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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

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NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“The Truth Shall Make You Free”

AS we read the words of the Lord Jesus, we find much to sustain. In John 8 : 31-32. Jesus said to those who believed on Him:

“ . . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

If we are His disciples—that is, under his loving discipline—if we do continue in His Word, we are blessed by knowing the Truth. We might ask, What is truth? The word comes from two words, meaning **not hidden, or not ignorant**. Truth indeed does reveal that which is hidden, it removes ignorance, and brings to the light. Truth fights and overcomes darkness. Truth, as Jesus tells us, “shall make you free.”

Let us stop and consider for a moment, brethren and sisters, what is involved in the Truth making us free. Free, we find, means **delivered or at liberty**. What did Jesus have in mind as He spoke these words to those who believed on Him—indeed, as He speaks them today to us? How can the Truth make us free? His own words help:

“ . . . Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin ”
(verse 34).

If we sin and who of us does not, we are servants of sin, bondmen and bondwomen; we are not free—not at liberty—but are subject to the law of sin and death, for Jesus has told us “the wages of sin is death.” Our cause would seem hopeless except for Jesus’ promise: “the Truth shall make you free.”

How great is this blessing? If through Truth we can overcome sin, we are then no longer the servants of sin; but servants of God, made free by truth. Do we appreciate fully this deliverance? Even now we know a measure of freedom from the sorrow, pain and trouble which comes with being servants of sin, and have the hope of eternal freedom from that law when Christ returns. This great nation (USA) is called the “land of freedom.” But of all people in the whole country, there are so few who are truly free—made free by seeking Truth!

“We are Abraham’s Seed”

As Jesus spoke these things to the Jews, they answered,

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“ We be Abraham’s seed and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? ” (John 8 : 33).

These Jews lacked in perception, lacked in understanding of what Jesus was teaching. Their answer shows the grave danger there is in having the name, but not the **power** of the Truth! These were the natural children of Abraham—were Abraham’s seed. Yet, they did not know the Truth—which could make them free.

Paul tells us in Romans 9 : 6-7,

“ . . . For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

How great, then, the danger (and the Truth warns us) of having the name ISRAEL, but not the power of the Truth. Only those who are truly Israel of the Spirit can know the Truth, and so only they can be made free by the Truth. As Paul said, “ In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” This takes our mind back to Abraham’s time and to his experiences under the Hand of God. In Genesis 21 : 12, we read of God’s words to him as he grieved over Ishmael and the bondwoman.

“ Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman: . . . for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

Isaac was the child of promise. Isaac was the child born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. Isaac was the one to whom the promises were given. Isaac was the son of the freewoman—not the son of the bondwoman.

Paul helps us in this thinking in Galatians 4—

“ . . . he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise ” (verse 23).

By the word of God—by the marvellous circumstances of his birth, born of the Spirit. This, being an allegory, is for our help—help to be the children of the freewoman, not the children of bondage. Paul tells us further,

“ . . . Jerusalem which is above is **free**, which is the mother of us all ” (verse 26).

If we are of Jerusalem which is above—if we are of the Truth—if we are of Zion, we are FREE, and are as Paul tells us,

“ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise ” (verse 28).

Do we fully comprehend the blessing—to be of the seed of Abraham,

the children of promise, and heirs to the promises made to Abraham, of Jerusalem that is above, of The Zion of God? The TRUTH has done all this! It has made us free, brethren and sisters—FREE from the snares of this life which lead only to the grave. The blessing is almost beyond our comprehension!

“Be not Entangled Again”

Do we appreciate fully this blessing, rejoicing in its provision? If we do, it should work in us, helping us to be more pleasing to the One who makes us free. Paul helps here as well.

“Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** wherewith Christ hath made **us free**, and be not **entangled again** with the yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5 : 1).

What is the “yoke of bondage?” It is to be the servants of sin, or to revert to it. How easily we can become entangled again in that yoke! It removes the freedom which Truth provides. It is so easy to be ensnared in that yoke, and thus become servants no longer of God, of Truth—but of the adversary who lies in wait for every one of us, seeking to deprive us of the freedom which is of the Truth.

