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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

“FEED MY SHEEP”

In recent readings we have listened to these words of Jesus to Simon Peter:

“... Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?
He saith unto him,
“Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He (Jesus) saith
unto him, Feed my lambs.” John 21:15.

Three times Jesus asked Peter, and each time said to Peter: “Feed my lambs/sheep.” Peter did feed Jesus’ sheep until his death in Rome, at the hands of Nero some 30 years after Jesus’ instruction.

We remember that Peter had three times denied Jesus, and also had rebuked Jesus when He spoke of going to Jerusalem to die on the cross, causing Jesus to reply:

“... Get thee behind me, Satan (adversary), thou art an offence (stumbling-block) unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”
Matthew 16:23.

Jesus, soon to die, to be resurrected, and to ascend to His Father, recognized the impulsiveness of Peter, and encouraged him to feed His flock. After Jesus ascended to His Father, the apostles received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, enabling them to speak with other tongues. Peter, having received that power of God:

“... standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.” Acts 2:14.

Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Peter began to feed the sheep, as Jesus commanded, and concluded:

“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.

Peter was prompted to speak of Jesus’ work. Let us listen to Peter as he wrote in AD 60 to his brethren:

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he

suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Who for his own sake bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls"

I Peter 2:21-25.

How does one feed the flock? Peter exhorted his brethren:

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Feed the flock of God, which is among you..."

I Peter 5:1-2.

He continued through verses 10 and 11:

"... the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

I Peter 5:1-11.

The Concordance helps us, showing that "to feed" comes from two words (1) to pasture, to fodder or graze, and (2) as a shepherd or pastor.

When we think of a shepherd, we are reminded of David, who was chosen by God through the prophet Samuel, to be king over Israel in place of Saul. God instructed Samuel:

"... thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee."

I Samuel 16:3.

Samuel looked upon Eliab, the oldest son of Jesse, and said:

"... Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him,

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

I Samuel 16:6-7.

God rejected six of Jesse's sons, and chose his youngest son, David, who kept his father's sheep:

"... the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he."

I Samuel 16:12.

David became king over Israel, leading his people in their giving glory unto the LORD, God spoke of David:

"... I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." Acts 13:22.

David's mind and heart were that of a shepherd feeding his sheep.

Peter was chosen to be one of Jesus' apostles, as He looked upon him:

"... Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."

Matthew 4.18-20.

Thus began Peter's work as an apostle of Jesus, to follow the Good Shepherd who fed His sheep, and gave His life for them.

In obedience to Jesus' words - "Feed my sheep" - Peter did give his life in doing just that, as he wrote:

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth:

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." II Peter 1:12-14,

Peter knew he was soon to die, having fed Jesus' sheep for over 30 years, keeping in remembrance Jesus' instruction: "Feed my sheep," giving his life in spite of scoffers who were adversaries of God's purpose:

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words spoken before by holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." II Peter 3:1-4.

We do need to be stirred up, put in remembrance, to discern how much we need to be fed, strengthened, while in this evil world,

as we strive to be separate from its temptations. Peter helps us to be stirred up, feeding us today by his words as we strive to heed them:

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,
According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue;
Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
II Peter 1:2-4.

It is our hope and prayer that we may be partakers (as this word also means fellowship, or partner - implying companionship) of the kingdom of God, free from the corruption and evilness of this world.

Peter further helps through his obedience to Jesus' admonition: “Feed my sheep” - by his nourishing, pasturing for some 30 years. He continued to feed, as he wrote in love for his brethren, how each can be nourished, looking to the end of God's purpose when Jesus returns:

“... giving all diligence (care and determination), add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience;
and to patience godliness;
And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (love). For if these things be in you, and abound (increase), they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

... for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:
For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
II Peter 1:5-8, 10-11.

Peter has helped to provide the food, the nourishment of the spirit. Let us be diligent to seek it, to digest it, and be strengthened by it, as the fruits of the spirit granted by an Almighty God for those whose hearts are circumcised - the fleshly lusts removed - so that the love of God may enlarge our hearts.

