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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

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THE HISTORY OF THE TRUTH IN THE LATTER DAYS

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

Gideon

To the mind searching for Divine help, the Word of God can bring much to strengthen, encourage, and comfort. Such is the case in the contemplation of the book of Judges, for here is found recorded the history of Israel's unfaithfulness and God's mercy toward them in spite of it. He heard their cries in time of distress and raised up judges to lead them out of oppression.

One of those raised up was Gideon, being led by God to free Israel from the hand of Midian. The manner in which Israel was delivered under Gideon's leadership brings to mind the ways God would have all His children overcome. Let us then, brethren and sisters, examine the record searching for its application to our lives.

In the seventh chapter of Judges, we read in verse one, of the setting in array of the children of Israel under Gideon, and of the great host of Midian. From the reading of the record, we discover that Israel numbered 32,000 and Midian, over 120,000 men. How insignificant the Israelites must have felt in the face of such numbers. Yet, we read, in Judges 7 : 2—

“ . . . The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, ‘Mine own hand hath saved me.’ ”

To vaunt, we find in the original Hebrew, means to glory, to boast. Such a trait is an abomination to God, yet a characteristic inherent in every one of us, and which can so very quickly become predominant. How difficult it is to keep pride under and acknowledge that all strength and power can only come from the source of all strength—the Almighty. Such was God's concern regarding Israel in their going out against Midian. The words of Isaiah (chapter 10 : 15) come to mind. “Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?” The word “boast” is the same rendered “vaunt” in speaking of Israel. God's desire was to teach that many times His hand uses certain in His purpose, and so great things may be accomplished, but the glory is His. We may be tools in His hand, but it must be remembered, as the Apostle Paul says: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” II Corinthians 4 : 7. All who will acknowledge such cannot vaunt themselves in pride, and so have the hope of being glorified by the Almighty. His words in Isaiah 60 : 7 tell us, “ . . . I will glorify the house of my glory.” This word “glorify” is again the Hebrew word for “vaunt.” Surely the teaching is clear; He is the One who alone can cause His

people to be vaunted or glorified. If only our minds could retain it, and so control the impulses to glorify self!

How can such impulses be controlled? The Apostle Paul tells us in I Corinthians 13 : 4, "Charity (love) vaunteth not itself." Does this show, brethren and sisters, how pride can be overcome—by a love of the Almighty which subdues all love of self, so putting under pride?

Ten Thousand Left

God then working with Israel through Gideon, removed some of the army of Israel, lest they vaunt themselves. The manner in which He chose those who were to remain, gives instruction and helps in our desire to be among those chosen to do His work. Judges 7 : 3, tells us—

"Now, therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead . . .'"

Why were "the fearful and afraid" removed? Deuteronomy 20 : 3, 4—

"Hear O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."

With true realization of such, could any faithful one fear or tremble? The record in Deuteronomy goes on to instruct that all who had just built a house, planted a vineyard, or married a wife, should be excused from battle, lest, because their heart was not wholly in the battle, others be distracted from the fight, and so the battle be hindered. Was not such the case with Gideon's forces, and is not such the anxiety with all those who fight in the battle of the Lord? God knows the hearts of all, and will reveal those who are fearful and afraid, so that those who remain, will not be caused to fear themselves, and so the battle be lost.

As we, brethren and sisters, are fighting to overcome today an enemy far more subtle than the Midianites, do we not need to examine our hearts and strive to put away all fear, doubt, and hesitancy, lest we pull down others in the fight, and ourselves be turned away, as not being fit for the Lord's use?

The record is that there were only 10,000 left of the 32,000 originally with Gideon. Surely now the host was fit to go against Midian!

"I Will Try Them"

But no—for we read in verse 4, "The Lord said unto Gideon, 'The people are yet too many: bring them down unto the water,

and I will try them . . . ” A further purging was necessary, that those who remained might be suitable for the Almighty’s use. God was to show to Gideon, to Israel, and to the faithful of today, how He will “try them.” He was to purge or refine them, the original Hebrew tells us. Such is the case for all those called to be His, for there is a constant trying, purging, refining, so only that which is capable of enduring the heat may remain.

