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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
THE COMFORTER**

Our reading this past week chronicled a change as Jesus ascended unto His Father, and the work of teaching the gospel fell upon His apostles. The same work that began with Adam continued through these men chosen by the Almighty.

Jesus was resurrected and remained with His apostles for 40 days before His ascent. The apostles would experience a great lack, a void in their living, perhaps feeling bereft. Jesus, knowing that they would feel the loss, comforted them before He was crucified:

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

In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know,

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

... the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

John 14: 1-4, 16, 26.

A comforter is an advocate, one who beseeches, exhorts, entreats, or prays. Jesus was all that as He gave comfort to His followers. He had the power of God’s Spirit as He taught and inspired them until His death, reunited by His Father.

Can we enter into the minds of His apostles as they saw Jesus ascend in a cloud 40 days after His resurrection? They would fear what they could do without His presence. But Jesus had assured them:

“... ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts 1:8.

They were to carry on the work of witnessing to God’s Truth. Their minds might have been: How can we do it? We’re only 11; we need help! But just before His ascension, Jesus:

“... commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized

with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” Acts 1:4-5.
This was the “another Comforter” to come — which would fill the void they feared. They waited 50 days — ten days beyond Jesus’ ascension. We are told that:

“... when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Acts 2:1.

The apostles were still under the law, and kept the required feasts. They would assemble with one mind to keep the feast of wave loaves, which was to occur 50 days after the offering of the first sheaf. These feasts were given to Israel (Leviticus 23) each year to help them remember God’s purpose to be accomplished through His Son, the Lamb of God, the firstfruit unto God. As they assembled for that feast, they might have questioned: Is this the day the Comforter will come? — having in mind the teaching of the feasts. They were not left in doubt:

“... suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” Acts 2:2.

As the roar of that wind filled the house, the 12 (Acts 1:26) who were assembled there would tremble, awed by its power, the evidence of God’s might on behalf of His people.

In the past, others had heard that power as God revealed it on their behalf. God’s prophet, Elijah, faced with persecution, affliction, in jeopardy of his life, despaired and sought to die, as he cried out to God:

“It is enough: now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.” I Kings 19:4.

God commanded him to go to Mount Horeb (Sinai), and while there He appeared to Elijah:

“... the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”

I Kings 19:11-12.

Elijah was shown God’s awesome power, able to do great damage; but to His prophet, it was “a still small voice” — bringing comfort, assurance and strength that God was with him, lifting his spirit and showing him that with God’s hand upon him, it is never “enough.” God also gave him Elisha to help in the required work.

The apostles also were shown that same awesome power as the roar of the wind filled the house. But there was more:

"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 2:3-4.

The power of the Spirit enabled them to speak in many tongues, so that they could, as Jesus said:

"... be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 1:8.

We might wonder how those 12 felt, chosen of God, as the power of God came upon them. Their bodies were not changed, but their hearts and minds were strengthened as they would feel that power, and rejoice as the Comforter prepared them for the work ahead. This power would lift them up, sustain them in the way God directed, giving conviction, faith and trust in His hand upon them. For example, Peter — whom Jesus had called a Satan, rebuking him that he savored not the things of God; and who had denied Him three times — now was able to put his own thoughts and fears behind him and faithfully witness before the scribes and Pharisees:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Acts 2:36.

Indeed, Peter gave the rest of His life to the work of the truth, obeying Jesus' injunction to him:

"... when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Luke 22:32.

How greatly sustained Peter was by the coming of the Comforter!

The apostles went forth from that wondrous bestowal of the Holy Spirit to do the work given to them. They could do it with a new trust and confidence, as shown by Peter and John as they went up to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1). There they met one lame from birth who asked alms of those entering the temple. Peter said to him:

"... Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God."

Acts 3:6-9.

The man had been lame for over forty years. How he would rejoice, leap for joy, and as he felt God's power through John and Peter, praised God for His wonderful act. Peter and John, having received that power, trusted that they would be able to help this lame man: "... such as I have give I thee." Surely the Comforter was with them, enabling them to witness with power!

