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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

"THY VISITATION HATH PRESERVED MY SPIRIT"

We are reading of Job, a man who pleased God. His name is familiar to many, even though they may not be spiritually minded; he was known for his patience. We find that his name means hated or persecuted. The Concordance describes him as "a patriarch noted for his patience." James wrote of Job many centuries after his time:

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

James 5:10-11.

The record of Job begins:

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed (turned away from) evil." Job 1:1.

He was also:

"... the greatest of all the men of the east." Job 1:3.

This does not seem to conform to his name - one hated or persecuted. Indeed, God spoke to an adversary of Job who was called a Satan:

"... Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Job 1:8.

The adversary countered God's praise of Job:

"... Doth Job fear God for nought?

Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." Job 1:9-11.

Why did the adversary accuse Job? Why did he show hatred toward Job? It was because of the enmity between the righteous and the evil a hatred from the beginning in the garden of Eden, where God said:

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

Genesis 3:15.

God took away Job's children, as well as his goods. Job responded:

"... the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Job 1:21-22.

Again, God asked the adversary: "... Hast thou considered my servant Job...?" And again, the adversary said:

"... put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." Job 2:5.

But Job did not!

Job was further tested when his wife spoke to him

"... Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." Job 2:9-10.

In spite of the hatred and the persecution, Job retained his integrity, his determination to bless God, to trust in God, to seek strength to endure:

We may wonder at Job's patience, at his love for God, his fear (awe) of God! How could he do it? Paul helps us:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (adversary)." Ephesians 6:10-11.

Paul describes "the whole armour of God" which ends with:

"... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,"

Ephesians 6:17.

Job was clad with that spiritual armor, and so was able to withstand the hatred and persecution. The strength of that armor is explained by Paul, in writing of the "fruit of the Spirit":

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law, And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another,
envying one another," Galatians 5:22-26.

This was the strength of Job, enabling him to rely upon God and wait for His help to endure.

James further wrote of the need for patience - waiting for the "fruit of the Spirit":

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7-8.

The husbandman plows, seeds, looks for rain; he weeds, prunes, and waits for the fruit at the harvest. He must wait for the established time of ripeness to harvest his fruit, for he cannot speed up the growth. This was Job's mind, his spirit, which helped him to retain his integrity - his oneness of mind and heart to serve God. He revealed that mind as he spoke to God in thanksgiving:

"Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit." Job 10:12.

God visited Job because of his faithfulness, integrity, and reliance upon Him. Job refused to curse God! "Visitation" involves oversight, charge, care, custody. God granted Job riches, honor, and fame; but much more importantly, He visited him with spiritual help to endure. Job lived and knew God's favor, seen in good deeds lovingkindness, mercy, and pity. He was subject to God, keeping his integrity, praising God, rather than cursing Him. God visits His people as he perceives their response, helping them to preserve their spirit.

David was one who, like Job, sought God's strength and help, desiring to honor Him. He expressed his spirit as he wrote:

"How many are the days (life) of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?

The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.

All thy commandments are faithful; they persecute me

wrongfully; help thou me.
They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook
not thy precepts,
Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the
testimony of thy mouth.” Psalm 119:84-88.

To “quicken” is to live, to preserve, to revive. David failed in spirit when he sinned in regard to Bath-sheba. When he realized his grievous failure, he turned to God for forgiveness:

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:1-3, 10.

God does grant life and favor. He oversees those who in patience wait upon Him for the visitation of the Lord Jesus, to fulfill God’s purpose with this earth:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:
And he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on his left.
Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 25:31-34.

This is the hope of Israel. This is the hope of Job. This is our hope! Job was hated and persecuted as he proved to the adversary that God was right in blessing Job, by preserving his spirit, his integrity. What enabled Job to do so? He made it clear:

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,” Job 19:25.
He endured, sustained by the knowledge that God would visit

in the latter day, to gather those who are His people for eternity in His kingdom. At the end of his trial, he could say to God:

"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.
Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee."

Job 42:2-3,5.

Job was drawn closer to God, growing in awe of His power, waiting upon Him whose visitation granted life and preserved his spirit.

The Almighty restored Job's position:

"... so the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning:..."

Job 42:12.

The last words concerning the life of Job are:

"After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.
So Job died, being old and full of days."

Job 42:16-17.

He died with the hope of resurrection and of hearing the words of Jesus:

"... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Matthew 25:34.

Remembering James' words:

"... Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

James 5:11.

Let us wait with patience, integrity, uprightness, and yet with fear, for that day of visitation.

J.A.DeF.