J.A.DeF.

A NEW SONG

We have been given in our recent Revelation reading, a glimpse into the future when the Lord Jesus will be joined to His followers:

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

Revelation 14:1.

Here is a view of Christ and His saints - those whose name are written in the Book of Life - those to be clothed in white raiment because they have endeavored to follow the Lamb. John not only saw the redeemed but also heard them joyful in song:

“And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

Revelation 14:2-3.

The words of that song which John heard, were sung at the opening of the seven seals:

“And they sung a new song, saying. Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

Revelation 5:9-10.

It was a song of fulfillment for promises made and promises received.

The prophet Isaiah wrote of that kingdom which John saw in vision, encouraging Israel to walk worthy of the promises made to the faithful by the Almighty:

“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

Isaiah 35:10.

The ransomed or redeemed are those for whom the Lord Jesus paid the price with His life. His blood was spilled that they may be released from the captivity of sin and death.

It is interesting to see that the words of John chosen in verse 3 of Revelation chapter 14 say, "And they sung as it were a new song". It was not really a new song - it was actually the same song that the redeemed had rehearsed during their time of probation. Blessed with an understanding of God's word, they looked to the end of the promise God had made to the faithful of all generations and tried to live accordingly. David spoke of that same song too in Psalm 40 where he writes of God's help and deliverance:

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.
And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."
Psalm 40:1-3.

That new song put into his mouth, was the hope of singing that song of the redeemed one day before the throne of God. Those nurtured by that word, and who trust in Him for all their blessings, sing His praises now, with hope of doing so eternally:

"Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."
Psalm 40:5.

As the word of God works within one, there is to be shown an appreciation for God's guidance and care, which directs those that are His. These thoughts encouraged David, even in the midst of trial and testing, to have a new song in his mouth each day, for God was with him:

"Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified."
Psalm 40:16.

It is no wonder that the redeemed who sing that song feel blessed, for they have been promised a place in His kingdom, if they have magnified (made large) the Lord during their time of probation.

Understanding that deliverance comes only through God, David realized his prayers for help and guidance must be made constantly, requiring a daily rehearsal as he wrote:

“But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me:
thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O
my God.” Psalm 40:17.

We are as well in a poor and needy state because we are flesh and fail. God knows our frail nature, but as we practice His song, it can turn our heart to Him, seeking repentance, renewal and ultimate rejoicing.

That new song is to motivate and remind us that salvation is just ahead and therefore, we must push on towards it over the hindrances that confront us daily in the world and the frailties within our own flesh.

David again in Psalm 98 shows us the majesty of God’s kingdom to come and how it is to be obtained:

“O Sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.” Psalm 98:1-4.

How true that will be when the Lord Jesus, who sits now at God’s “right hand”, the only One to obtain the “victory” returns, for it will be the privileged work of the redeemed to spread the gospel message to every corner of the earth, so all men know that God’s word is Truth!

In Revelation, John further describes those that sing the Song of the Redeemed:

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:4-5.

They are virgins in a spiritual sense - espoused to one husband and remaining pure from all fleshly influences to become one day, the Bride of Christ:

“And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:5.

Because the flesh has been destroyed, so also will be the evidence of any guile. Yet this characteristic of the flesh must be destroyed during their time of probation, in order to attain unto the status of the Bride. Guile means to be subtle or deceitful - the thinking of the flesh, and should not be in any part of His Bride's life, as Peter admonishes:

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:” I Peter 2:1-2.

Laying aside all fleshly characteristics begins by a spiritual circumcision of the heart - cutting away all that is fleshly and abhorrent to God. Peter goes on to speak of the Lord Jesus' character - the standard to which we strive to attain:

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

WHO DID NO SIN, NEITHER WAS GUILE FOUND IN HIS MOUTH:

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: **BY WHOSE STRIPES YE WERE HEALED.”**

I Peter 2:21-24.

There was no subtlety found in Jesus' responses, yet because He was flesh, how difficult it must have been to perfectly overcome and not allow the flesh to hinder the will of God lodged in His heart.

