

OCTOBER 1955

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

REMEMBER YE THE LAW OF MOSES MY SERVANT

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

UPHOLDING THE TRUTH

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

All Communications

W. V. Butterfield
16 Westfield Road,
Cheadle Hulme
Stockport, England

J. A. DeFries
17 Central Avenue
Fredonia
New York, U.S.A.

At the Table of the Lord

“ Be Ye Steadfast and Unmoveable ”

As the mind which seeks instruction contemplates the record of Israel, left in Judges, the impression which stands out is that of their lack of stability. How like human nature always. So long as a judge ruled to keep them in line, the Israelites served God, acknowledged Him as their Father, and looked to Him for their help and strength. But how quickly, when the judge died, as wilful children, they took up their own ways again, a mixing with the people of the land, and a worshipping of strange gods. The record in Judges 3 : 4 is that the nations were left in the land to “. . . prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandment of the Lord. . . .”

Fear Necessary

The failure of Israel was complete and the record is left that we may learn from it. Failure to be steadfast was because of their *lack* of fear and reverence for the Creator, who had brought them forth out of Egypt, preserving them in the wilderness, and finally bringing them to their promised inheritance. Do the words of wisdom’s instruction to her children help us in applying the lesson of Israel’s fall ?

“ *My son, fear thou the Lord and the king ; and meddle not with them that are given to change.*” (Proverbs 24 : 21).

The world and all that pertains to it *is* given to change. It is a quality which does not speak of truth and holiness. The line of demarcation placed by God’s law, keeps His people in the ways of stability and assurance ; but, when fear is lacking, then the mixing with the moveable element begins, and soon stability and steadfastness are gone, and with them, trust and peace.

To be “ given to change ” as the Proverbs puts it, has in its origin a thought of “ folded,” so that one facet is displayed and another side hidden. This helps us to see what instability is and how hurtful to joy and peace. In the Truth, hearts and minds must be clearly shown, brethren and sisters must be able to trust one another, to rest in assurance that reactions will be thus and so. A “ fold ” which conceals certain characteristics, giving possibly a false picture must be removed and thus the members of the Body become *not* given to change, but rather, sure and established.

Singleness of Mind

The example of Israel’s instability is for us. Where in this consideration do we stand ? What further must we guard against, that we are not changeable and unstable ? The Apostle James testifies in chapter 1 : 8—“ A *double-minded* man is unstable in all his ways.” Double-minded—the word means two spirits or two

lives, and it is that which we cannot be or have, for a divided love means a half-hearted love, with service and obedience also divided. One who is one-half desirous of serving God, and one-half desirous of yielding to the flesh, is in a constant state of turmoil and torture ; for, as Israel, there is an idol there in the heart which demands to be worshipped. Such a person the Apostle tells us *is unstable in all his ways*. The words of the Lord Jesus come to mind :

“ No servant can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. . . . ” (Luke 16 : 13).

Within each of us we know there *are* two spirits, but always the battle must be to overcome the one, and to strive towards the immovable spirit of truth and righteousness. However, vigilance can never cease, for the spirit of *this* nature is ever strong to change us, to sway us back to the ease and comfort which the enemy of true wisdom offers. The Proverbs 5 : 3 - 6 helps us to understand that we may not yield to the ways of flesh.

“ For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil : But her end is bitter . . . her feet go down to death . . . her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.”

Who indeed can know the ways of a wicked mind ? They move, they alter to suit whim or convenience. They cannot be pinned down. They twist, they insinuate, and suggest, but fail to leave a sure and definite path that may be traced and perceived. How vividly we have witnessed this very aspect of the flesh, and how determined we must be that our ways are clear, true, and able to be brought to the light. The ways of the strange woman, it is true, we cannot know ; but, how gratefully we must realize that the ways of our God are very different.

God's Ways Unchanging

“ I am the Lord, I change not.” His ways are clear, His requirements simple, but definite—never devious, never confused. He has made them so that we *may* know His ways. It is His desire that each of us seek them, and His promise is that doing so, we may *find* them. What, then, leads to failure and a departure from these ways, so concise, so un-sullied by the reasoning of men ?