In this connection, Paul’s exhortation to his brethren in Romans, chapter 6 : 16-18 helps us.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye **were** the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed **from the heart** that form of doctrine (the truth) which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

Being made free from sin! Is this, brethren and sisters, what the Truth does for us? Is this what Jesus meant when He said, “The truth shall make you free?” Paul further tells us:

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (verse 23).

If we are the servants of sin, our due is death; the recompense of sin to its servants can only be death; but the GIFT of God is eternal life. It is given only to those who are of the Truth—and they are made free from death through the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus. How very great is this blessing, for He alone can deliver, as Paul tells us,

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8 : 2).

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Yet with this freedom, as with all freedom, comes grave responsibility. Peter warns us,

“As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (I Peter 2 : 16).

A cloak involves a covering, a pretext, so that such a cloak would be using our freedom as a covering for maliciousness, for the leaven of malice and wickedness which is inherent in all flesh, unrestrained by Truth. Our freedom must never be a covering for the flesh, for such is hypocrisy, and makes us servants of sin again—despised and condemned by God, and bound to death.

How can we then continue free, for we all fail—we all sin? James can help us in finding the solution.

“Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and **continueth** therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1 : 25).

We are to behold our faces in a glass to see what we are like. We behold ourselves in the Word of Jesus—the Truth; we look at ourselves with the eyes of Jesus, with the eyes of Truth, and we see truly what we are like—so lacking, so much in need of help, of strength, of Truth. When we perceive this, there are two things we can do. One, James shows us:

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was”

(James. 1 : 23-24).

This is the easy way; but it is the way which leads to death! The second thing we can do when we see what manner of man we are, is to be so moved by what we see, by the Truth, that we change our ways, striving to conform more closely to the law of God, “the perfect law of liberty,” striving to continue therein, conforming to the image of Jesus whom we see in that law. Yes, we must study this mirror which reveals our true selves so clearly, so unflatteringly to the flesh.

Do not these things help us to understand more fully the words of Jesus which we have read this morning,

“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

His Word is Truth. It is the mirror which reveals us as we are; there is nothing hidden — we are not left in ignorance. IT IS

TRUTH! What we see in the mirror sometimes hurts our pride, our flesh. What we see of ourselves in the Truth, in the perfect law of liberty, hurts. It is so very clear and so condemning of the flesh. But, brethren and sisters, as we are exposed in that law of liberty, in the Truth, for what we are, the opportunity is given to change! Let us look closely, let us perceive what is required, and let us change! Let each of us be a "doer of the word."

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE"

As we begin to comprehend more fully, how great is our need for Truth; if we are to hope for deliverance, to be free, we will grow in appreciation of God's blessing and gift to us. In John 1 : 14, we read:

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth."

If He had not dwelt among us, being like us, truth would not have been revealed; there would be no means of escape from the law of sin and death, and we would be bondmen and bondwomen. But God is merciful, gracious in giving His Son, as we read further in John,

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1 : 16-17).

Without grace—without truth, there would be no hope of liberty, as Jesus tells us in John 14 : 6,

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Considering all these things, brethren and sisters, let us strive for that liberty which is in Christ Jesus. Let us work for that freedom from the law of sin and death, which is only possible through His victory, and which is given to us through the grace of God in His Truth.

Do we not feel we can strive harder? Can we more heartily be His disciples? Can we more joyfully and willingly place ourselves in His delivering Hands? Let us take hold of His marvellous blessing and rejoice in its promise, "**The truth shall make you free.**"

J.A.DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

“ If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant then ye shall be a peculiar treasure **unto me above all people.**” Exodus 19 : 5.

THESSE words were spoken by Yahweh at Sinai. They were to be the basis for the most miraculous preservation of a people that the world has ever seen. Israel had just escaped from the great and diabolical power of Egypt. Now just fifty days after the Pass-over they were to be united to their God in a simple and blessed covenant. Fifty days! Bringing us to the day when the Feast of the Firstfruits would be held when the Law was given and later to the day of Pentecost. This connection could not be accidental. It was to show to Israel that the covenant at Sinai promised not only present salvation but eternal deliverance for those who had faith in the “ Firstfruits.” It is interesting to know that Jews today acknowledge that the giving of the Law at Sinai was at the time later signified by God for the keeping of the Feast of the Firstfruits.

