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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

THE GOSPEL

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

My Messenger

MALACHI was a prophet sent to Israel during their restoration of Jerusalem. He was, as his name denotes, a messenger from God. He was sent, according to the chronology, in the year 397 B.C. Just before Jesus came, another messenger was also sent. Malachi prophesies concerning this in Malachi 3 : 1.

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in . . . saith the Lord of hosts.”

Malachi spoke of John, who was to prepare the way of Jesus. Jesus Himself used these same words concerning John, in Matthew 11 : 10.

“This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee.”

How important to God's purpose were these messengers; Malachi, John, and so many others! The message of each one is expressed here in Malachi 3: 1.

“. . . the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple. . . .”

This is the whole wondrous purpose of God from the Beginning. The Lord, the Messiah, shall suddenly come. Because this message has been given through God's love for His creatures, we look for Him, we seek His coming, we pray for it. **The Lord shall suddenly come!** At the wink of an eye, this is the way He **will** come, without immediate warning, as a thief in the night, Jesus tells us. It could be NOW. His message then speaks to us as “children of Light”, alerting us. Are we ready? Prepared for His coming, that we are not caught unawares, nor found “in darkness”?

From the Beginning

There have always been His messengers, bringing hope to those who delight in Him, showing His faithfulness to all generations. How blessed we are, brethren and sisters, that we have this help!

In our readings in Revelation, we find the same hope through the One sent of God.

“Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.” (Revelation 22 : 12.)

How similar this message, speaking of God's purpose to be accomplished through His Son, the Messiah.

But with the hope of His coming, we have warning as well.

“But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.” (Malachi 3 : 2.)

This same warning is repeated all through His Word, as in Revelation, chapter 6 : 17.

“For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

This is the question **we** must face. It is our hope that we may be able to stand in the Day of Judgment, and be accounted worthy to be joined to Him eternally. The warning is that He is like a “refiner's fire” and like “fullers' soap”. How telling the figures! The refiner's fire is to burn out all that is impure, and not wanted, for it detracts from the value of the precious metal. This is the work of the Spirit with His people, to burn out all that belongs to the flesh, to consume it in the fire, leaving only that which is precious in the eyes of the refiner; that spirit of submission, of obedience, and of joy to do His will. The fuller's soap was used to make soiled garments white, and speaks of the purifying work of Jesus, made possible by His life given for us. We read in Revelation 7 : 14, of those clothed in white robes:

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them **white in the blood of the Lamb.**”

These are cleansed by His blood, “for he is like fullers' soap.” As we submit to being refined and cleansed, we may hope to “abide the day of His coming”. Let us value then this blessing; let us welcome the refining, the washing, as something which in God's wisdom must be done; and painful as it may be to the flesh, we must receive it with joy as a sign of His love working in us.

“**They that feared the Lord**”

As we allow our minds to dwell upon these messages given, can we realise how much the help is needed, and how graciously it is provided? Malachi's words help us, as recorded in chapter 3 : 16.

“**They that feared the Lord** spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it. . . .”

They that **feared** the Lord—is this the key to our Hope, The Fear of the Lord? We must, if we are to abide! And so the words of

Malachi are given to help us more nearly know that fear. **Fear**, which is awe, reverence, awareness of His mighty power, and holiness—and of our own unworthiness. All of this helps us to perceive His great love for us, and to grow ourselves in love for Him. Love is the essence of the **Fear of the Lord**.

If this fear is in our hearts, it will help us to move, think, and act in a way which is pleasing to Him.

“Those who feared the Lord spake often one to another,” Malachi tells us. What would provoke this speaking “often one to another”? Would it not be a mutual love for God, a joining together to help one another be close to God and His Son, a true unity of spirit in subjection to His will? How much this speaking often one to another is needed, that we may encourage one another in the struggle to overcome, which every one that truly fears God does experience. How sobering too, the knowledge that God hears all our “speaking together”, as we read: “The Lord hearkened, and heard it.” If we were in the presence of a king, how carefully chosen our words would be. Let us remember, brethren and sisters, that we are always before **THE KING**, and before our **GOD**, and let us make sure that our words are pleasing to Him.

