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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

NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY

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

“The end of the commandment is love”

WE are privileged to read the words Paul wrote to his brother Timothy—words which express his love and care for him. “Unto Timothy my own son in the faith. . . .” How close was the relationship between these two brethren; close because of shared experiences, of help received from each other, of a fellowship in the work and in the Spirit. How pleasing and helpful to Timothy it must have been to receive such a letter. The Spirit has caused it to be preserved for us. Let us then seek the message of love it contains, with discernment, reading and making its help ours.

In I Timothy 1 : 5, Paul writes:

“Now the end of the commandment is charity (love), out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”

Here in a few words we find the kernel of his whole message. “**The end of the commandment is love.**” We find the meaning of “end” is helpful, conveying the thought of setting out for a goal, and is used as finally, or uppermost. The goal God had in mind in giving His Word, was love. If we obey the commandment, it will lead us to that end, the very essence of the Spirit of His Law. Paul helps us understand this in Romans 13 : 8-10.

“ . . . for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law . . . love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

To Israel of old, **this** was the **end** of the commandment—to this God sought to lead them. It is His desire that we, too, should grow toward this love.

“**Commandment,**” we find, is a different word from that generally used, and conveys the thought of transmitting a message. It is used as a charge, a command. So Paul, the Apostle, is the bearer of a message to us from God. He is leading us to the goal of His commandment—love. In Galatians 5 : 13, 14, Paul speaks:

“For, brethren, we have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but **by love serve one another**. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Can we, brethren and sisters, try harder to get hold of this, to enlarge our hearts, to draw near to the end of His commandment: a serving of one another in true love?

To help, we have the example of our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, God's Son, who in obedience, grew in love. He lived in subjection to His Father, having before Him the end of the commandment. As a result, His whole life was given for us. His life expressed total love, for God His Father, and thus for His brethren. How well this love is discerned in John 13 : 1—

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them **unto the end**.”

He loved them to the **uttermost**, the same word Paul used in writing of “the **end** of the commandment.” The end of God's commandment to Jesus was that He should lay down His life for His brethren—the total expression of His love, and God's for us. Keeping this in mind, let us listen to John's words:

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (I John 3 : 16.)

Let us strive for this, the end of the commandment, this love so full, so selfless, that we, following His example, would lay down our lives for our brethren. Following Him is not easy; growing in that love requires submission to God's commandment, which brings reproach and suffering at times, as well as a spending of time, strength, and thought for others—all because of love for God, for Jesus, and thus for our brethren and sisters.

We may well ask, How can we grow in love? It isn't a case of saying, “I must love,” but it must be something in us that lives itself, and guides **our** living. Paul's letter to Timothy is a real help to us in this growth. He tells us “the end of the commandment is

love, out of a **pure heart**, and of a **good conscience**, and of **faith unfeigned.**" Let us carefully examine these three qualities, for by them we may grow in His love.

" A Pure Heart "

What is a pure heart? **Pure** we find means clean, clear, undefiled, a purified heart . The flesh we know with all its lusts is unclean, defiling. Could we then consider a heart which is constantly being purged from the lusts of the flesh as a pure heart, a clean heart? This brings to mind the figure of circumcision given to our brethren of Israel of old. By this sign from God, they were continually reminded that the flesh must be put off, and if it were done faithfully, there was a covenant between God and them.

In Romans 2 : 28-29, we find the words which are so meaningful to us:

" He is not a Jew (one in covenant relationship with God) which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart**, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

A circumcised heart, then, is precious in the sight of God. It is a heart that doesn't imagine evil, doesn't deceive nor cover, doesn't seek to please the flesh, but rather, God. If our hearts are growing to be like this, then how pleasing to God. We read in Psalm 24 : 3, 5—

" Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a **pure heart**; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord. . . ."

Surely the one whose heart is pure, will receive blessing, because it has helped him to grow in love for God, and for His. It has enabled him to forget himself, and to do for others. Clearly did Jesus tell us,

" **Blessed are the pure in heart:** for they shall see God." (Matthew 5 : 8.)