The record of Israel is, in Judges 2 : 10, 11—

“ . . . all that generation were gathered unto their fathers. And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord . . . and the children of Israel did evil . . . and served Baalim.”

They “ knew not the Lord.” Even though He was in their midst ! But is it not possible that even though He is in our midst, manifestly so at times, we, too, can fail in this way ? To know Him means

to perceive, to understand His ways, subjecting one's self to them and coming to realize that here in truth is the only stability, the only unchanging thing in all the world. By drawing close to this Power, which never alters, are we not caused to become more like Him? To strive with all our hearts to know God, to love Him, will lead us toward the qualities of steadfastness and immoveableness—then we shall not vacillate as did Israel. If knowing Him becomes a reality, then the spontaneous gratitude will cause us to acknowledge that—

“ Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1 : 17, 18).

This is His mercy ! His great unchangeable purpose in *us*, if we can conform to the image of His Son. Can we understand the loftiness of being “ firstfruits ” of His creatures ? And can we get to that nearness to Him which the Apostle James must surely have felt ? He knew God and knew the Lord Jesus, the confirmer of God's word, and surely experiencing so closely the power of these qualities, he too would be growing towards steadfastness and unchangeableness. Is this a true test of those who would be brethren and sisters of the Lord Jesus, children of His Father, members of the Family of the Almighty God ?

Can our own brethren and sisters look upon us with confidence, sure that we shall stand for right—whatever the cost, temporally speaking ? If the heart is fixed in determination to be among the firstfruits, that will be manifest.

Habits May Bring Complacency

Steadfastness is something which everyone must strive for, and must not be confused with habit. It is possible to regularly attend meetings, read the readings, study subjects; we can take certain duties and do them daily and willingly. These are the habitual doings, the everyday duties which may keep us occupied and feeling that we are doing fairly well. How easy to get into the sense of “ routine.” But what really is the acid test for stability ? Certainly it is the unusual and unexpected, perhaps even such a small incident—a decision needed—but so telling. It is then we are given opportunity by the Spirit to show how truly we are anchored to the Truth. Can we strive harder, brethren and sisters, that nothing take us unawares ? Can we be always preparing for the unexpected storm which will show whether we have built on the Rock or on the shifting sand of human reasoning and desire ?

The Lord God has said through Malachi—“ I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” (Malachi

3 : 6). His mercy is boundless, His covenant is sure, He has promised. Jacob's sons, those who, like Jacob, never let go until the blessing is granted, must go on in patience, but with utter conviction that salvation will be granted if they do not falter.

A Swift Witness

The chapter in Malachi speaks also of what the unchangeable God will be to those who fail to stand, who move from the path He has laid down :

“ And I will come near to you to judgment ; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers . . . the adulterers . . . false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.”

(Malachi 3 : 5).

This is a warning, and are not those who will suffer judgment at His hands, those who are given to change ? A sorcerer—one who practices magic for gain, can cause things to appear differently than what they are, can change even the word of God to suit desire and to add to prestige. Adulterers are those who change from their first love, revealing that it is not a true love. A false swearer—one who, having made a vow, changes and breaks it ; and those who oppress the fatherless and widow, and cheat the stranger of his right—are those who for their own profit alter the word of God, and are changeable always in their own word. All these “ fear not the Lord,” and so cannot and will not become like Him.

Trusting in Him

David, one after God's own heart, proved through trial and sad experience, that his love was true and fixed upon God. Though he sinned grievously, though his life was far from peace and quietness, his faith was unflinching and his vision and understanding of God's greatness and mercy were unchangeable. His words and those of the greater David are to help us toward the stability which will keep us in God's way.

“ Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee : he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” (Psalms 55 : 22). The marginal reading is “ Cast what he hath assigned thee upon the Lord. He shall never suffer the righteous to slip or fail.” Our burdens, our trials, all which might cause us to be saddened or wavering, are *what He has assigned for us*. He has given us *every* trial, and has also given us a way to meet it. If in trust, in Godly fear, we acknowledge our inability seeking mercy and help ; and if we are in submissiveness utterly to His will, we may know He will sustain. *He* will provide and *He* will not permit us to be moved. He is the great unchangeable God, whose end purpose is to see in His people and in this earth, righteousness and love and peace

with Himself, because all men have learned to fear Him and in this fear and fear of failure, have become fastened to Him through His Son, and so can share in the end foretold in Isaiah 33 : 5, 6.

“The Lord is exalted . . . he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation : the fear of the Lord is his treasure.”

His Unchangeable Promise

Brethren and sisters, must we not amongst ourselves feel the peace, not of complacency, but which is given because we are becoming more stable? And in this peace, may we move more toward the stability which is of God and which He has promised to give to His children for ever?

J. A. DeF.

Remember Ye the Law of Moses My Servant

“Honour thy father and mother”—(continued)
(Exodus 20, v. 12)

Further consideration of this command is still necessary if a realisation of its power is to be complete. Because of the lack of appreciation by the human mind of divine things, the importance of these can often only be impressed by their being withdrawn. The present world is a marvellous object lesson in this respect. Failure of home life, degeneration and corruption of society, is traceable in a large measure to the loss by the world of the command to “honour father and mother.” A generation has arisen which regards this as old-fashioned. Children, they say, must not be suppressed (which God never intended). Fancy words are used such as, “They must not have inhibitions (fears of expressing how they feel before all).” To dispel such fears “education” is called “progressive education,” whereby the young child is given a facility of expression, bold, unrestrained, before its mind has been given anything worthy of expression. To help in this, parents and elders must no longer be regarded as superior. Even the blessed names of “Father” and “Mother” must go, and the child be encouraged to call his father “Dick,” “Tom,” or “Harry,” as though he were a playmate of the child’s age. And so precocity is encouraged—called by the satisfied teachers and parents “developed personality,” but which in fact comes near to insolence and irreverence. The child is not slow to be encouraged in wrong ways, as such tendencies are innate. It is much easier to be taught to do as one pleases than to learn to control one’s impulses. The result of such “progressive education” now being practised on both sides of the Atlantic is a child with an attitude of a worldly adult, without reserve, self important, inclined to be combative if not pugnacious, a monstrosity indeed, a worry to

parents and society. How foolish appear the ways of men when judged by those of God. When a command of God is jettisoned, for a while it does not seem to matter. Man experiments and fumbles, and then wonders why so much evil has come upon him. He, with his wife, looks round his home, wonders why his children give him no pleasure, why there is so much discord and rancour, and fails to discover that the breakdown is due to his own fault—the neglect of the counsel of God. When departure from the ways of God takes place matters never get any better, but always worse. The evil in the home is not confined to the home. The “developed personality” of the children, impressive to the parents and teachers, is viewed very differently by others. If only the parents could hear some of the views of their friends about their children, they would be friends no longer. Even then the friends can afford no help. The friends are in the same dilemma and can only bemoan the decline in child behaviour and express horror at some of the extreme results as youths are found guilty of brutal assault, robbery, rape and murder.

Such is the world which we are “in,” but in the mercy of God are not “of.” What a blessing indeed to be allowed to see the simple cause of this great evil, that we may return to God’s command to value its power and beauty more than we have ever done before.

The next lesson to be learned is that the children cannot honour father and mother more than father and mother honour God. Not an easy lesson! A lesson which Israel, as a nation, failed to learn, although their fathers had heard the command spoken directly by God! As the Spirit so incisively exposes the reason for Israel’s failure, it may be that a consideration of this will enable us to grasp the lesson which Israel as a nation failed to do.

“He shall turn the hearts of the children to the fathers”

(Malachi 4, v. 6)

The context of these words is impressive. They appear as the last inspired words of the Old Testament: the last words to the nation of Israel until the coming of John the Baptist announcing the Messiah. Their setting, too, is equally impressive:—

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant. . . .

