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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

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

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THE BEATTITUDES - THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

We have been reading in Matthew of the Lord Jesus' ministry and a portion of His sermon on the mount referred to as, "The Beatitudes". This was not the first opportunity He had to preach the word of God, for we have read in Matthew 4:23:

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan."
Matthew 4:23,25

Jesus through His ministry had sparked interest in the multitudes as news of the miraculous works performed spread. Others were soon drawn to seek Him out and hear for themselves. As the crowds grew in number, He went up into a mount in order to be seen and heard by the vast multitude:

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them..." Matthew 5:1-2

From the basis of the Law of Moses, He brought to light the spirit of love contained therein - not the rigid letter of the law as taught by the Scribes and Pharisees. He taught of the blessings offered through obedience to God's word - not only in this life, but in the Kingdom age to come.

The world speaks of this sermon as, "The Beatitudes", meaning giving a feeling of bliss, but these words have a deeper meaning to be seen fulfilled in the Kingdom age:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

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

Matthew 5:3-12

These blessings in a small way may be partially fulfilled in this life, to those who endeavor to be meek, merciful, pure in heart etc., but the deeper message to be perceived, was the hope of complete fulfillment in the Kingdom of God when His Son returns.

From this list given to guide one in the path of righteousness, perhaps the most difficult to be achieved is stated in verse 10:

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
Matthew 5:10

The Lord Jesus was making the point that the subduing of the flesh does not come without a price. It requires constant diligence to restrain the natural flesh impulses inherent in man. Often when others not endeavoring to walk in restraint, view a man endeavoring to do so, persecution follows because they run not in tandem - they are not of the same mind. The righteous man’s behavior brings a subtle self-condemnation upon their own unrighteousness and so they lash out in anger.

David experienced this sort of persecution during his lifetime - especially from Saul, and often addressed this in his psalms, calling out to God for help and deliverance. His words in the following 37th Psalm, reflect the same spirit of Jesus’ words we have just considered for one to endeavor to become the salt of the earth or a light not hid:

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.
Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.
Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”
Psalm 37:1-5

The Lord Jesus likened this struggle against one’s flesh to salt - a most valuable and prized commodity, especially in bygone years:

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”
Matthew 5:13

A simple concept to understand, for salt in those days was of great value to season, preserve or dry food. If it loses its saltiness it is useless and

cannot be used for its intended purpose. He showed the people great miracles and taught them the Truth of God's word, yet if they failed to apply it in their living, His work was of no effect upon them.

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.
Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16

Again, the same message, that if they received the word of God in their living, it should shine forth by their manner of speech and good deeds to be observed by all. No one lights a candle to give forth light and then hide it under a basket. To be of any use, it must be allowed to shine forth, illuminating all who look upon it. To hear His words and fail to apply it in one's living is a life wasted!

To Israel, schooled under the Law of Moses he said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

Matthew 5:17

He knew from Israel's own history that they had misused the law and its intentions - filling it with the traditions of the elders and the precepts of men (not God's). Therefore, He came to show God's intent in giving the law - to guide His people into the path of righteousness and salvation. To those wayward teachers of the law, He said:

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:19-20

The scribes and Pharisees applied the law for their own benefit - to garnish praise and respect from the people, as teachers of the law. They exacted heavy burdens upon the people - demanding every point of law upon them, negating the love and mercy to be seen within the law's precepts.

Jesus' work was to bring the people again to God - by fulfilling it in the spirit of love as intended by the Almighty. Under the law it was said, “Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment”.

However, in the spirit of love, the Lord Jesus added to their understanding:

“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.” Matthew 5:22

What leads to murder is anger - allowing the flesh to overflow unrestrained and exert itself. Better to understand what anger can lead to and quell it quickly lest it become a burning inferno - uncontrollable. This was the Spirit's intention to guide a man under the law to act always in kindness and consideration for others, so that even anger against another, was frowned upon.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:
But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”
Matthew 5:27-28

This teaching of Jesus focuses on the power of the mind - that thinking in a wayward manner is the first step to something far worse. This is the way of the flesh's thinking if not harnessed and recognized as the beginning of evil, it will quickly lead one out of the path of life.