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Only those who have striven to cut off the flesh, who have desired to please Him, will stand before Him and see Him, having been granted Spirit nature. How great the exhortation to us, brethren and sisters. Let us bring to mind the words recorded in I Peter 1 : 22:

“ Seeing ye have **purified your souls** in obeying the truth through the spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another **with a pure heart**, fervently.”

Let us then purge out of our heart all that is not altogether lovely, and pleasing in the sight of God.

“ A good conscience ”

Going again back to Paul's exhortation to Timothy, we find that a “good conscience” is another stepping stone towards love. **Conscience** means to see or know. We all know that a conscience is a still small voice within that says to us, “that is right, you must do it.” A good conscience makes us “see with” God. We see the effect of a good conscience in I Peter 3 : 15-17,

“ Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts . . . having a **good conscience** that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better . . . that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”

A good conscience enables us to face evil and to come out of it pleasing God, even by suffering for well doing, if it is His will. Surely this was what Jesus knew during His life, for He suffered much for well doing. He saw the **end of the commandment**, He **saw with** God. Let us then bend every effort in response to that good conscience, and by so doing, grow closer to that love which is for God and for His people.

“ Faith unfeigned ”

Last of all, Paul exhorts us to have unfeigned faith in order to grow unto love. We all know what faith is; we all have great need for it to face this life's problems and trials. **But** do we know what “**faith unfeigned**” involves, and most important of all, is our faith

unfeigned? **Unfeigned**, we find, conveys the thought of **without hypocrisy**, not playing a part, without dissimulation. It is easy to feign faith, to perhaps sincerely believe we have faith, yet when trial comes to prove it, is it always unfeigned, without pretence? If we do not sincerely believe that God is with us, watching over, and is able to do all things on our behalf, if we deceive ourselves and our brethren into believing our faith is sincere, we shall be found out in a time of trial. We remember the faith of Abraham, when he was required to offer Isaac as a sacrifice; he obeyed, prepared to sacrifice his son, steadfastly believing God who had said that in this son all Israel would be blessed. Imagine Abraham's emotions when God provided the ram! How grateful and full of love, and further strengthened in faith he would be. Here was faith truly unfeigned.

As we compare our faith to Abraham's we find it may be weak at times, but if we can submit, God will strengthen it, as He perceives that it is unfeigned. Then we, as Abraham, may see and know blessing, because of faith which is un-pretended, and shall experience that love which is the **end of His commandment**.

Paul again helps us in Romans 12 : 9—

“ Let love be without dissimulation (unfeigned). Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. . . .”

Unfeigned faith, that which is without pretence, leads to unfeigned love, a sure love which binds together the brethren of the Lord Jesus into the Holy Body of which He is the Head.

Reading Paul's letter to Timothy, we perceive in it the love of which he speaks, true brotherly love, begotten of a heart which is continually cleansed, a good conscience which “ sees with God ” in all ways, and that faith which is so real it cannot be feigned and will not fail. This is His message to our hearts—**the end of His commandment to us**, if we will hear.

J. A. DeF.



Christendom — *and others* — Astray (78)

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

“Sanctify unto me all the Firstborn . . .

Both of man and of beast: it is mine.”

Exodus 13 : 2.

WHAT would the brethren and sisters in the wilderness understand by these words? What divine lesson would they receive in the declaration that the “firstborn” of man and beast was God’s? Would it be merely a remembrance that in the last plague which came upon Egypt and brought about Israel’s deliverance, all the firstborn of Egypt were slain and the firstborn of Israel were saved by the blood of the lamb? Such an understanding would amount to nothing more than a keeping in mind the means by which deliverance from Egypt had been effected. It must be remembered, however, that the Ecclesia had already been told that they were God’s “firstborn” in the words which were to be declared to Pharaoh:

“Israel is my son, even my firstborn.” Exodus 4 : 22.