Today, Brethren and Sisters, we do not have the power of that Comforter to do miracles, as did the apostles, but God does work on behalf of those who from their hearts strive to serve Him. Such have been baptized into the death of Jesus Christ, and have risen from the waters a new man, a man of spirit, striving to deny "self" and follow Jesus — thus being "born of water and of the Spirit" and becoming members of His one body. We strive to obey Jesus' command to Peter and His apostles:

"... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matthew 16:24.

In submission to that command, do we trust in His Word, struggle to devote our living, and so be strengthened by the covering — the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus? Do we strive to move in His spirit of "Abba, Father" — bringing our spirit into subjection to His spirit? Do we think and act as did Jesus: "... nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done"? This is how one denies self and follows Him — in awe, in reverence, in fear — moved with God's help in one's time of probation to walk in the way which leads to His kingdom.

As we feel the hand of the Comforter in this struggle, let us respond as did Paul:

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

II Corinthians 1:3-4.

J.A.DeF.

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

In our recent readings from Luke, we are taught by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The two men entered the temple to pray. The Pharisee justified himself before God praying:

“ . . . God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Luke 18:11-14.

It is a familiar lesson which the Lord Jesus used to teach the importance of humility. After this we are told that the listening multitude brought their little children to Him to touch. The disciples no doubt in an effort to shield Jesus from the press rebuked them, however, the Lord Jesus constrained them saying:

“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.”

Luke 18:16-17.

He rebuked the disciples knowing they needed to develop more gentleness and empathy towards the thronging multitude as well as teaching them the spirit of humility they must develop within themselves in order to teach others of this essential spiritual quality.

To emphasize the need to surrender the flesh's proud tendencies and cultivate a spirit of humility, Christ set before them a little child as an example, when the disciples boldly asked: “. . . Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 18:1).

Jesus' answer was simple yet profound:

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

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

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.”

Matthew 18:3-5.

How shocking Jesus' words must have sounded to the disciples — “**except ye be converted**”. This word “converted” means to twist or

reverse. He was speaking of the spiritual conversion which must take place in those who seek to follow after Him and walk in that straight and narrow path which leads to the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus was soon to learn more from Jesus of this radical change or conversion.

Nicodemus was a "ruler of the Jews", a man of prestige and position, but who for fear of the Jews, came to Jesus by night to absorb more of His wisdom and doctrine:

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:1-6.

The Lord Jesus imparted to Nicodemus the understanding of being born again in spirit — that the thinking of the flesh must be turned about or converted in order for one to become humbled and more acceptable before the Father.

We can hear the wind when it is strong, although we don't know where it comes from or where it is going and we only see its presence as it moves among the tree tops. Those born of the spirit are similar, for the influence of God's spirit and Truth upon them can only be seen as their actions affect others in love.

In perfect humility, the Son of God made Himself of "no reputation", or as the margin renders this phrase, "emptied himself". He emptied Himself of the flesh's thinking and influence in order to be filled with gentleness, obedience and meekness — qualities of the spirit, so pleasing to His Father.

Paul implored his brethren at Philippi to also effect this same conversion within themselves when he wrote:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be

equal with God:

But **made himself of no reputation**, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
Philippians 2:5-8.

Therefore, when the Lord Jesus said, "suffer little children to come unto me", He spoke not only of those little ones then clustered around Him, but in a more profound spiritual sense to all those who can make themselves as little children in humility. A little child looks not to its own accomplishments with fleshly pride (for it has none at that tender age) but looks in trust to his father in obedience with submission and perfect trust for His guidance in all things. Only as we can be "converted", yielding our thinking to Him and not to our own ways, can we hope to be looked upon as his little ones.

M.C.S.

THE THINGS CONCERNING THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST (R. Roberts 1864)

1. That Christ exalted at the right hand of God is the only NAME given for salvation among men.
2. That the "name" was prepared by a sacrificial process.
3. That this process was necessitated by the prior facts of the case which are:
 - A. That Adam — the federal head of the human race — incurred by disobedience, the pre-stipulated penalty of death.
 - B. That his Descendants, as propagations of his nature, are subject to "the law of sin and death" established his person.
 - C. That mankind are therefore under sentence of death, being inevitably involved in constitutional mortality by virtue of their lineal connection with Adam — a fate which they have sealed and clinched by the individual transgressions of every living soul, (whence arises the consideration that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is a lie, originating with the serpent, systematised by heathen philosophers, and incorporated in the corrupt apostate christianity of early centuries, which is perpetuated and multiplied in the religious system of the present day).
 - D. That in the circumstances, mankind are incapable of

saving themselves, because they are under the operation of a law requiring death, which cannot be set aside without compromising God's supremacy.