Does not Jesus tell us that “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement?” (the day of his coming). Idle words, words to no profit or benefit. All too often our words can be like that. Let us pray, as David did, “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (Psalm 141 : 3). Thus, as the Lord hearkens and hears the words we speak one to another, our names may be written in the book of remembrance.

Book of Remembrance

How important is this book of remembrance, for we read,

“Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20 : 15).

Only those whom the Lord hears and approves, will be found written in this book, and may hope to abide the day of His coming. Further, in Revelation 22 : 14, we are told,

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

Malachi promises,

“ . . . they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels. . . . ” (Malachi 3 : 17).

A confirmation of this is found in the Revelation, where we have the figure of that Holy City, whose foundations are “ garnished with all manner of precious stones.”

What greater blessing, what surer hope can we have, than His assurance, “ **They shall be mine** ”? All this is given to us through His messengers. As we read it, seek to make it part of our living, are we not given further assurance?

“ I am the Lord (Yahweh), I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed ” (Malachi 3 : 6).

God does not change, and is “ without fold ” as the word means; for there is nothing hidden nor deceiving about our Lord. Man is subject to change, as we may have learned to our hurt or sorrow, but God changes not. We can look upon His Creation, and marvel at its constancy. The sun rises every morning and sets every night at its appointed time. The stars are fixed in the heavens so surely that they are used by man to locate himself upon the earth. All this speaks to us, brethren and sisters, witnessing to His unchangeableness. His **message** has not changed, for it has been the same from the Beginning, from the time of Adam, when the seed of the woman was promised, to the end when the Lord Jesus will return as THE SEED to bring about His Purpose. Well does the Revelation help us in this perception, where Jesus says,

“ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last ” (Revelation 22 : 12-13).

Let us then, brethren and sisters, read the message given **for us** in the words preserved for so long. It is real, it is Truth, it is God, unchanging, speaking to us. Let us be sure our hearts and our minds are tuned, sensitive to receive His message. If we are alert, discerning, we can be helped to a true fear of God, will truly speak often one to another now, and may hope to “ abide the day of His coming, and stand when he appeareth.”

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray (84)

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

**“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”**

Deuteronomy 6 : 5.

IT is impossible to love by command. No one can love another because they are told they must do so. Then what was the point of this command being included in the Law? No command is given that cannot be fulfilled.

The basis of love is knowing so fully the qualities of another that confidence and trust are established. This can be readily appreciated as applying to individuals. It is also the means by which men and women can be drawn to God in love. The start is by recognising that “God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” The next step is to realise that God has revealed Himself that He may be known fully—be admired for His imperishable glory, and “beauty of holiness,” be completely trusted for His faithfulness and unchangeableness, and be profoundly appreciated for His evident fatherly care and provision.

Christendom’s god is nothing more than a symbol; something like a mathematical symbol for the unknown. It is conceded that there must be a god, for things have not made themselves. Beyond this nebulous idea Christendom’s god is one of man’s own making. He is fashioned to lead a nations’ armies through all the miseries of bloodshed and ruin; to terrorise and wantonly destroy. He is made to approve the most grotesque ideas about life and death—all according to men’s fancies. And above all Christendom’s god is ever benevolent to the greatest worshippers of Mammon who can be persuaded to part with some of their wealth for the benefit of Christendom’s self-appointed officers of religion. Love of God in such circumstances is impossible, for there is no God to love. Christendom is without God: Christendom is astray. Let us then see with the help of the Spirit of Christ in the Law where God may be found; and finding Him may be known and truly loved.

The Ecclesia in the Wilderness.

Great is the privilege of being able to go to the Ecclesia in the wilderness, and imagine oneself with the brethren and sisters there listening to the words of the Great God—Yahweh. The experience dispels the idea that God is some great one afar off who cannot be

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known. His mighty presence is at once felt. Let us listen intently to what was said of the Ecclesia:

“Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?” Deuteronomy 4 : 6-7.