God would not make such a momentous declaration to His children unless they fully understood all that was implied in such words. They had seen in a most dramatic way that their own firstborn had been saved by the blood of a “lamb”; and in being addressed as God’s firstborn would know that they could look forward to being saved from eternal death by the blood of **the** Lamb. The teaching of the Law concerning the firstborn is most informative and impressive. It is worthy of carefully noting that this teaching did not commence with the Law given to Moses at Sinai. From the beginning the purpose of God was to be seen by His people in the “firstborn”.

The Law of God prior to Moses.

Reference to the “Law” in the New Testament is invariably to the Law given through Moses. This was because the teaching of the Gospel by Jesus, and the Apostles was first of all to the Jews. Prior to the death of Christ the Jews were responsible to the Law of Moses if they would be obedient to God, and so it is immediately understandable why both Jesus and the Apostles in speaking of the

Law should mean the Law of Moses. The Apostles in particular had to labour with the Jews to show that although the ordinances of the Law were terminated, the teaching of the Law remained. The prevalent error amongst the Jews which prevented them accepting the Truth, and robbed some of those of the Truth who had accepted it, was their desire to keep the ordinances of the Law although neglecting completely its teaching. This emphasis on the part of the Apostles might give the impression that the Law of God commenced with Moses; but this is only true in so far as the Jews were concerned.

It will at once be recognised that there had been a Law of God from the very beginning. What is not more generally recognised is that the Law from the beginning was similar to, if not identical with, the Law of Moses. This can be seen by the sacrifices which faithful men made, which must have been in compliance with the Law of that time. Undoubtedly, this Law was as much the Spirit of Christ as the subsequent Law given afresh through Moses. Valuable teaching concerning the "Firstborn" is given in this Law regarding the firstborn, supplementing in some particulars the details given in the Law of Moses, and helping us to obtain a more comprehensive view of the divine purpose in the "firstborn."

The Teaching of the Law regarding the "Firstborn" in the time of Abel.

Careful regard will have to be paid to the record in Genesis if the divine treasure which this contains is to be received. Little is said in the record, but there is much meaning available to the devout reader. Concerning the offerings of Abel and his brother Cain, the record states:

"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect."

Genesis 4 : 3-5.

The old time explanation, which used to be given as to why Abel's offering was accepted, and Cain's rejected, was that Abel's

offering involved the shedding of blood whereas the offering of Cains did not. Superficially this seems to be a satisfactory explanation until it is called to mind that the fruit of the ground could be offered to God providing that this was the "firstfruits," as carefully stated in the Law of Moses:

"The first of the firstfruits of the land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God." Exodus 23 : 19.

What then was Cain's failure when he made his offering? As a tiller of the ground he should have brought the "firstfruits" as an offering unto the Lord; just as his brother Abel, who was a "keeper of the sheep" was required to bring the "firstlings of his flock." Cain's careless offering declared in effect that God would receive any and all of the fruit of the ground without any discrimination. This carelessness on the part of Cain, amounting to disobedience, overlooked the most important fact that God has never declared His intention of saving all the "fruit of the ground"—all mankind. Salvation in the purpose of Yahweh has always been limited from the days of Abel to the saving of the "firstfruits." The simple record shows that Abel had an acceptable belief in salvation through the "firstborn" as seen in the firstlings of his flock which he offered; whereas Cain's offering showed a total disregard of God's teaching of salvation only through the firstborn, and in consequence Cain's offering was rejected.

A lesson of tremendous importance emerges from this simple consideration. God from the beginning has never sought to save all. Never has He propounded the idea of "universal salvation." In great mercy He has shown that the only possibility of salvation is through a belief in the "firstborn," and becoming part of the "firstborn," the Christ.

Through the dynamic Spirit of Christ in this brief and simple record we are enabled to see in a clear and vivid way that the sects of Christendom are all branded with the name of "Cain." One and all believe that man as the "fruit of the ground" can be saved whether he belongs to the firstborn or not. This fallacious teaching of Cain has infected the whole of Christendom. None stand with Abel demonstrating that their belief is that salvation is only possible through the "firstborn".

