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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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"THERE IS A PROPHET IN ISRAEL"

This morning our attention has been directed to Hezekiah, a faithful king in Judah, He had repaired the temple, destroyed idols, torn down high places, and led Judah back to serving the Almighty. In the middle of his reign he found himself in dire straits. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, threatened to capture Judah as Shalmaneser, an earlier king of Assyria, 11 years previously had done to the 10 tribes of Israel. In addition, the prophet Isaiah came to him and said:

"... Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." II Kings 20:1.

What was Hezekiah's reaction to these threats — from without and within? We have just read his response to Sennacherib:

"And it came to pass, when Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD." II Kings 19:1.

From there he sent his servants and elders to Isaiah, the prophet in Judah, asking him to pray for help:

"It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left." II Kings 19:4.

Hezekiah relied on the Lord and the Lord's prophet who had encouraged the king to restore the faithful service to the Almighty. The Lord answered Hezekiah's prayer through the prophet:

"... Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard . . . Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

II Kings 19:6-7.

Sennacherib further threatened Hezekiah by a letter, reminding the king how Assyria had conquered many lands which depended upon their idols. Why then could he not capture Judah, even if God protected them? Again Hezekiah in faith went into the temple:

"... and spread it (the letter) before the LORD.

And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD . . .

Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only."

II Kings 19:14-15, 19.

God answered and caused the death of 185,000 men of Assyria's army, not allowing even an arrow to be shot at Jerusalem. Thus all the kingdoms of the earth did indeed know that God alone was the LORD, and that there was a prophet in Israel!

In regard to Hezekiah's fatal illness occurring at the same time, the king fervently prayed to the Almighty. Again, God responded through Isaiah:

"... I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

And 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 for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." II Kings 20:5-6.

There was a prophet (one who speaks with inspiration) in Israel — a true prophet whose prophecies from the LORD came to pass!

We have many examples of prophets who brought God's word to His people. Recently we have read of Elisha who healed Naaman's leprosy, after the king of Israel despaired that such a healing was impossible to man. Elisha, when he heard of the king's despair, said:

"... Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

II Kings 5:8.

Elisha told Naaman that if he would wash in the river Jordan seven times, he would be healed. Naaman was wroth, expecting something more spectacular, but finally obeyed:

"... and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." II Kings 5:14.

What was Naaman's reaction to this miraculous work?

"... Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel..." V. 15.

Ezekiel was another prophet sent to God's people in captivity in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. In sending him, the Almighty spoke to Ezekiel:

"... Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation, that hath rebelled against me..."

For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall they

know that there hath been a prophet among them.”

Ezekiel 2:3-5.

Most did not hear; yet some, by hearing, knew God’s words, as Ezekiel witnessed to God’s purpose ultimately to be accomplished in Israel. However, with most of those in captivity, this was Ezekiel’s experience:

“... they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

And when this cometh to pass (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.”

Ezekiel 33:31-33.

“A very lovely song” — “a pleasant voice” — a pleasing instrument, tickling, delighting their ears, but such did not penetrate their mind or heart, or cause them to hear the words of God. When the prophecy did come to pass (and it did — for it was God’s word!) they knew, but it was too late, having been a rebellious people. When did Ezekiel speak these words?

“... one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.”

Ezekiel 33:21.

As God — through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel — had prophesied, Jerusalem was destroyed, the kingdom of Israel and Judah had come to an end; and the times of the Gentiles began, as Ezekiel had prophesied:

“I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.”

Ezekiel 21:27.

Truly God sent many prophets — “... rising up early and sending them” (Jeremiah 29:19) — with the message of His purpose to be accomplished when the One (Christ) comes, whose right it is, to establish God’s kingdom on earth, as His word has revealed from the beginning. Few heard, few truly responded. Hezekiah did; David did; Josiah did — all listening to His prophets sent, saying: “THUS SAITH THE LORD.”

This morning we have also read of Paul — a “chosen vessel” of God to witness “before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). He stood before king Agrippa and spoke of his

calling:

"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." Acts 26:19-20, 22, 27.

King Agrippa replied:

"... Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Acts 26:28-29.

Paul was in bonds, a prisoner in hope of deliverance unto the kingdom of God when Jesus returns. Then will be fulfilled the words of the prophets whom God sent: "... rising up early and sending them." Paul witnessed for 35 years. What was his message? "There is a prophet in Israel."