“ A Peculiar Treasure.”

When the greatness and glorious majesty of the Almighty is considered, the condescension shown in separating for Himself a people from the nations is at once revealing and will touch deeply any responsive heart. To look at the heavens and there to see His glory; and to descry the firmament and be able in a measure to regard His “ handiwork,” cannot fail to impress the mind with His exceeding majesty. To know that the Maker and upholder of these things is prepared to make a covenant with mortals, rejoices the heart. With the Eternal there is strength; with mortals only weakness. Our thoughts in this contemplation may be given expression by the sweet psalmist of Israel:

“ Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O lord, my strength, and my redeemer.” Psalm 19 : 14.

To be the “ treasure” of one loved is of special value to the human heart. What should it mean to be a “ peculiar treasure” of the great God of heaven? As the vast difference between the eternal God and mortal flesh is considered, such a close relationship seems beyond the bounds of possibility. Nevertheless God did say to Israel at Sinai that if they would be faithful to His covenant then they would be to Him a “ peculiar treasure.”

The Hebrew word translated "treasure" is significant. It has a hidden meaning of a people being "enclosed," and separated from all others. It is a wonderful contemplation that a mortal people, if obedient, can become a "treasure" of the Almighty. Treasure is not scattered about, but is kept safe and secure, separate from the curious and vulgar. This is the meaning of the word, and the blessed provision accorded to Israel at Sinai.

By the covenant, Israel were permitted to look beyond the present life. They were shown that the blessing given to them not only provided for the life that now is, but also for a future life, if faithful. To Israel was granted the rejoicing in the knowledge of the Truth concerning the "special treasure" concealed in God's Word:

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Malachi 3 : 17.

"My jewels," or as will be seen by reference to the margin "my special treasure." How gracious is the Almighty that not only did He regard Israel as His own at Sinai, but looked upon those who would keep the covenant as His "jewels" or "special treasure" for ever. In dealing with them, and helping them, the words of the Prophet show that God will not treat them as a master, but would be to them a true Father. "Sparing" them and bearing with them in all their trials and difficulties.

Complete Separation from other Nations necessary for the blessings of the Covenant to be enjoyed.

It was no accident that when Israel were brought to meet their God and to be joined to Him in the gracious covenant which promised so much, that not only were they called out of Egypt but were taken to a place where contact with other nations was impossible. The foresight of God in this arrangement reveals superb wisdom, and affords a lesson for God's people of all ages. The leaders of Christendom could never see the need for such absolute separation. Being of the world, they are in the world, and rejoice in being part of the world. Christendom is astray. Do the 'others'—those who once had the Truth—appreciate the lesson in the divine care of seeing that the nation of Israel were not allowed any contact with other nations? As some of their leaders are joined to Christendom in what they describe as a struggle "to snatch from disaster a generation which is on the brink of it, and to present God to men and women who refuse to know Him," it is at once evident that God's care of His people, Israel, in separating them from other nations is looked upon in effect as both unnecessary and useless.

The thoughtful, and the one anxious to please God, will pay no regard to the worldlings of today posing as brethren of Christ. They will realise, as Israel were taught, that the purpose of God with His people requires as a first consideration that they be separate from all other people or nations. This unique and blessed provision is referred to many times in the Law, as for example—

“Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.”

Deuteronomy 14 : 2.

As we come to consider the position of God's people today, the first thought to be borne in mind is that God is unchangeable. The principles of the Truth have never altered from the beginning; only the ordinances which have given expression to those principles in different ages. When we come to our day, could we expect that the principle of separation that God requires of His people should be waived? That they might fraternise with the world and regard the doctrine of separation as a spineless affair — allowing for mixing with the world providing there was some kind of rejection of the world's grosser indulgences. This important consideration brings us to—

The Doctrine of Separation now.

As already noted, Christendom has no idea of the importance of being separate from the world. Yet they would pay lip service to the divine injunction:

“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Ephesians 5 : 11.

