

AUGUST 1956

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

BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING

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

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

All Communications

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

J. A. DeFries
R.D.1.
Forestville
New York, U.S.A.

At the Table of the Lord

Numbered—According to the Word of the Lord

Reading the Book of Numbers, the mind is moved to enquire, what does God intend us to receive as help and instruction, from this record of Israel? On the surface, it appears to give us chiefly, a numbering or counting of these people; but with meditation, there comes the realization that here is being shown God's plan with Israel. Each one, numbered, being part of a family, had a specific work or assignment in the camp. To the faithful in Israel, this would remind that only in *the* family could they hope for an inheritance, and in striving toward this inheritance, it was necessary that each do his share of the work. To each, this would help toward an appreciation of their calling, their being *numbered* among the children of God.

We, who today, are seeking Israel's inheritance, can find help in this arrangement, given to Moses by God. *Our* desire and hope is to be numbered among His chosen; and did not the Lord Jesus tell His disciples:

“*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*” (Matthew 10 : 30.)

Thus they were shown how precious in the sight of His Father are those who, being joined to *their* Head, are numbered even now among His people.

David, most certainly numbered among the faithful, was moved, in speaking of Zion, the city of God, to write—“The Lord shall *count*, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.” (Psalms 87 : 6). Brethren and sisters, how important that we *consider* this mercy extended, and *value* it, looking toward the end of His purpose—the gathering of His numbered ones to Himself, for all eternity.

Serving the House

Striving to enter into the minds of our Israelitish brethren and sisters, as *they* were numbered, we can find particular help and instruction.

Those numbered of the tribe of Levi were given a special privilege in the work of the tabernacle: the families of Gershon, Merari, and Kohath being appointed for the service—including the bearing of the tabernacle as Israel journeyed. As each took his appointed place in this work, would not their minds be exercised by the association with the holiness of the House of God, and so be inspired toward strength and courage in carrying out their responsibilities? As example, we see the service of the sons of Kohath, in Numbers 4 : 4—

“ This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things.”

These people of Kohath, or as the name means, *allied and associated*, were permitted certain contact with the most holy things of God. How carefully they were to heed the instruction given concerning their service. It was only after these holy things were covered as God commanded, that they were allowed to approach to do this service. The record is in Numbers 4 : 18, 19—a warning :

“ Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites . . . but thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things : Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden : But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.”

What a fearful responsibility ! If any of the sons of Aaron failed in this command regarding the most holy things, the whole family of Kohath might be cut off. If any of Kohath disregarded God's will, the result would be the same. Upon each permitted to serve, there rested a responsibility for the other.

Brethren and sisters, are we in the same position, being permitted to serve in the holy things ? The responsibility must be just as real and just as awful as it was then to Aaron's sons, and to the Kohathites. Not *one* command can be overlooked in His service, lest disaster come upon the assembly. What careful searching we must do that all our service is in accordance with *His* requirements. We can do what we feel is right, we can do what may be, in our eyes, justice ; but, if it is not *just* as God has said, it is of no value—indeed brings trouble and may cause a breach.

We have the example of David who surely desired to please God in bringing up the ark to Jerusalem—*but did it in his own way*. The result ? God was angered, and Uzzah who touched the ark, died. II Samuel 6 : 7—

“ And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah ; and God smote him there for his error ; and there he died by the ark of God.”

We find the word, *error* comes from the Hebrew root meaning “ to be negligent,” bringing out the care needed lest we, through forgetfulness or lack of perception, offend God and so create a breach.

Bearing It Upon Their Shoulders

In the instruction to the sons of Kohath, there was shown how they were to bear the most holy things—on staves borne on their shoulders. Would they not, in carrying the weight of these holy

things on their shoulders, be truly putting themselves in the work? Is it not for us to enter into the work given just as intimately, feeling upon ourselves the burden, yet rejoicing in it? Was there not purpose, then, in God's requirement that these most holy things be carried on staves? In Numbers chapter 7, we read of the offering of the princes of Israel, for the work of the tabernacle. Included in the offering were eight wagons and oxen to pull them. These wagons were given to the sons of Merari and Gershon, but not to Kohath—for the record is in Numbers 7 : 9—

“ But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none ; because the service of the sanctuary belonging to them was that they should bear upon their shoulders.”