Repeated throughout this chapter, Jesus gave instruction for prayer. Not that this was to be repeated verbatim as many today do in calling it, “The Lord's Prayer”. But rather, that these facets be remembered when one prays - seeking to thank God for his many blessings.

To remember to always honor and hallow God's name in respect.

To recognize daily a belief in His purpose - looking forward in hope that His coming kingdom be established on earth, and that we may too be at one with Him and His purpose to be accomplished.

To thank Him for the provision of our daily food which comes from His Hand.

To ask for forgiveness for our own trespasses knowing that unless we forgive others their offences against us, we in turn will not be forgiven by our Heavenly Father.

To ask for His guidance in our living - that He give us indication and direction that we not be lead of our own will into areas of temptation to which we may succumb.

And lastly to recognize His holiness and power which controls every aspect on earth - giving Him the honor and respect that is due unto His name.

These points we are to remember and include in our daily prayers to Him, not in vain repetition of the same words as Jesus pointed out:

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” Matthew 6:7-8

It is not the quantity or repetition of prayer, but the quality of the words chosen, and that they come with sincerity from the heart, giving honor and glory to Him and asking for His help and guidance that we may walk in a manner pleasing to Him to the end of His purpose for us.

The Scribes and Pharisees were known for praying openly on the streets - to be seen by others so they would be perceived as holy and religiously minded. Jesus points out that this only garners the praise of men - not God's:

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”
Matthew 6:5-6

“Openly” means to manifest or be obvious. If one was motivated to please God and praise Him secretly and not to be seen and praised of other men, then this is pleasing to the Father and He will in turn praise such a man openly in the Kingdom of God.

God looks for a simple understanding of His word in His people, that they recognize the power of their flesh nature and endeavor to control its tendency to evil - to be meek and ready to repent when it raises its head to dominate in one's life. He does see all things and within the hearts of all who seek Him and will reward one day openly by giving them the gift of everlasting life in the Kingdom of God on earth, when in His purpose His Son returns.

M.C.S.

A FREEWILL OFFERING

At the time of writing, it is the week of Easter Sunday. Easter is celebrated as a remembrance of the day that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. Because of Jesus' offering of His own life, the resurrection offers us hope, through Jesus, to be part of the kingdom of God. His sacrifice should be remembered every day of every week, and not just on one day of the year, as so many do. Jesus did offer up His life to God, as it was God's will; but He did it of His own free will:

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
And walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself
for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”
Ephesians 5:1-2

We know that under the Law of Moses, the sacrifices and offerings were all a shadow or type of the Lord Jesus. For a sacrifice to be acceptable, it would have to be given in the right spirit, acknowledging a future Saviour. This Saviour would sacrifice Himself, and through His blood there could be atonement, or one could be made at one with God. It is this thought that brings to mind the words of Malachi, who spoke against the priests and their lack of respect for their duties:

“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?
Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.
And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto the governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.
And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.
Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.
For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.
But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is

polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.

But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”
Malachi 1:6-14

Malachi was the last prophet of the Old Testament, and the last prophet seen for more than 400 years. It is apparent by his words that the priests, of his time, did not respect or honor the significance of the offerings which they performed.

By contrast, we are to live our lives in accordance with the will of God by sacrificing ourselves to Him. In other words, we are to dedicate our lives to God by sacrificing the fleshly tendencies and replacing them with the spiritual ways as a show of faith:

“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

Our offerings are not like those under the Law of Moses, but are the things we give up, in this life, in the name of God through Jesus, so that we might be those lively stones in God’s spiritual house:

“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:

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them

which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

I Peter 2:1-8

Let us not forget that it was not only the Lord Jesus’ death and resurrection that gives us the hope, but it was also the conquering of His flesh and the perfect freewill offering of Himself. If He had not perfectly obeyed, His sacrifice would have been no different than any of ours; and, such a great hope would not be given to us, through Him:

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.
And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the seals thereof?
And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.
And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.
And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.” Revelation 5:1-5

It is our work to sacrifice our flesh nature to God. Our sacrifices are not perfect, and we need the covering of Jesus’ offering to atone for our shortcomings. We must remember to thank God for providing us with the perfect sacrifice to make up for our failings; and, to thank Jesus for His perfect love of God, making that sacrifice possible.