Cain in a fit of jealous rage slew his brother Abel. Christendom, too, has a similar wicked record. From time to time their "Christian charity" has been stained with the blood of those who

have dared to expose their evil ways. How much Christendom has been and still is astray!

Where do the 'others'—those who once had the Truth—stand? With Cain or with Abel?

If we go back to 1875 we find that those who held the Truth in those days were clearly with Abel. The following quotation from a brother at that time will confirm this:

“When I embraced the Truth in 1875 there was to my knowledge, but one community holding those First Principles as a Basis of Fellowship. That community was known as 'Christadelphians'; then, a despised, albeit, a happy and united little flock. In those far off days, to withdraw, or to be withdrawn from that community, whose headquarters were in Birmingham, was, in the mind of the writer, to be outside the One Body of Christ!”

These words express the sentiment of the teaching seen in Abel's offering, limiting salvation to those who believed in and became part of the “firstborn,” the Christ.

Now, however, this Body is divided into upwards of some twelve sects, and, although so divided, each claiming that salvation can be obtained in any one of these sects. Very much like the divided Churches and Chapels of Christendom each claim for the other. But such claims of the 'others' are not completely limited to membership of one of the parts of the dismembered body. Many express the view that it is possible that some belonging to Christendom, who may have believed the Gospel and been baptised, can and will be saved even though they remain in a Church or Chapel. Like Cain they have torn down the divine barrier limiting salvation to those who are part of the “firstborn”. In what they claim as genial charity towards the world they are joining hands with Christendom; in some cases substituting “good works” as the vehicle of the Truth for faith in and obedience to the “firstborn.” These cannot be warned in too strong a voice that a “little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”; that fellowshipping such views although disbelieving in them, is regarded by God as partaking of the evil. To individuals the appeal is made to cross the gulf that obviously exists between those belonging to Cain, and those who are Abel's

brethren; a gap which is no less than a frontier between darkness and light, between death and life.

To impress the minds of those who may be inclined to consider this appeal, may a look be taken at the final scene when the Redeemed of God are gathered upon Mount Zion. Significantly in the Revelation they are said to be there with the Lamb. How beautifully this takes the mind back to the time of Jesus, whom, John said was "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"; and further back to the types reaching to the time of Abel who saw in the offerings of the Lamb the provision of the "firstborn" who would be the means of redemption.

The company on Mount Zion is seen to be complete. Concerning them it is said "these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." This essential characteristic is not something miraculously granted to them in the day of their redemption, but rather has it been developed through all the trials of probation; through their profound belief in the Lamb, the "firstborn," and also in their belief of the necessity of being part of the "firstborn" until the end.

The concluding words depicting this scene are exquisite and by their reference show that a consideration of what is involved in the "firstborn" or "firstfruits" is a rewarding theme running throughout the Scriptures:

"These were redeemed from among men, being the **firstfruits** unto God and to the lamb." Revelation 14:4.

(To be continued . . .)

Not Discerning the Lord's Body

WHAT is the greatest danger that confronts us as we meet at the Table of the Lord?

Surely it is that we may partake unworthily as the Apostle points out in I Corinthians 11, verse 29:—

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (condemnation) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Because of this danger the Apostle says . . . let a man examine himself. Why the need for self-examination? There must be a reason and God wishes us to know it, and it is contained in verse 27:

“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord . . . not discerning the Lord’s body.”

Yes, God does want His children to know how they might serve Him acceptably and so we read in I Cor. 2, v. 12:—

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

Further “. . . he that is spiritual discerneth all things” verse 15. So we are without excuse.

What then had the Corinthian ecclesia to learn regarding discernment? In chapter 11, verse 18, Paul says:—

“For first of all, when ye come together in the ecclesia, I hear that there be divisions among you . . .”

So we begin to see here the root of the trouble. Had not the Apostle warned them about this very same point earlier on the question in I Cor. 1, v. 13:—

“Is Christ divided?”

Apparently the Corinthians had taken hold of the idea that they could be divided—in saying, verse 12:—

“Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.”