“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, v. 4-6).

The issue presented to man by these words, indeed to the whole world eventually, is either catastrophe or blessing, dependent entirely upon whatever is meant by the hearts of the fathers and children being turned to each other. Here was a warning, a last warning to

the nation of God's choice. Some four hundred years passed, then how wonderful it is to hear those very words spoken by the angel to the father of John the Baptist :—

“ *He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit. . . .* ”

“ *And many of the children of Israel shall turn to the Lord their God.* ”

“ *And he shall go before him 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, vv. 15 - 17).

Careful scrutiny of these words is necessary to find what was to be the operative power in bringing some of Israel to repentance—to turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. The secret power was to be discovered by “ turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers.”

Then their hearts must previously have been away from each other, for hearts turning to each other must unite, becoming one in love and purpose. There is, then, in the words of the prophet, first fulfilled in the work of John, a disclosure of family rupture, parents and children not united in heart. And the restoration was to be achieved, not by the panaceas of the philosophers, but by turning :—

“ *The disobedient to the wisdom of the just : to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.* ” (Luke 1, v. 17).

What command had the nation of Israel forgotten which had resulted in the hearts of parents and children being divided ?

“ *Honour thy father and mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* ” (Exodus 20, v. 12).

Now their forgetfulness had brought them near to being smitten with a curse (orig. utter destruction), and here in the gracious provision of God was a last chance to “ hear ” the command and avoid the calamity. How wonderful are His ways which provide for such blessing in the keeping of His Law—blessing in the home, and blessing in the nation. The divine appeal, however, was to a stiff-necked people. Few heard. The calamity of “ utter destruction ” must come but not without a further warning. Jesus upbraided the people because they would not hear :—

“ *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. . . .* ”

“ *Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.* ”

“ *For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother : and, whoso curseth father and mother, let him die the death :* ”

“ *But ye say, if a man shall say to his father and mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free.* ”

“ *And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother :* ”

“ *Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.*”
(Mark 7, vv. 7 - 13).

In these words the Lord put His finger upon the sin of the nation. The attitude and behaviour of their children were an indication of the apostasy of the parents, who like so many modern parents had allowed their children to grow up without any regard for their parents needs. In fact they said, like so many do now, that their children were not to be compelled to serve father and mother, and if they should do anything for father or mother, “ it is a gift,” something unnecessary, and unexpected, and so far had the training of the child been neglected, that like to-day, parents suffered him “ no more to do ought for his father or mother.”

The word used by the Lord Jesus for “ gift ” is the Hebrew Corban, the same word used for the offerings made to God. The comparison insinuated by the Lord Jesus between the child’s service to father and mother, and the parents’ to God is most searching by the use of this word. The untrained, erratic service of the children amounting to no more than lip-service was described as Corban—a gift, the same as the offerings of the parents to God when viewed by the Almighty.

The indictment of the Lord Jesus was dreadful. The nation had failed to honour God, by parents failing to teach their children, and being an example to their children, of that honour of which God required. As the children grew up and became parents, the declension became worse until the nation was corrupt and only worthy of being smitten with the “ utter destruction ” spoken by the prophet Malachi.

A great number of those who heard the warning of the Lord Jesus would be alive forty years later when indeed the nation was smitten with “ utter destruction.” After a terrible ordeal of two years siege Jerusalem was taken by the Romans in A.D. 72, the Temple burnt, and the Jews taken captive. The great “ iron ” power of Rome must have accounted this one of its greatest victories, for there still remains in Rome a large and elaborately engraved triumphal arch. On one of the frescoes can be seen the poignant sequel of disobedience to the command of God for there the captive Jews with their children can be seen carrying the Light-stand of the Temple in the ignominy of utter national destruction up the Capitoline Hill amidst the acclamation of their victors !