E.J.M.

“BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS”

We are indeed privileged to read the words Paul wrote to his Galatian brethren, words which express his concern and care for them, words sent to help them in their shared relationship and struggle to overcome. The Spirit caused this letter to be preserved for our help as well. Let us then seek the message of help it contains, as we strive together in our family bond.

In Galatians 6 verse 2 Paul writes:

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

To “bear” we find comes from a word meaning “to walk” and we also find that the word burden comes from the same word “to walk”. Therefore, this verse could be read, “walk ye one another’s walk”. Is this not telling us to place ourselves in one another’s position? By putting ourselves in the other person’s shoes, so to speak, we see what their walk is like and so know their burden. The importance of being able to place ourselves in our brother’s position cannot be overlooked, it is a necessary requirement, an upholding of the unity of fellowship we share one with another. If we can, we are told we fulfil the law of Christ.

Paul states this same message perhaps in more familiar words in chapter 5 of Galatians verse 14:

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

To love another as thyself requires a giving of ourselves, a serving one another as, really, we would like to be served. This love must be the essential ingredient in our determination to bear one another’s burdens, for by that love we can know each other’s walk. It follows then, that we should be better able to serve one another if we can grow in that love.

We might ask ourselves, how can we grow in love? The growth of anything which is to be of any value requires a care. In the case of love, a care within us to nurture its development. Again Paul helps us in another of his letters, one to Timothy. In 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 5 we read:

“Now the end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned :“

What Paul tells us in this verse, is really a message which we must recognize was sent through him, by God, so that the end of God’s command to us is love, love out of a pure heart, love out of a good conscience, love out of faith unfeigned.

Let us examine with care these three qualities through which our love must be expressed, to help us grow in the love which is the end of God’s command and that same love which will help each of us bear one another’s burdens.

What is a pure heart? “Pure” we find means “to be clean, clear”. In that which is truly clean or clear, nothing can be hid. Our flesh given the opportunity tends to hide that which is within our hearts, if they are unclean, but if our heart is clean, striving to be pure, it will erase the uncleanness of the flesh and show forth its purity. We read in Romans 2 verses 28 and 29:

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew, which is one of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

To circumcise our heart is to cut off the fleshly lusts and to turn from a confidence in the flesh to a trust in the spirit. A circumcised heart is a pure heart. It is a heart out of which the spirit of love can flow unhampered. By such an outpouring our love will stream to whatever place of need there may exist. Such a springing forth of love in our relations together, cannot but help lift each of us up, to support the burdens of one another.

Out of a mutual pureness of heart we are assured that only blessing can come as the Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew 5 verse 8:

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

Only those who strive to cut off the flesh of the heart in order to purify it, will be allowed to come before God as David likewise confirms in Psalm 24 verses 3-5:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”

In order to be granted this blessing we must display out of a pure heart our love in bearing of one another’s burdens. This is the spirit of love which God will be pleased to see in us. Let us heed the words of Peter in his first epistle, chapter 1 the 22nd verse:

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”

The next quality Paul reveals to us in order to grow in love is, “out of a good conscience.” Conscience, according to the Dictionary is “the moral sense which distinguishes right from wrong”. Going to the Concordance, we find perhaps a much deeper meaning as we see that the word conscience comes from two prime roots: the first meaning “union’ and the second “to know” Conscience then is a union to know. It is a union to know and discern what is good from what is evil. Are we not given this ability by God, so that we can co-perceive with Him what it is we must do? A good conscience can make us perceive with God. It can serve as a mighty guide in directing our love towards

others if we are sensitive and submissive to it. It is often difficult to follow our conscience since it tears at the flesh. Our conscience makes the flesh do what it doesn't want to. It consumes the flesh causing pain, but the smoke of its consumation is that which pleases God. As love out of a good conscience is allowed to shine forth towards one another, will not its rays lighten any burden which is being borne?

