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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

CHRISTENDOM - AND OTHERS - ASTRAY

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

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

Numbered

MOSES at Sanai was commanded to number Israel. Every male was to be numbered from 20 years old and upward—all that were able to go forth to war. In this numbering is seen the Almighty's care for His children, for Israel, as they dwelt in the wilderness. Unless they were numbered, they were not counted among the children of Israel, were not allowed to enter into the work, nor come near the Tabernacle of the congregation. In Ezra's time there were certain priests who were not numbered by genealogy, and so were put from the priesthood, as polluted (Ezra 2 : 62).

In the case of the Levites, each was numbered and each assigned a certain work in connection with the Tabernacle. The Kohathites were charged with carrying the holy things of the Most Holy and Holy Places, after they were covered by the sons of Aaron. Each would have his definite work, and would know what was required of him, and would carefully wait for the sons of Aaron to cover the holy things; knowing that if they did not carefully obey the divine instructions, they would die. The sons of Merari and of Gershon also had their duties under the direction of Aaron and his sons. How grateful the Levites would be to participate in this work, looking to the high priest and his sons for direction and oversight. Surely, if faithful, they would esteem their numbering, and the work given of the Almighty.

Is there not a real lesson preserved here for us? We, too, seek to enter into the work, but can do so only as allowed of God, as we are numbered, accounted among Israel of the Spirit.

Let us strive to value this calling, realising His kindness and mercy in permitting this fellowship—this setting apart from the world, counted as His children, His called-out ones. Even as Israel of old was numbered according to their families, so those who are Israelites indeed, know this family bond, a family which joins into a close relationship all under one Head, the Lord Jesus. What a privilege such a close relationship is, and too, what a responsibility it brings to grow together as a real family knit, with a bond of love for each other, and for the one who has numbered His people.

The Half Shekel

In Exodus 30 : 12-16, we read of what God required at a time of numbering, and perhaps can perceive what He meant to teach His people.

“When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord . . . this shall they give . . . half a shekel . . . thou shalt take the atonement money . . . and shalt appoint it for the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation.”

Each one numbered was to acknowledge their need for atonement by the paying of the half shekel. Surely this was to remind that they were to be holy, redeemed, a peculiar people unto the Lord, covered by His loving kindness seen in His Son, Jesus Christ. The record is found in Exodus 38 : 25, 27 of how the half shekel was to be used.

“ . . . of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the vail . . . and of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekals he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapters, and filleted them.”

This spoke again to faithful brethren of Israel, of their redemption through God’s loving kindness, associated in His tabernacling with them. How fitting too, that the pillars were “filleted with silver” (verse 17). The word filleted is associated with love, being rendered: have a desire, desire, longing, love. For example, Isaiah 38 : 17 tells us,

“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption.”

Here is seen in symbol the house of God, through His love joined together into one perfect whole. How meaningful this would be to thoughtful brethren of those days. With what careful gratitude they would comply with the command to be numbered, for it signified their hope of a part in His House. Can we, brethren and sisters, see God’s purpose revealed here for us? Surely He has extended His love towards His people in numbering those who strive to serve Him.

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As we meditate upon this numbering, remembering that the word is often rendered, to visit, to care for, to oversee—can we discern a little more of that which is involved? What a precious, guarded, and cared-for position this is! Does not the Lord Jesus tell us in Luke 12:7—speaking to His disciples: “Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore . . .” God knows, sees, and cares for all His numbered ones, accounting them as belonging to the Head, the Lord Jesus.

How we ought to conduct our ways, that we may always be so numbered, for it is possible to find that our position as one of God’s Israel is insecure, in danger of being eternally lost. Jesus taught of the prodigal son, who indeed having left his father’s house and care, was counted as “dead”—no longer numbered in that family.

Awakening before it was too late and realising he had forsaken a precious relationship, this son came back to his father in humbleness, saying, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” The father said: “For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.” Let us perceive the lesson here. How quickly in the Father’s eyes we can become as dead! Surely this is a warning to us to take heed to our ways and to remain steadfast in His House.

Are we not reminded by Paul in Romans 9:8,

“They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

Let us not, brethren and sisters, be children dominated by the flesh, but those seeking to obey and honour God—the children after the spirit, and so children of promise, remembering God’s word (verse 13) “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” It was the children of Jacob (Israel) who were numbered at Sinai—not the children of Esau!