The fact that God was in the midst of the Ecclesia was impressed upon the brethren and sisters in a most remarkable and dramatic manner. When they were assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive the blessing of the covenant which God made with them there, the voice of the Almighty was heard by every one giving the ten commandments. This experience was unique. Never before or since has such a company of people heard the actual voice of God. The circumstances which accompanied this manifestation of God in the midst of His people were equally impressive: “there were thunders and lightnings . . . and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud.” Who, with this experience so indelibly impressed upon the mind, dare ever say that God was not in the midst of His Ecclesia?

God was not in the midst of the brethren and sisters to frighten them, Through His Law He showed them all that was good and right that they might enjoy the peace of God and the happiness which this brings. They were to learn that every item of the Law was as a fence to prevent a brother falling into the ditch of his own weakness. They were to learn that through the Law families could be united together in true love and the whole Ecclesia bound together as one family—the family of God. That love was to be the fulfilling of the Law was impressed most carefully:

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord:
And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be
in thine heart.” Deuteronomy 6 : 4-6.

How many, or rather few there are who look upon the commands of God as given in the Law as being the vehicles of His love. The brethren and sisters knew they were, and could feel that love as they were required to teach their children about the wonderful care and provision of God in all things. Through the exhortation of Moses they could look back upon all that God had done for them in bringing them up from the bondage of Egypt, and bearing them as upon eagles' wings through the great and terrible wilderness. The children were there whom the brethren and sisters feared would be destroyed by the nations in the land; and now these children were to enter that land and enjoy all its goodly provisions.

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By observing the wonderful care of the Law in the land every family could be at peace and the whole Ecclesia enjoy the provision of God, which is described in the most powerful manner as “the days of heaven upon the earth.”

There is no doubt that on the day that the brethren and sisters were to leave the wilderness and enter the land that God was in the midst of His Ecclesia. His hand had been outstretched to overcome the adversary and preserve the brethren and sisters. He had given bread from heaven and made the rock of the wilderness yield life-giving waters. Their clothes and their shoes had been preserved during the many years of wandering through the rock-strewn desert. Truly they had lacked no good thing. God’s purpose had not failed as could now be seen in their entering of the land. His love, in more ways than could be numbered, was manifest to all.

No brother or sister could help but respond with an exultant heart in love towards the Lord, and with that fulness implied in the words that it should be “With all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

This is clearly seen to be the Spirit of Christ, for when Jesus was asked, “Which is the great commandment in the Law?” He replied:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.” Matthew 22 : 37-38

A command truly; but one that is only calculated to give articulation to the innermost feelings of a deeply grateful heart. Such a one has come to know God, has been conscious of His presence, and through the many mercies extended towards him has been drawn to God by the cords of love.

Christendom is devoid of such provision for they know not God. What of the ‘others’ those who once had the Truth? They may confess as an article of faith that God is in their midst, but what does this mean? To what purpose is God in their midst? Unless it be to give His mind on all questions that arise affording necessary guidance the declaration of God’s presence means nothing. Having seen the power of love which can be born in the heart through a knowledge of God may the attention be directed to one of the most misused quotations of scripture—

God is Love.” 1 John 4 : 16.

Christendom delight in displaying these words on their wayside pulpits. Few, if any, take any notice of them because the words mean nothing to those who use them and to those who see them.

How can they when God is not in all their thoughts; they know not God.

What is meant by the Apostle when he says, "God is love?" He means nothing less than the God of Israel is the source of all love, and that without Him there would be no love. God is the embodiment of love. God is love. Let us see in a few details how majestically true is this statement.

God created man in His own image and has set him in families. The natural love that binds together man and wife, parents and children is not something that has just happened; it is not a by-product of evolution which this false science would have us believe, but is a direct gift from God. The sucking child in its mother's arms is a familiar but distinct evidence of this great gift of God.