The words of the Almighty through Daniel (chapter 11 : 35) tell us,

“And some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end . . . ”

Has not this been God’s working right from the beginning— a trying of all, that those who survive the refining may be white, and so find a place in His house? How significant that the trying here spoken of is caused by some of “understanding,” who have fallen. The fall of any who have been close and have been loved and respected because of their understanding, and past faithfulness, can cause a grievous trial, but yet the Almighty allows it that the faithful ones may be tested. The words of the prophet Malachi in Chapter 3 : 2—3, helps further—

“But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

Are we not shown, brethren and sisters, that apart from this purifying and making white, there is no hope of offering in righteousness? The life could not be acceptable now in time of probation, and would not be in the time of His appearing. The prophet Zechariah in Chapter 13 : 9, tells us of the purging of Israel, which applies as well to those striving to be Spiritual Israel:—

“I will bring the third part of them through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, ‘It is my people;’ and they shall say, ‘The Lord is my God.’ ”

Here is brought out that there can be true fellowship between the Almighty and His people only as they are tried, purged, and refined under His hand.

Such was the case with the 10,000 left to Gideon, who were to be tried by the Almighty. The record in Judges is that only those at the brook who lapped, using their hands, were to go against

Midian. How was this an indication of hearts which would survive the purging? The others who were not chosen had all bowed down upon their knees to drink. Did not the attitude of each one as they refreshed themselves, reveal what was in the heart? Those who lapped "putting their hands to their mouth," were those who were alert, watchful—their eyes not absorbed in satisfying their fleshly needs, but looking about, knowing that they were in the midst of their enemies. Such were chosen to fight the battle of the Lord.

The others went down upon their knees to drink, and so were not able to be alert, watchful. Their desire was to fulfil the needs of the flesh, neglecting the dangers all about. Does not this trying of the 10,000 hold for us a great lesson? Even in a time of refreshing, there is always the adversary near, ready to pull down and destroy our faith. Unless the mind is alert, watchful—yes, circumspect to the danger, such will not be suitable for the Lord's use. How easy it is in a time of seeming peace and tranquility in the Ecclesia, to be unmindful of a need in a brother or sister, which, if the mind is discerning, can be supplied to the strengthening of the individual and the Body.

In Gideon's time, only 300 out of 10,000 were found to have such a mind. Oh, brethren and sisters, if only we can see the warning! Are we not given the Elims to strengthen and refresh—for what? The next battle! Let us not relax, forgetting that the fight will be constant to the end of our probation.

The 32,000 in Gideon's time, were reduced to 10,000 and then with further "trying" to 300. Such is the experience of the faithful of all ages. A purifying, a refining is necessary, that the fearful may be removed, and then, those who are not ever watchful and alert. Can we enter into the feelings of Gideon as he saw the numbers cut down? How sad and how frightened he must have felt, to see so many turned back; yet he knew it was of the Lord. Can we enter into similar experiences, knowing that it is the Almighty's hand extended to us today, for the purifying of His house, for the sorting out of those who are suitable for His use? While sadness is felt at the leaving behind of numbers, and those who in the past have been close, it is God's hand allowing it for our eternal good.

A further help is given in the record of how the 300 overcame the thousands of Midian. Their weapons were a trumpet, a lamp, and an empty pitcher. What seemingly feeble weapons to go against the great army of Midian; yet, the record tells us that these 300 put to flight all the great power of the adversary. These things can be applied to our endeavours to overcome through the help of the Lord. Are not our weapons to be the Light which is from within, given of the Creator to His people as they acknowledge that of

themselves, they are but empty pitchers? In addition, there is the trumpet which is to give a clear, certain note—the word of Truth, which sounds a warning, and if unheeded, will in the time to come, bring judgment just as in the case of Jericho.

Brethren and sisters, our weapons, to the world, do seem weak and useless, but what a great victory was achieved by the 300 under Gideon as they, with the power of God, overcame the enemies of Israel. Their trust was in the Almighty, having come through testing and trial, and as a result, felt so keenly and closely the power that is His. Such do not vaunt themselves, and yet, have a feeling of confidence, knowing that the Almighty is working in them for His Purpose.