The Visitation of God

As we strive to be the children of promise, those whom God desires to number, He overlooks our lives—testing, proving, strengthening. He visits all His children in this way, providing help where He sees faithful obedience and subjection to His will. Job

is an example of one whom God tested and found faithful. How much Job suffered, and yet steadfastly he held fast. His strength is revealed for us in Job 10 : 12—

“Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.”

This word “visitation” we find is derived from the Hebrew word for “number.” Surely Job in his extremity of suffering was strengthened by the knowledge that God had visited him, and numbered him, and so was testing his faith. In our own trials we need to remember that God has visited us, has cared for us in calling us to be His children, and is even now working by trial and tribulation to prove our faith. If we can continually remind ourselves of this, we will be strengthened in the life-long struggle to overcome. Let us enter into David’s prayer as we read in Psalm 106 : 4-5 :

“Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.”

“Members One of Another”

Allowing the mind to return to the figure of Israel, numbered of God, covered and guided by His Spirit, led by the cloud by day and the fire by night, we can see a little of the beauty of these arrangements. As Israel is pictured encamped around the tabernacle, as the glory of God is seen overhead, we are moved with gratitude and awe, looking to the end of God’s purpose. Do we, as Balaam was caused by the Spirit, exclaim :

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel.” (Numbers 24 : 5).

Indeed we do value the hope that is ours, because we have been numbered among those who are the Israel of God. As Israel was to be united as one, rejoicing in the holy and separated relationship as His people, we too, are to value this blessing and to be united in one heart and in one spirit to serve our Father.

Paul reminds us that we are a visited people, called to be one body, bound to One Head.

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, (all numbered) and all the members of that one body, being many,

are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many.”
(I. Corinthians 12 : 12-14).

And so the charge to each of us is to watch, and to work and to believe that “. . . there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.” (v. 25).

What care God has for His people to number them. As we strive to be of the number must there not be a reflection of that care in our reaching out one to another to help, to strengthen, and thus cement the bond that joins together those of His body ?

Let us too, brethren and sisters, exhibit a heart-felt care and love for God who has drawn us to His Son. Can we join in the humble words of David ?

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man that thou visitest him ? (Psalm 8 : 4).

Let us join our voices in praise : “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.”

J. A. De F.

Christendom — *and others* — Astray (32)

The Law of Moses the Spirit of Christ

HOW few there are in the world today who acknowledge that the Law of Moses was the Spirit of Christ, capable of giving practical guidance to the church of God on a host of every-day problems. Yet, surely its preservation and the many references to the Law throughout the Word indicate the importance of the Law and the present help which God intends the Law to give.

Christendom ignore the Law : indeed they despise the Law. Never would they entertain that the Law is the Spirit of Christ. They are loud in proclaiming the opposite: that the Spirit of Christ was superior in every way to the Spirit of the Law. But Christendom is astray ; very much astray as amongst other things their attitude to the Law reveals. This malady of Christendom is incurable. The only remedy is the destruction of all Christendom's institutions when Christ comes.

Christendoms' diseases are contagious; hence the need for separation if the faith is to be kept pure. The "others" have failed to keep separate and have become infected. This is revealed in their attitude to the Law, which in a sense is worse than Christendom's, because they profess to believe the Law, and then immediately deny its application to the present time by saying—"We are not under the Law." How grievous and ungrateful this must appear in the eyes of the Law-giver and the Law-preserver. To confess a "form of godliness" is not enough; there must be an acknowledgment of the "power." These articles are being written to deliver sincere seekers of Truth from the insipidity and impotency of "the form"; that they might come to rejoice in "the power" to their eternal happiness and well-being. This will never be accomplished by cold logic. Lines of proof may be drawn from the Word as carefully as those in geometrical theorem; they may produce some kind of conviction in the intellectual and technical mind, but they will never succeed in developing a robust faith, felt and loved as a power in the heart. Only as Christ is seen in the Law, in all His glory and beauty, can the heart become enlivened and established with a warmth of conviction. Let us recall that the Law was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." The "schoolmaster," or rather as the original states, the "pedagogue" was the one who led the child by the hand, keeping him from harm, and taking him for instruction. Shall we become as a "little child," and be led by the hand of His gracious Law as given to Moses, that we might see Christ? Not as Christendom sees Him, irresolute, tolerant of all evil, and swaddled in sentimentality; but rather as He is revealed by God in the Law; firm yet gracious, condemnatory of rebels yet merciful to the truly penitent, the embodiment of light exposing and condemning all darkness.