And so the Apostle is quick to reprimand and to put them right. And so his question, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?” They knew from this that Paul was not crucified for them, and neither was Christ divided. And so it would seem that they had not fully learned their lesson about this, and so Paul says in verse 18 of chapter 11, “. . . I hear that there be divisions among you . . .” And the great danger was, of their meeting at the Table of the Lord to their condemnation, not discerning the Lord’s body— not discerning that unless they were completely united and at one

they were guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. Does not the bread speak of unity and the wine speak of the life of Christ?

By the very fact of meeting together at the Lord's table and not being perfectly united was tantamount to saying and believing that Christ was divided and could only bring forth condemnation on themselves, not discerning the Lord's body and

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” Ch. 11, v. 30.

And so we find the Apostle continues in the next chapter, verse 12:

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: **so also is Christ.**”

Verse 13:—

“For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.”

Verse 14:—

“For the body is not one member, but many.”

The vitally important point to discern is that Christ is not divided and any who say contrary to this (and there are many), are guilty of dividing the body and blood, i.e., the life, of Christ.

First be reconciled

How essential is this unity to be manifested between the members of Christ's body is highlighted for us in the divine instructions given that this great danger of not discerning the Lord's body in its perfect unity can be avoided.

Matt. 5, 23:—

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee” (obviously in disagreement).

Matt. 5, 24:—

“Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, **first be reconciled** to thy brother, and then (when unity is restored) come and offer thy gift.”

Again, Matt. 18, 15:—

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee (unity is restored and) thou hast gained thy brother.”

Can we not see an underlying principle throughout, the object of which is to preserve the unity.

Any failure to perceive these things is to be guilty of not discerning the Lord's body.

The hallmark of the Truth is seen in unity. Christ is **not** divided and any one who partakes at the Table of the Lord knowing that unity is absent is guilty of not discerning the Lord's Body. “So let a man examine himself” (and after self-examination to see that true unity exists) and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

I Cor. 11, v. 29:—

“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (condemnation) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

J.S.

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

“AND THEY SHALL LOOK UNTO THE EARTH; AND BEHOLD TROUBLE AND DARKNESS, DIMNESS OF ANGUISH; AND THEY SHALL BE DRIVEN TO DARKNESS.” (Isaiah 8, v. 22.)

ONE of the organisations of men which the masses look to for hope in these times is undoubtedly the United Nations. Its

job is purported to be peacemaker, provider for poverty stricken areas and campaigner against disease and ignorance. The special agencies of the United Nations such as UNESCO which works to promote education and science in backward countries, and the FAO that deals with food and agriculture are sending groups all over the world to improve food production and lessen disease. Work by such teams is being financed by U.N.O. in Africa, India, Iran, and places in Central and Southern America to name a few.

But the U.N.O. is not the only organisation that is seeking to improve the lot of the more ignorant and poverty suffering regions. The Colombo Plan is also at work endeavouring to raise the standard of living in South and South-east Asia. The plan commenced nearly 15 years ago when in January, 1950, representatives from India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand met at Colombo, the capital of Ceylon for the purpose of organising an attempt to develop the considerable natural resources of the areas of India, Pakistan and Ceylon for the betterment of their peoples. The idea caught on and captured the approval of many countries and there are now 22 countries concerned in the plan, 16 of which are in the areas that desire the help of the plan for their own development. The United States and Japan have also joined.

Work under the plan has apparently helped India to become one of the most industrial countries in the region, and in Ceylon for example, great spaces have been cleared in the jungle enabling 42 villages to be built and 200 square miles of rice fields to be put into production.

In the light of such efforts surely a great improvement should be seen emerging after ages of poverty, conflict and suffering. But this is not the case. Statistics revealed some months ago show that there are very great needs in the modern world. The following details make a startling list.

Over 300 million do not get enough to eat.

Trachoma affects 500 million people or a sixth of the world's population. It is "the greatest single cause of serious and progressive loss of sight." In many North African countries more than nine-tenths of the indigenous rural population become infected with trachoma in the first year of life.