We are privileged to know His will through the spirit contained in the word. Therefore, let us endeavor Brethren and Sisters to perfect that new song, rehearsing it every day of our living, as we wait in hope for His return.

M.C.S.

SOUND DOCTRINE

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

The above quotation is a prophecy that has gone on to be fulfilled over the centuries, but how much more at this time of the end!?

At the beginning of God's holy word, we have the details of how the wonder of the Creation, which we know, came about. The Bible commences with a clear testimony:-

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”
(Genesis 1:1)

The earth we behold around us; the heaven is seen in the clouds above. But we are now in the time when “they will not endure sound doctrine”.

Let us look at some of the recent media comments, which are so revealing of the deterioration of world thinking, on subjects which previously were treated with a degree of respect, as from the Bible. For example, we will outline, and quote some of the worldly affirmations which move against faith:-

“- - - modern Europeans can be traced back to - - - seven successful clans, each of which is linked to a single woman, our oldest maternal ancestor. This woman is commonly known as “Eve” and she was related to everyone on the planet - - - she lived 150,000 to 200,000 years ago in East Africa AND ALTHOUGH SHE WASN’T THE ONLY WOMAN ALIVE AT THE TIME, she was the only one whose DNA was successful enough to be passed on to us all. - - - The seven daughters of Eve - - - and their descendants spread through Europe between 45,000 and 10,000 years ago. They coped with the adversity of the climates and the scarcity of food in order to pass down their hardy genes to us. - - - The clan mothers were not the only people alive at the time but they were the only ones who have direct descendants living right through to the present day.”

This comment, from an eminent University Professor of genetics, purports to explain one of the developments that have resulted in the life we see around us. However, what does God’s holy word say?:-

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” (1 Timothy 2:13)

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive - - - .

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.”

(1 Corinthians 15:22-24)

Here then are examples of Gods’s scriptural testimony, as against the assertions of the wise of this world. Those who would accept Darwin’s teaching, fulfil that which was prophetically warned against. The profound, yet simple truth, is clear. Worldly wisdom descends into a jargon! Consider the following media comment, one of many:-

“Life on earth owes everything to outer space - - - amino acids, the building blocks of life, in their highest ever concentration (they found) in two meteorites. These space rocks were formed shortly after the birth of the solar system and smashed into Antarctica millions of years ago.- - -

'It may have been meteoritic amino acids and other biologically useful compounds that spurred life into existence.' If it can happen here, why not elsewhere in the universe?"

The upholders of scientific investigation we then see, are filled with what is called scientific explanation about "meteoritic amino acid and other biological useful compounds that spurred life into existence."

Jesus Christ said:-

"- - - He which made them at the beginning made them male and female.

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. - - -

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

(Matthew 19:4-6)

The word of God gives a wholesome explanation about the wonder of human life, because of a heavenly purpose, which gives to us a profound hope. What a blessing it is, to be given the knowledge of this!

A BIBLE CLASS

"IS THERE NO BALM IN GILEAD. . .?"

This question was part of Jeremiah's obedience to God's requiring of him:

"Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD."

Jeremiah 7:2.

Let us look at the circumstances in Judah, when the Lord sent Jeremiah to speak at the temple gate. The chronology indicates that this came about in 600 BC. In 721 BC the ten tribes were conquered by Assyria and were scattered from their land because of their worship of idols, rather than the Lord. This left only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Gilead was a region among those conquered

in 721 BC. Thus Jeremiah was sent to the gate of the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem, to warn the inhabitants of Judah. Let us look at the history of Judah's kings at the time of Jeremiah.

Jehoahaz was king after Josiah's death in 610 BC, who reigned in Jerusalem for three months. He was succeeded by Jehoiakim from 610 to 600 BC, during the time that Jeremiah warned Jerusalem in 600 BC. Jehoiachin succeeded Jehoiakim in 599 BC and reigned for only three months, and was succeeded by Zedekiah who reigned until the two tribes were conquered in 588 BC by Nebuchadnezzar, ending the sovereignty of Israel. This was the history of Judah and Jerusalem during the prophecy of Jeremiah, who witnessed to those entering the temple to worship the Lord. His warning was:

"... Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.
Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD,
The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD are these."
Jeremiah 7:3-4.