(Here arises the reflection that death is of God's decree and infliction, because of rebellion against Him on the part of the free moral agents of His creation, and is not the power of (Satan) a malignant supernatural being such as the devil of common repute. The belief in such a being clearly indicates ignorance of the moral relations subsisting between God and man as embodied in "the Things of Name", not under consideration.)

4. That the sacrificial process was further rendered necessary by the covenants made with Abraham and David, which (involving the bestowal of immortality) could not be carried into effect until the disabilities indicated in the foregoing enumeration were removed.
5. That the process commenced with the "preparation" of the body of Christ in the womb of Mary by the power of the Highest, a transaction arising from the necessity that the sacrifice, to be efficacious required to possess the sinning and condemned nature, and at the same time to be so constituted with reference to paternity as to be "without sin" morally, so that resurrection after representative suffering might take place.
6. That because of this preparation, the "holy thing" born was "Son of God", being a body of flesh, organized by the formative power of the spirit by which it became an incarnation of the Eternal Word in the created Jesus — "God manifest in the flesh".
7. That Jesus was "in the days of his flesh", "holy, harmless, and undefiled".
8. That he "died for our sins", standing representatively as "the second Adam".
9. That he was raised again from the dead on account of his personal holiness, and exalted, with reference to his representative accomplishments, "a prince and a saviour to grant repentance and remission of sins". As the representative of human nature, he triumphed over the law of sin and death in his own person by yielding all that the law could claim, and then escaping from its power by reason of his holiness.
10. That he is therefore a name of salvation on the principle that God allows us, on condition of union with him, a participation in his glorious position; involving the forgiveness of sin, and exemption from death.
11. That the Ceremony of union exists in the rite of baptism (immersion in water) which God has appointed as a means of

induction into his glorious name.

12. That baptism is only efficacious where there is a knowledge of "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ."

13. That the ultimate acceptance of "those who name the name of Christ" in baptism depends upon a faithful continuance in the varied well doing prescribed in the word of God.

Note — The "things of the name" involve the principle that it was absolutely necessary that Christ should die, and that apart from the sacrifice of Christ, salvation, of which the Kingdom of God is an element, would have been impossible.

FORGIVENESS

As we met this morning to worship at His Table, we sang Hymn 48, reminding us of the blessings to be bestowed upon those who persevere to the end of their probation. Our hymn was taken from Matthew the fifth chapter which records one of the Lord Jesus' sermons where he taught:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11-12.

None of us have suffered the persecution or personal attacks that were endured by the Lord Jesus. Even during His final hours as He hung dying upon the cross, He was reviled and taunted:

"And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days.

Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him." Mark 15:29-32.

What a temptation it must have been, to use that power given Him at baptism and come down from the cross, thus stunning and shaming his persecutors. They would finally believe He was the Son

of God. Yet His mind would not yield to glorify self, but rather He submitted, enduring unto the end. Only by doing so could He fulfill God's will and become the Saviour for all those who would believe on Him — the only means of entrance into the Kingdom of God. What a terrible responsibility He shouldered. As He hung on the cross, enduring reviling and great pain, He looked down upon His persecutors and could say:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do".

Luke 23:34.

What perfect yieldingness, obedience and submission to be able to utter these words at His tormentors. Yet, this is what He taught and is recorded from His sermon in Matthew chapter 5, referred to by many in the world as "The Beatitudes":

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:"

Matthew 5:43-45.

This is not the thinking of the flesh and His words would startle many who stood among that multitude watching His death. To the fleshly mind, revenge is always justified, even to coining the phrase, "revenge is a dish best served cold". In other words, plan your revenge carefully and thoughtfully, don't act quickly out of passion, but execute your own justice when you can be calm and deliberate to be sure it achieves its greatest result. However, at this same time, the Lord Jesus explains why God's children must cultivate a mind much different from the flesh's reasoning:

"For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?