There are 10 million lepers in the world; millions receive no treatment.

In India alone there are 5 million cases of T.B.

There are 90,000 deaths a year from T.B. in East Pakistan and only a few hundred beds for T.B. patients.

One-third of the world has less than 10 grams of protein a day to eat.

Eight grams of animal protein is provided by the average daily diet in the Far East. (The North American comparison is sixty-six grams.

Eleven out of every 100 children die in India before they reach the age of 4.

The expectation of life for a Burmese woman is 31 years (in comparison, the expectation of life for a British woman is 74).

There are still 1,350,000 refugees under the mandate of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Sixty per cent of Africa's children never go to school. Only four per cent receive secondary education.

This list could stretch on, but perhaps sufficient has been stated to enable the mind of western readers to realise the extent of the suffering and of the need that prevails, reminding of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the signs of His coming:—

“ . . . there shall be famines and pestilences . . . ”

(Matt. 24, v. 7.)

It is difficult for the more affluent dwellers of the West, by reason of their easier environment, to understand the true position from a world point of view. But the remarkable thing is that such a situation should still prevail even though there have been many wonderful achievements in modern science.

Here again the situation witnesses to the accuracy of the divine record. The declaration of its prophecy is vindicated. God has known from the beginning what the course of events would be.

**“ AND THEY SHALL LOOK UNTO THE EARTH; AND
BEHOLD TROUBLE . . . ”** (Isaiah 8, v. 22.)

It has been said that the United States President is anxious to co-operate with Russia to help transform millions of waterless square miles into fertile land. Scientists have proved that atomic power stations can use waste heat to distil salt water into fresh water cheaply and in vast quantities. This matter has been under discussion at Geneva at the Atoms for Peace conference, when international experts explained how drought-stricken areas could advance to undreamed of prosperity. Giant power stations on desert coasts or above inland salt water reserves could distil fresh water for crops and animals. At the same time the nuclear reactors would generate power which could be used for new industries, as well as for homes and transport. Emphasis was placed on the fact that such things could be undertaken without any further research; all the basic knowledge is available and has been proved to work.

What then hinders an age of golden prosperity? Let the divine record be appealed to for the answer.

“ Take counsel together, but it will come to naught,” says the scripture; and again “. . . give ear, all you far countries; gird yourselves and be dismayed.” Should not a people consult their God? ” “ Surely for this word which they speak there is no dawn.” (R.S.V. Isaiah 8.)

The outcome is eloquently expressed in the passage:—

“ They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry; and when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will curse their king and their God, and turn their faces upward, and they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be thrust into thick darkness. But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish ” (i.e., the people of God). (Isaiah 8, v. 21-22 and 9, v. 1 R.S.V.)

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Man is his own worst enemy. Though population has increased there is ample provision in the earth if it is used rightly. But when there is hunger men do not always blame themselves or reproach themselves for the "enraged" situations that result. Many times those who have not had to suffer and want and who have been selfish in their affluence, have had to suffer the trouble which the poverty has fomented.

The vexatious result is that not only their ruler but God also is blamed. But it is man who hinders his own progress and hides himself from his Creator.

So the world situation is perused "and behold trouble."

India has recently appealed for grain, indicating the seriousness of the country's food situation. Yet there is a potential of plenty in that country. It became evident that it is the interest in power and of the needs of war, for which man has made his preference, that stands in the way. An Indian military mission went to Moscow recently with a big order list which included a submarine. India also started negotiations with Britain 18 months ago for three frigates to escort its aircraft carrier. The order would be worth an estimated £13 millions.

The situation among Colombo Plan Countries is far from peaceful. There is trouble between Indonesia and her fellow-member Malaysia, and there is civil war in two other member-countries, Laos and Vietnam. This means that there cannot be affluence; improvement to sufficiency is impossible when there is war!

Looking to the far east trouble is again seen. China is a country that is in great need of the basic provisions and yet there is a danger of a clash there with Russia. Though the true position is not easy to perceive because of veiled reports, it seems as though there has been skirmishing on the borders that could be a preliminary to a major engagement.