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

Over several days in our reading schedule, we have studied the prophecy of Habakkuk. He was a prophet who “embraced” the word of God as the meaning of his name suggests, and endeavored to witness to the people of his day, reminding them of the need for faith in their living.

In the first chapter, Habakkuk laments of the evil triumph of the wicked as violence and injustice abounds throughout God’s people:

“Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.” Habakkuk 1:3-4.

He warns of their impending captivity by the Chaldeans in retribution:

“For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs.

They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.” Habakkuk 1:6-7.

Habakkuk prays to the Almighty in awe of His great might, using the word “Selah” as David often did in the Psalms, meaning “value it, considering the end”. This gives us the indication that his prophecy would also apply to the latter days, at the end of God’s purpose when Christ returns:

“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.” Habakkuk 2:1-4.

He came to warn as well as to build the faith of those with a listening ear. God’s word came to him in a vision, prophesying of a

time to come when not only the Chaldeans, but all the enemies of God will be destroyed. These were inspiring words to live by, for those with faith in God. Habakkuk's prophecy did influence many, including Paul approximately 700 years later, as he recalls the prophet's message:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Romans 1:16-17.

The faith that Paul endeavored to instill in the Romans was the faith that Habakkuk preached - the need to embrace the word of God, take it in and live by it. Paul gave a similar message to the Galatians when he wrote:

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."Galatians 3:8-11.

The law was a schoolmaster - not to be kept by the letter, but by the spirit of faith revealed therein, showing the faithful the end promised. In this same vein, Paul continues by writing to the Galatians that:

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galatians 3:13-14.

Here is the end seen of Habakkuk's prophecy - the gift of Christ's sacrifice, which would redeem both Jew and Gentile from the curse of sin and death, through belief in Him. The Jews by seeing Him by faith in the law, and the Gentiles through faith and belief in the record of His life while on earth.

Using the inspiration of Habakkuk's words, Paul again speaks to the Hebrews:

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Hebrews 10:37-39.

Faith involves an embracing of God's word - not a drawing back - believing that He will eventually accomplish all He has promised.

Habakkuk was told of God to "Write the vision . . . that he may run that readeth it." (Hab.2:2). To "run" means to rush forward, teaching us of the need to take hold of God's word fervently and apply it in our living. Just as Paul wrote of the need to run:

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Hebrews 12:1.

God looks to see if we will endure under trial and testing. Will we embrace His word and come to Him in times of need, or rely on our own strength? Habakkuk was one who feared because he believed God's word: "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid" (Hab.3:2).

We know from the time of Habakkuk's prophecy (about 620 B.C.), this vision spoke of the promise of One to come, through whom grace and mercy would be extended. Obviously Habakkuk believed in hope and his message spoke of his faith in God's promise:

"Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."

Habakkuk 3:18-19

How full of promise and inspiration are Habakkuk's words, inspiring us as well, that we too may rejoice in the day of His coming, in hope of finding mercy, if we live today by faith.

M.C.S.

"MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR"

(Luke 21:26)

"Except those days should be shortened,
there should no flesh be saved."

(Matthew 24:22)

The prophet Daniel, speaking of an end coming to man's way of life, was clear in his expression of what would ultimately result:-

"- - - there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.- - -"

(Daniel 12:1).

The prophecy declares that with such a time being the end of the days, and so a heavenly deliverance being needed, it will be the time of resurrection of some who are in the grave:-

"- - - and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

(Daniel 12:2).

At the time of writing, with these scriptural verses in mind, there has been much discussion about Britain's weapon called "The Trident". It has three parts to it; there are the submarines, the missiles and atomic warheads to be affixed to those missiles. Trident was commissioned in 1980. Then in 1994 four Vanguard submarines carrying nuclear rockets went on patrol. They are based in Scotland, on the River Clyde, and can patrol for up to three months at a time, one only being out at any one time. This nuclear powered vessel carries, each one, about 16 missiles, each of which have up to eight warheads; and note each individual warhead has eight times the power of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Japan, at Hiroshima, in 1945. When that explosion took place at the end of World War 2, the world was shocked to learn that 140,000 people were killed by just one atomic strike. Consider then what a threat "Trident" is, with rocket missiles having a range of more than 4,600 miles.

British politicians, who advocate "Trident", argue that further development of nuclear warheads is necessary to deter, in this uncertain world, other nations, such as Iran and North Korea from developing a nuclear weapon. It is a powerful threat, a warning to less scrupulous nations, to exercise care in their military preparations in this very, very, uncertain world.

