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in opposition to the Dogmas of
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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

REUNION

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

“How Goodly Are Thy Tents, O Israel”

IN the time of King Jehoiakim, Jeremiah was told by God to go to the House of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to turn them if possible from their wickedness. We read of the Rechabites in chapter 35 of Jeremiah, who were to be an example to Israel, to instruct and reprove them. The Spirit used these people for a reason. Let us consider why. Help is found in what Jeremiah required of them, and their response. He was to bring them to the house of the Lord and make them drink wine. Their answer was a lesson in obedience.

“We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons forever. Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers” (verse 6).

They were to have no houses, no vineyards. Was not this to impress upon them that “ye be strangers,” helping them to be freer from the cares of this world, to be God’s, and God’s alone. The record is that these sons obeyed their father, and it was accounted to them for righteousness. In this their example was a condemnation to unfaithful Israel, who refused even after patience and pleading, to hear the Almighty who was their Father. Do we not remember God’s command given in Exodus 20 : 12—

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

How similar this promised result of obedience, to the command given by Jonadab to his sons, “That ye may live many days in the land.” The honouring of father and mother was a necessary step toward honouring the Father, the God of Israel. So the Rechabites obeyed, seeing the love of God in the command. Well! indeed might Jeremiah hold them up to a rebellious Israel, as an example.

“ Dwelling in Tents ”

The sons of Rechab had been commanded by their father to dwell in tents. Why was this? What was to be taught? It is helpful to consider the testimony concerning other faithful men who, in submission to their Father, dwelt in tents. Abraham did, as the record tells us in Hebrews 11 : 19—

“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles (tents) . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

He was a sojourner, a passer-through, a stranger indeed, whose eyes and hopes were fastened on the future. In the meanwhile, he dwelt in tents, awaiting in faith that city of God.

What of Jacob? Genesis 25 : 27 tells us: “. . . Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.” What a wealth of help may be found in these few words which reveal Jacob’s spirit. The word “plain” is translated, “perfect, upright, undefiled, coupled together.” The same word is used by the Spirit to describe Job (chapter 1 : 1) “. . . that man was perfect, and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.” Such was Jacob also. He believed God concerning his inheritance, and that until it was time, he would dwell in tents, a temporary abode, ready always to move as God commanded, trusting in the end to find that city of his inheritance.

How fitting that the word describing Jacob—“plain,” should also mean “coupled together”—as the boards in the tabernacle were “coupled together” with rings of gold. This made the house a strong, united tabernacle, His dwelling place, a unity complete. This was the hope of Jacob, and of his grandfather, Abraham, to find a place in God’s tabernacle, coupled together for always with all the faithful men of God’s house. The time is not far off when all the members of this house will be united, all “plain” men, who have waited in patience and faith, having no certain dwelling, but as sojourners and strangers in the world, have looked for the accomplishment of the Promise.

What of ourselves, brethren and sisters? Are we "plain" men and women? Willing now to dwell in tents, uncertain dwelling places, as sojourners, but rejoicing in the certainty of His coming and the establishing of His house for ever?

Israel in the wilderness abode in tents and should have been exhorted and instructed daily. God's presence was visible to each one always, in the pillar of cloud by day, and the fire by night. In Numbers 9: 17, 18, we read:

"When the cloud was taken up . . . the children of Israel journeyed: and . . . where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched. . . ."

How quickly they must respond. By dwelling in tents they could do so at short notice; for there were no houses to close up, no lands to fence or guard, nothing permanent, which would be a burden, or hindrance to their obedience.

How telling the lesson, how complete the subjection to the Spirit's guidance ". . . whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed" (verse 21).

For some, it would not always have been convenient to journey. There were probably others in Israel who were content to rest in their tents being weary or perhaps not zealous to be about the work; but journey they must under His guiding requirement. Is there a lesson here for us, if we are striving to dwell figuratively in tents as God's children? When a move is indicated, it may not fit in with our plans or desires, but like Israel, can we refuse? An Israelite refusing, would have been left behind, outside the camp, and away from the Father's guiding hand. Again, in verse 22—

" . . . whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, . . . the children of Israel abode in their tents. . . ."

Doubtless there were many in Israel, anxious to be going, to get along the way which led to the promised land, restless to be on the move. Yet, it was required that they abide with patience in their tents, until the cloud of His Presence moved.