Children of the brethren and sisters in the wilderness were not only to experience this natural love as very many children do, but as they grew older were to realise who was the provider of all things, and the One from whom all love flows. As they walked with their parents in the land and would see the delightful colours of the flowers and smell their exquisite fragrance they would realise that this pleasure was provided by God; a token of His love. As they stopped and listened in Spring to the songs of the birds, enthralled by the variety and purity of their tone, they would come to know that this melodious delight was given by God for their enjoyment. Again a token of His love. As they stood upon some eminence and looked to the East and saw the mountains rising in their grandeur, and to the West and beheld the vivid azure of the sea competing with the heavens above for beauty and glory they would come to know that such a satisfying and ennobling sight was another gift of God; another token of His love. At night as they beheld the heavens they could not fail to exclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." As they looked at the stars shining in their wondrous brightness they would call to mind the words which had been spoken to their father Abraham: "So shall thy seed be."

It is at this point that the mind is permitted to reach from the many every day tokens of the love of God to that which in the mercy of God promises deliverance from all present decay and death, and everlasting association with the glory of God in the Kingdom. This can only be accomplished through the One whom God has provided, His Son, whose beauty of God's character was seen in His countenance.

How regrettable it seems that the 'others'—those who once had the Truth—should now be following in Christendom's wake by a

mistaken charity towards those for whom God has never intended to extend His love. All in the world in some degree experience a measure of His natural love but only a few and very few are privileged to experience that love of God of being called out of a perishing world and joined to His Son. Some amongst the 'others' seem determined to improve upon the ways of God, and by imitating Christendom feel that they will make converts of those to whom they show their charity. Truly like Christendom they know not God nor His ways.

(To be continued . . .)

The Gospel

“The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

THE importance of the Gospel to all who would have life is made clear by the Apostle Paul:—

“The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Romans 1 : 16.

To remove any possibility of doubt the Apostle Paul shows that without an understanding and belief of the Gospel there is no hope:

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.”

2 Corinthians 4 : 3.

Current popular religious teaching confines the Gospel to some vague knowledge of the “death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.” Many claim to be ‘saved’ by uttering that they have accepted Jesus on this scant knowledge as their Saviour. If this is true all is well: if false, then there is no hope of life. The devout reader will be anxious to know precisely God’s revealed conditions of salvation as shown clearly in the Gospel; and will not be deflected from this purpose by what men say. The object of these articles is to show the beautiful simplicity of these conditions.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

As the title of this article shows the Gospel deals with the transcending themes of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, but why are these described as the “Gospel”? Let us go to Jesus when He made His first public testimony.

In the synagogue at Nazareth a remarkable scene meets our eyes, and more remarkable words fall upon our ears. Jesus stands up to

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read a portion from the prophecy of Isaiah. We listen to His words:—

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Luke 4 : 18-19.

We watch as Jesus sits down before a spell-bound audience and hear Him say:

“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

Before looking at how the Gospel was to be fulfilled, a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 61 : 3) shows that the Gospel is spoken of as “good tidings.” This then is the meaning of the Gospel. Let us see why the news contained in the Gospel is so good.

As we allow the words of Jesus to sink into our minds we find that they contain a promise which no other power on earth can give: “Deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind.” Natural blindness is too dreadful a disease to contemplate; so is the thought of being cast into some prison as a captive without any possibility of escape. Jesus, however, was not speaking of physical blindness and captivity; but of that blindness which prevents the seeing of God’s purpose and His conditions of salvation, and the consequent captivity in the prison-house of an eternal tomb. The Gospel, through the miraculous and merciful power of the Almighty can open the eyes to see the glory of the Kingdom of God, and the opportunity of attaining thereto through the name of Jesus Christ. There can be no greater and more rewarding endeavour than coming to know the power of the Gospel. No human pursuit, however worthwhile, however sincere and self-sacrificing, however devoted and charitable, can offer the glorious and eternal rewards promised by the Gospel.