The United States, of course, is very capable in their submarine development programme; and the United Kingdom intends to cooperate closely with their same-language-speaking friends, of America. While a developing of even more advanced submarines

now go ahead, Britain joins with an American programme to extend the potency of the life of the present U.S. made nuclear weapon, until an even more advanced vessel takes its place of importance in this troubled world.

This, then, is an outline of the situation in which the nations of men now find themselves. Oh! how meaningful the warning words of Jesus are, in the present world technological development. What hope really, has the world, except for Christ's promise:-

"- - - for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

(Matthew 24:22).

"- - - and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

(Matthew 24:30).

A BIBLE CLASS

"... THERE BE HIGHER THAN THEY"

Ecclesiastes 5:8

This book was written by Solomon, as we read:

"The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem," Ecclesiastes 1:1.

Solomon was granted wisdom by God, as he began his reign over Israel. He used that wisdom to teach as the Preacher - or the one who assembled the people to be instructed in the word of God. An example is found in our chapter under consideration:

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil." Ecelesiastes 5:1.

When one goes to the house of God, it is to worship Him, to give glory to His name, to walk in a way that pleases Him, revealing one's gratitude for His blessing, ready to hear His word.

There are only two positions in this life - to walk in the world or to walk in God's house. Those who seek to belong to the house of God will heed Jesus' words to His disciples:

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

We, brethren and sisters, strive to walk in Jesus' footsteps, in subjection to the word of God.

With this in mind, let us look at our subject. The Preacher wrote:

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they." Ecclesiastes 5:8.

To "marvel" is to be astonished, amazed or to be in consternation. Those who do not strive to follow after Jesus, are subject to their own desires, riches, honor, position, and fame - pleasing themselves. When promoting self, there can be oppression of the poor, and perversion of judgment and justice. Solomon was an example, having been given great wisdom, as he sought after God.

In addition, God gave him riches and honor. He used that wisdom and riches to serve God, to build the temple, that David had desired to build, in accordance with the plan God gave to David. However, as he grew in honor and riches, his inclination grew toward further riches, further attention to self, rather than toward God, until at the end of his life, he was alienated from God.

The Almighty, knowing the weakness of the flesh, gave instruction regarding the mind of any who would become king in Israel. In the time of Samuel, Israel desired a king, to be like the other nations. God warned His people that such a king would take their sons, daughters, fields, vineyards, the tenth of their seed - and would make them his servants (1 Samuel 8:11-16). As a result, Israel was warned:

"... ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day."
1 Samuel 8:18.

Further, God had given instruction for those who would be kings in Israel. They should not multiply horses, neither multiply

wives, nor gold and silver. In addition, God instructed:

“And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book...

And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them:

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandments...”

Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

Solomon did multiply wives, horses and riches: these led him astray from the law of God. “The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (I John 2:16) governed his living. He did oppress the poor, and did pervert judgment and justice - for his desire was to the ways of the world. He was moved to write:

“Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.”

Ecclesiastes 4:13.

Further, we read:

“And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel...” I Kings 11:9.

If one’s heart is turned from God, his walk is in accordance with his own desires; for it is not possible to serve two masters!

Going back to our subject, we realize that there should not be marveling when there is oppression of the poor, and a perverting of judgment and justice; these are the works of the flesh. Those who are in high places seek to be higher, to grow in the things which satisfy the flesh, rather than God. The Almighty looks upon the works of man. He sees all, knows all, judges all, He is higher than any, the “most High”- the One who bestows mercy and grace upon those who seek to serve Him. He also brings judgment upon those who serve self, no matter how high in position they may be. He knows our works and will judge us according to His word, when the Lord Jesus returns to gather His people - separating the sheep from the goats:

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34.

To those seeking the high places in the earth, He will say to them on his left hand:

“... Depart from me, ye cursed, unto everlasting fire (lake of fire), prepared for the devil and his angels:

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal.” Matthew 25:41,46.

Let us remember that God is indeed the Highest - for He is higher than any, no matter how high they may be!

J.A.DeF.

LET NOT THE SUN GO DOWN UPON YOUR WRATH (EPHESIANS 4:26)

Our consideration is taken from Paul’s letter to those at Ephesus - a group of believers joined in like-precious faith through Christ - learning and growing under Paul’s tutelage to be men and women of spirit, no longer walking after the flesh.

Paul wrote to instruct them in the ways of the Spirit, that they might nurture the new man born at the waters of baptism, and put away the old man of flesh and all his evil tendencies:

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24.

The new man rising from the waters of baptism has in figure, buried the man of flesh beneath the waters. As a newborn babe rising anew, he must daily be fed from the word, the knowledge of how to walk acceptably before the Almighty, after the example of His Son, the Lord Jesus. To follow in the path of Christ, one must learn to develop the spiritual qualities of kindness, compassion, forgiveness and love for one’s fellow man, as He so perfectly exemplified. These characteristics are not natural to the man of flesh, but must be learned of the Spirit and diligently practiced.