No matter what the circumstances, or what the personal wishes, each in Israel had to submit to this divine direction. In this way all would remain together, the whole of Israel would stay united, and would necessarily grow in patience, and watchfulness for the indication of God. Surely this would mean a putting away of self, and of making secondary, all the encumbrances of the flesh. And for us, brethren and sisters, the lesson is clear. All the temporal hindrances which would keep us from being obedient and entirely ready to wait for God's will, must be kept in the background, subject to the indication as we continue to be a "plain" people, dwelling in tents.

This was the impressive example of the Rechabites, with which Jeremiah was to teach Israel. Let us likewise receive the instruction.

Sojourners

There were some in Israel who did discern what it meant to spiritually "abide in tents." We have David's words in Psalm 39 : 12. ". . . for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." There is no question of what was David's mind here. Although he dwelt at one time of his life, in a palace, as king of Israel, in spirit he dwelt in tents, even as his fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had done. How then does this apply to our lives: as sojourners here, how can we grow in that spirit of David? We are told in I Peter 1 : 17, ". . . pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." Fear—lest we miss an indication of God's spirit; fear lest we be not ready to move, fear lest we should become so engrossed in our homes, our work, our problems, that we are not in spirit, abiding in tents.

"How Goodly Are Thy Tents, O Israel"

Yes, Israel had a great lesson and help given to them as they encamped in their tents around the tabernacle of God, watching the cloud above it. What blessing was theirs that God provided so beneficently in the wilderness. Our minds go to Balaam who,

" . . . lifted up his eyes and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes, and the spirit of God came upon him." Numbers 24 : 2.

He was moved by the sight of the tabernacle surrounded by the thousands of Israel's tents, to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!"

To the faithful in Israel, how goodly indeed, these tents were; their dwelling place under His shadow, close to the Tabernacle, blessed with His guidance. All the faithful were filled with Israel's hope—a place in the land toward which the cloud was leading them; and beyond that, an eternal inheritance if they remained faithful and under the Spirit's hand. How they would value their tents, esteeming them indeed goodly! How ought we too, brethren and sisters, to esteem our called-out and cared for position, a dwelling place under His wings, an earnest of an eternal abode in God's purpose. In this hope and spirit, we can enter into David's words in Psalm 27 : 4—

"One thing have I desired of thee Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me upon a rock."

What greater care and love could be found or hoped for? Let us also seek it, longing for it sufficiently to abide in tents now, waiting only to move as he directs.

These were the lessons with which Jeremiah pleaded with Israel. "Will ye not receive instruction, to hearken to my words? saith the Lord." Let us heed the same instruction, for we live in a world which is filled with evil, one which delights in building great houses, great names, great nations, but has never had the saving spirit to "abide in tents."

As the promise of God to the Rechabites was (chapter 35 : 19)

"Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."

So all those who heed instruction from their Father, being content to dwell in tents, may stand before Him approved in the day soon to come.

Shall we abide with them in that time so surely promised?

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Revelation 21 : 3.

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — *and others* — Astray (37)

The Law of Moses the Spirit of Christ

ALL over the world the Churches of Christendom are many and its members numerous. In East and West, from Rome to Rio, from New York to Old York, the buildings of Christendom sprout from the earth often expensively and lavishly decorated, bearing the name of some supposed “Saint.” Generally the dedication is to some Apostle or to Christ Himself, as for example “St. Peter’s,” “St. Paul’s,” or “Christ’s Church.” Never in the whole realm of Christendom can a Church be found bearing the name of an Old Testament worthy. Nowhere is there a Church called “St. Abraham” or “St. Moses.” Why? Is not Abraham, the “father of the faithful,” worthy of their respect? Is not Moses, in whose likeness Jesus came, worthy of their remembrance? The Truth is that Christendom has no place for the Old Testament and its faithful; they are ignorant of the simple and glorious fact that the Spirit of the Law (and the Prophets) is the Spirit of Christ. Hence their doctrine is anaemic, deficient, and devoid of the power and Spirit of Truth. This is at once seen in the varied and confusing dogmas of Christendom, which have little or no practical bearing, and at all times are seen to be out of touch with reality.