Let us also remember with reverence that God, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus was the Law-giver; that His presence gave the Ecclesia in the wilderness its title, and its life. His "tabernacle" or dwelling was set up in the midst of the Ecclesia twelve months after their coming out of Egypt. This dwelling was "anointed", or, was "Christed." Every part of God's dwelling was to show some phase of the Redeemer—Christ. The singular frag-

rance of the holy anointing oil conveyed to the sense in a dramatic way, the delights to be found in the Redeemer. Thanks be to God that we who live in this far-off age of Gentile times are not denied the helpful fragrance of the Christ, concealed in the appointments of the Law.

The Altar of Burnt-Offering

Like every other part of God's dwelling the Altar of Burnt-Offering was anointed, was "Christed." In this way it was designed to teach about the work of God in the Christ, when He should come.

Divine instructions concerning the making of the Altar were given at Sinai.

"An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings . . . in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Exodus 20 : 24).

It is not generally recognised that the brazen altar itself was really a grate placed over a mound of earth raised from the ground, helping to keep this in position, and providing a convenient platform at the top on which the offerings could be placed and burnt. It is important to see Christ then not only in the whole arrangement, but first in the "altar of earth." A striking and delightful fact is seen in connection with this Altar, as noted in the divine instruction :

"In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Exodus 20 : 24).

This Altar was to be associated with God's Name, and the place where He would choose to put His Name. Here, He, the great God, would come to be with His people, and there He would bless them. There is obviously a vital connection between the Altar of earth, and the place of God's name where His people would be blessed.

"The place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there."
(Deuteronomy 16 : 2).

This statement is made many times in the divine record, underlining its importance. Moses was shown that God had chosen

Jerusalem for this great purpose, and so it was in Jerusalem that eventually the dwelling of God, the Temple, was erected. Here was to be God's Name, and the Altar where God would be with His people, and where He would bless them. It is not difficult to see these great facts as substantial truths when it is known that the Altar of earth specifically represented Christ; that in Him should be seen God's Name, that through Him, God would meet with or fellowship His people, and that by Him God would bless those who belonged to Him. The whole purpose of God was seen in the Altar as later it was seen in Christ, but how greatly consideration of the Altar simplifies our understanding of the work of God in Christ as will be seen as the details are examined.

Jerusalem was to be the place where the purpose of God should be fulfilled. Just as the Temple and the Altar were in Jerusalem, so Christ when He came, finished His great work there. His testimony was in that city; His condemnation to death took place in Jerusalem.

In one of those exquisite turns of divine justice and retribution, Jesus is to return to Jerusalem, the place which saw His shame, there to be vindicated and seen in glory. It is then that this City in fulfillment of the purpose of God will become the "city of the great King." Here, in the final sense will God meet with His people and bless them through Christ, for upon Jerusalem's mountains, the mountains of Zion, the children of God are to receive the eternal blessing. It is to come upon them "like the precious ointment upon the head of Aaron." This anointing pointed forward to the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit, ultimately bringing the change in His nature—from corruptible to incorruptible. It also shows the anointing of all who truly belong to Him, and so will receive the promised blessing :

"The precious ointment upon the head . . . (is) As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for ever-more." (Psalm 133).

The beginning of all this glorious achievement is in the Altar of earth, or rather in the One represented by this Altar. David knew this, as he explains in the Psalms :

“I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

Surely his salvation is nigh unto them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.” (Psalm 85 : 8-11).

“Truth shall spring out of the earth.” Jesus was raised up out of the earth, born of a woman, made of the dust of the ground like all mankind. This essential truth was powerfully demonstrated in the Altar, which was to represent Him. It was to be an altar of earth, raised up from the ground, just as Jesus was.

Here in this altar David proclaims—“Mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace embrace each other.” Truly, in Jesus truth did “spring out of the earth,” and upon Jesus came the righteousness from heaven.