The Bible: The source of the Gospel.

The Bible is a wonderful book or rather a collection of books, miraculously produced and miraculously preserved. Throughout its pages the Gospel message can be discerned. The Old Testament is as important as the New, for Jesus based His Gospel teaching on the Old Testament. He spoke of the Old Testament as the “Scripture which cannot be broken.” Those who doubt the Old Testament deny Jesus.

To understand the Gospel fully it will be necessary to go through

the whole of the Bible, selecting the main points from each part, and this is the intention in this series of articles. In the first place a few words must be said about the authenticity and infallibility of the Bible.

The Bible is the gift of God to those who seek that they might understand God's purpose. The Gospel with the "Good News" is the theme found throughout the Bible.

The Bible is the Word of God. It is often spoken of as "The Holy Bible," which indeed it is, for it is not a human production. The authors of the various books of the Bible were subservient to the power of God, which came upon them directing them in what they should write and say. The words of these books in the original tongues are therefore the Words of God. The Apostle Peter says:—

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1 : 20-21.

Here then is great comfort and help, for we are given an undoubted message from God that we might know the Gospel or "good news" concerning the Kingdom of God, which will be established, and the salvation which is promised in the name of Jesus Christ for those who seek and obey.

Anything less than this whole-hearted acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God robs any teaching of power and authority. Religious sects today are tossed about with all sorts of philosophies, because of opinion supplanting the divine Word. Any tampering with the Word of God, casting doubt on any part of it, is regarded by God as a denial of Him and constitutes the gravest sin.

May the reader then be helped through the pages of the Bible, a divine treasure indeed, and so be permitted to see how reasonable is the scheme of God for the deliverance of the earth from its present dangers; and for the individual who obeys God there is the greatest of all rewards—the gift of everlasting life. This in a word is the Gospel—the "good news"—but only for those who **know** the Gospel, **believe** the Gospel, and **obey** the Gospel.

(To be continued . . .)

Correspondence

Letter received from C.E.B., Northwood, Middlesex.

“Many thanks for magazines and particularly your booklet dealing with the “History of the Truth in the Latter Days,” which I have read with much interest. . . .

“As one who was baptised into “The Faith” close on half a century ago and having over this period of time been witness to division after division within the Brotherhood, I share your deep concern regarding declining standards of conduct and present day trends towards laxity in matters affecting Fellowship; nevertheless, I am deeply convinced following careful and prayerful consideration of all the issues involved, that The Old Paths Fellowship which accepts the old B.A.S.F. without any sort of reservation, more than meets the needs of today, with particular regard to all those brethren and sisters who view with sorrow and dismay present-day trends within the Re-Union Fellowship.”

REPLY

You say that you are “deeply convinced . . . that the Old Paths Fellowship which accepts the old B.A.S.F. without any sort of reservation,” will in effect merit the approval of God with the promise of His salvation. Let us examine this carefully for the issue is no less than that of life or death.

Just what is attained by “accepting the B.A.S.F. without reservation?” Does this satisfy the Almighty’s conditions of fellowship with Him?

There is only **one** fellowship. To speak of ‘this fellowship’ or that ‘fellowship’ suggests that each and all may have fellowship with God; that in this main essential one is no better than another, and that the Kingdom may be gained in any one of them. This is confusion, and obviously lacks the clear voice of Truth showing beyond doubt the requirements of God. To say the will of God cannot be ascertained on such an important matter until the Judgment Seat of Christ is a denial of the promise that God, as the perfect Father, will make known His way in all things that His children may obey Him.

The present parlous position in what is erroneously called the ‘brotherhood’ has arisen because the “Statement of Faith” has been exalted above the Word as the sole instrument for acceptance with God.

The "Statement of Faith" has changed and must change. It can never be the sole arbiter of truth. By its very nature it is a human instrument, a 'letter' and not the Spirit. It has been useful in highlighting important points of the Truth, which have been challenged by those in error; but because the "Statement of Faith" has come to be regarded as the complete repository of essential truth minds have been blinded to its obvious limitations.

