to further Canterbury diocese's youth work. Another arrangement, about the same time, was a swimming event near Folkstone. And there were other efforts as well, prompting the comment:-

"There is a great enthusiasm on the part of young people to be included in the Church. - - - They are the leaders of tomorrow's Church - - -."

But other religious interests are developing in Britain. For example there is an inclining to Buddhism in some quarters. It is described as a non-exclusive and non-dogmatic religion.

Shamanism is another religion which is attracting adherents. Rituals are performed by Shamans who claim they will bring about a greater state of wholeness.

Islam also has a considerable influence in some parts of the country. And there is Sufism, emphasising inner faith, with members chanting and also meeting to meditate.

Wicca has also emerged. It is a going back to the time of the Druids, and claims to be teaching deep respect for nature. This religion emanates from "The Pagan Federation" based in London.

It is when this trend is contemplated, that the words of the heir to Britain's throne becomes more meaningful. On the coinage of the realm the superscription and image defines the one portrayed, along with other descriptions, as *Fedei Defenser* (recently abbreviated to F.D.). This means that the monarch, by reason of the royal position is "Defender of the Faith" as head of the Anglican Church. The heir to the throne, if he attains the position, states he would want to be described as **DEFENDER OF THE FAITHS**.

Yes, there are many faiths, many religions. And it does seem

that the peoples of the world are to a degree again inclining to these.

So "the names" continue, for interest in religion remains a feature of the world's politics. But we must emphasise that inclination to church and other beliefs is a very different thing from desire to understand and uphold the holy word of God. This remains a mystery to mankind at large. Unless the word of God is truly sought, how can the Truth be known?

It is obvious to the thoughtful that a multitude of sects and societies speaking different things cannot convey it. Nevertheless the world system is full of names of religion, which forms an important part in what man has organised to control his affairs. This was revealed in God's holy word to the Apostle John almost two thousand years ago, to help true seekers to understand the real position of things.

"THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, AND FORGIVENESS"**(R. Roberts)**

God does not offer forgiveness indiscriminately; He does not say He will forgive the sins of the world, whether they take notice of Him or not. Very far from this: He restricts forgiveness to those who fear Him and submit to the conditions He has provided. The question is, what are those conditions? There are various conditions, but we look not now at subsidiary conditions, but at the one that comes before all others, as brought forward by Paul in the declaration before us — the propitiatory setting forth of Christ as an object of faith in the shedding of his blood. It is forgiveness that is offered, but not without this, — not apart from this. But now comes the question, why is the death of Christ a sufficient foundation for the forgiveness of sin unto life eternal, when the death of animals was not so? We find the answer in the statement that the death of Christ was "to declare the righteousness of God" as the ground of the exercise of His forbearance. That is to say, God maintains His own righteousness and His own supremacy while forgiving us; and exacts the recognition of them and submission to them, as the condition of the exercise of His forbearance in the remission of our sins. Now as we look at Christ, we find in his death the declaration of that righteousness. When we look at the killing of a lamb or of an animal of any kind, it is not a declaration of the righteousness of God that we see except in shadow, in type, in figure: the animal has done no wrong, and in the abstract, there would be wrong and not righteousness in punishing one for the sin of another. The death of Christ was "that God might be just" while acting the part of justifier or forgiver. The sacrifice of animals did not illustrate this, except typically and preliminarily. It did not exhibit the righteousness of God except in the prophetic sense; it was a type of the true exhibition of God's righteousness that God would accomplish in the Lamb of His own providing. "God shall provide Himself a lamb, my son", Abraham said to Isaac, not of course meaning this, but he spoke by the Spirit of God, pointing forward; and when Jesus appeared, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Now, on Christ we must fix our attention in this character, with the view of being able to see in what way the righteousness of God was declared in the crucifixion of a guileless and sinless and perfect man. We must first of all ask who he was. It is a ready and a Scriptural answer, so far as it goes, to say, He was the Son of God. But he was more than this. His being this alone would not have

qualified him for the work of declaring the righteousness of God in being sacrificed. He was likewise the Son of man through birth of a woman. Although he is called the second or last Adam, he was not a new Adam: he was not made fresh from the ground as Adam was. He was not of angelic nature; he was not in any physical sense apart from us. Born of a woman, born of our stock, he is introduced to notice in the very first verse in the apostolic writings as "the son of David, and the son of Abraham". As Paul says, "the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3), or as in Hebrews 2:14, partaker of the same flesh and blood, that through death he might annul, destroy, neutralise, that which is destroying us all