Brethren and Sisters, we are not prophets, but as the Almighty spoke: "Ye are even my witnesses..." (Isaiah 44:8). We strive in faith and trust in His word to witness to all that He has revealed from the beginning. It is by our acts, our deeds, our living, our glorifying God that we are privileged to be His witnesses. How blessed we are to have been given God's word through the prophets — a testimony that God's word will not fail, for He has promised His witnesses: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

We have listened to Isaiah, Elisha, Ezekiel, and Paul here this morning; we have been privileged to meet together in His name. Today there is a remnant, even as Hezekiah asked Isaiah, His prophet:

"... lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left."

II Kings 19:4.

To which the Almighty replied again through His prophet:

"... the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that

escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this." II Kings 19:30-31.

The Almighty further spoke through His prophet Isaiah:

"Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Isaiah 1:9.

Paul relates how the Almighty spoke of His prophet Elijah who said:

"Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

But what saith the answer of God unto Him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Romans 11:3-5.

What encouragement the Almighty has provided and continues to provide for those who look to the help given by those prophets of old, who, in subjection to Him, faithfully witnessed:

"... that there is a prophet in Israel." II Kings 5:8.
J.A.DeF.

PASSERS THROUGH

We have recently been reading Paul's letter to his Hebrew brethren — those "passers through" schooled in the law, but who now were being taught the importance of their relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the Jews who had been given a hope and covenant through God's word but who turned their back on Jesus, the Word made flesh, and ultimately succeeded in plotting His crucifixion at the hands of the Romans. Paul, some thirty years later was endeavouring to show them their error and that the hope of salvation was not possible through the law but only through the name of Jesus, God's Son.

They must come to a new understanding and acknowledge that the covenant made with God under the Law could not bring salvation and eternal life except through belief in the death of His Son Jesus, of whom the covenant spoke:

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Hebrews 10:1-4.

To these Hebrews familiar with the Law, Paul was now teaching the component they had overlooked — that the Messiah promised through the prophets had indeed been born and died to teach men of the need to repent and conform their living after His example. This work complete, He now sits on the right hand of God as a Mediator for His people:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

Hebrews 1:1-4.

These Hebrews or "passers through" shared the hope of their fathers like Abraham and Isaac, not by blindly following the letter of the law, for the law itself could not save, but only as they earnestly

searched for the spirit of love contained therein, which pointed forward to Christ:

“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did: by the which we draw nigh unto God.”

Hebrews 7:18-19.

This hope that His word from the beginning had made known, was predicated upon belief in the Word which would be made flesh — the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Hebrews put a great deal of importance upon the history and traditions of their fathers and Paul drew upon this to teach them of Christ:

“For unto which of the angels (messengers) said he at any time, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE? And again, I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER, AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON?

But unto the Son he saith, THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER: A SCEPTRE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTRE OF THY KINGDOM.” Hebrews 1:5, 8.

They revered the examples of their fathers such as Abraham, Isaac and Moses and from this knowledge Paul appealed, teaching that Moses was a type of Christ, the Deliverer to come:

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.” Hebrews 3:1-3.

Everything hinged upon His struggle to overcome His flesh nature — could He conquer it, never sinning and become the sacrificial Lamb without spot?

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he

took on him the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Hebrews 2:14-18.

Realising that the Lord Jesus was made with a nature like our own, subject to sin, His own spiritual struggle, knowing our temptations, makes Him a perfect Mediator between God and man. Clearly the place of that old Levitical priesthood was to be abolished with the coming of Christ and without a true understanding of the new covenant, those who had persecuted Christ during his lifetime and orchestrated His death had no hope.

As we likewise seek to be "passers through" this world, struggling to do His will, we can be helped and encouraged by Paul's words that urged:

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:20-21.

M.C.S.

THE PRAYERS OF CORNELIUS. (R.R. 1872)

“Cornelius was a Gentile, yet his prayer was heard.”

Cornelius was not a Gentile pure and simple. He was a Roman Centurion who had discarded the Pagan mythology of Rome for the God of Israel, among whose people he was stationed, as shown by his prayer to Him; and who had identified himself closely with the Jews, as indicated in his “much alms” to them. For such, there was provision under the law: “When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover of the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land.” (Exodus 12:48-49). This class of appreciative stranger to which Cornelius belonged, is thus addressed in Isaiah 56:3-7: “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 - - -. I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer.”