Do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5:45-48.

This is a lofty goal for those of flesh nature, yet it must be the ideal to be worked towards by all who desire to become part of God and His Son. For Jesus too came into the world with all the inherent weaknesses of the flesh, yet triumphed through obedience and submission because, above all else, He desired to perfectly fulfil the purpose of God set before Him.

Further in Luke, more is added to help this understanding of

forgiveness:

“But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” Luke 6:27-28.

We can be enabled to temper the flesh’s thinking and walk more perfectly before Him. The key is in His words, **“I say unto you which hear”** — those who hear the Spirit’s instruction and endeavour to walk therein, rejecting the thinking of the world around them.

To love one’s enemies is thought by the world today as a weakness — this is not standing up for one’s right! The Lord Jesus could have called down twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from the pain of crucifixion, but this would not have been in God’s purpose, and so He not only submitted to the cruelty pressed upon Him, but forgave His persecutors.

This same forgiveness which we are to show, must be without limit, as His own example displayed. Further in Matthew chapter 18, He helped Peter on this very point:

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” Matthew 18:21-22.

The Lord Jesus then went on to illustrate the lesson of forgiveness through the parable of a king, who out of compassion forgave his servant a large debt, but this servant in turn would not forgive a much smaller debt owed him (Matthew 18:23-35). God, as the compassionate King in Jesus’ parable, bestows forgiveness daily upon those who seek contrition and blessing through Christ, and in turn they too must extend the same forgiveness to any who offend them.

Joseph’s Example of Forgiveness

Joseph’s life was a witness to the power of forgiveness as seen in his yieldingness to God’s purpose with him. He suffered much under the hand of his brothers, who sold him, out of jealousy, into the hands of merchants bound for Egypt. While there, he was unjustly accused by Potiphar’s wife and thrown into prison, where he could have grown bitter and resentful, being an innocent man. Yet as proof that he persevered in faith, he gave God the glory when interpreting the butler and baker’s dreams while in prison. His only request of the butler was:

“But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house”.

Genesis 40:14.

True to the fickleness and infidelity of human nature, the butler did not remember Joseph, not repay his kindness until he was prompted to remember him by Pharaoh's own dream some two years later. How easy it would have been for Joseph to sink into self-pity or depression and lose faith and hope in God, yet he did neither. God tested Joseph's faith and resolve in all these circumstances, but at the end, Joseph could say without bitterness to his brethren, now reunited with him in Egypt:

"Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

Genesis 50:19-21.

His was a different response than his brothers were expecting. For their evil treachery they expected the same, yet from Joseph came forgiveness and kindness — true fruits of the spirit. Joseph realized that God had guided his steps through hard circumstances, even prison, so that he might be a succor for many people and thus keep alive the house of Israel, God's peculiar treasure.

"The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression". Proverbs 19:11.

The Lord Jesus and those spiritually minded such as Joseph, saw the true mercy of God in forgiveness and exercised the discretion needed to bring their natural fleshly feelings under obedience to Him. If we could but apply this in our living, we could better put away the feelings of anger and reproach when we are offended. Paul had a similar thought in mind when he wrote:

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Ephesians 4:31-32.

Let us seal this understanding in our hearts and minds not allowing the natural thinking of the flesh to overtake us, but overcome that thinking with the spirit of forgiveness, love and mercy, just as taught by the words of our Hymn sung this morning:

"O blessed they who mercy show,
Good measure running o'er;
On them the Father will bestow
His mercy evermore."

(Hymn 48)

M.C.S.

ELIJAH (continued)

Following our reference to an article in an ecclesial magazine not connected with ourselves (see Remnant Magazine December 2002), a contributor to that magazine has recently written to it as follows:-

“--- I have never regarded the transfiguration as other than a vision, for two main reasons.