Such a precept in Christendom is interpreted in a widely varying way. Generally this results in men becoming immersed in “filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting,” much to the embarrassment of those in the Truth who may have to work with such people.

While the ‘others’ would not indulge in such works of darkness they believe that it is quite in order to have fellowship with those of the world, and any reproof of the works of darkness is left to what is called the individual's conscience. There is only one result to such a course as God knew in the case of His people Israel of old, and as He makes clear now. Because it is so much easier to please our flesh than the Spirit, friendship with those in the world is found satisfying to the flesh and will quickly quench the Spirit. A frank look at some experiences as a result of associations in the past will at once prove that this is abundantly true.

To emphasise that separation in a literal sense is imperative, the

Apostle James says:

“ Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4 : 4.

Could words be more plain? We know that philosophy can turn these to suit the taste of those desiring to please the flesh, and say they mean friendship with the evil of the world. Philosophy can do anything to make the words of divine writ suit the flesh. “ Beware,” says the Apostle Paul, “ lest any man spoil you through philosophy.” Yes, and he adds, “ after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

Those of us who have relatives in the world, parents, brothers and sisters may find it hard at first to receive this divine instruction, but we shall only circumvent it at our peril.

There is a duty to some in the world, such as to parents who may be in need of some care, but did not Jesus say in order to emphasise the importance of separation in all this?—

“ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14 : 26.

To the uninstructed in the Spirit of the Truth these words may seem hard. They are, however, the words of Jesus for the guidance of those who would be His disciples. Many have fallen in the Truth in time past by allowing a place in their hearts for relations who are of the world and will not have God.

In Israel of old, separation meant keeping apart from other nations; having no friendship with them nor making any covenant in marriage with the alien. Now the same teaching is carried forward to show that we, because of the weakness of our nature, need the same care. There must be separation from those in the world, including our relatives, lest they turn our hearts from the living God.

‘ Is Christ Divided? ’

It is elementary that Christ cannot be divided, and where there is division either one or both of the parties are wrong and consequently without Christ.

In the current issue of the “ Testimony ” appears an Article with the above heading, the contents of which show a complete failure to appreciate the divine necessity of separating from evil—that is, from evildoers who propagate false doctrine whether they be many or few. Separation is talked of, but in such a way as to give it little definition or meaning. The suggestion is made of a vague kind of separation

from wrong-doers which has a smack of righteousness but without any power; that "Ecclesias" known to have offenders should not be visited or their platform supported. Nor should any of their false teachers be allowed to make a reciprocal visit. However, the confession has to be made that there is at present an "impasse in the ecclesial world." This is not surprising when the need for separation from those who are guilty of false doctrine, even if many, is disregarded. The Truth requires righteous action. Talking of separation without doing anything is only "beating the air."

It is quite obvious that the "impasse" will never be cured, for the writer of the Article says, "no mass division is required or is scripturally justified." Why not? Was the "mass division" in 1864 from the Dowieites by Robert Roberts justified? Was the "mass division" from those who denied the nature of Christ following Edward Turney in 1873 in order? Was the "mass division" from those who undermined the inspiration of the Bible in 1885 in accordance with divine requirements? Let the writer of the Article face these questions or acknowledge that the pioneers he claims to follow, namely, Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts, were unjustified and unscriptural in what he calls "mass divisions."

Further, what would have happened if these faithful pioneers had not carried out "mass divisions?" The Truth, which was rediscovered under the hand of God by Dr. Thomas, would quickly have been lost. Soon the Body would have been corrupted by all the fables of Christendom from which those in the Truth had so recently been delivered. From the Dowieites they would have inherited the heresies of the immortal soul and the personal devil. Edward Turney would have given to the Body the undermining error that Christ could not sin; thus completely destroying the teaching of God in the death of Christ. Those who assailed the inspiration of the Bible in 1885 would have split the rock upon which the Truth is based and consequently the House of God would have quickly fallen. Through the failure to appreciate the righteousness of what may be called "mass divisions" in the past, the present Body of the 'others' has allowed these errors to infiltrate into their midst and thus rob them of the Truth.