The final quality Paul tells us will help our growth in love is faith unfeigned. To feign anything we know is to make-believe, to pretend, to invent or represent falsely. Unfeigned then is just the opposite. Unfeigned is to be genuine, without hypocrisy, without dissimulation. Faith unfeigned, is a living faith, not a dead or empty show. James helps us through his epistle the 2nd chapter the 14th to 17th verses:

“What doth it profit, my brethren though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?
If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food,
And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful of the body; what doth it profit?
Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

Unfeigned faith requires works, works towards one another which reveals an unfeigned love. It is not a case of saying, I have to love and so display of it through empty deeds, but an inward fervent desire to truly reach out in love through a genuine faith. What a help we can give in bearing one another's burdens if our show of love can be as intense as this.

Paul again helps us in Romans chapter 12 the 9th verse:

“Let love be without dissimulation. (let love be unfeigned)
Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.
Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love: in honour preferring one another;”

In what other way can we better reveal our brotherly love than in our bearing of one another's burdens? To know what our brother's walk is like and to come alongside in his time of need is our very own responsibility, really part of our own burden, as Paul says in verse 5 of the 6th chapter of Galatians:

“For every man shall bear his own burden.”

In our walk towards the reward of life everlasting, we must remember that it is an individual effort, for we cannot bear entirely the burden of any who are not willing to bear their own share of that weight, for God we know

will not allow this to happen. So let us examine ourselves carefully in regards to our responsibility to one another to make sure we are bearing our own, as well as our brother's burden.

We can be helped in this work if we can keep in mind the message of our brother Paul from God, that one word and end of God's commandment - Love!

Love allowed to flow forth out of a pure heart under constant purging;
Love - shown out of a good conscience which is striving to perceive with God; Love - working out of faith unfeigned in all genuineness.

Let us then, keep in mind our need to grow in all these qualities of love. As we do, the love manifested can bind us ever closer in our burdens to fulfil that law of Christ which can enable us to walk as Christ has walked, in perfect love.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

We have read from the record in Matthew of a miraculous event termed, "the transfiguration" of Jesus, as witnessed by three of His disciples. We read of this event in Matthew 17:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."
Matthew 17:1-3

This word "transfigure" means to change or transform. He seemed to change before their very eyes - glowing white and beautiful, brightly as the sun, while there appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him. How did the disciples know this was Moses and Elias since they obviously had never seen them? Their understanding was enhanced through the power of the Spirit, so that these three disciples could glimpse the glory of which the Lord Jesus would soon partake after His death and resurrection to immortality.

Only a few days previous, the Lord Jesus asked His disciples:

"...Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?
And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias;

and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:13-16

He was pleased with Peter's response, for the time was drawing near to His death and He was concerned to bring His disciples into a closer awareness of who He was and what would be accomplished ONLY by His death - the hope of salvation through His name.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 16:17

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Matthew 16:21

Through the word of prophecy, Israel had been waiting for the Messiah's arrival for hundreds of years. His coming they believed would herald in the new nation of Israel restored, when the Christ would reign over the entire world from Jerusalem and peace and prosperity would reign in the Kingdom age for all men who would accept Him as their King. It was natural that with the realization that Jesus was the Christ, the disciples believed this kingdom would now be established by Him. They would be looking forward to the deliverance from Roman occupation and the establishment of the nation of Israel in peace.

Jesus with the power of the Spirit, knew of their thoughts and misconceptions. They didn't fully realize that in order for the Kingdom to be a reality one day, He must first offer up his life as a perfect sacrifice, die and be raised again to immortality. This is why He was so diligent to explain the events which would shortly be happening, yet Peter's (and the other disciples') lack of understanding was evident when learning of His upcoming death, said:

"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Matthew 16:22-23

Peter did not grasp that His death was necessary in order for the hope of the Kingdom age to be realized. The Lord Jesus rebuked him because

although Peter was expressing love for Him that He suffer no harm, it was not a spiritual help to hear this - it would weaken His own resolve, for He knew the suffering that lay ahead for him and which must be endured. He must face it with determination and resolve and Peter's misguided attempts to shelter Him from this end, was not in God's purpose, or His own aspiration to become the way of righteousness and salvation!

