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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

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“Lord, Are There Few That Be Saved ?”

Consideration of this question, put to the Lord Jesus, as He journeyed towards Jerusalem, helps the mind to an appreciation of the greatness of the blessing bestowed by the Almighty. That there *are* few that be saved, takes on more powerful meaning as the time for the Lord Jesus' return to gather His own to Him, comes closer. His answer to the question is one of vital importance to us whose greatest hope is to be “ saved ” in that day.

“ *Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*” Luke 13 : 24.

Can we discern the instruction here ? Entry into this particular gate, requires striving, or “ agonizing ” as the Greek tells us. Pondering this word, we are made to think of an intense struggle, employing every ounce of strength and courage—one which surely means pain and suffering. It tells of a straining with every resource towards a goal. This is what must become the experience of everyone who is striving to enter the gate which means life with the Lord Jesus without end. He in His probation, agonized greatly, to the overcoming of that sin nature, which we also bear. He succeeded because of the intensity of His striving, which brought Him the Spirit's strengthening. What sore tribulation, what dreadful sorrow was His, and later, what sublime joy when this life and its agonizing had finished and He ascended to the Right Hand of His Father, having overcome. We remember His prayer in the garden, so near the end :

“ *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*” Luke 22 : 42.

It was an agonizing, a killing of the man of flesh, that the way might be opened for all those whom His Father had given Him. Just at this crisis of His suffering, it was that, “ There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening him.”

His Father never failed, never left Him ; and, can we, who need the strengthening so greatly, increase in faith by knowing this ? It is further recorded, “ And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood. . . .” Can we get hold of the intensity of His struggle ? And, brethren and sisters; are we not called to fight in a measure the same fight, lest we fail of entry into that gate through which our Head has already passed ?

He resisted the power of sin to such an extent that His sweat appeared as blood. The words of the Apostle Paul come to mind :

“ *Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against*

himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving (agonizing) against sin.” Hebrews 12 : 3, 4.

As we struggle now against sin, it is an endless ordeal, one which would soon weary and cause us to faint, if we were without His example to guide and His Spirit to strengthen. Comfort and assurance is given as our own frailty is felt.

“ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. . . .” Romans 8 : 26,27.

With the Spirit's help, we *will* not fail, brethren and sisters.

It is only as we fellowship *His* striving, we can remain now, in His House, and hope to be among those who will share perfect fellowship with Him and His Father throughout eternity. The prospect fills our hearts with gladness and with it, how anxious each true brother and sister will be that every “ called one ” may find an entrance into that strait gate. Paul speaks of this glory in Colossians 1 : 27—29.

“ . . . Christ in you, the hope of glory : Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus : Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.”

Are we striving according to *His* working, that each of His “ little ones ” may be helped when needed, exhorted by our labouring and by our example in daily living, and that all are bound together in The Family with cords of love ?

The Strait Gate

The Lord Jesus has told us to strive to enter the “ strait gate.” From the time of God's call there must be an agonizing to do so. It does not cease when the House is entered at baptism, as is so evident in the case of the Lord Jesus. It must be remembered, however, that the difficulty of the way has not been put there by the Father—for He would not have any to fail. Is it rather, the obstacle which we ourselves place in the way which hinders any entrance.

We are told in Luke 9 : 23 :—

“ If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.”

Are these the obstacles which may hinder our entrance ? There must be a continual self-denial, and a crucifying of the flesh daily. How difficult this is, and how unattractive such a life would seem to us,

except we had a strong faith and hope. Can we acknowledge that our greatest obstacle is self, and can we then be helped in endeavoring to strive harder to enter into this strait gate. If the adversary is recognized and encountered, a major part of the battle is won. Nevertheless, the way is hard, and we are brought to comprehend why there are few that be saved.

“ I Know You Not Whence Ye Are ”

There will be many brought to the Judgment believing that they have the right to enter in—yet in their time of probation, these have refused to “ agonize ” after the example of the Lord Jesus. What an awakening awaits them !