In showing this righteousness Jesus died, declaring that flesh is justly sentenced to death, and thus He opened the way for “peace unto His people,” and the salvation which this promises.

“Souls under the Altar”

A correct understanding of one part of the Word helps in the understanding of another. The Book of the Revelation is not easy to understand; but certain there is no hope of doing so, unless there is first a clear understanding of the Law of Moses. It is remarkable how many references there are in the Revelation to the Law: surely a clear indication that the Law is the Spirit of Christ and is indispensable.

Is this the reason why Christendom fail completely to understand the Revelation? And even go so far as to say God did not intend it should be understood. How stupid is the wisdom of this world, which would say God troubled to write a book that He did not intend should be understood! What would they say of a man who published a book that could not be understood, when questioned said he never intended it should be understood? There is only one place, they would say, for such a man, and yet that is just how they make God appear. Christendom is astray—sadly astray.

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Now the "others" in the last generation have sadly neglected the Revelation. No longer are they interested as a body in the writing of Dr. Thomas in "Eureka"; neither have they progressed since his day. Is this failure due to the loss of the Spirit? The Spirit of Christ as seen in the Law and all parts of the Word?

Never will the subject of the "Souls under the Altar" be understood without this Spirit.

It is essential to consider what the Ecclesia in the wilderness were taught at the Altar, and it is wise to remember that they were an Ecclesia of brethren and sisters.

As they approached the dwelling of God, the first thing to be seen in the gate of the Tabernacle was the Altar. Although the Tabernacle was the dwelling of God who promised life, they were immediately confronted by death, for at the Altar animals were slain and their bodies consumed on the altar. This seems a great paradox: that those looking for the promise of life should be greeted by death—at the altar.

This was a divine design intended to implant the first lesson of supreme importance in those seeking God. The history of the world shows that mankind not only desire life, but claim they have a right to life. This was the serpent's lie in the beginning, which has confused Christendom and alienated them from God and the Truth. God knew of this weakness, which has swept millions to the darkness of an eternal tomb. His kindness is seen in the altar with its spectacular lessons. There death was seen to be the just sentence for sin; and even He who was represented by the altar showed He was worthy of death because of His sinful nature. This is a hard lesson for the human mind to receive; hence God arranged for its dramatic demonstration for those who approached His dwelling. Those who will not learn the lesson that death is our just end can never have any part in the altar; and so cannot share the name and the blessings through the Name.

But all was not death at the Altar to the discerning mind, for the blood of those animals offered was poured out at the bottom of the Altar. The blood was not consumed on the Altar. In a figure it was preserved by the Altar.

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When the brethren made their offerings they would gladly observe this: for if they would really acknowledge they deserved death, then their life would be preserved with the altar. They would be taught of the Redeemer, the Christ, represented by the altar, whose life would be accepted by God, and concerning whom they would learn, that though they were "dead," yet :

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."

(Colossians 3 : 3).

The brethren and sisters knew that the "blood" was the "life," and they would see the promise of life in Christ in the figure of the blood of the animal slain preserved at the bottom of the altar.

God remembers the lives of all His saints. Abel's blood "cried unto Him from the ground." In the figure of the altar, the blood or life of all God's faithful ones are seen preserved in Christ, and in a figure calling for the promised blessing through His Name :

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

(Revelation 6 : 9).

There were of course no literal voices, but the voices heard by the Apostle John in the vision shows that those of all ages who truly belong to the Altar, are not really "dead," for all these "live unto him."

(to be continued)

Light and Darkness

WE are continually being reminded that light and darkness which are described in the Word by the natural light and darkness experienced in our everyday lives. We know that immediately darkness comes, when the shades of evening hold sway that we need light. How very quickly we try to overcome the darkness by providing light by whatever means we have to hand. In the beginning "God divided the light from the darkness" and how beneficial this arrangement of the Creator has been! He did not require light for Himself as He already dwelt in light. The very existence of the earth with its abundant verdure, its trees and flowers and man himself, depends upon this light but how few appreciate this

kindness of God. The earth once was without “form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep,” then God said “Let there be light” and light came. For whose benefit was it? The obvious answer is, for His creatures which He made and especially for man. The world would very quickly perish if the light were completely taken away, and yet almost all people take this blessing for granted, like they do many other things. The daily tasks of man are mostly done by the light which God provides, and no one has been able to equal its universal power and warmth. This light has not lost any of its power in the six thousand years it has been shining. The moon that gives light at night has a special function to perform in its own way, but the sun was to rule the day and “the lesser light to rule the night.” He made the stars also and they were to be for “signs and seasons.”