How careful was Moses that God's requirements were not overlooked. Brethren and sisters, our care must be the same. How much easier it would have been for the sons of Kohath if wagons were provided, but would it not be a taking away of the closeness, of the putting of themselves into the work, of the particular privilege and holiness of their work? Here again, staves were used, showing God's purpose, for with the use of staves, it meant that more than one must be engaged in each phase of the work. Would not this be brought to the mind of the sons of Kohath as they united in the bearing on the ends of the staves, finding the burden lighter because of the sharing of it, no one able to bear it alone? How surely they would be *Kohath*—those allied and thus united—no one pulling away, but each with willing shoulders to bear up the work.

Must this not be our experience as we unite in the service of the House of God—a lightening of the load because of *unity* in the work, with the sole desire to do it in accordance with *God's* requirements? In such a unity, the work becomes a joy, a privilege to be sought after, and so the burden becomes light, a rejoicing.

The Cloud

Further instruction may be found in the care with which God instructed Moses concerning the going forth of the camp of Israel. First of all, we read in Numbers 9, of the indication of God in the cloud—verse 17.

“ And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that, the children of Israel journeyed ; and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.”

Every move was made only as God desired—the whole of Israel in submission to the guidance given. What patience it must have taught them, for we read in verse 22—

“ Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not : but when it was taken up, they journeyed.”

Can we not imagine the impatience of Israel to get about the journey, feeling it was time to move on toward the promised inheritance ; but, it was not to be done in accordance with their desires—but God's ! In His purpose, He permitted them to move, and when He knew it was right, they were required to rest in their tents. They knew not when the cloud would go up, and so how alert they would have to be, lest they fail to heed God's indication. We, too, in our wilderness journey, must look for indication, realizing that God knows best when we must move, and when we must rest. Can we, brethren and sisters, be as alert, knowing that whatever the situation, we must be ready to move *instantly* when the cloud goes up and the Spirit's voice is heard.

What activity there would be in Israel when the cloud did go up. Each family taking down their tents, the sons of Aaron going in to cover the most holy things, the sons of Merari and Gershon taking each one his appointed burden of the tabernacle, the sons of Kohath coming after to take up the most holy things : all having a part in the going forward of Israel. It is not hard to imagine what working together was necessary, but can we, for a moment, think of what chaos would result if there were any who held back, any who allowed other things to keep them from this vital work? How disastrous for all of Israel ! But, if done according to the commands, indeed it would have been an impressive sight, and how significant to the discerning mind.

First the standard of the camp of Judah, next the sons of Merari and Gershon with the tabernacle so that when the cloud rested, it could be all erected and ready for the most holy things being borne by the sons of Kohath ; next, the standard of the camp of Reuben, then the sons of Kohath ; next, the standard of the camp of Ephraim, and finally, the standard of the camp of Dan.

Would not a faithful Israelite discern God's purpose in this going forth of Israel with the standards of the tribes, and the tabernacle in the midst, all led by the cloud ? The very names of the tribes chosen to bear the standards are full of meaning : First, Judah—praise ; second, Reuben—behold a son ; third, Ephraim—fruitful ; and, finally Dan—God hears and will vindicate.

Further, do we not see in the standards of the camps of Israel, great significance ? The word used in the Hebrew for standard is also used for " banner " in the Song of Solomon 6 : 4, where the bridegroom speaks of His bride—

" Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners."

And in verse 10, the same thought is expressed—

" Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners ? "

There is illustrated here for the faithful to discern, a figure of the people of the Lord Jesus, united to Him, likened to an army or camp with banners. Is not here being shown to us the whole purpose of God—to take out a people for His name, who are moving under His guidance, following His commands, numbered in a camp or army identified with banners, signifying so much to them?

Brethren and sisters, let us discern God's mercy toward us, take hold of the work given, bearing it upon our shoulders, showing the humble and contrite spirit in the hope of being numbered among those who will be privileged to do His work throughout eternity. Can we, will we, be among those who are to be everlastingly "Kohathed" to the Lord Jesus and His Father?

J. A. DeF.



Remember Ye the Law of Moses My Servant

"If men strive together" (Exod. 21 v. 18).

"If men strive together, and one smite another . . . and he die not . . . he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed." (Exod. 21 vv. 18/19).