“ *I know you not whence ye are.*”

Why are these unknown to the Lord Jesus ? They have not honored His Father and striven as He did against the power of sin. They did not fellowship His agonizing, although professing His name. Only those who truly bear His Name will be known to Him. His response is recalled—to those who had failed to replenish the oil in their lamps, in Matthew 25 : 12 :—

“ . . . *Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*”

They lacked the oil of the Spirit, had not been striving to grow in the Spirit, and so they no longer constituted a lightstand. The Spirit-being within these, had died. The Lord Jesus’ warning was, “ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.”

We *must* watch, brethren and sisters, it is vital that we draw close to Him now, that when He comes, we may hope to be known of Him ; for, rejection by Him is the end of all hope. We are given grave lessons of the Spirit’s refusal in contemplation of the people of Israel in Ezekiel’s time—when the unrighteous elders came to enquire of the Lord’s prophet ; the response was :—

“ . . . *Are ye come to enquire of me ? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you.*” Ezekiel 20 : 3.

They refused to be submissive and so the Almighty’s back was turned on them. How fearful such a position—no recognition by God. Can it happen to us ? It could if we lose the intensity of determination to keep the holiness and unity. Now the Lord had continued to work with Israel for a long time in spite of their refusal and we are told why this was done :—

“ *I wrought for my name’s sake.*”

For the glory of His Name, He did not forsake these people, though they had earned it. Through the ages, He has continued to work with a people—for His Name’s sake. But He will endure only as we realize and uphold the glory of that Name. The elders of Israel did not, and His ears were closed to them. Then we must discern

anything which would detract from that glory and we must act swiftly. This applies to each of us who is hoping to be part of the Great Name : an elder, a sister, a young brother—everyone has a responsibility to keep the House holy. We must stand ready—sympathy and hesitancy cannot guide us. The Spirit will, *if* we are zealous for His Name. God still requires that which He could not find in Israel. We must take it personally, brethren and sisters, lest there be a weak link which under stress might break.

“ And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it : but I found none.” Ezekiel 22 : 30.

There *are* few ready to stand in the gap, and those few will indeed “agonize ;” but, brethren and sisters, the strait gate opens to indescribable future joys.

A Few That Be Saved

We ponder the Spirit’s message in Chronicles—the recording of the many names in Israel, containing only a tiny few who shine as lights. Indeed, they must have done so, for darkness surrounded even as it does us now. But by the covenant, they were united to the Father, and in faith, they knew the Lord Jesus. They, too, were striving, agonizing, against the same dreadful power which we battle.

Can we, considering these few righteous names, unite our minds with one of them ? Jabez, in his prayer, pleaded :—

“ Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me !”

“ And God granted him that which he requested.” I Chronicles 4 : 10. J.A.DeF.



Remember Ye the Law of Moses My Servant

“ If a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant ” (Exodus 21 v. 7)

In the life of a community many and varied situations arise, each of which is a test of human nature. Conventional respectability spreads a veneer of politeness over human ways, but a crisis soon reveals how very thin this is. When something unsuspected arises which strains friendship, maybe only a small point, how quickly are all previous protestations of regard and affection forgotten, and instead bitterness and anger destroy the relationship. God’s great and majestic purpose is that His children should be different, that their character should not be a veneer, an appearance only, but something intrinsic, belonging to the heart and soul. When the two are compared, the man of the world and the man of God, then the infinitely superior ways of God are at once

seen. The man of the world may be affable, "nice" and gentlemanly, but wait for time and opportunity to test his real self. When under stress the heart is revealed how dreadful and hateful it appears. The "nice" ways are then seen to have been only a cloke for something hateful to God and even distasteful to men. The man of God may lack in external appearances, may be self-effacing and subdued, but he shines however in times of difficulty. His control of speech and action appears as something unusual and altogether virtuous. His restraint, his apparent weakness then makes him strong, and judged by the right mind he increases in "favour with God and man." To achieve such worthwhile results in humans, instead of concentrating on the mere conventions of behaviour, is the solid work of the great God of Heaven. That is why when we are introduced into the large community of His people, Israel, the "judgments" are given that deal with the "heart" rather than the superficially attractive tinsel of Gentile manners, which outwardly appear impressive, but inwardly are nothing more than the corruption of dead men's bones. In the mercy of so wise a God, the devout may still have this wisdom and deliver himself from the hollowness of worldly respectability, for here in the Law is contained all that will lead to "Christ"—to Him who was and is altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand.