What of the “others?” Are they also astray from Moses, failing to value the Spirit of Christ which came through him as is seen in every part of the Law given through him? Can it really be pleasing in the sight of God that whilst professing to believe in a wholly inspired Bible there is ignorance of the Spirit of Christ in the Law with its power for present guidance? A merely formal belief in the Law is strongly condemned by God, as is seen by the Apostle’s letter to the Romans:

“ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the Law, and and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law; and are confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the Truth in the Law.

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself.

Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law, dishonourest thou God ?”

(Romans 2 verses 17 : 23).

Remember that those condemned claimed to uphold the Law as the Truth of God, and would never think that they deserved this condemnation. It is most clear that a form of belief is not enough. God will only be pleased with those who acknowledge that in the Law is the Spirit of Christ, and that its preservation is for the purpose of that Spirit helping in all present-day problems.

“ Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole ”

(Numbers 21 verse 9).

The value of this portion of the Law cannot be over emphasised. To appreciate this, the circumstances of the Ecclesia in the wilderness at this time must be carefully studied.

They had left mount Hor where the camp had been invaded by the Canaanites, and following an appeal to the Lord the enemy had been signally defeated. Now they were on their journey circumventing the land of Edom, a hot and wearying piece of terrain. “ The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” Weariness is a test of faith : in the strong it is met with resolution and cheerfulness, but in the weak with complaint and murmuring. The Ecclesia showed their dreadful weakness when they complained against God and Moses saying:

“ Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread ” (Numbers 21, verse 5).

They had soon forgotten the help which they had so recently received at Hormah, where King Arad, the Canaanite, and his army was completely defeated and his cities destroyed. Weariness had been allowed to quench faith, so that they no longer believed God could provide them with all that they required. Their murmuring was a dreadful exhibition of unfaithfulness and brought upon them punishment from God:

“ The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died ” (Numbers 21, verse 6).

Here was punishment indeed—summary death for sin! The consternation in the Ecclesia can be imagined as various brethren and sisters were being bitten by the serpents and were dying. Murmuring now gave place to a frantic appeal for help; a feature which is often the case with human nature. If they had appealed before, they could have been helped without all this disaster which now confronted the Ecclesia.

Moses, benign and self-effacing, was not embittered by the brethren and sisters having spoken against him, but prayed to Yahweh for them in their dilemma.

The answer came quickly to Moses:

“ Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live ” (Numbers 21, verse 8).

Moses, ever obedient to the word of God, carried out the divine instructions as stated in the record:

“ And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived ” (Numbers 21, verse 9).

This was a stupendous miracle. God could have taken the serpents away, and healed all the Ecclesia by one word of His mouth, but the method that He chose was that the Ecclesia might receive instruction—instruction in the Spirit of Christ. What was the lesson that the brethren and sisters must learn if they were to be saved from death? Undoubtedly sufficient instruction would be given to them at the time that they might carry out what God required in faith. Although the record does not give the details of this instruction, sufficient remains in the Law as a whole for us to be able to appreciate what must have been given to the brethren and sisters at this time.

“Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”

(Galatians 3, verse 13).

Although these are the words of the Apostle Paul, they are in essence the Law as given in Deuteronomy 21, verses 22 and 23, where the purpose of carrying out this part of the Law is explained—“That all Israel shall hear, and fear.”

The object of putting rebels against the Law of God to death, then hanging the body on the tree was that a salutary lesson might be learnt by the whole Ecclesia—that a rebel against the Law of God was only worthy of destruction.

Clearly then the serpent of brass which was hung upon a tree or pole was condemned, but this unthinking piece of metal would care nothing about this. The divine lesson was for the brethren and sisters; not for the serpent. Again we must have the help of Moses in his first book to appreciate what was the lesson. There he records in Genesis 3, verse 15 that there would be the “seed of the woman,” and “the seed of the serpent.” It will be remembered that the serpent had denied the Law of God, which said that death would come if the first parents transgressed. The wicked are those, who like their forbear, the serpent, deny the Law of God and hence are described in the word as the “seed of the serpent.” The brethren and sisters at this time in the wilderness had forgotten their calling, and had become victims of the serpent-like teaching, and so murmured against God. When one of them was bitten by a serpent there was no doubt he would die unless he carried out the divine instruction, and appreciated the lesson which this was intended to teach.