In the near east there is not only an uneasy situation around Israel but there is danger of a war between Turkey and Greece over that greatly troubled island, Cyprus.

In Africa, trouble flares up in the Congo. The rebels there have accused the International Red Cross and the World Health Organisation of being part of an "imperialistic plot" against the rebels.

South Africa and the U.S.A. are troubled over the colour problem. In British Guiana the country is suffering from terrorist activities, with British troops endeavouring to improve the dangerous situation.

These events which create fear and jeopardise the world over-all situation are happening just as the scripture declared they would. The counselling of nations for the alleviating of the world's ills comes to nought as a result.

“ They shall look to the earth,” says the scripture. But they will not see their desire. Instead there will be “ trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish . . . ” because there is no counsel of God allowed in their affairs; and the schemes of flesh are allowed to dominate.

It is at such a time that God declares, “ But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish.” The coming of Christ to deliver His people is prophesied in the context of such a situation. Surely then the perverse failure of men to achieve their desire for prosperity and peace because their schemes are not sincere, nor according to God's counsel, though technically they have more to aid them than ever before, is another sign of the time of the end.

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: Mid-week, Forestville, Hamburg, Buffalo, and Orchard Park.

The regular Sunday School address scheduled for September 27th, will have taken place when this is in print; and we shall be looking forward to the Sunday School Outing planned for October 3rd.

It is hoped to circularise in Forestville, Hamburg, and Orchard Park during the next few months, and to deliver a special lecture in Buffalo during October—these two works being phases of the work of witnessing which must continue.

With joy and gratitude, the loving care of The Father and the brethren and sisters is acknowledged in the granting of the visits across the waters by those from U.S.A. during 1964. The practical plans have entailed much work on the part of those who received us, in order to get the maximum of benefits from the contacts. The aim accomplished, we believe, is a strengthening of the bond of unity, the renewing of vows, and a rejoicing together in the sure knowledge that The Spirit works among those who desire to serve God. May we press on with zeal in the hope of Mercy.

J. A. DeF.

Newtownards, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.

Sundays, Breaking of Bread, Newtownards, 11.30 a.m.
Sunday School: 10.30 a.m. Bible Class: Wednesday.

The visit to Ireland of Brother and Sister W. G. Butterfield and Sister Harrison was another time of joyful union with those of like faith, and a further experience of the peace of the Spirit. We were grateful to Bro. Butterfield for exhortation on Sunday morning. It is hoped to arrange a public lecture in Belfast about the end of October.

J.P.

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 alternatively.

It was a great pleasure to have Brother and Sister DeFries and Sister N. Brown, of U.S.A., Sister Slaney and Sister Francis, of Manchester, in our homes in August and also at the Table of the Lord.

Brother DeFries helped us by exhortation.

These contacts from across the seas are evidence of the oneness of heart, though of necessity few.

We also had Brother and Sister Robinson at the Table of the Lord when Brother Robinson exhorted.

A cordial invitation is extended to all Brethren and Sisters at our Fraternal, October 10th. H.J.S.

Manchester. Memorial Hall, M.A.P.S. Building, 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: 3rd Saturday each month at 3.45 p.m.

On September 1st Brother and Sister DeFries and Sister Nancy Brown concluded their visit to this country and departed from Manchester Airport for the States. We were sorry to see them go as their presence has fortified us in our faith and hope. Inevitably, these times must end, but when they do, there is a feeling of sadness and for a while a gap is felt. Nevertheless, gratitude is expressed for the mutual benefit in discussing the problems which are bound to arise in those whose consciences are exercised "to discern good and evil."

Other welcome visitors at the Table of the Lord which it was omitted to mention last month have been Sister Packer, of Nottingham, and Sister Nancy Pinkerton, of Ireland.

On September 6th we were pleased to have the company of Brother and Sister F. Harrison, of Nottingham. Brother Harrison gave the word of exhortation and also the lecture on that day when a few strangers were present. W.V.B.