"If a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant" (Exodus 21 v. 7).

One of the stresses in life for testing of character is poverty; poverty of goods or maybe of health. Whatever benefits may accrue to the "poor" on their own account through such circumstances, it is certain they provide a means of testing their brethren. The test goes further than requiring a "bestowal of goods." Many worldly institutions have excelled in "charity," whilst remaining obnoxious to the Almighty. Their "charity" has been made to stink with the taint of pride which infects it. Care for brethren approved of God requires more than gifts. Indeed it requires something, as the Law shows, which all *can* give—both rich and poor: consideration amounting to a placing of oneself in the position of the needy brother. When this is done—*sincerely*—gifts, if there are any, are merely incidental to a heart—purpose to help the brother by every means that is deemed wise. A word of encouragement an enquiry if help is required, a discussion on the word to supply the "oil and wine," a "reaching out" to such an extent that the afflicted is made to feel—"I have a brother." Gentile books on good behaviour will never teach this; but God's law inculcates it in every "jot and tittle," a true love of "neighbour" arising from a copious upsurging love of God.

In Israel poverty was no exception. God said it would come in spite of the abundance of His promises, doubtless as a test for His people. In certain cases it necessitated the selling of a daughter to a

brother as a maidservant. The law required that :—

“ She shall not go out as the menservants do.” (Exod. 21 v. 7).

“ Hard ! ” will say the Gentile mind ! “ Worse for the woman than the man who could go out at the end of six years.” God’s ways are not man’s ways. His thoughts transcend those of men as much as the heavens are higher than the earth. This will be seen to be so in what appears on the surface to be a discrimination against the woman.

It must first of all be remembered that the daughter was to be provided with a home. At the end of six years she could not leave, neither could she be turned out. If dismissal were possible what hardship might have resulted when another home might not be found, especially if advancing years brought declining strength. Rather than hardness, mercy is seen that the daughter must have a home for always and under all circumstances. The type is impressive. Those who become Christ’s bondservants, or rather maidservants, are given a home which they may enjoy for always. No inability on their part will cause them to be turned out. They are embraced in a promise that they will be His—for ever. Truly the Law does take us by the hand, like the Greek “ schoolmaster,” the pedagogue who carefully led the child to school, to be instructed. So by the loving kindness of God the law will lead to Christ.

“ If she please not her master who hath betrothed her unto himself.” (Exod. 21 v. 8).

“ Then shall he let her be redeemed.”

A servant girl must not allowed to be a victim of human fickleness. If her master (a brother remember) were attracted to her “ betrothed her,” and then tired, he was not allowed to get rid of her and regain some of the money he had paid. He knew he could never sell her to another brother. He might be tempted to dispose of her to a “ strange nation.” A dreadful thought, but evidently more than a possibility, as the Law reveals :

“ To sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.” (Exod. 21 v. 8).

Whilst she was still active, capable of working, the command was :—

“ Let her be redeemed.” (Exod. 21 v. 8).

The changeable brother must lose his money and the “ maidservant ” could either return to her father or be “ sold ” to another brother willing to carry out the spirit of the Law, which, it must ever be remembered, was the delightful spirit of Christ.

“ If he have betrothed her unto his son.”

Often great cruelty has been inflicted upon the servant girl where she has become espoused to the son of the house, but such heinous ways were not to be allowed in the house of God. If the girl were “ betrothed ” unto the son, then the father must deal with

her after the manner of daughters ! No looking-down on the girl's station, no patronising, no bitterly cruel ostracising, no contempt, but a full receiving of the girl into the home—as a daughter. How delightful are the ways of Yahweh, who manifests such care for the weak and defenceless !

But supposing the son changed his mind regarding the espousal, was the girl to be relegated to the status of bondservant with nothing but contempt as her companion. Gentiles in such circumstances might say "Yes," but not so the Law.

"If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go free without money." (Exod. 21 vv 10/11).

Reflection on these few words are necessary to appreciate their far-searching wisdom and equity. The servant girl elevated to the status of a "daughter" must not be treated as a servant again. Her rights under the Law are clearly stated and could be claimed, if not forthcoming, before the Judges.