From a casual reading of this part of the Law it might be assumed that the Law condoned strife even if not allowing it. The reminder cannot be made too often that the Law was "good," as God counts goodness; and that the Law expressed the same spirit as was manifested in Christ. Those who have had *the Truth* and lost it, whilst claiming that the Law is part of the wholly inspired Word, fail to discern that the Law is pervaded by the same spirit as was the teaching of Christ. The poison of Christendom that the Law is inferior in its teaching, in its spirit, has infected many sects who fifty years ago were in *the Truth*, and in consequence the help and guidance of the Law is almost lost to them; for where the spirit of the Word is not discerned, it fails to convey any power. The words of Malachi, God's messenger, preserved to the time of the end are a present-day clarion called to all who would have *the Truth*:

"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant."

In the context the mind is projected right to the end of time, when the prophet Elijah is to appear, and as a result of his work the hearts of the fathers and children of the Jewish nation that is left will once more be united through the whole-hearted acceptance of the Law. If this great saving work were not accomplished, first in the Jew and then in the Gentile, the prophet declares that God would smite the earth with utter destruction. A look at the trends in society,

particularly in youth, will suffice to show the need of such drastic measures unless the messenger of the covenant were quickly to appear.

The upholders of Truth will value the Law, especially in the present closing days of the Gentiles, and will seek to find the spirit of Christ concealed therein, knowing that such is power to guide, to lead as a schoolmaster to a full and appreciative understanding of Jesus the Christ. Jesus is *the* "peace" in a special sense to those in the Truth. His Father, who is their Father, is the God of peace. He was the author and giver of the Law that His children might have peace. To the successor of His beloved, David, he gave the name of "peace"—*Solomon*, and it was Solomon who expressed in the inspired Proverbs the condemnation of strife and upheld the qualities of peace.

"A froward man soweth (sendeth forth) strife." (Prov. 16 v. 28)

A fro-ward man is a man going *away from* the Truth. One seeking the face of God is one to-ward the Truth, and such love the law of the God of peace, and in consequence nothing shall offend them, or turn them out of the way. But although in Israel all were called to such exalted and sublime association, relatively few responded. They not only strove with each other but also on many occasions strove against the great Yahweh who had been their saviour and preserver. The ingratitude, and baseness of human nature is beyond comprehension—when seen in others! How few will recognise in very truth the same degree of frailty in themselves—in ourselves! In Israel although the brethren and sisters were called to peace they frequently gave way to those hateful qualities of human nature—pride, spite, malice and hatred, and in consequence strife ensued. This experience has had its parallel in modern Israel causing the overthrow of the faith of some and the wounding of others.

This portion of the Law contained a warning to those liable to become victims of strife. Where the passions gave way to physical violence there was real danger; if not of murder, then of injury, for which the one causing it must be responsible. If the injury were such as to cause the brother "to keep his bed," then "if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit." The inference is, if the injured did not rise again, but died, the one causing the injury should be accounted worthy of death. If the one injured recovered, his loss of time must be made good by the one causing the injury. The Law adds that he—

"Shall cause him to be thoroughly healed." (Exod. 21 v. 19).

In this the rights and wrongs of the dispute are not the criterion. These could be settled by an appeal to the judges. The Law in this particular is dealing with strife where violence might take place.

Those engaged must have known their responsibilities according to the Law. Whoever was injured, the one who may be right or wrong, must be thoroughly healed at the expense of the one causing the injury. This would involve payment for loss of time, maybe for assistance required in caring for the injured. At least this seems to be implied in the words, "cause him to be thoroughly healed." This would be a great deterrent to strife, for all were to know the Law, and when Israel were faithful the judges would uphold its precepts.

The spirit of Christ is certainly seen in this requital of the injured. Each party, the injured and the non-injured, would be taught by their sufferings in different ways that strife was wrong. The brother who lay in bed, suffering through injury, would be caused to reflect how it could have been so easily avoided. What a warning for the future—and to others. The one who, naturally, might rejoice in his brother's injuries would first fear, lest these should be fatal and he would have to pay the penalty for strife with his life; and if not fatal he would have to keep paying the one to get better. Could there be higher wisdom to teach brethren they ought not to strive, but must love each other as themselves? How foolish strife would appear to both as they suffered; and how valuable would be the lesson to all Israel.