Part of God's word spoken by Jeremiah at the gate of the temple was as follows:

"We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!
For, Behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.
When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.
Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country.
Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her?
Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?
Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"
Jeremiah 8:15,17-19,22.

God asked: Why is not the health of my people restored when I have provided a physician - one who cures, heals, or makes whole? Also, I have provided the balm of Gilead. This balm of Gilead is an

ointment made of the resin of balsam trees in Gilead, which promotes healing. It was particularly found on Mount Gilead, and was especially valued, as we read God's word concerning Egypt:

"Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured (healed)." Jeremiah 46:11.

These means of healing - the balm of Gilead and the physician - were available, but brought no healing for Judah, because they would not listen to the warning of God. Consequently, within twelve years Judah was conquered, ending their existence as a nation, according as God, through Jeremiah, had warned them when they entered the gate of the temple soon to be destroyed:

"Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

And I will make Jerusalem heaps (destroyed), and a den of dragons, and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.

And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;

But have walked after the imagination of their own heart,... Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them."

Jeremiah 9:9,11,13-16.

"Wormwood" is a poison, as also is gall - certainly not a means of healing, but deadly, if eaten.

God has provided a means of healing - balm and a physician effective only if used. Judah refused this provision of God, and so perished as a nation! God in His mercy and grace has provided the means of healing for us, if we seek it and respond in the hope of salvation, through the comfort of His balm, and the healing by His physician, the Lord Jesus Christ.

J.A.DeF.

ESTABLISHED WITH GRACE

"It is a good thing that the heart
be established with grace"
Hebrews 13:9

Paul, in our study under consideration, wrote to his Hebrew brethren. To those who were originally given the hope of Israel as Jews, schooled in the law and prophets, and who had now been converted to a new belief in the Lord Jesus - opening their understanding that He was the Messiah promised to their fathers. Paul was building upon their knowledge of the new way through Christ, fearful that any should relapse into the old familiar ways as taught by their elders:

"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;" Hebrews 1:1-2.

The place of the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah for the Hebrews, was a dramatic change to their thinking. Here was the long awaited Redeemer, the One promised to their fathers, in the form of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul was thus emphasizing His place in the whole purpose of God from the beginning, as he said:

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
Hebrews 13:8.

There is unchangeableness in God's word, for from the beginning as He called out the Hebrews, or "Passers Through", to be His own peculiar people, they had been taught His word from the law and the prophets. Paul knew their background, for he himself was born a Hebrew, and warned them not to be caught up again in the traditions that the elders had created, and which they had learned as children. These were man-made interpretations, dwelling on rules and regulations and not reflecting the mercy and love contained within His word and its spirit of love:

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.
For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace;

not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." Hebrews 13:9.

To the Corinthians, Paul likewise wrote of this grace of God:

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;" I Cor. 1:4-5.

Again to those members of the church at Ephesus, Paul also wrote of grace:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:4-5,8-9.

The traditions of men under the law, did not gender compassion or love for one's fellow man. This is why Paul said it was to be shunned. The man of God must instead seek the grace and favor of God, which can come only by displaying a love for God and one another. In return, grace is the gift He bestows only upon those He loves.

Peter wrote in a likewise manner concerning God's grace:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." I Peter 5:6-10.

Recognizing the self-will tendency of the flesh, the man of God must put away reliance on his own strength and look to God for help and deliverance in all his daily struggles. If found so doing, Peter wrote, in return God will in love, "make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you".

Only through belief in Christ can this grace from God be received - there is no other path to life everlasting. John also goes on to explain that fellowship and grace from the Father is only possible through belief in His Son:

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:
But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

I John 1:6-7.