"Her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage (that which was promised her on marriage) shall he not diminish." (Exod. 21 v. 10).

The son may have offered much in the fervour of his love, which could not be withdrawn in a single particular when he changed his mind. Further the girl's food and clothes were not to be that of a servant any more. Both the father and the son in observing the spirit of the Law would see she was treated as a daughter. How many Gentile maids in former times would wish that they had had such careful protection. Israel were truly blessed, blessed by the One whose name is Jehovah.

If the father and son were not willing to provide for the girl as the Law required, then whilst she was still young and physically able she must be allowed to "go out free without money." The purchase price, or so much of it as remained by service not given, must be forfeit. The girl could go to her father without any burden of debt.

As the loving kindness of Israel's God is seen interwoven through all the items of His Law, providing protection for the widows and fatherless, care of the poor and weak, then in some measure the mind is able to grasp how much higher are His thoughts and ways than man's. The ways of the worldly man may seem attractive, polished, gentlemanly, but at best they are only superficial and underneath there is often oppression and callous cruelty. The one who became the full and complete expression of God's law showed a kindness free from sentimentality, a beauty of character, noble and

firm, but without a trace of bitterness or cruelty. He was, as the Apostle John said, "The word of God made flesh," and "we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

(to be continued)



The Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace

The Spirit—Received of His Fullness

None of us can fully comprehend the privilege of being invited to be sons and daughters of the Creator. The frail human mind cannot grasp the honour or the reality of it all, and can but echo those words of the Apostle John :—

" Beloved, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God . . .

" Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him : for we shall see him as he is."

To perceive more clearly the mighty purpose of God in developing a family—a divine family, a perfect family, it is helpful to detach the mind from the pressing circumstances of everyday life and to survey, as it were, the whole history of the world from the time of Adam to the present. Only then can the kindness and especially the long-suffering of the Almighty be appreciated.

Since those far-off days when our first parents left their habitation as creatures of death it is impossible to say how many of their posterity have walked upon the face of the earth, only to return to the dust again. Every day, a hundred thousand children of Adam are swallowed up by the grave—"consumed by thine anger." How useless and vain would all this life be, had not God raised up of Adam's nature a Son, His firstborn—one who was perfect, first in character, and afterwards in nature—a perfect being, like God Himself, and the very centre of His purpose.

By nature, not one of us can claim to be the children of God : for we were born "of the will of the flesh, of the will of man." But God in His kindness has ordained that we should become joined to His Son as *adopted* sons, and so it is written :—

" Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs : heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

and again :—

" . . . Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

The Giving of the Law

Centuries after the promise of a Son, we find a whole nation assembled at the foot of the Mount of God, about to receive the divine oracles. Nothing then uttered, however, would affect the promises of God given so many years earlier. The question therefore arises, What was the purpose of the Law given from Mt. Sinai? Was not the Law an expression of the mind of the Creator, revealing a high and perfect standard—so high as to condemn every son of Adam who endeavoured to obey it? It could not have given a promise of life, for this promise had already been made amongst others, to Abraham.

Many passages in the Scriptures make it evident that men's reactions to the Law varied greatly, even amongst those who paid heed to it. There were those who commenced by striving to keep the Law in all its details and who, as time went on, became more and more satisfied with their efforts, taking pleasure in the consolation that "they were not as other men." Despite their apparent observance of the Law it was against such that Jesus testified repeatedly. On the other hand there were others who also commenced by striving to keep the Law in all its details, but who, as they came to comprehend it more perfectly, became more and more aware of their failings, until they felt compelled to appeal "Lord, be merciful unto me, a sinner." Jesus made it clear that only such could ever please God, and that the majority who feel satisfied with their keeping of divine commands are really hateful in His sight. The Apostle strove hard to emphasise this—"No man by the law is justified in His sight," he wrote, and again, "The law can make nothing perfect."

Thus, as the eye surveys the passing of the centuries, it becomes evident that in each generation there have been many who *thought they were righteous*, but only a few—often very few—who *knew they were unrighteous*. These few felt themselves "bound" by the law—the law of sin and death: they felt as though they were in prison—a "prison house of death"—but yet not without hope for they knew of God's promise of a Redeemer, and so are described as "prisoners of hope." To such the promise of *another* covenant, not written on tables of stone, but on the "fleshy tables of the heart" was the centre of their hope—when men would no longer feel the condemnation of their nature, but would be immortal with the law of their God written on their hearts; a time when men would have no need to say "know the Lord" for all should know Him from the least to the greatest.