Now what is that? To see this, we must go back again to Adam in the garden of Eden, and see him condemned to death. The effect of such a sentence upon a creature we see illustrated in Gehazi as he stood before Elisha. "The leprosy of Naaman cleave to thee and to thy seed for ever." That was the sentence, "and he went from his presence a leper as white as snow." The words of Elisha took effect and became leprosy. The word of God to Adam took effect, and made him a death-stricken man; he was not subject to death before, for sin was the door that death came in by. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." "By man came death." "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Not to be killed straightway — "Thou SHALT." God's purpose with man required a slow death, because His purpose was to bring great good out of the evil, and, by two sinners, to bring forth a righteous multitude. Therefore he produced slow death, by establishing a law that would work it out. It is like fixing an alarm clock, the mechanism of which is adjusted to the time it is required to go off. The Word of God against Adam made him a mortal man with a mortal body. Look at Adam and Eve, mortal; by-and-by children; what are they? Just the same: they also are mortal. Could a mortal beget an immortal? Mortal means deathful. The word comes from a Latin word, "MORS" — death, and is imported into the English language, but in plain Saxon, it is "deathful". Why deathful? Because of Adam's sin.

It is all very simple, and it is all very reasonable. As to the simplicity, the great verities of the universe are all simple. What is simpler than letting fresh air in by a gullet to give us life? Choke up the gullet with a bit of tough beef and where is your philosopher? Gone as clean as the meanest strangled rat or rabbit. The high-stepping mightinesses of philosophy are absurd. The great facts of God are simple, and it is our business to "receive them as little

children”.

As to the reasonableness, since God has given us a power of choice, and since this power is capable of being used with great mischief, is it not good and necessary that God should tell us how to use it? and is it not necessary that His command in this case should be an imperative obligation? Ought not His will to be the supreme law of life? and ought not insubordination to be insufferable? Is it not defensible on every ground that the wages of sin should be death? There is only one answer to all these questions: and that answer brings the heartiest endorsement of the ways of God, and the severest rebuke on the shallow presumption that would criticise and disparage those ways.

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” Now, how was this state of things to be remedied? There were three ways of mending it. One way was to exterminate the whole human species. But this would have been a poor remedy. It would have been to confess failure; — that God had set a-going an arrangement on this planet for His glory and could not make it work. This was impossible. God has said that He has not made the earth in vain: that He formed it to be inhabited by the righteous; and that as truly as He lives, it will be wholly filled with His glory yet. The second way would have been what might be called the toleration-of-sin method — the universal and indiscriminating pity method, by which the wickedness and disobedience should have been ignored, and mankind allowed to occupy the earth immortally for their own pleasure. But this also was impossible. It would have meant God’s abdication, and the handing over of man to eternal misery. There was a third way — a middle way, and that is the way, and that is the way which has been adopted — namely, to enforce the law against sin, and at the same time leave the door open for mercy to repentant and obedient sinners. How such a method could be made consistent with itself has been exhibited to us in the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.

He was born that he might die, as the first necessity in the case; for thus was the righteousness of God to be declared, and sin condemned in its own flesh as the foundation of all the goodness to come afterwards. It may be asked, could not such a result have been achieved by the sacrificial immolation of any sinner?