The "Statement of Faith" is not given by the Spirit, and therefore it cannot be likened to the gold of God's Spirit Word; and attempts to gild the "Statement of Faith" by resolutions over the past forty or fifty years that it is accepted "without reservation" have been abortive. Men's words can never take the place of the Spirit.

Let us then see precisely what the "Statement of Faith" lacks even if declared to be "accepted without reservations."

In the true Body the presence of God is recognised as a very real thing, for the Apostle Paul has said concerning the Body:

"For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." 2 Corinthians 6 : 16.

This statement of the Apostle is a quotation of a precious promise from the Law given to the Ecclesia in the wilderness. This promise meant everything to the brethren and sisters at that time, for without the guidance and provision of God they would have perished in the wilderness. Can it mean any less to the one true Ecclesia of the present time? Surely not. Those who do not understand this promise or only look upon it as academic are without the presence of God. They are deprived of guidance in matters of doctrine and practice, which is required as much now as it was in the days of the Ecclesia in the wilderness. Those groups which have left the Truth merely serve the 'letter', and know not the value of His presence. Let it be carefully noted that being without His presence means death; only with His presence is there the prospect of life.

In the true Ecclesia as questions on doctrine and practice arise, which are not covered by the "Statement of Faith," there will not be a resort to the 'letter,' to debate and strife, but a coming to God in the solemn belief that—

"All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, **believing**, ye shall receive." Matthew 21 : 22.

It is no use asking without **believing**. Such an attitude would deny the promise of God's help.

Consequently the practice which has developed amongst those

falling away from the Truth, that if a question cannot be answered from the "Statement of Faith," it shall remain an 'open question', will not be found in the true Ecclesia. Questions on both doctrines and practice will not be left as a matter for private opinion, but will be determined by knowing the will of God on such matters of doctrine as "divorce," "time of judgment," "responsibility of enlightened rejectors": and on practice, such questions as "munition making," "civil defence," "voting," "worldly pleasure seeking," "the adorning and making up of women members to suit the goddess of fashion," etc. The provision of having these questions and a host of others settled according to the will of God is an incalculable benefit, and a proof of a fulfilment of His promise that His presence shall be with His people.

It is hoped that you will reconsider the futility of serving the deadness of the letter and determine to seek the life-giving Spirit in obedience to the Apostle Paul's command:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6 : 17-18.

The solemn fact emerges from these words that those who do not come out have not the Father.

W.V.B.

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

"I WILL SHAKE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, AND I WILL OVERTHROW THE THRONE OF KINGDOMS, AND I WILL DESTROY THE STRENGTH OF THE KINGDOMS OF THE HEATHEN; AND I WILL OVERTHROW THE CHARIOTS, AND THOSE THAT RIDE IN THEM; AND THE HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS SHALL COME DOWN, EVERY ONE BY THE SWORD OF HIS BROTHER." (Haggai 2 vv. 21-22.)

HAS there ever been such a time of shaking and disunity as at the present time? The trouble in Vietnam focuses the attention on a situation which the word of God has foretold will increase in intensity, until the purpose of God is fulfilled against the nations.

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Vietnam is only one example of man fighting against "his brother."

The history of the last two decades is interesting in the context of a consideration provoked by the scriptural quotation which forms the heading of this article.

It is only a little over 15 years since the war in China between the Communists and the Nationalists came to an end when the People's Republic was established in September, 1949. Nevertheless Chinese disunity continues, for the Nationalists having been driven from the mainland continue the struggle from Formosa, and the enmity between these two factions is indeed no less deadly.