Our consideration is a similar aspect needing restraint:

“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:” Ephesians 4:26.

By nature, all men are born as “children of wrath”, prone to

the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. In order to change and become a man of spirit, these impulses must be harnessed and controlled. God knows the frame of man that where there is flesh, there will be wrath and anger, therefore, care must be exercised to recognize that it needs taming and should not be left to fester and grow. To "let not the sun go down upon your wrath", teaches of the need to make amends quickly, even before the day is done when we err.

Being able to see the spirit of love from the law, the Lord Jesus taught of the seriousness of anger and how it can impede one's own forgiveness from the Lord:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,
Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in
danger of the judgment:

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother
without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and
whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger
of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be
in danger of hell fire.

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there
rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee;
Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first
be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy
gift."
Matthew 5:21-24.

How could God accept the gift of one who harbors anger at his brother? Therefore, Jesus taught - first be reconciled with thy brother and put away your anger, and your gift will be accepted by the Almighty.

Paul writes to his brethren in Colosse, encouraging them to recognize the flesh's tendencies and put them away:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are
above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
Set your affection on things above, not on things on the
earth.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;
fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil
concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry;"

Colossians 3:1-2,5.

The love of Christ cannot rule in our hearts if there is lodged there a fleshly characteristic like anger against another.

Anger held against another makes us think of Cain and Abel:

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering;

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell.

And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.

And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.”

Genesis 4:3-8.

Abel was a man of spirit, perceiving what was required to please God and accordingly, brought an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. While Cain a man of flesh, undiscerning or uncaring of what was required, was consumed by anger when he was corrected for his lack.

Cain’s countenance reflected an angry spirit and if not remedied quickly with repentance, sin was laying in wait. Instead of clearing the matter, Cain’s anger grew and festered into murder and he rose up and killed his brother.

From the Revelation given John, the Lord Jesus warns, “I come quickly”. We never know when our probation will be ended, either by death or His return. Therefore, we are exhorted to use our time wisely and when in error, quickly act to make amends, while we have the opportunity.

David was one who quickly sought repentance when he failed. Because of this, he was spared the law’s sentence of death for his sin with Bathsheba and the planning of her husband Uriah’s death. Under the law, he would have been stoned, yet because he was quick to hear correction and repent, God was merciful and his sentence was tempered with mercy.

How edifying are the words of the spirit as taught by Paul, helping us to recognize the tendencies of the flesh nature, which must be controlled if we hope to, “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

M.C.S.

SOME THOUGHTS ON FELLOWSHIP

We quote as follows from a publication not connected with us:-

“No true believer would countenance fellowshiping with any who deny that Christ came in the flesh and will return to establish God’s kingdom upon the earth - - - the separation that was threatening to occur in Corinth was between brethren and sisters who shared fundamentals of faith, but secondary issues were driving them apart. These secondary matters each had their advocates, so that separate parties or factions were grouping around and became identified with specific individuals. Disagreement between the factions were driving them even further apart - - -. Paul appealed - - - that ye all speak the same thing. - - - Whatever differences existed, they were not sufficient in the apostle’s judgment to justify either serious disagreement or separation. What then were these secondary matters? the list of problems that were besetting the ecclesia in Corinth was long and serious ranging from misunderstandings over the teaching of the resurrection, to refusing to take action over a case of gross immorality. The apostle’s counsel was clear; many of these issues arose because of endemic disunity in the ecclesia, rather than being the underlying cause of the disunity. - - - Unless the question that disturbs an ecclesia is truly a foundation principle of the faith, there are no reasonable grounds to justify separation. - - - Individuals and groups that stand aside from the fellowship - - - point to specific problems and difficulties, as if these are reasonable grounds for continuing separation believing that they justify decisions that were taken long before any of the problems arose. Yet there are no examples in the New Testament of individual brethren and sisters or groups of brethren and sisters being commended for refusing to associate with other ecclesias, even when those ecclesias had serious problems.”

So the tenor of these words are to excuse and advocate a patience towards disunity, that is when questions are described as “SECONDARY ISSUES”. Our difficulty with accepting such a suggestion is in what Paul actually says as follows:-

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, and that there be no schisms among you; BUT THAT YE BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE SAME MIND AND IN THE SAME JUDGMENT. - - - THERE ARE CONTENTIONS AMONG YOU. - - - Is Christ divided?”
(1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

We ask the Question, that if a “secondary issue” arises, and is persisted in, is that a contention? And if it is a contention which is “long and serious”, yet because there is thought to be “no reasonable grounds to justify separation” being a secondary matter, it should be allowed to continue, in the hope that eventually it is “properly discussed and faithfully resolved.”