So far as the mere condemnation of sin was concerned, no doubt the lesson could have been thus enforced; but as in all the

works of God, there were more objects than one. Not only had sin to be condemned, but resurrection had to come in harmony with the law that made death the wages of sin; and this resurrection was not merely to be a restoration of life, but the providing of an Administrator of the glorious results to be achieved — the raising up of one who should be mediator between God and man, the dispenser of the forgiveness and the salvation of God through Him, and the Judge also of who should be fit to receive these great gifts. All these aims required that the sacrificial victim should be a PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUSNESS MAN, as well as a possessor of the nature to be sacrificially condemned — who should do no sin himself, while “made sin” and treated as sin for us; who should be just and holy, obedient in all things, while yet “numbered with the transgressors and making his grave with the wicked.”

Footnote

R. Roberts expresses the purpose of Christ in admirable simplicity. So is defined the wonderful mercy of God to sinners, that ‘as in Adam all die, even so IN CHRIST shall all be made alive’, through His life of obedience; gaining eternal acceptance first for Himself and thereby for those who belong to Him. (1 Corinthians 15:22).

A BIBLE CLASS

“FOR THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER BUT MANY”

I Corinthians 12:14

Our subject is taken from the writings of Paul to his Corinthian brethren. To teach of the importance of unity in the body, he uses the analogy of the human body and the various functions that each part serve — individual and unique in their function, yet all part of the one body.

The ear is a complex and unique organ provided for hearing. Likewise as miraculous is the eye, providing sight. Working together they are invaluable assets of the body. Yet if the eye, ear or any part of the body becomes feeble or fails, the entire body is handicapped because of this loss:

“And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If

the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?
But now hath God set the members every one of them in the
body, as it hath pleased him." I Corinthians 12:16-18.

In like manner, the various members of His house have been called to contribute to the spiritual health of the one body. Paul goes on to explain the various talents that some may possess, such as prophecy, wisdom, or the speaking or interpreting of languages. There also may be some members with strength and great faith while others being more feeble, need the care and support of stronger members. No matter the attributes or gifts, all are called to be members of the body with none being preeminent over another in God's sight:

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."

I Corinthians 12:8-10.

Unity of the one body was often a subject of Paul's epistles to his brethren. He wrote to the Ephesians beseeching them:

". . . to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

Ephesians 4:3-7.

Just as a building contractor constructs a home from many differing materials, such as wood, stone, brick and mortar, so too does God, the Master Builder, call to His house those of varying gifts and strengths, binding all together on the sure foundation of the cornerstone — Christ. Paul reminds the Ephesians of their part as Gentiles in this building process, saying:

"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.

Peter also writes in the interest of unity, of the duties of brethren one to another in love, in order to edify the one body:

"And above all things have fervent charity (love) among yourselves: for charity (love) shall cover the multitude of sins.

Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." I Peter 4:8-10.

Just as the natural body is comprised of many parts, all differing in function, so too are we called to the one body with different gifts or attributes. being different one from another, every member has a duty to contribute harmoniously in love, working together, not as separate parts but as one body. What can get in the way of this spiritual process is fleshly pride if one member feels itself superior because of its attributes over another. Yet Paul has said, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" Each part is precious and vital in God's sight, and should one be diminished, the entire body suffers because of this loss.

Paul's epistle to the Corinthians provides the Spirit's instruction, that those who endeavor to walk in His ways may better understand why "the body is not one member, but many".

M.C.S.

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel - - - ." (Ezekiel 35:5).

Arab opposition to the Jews began with the British Balfour Declaration, of 1917, which promised a national home in Palestine for the Jews. In the 1920s there were Arab riots against Jewish settlers. Britain having the mandate by League of Nations sanction, kept a degree of order. But when an Arab revolt began in 1936, a royal commission recommended the partition of Palestine, Arabs taking one part and the Jews the other. The United Nations agreed to this plan in 1947. But the Arabs indignantly rejected it. Britain had had enough and decided to bring its troops home.

So began the Arab wars against Israel. The Arabs combined their forces against the Jews. Amazingly they were defeated, the Jews going on to take over seventy five per cent of what had been Palestine under the British mandate.