The disease in the Body of the 'others' cannot be cured. It is beyond remedy. In the "Final Statement" which was the legal instrument in bringing about the reunion of Central and Suffolk Street it is said that:

"Baptism into the saving name of Jesus, as commonly understood by us, creates relationship between the Father, the Son and the individual believer, which is indissoluble save by the final declaration of God through Jesus."

This is heresy. To suggest that a man may deny the faith and yet have a relationship with God and His Son is dreadful, and until this idea is repudiated those denying the faith of which there are so many at the present time amongst the 'others' will ensure there is no separation in the divine sense, and be responsible for friendship with the world and being united to the sects of Christendom. To talk of separation while in works completely denying its application as required by the Almighty has nothing more than the appearance of righteousness of a parson who condemns evil without condemning anybody. Such betrayal of the Truth has obviously resulted in the loss by the 'others' of the "pearl of great price."

The Titles of the Psalms

"Speaking unto yourselves in Psalms . . . making melody in your heart unto the Lord." Ephesians 5 : 19.

THE beauty and purpose of the Psalms can only be fully understood by those who have the Spirit of the Truth. The key to many of the Psalms is to be found in the Titles which appear in small print commencing with Psalm 4. These Titles are part of the sacred text, and are intended to open the mind not only to the purpose, but also to the Spirit in the Psalms.

These Titles must not be confused with the summaries which some Bibles contain of the contents of each chapter. The "Master's Household" Magazine for June, 1964, makes a very misleading statement in this connection, as follows:

"Leaving the brief commentaries at the head of each Psalm, consideration is to centre on the words of inspiration."

The reader, who rejoices in the Spirit of the Truth, will be careful to note the Titles of the Psalms are also "words of inspiration," without which the complete message of the Psalms could not be understood. The Psalms are the Spirit of Christ. If this is received a wondrous change in the heart and mind will be effected. The proud and base qualities of the flesh are made to disappear, bringing forth a character like unto—

"The sweet Psalmist of Israel." 2 Samuel 23 : 1.

The word "sweet" scarcely leads the mind to the end seen in the characters of David and the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no idea in this word of a sickly sentimentality, but on the contrary the "glory and beauty of holiness" which is divine. A careful look

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at the original word for "Psalm" (Mizmor) will direct the mind to the meaning and purpose of the Psalms.

The word "Psalm" means a song, but there is implied in the original, a song which has been "pruned"; like a tree, so that all that is superfluous and unfruitful has been removed and only the perfection of beauty remains.

How different from the songs of the world whose luxuriant growth reeks of fleshly tendencies, and are mainly written to titillate the "lusts of the flesh." The rhythm, the beat and the words of these songs are debasing. Inspired by the music of the jungle their purpose seems no higher than to make mortals suitable denizens of such a place. Even the titles, which some of the stars choose to be known by, show they are nearer to the insects of the earth than to anything which is heavenly. It is delightful to turn from these depraved things, which have captivated an evil world, and consider what is meant by the "sweet song or Psalm."

The beautiful and delightful meaning of the word will appear if some of the instances of how it is used by the Spirit is considered.

Speaking of the effectual power of the Spirit to unite those who are mortal, yet brethren, David says:

"Behold, how good and how **pleasant** it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Psalm 133 : 1.

In the original, the word "pleasant" is the same as "sweet." This conveys the idea of power as well as delight. There is no other power upon earth which can unite mortals in such perfect unity; a unity which in the view of the Spirit is "sweet," and promises an everlasting unity when Jesus returns from the right hand of His Father. Here is the repository of all sweetness or "pleasures." David says concerning Jesus:

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are **pleasures** for ever more." Psalm 16 : 10-11.

Such sweetness or "pleasures" (same word in the original) are the delightful qualities of the Spirit. They are likened unto the fragrant ointment placed upon the high priest; whose fragrance takes the mind to the perfect and unsurpassable sweetness of Him who is the "altogether lovely and the chiefest amongst ten thousand."

The Psalms are given like the rest of the Spirit Word of God to make a people like Christ; "sweet" in the divine sense. By suffering they will learn obedience like He did; their hearts and minds will

become vessels of the fragrant Spirit. Nearer and nearer will they become like David, like Jesus; until when the day the Lord returns He will look upon His redeemed, and say to them:

“Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, **pleasant**” (same word in the original). Song of Solomon 1 : 16.