All because Israel as a nation failed to learn the power and blessing contained in the command :—

“ *Honour thy father and mother that thy days may be long upon the land the Lord thy God giveth thee.*”

To know the command is not enough. Many Gentiles recite it as one of the “ ten ” commandments. Its power must be gratefully

appreciated if its blessing is to be received now, with further blessing in that day when Elijah shall come and the Jews first and then the whole world shall be given new fathers—whose inheritance of the land shall be for ever. (to be continued)

“Contending for the Faith once delivered unto the Saints”

For nearly six thousand years the work of “earnestly contending for the faith” has continued and still continues for “yet a little while.” From the divine standpoint it is a work of supreme importance, as is shown by the fact that the Creator has seen fit to leave on record in the Bible so much of its history.

Nothing could be farther from the truth than the popular idea of *contending for the faith* which so many associate with “evangelical campaigns” and “mass conversions.” Contending for *the* faith is quite different, as even a brief review of the Scriptures will show, for it has always been a “still small voice of truth” quietly testifying to the holiness of God and to His immutable purpose with the earth. For the most part it has been a voice unheeded and ignored by a world preoccupied with its cares and troubles, and satisfied with its false religions.

Its Long History

The long and sad history of the *contending for the faith* is distressing to read. In every generation, those so engaged have been hated and despised. Many have lost their lives, and others persecuted and imprisoned. It has always been the same. Abel, the first to contend for the faith, was slain by his brother Cain. Moses, who so faithfully led the children of Israel through the wilderness, had to lament that “they be almost ready to stone me.” Jeremiah was cast into a dungeon after nearly losing his life in a miry pit, whilst the Lord Jesus, who so perfectly contended for the faith, was finally condemned to death and crucified. Later the apostle Paul was beaten, stoned and imprisoned. These examples could be multiplied:—

“ . . . others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins : being destitute, afflicted, tormented : (of whom the world was not worthy), they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. . . .” (Hebrews 11).

What a dreadful testimony to the wretchedness of human nature, that those who contend for the righteousness of God should do so in fear of their lives ! How true are the words of the Lord Jesus that “he that doeth evil *hateth* the light” !

The Saddest Feature

Let the history of the "contending for the faith" be carefully examined, and a startling fact emerges: *the great majority of those called to contend for the faith have finally left the faith themselves!* It would be difficult to believe this, were the Scriptures not so clear. Without doubt this is the saddest feature of all, yet lamentably true. How often, for example, do we read of the nation of Israel departing from the ways of God—from the very faith for which they were called to contend. Time and time again it happened throughout the nation's tempestuous history. Later, in the days of the apostles and early disciples, it was just the same. Many who embraced the Truth and earnestly contended for it, later fell away. The human heart is sometimes unbelievably treacherous!

Thus the whole history of the contending for the faith abounds with examples of men and women who after years of faithful testifying finally left the faith, *and so had to be contended against.* Hence their bitter hatred. Think of men like Solomon and Jehoshaphat, or like Hymanaeus and Philetus: men who earnestly contended for the faith and then later fell away, *taking many with them.* One could almost say that the history of the Truth is a history of departures from the Truth, commencing with Cain who first fell away, right down to the present time.

Contending — A Failure ?

If numbers meant anything, then it would have to be admitted that no work in the world has been such an abject failure as that of *contending for the faith!* Noah, described as a "preacher of righteousness" failed to get a single response to his appeals, other than from his own household. Jeremiah fared little better. After warning and appealing to his brethren the Jews for forty-one years, only two men are recorded as being with him. It has nearly always been so: the times when men have responded in numbers have been few and far between.

The human heart, it would seem, is easily hardened, and once hardened it remains incredibly hard and impervious to every effort to soften it. Rarely will it respond either to appeals or to rebuke. Once stiffened, all reasonings, arguments and even indisputable facts will fail to touch it. Noah must have appreciated this by bitter experience as he testified and appealed to his own generation. All who have contended for the faith have met the same experience, especially from those who have once known the faith. The counsel given to Ezekiel comes forcibly to mind—

"Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation. . . . For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear or whether they

will forbear (for they are a rebellious house) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.” (Ezekiel 2).