Can we then, brethren and sisters, feeling the strength given by the Almighty, join hands in the struggle to overcome, having faced together the trials which have alerted and united—as did Gideon's three hundred?

J.A.DeF.

Remember Ye the Law of Moses My Servant

“Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both . . .”

(Exod. 22 v. 11)

In the life of a community there are many issues bringing differences between its members. This is seen on every hand at the present day. However laudable the objects of a particular society, a brief acquaintance with its inner workings is sufficient to reveal animosities between its members and development of factions. In larger communities these difficulties can lead to strife, to hatred, and to war. Such is the universal testimony to the dreadful weakness of human nature, which, when uncontrolled, soon exhibits passions more savage than the beasts of prey. Men have made frail attempts by their laws to control these base tendencies, but failure is writ large over all their efforts as is seen in the turbulent state of society everywhere, and also in the frightening international relations the world over.

A detached view of these things, with a sober estimate of the true cause, prepares the mind for a better appreciation of the Law of God given through Moses. In its tersely stated terms much can escape the mind that is superb in wisdom which is divine, and in equity which transcends all human jurisprudence. It must be remembered that the enlightening and uplifting effect of divine law cannot be seen on the surface; study and meditation are necessary if the “Spirit of Christ” in it is to be seen, directing with subtle but unfailling power, the children of God to a true love of neighbour. By this the mind is led to gratitude for such provision, causing the love of God to spring forth from the heart, spontaneously

and sincerely. The work of Israel's Judges, of the Levites, was to help all to so great and satisfying an ideal. Provision was made so that convenient centres for the teaching of the Law were available to all the nation. The cities of the Levites were suitably located throughout the land so that brethren might not only know the Law, but delight in it to the extent of living by it. No nation has ever had such an incalculable blessing. To such high degree is this true that when the nation listened to the last exhortation prior to its entry into the land they heard Moses say:

“Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them: for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations (what a privilege!) which shall hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’

“For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?” (What an honour!)
(Deut. 4 vv. 5-7)

With the mind imbued with such thoughts, profitable consideration can be given to what on the surface only seem items of the Law given for the care of cattle and goods, between borrower and lender.

“If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to help; and it die, or be hurt or driven away, no man seeing it:

“Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good.”

(Exod. 22 vv. 10-11)

As between brethren here was a circumstance likely to cause trouble—cattle received for care and lost but “no man seeing it.” The Law clearly stated that if the cattle were stolen whilst in the keeping of the neighbour, then restitution must be made. The neighbour was responsible to take care that such should not happen. If, however, the beast were “torn to pieces,” he need not make restitution providing the carcase could be brought as evidence. The case was different where there was loss of neighbour's cattle, “no man seeing it.” There was the dreadful possibility of the brother having stolen his neighbour's goods, disposing of his theft by sale. In these circumstances the matter was to be settled by oath, “an oath of the Lord that he hath not put forth his hand

unto his neighbour's goods." The truthfulness of such an act was beyond question. As the Apostle Paul says:

"An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."

(Heb. 6 v 16)

If a brother took an oath, falsely, he imperilled his life, for "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." The oath was a divine ordinance, which a brother living in the days of the Law given by Moses, and before, could take to attest to his brethren the unquestionable truth of what was averred. It was a provision for brethren when all their work and associations were controlled by divine law. In such an association to acknowledge the giver of the Law in attesting the Truth was not only permissible but was at times required by God as in the case under consideration.

Apostasy from the simplicity of the oath

Why is it, when commenting on this part of the Law, Jesus says:

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself (i.e., swear falsely) but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths:'

"But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven: for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great King.

"Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

"But let your communication be, Yea, yea, Nay nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

(Matt. 6 vv 33-37)

Careful consideration of the words of Jesus will show that in Old Testament times the oath must be to the Lord. Many subsidiary oaths had been invented, which seemed to add weight to some statement or transaction, but allowed of escape from punishment for divine heresy. This artificial elaboration had gone so far that the scribes and Pharisees were accounted as being blind guides in these words:

"Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple he is a debtor!

"Whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon the altar, he is guilty."