He was to look at the crucified serpent. In the first place he must remember that he, by his actions, had become like the serpent, identifying himself with the serpent's seed. And then he would perceive God's condemnation of him was right, and pleading for forgiveness he was healed by divine power and saved from death. A great deal of divine truth concerning salvation from death is compressed into a few verses in this account, which can be discovered in its fulness by reference to other parts of the Law and the Word. That a further and vitally important lesson was also given to the brethren and sisters at the time for their help is underlined by Jesus Himself in His words:

“ As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness ”

(John 3, verse 14).

“ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ” (John 3, verses 14 : 16).

Unless the brethren and sisters in the wilderness had understood and believed what God intended to show them in the crucified serpent they would not have been saved from death ; similarly, salvation at the present time is impossible, unless there is a clear understanding and belief of the divine teaching in the death of Christ.

Christendom are pitifully ignorant of the fact that Christ when “ lifted up ” like the serpent in the wilderness was condemned. Their conceit is that Christ was a God, who was pleased to come down from heaven, and suffer in human form upon the cross that another God's wrath might be expiated, and so the victims of that God's wrath—all mankind—might be delivered from death. A terrible and preposterous caricature of divine teaching. But the “ others ” also fail to see that Christ was condemned in His death. When reminded of the Law that “ cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.” they explain this by saying that this was done “ for us.” They forget that God will not do evil that good might come. He would not condemn a just man who did not deserve it for the benefit of others however many they might number. In some way Christ must have merited the condemnation, otherwise He would not have suffered the death on the tree.

Christ never sinned, therefore in this respect He did not deserve death; but He was of our nature and was painfully aware of all its propensities to sin. Throughout His life He was contending all along with the rebellious tendencies within Him. Christ's overcoming was not a theatrical act. It was a victory accomplished after a bitter struggle. It is wise to try and appreciate how He felt, if he would understand that it was His will as well as His Father's to submit to the condemnation of God in the manner of His death. An insight into His mind is given in Psalm 73.

“ Truly God is good to Israel even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked ” (Psalm 73, verses 1 : 3).

Here was the temptation which He felt so strongly, and which He overcame, and shows in the Psalm that He did overcome:

“ If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.
When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me ”
(Psalm 73, verses 15 : 16).

Christ submitted to the condemnation of God in His death to show that His and our nature is rightly condemned by God to death. Christ's death says to all the world that God was just in sentencing all mankind to death. Christendom on the contrary, claim they have a right to live, and to live forever. This shows that Christendom is astray, in that they have not understood and believed the divine teaching in the death of the crucified Christ. It is regrettable that the “ others ” have also lost this keystone of faith, and no longer understand and believe that it is right that all should die including the Son of God. Salvation can only come to those who perceive that God is right as declared in the death of Christ and then cast themselves upon God's mercy as being utterly lost. If they will be obedient to divine instruction, then they will receive the healing from death to which we are all subject; just as certainly as the brethren and sisters did in the wilderness, who looked in faith upon the crucified serpent.

The finger of Christ directs our attention to this portion of the Law that we might perceive our natural position as before God; that we are all subject to death and indeed deserve to die. It is true that all mankind are sinners and therefore in this sense merit death. But Jesus showed in the manner of His death, that all mankind including babes and children, young and old, are made of a nature which is inherently sinful and therefore merits death.

Unless at the present time these things are believed, and there is obedience by being baptised with an understanding that this means being “planted into His death,” there is no hope of being saved from death. The simple truth was made clear to the brethren and sisters in the wilderness for their salvation at that time, and from their experience divinely recorded for our guidance we are able to perceive our own hopeless native position, and how in the mercy of God we may be delivered therefrom.

(To be continued . . .)

Reunion

The heart of the servant of God is greatly stirred as he sees events taking place both in the political and religious spheres of human activity which herald the end of the Gentile times. The stage is being set for the final phase in human affairs concluding with the drama of the overthrow of all present Kingdoms including their Kings, Presidents, Popes and Priests. It is as if the actors on this stage knew what was required as they hasten to take up their respective places.

The Final Battle and Overthrow of the Nations

If this can be seen from the Word of God then present events can be considered as preparatory to this end. The Revelation gives particulars of this great and final conflict. The powers of the earth—both religious and political—at this time are depicted in symbol as a “Scarlet coloured beast.” The purpose of this gigantic confederation is clearly stated:

“These have one mind. . . . These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: For He is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings: And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17, verses 13 : 14).