When there was great darkness over the land of Egypt at the time of Moses, prior to the last plague, no one was able to leave his place for three days, but the children of Israel had “light in their dwellings.” What confusion there was at that time in Egypt, but what serenity in Israel, where they had light in their dwellings. What kindness and also power was revealed by this great event, that the great God should bless His people with light, when over all the land of Egypt darkness prevailed, that could be felt, for three days.

The God of Israel has worked always for the benefit of His people. When Joshua was subduing the enemies who were trying to resist Israel’s entry into their possessions (which had been promised by God to the fathers) the sun was commanded to stand still upon Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, and so the sun hastened not to go down about a whole day—He that had created these bodies had perfect control over them; and what a mighty power the sun is in the hand of God. We read concerning this day that there was no day like it before or after in which God hearkened to the voice of man. This would be an inspiration to those who are holding fast but a warning to those who are lax.

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We may recall to mind the prayer of Hezekiah, when he was told to set his house in order as he was to die (2 Kings ch. 20). His prayer was heard and an extension of life was granted to him, of fifteen years. The plea was for a sign and so the sun went back fifteen degrees; a token from God as He listened to the voice and pleas of a man, because that man was one of His children! He can also listen at the present time and help those whose minds are stayed on Him because they trust in Him.

Yes! as we contemplate such a subject there is an assurance that it is just as easy for God to work on behalf of His people now as in former times. Where transgression has taken place without contrition and repentance, He will take away the light of His word. But to the upright there are the assuring words that—

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”
(Psalm 27 : 1).

These are words given by the spirit as light that shines in a dark place. Again we read “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.” (Psalm 112 : 4). Is not this passage of scripture a clear indication that there is no light in the world, no matter what others think! Light is only given to the upright; the perverse and the unbeliever are prevented from seeing the way of God as long as they remain in that position. The world with all its advancement in science and knowledge and with its many great achievements, cannot by searching find out God, and therefore is in the dark regarding His purpose.

“For with thee is the fountain of life : in thy light shall we see light.” (Psalm 36 : 9).

This simply means that if we turn away from the Word and are perverse in any way we walk in darkness and no matter what we may think of the position, this decree of God will stand!

In the world the Bible is a best seller, but of what avail is this if its teaching is not observed? Many pay lip-service with much profession and sanctimonious piety, having a form without the power. Will the Creator delight in such? We do know that although this counterfeit of the light abounds in the world His purpose will not fail.

“Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” (Psalm 97 : 11).

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Light is promised now and gladness in the future! What a different world it would be if everyone were obeying God's commands, and would let the light get through to chase away the darkness.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path."

What a blessed privilege to be guided along and also to be shown the direction of the path. How many miss this inestimable kindness of God, given for the benefit of His creatures. When Jesus was in the world, He declared :

"I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

(John 8 : 12).

Suppose we fail to follow, how tragic and how vain will our life have been. We also read of Jesus that He was "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" . . . "The world knew Him not." (John 1 : 9-10) "but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Yes, indeed belief was essential, and is! How sad as we listen to Isaiah 5 v. 2, is the indictment of those who put darkness for light and light for darkness : in those who fail in this way the word has been clouded and therefore such have lost the light of the knowledge of God, and so are in darkness.

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

This is the state of those who once had THE TRUTH but are now unable to see—because the darkness hath blinded their minds. We must remember that—

"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5).

Dare we say we are in the way of salvation if we walk in darkness? Was not the apostle sent (Acts 26 : 17-18) to turn the people from darkness unto light, to open the eyes of the Gentiles, and deliver from the power of Satan, and turn to God and to forgiveness of sins and inheritance, among them that are sanctified by faith? Is it any different now?

What a great joy to see the sun and to enjoy its warmth and cheering influence, but how much more if we can be enveloped in the Sun of righteousness when He arises to take away the darkness and disseminate the light.

Truly light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart, but can we reach out to it? May we express from the heart :

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.’ ’ (Psalm 119 : 18-19).