What an indictment of the heart—the heart that has become hardened ! Yet everyone who has truly *contended for the faith* has at times had to do so, sadly, in the spirit of Ezekiel “ whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.”

The Contending To-day

Throughout the centuries, the human heart has remained unchanged. It is still “ deceitful and desperately wicked.” It is still easily hardened, making it quite unresponsive to every effort to soften it. It must not be expected, therefore, that the contending for the faith will be any more fruitful now than in the days of old—nor is it. Talk, for example to the man who believes in a “ personal devil.” You can reason with him, appeal to him, and even prove from the Scriptures that the Word does not teach of a *personal* devil, a fallen angel responsible for the world’s troubles : but he will not be moved ! Only in the rarest of cases will there be any response. Or again, talk to the man who does not regard baptism as being *essential* for salvation. The clear words of Christ that “ except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God ” can be quoted : likewise the baptisms of the early disciples may be mentioned. Usually, though, it is of no avail, for the heart has become stiffened, bringing resentment and anger.

This incredible hardness of the human heart may seem difficult to understand, but the Lord Jesus found it so, and so have all His disciples. Is it not just the same in this generation ? Many have left the faith after years of patient contending for it. You can appeal to them, you can try to reason with them ; you can plead with them endeavouring to open their eyes, but all in vain. There is no response ; not even to “ come and reason together ” : just an adamant refusal to discuss, and much scorn and contempt. Hearts which once were pliable and trembled at the Word of God, have suddenly become hardened. History is being repeated, and so yet again the testimony must go forth “ whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.”

The Lesson for To-day

There is a fearful example of such hardening recorded in the Bible. A million men and women were journeying through the wilderness towards the land “ flowing with milk and honey.” Hopes were high. Egypt had been left behind and with it a hundred years of cruel bondage. The promised land was at hand, only eleven days journey away. Suddenly a crisis arose, a great test of faith, and *a million people hardened their hearts*. The appeals of Joshua and Caleb were of no avail. The whole congregation preferred the evil report of the ten spies, to all the appeals of those two righteous men.

In vain they contended for the faith and so great was God's anger that a million carcasses later fell in the wilderness.

The apostle Paul might well refer to this calamitous event, left on record for the admonition of those "on whom the ends of the world are come." What a timely warning—"To-day, if ye will hear his voice, *harden not your hearts* as in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation." Can we receive this warning, this admonition, this exhortation of the Spirit? In sixty centuries of human existence, thousands upon thousands have been called out of "Egypt" and invited to sojourn through the wilderness towards that rest "which remaineth for the people of God." But, oh the thousands, nay the millions of carcasses which have fallen in this wilderness: some out of a desire to return to the fleshpots of Egypt, but by far the majority because, in a day of crisis, *they hardened their hearts*, and nothing could soften them. Well might the apostle appeal—

"To-day" — to-day — TO-DAY, "if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts" —

for those who will not hear His voice *to-day*, how can they ever hope to hear it again?

J.R.M.

Upholding the Truth

As we see the nations of the world rapidly re-arming, with fear increasing and men and women "looking after those things which are coming to pass upon the earth," what is our reaction? Are we complacent, satisfied we are secure? Or do we continually remember the exhortation "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall"?

The Truth is a warfare, and the upholding of it demands courage and earnestness. The good soldier of the Lord Jesus will endure hardness; there can be no relaxation for it is written "Fight the good fight of faith." We must ever be aware of the enemy we fight, *for it is for our life*. We must be vigilant, keeping the prize ever before us, as frontlets between our eyes. Every thought out of harmony must be brought down.