May each and all of us try and learn the same lesson: that strife is not permitted to those who are called to be fellows of the great God of Israel: and that where this is allowed, through the weakness of the flesh, there is danger of great injury, as a result of which both parties will suffer. If contending for the faith is likely to degenerate into strife, the righteous brother will quit the discussion although it may make him appear the loser. The truth can always be upheld without exciting the passions, arousing bitterness and hatred, causing damage which it will take a long time to heal.

There are other consequences of strife, involving violence, which the Law takes into account, and shows in the severe punishments to be inflicted that all strife is abhorrent to the God of peace.

"Eye for eye, tooth for tooth . . ." (Exod. 21 v. 24).

If a mother-to-be were injured through strife, the man must be punished as the judges were to determine. But suppose serious mischief were to follow, then—

"Thou shalt give lip for lip, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." (Exod. 21 vv. 24/25).

This part of the Law is ever on the lips of the scorner as showing the primitive and cruel features of the Old Testament. To many so-called Christians the words are barbaric and they claim that Christ disowned them when He said:

“ Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matt. 5 vv. 38/39).

This word “ but ” used by Christ has been examined before, and been found to mean “ the foregoing is not all, but I add ” (See *The Remnant*, February 1955). What is the important connection that Christ wished to make for the benefit of His brethren and sisters between the law demanding an “ eye for an eye,” and not resisting evil ? There must be one ; yet even with those who claim to be the brethren of Christ this essential to unity between the Law and the teaching of Christ is not found. Obvious embarrassment is noticed if the question be pressed. How did this part of the Law exhibit the spirit of Christ ?—for these know that the whole of the Word is to show from beginning to end the same spirit, from the same God, seen in His Son.

The mistake made by Christendom in approaching this difficulty is in assuming that the Law, “ An eye for an eye ” is one of retaliation : that where injury is suffered, then the sufferer would be entitled to inflict the same injury—much as men try to do to their fellows in a brawl. This is not the case at all. The administration of the Law was in the hands of the judges. Only by their permission could the guilty be punished. If a brother were guilty of murder, he must die. If he had caused by his “ strife ” injury, then he must suffer injury to the same degree he had inflicted. What was the object of such provision ? The example of a false witness supplies the answer :

“ Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother ; so shalt thou put away evil from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” (Deut. 19 vv. 19/21).

A careful perusal of these words will show who Israel were to fear by the carrying out of the Law ; not some brute bent on “ getting his own back,” but rather their God whose sole purpose was that His children should learn to “ put away evil among you.” What was the root of this evil ? Pride, bitterness, hatred, causing strife—so that in the very part of the Law which is the classic example used by the sceptic to show that the Law was un-Christlike, the spirit of Christ is found ; and when the Law is carefully considered, it is seen how wonderful was the provision to stop and root out the cause of strife. If in temper a man was killed, then a brother must pay with his life, so that Israel should hear and fear and put away such evil. If a brother smote his brother causing him to lose an eye or

tooth, he must suffer similar loss. What a reminder to Israel that they must hear the Law which was to teach the sublime attribute of love—expressed in a love of neighbour as oneself. Such loss inflicted, not by a vengeful enemy, but by the judges, would cause all who came in contact with the guilty to feel how dreadful strife was, and how horrible those hateful qualities of the flesh which produce strife.

How powerful the unity in the words of Christ that “it hath been said of old time an eye for an eye . . .” but now I say unto you “resist not evil”: rather than enter into strife hated by God, bear a blow upon one cheek and then turn the other. Men of the world who understand not the magnanimous qualities of the Spirit cannot see that this is the blessed provision of Him who is the Prince of Peace, and whose brethren and sisters are called upon to “follow peace with all men.”

The requirements of the Law were to inculcate this spirit of peace by demonstrating in suitable punishment how hateful strife was in the eyes of God. The words of Christ expound the same, and show how the cause of strife must be curbed in His brethren when they live in a world which knows not the Law. If it be borne in mind that it was really *God* who punished, to correct and to remove evil when His people were a nation, and not a spiteful and malicious man anxious to return evil for evil, the spirit of Christ is seen clearly working to purify a nation, as indeed it will His people *now*, if they perceive that the cause of strife is in themselves and then hear and fear Yahweh who was the giver of the Law and of the One who upheld the Law in every “jot and tittle.”

(to be continued).