Devout Gentiles, who cast away the gods of the heathen and “joined themselves to the LORD,” were known as “proselytes” (Acts 2:10), and were allowed to worship at Jerusalem, as in the case of the eunuch to whom Philip preached the word (Acts 8:27). A court in the temple was provided for them, and known as “the court of the Gentiles”. The “proselytes of the gate”, as they were called, were recognised worshippers. They approached God in the only way open to the Gentiles at that time.

God never has shut His ear against those who have come to Him in the way appointed. But a wider gate was opened when Peter was commissioned to announce, in connection with the case of Cornelius, the abolition of “the middle wall of partition”; and the free admission of the Gentiles upon the terms then disclosed, as “fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel”. (Ephesians 3:6). All Gentiles are at liberty to partake of “the promise in Christ BY THE GOSPEL”, but in no other way. Such as are inclined to take “heart of grace” from the case of Cornelius must remember that Cornelius was in the right way, so far as it was possible for a Gentile to be. Therefore his prayers were heard and the way of life opened to him by an angel.

CHASTEN THY SON WHILE THERE IS HOPE.

(Proverbs 19:18)

The above scriptural advice goes on to say " - - - let not thy soul spare for his crying."

The world at large now believes that it knows better. Corporal punishment for the unruly and incorrigible young person is no more. The consigning of the wisdom of the Holy Word is now bringing about a bitter, destructive aftermath. Note the following media lament:-

" - - - You may rightly observe that there have always been playground punch-ups - - - fisticuffs occurred but that is all they were. Now it seems that fists are no longer sufficient — knives are involved as well.

(The Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers documented the abuse suffered by its members this year at the hands of violent pupils.)

Examples included an eleven year old boy assaulting a member of staff at an Essex school by firing a staple gun, and another eleven year old shooting a teacher with a ball-bearing gun. (though excluded from his Yorkshire school he was reinstated by an appeals panel) - - -

Increasing use of weapons in crime on the streets is spilling over into the once relative calm of security of schools.

The - - - Education Secretary (has been written to urging a) clamp down on aggressive behaviour and bullying before it escalates further."

But note what happened next. A child disrupted the class at her primary school. This pupil had been excluded from a previous school, and had only been at the new school for a week. The child's behaviour was such that the class teacher sent for the Headmistress. The teacher called for help because the pupil was "hitting around" with a ruler. The principle on arriving at the class-room took hold of the child by the shoulders, but had to drag the resisting child along the floor, thereupon she was alleged to have administered two slaps with her hand. What resulted from this endeavour to restore order? The principle with an unblemished 25-year record was taken to court to be charged with common assault, ultimately she was pardoned, but she had suffered a six month suspension.

The over-protective legal requirements of modern law relating to the misdemeanours of the young, is harbouring an ever increasing threat to the stability of civilian life.

But it was what Jesus foretold, when He said:-

“For as in the days that were before the flood --- so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:38-39).

At the time of the flood “the earth (was) filled with violence.” (Gen 6:13). When men ignore the wisdom of God’s Holy Word, their well being deteriorates. How clear is God’s counsel as to how children should be brought up:-

“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” (Proverbs 13:24).

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” (Proverbs 22:15).

“Withhold not correction from the child. --- Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shall deliver his soul.”

(Proverbs 23:13-14).

Children have to be trained, and the violent young need chastisement while they are still young enough to be amenable. Later is too late, they become hardened in their outlook. The world at the beginning of this new century is a much different place to the earlier years of the previous century; and whereas knowledge has increased ignorance of God’s requirements and lack of respect for His law is very evident.

So is fulfilled the warning of the Spirit concerning these last days, indicating the need for a solution which can only come from God.

What hope has this rising generation got when the latest moves, planned through the British Parliament, is to push legislation to threaten parents who smack their children. Politicians are hoping to warn all parents they face criminal prosecution for assault, if they punish their children. It is intended to be part of a new Child Protection Bill, which has found favour with a majority of the Members of Parliament. What a problem for thoughtful parents who are still concerned about their children’s behaviour. How evident is the deterioration in the morality of the present generation.