1. It was so described by Jesus at the time (Matthew 17) and he knew best what the episode was.
2. I find it incongruous that the God whom Moses and Elijah served so well (the God of love and mercy,) the God who stipulated ONE death and resurrection for the faithful but two deaths for the wicked who are now dead, would go back on His word and watch both men die, then raise them for a short time, then let them die again, then raise them again at (in one case, before) the Return,

The only other explanation is that God took Jesus, Moses and Elijah forward in time to the Kingdom age, to show them the glory of Christ to come. However, Peter, James and John could not have been there: with flesh and blood it's impossible ---”

The magazine's reply following their publishing of this letter was, as shown in this extract:-

“While it is true that our Lord described the transfiguration as a vision (Matthew 17:9), the word can mean simply, 'that which is seen'. - - - Most of the other occurrences of the original Greek word do, however, refer to visions. But there is one use, in Acts 7:31, where it refers to Moses' shock at seeing the burning bush: this was tangible and not a vision. Regarding God only bringing the faithful back to life once: there is a problem with Jairus's daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus. All of these died twice, and it will be very surprising if they are not present at the resurrection, and even more surprising if none of them is found to be faithful. There does not seem to be conclusive evidence one way or the other to prove that Moses and Elijah actually appeared, or were part of a vision.”

The Remnant's comment on the above

Consider what Jesus said about Jairus's daughter, “Fear not: believe only, AND SHE SHALL BE MADE WHOLE” (Luke 8:30). This was a healing miracle. Then there was the widow's son. Jesus had compassion and said “Weep not, and he came and touched the

bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise — And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." (Luke 7:13-15). Again this was a healing miracle. As for Lazarus, Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." (John 11:11). These were miracles of recovery which showed forth the power of God in His Son.

But when it comes to Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration, think of the many centuries that had elapsed since their deaths, as aged men. There can be no comparison in the argument.

As for Ejjah appearing to Israel before Christ's return, "We must ALL APPEAR before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Cor. 5:10). How can Elijah take up his future work before he has appeared before Christ? As to the erroneous view that Elijah may be alive, well it is very clear, "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12). The only exceptions are those "which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:15).

A BIBLE CLASS

"YE ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET"

John 13-14

We are considering Jesus' teaching as He washed His apostles' feet. He did this at the time He established His table, when His apostles partook of the bread and wine in remembrance of Him:

"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John 13:1.

In love, Jesus established the memorial feast of love as His time of probation drew to a close. Following this act of love:

"He ariseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel ..."

John 13:4-5.

This was a symbol of His work soon to be accomplished, as He died on the cross, the Victor over His own sin nature, thus becoming the mediator, the Messiah, the One who would be the means of eternal life for those who faithfully followed Him. How significant was the timing of this act, so soon before His death.

Peter, humble but unperceptive, said to Jesus:

“... Thou shalt never wash my feet, Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” John 13:8.

Jesus made it very clear to Peter that His work of cleansing His people was necessary before they could have a part, share, or portion with Jesus. They could not be in fellowship with Him if there was not that cleansing — a baptism or burial into His death and rising again a new man, joined to Christ in fellowship. Peter, still not fully perceiving this, further spoke:

“... Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.”
John 13:9.

To this Jesus carefully responded:

“... He that is washed (fully immersed, baptized) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.”

John 13:10.

The word Jesus used for “washed” involves a complete washing, the whole body cleansed, as when one is baptized (washed, whelmed) into His death. As one arises from that washing, the whole body is cleansed; there is at that moment no need to wash one’s feet. However, being flesh, we fail, sin (unlike Jesus); thus our walk is defiled, in need of our feet being washed — as Jesus symbolized in His work of washing their feet. The word used for “wash” — in relation to feet, involves a washing of only a part of the body, such as the hands, the feet or the face, not a complete immersion, as required for washing the whole body.

As Jesus finished washing His apostles’ feet, He asked:

“... Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.”

John 13:12-13.

Jesus had revealed to His apostles the work that His Father had given Him — to be a means of cleansing, removing sin, by His death for all those who would “... deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). Knowing of His soon departure, Jesus further instructed his followers:

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

John 13:14-15.