A confederation is presided over, in symbol, by a woman which the Apostle John is told is, "That great city, which reigneth over the Kings of the earth." This city is carefully identified:

"The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth" (Revelation 17, verse 9).

There may be several cities in the world possessed of seven mountains or hills; but there is only one whose inhabitants are so careful to tell you and boast of the fact that Rome is built upon "seven hills." These words fall from the lips of guides, bus conductors and the general populace, which to the servant of God, show that Rome is the city which will preside over the last "Holy alliance," which is to come against Christ and His people.

A closer look at the symbol of the Beast reveals that this Holy alliance embraces "The Kings of the earth and of the whole world," guided and goaded by a religious system in the mad pursuit of trying to defeat the returned "King of Kings." Look again at the Beast, and see that it is not representative of a single denomination, but it is "full of names." These names are "names of blasphemy," because they are the names of many denominations professing Christ, but in works denying Him; bodies of people who by their teaching and activities represent Christ as being a person totally different from what He is, and so injure the good name of Christ, which is blasphemy. Notwithstanding the previous bitter divisions of Christendom, in the end the sects of Christendom will become confederate submitting to the guidance of one head—Rome.

History reveals the great schisms in Christendom. After much quarrelling the Churches of Eastern Europe broke with Rome. In 1054 A.D. Pope Leo IX excommunicated the whole of the Eastern Church. This Church is now known as the Greek Orthodox Church and numbers many millions. The next great cleavage was in the Western Church which took place in the first half of the 16th century, when almost all the northern part of Europe threw off the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. Those seceding from Rome protested at the gross iniquities of which the Roman Church at that time was guilty, and so they became known as "Protestants." Since this time there have been many minor divisions by what have been called dissenting sects, so that there might be a few hundred different sects at the present time making up what is known as Christendom.

In the end these many sects, each possessed of its own name, is to be confederate with the rest under the direction of Rome. Now let us look at what is happening in the religious world. The bitterness of past divisions is no longer mentioned, and reunion of the great sects of Christendom is now openly discussed by those whose fore-fathers would rather have died than consider going back to Rome. The leader of the English Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury, is to visit the Pope at the beginning of December. In addition he will call upon the Head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Istanbul. The Pope shrewdly moves to grasp the power which is coming to him. He has appointed a secretariat for Christian unity, and has issued a call for "a great understanding of those who carry Christ's name in their hearts and on their fore-heads, although they are separated from the Catholic Church." He has also given notice that he will call a ecumenical council. The word "ecumenical" is derived from a word which means the "inhabited globe," and so the Pope not only wishes to call together all the members that belong to his Church, but "desires" that other Churches of Christendom will also be present. Now listen to the significant words of the Archbishop of Canterbury:

"The pace is quickening. We must enter into unity of Spirit with Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and even Roman Catholics. We all know that we must get together and learn to like to be together before we can seriously grow together."

Little do they know that what they are doing is in preparation for their own destruction in that conflict with the Lamb of God, when He, and those with Him, shall overcome them.

Reunion. The Christadelphians

Those, whose name means the "Brethren of Christ," and once had the Truth have become infected with the same desire to become larger and more influential in numbers, and thus have tried to find a convenient basis for reunion irrespective of divine principles involved. In 1957 two of the larger sections of the Christadelphians body reunited. Ostensibly the basis was a "statement of faith," which all parties involved in the "reunion" were to agree. But there was nothing done at the time to vindi-

cate those responsible for the division between these two sections in 1885 because Suffolk St., either believed in partial inspiration or condoned it. The doctrine of fellowship has gone by the board. No longer is it known "Where to draw the line." Withdrawal from those in error is regarded as uncharitable. Indeed the heaven has been allowed to work until the whole has become leavened. This is seen by the adoption of many worldly practices, which a generation ago would have been strongly condemned.

"Reunion" seems to have been responsible for the final tearing down of the hedge between the Christadelphian body and the world. Many will now attend Church services, and although this is not looked upon favourably by the leaders no action is taken. The leaders confess that they do not know "where to draw the line," and indeed this is seen to be the case by what is taking place. The majority will say that they believe that any Christadelphian has a possibility of being in the Kingdom, irrespective of the sect to which he belongs, and add that they would not like to limit this possibility to just those who are Christadelphians, and say with impunity that some in the Church, if they believe the right things and are baptised, will also be saved. Does it not seem at the present time in the Christadelphian body there is a miniature Christendom wherein there are many sects—perhaps about 12—not united, but federated on the general understanding that each and all will have those in them who can be in the Kingdom. When, as in the minds of many, this idea is extended to members of the Church, does it not show that the once honoured name of "Christadelphian" is being placed upon the beast. The end of that beast is utter destruction. Meanwhile, the cry goes forth:

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"

(Revelation 18, verse 4).