“Contending for the Faith once delivered unto the Saints”

There can be few more searching exhortations than that of the Apostle Jude who besought his brethren to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

“Contending for the faith” is the professed occupation of innumerable people and of a host of sects—but how many *really* contend for the Faith? Has not Christ warned that when He returns

“*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (Matthew 7 v. 22).

Consideration of the context of the Apostle's words throws a flood of light on his exhortation. He was not asking his brethren to contend against the pagan or the barbarian. His anxiety concerned some in the *Body itself*, as he proceeds to explain—

“ *For there are certain men crept in unawares . . . ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.*” (Jude 4).

Hence the urgent necessity to contend for the faith—but in what way should this be done ?

The answer is hidden in the words “earnestly contend.” The original word in the Greek has nothing to do with contention ! It is *epagonizomai*, a word obviously related to our English word “agonize.” All who truly contend for the Faith agonize for it !

To get a clearer insight into what is *true* contending, the examples of the Apostles need only be considered ; for every Apostle, like their Lord, contended for the Faith. Listen for example to the way Paul “contended” with his brethren in Corinth, of whom he stood in doubt :—

“ *I Paul myself, beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ . . .*”

What gentleness is here ! What an example of how to contend for the Faith ! No boasting, no self-confidence, no suggestion that “I am more righteous than thou ;” instead a moving appeal, an urgent call to “come alongside” (as the word “beseech”—*parakaleo*—implies). One can sense the Apostle's anxiety, yes his *agonizing*, on the behalf of those for whom he had laboured so much in Corinth. All his contending was motivated by love, so beautifully exemplified in his appeal to these same brethren :—

“ *Being reviled, we bless . . . being defamed, we entreat ; we are made as the filth of the world and are the offscouring of all things . . . I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, ye have not many fathers ;*”

Here is *true* contending, just one of many examples—but oh, so different from the world's idea of *contending for the Faith* ! It demands love and patience, long suffering and courage, gentleness and meekness. It is the very Spirit of the Truth, and it is a work in which every true believer will confess he has always fallen short.

J.R.M.

Summary of a Bible Class

“ **Be careful for nothing** ”—Philippians 4 v. 6.

In verses 4 and 5 of this chapter we read the wonderful words of the Apostle :—

“ *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*”

The word rendered moderation in our English version is *epieikes* in the original Greek which really means *yieldingness*. We have it translated as *gentle* in Titus 3 v. 2,

“ *To be gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*”

Also in James 3 v. 17

“ *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle (i.e. yielding), easy to be entreated.*”

So we see that the Almighty desires in His children a spirit that is easy to be entreated, a “ yieldingness ” that will make itself apparent to all men who come in contact with them. This is a wonderful characteristic of God himself ; those who want to be like God (i.e. Godlike) then, must strive to cultivate this spirit which will show forth the goodness and glory of God.

Even when dealing with people who are in the wrong, those who are “ fellows ” of the Lord (who are in fellowship with Him) must be as yielding and patient as God himself, however right they are. They need to remember that there is no one more right than God ; nevertheless, *He is yielding*. Not, of course, that the “ yieldingness ” allows for the watering down of the Truth, but this quality of yieldingness and forbearance in attitude, is essential when dealing with those who do.

Who is more yielding than God himself ? Throughout the pages of Scripture the “ yieldingness ” and forbearance of God shine out. Passages come readily to mind : for instance, Genesis 18, where we read of Abraham’s plea in respect of Sodom :—

“ *Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked ? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city. . . . And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city then I will spare all the place for their sakes . . . Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous ? . . . Peradventure there shall be forty found there ? . . . Thirty ? . . . Twenty ? . . . Ten ? . . . I will not destroy it for ten’s sake.*”

There is also the plea of Moses in Exodus 32 :—

“ *If thou wilt forgive their sin ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*”

O, the wonderful condescension, forbearance and “ yieldingness ” of the great God of heaven !

The opposite to this characteristic is that spirit which is unyielding and implacable, which is of the flesh. Those who follow the Spirit of God suffer from time to time at the hands of those who have such a spirit, but the encouragement to them is—

“ *The Lord is at hand.*” (v. 5).