(Matt. 23 vv 16-17)

Jesus showed how inconsistent they were, upbraiding them for their blindness that they could not see which was the greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifieth the gold; or which was greater the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift. Such pseudo-oaths must have been obnoxious to the Creator and giver of the Law, as being nothing more than convenient ways of appearing righteous without any true intention of always being so. As such Jesus said they were evil. The sanctity and simplicity of the oath had been lost, and so those listening to the Lord Jesus heard his instructions, not as a contradiction of the Law, but as an amplification and adaptation to the changed conditions. In effect the Lord says:

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not perform unto the Lord thine oaths.’ But—this is not all, for I add—

Swear not at all. Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” (The addition of the word “but” has previously been shown to be implied in the original).

From these words the Lord Jesus upholds the Law, showing that in the Kingdom when all activity was to be regulated by divine precepts, the oath allowed a simple statement of truth to receive a sanctifying seal. In this there was nothing more than godly simplicity, no thoughts that statements could be made, elaborated by some kind of oath, which, if false, made no difference, because it was not a breach of the Law.

Such ideas of differing culpability belong to Gentile philosophy, and are not to be found in divine law. A lie was condemned by God’s law in all circumstances as one of the seven things the Lord hated. In the Gentile copy of such justice much is lacking, for a man is only regarded as an offender to be punished who makes a false statement under oath, in a court of law.

By the time of the Lord Jesus the apostacy in Israel was nigh complete. The oath, once a provision for sanctifying a simple truth, had become prostituted to being a cover for that which was not true, but which the utterer of the oath desired to make appear true. Departure from truth a little further on this matter reveals the degeneration of swearing an oath, to blasphemous cursing—a noxious taint known in every modern language.

Therefore the instruction of the Lord to his brethren for the time between the casting off of the Kingdom and its re-establishment was simple and clear:

“Swear not at all . . . Let your yea be yea; and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

The Apostle James carefully emphasised the same point, to show the necessity of being different from the world who by their oaths would make their statements seem true, when they are not. He says:

“But above all things my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.”

(James 5 v 12)

The latter day apostasy on oaths

The warning is clear. Where language is over-emphasised, truth is likely to suffer. Distortion of truth is evil, and if practised by the servant of the Lord will certainly bring condemnation as declared by the Apostle. In an age when language is often elaborated to confuse, when oaths are added to impress falsely, the divine instruction is one of restraint, and development of sincere simplicity:

“Let your yea be yea; and nay, nay.”

Those who emulate this divine standard must be “slow to speak,” for simplicity and sincerity of expression need more thought.

When the Kingdom is restored, and divine simplicity and sincerity is all prevalent, then the oath will be restored; again to fulfil the purpose which it had in the original Kingdom, the sanctifying of a statement made on the part of an individual to God, or to his brother. The returned Lord Jesus is seen in prophecy as the taker of such oath in the Apocalypse—

“And I saw another mighty angel come down . . .

And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever . . .”

(Rev. 10 v 1 and 6)

There is something very satisfying in perceiving that the Lord Jesus did not in any way contradict the Law, but in all points upheld His declaration that He came to fulfil it. As the matter is worked out it is seen how the oath is a beautiful institution in the atmosphere of the Kingdom, but utterly desecrated by the evil of a Gentile world, and so oaths of every kind must not be used by Christ's brethren during His absence lest they partake of this evil or appear to do so.

Those who have had the Truth in the latter days were firm in their stand in upholding his divine principle; and indeed rejoiced that in the English speaking nations provision was made for exemption from taking an oath. How sad that the “Christadelphian” Magazine, once the organ of those who upheld these views, should depart from the divine sandard. Reference to the “Christadelphian Magazine” for February 1915, page 75 and others, argues that in spite of the clear command, “Swear not at all,” that it is the

nature of the military oath that makes it impossible for brethren to take it, and that it is "going too far" to say we cannot take any oath.

Faithfulness is shown under pressure of circumstances: that is under trial. When there is no trial faithful conduct means nothing more than a negative agreement. When trial comes, and maybe a danger of persecution, then both courage and faith are required for a positive agreement in facing the trial.