Paul himself being a Hebrew, knew the dangers there were for these former Jews, now converted to belief in Christ, to slip back into the old ways of the law, and so encouraged them on in the newly found fellowship they had received in Christ.

Man was made in the image of God and in the beginning His work was good. Yet because the man of flesh failed, God's grace was needed to provide a means of covering and atonement through belief in the One whose blood would be shed for His brethren. Only through Him could that breach be healed, that was made when man disobeyed.

Paul himself knew the grace of God first hand, for he was given a hindrance in his flesh. We feel it may have been poor eyesight which troubled him in his daily life, and as like Jacob who halted and walked leaning on his staff, Paul was hampered by his own particular physical weakness. This was a constant reminder to him that he needed the help of God every day in his living, for his own was not adequate:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

II Corinthians 12:7-9.

He felt the hindrance of his weakened flesh nature every day and being flesh, recognized its humbling effect, save for the grace of God:

“For the wages of Sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6:23.

Wages are something, which are earned, and when we sin we have rightly earned the punishment of death. Yet through the prayers of the Lord Jesus, who is the grace and gift of God, we can be washed clean of our transgressions and escape the bonds of death, which we so richly deserve. How vital it is then that our hearts be established in His grace as Paul so eloquently teaches.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“The heart of the fathers to the children.”

The prophet Malachi, speaking of the coming of “the Sun of righteousness” to bring about a “healing” in this troubled world, he was particularly specific of the help which would come “to the children”. How pertinent the words are:-

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;
And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,
and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come
and smite the earth with a curse.”

(Malachi 4:5-6)

The reference to Elijah is taken up in Luke’s gospel record. Speaking of a son who was born at the later time of Jesus Christ, of that Jewish priest Zacharias, Luke says of John the Baptist:-

“ - - he shall go before him (Christ) in the spirit and power
of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and
the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a
people prepared for the Lord.” (Luke 1:17)

But the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy does not end there. The great and dreadful day of the Lord is yet to come! There is also the holy warning that if there is an absence of reconciliation of parents and children, when difficulties between the generations arise, the Eternal Creator is certainly not unmindful of such a deterioration! Consider then the following media reporting:-

“ - - the criminal justice system struggles - - when you’ve
got a parent who just doesn’t care, what do you do?
- - Teenagers as young as 15 and 16 are, on average,
downing at least sixty seven bottles of wine a year. That is
the same as almost one and a half pints of strong lager a
night - - up to 40 per cent of 15 and 16 year-olds from the
poorest districts and a third of those from better-off areas,
binge drink - - .
Binge drinking was classed at drinking more than five

drinks in one go and would be enough to leave the teenager drunk and out of control. - - - The responsibility is not just on the government but on - - - parents to recognise the scale of the problem. - - -

Without a clear message that under-age drunkenness will not be tolerated we will continue to see the high levels of alcohol bingeing and related violence - - - Drink fuelled incidents (are) up by fifty per cent in (the) cities - - -."

So is seen, the incapability of parents in dealing with their young ones, or in some cases a dreadful indifference. God shows through His holy word that He is greatly concerned about such a situation. His scriptural promise is that at such a time, a Heavenly working will take place:-

"- - - to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. - - -"

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR JUNE 2008

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 beloved Sister Nancy Brown fell asleep on March 12th in her 93rd year, after a short illness. She has been an inspiration and example to us for many years, and now rests waiting for the resurrection to the judgment seat of Jesus Christ when He returns to gather God's people.

We are grateful for God's care in response to prayers for our Sister Martha White in her recent surgery.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Provision continues, in the mercy of our Heavenly Father, for this work to go on. The endeavour is to have, and to go on seeking to have, the spirit of the Truth. In this spiritually darkened world what a wonderful blessing it is, to have fellowship in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sister Nancy Brown is now lain to rest. What a special comfort of Hope we have at such a time as this. She was a stalwart example of faith to us all during the days of her probation. We rejoice with those in the United States with whom we have the love, which is of the spirit of the Truth, that we have the Resurrection to look forward to!