Gradually the mind begins to grasp the mighty purpose of the Creator. He is creating through His Son, a family, a perfect family of sons and daughters, every one of whom has *first* felt ashamed and condemned by the Law, but on whose heart has been indelibly inscribed the whole Law of his Creator.

The Law written on the Heart

To appreciate all that is embraced by the promise of the Law being written on the heart, it is instructive to consider a natural house occupied by a devout father and his family. A visitor entering the house would find no list of rules and commandments hanging in the hall. On enquiry he would be told how unnecessary such would be, because all the children *knew* their father, his likes and dislikes, and strove to obey him from the heart. A list of "commandments" might be useful in a boarding house, but not in a home where the father's love for his children is reflected by their love for him.

How simple, yet how perfect is this plan of the Almighty—the building of a house of living stones, each one called to be perfect, bound to the Father by cords of love, and with law, His law, engraved on their hearts, so that in all their activities, the Father's mind is expressed and His character reflected.

To this end, we have been called to be like Jesus, and therefore like the Father: to show forth those qualities of purity, mercy, long-suffering and compassion, even as we have seen in the Father and His Son. Often we read of His kindness and long-suffering, but do we really appreciate these qualities, so much so that they become reflected in our own characters?

The Kindness and Mercy of God

It is astounding how many incidents have been recorded, and in fact took place in the first instance, because of the long-suffering and kindness and mercy of God. When, for example, Adam and Eve were compelled to depart from their dwelling place in Eden, cherubims were placed at the east of the garden. Why were they there and why was their presence so carefully recorded? Surely only because of the mercy of God, who would that all should be assured that He has a purpose with man, and that the time will certainly come when He will "inhabit" the cherubims of glory, those cherubims "beaten out" from the *mercy* seat as the children of Israel were shown and taught.

A thousand years later, and the anger of God is seen against men because of their wickedness. There is Noah busily engaged in the building of an ark in preparation for a flood more devastating than men could ever have contemplated. But why a flood? it might be asked. Could not God have destroyed the wicked by fire and brimstone as He did Sodom and Gomorrah many centuries later? No doubt He could have done, but in His kindness decreed that men should be destroyed not by fire and brimstone, but by a flood—that all might be caused to place their hope in an Ark greater than that built by Noah, and come to realise, too, that in a very profound way men could never be saved except by water—even the waters of baptism.

Throughout the centuries, this and similar “incidents” some apparently quite insignificant, have been kept on record by the over-ruling care of a loving and all-wise Father. Think of Isaac, whose birth was delayed until Sarah according to natural standards, was well past child-bearing. But why the delay? The answer again reveals the kindness of God who would that *everyone of His children should receive comfort and exhortation from the experiences of Sarah*: remembering how she passed through a time of trial and frustration nearly to despair, as a “woman forsaken” and despised of the world.

Later this compassion, this condescension is again revealed in the circumstances of the birth of the sons of Isaac. The Almighty decreed that Rebecca his wife should bear two sons, Esau and Jacob in whom should be typified two classes of people:—

“*Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated in thy bowels.*”
and furthermore—

“*The one people shall be stronger than the other people: and the elder shall serve the younger.,* (Gen. 25).

Were it not for the reference to this by the Apostle, we might well pass over its significance, and so fail to discern the hidden kindness of the Almighty. The Apostle explains that all this was expressly over-ruled by God that men should know that neither “works” nor circumstances of birth could ever provide a means of attaining eternal life: that to be an Israelite and a son of Abraham gives no assurance of participation in the promises:—

“*Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel.*” (Romans 9).

and then explains that even before the birth of Esau and Jacob, before either could have done good or evil, it was revealed to Rebecca that “the elder shall serve the younger”—as a witness to believers of all time—ourselves included—that

“*the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.*”

Is there not here a facet of the Almighty not always appreciated? When men make promises, they expect them to be believed, and quickly take offence if doubt is expressed. Yet the Creator of the heavens and the earth not only makes “exceeding great and precious promises,” but carefully over-rules the affairs of such as Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebecca to the end that the heirs of the promises *might have absolute assurance* that what He has promised He will certainly fulfil. Here is condescension indeed and reveals an aspect of character alien to human nature, but one which *should* be seen, as a delightful fruit of the Spirit, in all those called to be the sons of God, even as it was seen in Jesus.