In the trial which came about by the danger of war, reproach fell upon the brotherhood who refused to take part. Faithful action required a wholehearted upholding of the godly simplicity conveyed in the words of Christ: "Swear not at all." To say as was said at the time, that "There are oaths and oaths," was a compromising argument reminiscent of Gentile philosophy, and at once destructive of the Truth.

The lessons of the past are clear; Why the Law allowed and required in certain cases an oath in the times when evil practice had not robbed it of godly simplicity: Why Christ forbade the taking of any oath, not as a contradiction of the Law, but due to the apostasy of men from the Truth, bringing evil which came from using oaths as a cover or pretext.

So the present servant of Christ will rejoice in the counsel of God given at all times to preserve godly simplicity and to preserve from evil. He will rejoice in knowing the Spirit of the Law was the Spirit of Christ.

(To be continued)

The History of the Truth in the Latter Days **"Christadelphians" and "Re-union"**

In the beginning of the revival of the Truth in the latter days it is interesting to note circumstances which had to do with the origin of the "Christadelphian." Dr. Thomas wrote of the facts which had made necessary the choosing of a name, and said:

"I do not want to hear of such a people as the people I have referred to, being called by my name. If they believed in theories and traditions invented by me, it would then be well to call them by my name, but as far as developed truly, they believe the truth which makes them Christ's brethren, and "Christadelphian" expresses that fact. To be called by this name is a great honour if we believe it. It is an unappropriated name by any sect, and, therefore, distinguishes us from all. "Christian" has lost its original significance in the mouth of the Gentile; hence the Pope, the

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Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Mormon High of Utah, are all Christians so-called and brethren, but not "Christadelphians."

Towards the end of the American Civil War a petition was got up by the brethren in the States praying for exemption from military conscription. Herein, the name "Christadelphian" had its first important historical usage. Extracts from the petition read as follows:

TO THE SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

Gentlemen,—Your petitioners respectfully submit that they belong to a "very small remnant" of that sect, which in the days of the Apostles was "everywhere spoken against" because of its testimony against "the world-rulers of the darkness of that age." This has been their testimony in all ages of their standing before the "Powers that be." Inheriting their principles, your petitioners are brought under the obligation of maintaining their testimony: although, as in past experience of thousands of them, it may be necessary to seal it with the loss of goods, liberty or life.

During the past eighteen hundred years they have been distinguished from heterogeneous "names and denominations" of the kingdom of the clergy, by various titles imposed upon them by their enemies. These names they repudiate: and, in accordance with apostolic teaching, that all the real children of God are the brethren of Jesus (a relationship in which their brethren in all ages have glorified), your petitioners choose to be known as "Christadelphians," or brethren of Christ.

Your petitioners belong to a very small remnant . . . Wherever found their principles are identical, having been taught by the Word, not of man but of God. By this teacher, whose authority alone they recognised, they are commanded not to kill, nor even to be angry with their fellowmen without a cause . . . not to resist evil . . .

Now your petitioners respectfully affirm that they are of that class especially provided for in the Enrolment Act as conscientiously opposed to the bearing and use of "weapons of war," and to the shedding of human blood; and as the brethren of Christ, owing allegiance only to Him, as King of Israel, positively refuse under any circumstances whatever, to engage in the armies and navies of any government."

Shortly after the making of the petition the war ceased. Nevertheless, the authorities came to know of the existence of a Remnant

by the name of "Christadelphian," and the position of the Remnant in relation to the governments of men.

The early History

The disentanglement of the Truth from all error required the unflinching and courageous action of a man of faith: one who could discern what was right and unswervingly pursue what the Truth required, even though it might mean the loss of earnings and of friends. Such a one was undoubtedly provided in the person of Dr. Thomas. The words from his pen, which follow, are illustrative of his forthright and unwavering service to the Truth:

"I am no man's personal enemy, I have neither time nor inclination to trouble myself about persons or their affairs . . . But when they approach me on the premises of the Truth, then they are either my friends or my foes, and I am theirs. I am their friend for the truth's sake, or I am their foe for the truth's sake . . . I, for one, know no one in this warfare as a brother and friend who is *neutral* . . . (He) they may virtually acquiesce in the theory of the Truth, but can we call them friends and brethren? Are they Christ's brethren? How can they be, seeing Christ is the Truth?"