May we continue with the spirit of the Psalm,

“I am a stranger in the earth : hide not thy commandments from me.”

Striving to walk in singleness of heart that we might be worthy of dwelling in Eternal Light.

S.L.

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

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety . . . they shall not escape.” (1 Thessolonians 5 : 2).

SINCE the last article was written the world has once again been plunged into gloom. Instead of the improvement in East-West relations that was expected as a result of the Summit Conference, arranged to take place in Paris, there has been a great deterioration in world relations due, it would appear, to the American spy plane being sent over Russian territory. The talks were broken off by the Russian Prime Minister even before they had started, and the four leaders of Britain, France, the United States and Russia parted without discussing any of the grave problems which divide the world.

The world was dismayed at what had happened and so was Israel. It has been stated in the Jewish press that the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which sent observers to Paris for the conference, had hoped that an agreement between Russia and the Western Powers would help to solve Middle East problems. Israel, it was pointed out, had been a constant victim of the cold war. Now it is feared

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that the Kremlin will be even more pro-Arab than before. Concern has also been expressed at the position of Russian Jews, who may be looked upon by the Russian Government with sharper suspicion because of their religious links with the Western World.

Yes! the world had been buoyed up by what appeared to be a real step in the direction of "Peace and safety," but God's word is irrevocable!

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand . . ." (Isaiah 46 : 10).

The recent relapse in international relations is a testimony to the infallibility of the Word!

Nevertheless the cry for "Peace and safety" still continues even though there has been such a setback. New Soviet proposals for total and complete disarmament have been announced. These proposals are an elaboration of those which the Russian Prime Minister outlined to the United Nations General Assembly last September, modified in a number of ways to take into account some of the criticisms levelled against them by the Western Powers. The revised Soviet plan aims at achieving total disarmament in three stages within four years or a larger agreed period. Nuclear disarmament it is suggested by the Soviet leader should be the first stage. (The Western Powers however insist that disarmament in the nuclear and the conventional field must go hand in hand.) Acceptance of the Russian plan, by the West would mean that the first stage of disarmament would see the abolition of every means of delivering nuclear weapons and the withdrawal of American and British forces from the Continent of Europe, which would bring about the virtual dismantling of conventional forces or arms. That reduction would follow under the second stage of the Soviet proposal when measures for on-site inspection and control of armaments to agreed levels, would be taken, including the right to inspect all establishments which produce or use atomic materials or atomic energy. The third stage would be the completion of the disbandment of all national armed forces so that only agreed numbers of police or militia would remain, followed by the destruction of all conventional arms and the cessation of all military production. War mini-

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tries, general staffs and all military establishments to be closed down and such measures to be subjected to international control and inspection, including as necessary, aerial inspection.

To many these proposals, no doubt, will seem reasonable. But at their inception they are doomed to failure, for the "sure word of prophecy" reveals that :

"At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him." (Daniel 11 : 40).

An acceptance by the West of the Russian proposals would mean an end of that pushing forward. Fear, the result of lack of faith in God, prevents the West from agreeing to the abolition of their superior stockpile of nuclear weapons and the bases for their delivery, which form a ring round Soviet territory; fear and mistrust likewise prevents the Soviets from reducing, at an early date, their superior stockpile of conventional weapons, and their vast army.

How applicable are the words of Psalm 14 to such a situation !

"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord. There were they in GREAT FEAR (margin, they feared a fear) for God is in the generation of the righteous."

The fear and mistrust of the nations for each other is one of the reasons why "they shall not escape." This mistrust results in them speaking

" . . . lies at one table ; but it shall not prosper."
(Daniel 11 : 27).

Their fear of each other prevents a genuine settlement, but their peace platitudes continue to be reported ! Recently in the national press, there was an account of a ceremony which took place at the United Nations Building in New York. The account read as follows :

"As though all was sweetness and light in international affairs, the Russians presented the United Nations with a peace statue yesterday.

It is a life-size bronze of a man beating a sword into a ploughshare, and was unveiled by Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld at U.N.O. headquarters in New York."

Such a symbol inspired by God's promise that this will eventually be realised can never become a fact as a result of the work of U.N.O. which continually has proved ineffective at reducing world tension. But this blessing will undoubtedly be fulfilled from Jerusalem when the city of peace, as its name means, becomes the centre of a new world order. It will come just as surely as the evidence of the signs "in the sun, and in the moon and in the stars" (the political lights of the international firmament) reveal that men by their own efforts will be unable to escape from their dilemma.