AT A BIBLE CLASS

"HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US"

II Corinthians 5:21

Paul speaks of our need for reconciliation with God, or as the word implies — to be restored to His favor, His grace. How is His favor lost? It goes back to the beginning of His creation when man was alienated from God by disobedience to His one command:

"... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17.

Adam and Eve were not born; Adam was created from the dust of the ground:

"... The LORD God ... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7.

He was capable of living **IF** he in submission obeyed God's simple command. Tempted by the serpent, the adversary, man succumbed, and was sentenced by God to ultimately return to the dust of the ground:

"... for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19.

All men since Adam thus have become dying creatures, alienated from God through disobedience. However, God in His mercy provided a covering — a means of escape from that law of sin and death:

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Genesis 3:21.

God also decreed:

"... I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15.

From that day, there has been enmity between the flesh and the spirit. Also, in God's mercy there was provided the seed of the woman — Jesus Christ — as a means of reconciliation between God and man, giving a hope of redemption from his dying nature. The seed of the woman (Christ) did wound the serpent (flesh nature) in the head, to accomplish God's promise. The Lord Jesus gave His life without succumbing to sin in His nature, inherited through Mary. The law spoke of His victory over His flesh in the sacrifices made under the law; for "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ..." (Galatians 3:24). The Lord Jesus died on the cross, never

having sinned although tempted as we are. As He died, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, symbolizing that through His death as the unblemished Lamb of God, He opened the way into the most holy place—the presence of God. He became the means of atonement, of propitiation, of reconciliation for sin, promised by the Almighty from the time of Adam.

God has given a means of escape from death for those who are joined to Him through baptism. This involves being buried into the Lord Jesus' death, whereby the old man of sin is put to death, and a new man is born, cleansed of sin. As a new man of spirit, one struggles to follow Jesus Christ who never sinned. He has told us how this can be done:

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

We struggle to deny self—to say NO to the temptations of our flesh; but sadly we fail. God in mercy has granted His Son as a redeemer, a mediator for us. He carries our supplications for forgiveness before God as a means of reconciliation with the Almighty.

Paul wrote to his Corinthian brethren:

“... the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry (teaching) of reconciliation;

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

II Corinthians 5:14-15, 17-19, 21.

The word “sin” comes from two Greek words meaning (1) not or nor, and (2) sharing. He “who knew no sin.” got the victory over His flesh and thereby glorified God as the seed of the woman. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the law as the unblemished Lamb—the sin offering, the peace offering, the trespass offering, and the whole burnt offering—making possible reconciliation with God. Paul further spoke of

Jesus' work in fulfilling that law:

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death . . . they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Hebrews 9:12-15.

Truly God in His mercy has graciously provided a means of reconciliation for those who strive to follow Him — those who say NO to self, and endure by putting the old man of sin to death.

J.A.DeF.

"IN HONOUR PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER"

When reading the twelfth chapter of Romans, written by Paul to his brethren at Rome, we see from the context that he is urging a close examination of their relationship one to another within the household of God, and of their responsibility to live not after the example of those in the world, but to fashion their living after the spirit of Christ:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present 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 goes on to teach of the need for harmony and love within the body of Christ as all members yield themselves one to another:

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one

members one of another.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:4-8.

Naturally, all do not share the same gifts or talents — one may be skilful in ministering and another may possess a talent to teach, but all must work together in humility and love, being considerate of one another.

This harmonious combination of many parts makes us think of the incense that God instructed Moses to create for use in the tabernacle:

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy."

Exodus 30:34-37.

An equal weight of these spices was to be mixed together and pounded small to release their individual fragrances. However, when blended together they created a pleasing aroma that was unique and holy unto the Lord. It was to be used only for His worship, teaching of the prayers of the saints which would ascend towards God in heaven as a sweet smell. There would be no individual spice that would overpower or be stronger in fragrance than another or the combination presented to God would not be pleasing. When blended, they worked together to make that one unique fragrance so pleasing to the Almighty.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many."

I Corinthians 12:12-14.

Our verse under consideration speaks particularly of His household and of how this blending of many components can work together in love and humility to create a sweet smell to the Lord:

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Romans 12:10.