"Shall I call such enemies of Christ my friends and my brethren? I tell you nay . . .

"The greatest and most dangerous enemies to Christ are those who pretend to be his friends, but are not faithful to his doctrine."

The Doctor's first visit to England to preach the gospel was in 1862, when he was to meet his co-partner and fellow pioneer in the work. At that time the Doctor was 57, and his assiduous helper, Robert Roberts, a young man of only 23. Not having met before, this young man's apprehension was considerable as he waited at Huddersfield Station. Robert Roberts speaking of the incident, says:

"I watched every train from Liverpool for a certain length of time. At last a quiet, firmly-set, square shouldered, literary looking gentleman, in frock coat and chimney-pot hat, with ruddy countenance and white beard, emerged from one of the carriages."

With salutation over they repaired to a humble homestead. The first breaking of bread attended by the Doctor in England, was in a bakehouse, where a baker's trough with a lid over it served as the Table, and the audience consisted of six or seven persons.

A few words from the pen of Robert Roberts about the personal side of Dr. Thomas may serve to convey to the mind the kind of character the Truth should develop by the fiery trial of enemies within and without: one surely who will not yield an inch where the interests of Truth are involved but who at all times is approachable, "gentle and easy to be entreated." Such was the decided impression of Dr. Thomas upon the mind of the young stalwart for the Truth, Robert Roberts. In noting this impression, he says:

"It is impossible to exaggerate the charm of Dr. Thomas's company under our own roof (though it was but a lodging house roof).

"He was a totally different man from what his writings prepared us to expect. These writings were so pungent, so vigorous, so satirical, and had such a sledge-hammer force of argument and denunciation that we looked for a regular Boanerges—a thunder dealer, a man not only of robust intellect, but a combative, energetic, self-assertive turn, whose converse would be largely spiced with explosive vocables.

"Instead of this, he was quiet, gentle, courteous, well-mannered, modest, absolutely devoid of affectation or trace of self-importance. His calm, lofty, cordial reverence for the Scriptures was very edifying to us, after several weary years of contact with drivellers and blasphemers; and his interest in all circumstances pertaining to the fortunes of the Truth which we had to tell him was very refreshing after a toilsome course of solitary labour in a cause that all our neighbours pitied us as fools for taking up."

The Truth in all ages has developed men whose strength has been made perfect in weakness, a strength free at all times from life-sapping compromise, vital, forceful and always upholding the right and being prepared to condemn the wrong, but in personal contact and personal matters always irradiating the exalted and charming qualities of the Lamb. This is a strange paradox, which only the Spirit can make clear—that one so strong, so immovable, so earnest and at times so combative, should have in person the meekness and humility of the Spirit of the Lamb, and only those who would submit to the Spirit in all things can find delight in the company of such faithful witnesses, and an urgent desire to emulate such apparently conflicting attributes. These attributes are the seal of the Truth: to be strong as a lion certainly in the Truth's defence against error, but at all times meek as a lamb.

(To be continued)

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

In the first verse of the last book of the Bible is to be found a most significant phrase which has an important bearing on present world events—

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass . . .”

To the apostle John, to whom the Revelation was addressed, the word “shortly” would mean much, for he would understand from it that all events portrayed in symbol before him would come to pass “with speed” (as the original Greek means): not that they would be fulfilled in the immediate future, but that their fulfilment when once started, would be accomplished rapidly—with speed.

Here is something of tremendous importance. It means that the events of the Revelation, in their final fulfilment, will not be long and drawn-out, but will follow upon each other with great rapidity. This is not altogether surprising, for the Lord Jesus has warned that His coming will be as a thief in the night, taking the world unawares, implying that the apocalypsing of the Son of God will certainly be with speed.

Yet many of the events recorded in the Revelation are world-wide, some concerning great confederacies of nations, and others affecting the whole world. Normally, nations and confederacies do not arise overnight, but take time, many years, to come to fruition. Yet John was told that events were to happen with speed. This can only mean one thing: that before the final apocalypse of the Lord Jesus, the world stage is to be all set and prepared, ready for the sequence of mighty happenings which are to shake the world to its very foundations.