Jesus was their Master, their teacher, as He “loved them unto the end (or uttermost)”. He revealed their responsibility as His disciples. They too in love should “wash one another’s feet.” They did not have the power or authority to redeem or cleanse from sin, as did Jesus; but, in love, could help one another to walk in that strait and

narrow way which leads to the kingdom of God.

We are flesh, we have wandering feet, for we fail, we sin, departing from that way of life. These wandering feet need cleansing! How can we, as children of God, wash one another's feet? If one is seen in weakness to be in danger of departing from the way of life, it is our responsibility to warn, to come alongside to help — in love to "gain" out brother. How can we do so? Paul helps us:

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault (offense, sin or trespass), ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Galatians 6:1.

Our responsibility is to restore such a one who is in danger. "Restore" also is used as mend, to repair or perfectly join together — to bring back to the way revealed in God's word as the only way to the hope of redemption. How can this be done? By going to His word; in love, pointing out the right way, doing so in the "spiritual" way, in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, humility — recognizing that we too fail and need help, lest we lose the way of life. The flesh, being what it is, might be inclined to condemn, rather than seek to "gain," to save, Jesus taught:

". . . first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Matthew 7:3-5.

This is part of "denying self" — in love to wash one another's feet knowing that our own feet at times are in dire need of cleansing due to failure.

Let us strive to reflect the love shown by Jesus when ". . . he loved them unto the end" — remembering His words: ". . . ye also ought to wash one another's feet." And by so doing, we can be perfectly joined together, restoring one another in meekness and love.

J.A.DeF.

"FOR THE LIVING TO THE DEAD? - - -"

(Isaiah 8:19)

The ancient prophecy challenges such action of looking to dead things for help. How striking then was a recent news flash as follows:-

"Iraqi Roman Catholics have flocked to Baghdad to venerate the relics of a 19th-century French saint. The remains of St.

Thérèse of Lisieux arrived in Iraq as United Nations inspectors prepared to resume their search for weapons of mass destruction. - - - a retired teacher said she hoped the saint would 'keep war away from us and end the embargo'."

Thérèse of Lisieux was born in 1873. She became a nun at the age of fifteen when she entered the Carmelite convent of Lisieux in Normandy. Early in 1895 she was asked to write the recollections of her childhood. She did this and afterwards added an account of her later life. After her death the book entitled "The Story of a Soul" became a success. It was translated into various languages, and it began to be said that answers to prayerful requests were the result of her intercession in Heaven. She became popular as a result of her autobiography, and this moved Pope Pius XI to canonize Thérèse in 1925. She died at the age of 24, in 1897, as a result of tuberculosis. Her book, the authentic version of "The Story of a Soul" was first published in English in 1958, translated by Ronald Knox, who gave it the title, "Autobiography of a Saint."

The Iraqi receivers of these bones obviously believed there is power in the relics. That their having what remains of Teresa Martin, will act as a charm to help their predicament. But how hopeless is their faith in what is left of a young woman, of interesting but uneventful life, who died one hundred and six years ago.

MISUNDERSTANDING AND UNAPPRECIATION **(Dr. J. Thomas 1860)**

For a man who understands the truth to be understood and appreciated by his age and generation, that generation must not be crooked and perverse. It must not be ignorant, bigoted, and spiritually intoxicated. When a generation is enlightened in the truth, and loves it with unselfish devotion, it understands and appreciates the enlightened and devoted. The prophets, Jesus, and the apostles were neither understood nor appreciated by their several generations, which were unworthy of them. They slew them because they misunderstood them. The world was ignorant and devoted to its superstitions, and would not let them go. For this cause it misunderstood its benefactors, and, instead of appreciating them, persecuted and destroyed them.

It never was expected in the providence of God, that his friends would be understood and appreciated by the church and world IN GENERAL. It is only by those of the church who really and truly

unselfishly love the truth, that they will be understood and appreciated. Demas, Diotrefes, Hymeneus, Philetus, Alexander the coppersmith, Simon Magus, Ananias, Sapphira, professing Christians all, neither understood nor appreciated the apostles, but thought them altogether such miserable varlets as themselves. They knew themselves to be brutish and diabolical, and therefore naturally concluded that the apostles were so likewise. They judged after the flesh, and therefore erred in all the deceivableness of unrighteousness peculiar to the old Adam.