The word rendered “ hand ” is *eggus* in the original, i.e., *nigh* or *near*. Yes ! The Lord *is* near to those who follow meekness ; they may be despised by minds of flesh who think that meekness is a sign of weakness, but their consolation is that *The Lord is near* : He is close and knows their needs. And so the exhortation of verse 6 is :—

“ *Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*”

The word rendered “ careful ” is *merimnao*, i.e., *to become distracted*. It is used in Luke 10 v. 40 in relation to Martha who was “ careful and troubled about many things.” So we see the meaning is *in nothing*, (not anything) *to be distracted*.

The believer is exhorted to exercise faith in God and not to be distracted in his needs, for the necessities of life do not depend solely on his efforts : they are the provision of God. Neither is the believer to be “ over anxious ” regarding mundane things : the Truth must not be subordinated to his ambition.

God is good : He will provide. Hence the exhortation “ in everything (in all our needs) by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” By this means the “ peace of God which passeth all understanding ” will be received (verse 7) and will keep the heart and mind, through Christ Jesus.

“ Finally,” from verse 8, “ whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report . . . any virtue . . . any praise . . . *think on these things.*”

Yes, if we think on these things, of which the world to a large extent is lacking, we will not be *over anxious* ; we will not be *distracted* to the detriment of the truth of God . . . we will have peace, for God who is “ the God of peace ” (verse 9) shall be with us.

D.L.

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

“ **In the last days, perilous times shall come.**” (2 Timothy 3 v. 1).

A review of the long and tortuous history of the world cannot fail to leave the mind with a strange feeling of urgency and expectancy, with a conviction that something is to happen, *must* happen, very soon. Present conditions and events are seen to stand out in

striking relief, revealing that the world stage is rapidly being prepared for the "great day of God Almighty."

Many are the signs that we are living in the last days. The King of the North is already in position : the Jew has re-established himself in the land of his forefathers ; and the fear of universal destruction hangs like an ominous cloud over all mankind. These, and many others, are divinely-given Signs that the end is near, very near. But there is one sign, a unique sign, which stands in a class of its own, for it concerns not the material condition of the world, but the *character of men* at the time of the end.

As noted previously, most of the "Signs of the Times" can be traced back to the remarkable increase in knowledge during the last century. So also can this Sign—for if knowledge has affected men's way of life, *it has certainly affected their character.*

A most profound change has overtaken the world in recent years. Men's whole outlook on life has been altered—and all in the space of a single generation. Being ourselves so close to life we cannot perhaps discern it so clearly, but some of our grandparents, were they brought back to life, most certainly would be shocked at the change which has taken place.

Two hundred years ago, Britain, like most countries, was a place of hamlets and villages. Some have been engulfed with the passage of time, but many still remain. Although commanding little attention in this modern industrial world, yet they do provide a remarkable witness to the outlook of our forefathers : for the most impressive building in every hamlet and in every village is always the church ! The effort put into the building of churches was stupendous, whether measured in terms of money, or of time, or of skill. The world's great architects devoted their lives to the work, as did also the world's finest painters in their effort to provide fitting ornamentation. All this reflected the outlook of men of the day. Religion was taken seriously, and the Scriptures held in reverence. This is not to say that the Bible was understood or even believed, but men did approach it with a certain devoutness. How much was due to fear or to ignorance or merely to custom it is difficult to say, but certainly there was a reverence of the Word which is entirely lacking today. Four hundred years ago, a man who doubted the veracity of the Scriptures was liable to the penalty of death ! Bibles then were few and scarce, to be found only in churches, where they were kept chained and could be read on payment of a fee.

Many customs of the past testify to this same reverent approach which men had towards the Scriptures, even though the customs themselves were often little short of hypocrisy. A hundred years ago it was a common custom in certain classes of society, to turn all pictures back to front on Sundays, lest they might despoil the keeping

of the "Sabbath!" Bible lectures in the larger cities would attract hundreds of men and women. Even thirty years ago, the "sabbath" was rigorously observed, except in the industrial areas. Sunday games and Sunday cinemas would not have been tolerated. Especially was this so in the remote parts of Scotland and Wales. Many Scottish landladies would never allow visitors to arrive on a Sunday!

A Great Change in Outlook

All this has now changed: something has happened to alter men's outlook. Is it not that *knowledge has been increased*? The acquiring of knowledge has brought mighty changes in the earth—but it has wrought an even mightier change in men's outlook and character.

"Knowledge puffeth up" says the Apostle. Oh, how very true! Wherever there is knowledge, there is pride, and confidence and assurance invariably follow. How rare to find an exception!