The second war of Jews and Arabs was 29 October to 4 November 1956. Egypt had taken control of the Suez Canal and blockaded the Straits of Tiran. Britain and France became involved with the Jews because of the Suez take over. But under U.S. pressure the conflict quickly ceased and the territory Israel had taken over was relinquished.

Then came the third war, the 5th to the 10th of June 1967. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria, took over the eastern half of Jerusalem, up to then under Arab control, and the West Bank territory which had been held by Jordan, west of the Jordan River. The Gaza area and the Sinai peninsula as far as the Suez Canal was also taken.

The fourth war came 6 October to 24 October 1973. The Arabs had made a surprise attack when the Jews were keeping their special religious day, the Day of Atonement. The Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal, and the Syrians attacked from the north. Amazingly in less than three weeks, Israel triumphed.

Then on the 6 June 1982 Israel did the attacking. A full scale invasion of Lebanon was launched. Israel had been continually provoked by raids made by Arab Palestinian guerrillas, who had bases in Lebanon. Palestinian and Syrian forces withdrew to Syria. But then in February 1985 Israel withdrew from Lebanon, establishing a buffer zone in South Lebanon, with support of the South Lebanese Army militia.

Hope of a peace settlement emerged September 1993 when Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation signed a peace accord. But at no time during these years has there been any true agreement between Israel and the Arabs as to what to do about Jerusalem. The Arabs insist that Jerusalem is important because of its connection with Mohammed. The Jews likewise insist that Jerusalem is their true capital city.

Recently Israel has relinquished its support for the South Lebanon Buffer Zone. It seems to be doing everything it can to bring the Arabs to a more reasonable frame of mind. It has released from prison captured Arab terrorists, and of course has allowed the Palestinians control of territory where Arabs predominate.

But then there is a report that Syria has been buying powerful

ballistic missiles from North Korea. But what can be made of a further report that Egypt is also in negotiation with North Korea for similar weaponry? Egypt is supposed to have a peace treaty with Israel! The United States has now taken a relaxed view about the Middle east. "Israel and the Palestinians have come to recognise one another (is the thought) therefore the source of all the conflicts has been cleared up." Why then do Arab nations buy missiles capable of striking at any part of Israel? Israel's aircraft are capable of intercepting enemy aircraft. But it is quite a different matter dealing with missiles. At a time of comparative peace, this buying of sophisticated weapons by Arab powers weighs against a peaceful future.

Oh yes, Israel has won five wars with the Arabs, and perhaps feels it can take care of itself for the future. Indeed, it may now feel that it has begun to make friends with the Arab World. But there is still the issue of Jerusalem, and this is a focal point for the future. How can the Jews and the Muslims become religiously reconciled over Israel's ancient capital city? For all the signing of accords and agreements it is reported that there is still "an unending litany of Arab and Palestinian hate, propagated in the various issues of the official newspapers of the Arab world." And the Arab world is a powerful sector of the world. It has a great deal of wealth under its control.

It may now be forgotten, but on November 10, 1975, Arabs managed to achieve a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly, (at a time when many abstained from voting), that this Assembly "determines that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." This obviously had a counter effect against a resolution at the U.N.O. some time previously that "welcomed Zionism at the national movement of the Jewish people".

The Arabs number at least 150 million people; the Jews in Israel perhaps hardly number more than 4 million. Who then are the racists when the various Arab wars to quash Israel are taken into consideration?

But all this is a fulfillment. The prophecy of Ezekiel declares heaven's own involvement with Jerusalem:-

"Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine anger, (Arabs) and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; (Israel) and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee." (Ezekiel 35:11).

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

How grateful we are for the bonds of love which join us to our brethren and sisters in Manchester. The ability to counsel together is one of the fruits of these bonds, providing guidance and unity in the work of His house.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

We thankfully report, where there was a health concern, of considerable help and improvement under medical care. Knowing that in looking to medical skills for alleviation, we must realise that our welfare truly depends upon He who is the source of all life.