"The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the world"

"PROCLAIM YE THIS AMONG THE GENTILES . . . BEAT YOUR PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS, AND YOUR PRUNING HOOKS INTO SPEARS" (Joel 3, verses 9 : 10).

MUCH has been voiced recently in the political circles of the world in the professed cause of world disarmament. Great thinkers have engaged in a battle of words over this subject which has proved to be a vexing topic. The unity of the political oppo-

sition party of Britain has been shaken, to say the least, over the question of nuclear disarmament; its leadership committed to the keeping of a "nuclear deterrent" has been threatened by a strong opposition within, that holds a different view. Then there is the proposal for setting up in Britain of a Committee of a Hundred for Civil Disobedience against Nuclear War. What will be the outcome of these efforts? The scripture supplies the answer! In context with the return of the dispersed of Israel to the land of their forefathers stated in the words:—

"... I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem," the declaration of God concerning the nations of the present day is that they are to **BEAT THEIR PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS AND THEIR PRUNING HOOKS INTO SPEARS.**

The measure of the production of warlike instruments, which is the proof of the accuracy of this prophecy, is seen in the following summary of various reports:—

An estimate of the size of the American nuclear weapon stockpile, voiced in France by a director of the French Atomic Energy Authority, is that at the beginning of this year the United States had about five hundred tons of Nuclear explosives which would produce about twenty thousand atomic bombs. The American investment in nuclear weapons up to that date reached the immense sum of 20,000 million dollars. Last year uranium became the second most important nonferrous metal produced in the West. Of the growing African, mainly Congo, production (hence the great interest of the world powers in that troubled territory) and the Canadian and American production, 80 per cent was absorbed by the United States, 15 per cent was absorbed by the United Kingdom and 3 per cent by France. Since the discovery of large quantities of uranium in the United States it has become evident that there is a world surplus at the present time of this bomb ingredient. To quote a newspaper report:—

"This abundance of uranium is striking seriously at the policy of limiting the members of the nuclear club which the two large Anglo-Saxon nuclear powers have pursued since the war by trying to maintain a monopoly on the main uranium sources in the West."

From the Soviet Union during the year has come news of increasing armament development. Last January the Russians said they landed a missile only one and a quarter miles from the spot aimed at after a flight of about 7,760 miles. In July came the news of the landing of a rocket plumb on target 8,000 miles away in the Pacific. The dummy nose cone of the multi-stage ballistic rocket hit the water right at target point, it had followed the pre-set course exactly, and the accuracy of its delivery was confirmed by special vessels in the area.

To combat such a threat Britain has worked out a system for getting its nuclear bombers into the air in two minutes to enable them to escape rocket destruction. It has been stated that to end all possibility of retaliation from Britain, it would be necessary to destroy all the V-bomber bases and all the dispersal bases, of which there must be something between thirty and fifty. It would also be necessary to hit the 20 groups of three missiles. Any bombers which got off or were already in the air on a dispersal flight would also have to be reckoned with. Once a ballistic missile early warning system is working those bombers which are at a high state of readiness seem very likely to get away. One such system it is expected, will be functioning before the end of this year and the full northern line by late 1962 when the Fylingdales Moor warning system is ready. The British Prime Minister speaking recently on what is described as the latest developments in the deterrent force said:—

“The United States have made a significant advance in deterrent power. The first Polaris missile operating submarine, the George Washington, will become operational before long. It will be quickly followed, I am told, by other vessels now nearing completion. A new flexible element will thereby be added to the strategic nuclear deterrent. There would be operational advantage and the extent of the deterrent would be strengthened if a secure anchorage on this side of the Atlantic could be available for a submarine depot ship and a floating dock. This the Government had undertaken to provide.

“It is my duty,” the Prime Minister stated in Parliament, “to warn the House that until we have achieved international disarmament it would be folly to lower the defences of the West, of which the nuclear deterrent forms a vital part.”