Gone are the days when men had a regard for the Bible. Gone, too, are the days when men honoured their fathers and mothers. Knowledge has changed all that. For a hundred years children have been better educated than their parents; instead of honouring father and mother and leaning upon them for wisdom and advice, the tendency has been inwardly to despise them. Rising generations have preferred the sympathetic and doting appeals of the psychiatrist to the more severe scriptural counsel of mother and father.

So the world has lost even its reverence for the Holy Scriptures. Evolution has replaced Genesis and the rising generation knows more and more about nature, but less and less about the Creator of nature. The victory of science over the Bible is complete—but what a hollow victory! When the Bible was overthrown its restraining influence was lost for ever. With it went reverence, and her sister, gratitude. Instead, licentiousness has taken command of the world. Her unruly children—conceit, pride, greed, disobedience, adultery and murder clamour for space in the world's press and particularly in the Sunday press. A great change has taken place! Like the incoming tide, it started slowly, almost imperceptibly. Now the world is engulfed. Family life is breaking down; governments are being pressed to ease divorce, respect for parents is disappearing and reverence for the Bible has gone. In stark reality the prophecy of Paul is coming to fruition before our eyes—

"This know also that in the last days . . . Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy . . ." (2 Tim. 3)

Herein lies a peril quite different to that of the atom bomb—the peril to one's faith. Well might the apostle commence by warning—

"In the last days, perilous times shall come."

How the world confuses knowledge with wisdom ! Knowledge "puffeth up," but wisdom, true wisdom, brings humility. The beginning of wisdom, says the Scripture, is the *fear of the Lord*. Although every month knowledge is increasing, yet wisdom is decreasing.

Let the mind ponder the case of Daniel, the wisest man of his day. Whilst struggling to understand the heavenly visions, an angel appeared with this unique message—

"Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words."

Chastening—humbling—himself before God ! Here is the very antithesis to the way of the world as so strikingly foreshadowed by Paul. What a warning, but what an exhortation for all who aspire to discern the "Signs of the Times." J.R.M.

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.

Once again we draw near to the time when we hope to meet face to face those with whom we are united in striving to uphold the purity of fellowship with the Father and His Son.

During the month we have had the pleasure of having with us Sisters Crossley, Harrison and Butterfield, and also Brother Butterfield who ministered to our needs at the Lord's Table. Now we have the added pleasure of having with us Sister Carter and Sister Lois Carter : evidence of the love that binds us into the family of God.

H.J.S.

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

We have received much help this month by way of lecture, exhortation and reading from Brethren Smith and Moore.

At the lecture given in Portmadoc on June 27th, four strangers attended, one having been to several lectures in Criccieth some years ago. Arrangements are in hand for a lecture in Criccieth on August 1st, to be followed by another one at the end of August.

It is interesting to have had several enquiries recently from visitors to the district, including some from "Christadelphians," concerning the leaflets here.

The work of the brethren in the Magazine is much appreciated— a means of strength and encouragement, helping us to uphold the Truth.

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.

Only slight encouragement was felt in the response to the Forestville effort, but it is planned to follow up with circularizing in the hope that response to the invitation to write for literature may indicate further work there.

We are grateful for Sister Glenn's safe return after a month's participation in the activities of our brethren and sisters in England, and by the time this is in print, it is hoped that Sister Carter and Sister Lois Carter will have arrived for the August Fraternal.

The Annual Sunday School Review is planned for July 15th.

J. A.DeF.

Enfield—6 Chase Hill, Enfield.

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

Great happiness was derived by the children when they were able to attend the Sunday School Party at Beeston. This is indeed a very happy time for all of us.

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.

There has been some increase in attendance at the first lectures this month which has been a source of encouragement. It would seem that a poster on one of the main Manchester railway stations has helped in this. Leaflets have been distributed bearing the general lecture title "Christendom astray from the Bible," and doctrinal points which have been dealt with have aroused the interest of some.

On Friday, July 20th, we had the joyful experience of welcoming at the Manchester Airport Sister Carter and Sister Lois Carter from the Eden Ecclesia, America. They are with us for nearly a month and we look forward to the help which these contacts provide in many ways.

If the Lord wills, our Sunday School Outing is at Wythenshawe Park on Saturday, August 4th, and the Fraternal Gathering in the Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester on Monday, August 6th.

W.V.B.