Hardly a year had gone by from the time the Chinese People's Government was established when Korea became the scene of a dreadful conflict with the crossing of the 38th parallel by the North Korean forces. The battle swayed backward and forward over a devastated land as North Koreans with Communist help fought against the South Koreans with American and United Nations help. Three years of massacre were to pass, during which time Korea slew Korean, before there was a truce. To this day the land has not really recovered; its standard of living remains painfully low. Formerly known as ancient Chosun, the Land of Morning Calm, it is now so stricken that it lives only through large contributions from other nations, among whom the main provider is the United States, which has poured over 5,500 million dollars into the country since the conflict. Under the terms of the armistice a line was drawn across the peninsula from a point on the west coast, about twenty miles north of Seoul, in a north easterly direction to the east coast. This remains today as an uncultivated strip ten miles wide between parallel lines of barbed wire. It completely separates the industrial north termed the People's Republic of Korea from the agricultural south, the Republic of Korea, for there is no communication whatsoever across it. Such a division stands as a huge obstacle in the way of the country ever becoming again economically self supporting, and is an example of the tragic consequences that are a result of men's warlike tendencies which reach even to man fighting against "his brother." About the time of the Korean war, suggestions were made by the Great Powers for the re-unification of Germany, no doubt out of fear that a Korean situation might develop in Germany; but there has been no solution found. Indeed the enmity between East and West Germany is probably more pronounced today than ever. The Berlin Wall has become a symbol of the barrier between the factions as well as an actual preventative of contact between the Germans of the East and of the West. The shooting down of Germans by Germans as they attempt to reach the West is another example of man against "his brother." The recent

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dismay with which the West German Government received the news that the Head of State of East Germany had been invited by Egypt to Cairo, which invitation had been accepted, indicates how serious is the cleavage.

The West German Ambassador has made it clear to Egypt that his Government views the matter in a serious light as affecting the relations of their two countries.

To go back again to 1954, it was in that year that France relinquished her rule in Indo-China after seven years of fighting and internal commotion, and the country was partitioned approximately along the 17th parallel. A Communist Government was set up in the North while a right-wing government was established in the south.

Two years later in October, 1956, a full scale revolt broke out in Hungary, a nationalist government was set up which renounced the Communist Warsaw treaty. This was resisted by strong units led by Hungarian Communist Party officials who with considerable Russian help squashed the revolt.

The last few years have seen troubles in Africa, particularly in the Congo with man against "his brother." There has been bloodshed in Cyprus, fighting in Arab countries, shooting in the South American area, attempts upon Cuba by exiled Cubans, and now it is Vietnam.

This divided country which was formerly French Indo-China has been troubled since the partition. For nine years the United States has been pouring money into South Vietnam and has been extending military help in troops and arms to bolster up the régime there. Now the antagonism between the North and South Vietnamese is flaring up more than ever, especially as the Northern Government is receiving Russian assistance. The South Vietnamese forces on the other hand are to be increased by 100,000 men; meanwhile infiltrating forces from the north strike terror into the south as they emerge from the cover of the jungle to make raids upon that territory. There has been retaliatory air-raids by South Vietnamese "Sky raider" fighter-bombers upon military bases in North Vietnam in reply to the threat. Man is again seen fighting against "his brother" in this area. South Vietnamese troops are slaughtered by the guerillas from the north at every opportunity; but when the southern forces strike back they do so with a ruthless fury, torturing the prisoners they capture. Altogether there has been a savage massacre of civilians. Women and children have been murdered, crops and dwellings have been destroyed. These troubles of a divided country

are also overflowing into the adjoining territory of Laos where there is also unrest.

How truly applicable of these times is the prophetic pronouncement through the message of Haggai:—

“I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen (nations); and I will overthrow the chariots and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down,
EVERY ONE BY THE SWORD OF HIS BROTHER.”

These things are only the beginning of what there is yet to be. But when viewed together they do reveal a startling trend of national disunity in different parts of the earth which is a reminder that God according to His prophetic word is well aware of what is happening; and indeed the approach of His final purpose is indicated by such events.

Perusal of other scriptures in context with this consideration afford considerable understanding of how God will work against the nations.

“FOR THOU HAST BROKEN THE YOKE OF HIS BURDEN, AND THE STAFF OF HIS SHOULDER, THE ROD OF HIS OPPRESSOR, AS IN THE DAY OF MIDIAN.” (Isaiah 9. v. 4.)