God's assurance to Jeremiah

This same attribute of the divine character can be discerned in the experiences of Jeremiah shortly before the fall of Jerusalem. The city was besieged, food was scarce, and Jeremiah himself was shut up in the court of the prison. Could any situation have seemed more desperate? It was in such circumstances, at a time when the prophet was foretelling the utter destruction of Jerusalem, that he was commanded to do a surprising thing—to purchase a field of Hanameel, his uncle's son. Whatever for? Simply as an assurance, an absolute assurance, that the time *would* come when Jerusalem would no longer be trodden down, when the captivity of Israel would be ended:—

“*And I will bring them again into this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God . . . And fields shall be bought in this land: for I will cause their captivity to return.*” (Jeremiah 32).

The record of this apparently insignificant event has been preserved throughout the centuries *that every son of God might have a strong consolation*, and be assured that what God has promised, He will fulfil.

Born of the Spirit—called to be the children of God! This is *our* calling, with the invitation to show forth all the qualities of the Creator Himself. Here we have seen just one facet of His character, shining out in all His dealings with men. It shone out in the life of Christ. Can we ensure it shines out in *our* lives?

J.R.M.



“The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the world”

“Peace and safety—they shall not escape”

(I Thess. 5 v. 3).

The certainty of the Signs is not determined by the occurrence of one particular event, but rather by a series showing a continuing development. It is true that often one event will bring a culmination to such a development, as for example in the case of Israel becoming a nation, but for fifty years previous there had been “signs,” gathering significance as the years passed, so that no one could mistake the voice of the prophets who foretold these things and revealed at the same time the divine and final sequel. These developments or trends, when understood with the aid of the Spirit, give perspective to human affairs, revealing clearly to what end they are leading. They unravel the confusion of nations and international affairs showing their simple relation to a divinely predetermined plan. Discerning of the Signs must always take in the context of any event,

however spectacular or significant, otherwise there is a danger of consideration of what are called " Signs " by so many sects, becoming nothing more than news reports with no power to excite the mind with divine intentions, and intensify effort " to be found so doing " when He comes.

" But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety,* then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they *shall not escape.* But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

Recent events have shown some relaxing of tension between the two hostile powers in the world—the east and the west. In the mighty camp of the east the old order of dictatorship seems to have passed even to the point that the present leaders have succeeded in condemning Stalin without losing their heads. Benign government is supposed to have replaced oppression. The new leaders, Bulganin and Khrushchev have ordered the release of many political prisoners in their own territories, saying, in effect, we want peace at home and peace abroad.

To the great surprise of the western world these leaders have appeared from behind the " Iron Curtain " on the shores of Britain, there to be given all the usual honours. They said they came as ambassadors of peace. They were told that they were received as the ambassadors of peace. Yet the ironical fact is that behind these words, arms of war have been and are being accumulated to such an incredible extent as to make the whole world fear. Marshal Bulganin said that the distance from Moscow to London had been covered by their jet liner in three and a half hours, but their latest ballistic weapons would only take a few minutes ! What an uneasy peace ! How doubtful the safety ! Disarmament was talked about as being an essential aim for the nations, yea a vital factor for their existence, but without any prospect of implementing such a wishful hope.

Let it be noted that the Spirit has said that in spite of talk about peace and safety—" *they shall not escape.* "—an alarming sign growing in significance in the past fifty years.

Indeed it must be a hundred years since Dr. Thomas attended a peace demonstration in London and rose at the end to point out from the Scriptures the futility of the project. He was scorned at the time and regarded as an enemy of society, yet how true his contention. War at that time was something afar off, rather like an exciting tale for the masses, and victory a heady wine for national pride.