Let us then go forward in the name of the Lord of Hosts, keeping rank, ever Zionwards with the whole armour of God for our protection, rejoicing when called upon to suffer persecution, remembering it is written—

"Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

As we see the happenings in the earth, we lift up our heads knowing that soon the people of God will be received at the hands of the Lord Jesus. In the meantime, trials and persecutions must be expected. We all know how hateful the flesh can be, especially when

it rises up as an adversary, but we must not be resentful, knowing that God will deliver the faithful. There must be a patient waiting for the day when God will vindicate the righteous and deliver them from the hands of wrathful men.

If faithful now, then we shall rejoice with men like David—

“ *Blessed be Yahweh, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers : the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*” (Psalm 124).

How grateful we should always be for the “ things written aforetime.” As the Apostle Paul declares, they are our ensamples. The afflictions various ones were called upon, and are still called upon to endure, will either soften or harden the heart. *Which is it to be in our case ?* If our hearts *are* softened by the experiences we are undergoing, we shall come to know a peace which passeth all understanding, and we will not easily be troubled in heart and mind. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit and will find a place in all those who are His at His appearing. Only in these will be found the true “ unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.” Elsewhere there is turmoil, vanity and vexation of spirit, for God will not be round about those whose hearts are not towards Him.

Have we not tasted of the goodness of the Lord, protecting us, and delivering us from evil? We have been given a “ way out ” : how then shall we again be entangled therein? Is it possible for our hearts to be lifted up? We must ever be on our guard, fully comprehending God’s way out from the bondage of sin and death.

How Long ?

How long will it be before deliverance comes? We read of a time of trouble such as never was : when “ darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people.” This time surely is at hand, showing to those who are carefully watching how near is the day when the Redeemer shall come to Zion. We have only a short time to finish the work we have been given to do. Are we like David, given to reflect on what is our aim—

“ *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments* ” ?
(Psalm 119).

What does the future hold for us, for each one of us? Let us not fail to fight a good fight, remembering that though many are called, only few are chosen. It will be in the coming dispensation that the full definite number of the “ elect,” all precious before God, will be known. Are we preparing *now* for that great time, searching our hearts?

Those whose whole desire has been to serve and honour their Creator before all else, will soon be satisfied with His Salvation, when the people of God shall shine forth as the stars in the Kingdom of their Father—a time when—

The morning stars shall sing together and all the Sons of God shall shout for joy. S.H.E.

The Signs of the Times

“*The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men*” (Daniel 4, v. 17).

The prophecies which God has given in His word are not given that men might boast of a knowledge of future events : they are given to the believers to show to them His purpose and the certainty of what He has promised, and to comfort and strengthen His people in the knowledge that in the affairs of the nations God’s hand is over-ruling to the end that His people might be delivered and His purpose established.

God is over-ruling the affairs of the nations to-day just as surely as He did in the times of Abraham, Joshua, David and the kings of Israel. Whatever man may purpose, the faithful have the assurance that what God has spoken will stand. In the events of to-day we have evidence of how the affairs of men are over-ruled by the hand of God.

When Gog invades the land of Israel, it is written, “*Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all the young lions thereof shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil. . . .*” (Ezek. 38, v. 13). This Tarshish power therefore will be the King of the South of Daniel 11 and can be identified as that power whose trade extends from the “*gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks*” of India and Ceylon, (I Kings 10, v. 22) to the “*silver, iron, tin and lead*” of Britain (Ezek. 27, v. 12). This power is Britain and those with her.

It appears from recent events that Britain is being forced out of Egypt and the Sudan—“*The Sudanese Parliament on 16th August 1955 approved a resolution for the evacuation of British and Egyptian troops within 90 days to clear the way for Sudan’s freedom after 56 years of foreign rule.*” At first sight this might appear to be a weakening of the position of the King of the South, and most certainly Britain is making efforts to retain a foothold in the Sudan, but a consideration of the scriptures shows that this may be one more necessary move in the affairs of the nations—over-ruled by the hand of God that His purpose might stand.

When Gog, the King of the North, invades Israel it is written—“*He (the King of the North) shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries : and the land of Egypt shall not escape . . . and the Libyans (west of Egypt) and the Ethiopians (according to*

Young the country to the south of Egypt and northern Abyssinia shall be at his steps."