When we look up that word "honour", we find it means something of value or precious, coming from a prime root meaning "to pay a price". "Preferring" is to show deference or to lead the way. Within the household of God there must be love and deference one to another to live harmoniously, remembering that Christ said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40).

Fellowship was not valued or practiced among the Scribes and Pharisees, for they took pride in their lofty positions as elders, not being true examples as loving shepherds to God's flock.

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:8-10.

Looking also to Paul's teaching to the Galatians we find a similar thought regarding love and fellowship:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:7-10.

To do good to all, but especially the household of faith gives the idea of the special bond there is to be between brethren and sisters.

To the Ephesians also Paul wrote of the need to be filled with the spirit of Christ, submitting themselves (or deferring) one to another:

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the the will of the Lord is.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled

with the Spirit;
Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual
songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the
Lord;
Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”
Ephesians 5:17-21.

Paul goes on to describe the godly relationship there must be
between husband and wife which mirrors the bond between Christ
and His church:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as
unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the
head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the
wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the
church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of
water by the word.

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not
having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should
be holy and without blemish.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He
that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh: but nourisheth and
cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.”

Ephesians 5:22-29.

Just as the holy incense was offered as a praise to God, our
work as His children is to be blended or tempered together, that we
may be pleasing to our Head and the Almighty. Not preferring one
over another, but showing love and extending help to each other,
that we may become a sweet smell bound together in love and
without dissimulation.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“- - - they shall not cleave one to another - - - .”

(Daniel 2:43).

After the two devastating World Wars, European nations aspired to establish a unification which would ensure the future peace of the Continent.

It started with the European Coal and Steel Community (1952). Then the European Economic Community (1957). By 1995 there were more than 360 million people involved in this arrangement following the establishing a single market for the free movement of goods and capital in January 1993. The founding members were Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Later the nations involved were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (as a whole), Greece, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the U.K.

Now in this year 2004 ten more nations have agreed to join. These are Poland, Hungary, the Czech republic, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta.

Now in considering these nations that are involved, immediately the truth of the Scripture is evident:-

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter’s clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.” (Daniel 2:41).

It is a mix of strong and weak, and some very weak nations. But the aspirations of European peoples does not end here. Romania and Bulgaria are hoping to join in three years time. Turkey is also interested, but has been held back by European leaders requiring Turkey to first of all improve its human rights record.

The nations with the greatest number of seats in the European Parliament are France, Germany, Italy and the U.K., these reflect the iron aspect of Daniel’s image. But do these more powerful entities ensure unity? Daniel shows that unity in the fullest sense cannot be achieved:-

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” (Daniel 2:43).

At the present time the Irish Government holds the E.U. Presidency, which the nations take in turn. But it is reported that the

Irish Premier is somewhat pessimistic over recent endeavours for a new E.U. constitution, incorporating changes to the voting system, which for example could reduce the influence of Poland and Spain. He commented that:-

- - - he was not optimistic that he would be able to steer the clashing E.U. member states to an agreement. He was wary of forcing the issue, but would do some informal consultation with other member states about when to relaunch negotiations. He felt that he must avoid, at present, a second set of talks which ended in failure.

An ICM poll in Britain revealed a majority of the population declaring that Britain would be more prosperous and secure if it kept out of the European common currency and took its powers back from the Brussels centre.

Britain's Prime Minister has admitted:-

- - - Europe has a mountain to climb as the collapse of the Summit delivered a shattering blow to the constitution, aimed to change the E.U.'s unwieldy structure, ready for the 10 new members in 2004. - - -

Britain's leader had tried to mediate, but France refused to consider any compromise on the voting issue. The Prime Minister declared that "Some people will rejoice that we have not come to an agreement."

Significantly a religious aspect came into the issue; consider the following report:-

"The Catholic nations including Ireland, Poland and Spain have enlisted the Pope to back their demands that the constitution refers to Europe as mainly Christian. France, which firmly separates church and state, opposes, while Britain fears offending its own ethnic minorities plus Muslim Turkey which hopes to join."

In considering these details, is it not obvious there is a very uneasy situation in Europe? But obviously it is scriptural fulfilment. The scripture is clear about this sign in the nations:-

"And in the days of these kings (kingdoms) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. - - -

the dream is certain, and interpretation thereof sure."

(Daniel 2:44-45).

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