Is an ecclesia, or a group of ecclesias in such a condition “perfectly joining together in the same mind and in the same judgment”? Or is it a situation of failing to be “joined together in the same mind”, which is repeating what occurred over the centuries, in what is termed “Christendom”; but which is so very far removed from being Christ’s Dominion!

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

"I will cause them to return - - -"

The above words, which have a former fulfilment, also have a latter day application. As part of their context, there is the lament in the prophecy:-

"Alas - - - it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:7).

There is also the promise:-

"- - - they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I WILL RAISE UP UNTO THEM.- - -" (Jeremiah 30:9).

The prophecy then goes on to say:-

"- - - though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.- - -" (Jeremiah 30:11)

The preservation today of the Jews and their restoration to the land of their fathers is a miracle, and greatly witnesses to the purpose of God that He has with this good earth of His creation, and of an outcome of blessing which is approaching.

The significance of the deliverance of the Jews from the evil enmity of their enemy, Hitler, is a very great sign. It perhaps warrants some study being given to the facts of what the Nazis endeavoured to accomplish. It is now more than 60 years since that dreadful time, when Hitler and his cohorts set about exterminating the Jews. At Auschwitz an area was set up by the Nazis where Jews were to be taken to be disposed of. In 1943 the Nazis were disposing of about 6000 people a day, and these were mainly Jews, though the Nazis were also averse to gypsies who were included in the apprehending and slaughter. Often within an hour of arriving at Auschwitz these were killed, and the bodies would then be burned in the Auschwitz camp's crematorium. Ashes from them were placed upon a procession of lorries and taken to be poured into the river Vistula nearby.

Nazis took their victims by railway to the camp, carefully hiding what they had shortly in store for them, even running the railway right up to the doors of the gas chamber. Their policy was to separate the more able ones from the sick and weak. Children, and women with babies, and the old were taken to what was termed "the showers"; others capable of work employment were selected for a different part of the camp. These were put into production

with a false promise the "work will make you free."! Those sick and weak meanwhile were taken to chambers where there were shower heads, and towels and soap. They were told to undress and remember where their individual piles had been left, for when they came back from "the shower"! So in this subtle way panic was avoided, with thousands being disposed of with ease. Any showing signs of some panic were taken away to another location by the S.S. soldiers, for "calming"; this actually meant a bullet in the head!

It was a determined effort by the Jews' enemy to eliminate the Jewish people.

As the U.S.A. and Britain approached victory in that terrible conflict of 1939 - 1945, the Nazis endeavoured to hide what they had been doing. But some evidence of the evil still remained. The following is a description of one of the buildings which remained:-

"Right next to the chambers of death, is a massive complex of ovens. The cremation of the bodies would have started within minutes of the last person expiring. Those closest to the openings where the Zyklon B gas was dropped in died almost instantaneously. Few lasted more than a quarter of an hour - - -. The manufacturers instructions on the ovens which are still legible to this day claim that 8000 people could be incinerated in a 24 hour period (6000 per day was regularly achieved)."

When the Auschwitz death commander, Rudolf Hoess, was brought to trial at Nuremberg, he admitted the murder of more than three million people. But Germany finally collapsed, and the Nazi leadership ordered the killing of the remaining prisoners. But this was disobeyed because of threatened reprisals by U.S.A. and Britain. The Russian Army, however, freed the Camp (January 27th 1945). As the Russians approached, thousands of remaining prisoners were forced marched into Germany, and many of these, being in a very weak state, died on that final march. "Alas" - - - it was - - - "the time of Jacob's trouble."

A very clever, efficient endeavour had been attempted to eliminate the Jews as a people. What the Nazi forces had failed to perceive was the outcome decreed by the Most High which could not fail. So the word from Heaven promises:-

"I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it"
(Jeremiah 30:3).

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR JUNE 2007

Hamburg, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. & Pleasant Avenue.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30am

Sunday Afternoon Class: 1:45pm

Midweek Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg & Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

Our weekly Bible Class has been changed from Wednesday to Thursday to fit into present circumstances.

Replies to our monthly mailings continue seeking for the offered literature.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Provision for our magazine continues, and its distribution to various lands and districts is a witness that gives satisfaction, even though the present time is "a day of small things."

World events are continually significant, as in them is seen prophetic fulfilment, indicating the Bible message is speaking just as aptly as in former times.