If this territory is to fall to the King of the North, it may well be that the forces of the King of the South may be centred in other parts of Africa and Arabia. Britain and America are establishing air bases in Africa. Sheba (Aden) and Dedan are east of the Red Sea, (according to Phillip's atlas ; Young suggests it is a district near Edom) and here again is a centre for British forces in the southern part of Jordan.

So the nations blindly strive one against the other, completely oblivious to the fact that their destiny is under the controlling hand of the Creator, and that at the appointed time His kingdom will be established on the earth.

In the same way the nation of Israel is preserved from the destructive hatred of Egypt and the Arabs.

With these things in mind should we not take courage, realising that the faithful remnant, so few in number, are kept by the same " power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time " ?

J.H.W.

News from the Ecclesias

Beeston (Notts.)— Adult School Room, Acacia Walk, Beeston.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.0 a.m. Sunday School, 2.0 p.m. Bible Class, 3.0 p.m. Thursdays : 7.45 p.m.

If the Lord wills we are hoping to have a further lecture in our meeting room on Friday, September 30th at 7.30 p.m. and thereafter to continue monthly lectures on the last Friday each month. We desire that the people in this district should know where the Truth is proclaimed.

Our thoughts at this time are with Bro. and Sis. Butterfield on their visit to those we know and are united with in the U.S.A.

We have had Bro. Moore with us and thank him for his ministrations.

R.G.

Criccieth.—Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc. Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.0 a.m. Revelation Study, 3.0 p.m.

The summer season being now over, the work of witnessing to visitors by way of public lectures has come to a close. Two lectures were held during September ; one stranger who attended showed particular interest, and correspondence with her is continuing.

A very happy time has been spent here this season by the brethren and sisters, who together with their children, have enjoyed the glorious sunshine amidst the wonderful handiwork of the Creator.

per J.H.W.

Eden, New York.—Grange Hall, Church Street. Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.15 a.m. Sunday School, 10.0 a.m. Revelation Study, 1.30 p.m. Bible Class : Mid-week alternately in Fredonia and Hamburg.

Anticipating the hoped-for visit of Brother and Sister Butterfield, plans have been completed for the special lectures in Hamilton, Canada, on September 27th and in Buffalo, N.Y. on October 4th.

The contacts in Canada and further enquiry from Vancouver make us feel grateful for the opportunity to spread the true doctrines, knowing that God will answer the cry of any right heart.

Bro. Butterfield's help will be appreciated, and the sincere desire is to build up the bond of a true unity of mind in the One Fellowship.

Lack of response at the Eden lecture seems clear indication that for the time being, the witnessing should be taken elsewhere.

J. A. DeF.

Manchester.—Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.30 a.m. Lecture, 3.15 p.m.
Thursdays : 7.15 p.m. at Onward Hall, Deansgate. Law of Moses Class : Second Saturday each month at 3.30 p.m.

At the lecture in Sheffield on August 27th, arranged jointly by the Manchester and Beeston Ecclesias, about 35 attended to hear Christ's Signs and Warnings for the time of the end. As is so often the case, the majority were quite satisfied with their present position, but one has since written seeking further information.

On Monday evening September 12th Bro. and Sis. Butterfield left Ringway Airport to visit the few holding fast the faith in America. Many brethren and sisters were at the airport to bid them "God-speed" and we hope all will be refreshed by the mutual contacts of the sojourn. It is a great privilege in these last days, after the time of shaking and sadness, to be able to rejoice together through the fellowship of the Truth : therefore our hearts fellowship the work in sincerity.

Trial and tribulation is only for a time, but when the desire cometh it is a "tree of life."

The ecclesia has found it necessary to withdraw fellowship from Bro. and Sis. A. Porter and Bro. and Sis. H. Heimer. What a sombre reminder that only those who are prepared to serve their Creator with all their heart and might and strength can hope to hold fast to the end.

S.L.