Biblical history as these articles have so often attempted to show previously, does repeat itself. The above quotation takes the mind backwards as well as forwards. Contemplation is caused to dwell upon the times when the Judges led the nation of Israel before a man was appointed to be king. The “day of Midian” refers to the time when Israel was oppressed by that nation. Its people came as marauders each year to steal and destroy the barley and the grain that was ready for harvest, and they caused the Israelites to flee in terror to caves of the mountains as soon as the first of the Midianite bands appeared. The result was starvation and disruption. It was at this time that God sent Gideon to be a deliverer of the people from the Midianites. But the deliverance as the divine record shows so clearly, was really of God. Instructed by God, Gideon went against the invaders with a small band of three hundred men instead of an original arm of thirty-two thousand. By night they attacked the huge host of the enemy, each carrying a ram’s horn, and each with a torch hidden in an earthen-ware jar so that the rays of the torch could not be seen. While they were running after their leader Gideon, they all blew with the horns and at the appropriate time broke the earthen jars to hold the torches in their left hands. The

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result was confusion in the camp of the enemy. The huge army cried out and fled, and in the panic "every man's sword (was) against his fellow even throughout all the host."

Such an event is to be repeated on a greater scale in the confusion of the latter days. Israel's oppressor of these times is to be broken in the same way. After which God's judgment will be poured forth upon all nations:—

" . . . they (shall) kill one another . . ." (Rev. 6, v. 4.)

In that day, according to the prophecy, Christ, typified by Zerubabel, will be the authority, as the "signet" of God.

"In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts." (Haggai 2, v. 23.)

D.L.

News from the Ecclesias

Eden, New York. Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 12 noon. Sunday School 10.45 a.m. Revelation Study 2.0 p.m. Bible Class: Midweek, Forestville, Hamburg, and Orchard Park.

The Sunday School Quarterly Address is planned to take place, God willing, on March 28th.

The Sunday School Party held as scheduled on February 27th, was a time of benefit and happiness for all. The subject, "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations," was presented by maps, drawings, and slides during the address; and shown also in little tableaux depicting circumstances in early believers' lives, which proved The Father's Faithfulness.

Correspondence concerning doctrine and fellowship continues with a few.

We are grateful, and may all rejoice because of the evident guidance God has granted in His House.

J. A. DeF.

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

We were glad of the company at the Table of the Lord of Brother and Sister D. Lancaster on February 28th when Brother Lancaster gave us the word of exhortation and lectured on the subject of Present-day Confusion.

Enquiries are being made for a room at Derby in preparation for a proposed combined effort.

H.J.S.

Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

We have been pleased to have the company of Brother J. Smith on January 24th for exhortation and counsel.

We have decided to accept the offer of a Poster site on Portmadoc

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station.

The work of witnessing to one from Portmadoc which started in October has continued. We are thankful for these privileges as it has provided for work in the winter. We trust it may continue.

per J.S

Newtownards, Co. Down, N. Ireland.

Opportunities to Witness to the Truth are rare in personal contacts, as is only to be expected; though we are grateful that they are presented while we are diligent, and encouraged when interest is shown. We have attempted an indirect approach through the correspondence column of the local press, our first letter being rejected but the second printed.

We look forward to the visit of Bro. J. Smith next week-end. We are grateful for these regular visits this winter which have been sustaining to us.

J.P.

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.

Applications continue to be received for the copies of the "History of the Truth in the Latter Days" and also for the Appendix thereto. Not a few have written in appreciation of our position, and it is hoped that this may lead to positive acceptance of what is the Truth.

It is hoped that in the month of March it may be possible to hold a Special Lecture in conjunction with the Nottingham Ecclesia who have the matter under consideration.

We have been very pleased to welcome Brother and Sister S. Elston.

Bro. H. J. Smith was with us March 7th and we were grateful for his help.

W.V.B.