We should feel utterly disgraced (to be) appreciated by such a generation of pietists as this of ours. It can only appreciate humbug and tomfoolery; and can understand aught nothing that is spiritual, that is to say, scriptural. It can appreciate ecclesiastical and political mountebanks; but those who expose its nakedness, and prove it to be the object of divine reprobation, it misunderstands and estimates at infinitely less than their real value. Is it at all flattering to be appraised as a precious jewel of intelligence and worth by an ignoramus, or by peoples pronounced apocalyptically to be universally deceived and drunk? (Revelation 18:3). Nay, the dispraise of such is a glory and a joy.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

A.D. 2003

“Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation.”

(Jeremiah 25:32).

A few months ago there was the dreadful terrorist explosion at Bali, devastating the families of Australian tourists. It brought back to memory the words of Bin Laden, “We are carrying on the mission of our prophet Mohammed - - - we are only defending ourselves. This is defensive jihad.”

Following this the British Prime Minister warned, after certain arrests on suspicion of a terrorist attack on the London underground, “there is a real terror out there — though preventing one catastrophic attack doesn’t mean there won’t be another soon.”

And then came the explosion at the Paradise Hotel, Kikambala near Mombasa, Kenya, when also two missiles were fired by terrorists at a Boeing aircraft carrying 271 Israelis, who narrowly escaped being shot down. Kenyans were dismayed to have become a target for the second time in just over three years. More than 200 people were killed in 1998 when terrorists bombed the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.

Sadly in this period a number of Jews in Israel have also suffered from random explosions by their bitter Arab opponents.

As Christmas approached, the Greek Orthodox Superior of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem appealed to Israelis and Palestinians to end their conflict and search for lasting peace. He was still hoping for "pilgrims" to see Bethlehem for Christmas, a profitable time for the Church. It was a hopeless request. A reporter approached a young Palestinian about this time to see what he thought about the situation. He insisted that military force would not be the answer, "that he was not afraid to die, for that would make him a martyr and bring blessings from heaven". An Israeli official said that in the light of the continuing Palestinian attacks it was futile to bring about a limited truce and to withdraw from some areas.

At the time of writing the world is wondering where the next terrorist strike will come from. The British Foreign Office issued advice to tourists and travellers as follows:-

Do not travel to any part of these countries:-

Afghanistan (except north Kabul); Burundi; Central African Republic; Indonesia; Iraq; Ivory Coast; Liberia; Chetchen Republic; Somalia; Yemen.

But then followed a long list of countries where certain parts are very dangerous and should be avoided:-

Albania (north east); Azerbaijan (western region); Chad; Congo; Democratic Republic of Congo; Eritrea (border areas with Ethiopia); Ethiopia (border areas of Tigray and Afar); Guinea (border region with Liberia and Sierra Leone); India (Jammu and Kashmir); Jordan (Maan); Kyrgyzstan (south and west of Osh); Namibia (border with Angola); Phillippines (central); Sri Lanka (north and east); Sudan (Eritrean border); Uganda.

Further instruction declared, "Do not travel to these countries unless on essential business":-

Algeria; Angola; East Timor; Pakistan; Sierra Leone; Tajikistan.

What a list is this! How dangerous the world has become. But it is a fulfilment of the ancient prophecy; in the warning that "evil shall go forth from nation to nation" and there is a grim context as follows:-

"--- a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth."
(verse 32).

Where will it blow next? It certainly has disturbed the world's governments, which are going to great effort to thwart this terrorism, but finds it very difficult to deal with an enemy which is practised in deceit, and is careless of its own life.

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

Witnessing to the general public continues with some response to the invitation to write for an article revealing God's plan for this troubled earth.

Contact with Christadelphians continue, giving opportunity to point out the "falling away" among that body in these last days.

The annual winter party is scheduled, God willing, for February 15, 2003.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

What a blessing in difficult times is the provision of Brethren and Sisters who are ever willing to counsel. And what assurance is the knowledge that each one is always ready to petition the Most High for help in perplexity and need. Such fellowship is the merciful provision of God.