Nebuchadnezzar's Image

Bearing this in mind, let us now consider the great and terrible image which Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, saw in a dream, and which the prophet Daniel interpreted for him. In his dream, the king saw a huge image whose head was of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay. Here, as the prophet explained, was foreshadowed a sequence of mighty powers which should rule the world, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar himself, as the head of gold, and ending with a divided kingdom

symbolised by the feet of iron and clay. "In the days of these kings," the prophet announced, "the God of heaven shall set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed." But then the record adds—

"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor."

(Daniel 2 v 35)

Remembering that Babylon, the head of gold, was overthrown 2,500 years ago, the question arises, how can the gold (and the silver and the brass) with the iron and clay be broken to pieces "together," in the day when the "God of heaven shall set up a kingdom."? Evidently in some way or other, either literally or spiritually, the kingdoms represented by Nebuchadnezzar's image must all be in existence and in their appointed places, at the time of the end. Striking confirmation of this is the fact that one of the great powers symbolised in the Revelation actually bears the name "Babylon."

Slowly but surely the nations of the world are taking up their appointed positions and the ground is being prepared for the latter-day appearance of Nebuchadnezzar's great and terrible image, a confederacy which must include all nations of the earth particularly as represented by the past empires of "gold" and "silver" and "brass." Thus amidst the confusion of modern politics certain trends can be discerned, perhaps unnoticed by most, but reminding the servants of God that the world panorama is to be all set, so that at the appointed time the Revelation will be fulfilled—with speed.

The most obvious and spectacular example is that of Russia whose rise to power, as all the world is made to realise, is little short of miraculous. At the appointed time there she will be in her place, ready to fulfil divine prophecy—with speed. Then there is the Roman Catholic Church. For over twenty years, and especially since the last war, her numbers have been rapidly advancing as also her power and influence. When the "great day of God Almighty" comes she too will be in her allotted place and in a position to fulfil the prophecies recorded of her—with speed.

More remarkable still, perhaps, is the rise in power of the Arab nations. Subdued and despised for centuries, and divided and rent amongst themselves, their part at the time of the end might seem to be negligible. Yet Nebuchadnezzar's image implies that all nations will be involved, when "the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold" is ground to pieces. Thus every month the Arabs are becoming immeasurably stronger. Enriched by their oil

resources and united by a common enemy in the land of promise, the shackles of foreign oppression are being scornfully cast aside, to the dismay of England, France and America, and to the delight of Russia. It is a mighty movement and one not confined to the strictly Arab nations, but includes all who pay tribute to Mohammedanism, from India in the east, who has gained independence, to Morocco in the west who is demanding it. Thus when that "day of the Lord," now so close at hand, arrives, all the Mohammedan nations will be in their divinely appointed places, ready to fulfil their part— with speed.

A consideration such as this raises the supremely important question—

Are we, called to be the children of God, also prepared and ready for this great day of God Almighty?

J.R.M.

News from the Ecclesias

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.

On Saturday, August 25th, we had the joyful experience of witnessing one more of Adam's race put on the saving name of Christ in baptism. Mrs. Ellen Brown was baptised at the Stockport Baths, in the presence of a number of brethren and sisters. On these occasions it is always a delight to remember that the joy experienced is being shared by the angels in heaven. We hope that this planting will redound to His honour and glory in the great day of account.

Our Saturday classes are now being spent in a general review of the Revelation which we are finding very helpful in getting an overall picture of this precious prophecy.

Later

We have had further cause for rejoicing in the baptism of one of our Sunday School scholars. On October 6th, Eunice Francis, daughter of Sister Francis, put on the saving name of Christ in the way appointed. It is encouraging to watch the development of children in the Sunday School as they reach years of understanding, and to see them facing up to the issues of life or death. It is hoped that our new sister will adorn the Truth she has been honoured to receive and at last find the reward which in the mercy of the Father is promised to faithful children.

W.V.B.

(Other "News" next month.)