By bringing three of His disciples to see His transfiguration, He was showing them the glory that would be His, before it actually happened. He knew they needed this instruction to strengthen them in these last days before His death. He taught them often of the things that would come to pass to strengthen their faith and give them the determination necessary to carry on His work after His ascension to heaven.

During this event, while they watched Moses and Elias talking with the Lord Jesus, the voice of God spoke, causing them great fear; and that same understanding is brought to us today from their eye witness account.

He is now glorified and we wait for His return to set up the Kingdom of God on earth wherein all will be glorified who believe on Him - this is our hope today.

M.C.S.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD'S WORD

In our striving to be children of God we are helped. This help we perceive may be called guidance, indication, instruction, warning, or chastening, all extended to us to nurture our upbringing in the household of God. These helps given by God through the Spirit, are our means of growth and sustenance, therefore they cannot be overlooked. They must be partaken of and valued in the purpose of God.

God is a good provider because He knows precisely what we need and He does provide the food necessary for our proper growth. This food we know is God's word. It is unspoiled, for indeed it has been perfectly preserved throughout the centuries. It has been stored to feed His children, to feed us, for we each have this portion given us of which we are instructed to partake regularly.

When we stop to consider that this provision of God has been supplied to His children since the beginning, we are allowed to see through our portions how God's word has helped those allowed to partake of it at earlier times.

Our brethren and sisters of old had not the Bible as we have it in entirety today, but they had given to them the same provisions of God's word.

This word came to them in various ways, through the law, through the prophets, through messengers sent of God, through vision, through works, through the word manifested in the flesh Jesus Christ, and through His disciples and apostles.

All of these means were provided and they are recorded for our help in God's portion to us — the Bible. It is from the words of this book that we have come to know the great help afforded our earlier brethren and also derive help ourselves from their example as they were nourished on the spiritual food given them of God.

The familiar words in II Timothy 3 verse 16 clearly reveal the intended purpose and help to be obtained from our consideration of God's word. We read:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

Each one of these aspects; doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction which are the ingredients of our scriptural record, make it profitable, or as the Concordance renders it, “helpful”. We know why it is given! The next verse clearly tells us;

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

We can be assured that God gives His word because He wants those who are striving to be His, to be perfect (complete), “thoroughly furnished unto all good works”.

To be “thoroughly furnished” comes from the same word which means “to equip fully, to be completely fitted out”. God gives us His word so we may be fully equipped and fit to do good works.

God is good, all His works are good, He wants our works to be the same, so He provides through His goodness, His word, so that we can be equipped to do good works.

We must hunger after this scriptural food and as we are allowed to partake of it, we must reveal that which it is striving to develop in us - good works.

However, before we can consider anything ‘which might be called good, we must realize that whatever amount of goodness is present in these latter days, is only of God. Only where God is, is there any true good. If our striving then is unto good works, as we know it should be, we must allow our hearts to be influenced by that goodness of God, from which all goodness flows.

Faith and Works

In the record of the example of those of old who were considered children of God, as they were allowed to do good works, lies our help. Let us consider some of those who were helped by God’s goodness to show forth good works, works by which they were found faithful. Going to Hebrews 11 verse 4 we read of Abel;

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

Abel’s sacrifice was regarded by God as being acceptable, it was good in the eyes of the Almighty. A good work wrought by Abel was it not? Abel’s example speaks to us that we too must offer a more excellent sacrifice, that we must give ourselves unto God completely, crushing the flesh.

Again in Hebrews 11 verse 7 we read of Noah:

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

We must ask why God would single out Noah for this task? We are told that;

“... Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” (Gen. 6:9)

The word “perfect” used in the above reference comes from a root word meaning “to be complete” and is this not what God wants a man to be? Noah in his submission to God’s word was revealing a perfect or complete heart, and in so doing, he was strengthened of God to do those works he was chosen by God to do, namely the building of the ark.