Can words be found to express the delightful purpose of the Truth that some mortals may be so refined and polished as to become worthy in the mercy of God of such ineffable virtue! A consideration of the Psalms especially with the key supplied by the Titles, will touch responsive hearts and help lead them to such a delightful result.

“To the chief (musician).”

“To the victor—a Psalm of David.”

No less than fifty-five Psalms include in the Title the word “musician,” which is not in the original text. The original word is “natsach” meaning “chief,” or “pre-eminent” in the sense of having overcome. The translators of the Bible have been baffled by this Hebrew word. Their minds were evidently pre-occupied with the idea that the Psalms were only pieces of music as so often “chanted” in the Churches today, obviously without giving any understanding or enlightenment.

When Dr. J. M. Allegro (Hebrew Scholar of Dead Sea Scroll fame) was asked the meaning of this word all he could say was that it was a very difficult one. It should be remembered that the Bible has not been written for scholars. Jesus said its purpose would only be revealed to those who were “babes,” and not to the “wise and prudent.” It is comforting and a reassuring proof that this is so when those who are comparatively ignorant are able to decipher the meaning of the enigmatical words of the Spirit such as those translated in the Authorised Version “to the chief musician.”

The word reveals the divine purpose in the Psalms. “To the one that is over” or overcomes. “To the victor,” in the sense that Jesus meant in concluding His letters to the Ecclesias in the Revelation by saying, “to him that overcometh,” seven times repeated.

As we go through the Psalms the meaning of these words will supply to the discerning reader an acute vision of the purpose of the Psalms leading him away from all the debate and darkness of apostasy, and if he will allow the Spirit to work in him bringing him to that company who are the One Body now, fragrant with unity, and with the promise of an eternal blessing.

(To be continued . . .)

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

“ IN THAT DAY THE LORD WITH HIS SORE AND GREAT AND STRONG SWORD SHALL PUNISH LEVIATHAN THE PIERCING SERPENT, EVEN LEVIATHAN THAT CROOKED SERPENT; AND HE SHALL SLAY THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA.” (Isaiah 27, v. 1.)

THE above words take the mind to the day of deliverance for the people of God, the time of resurrection and reward.

“ Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust . . . the earth shall cast out the dead . . . Come, my people . . . hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” (Isaiah 26, vv. 19-20.)

That day will see the revealing of the Yahweh of Israel, to punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity. The dragon will be slain. Hence the joyful exhortation:

“ In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” (Is. 27, vv. 2-3.)

“ In measure, when it shooteth forth (natural Israel) thou wilt debate with it ” (verse 8). But God remembering the promise to the fathers will not allow overwhelming chastisement “ He stayeth His rough wind **IN THE DAYS OF THE EAST WIND** ” (verse 8).

The expressions of this prophecy are powerful and eloquent. The withering blast from the east, hot and turbulent that would spoil the vineyard for ever and its tender fruit, will be caused to cease in its punishing devastating work. The iniquity of Jacob (natural Israel) having been purged (verse 9) through suffering the afflicting incursions of the enemy from the east and north; the Jews will “ worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem ” (verse 13).

THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA.

Dragonic power would not, could not exist, but for the support of multitudes of people. Because such people belong to the serpent they praise the evil powers that control them. They do not perceive how crooked are the ways of those whom they have set upon a pedestal; and at times they are prepared as pawns to fight and suffer, and cause suffering, to further causes they do not under-

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stand and prosper the ambitious purposes of those who deceive them. This is the lesson from the far east at the present time. The Chinese dragon is in the throes of revolutionary unrest because its leaders are competing with each other for power. Blood has been shed in scores of cities from one end of that vast country to the other. Even in Lhasa in remote Tibet there has been trouble. Suicides have been reported among the leaders of the group or groups that are opposed to the renowned chairman of the Chinese Communist Party; but still the opposition, the confusion, and anarchy remains. The leader, striving for power to continue at the helm of state has cultivated the youth of China to come to his aid. From among the 375 million Chinese under the age of 20 the Red Guard organisation has been born, numbering 22 million teenagers, who have been set loose in gangs of a score or more individuals to attack anything that savours of China's past. They have torn down signs from shops that have been charged with having "bourgeois" appearance. Names of streets and departmental stores have been altered. Even girls who have been thought to have a hair style unbecoming to the "New China" have had their heads unmercifully trimmed; and those who would have made attempts to stop such actions have been violently assaulted.