In the first world war most nations learnt the truth about war, its iniquity, its horror, its cruelty. So the nations were buoyed up

with the promise that it was the war to end war. When the end of the war came the League of Nations was formed ; most impressive in its aims and the means by which peace and safety would be assured. War had been shown to be utterly foolish in what had so recently taken place, that it was damaging to an extreme degree to the victor as well as the vanquished. The nations must learn this and go to war no more. How soft and kind at the time did those breezes from Geneva seem, for it was at Geneva the palace of the League of Nations was built.

The Spirit, however, had said, "*they shall not escape.*" None of the efforts of the League or the rulers—Pope, Kings and statesmen—could prevent the second world war. At the conclusion of this war weapons were used which showed the world the futility and iniquity of war in a way which all could understand. A new power had been discovered and unleashed, which in its intensity and scope, gave man the absolute weapon, a weapon against which there is no defence whatever. Now would the nations lay down their arms for good ? Would the newly conceived United Nations Organisation for peace succeed where the League had failed ? No expense was spared that it might achieve success. The Headquarters in New York must have cost millions of dollars, but after ten years what a melancholy spectacle is this expression of men's hopes with the approach piously engraved with the words—"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

How true is the divine writing on the wall. "They shall not escape." Men have been trying and are still trying to find peace without God. It is as impossible as trying to make bread without flour. God is peace. His thoughts and His ways are the ingredients of peace. As the development of men's endeavours proceeds, even if aided by the most altruistic motives, failure is imminent, and the climax will bring about His coming, first for the salvation of His people and then for the salvation of the world as a gift to His people.

Throughout the last fifty years the greatest among men have striven for peace. All peoples recognise the folly of war and the vital need of peace. The leaders of the nations travel from one end of the earth to the other to find peace, but first in 1914 then in 1939 their hopes were dashed. As world events move apace the talk of peace becomes louder and more incessant. This is the culmination of a great sign, which speaks quietly to the children of God—"they shall not escape ;" for sudden destruction will come, and at that time His appearance to His people will be as a thief in the night.

His mercy is great, but let us not presume, but rather in meekness and godly fear try to make ourselves worthy of His great salvation :—

"*For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (I Thess. 5 v. 9).

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.

We are now looking forward to our Fraternal Gathering on Whit Monday when we hope to see all the brethren and sisters together with our Sister Glenn from the U.S.A. How necessary are these Elims as the dangers increase in the last days.

We have to report the withdrawal of fellowship from Bro. R. Gamble because of his failure to uphold, in letter and in spirit, the laws of Christ dealing with a brother believed to be in transgression ; also from Sister A. Gamble, Brother W. A. Wallis and Sister N. Wallis for fellowshipping this transgression.

H.J.S.

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

It is now arranged to have the meetings here during the summer, and to have the lectures in Criccieth or Portmadoc as occasion requires.

At the lecture in Portmadoc on the 12th of May there were six strangers, four of whom had attended the previous lectures. One is particularly interested and we trust the work will continue during the coming months.

We are very thankful for the work of the brethren on these occasions.

per J.R.M.

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 Forestville and Hamburg.

Evidence of guidance and encouragement in the work are experienced here, as the contacts continue in Canada. We are grateful to The Father for this privilege of serving, and for the many lessons in the wonder of His mercy and judgment.

THE REMNANT

Before this is in print, God willing, Sis. Glenn will once again be among the brethren and sisters. These visits, we believe, are granted by the Spirit to bind those who cannot be shaken in an ever closer Family relationship and responsibility.

The date for the Public Witnessing in the Forestville area has been set for June 14.

J.A. De F.

Enfield—6 Chase Hill, Enfield.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.30 a.m. Sunday School
2.30 p.m.

We look forward to the Fraternal Gathering at Beeston on May 21st when we can rejoice together, and partake of that spiritual food so necessary to life.

M.McD.

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.

We were privileged to partake in the work of a special effort in Altrincham on May 8th. Four thousand cards were distributed : only a few responded to the invitation but two of these seemed more than casually interested.

Provisional arrangements are being made for the special effort for 'Christadelphians' in Birmingham on June 16th, details of which will be sent to the ecclesias in due course.

All are looking forward to the visit of Sister Glenn from the States, whose presence amongst us we feel will be helpful and beneficial. These contacts are most important in these last days, helping to maintain and strengthen the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

W.V.B.