Noah’s example speaks plainly to us, that as we have been chosen of God, we must be determined likewise to show forth good works unto God.

Further in this 11th chapter of Hebrews the 8th verse we read of Abraham;

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went”

He departed as the Lord had spoken to him: he obeyed His word just as later he obeyed in the matter of offering up Isaac. These were good works which Abraham wrought in the sight of God, works which justified his being called faithful. We are shown clearly by Abraham’s example that faith and works must go hand an hand.

James exhorts us on this point in the 2nd chapter the 21st to 24th verses:

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

It is clear that we must have more than just faith, we must exhibit the good works to accompany that faith.

There are many more examples of those who in faith wrought good works, such as Joseph, Moses, David, but in all of these faithful brethren of old there was a common intention to serve God. They accomplished this

through good works done in faith, all done in the spirit of serving God, all done by the help of God's goodness extended to them.

By this same goodness, we are to find the help to serve God in a way which is pleasing in His sight.

This help we find through our Father's word, just as those before us found and were able to serve God by that word. It is clearly revealed in God's word of His desire that all His children serve Him through their time of probation on earth. For it is by this service to Him that God comes to know those who are taking hold of His word and thereby attempting to grow towards perfection.

It is God's desire that we be perfect, be complete, but each of us lack, we fail at times to serve Him as we should.

In this respect we must acknowledge and realize that we would be lost if it were not for the One who in faith and works served God so perfectly, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is in Christ that we are allowed to see manifested the merciful and gracious goodness of God, that goodness through which we can hope to attain unto perfection.

How well Paul reveals this as he wrote in conclusion to his Hebrew brethren in Heb. 13 verses 20 and 21:

"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 well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Through Jesus Christ our mediator, we are allowed the means of coming unto God to serve Him perfectly. Only through Christ can our weaknesses be overcome and forgiven.

Paul states about Christ in Heb. 4 verse 15 that;

"For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Is this not goodness! That Christ can be touched, that He can feel sympathy for our weaknesses, for our failings when we fall short in serving at

all times as we should? Because Christ can do this, Paul goes on to state in verse 16:

“Let us therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

How much brethren and sisters, we need and have needed at all times, this mercy and grace, and especially now as the world serves more and more itself rather than God. How urgent then must be our attempt to partake of that good food that God extends through His word, for by it we are helped to grow and be sustained and can be equipped to serve God through good works.

How great an incentive to serve God is extended in the words of John in Revelation 7 verses 14 to 17;

“...These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Having such a great expectation as this set before us, must we not in the goodness of God, during the time which remains until the Lord Jesus' return, go forth with a spirit of determination to serve God completely now in faith and good works, so that by that service we might be found acceptable to serve Him eternally.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR JULY 2013

HAMBURG, NEW YORK

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30 am

Thursday: Bible Class 3:30 pm; Forestville, Hamburg and Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

Heartfelt gratitude is felt for the thoughts and prayers of the brethren and sisters on behalf of one here having undergone surgery. The mercy of God is truly felt as trust is put in the hands of the True Physician.

With summer in full swing, the warmth and beauty of God's creation comes together, making us long for the perfection of the Kingdom to come. May we be positively influenced by all of God's blessings in order to endeavor to serve Him acceptably.

M.C.S.

MANCHESTER

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30 am

Thursday: Bible Class 2:00 pm

The months continue for the Ecclesias and there is much for us to rejoice in. We feel our Heavenly Father's hand near to us.

The time when our Lord Jesus was on this good earth and gathered those twelve disciples to Him comes again to our thoughts. How close to Him they held on, with the exception of he who is referred to as the Traitor. And we think, Oh, what an end for him at Christ's return to this earth. Standing before Jesus at the judgment seat of the Lord, he will feel great shame at his failure.

As we continue as an Ecclesia we ourselves pray for help to hold on to the rejoicing of faith.

For more information or to read our literature, log onto:

www.remnantofchristsecclesia.com