As was to be expected, the enraged populace began to fight back. Workers have resisted the infiltration of the Red Guards into factories and mines; and infuriated provincial citizenry have organised themselves into "Peasant Red Guard" units, to engage in large scale fighting with the young Red Guards sent from Peking.

The Soviet leader is reported to have commented that the Chinese situation is "reaching a point where everything is possible." As a result the Russians have strengthened their positions along the 3,500 mile Sino-Soviet border.

There is considerable significance in this turn of events. China which appeared as a growing threat to the west and an embarrassment to Russia, has not only lost prestige but also has been weakened in its purposes by its own discord. Such news might divert world attention to China, but as a result the thought is also provoked that it is necessary to remember at such a time as this that Russia, now for the present not so prominent in Western headlines, is still the greatest threat in the east.

China, it has recently been stated, is expected shortly to commence deploying medium-range missiles with nuclear warheads in preparation for the development of inter-continental missiles by the early 1970's. But the American Defence Secretary does not appear to be very alarmed; he had previously asserted that no decision need be taken for a year or two to begin the development of even

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a modest anti-missile system against a possible Chinese attack; and even when the latest intelligence suggests that China is three or four years ahead in development of missiles than formerly estimated, Russia is obviously the more dangerous power in the east. The Soviet Union in fact, is the only nation which has the means of destroying most of the United States in the foreseeable future.

The world has been lulled into thinking that because the Chinese condemn the new Soviet leaders for what is termed "Revisionism," and because Russia talks about peaceful co-existence, the Russian threat has receded. But what appears to be moderation on the surface covers much that is in fact a working to extend communist influence. The new Soviet leaders have placed some 50 surface-to-air missile sites in North Vietnam operated with the help of Russian technicians for the purpose of shooting down American planes. That country's industries and its military organisation is also very largely fed by Soviet oil.

In Cuba it is reported that Russia is even more influential, increasing military, technical and financial aid. A Soviet-Cuban revolutionary organisation is in operation in Havana to direct subversive actions in Latin America.

Politically also, either by diplomatic success or through the turn of events, Russia is in a better position in Europe. The indication is that France wants to come to terms with Russia independently, which is a blow to the N.A.T.O. alliance: and the question arises, will Germany be lured away as a result?

From the Middle East also comes significant information. For 300 years Russia and Turkey have been at enmity. They have been involved in more than a dozen wars with each other during that long period of unfriendliness. Now there is a great change. A short time ago the Soviet Premier flew to Ankara, the first Soviet Premier to pay such a state visit. The Russian and Turkish leaders had much to discuss, mainly about trading and financial aid to Turkey. The Soviet Union has agreed to underwrite seven Turkish industrial projects with low interest loans, which can be paid back with agricultural products, an agreement that would doubtlessly have been unacceptable to the United States in the same negotiating circumstance. This is a step in removing Turkey from its previous economic dependence on the West. Significant also is the news that reaction has set in among a segment of the Turkish population to the continuing presence of American troops on their soil. An intellectual spokesman in Ankara has been reported to have said "If we and Russia were more friendly to each other we would both feel safer. And if that means shipping some American servicemen out of Turkey, so much the better because they create frictions." Even

on the question of Cyprus, Russia has come to terms with the Turks. The Soviet leader has openly criticised the Czechoslovakian member of his own block for selling arms to the Cypriot Greek Community. He now stands with Turkey, and with the Turkish Cypriot minority in the disputations over that troubled isle, whereas the United States has refused to take sides.

Yes, Russia is the dragon. It is extending its influence. A vast sea of mankind supports it. It may have had a setback in its relationship with China, but who knows whether the unrest in the Far East will end with a complete return of China to the fold?