The race to arm is also seen in the smaller powers. Western Germany desires that its forces in the NATO "shield" be equipped with nuclear weapons like other Allied shield forces. Even little Switzerland, which has escaped unscathed from much that has troubled Europe in the past, fears the worst! A few months ago the Swiss government introduced a bill for a new Swiss Army which marked a break with that country's past notions of defence. The Swiss army it is intended, will still be based on the militia system, with a total of twelve divisions—an amazing strength for so small a country! But its combat units will be organised into more mobile, hard-hitting armoured battle groups, to provide units, it is suggested, which will "deliver such crippling blows, inflicting such heavy casualties, and shaking the morale of the enemy to such a degree, that he may decide to abandon his purpose."

Even Israel is in the arms race! She is spending several million pounds buying new arms (after negotiating with a certain military power), for two branches of her army, which her government has stated, she urgently needs. This of course has meant increased taxation which has been sharply criticised by some. When this policy was announced by the Israeli Prime Minister a few months ago he stated in his support of the government's decision that "Because of the momentous importance that the matter might assume in conditions that do not depend on us, but on the enemies who threaten to destroy us, it might even be decisive to our fate."

So the policy of swords rather than plowshares, continues on an ever increasing scale. The voice of appeal of the Israeli Foreign Minister at the United Nations Assembly in October for the consideration of complete disarmament of Israel and the Arab States under mutual inspection and control because "Neither Israel nor its neighbours can afford an arms race," was carried away by the wind of hate and fear. So Israel continues to be caught up in the mad armaments vortex of the Gentiles, even though she, no more than other nations, can really afford to squander her wealth on the unprofitable materials of war, and on the armaments race, which is proving to be a burden which all nations are having to shoulder!

How truly the words of the Prophet Joel are being fulfilled! This trend heralds the time when the confederacies of nations are to assemble together around the battleground of Israel. In the words of Joel's prophecy:—

“Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye nations, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. . . . multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision (or threshing) **FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD IS NEAR** in the valley of decision. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; . . . but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel” (Joel 3, verses 11 : 16).

Yes, the sign of universal war preparation, on a scale unknown hitherto, reveals that the time is near when this great event is to take place. The voice of God, the source of all power, is to roar out of Zion against the vast array of Gentile munitions and devices. At that time Israel will be converted from the policy of “plowshares into swords” to a faith and trust in The Great God of Heaven who will be their strength. In that day in the words of the prophecy:—

“Egypt shall be a desolation and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land: . . . But Judah shall dwell for ever. . . . For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed:” (Joel 3, verses 19 : 21).

In that day the heavens and the earth, the powers that be, shall shake with the thunder of God’s judgments, but the assurance to His people is:—

“ . . . But the Lord will be the Hope of His people”
(verse 16).

D.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.

We are grateful for the safe return journey of our sisters, Peggy Crossley and Eunice Francis. Their sojourn with us was of

mutual benefit, and very happily spent. How wise and gracious is our Father, who knowing our needs, permits these personal contacts, and the opportunity to be removed from familiar circumstances to observe the power of the Truth in the lives of our brethren and sisters.

We appreciate the cable reaching out in fellowship, received from the Nottingham Fraternal.

Correspondence with Christadelphians and others continues, giving evidence that the magazine is widely read.

J.A.DeF.

Manchester. Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester. Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11-30 a.m. Lecture 3-15 p.m. Thursdays 7-15 p.m. Onward Hall, Deansgate. Law of Moses Class: third Saturday each month at 3-45 p.m.

Brethren and sisters are reminded of the Annual Sunday School Party and Prize Giving arranged for December 31st, in our own hall. The subject chosen for consideration is, "The walls of Jericho." It is hoped to arrange for the children to assist with a model so that the divine lessons in connection with the fall of Jericho may be made impressive to all.

We welcome the return of Sister Peggy Crossley and Sister Eunice Francis after their journey to the States. These visits undoubtedly help in promoting the unity of the body, and making us realise that though some of us are separated by so many miles yet we are really very close together in Him.

W.V.B.

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.

We are grateful for the help received by the visits of Brethren Pulman on October 30th and Brother S. Lancaster on November 6th, by way of exhortation, and the company also of Sister Pulman at the Table of the Lord.

These contacts do help us to feel the Unity of the Spirit which binds together Yahweh's people into one.

H.J.S.