Even on a smaller scale in the national sense, men are finding there is no escape from the difficulties in which they are entangled. The trouble between the black man and the white man in South Africa continues: fear again and the determination to hold on to certain advantages prevents tranquility being achieved. How interesting was the report (which later was the subject of a cartoon in the national press) of the South African Prime Minister releasing a white dove as a symbol to the world of the peace and prosperity which he said South Africa wished the world. But as he tossed the bird into the air before a vast crowd at Bloemfontein, instead of flying off, it failed to open its wings and fell to the ground in front of the Premier, and no amount of poking and prodding by embarrassed officials would induce it to take flight. How symbolical, in a sense, was this incident, of the way men's hopes for peace have been dashed to the ground by the failing to take place of the Summit Conference. No amount of inducement could make the Soviet leader change his stipulation that the Summit could not take place until the U.S. completely retracted its spy plane effort, apologised and agreed to punish those responsible for sending it.

Many have deplored the U.S. policy as a mistake, possibly more as a result of the United States plane being allowed to fall into Russian hands as proof, rather than the actual deed, and others have deplored the attitude of the Soviet leader. But God "who taketh the wise in their own craftiness" is forgotten, His word is ignored, and therefore His hand is not perceived at work.

"But ye, brethren (says the Apostle) are not in darkness . . . Therefore let us not sleep, as do others ; but let us watch and be sober . . . For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

S.L.

News from the Ecclesias

Eden, New York. Grange Hall, Church Street. Sundays : Breaking of Bread 11.45 a.m. Sunday School 10.30 a.m. Revelation Study 2.0 p.m. Bible Class, midweek, Forestville, Hamburg and Buffalo.

When this is in print, another Elim will have been granted the House of God. We who are distant physically, hope to be present in Spirit at the Fraternal, and to have obtained a benefit as we look with all of you toward the Sun's Rising.

Plans are complete for those who hope to visit from America in July. Anticipation is keen, but subject to God's Will.

The witnessing here continues, but with little true response. Nevertheless they have heard, and it is sad that many see, but lack courage and faith.

The Sunday School Review took place on May 29th and the children gave a good accounting, receiving their rewards for their efforts.

J. A. DeF.

Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc. Breaking of Bread Sundays 11.30 a.m. Eureka Class Thursday 7.30 p.m.

It has been a great pleasure to have the help and company of Bro. S. Lancaster and Bro. and Sis. D. Lancaster at the Table of the Lord.

THE REMNANT

A special lecture was held in the Portmadoc Town Hall on Saturday evening, June 11th, the speaker being Bro. D. Lancaster. Two Christadelphians attended and an interesting discussion followed.

They had been receiving "The Remnant" Magazine and have requested copies of "The History of the Truth in the Latter Days."

A further lecture is arranged for Saturday, June 18th, again to be held in the Portmadoc Town Hall.

per J.S.

Nottingham. Meadow's Community Centre, Kirkwhite Street, (Queen's Drive end), Nottingham. Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.0 a.m., Bible Class 2.15 p.m., Thursdays: People's Hall, 7.45 p.m., Eureka and Exhortation alternately.

Our Fraternal now is a pleasant memory of the profitable time spent together on June 6th when Manchester, Wales and Ireland were represented and was surely a foretaste when Gatherings will continue for ever.

Greetings were sent from U.S.A. and Ireland to which the following was sent in reply: "Grateful to have you with us in Spirit. We send joyful greetings in the wonderful unity of the Spirit.—Psalm 90: 17."

We are also grateful for the help of Bro. D. Lancaster and Bro. W. V. Butterfield at the Gathering.

H.J.S.

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

The brethren and sisters are reminded of the intended visit of those from America arriving in England, Wednesday, July 27th: of the visit to Nottingham July 30th to August 3rd: to Ireland, August 17th to August 22nd.

Further, of the following arrangements subject to His will. Special lecture by Bro. De Fries on Friday, August 5th, Fraternal Gathering in Manchester, Saturday, August 6th and Sunday School Outing, Saturday, August 13th.

W.V.B.