True, there has been the signing recently of a treaty between the United States, Russia and Britain, the first major East-West agreement since 1963. This agreement pledges that the three powers will ban nuclear weapons from outer space. There is optimism that the treaty may be followed in a few months by another one, to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons on earth. But the question is asked, can a dragon change and become a lamb?

The time of "the east wind" will surely come. Gog, with Gomer (the Cimmerians or Cappadocians, Turkey) with "all his bands" will invade the land of Israel. But the dragon will be cast out, for "Michael" will "stand up" against him.

" . . . He sayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind."

D.L.



Correspondence

In a letter received from R. Storer, Nottingham, is the following:

“I am not proposing to reply to your complete failure to understand the Creation. I will however ask you a few questions which may reveal something to you. There are about twelve differences between the Adam of Gen. 1 and the Adam of Gen. 2 of these will you explain one of them.

Adam of Gen. 1 has unrestricted scope and direct command to subdue the earth.

Adam of Gen. 2 is enclosed in a garden and put under obedience for an unspecified role.

How can these be the same Adam?”

REPLY

If there were two Adams, which one sinned and died? And what happened to the other? Is he still alive?

Once the “straight and narrow path” of Truth is left, confusion of this kind is encountered, wherein the Spirit of Truth can no longer be discerned or heard.

Such serpentine undermining of the Word must meet with God’s strong condemnation. What of the ‘others’ who are “fellows” of such evil? How can they escape? Their minds should be alerted to the grave peril of their position.

“For if the word spoken by angels was **steadfast**, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

How shall they (we) escape, if they (we) neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2 : 2-3.

W.V.B.

News from the Ecclesias

Eden, New York. Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Sunday School 1.30 p.m. Bible Class: Midweek, Forestville, Hamburg, and Orchard Park. Alternate weeks: Revelation Study.

Our hearts are united in the work with some who are seeking Truth and deliverance from oppression.

God willing, we shall be in spirit with all privileged to attend the first Gathering of 1967.

Providential are these feasts! We are grateful that the Father made them a Law under Moses; and wise are we if we perceive the benefits and the promise in these assemblies, and grasp their blessings and happiness. How trivial do the daily encumbrances seem as we look ahead in faith—so let us press on in the unity and **only** security known to men.

J.A.DeF.

Newtownards, Co. Down, N. Ireland.

Breaking of Bread, Sunday, 11.30 a.m. Sunday School 2.30 p.m. Bible Class, Wednesday.

We posted approximately 70 copies of circulars to Christadelphians; from the few replies it would appear that to most, the warning falls on deaf ears. How terrible will be the full realisation of the neglect to heed, by those who have knowledge, when Christ returns.

With gladness we have received the news of those drawn out to the One Body within the past few weeks—Bro. and Sister Wood; and of the baptism of their daughter Ruth. We look forward to meeting them, all being well, at the first fraternal in Manchester.

Bro. Smith's visit to us was most welcome and beneficial. We thank him for making the journey, for counsel, and his help on Sunday morning.

J.P.

Manchester. Memorial Hall, M.A.P.S. Building, Albert Square, Manchester.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Lecture 3.30 p.m. Saturday Bible Class 3.45 p.m. For dates please refer to plan. Thursday, 7.15 p.m., Onward Hall, Deansgate.

The "long-suffering of our Lord is truly salvation" allowing a few more to be called by Him in these fast ebbing days of Gentiles' times.

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With gratitude to our Father, we have seen the return of R. Wood and his wife Olive, of Dudley. Carried away by the Nicolaitanism in 1954, they have been permitted to learn by a dreadful experience how hateful is this doctrine to the Lord Jesus, even as it is to every right-minded child of God. After satisfactory interviews they were given the right hand of fellowship on Sunday, February 12th. May their re-uniting to Him and to ourselves be a strengthening to us all, for the glory of His name.

On Saturday, February 11th, Ruth Mavis Wood, daughter of Brother and Sister R. Wood, was baptised into the death of Christ after a good confession before witnesses.

All rejoice in this God-given increase, and pray that we may be worthy of such blessing, that in the near future our new brother and sisters together with ourselves may inherit the blessing—even life for ever more.

W.V.B.

