

JUNE 1968

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

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 TITLES OF THE PSALMS

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

CORRESPONDENCE

AN APPEAL

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

All Communications

W. V. Butterfield
16 Westfield Road,
Cheadle Hulme
Stockport, England

J. A. DeFries
R.D.1.
Forestville
New York, U.S.A.

At the Table of the Lord

“ Lord, Teach us to Pray ”

IN the daily portions, we are reading how Jesus instructed His disciples. He taught them of the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ as the only means of entrance into that Kingdom. It was the Gospel, which has been taught from the beginning of God's creation, and is the provision of a merciful and all-wise Father for His children. It is the means for salvation, for only through His Word is there hope of eternal life.

How important for us is this instruction of the Lord Jesus, for it points out so clearly the way our Father would have us go, as well as it did for His disciples of so long ago. In the portion read this morning, His instruction is concerning prayer. We might ask—What is prayer? It is the privilege granted which permits communication with God, our Father in heaven. It can be thanksgiving or praise, or supplication—all offered up through the Lord Jesus as His appointed Mediator and High Priest.

Brethren and sisters, do we ever stop to consider how great is the privilege granted in prayer—that we should be permitted to have our prayers heard by the Almighty God, through Jesus? How few there are in the hundreds of millions in the earth today whom He does hear—who can pray to Him with the hope that He will incline an ear! Do we value it as we should—or because we pray often, creating the danger that it becomes commonplace to us—do we fail to appreciate fully the great blessing—the privilege?

Let us, then, look to Jesus' instruction to help in our desire to pray in a way which He will hear, in a way pleasing to Him. In Matthew 6:5-6 His help is clear:

“ When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

Those who are hypocrites, who are playing a part, not moving from the heart, desire to be seen of men—to be esteemed as godly in men's eyes. What does this avail? It simply reveals that there is no perception, no appreciation of the privilege of prayer; but

merely desire to make a good impression upon those standing by, watching. As the Lord Jesus so clearly expressed it: ‘They have their reward’. They are seen of men, and may give a good impression to them.

“ . . . Pray . . . in secret . . . ”

This was Jesus’ instruction to His followers—to us today. When we follow this instruction, does it not show that there is a realisation of the One to whom we are praying—to the God of heaven, who sees all, knows all, hears all? There is no need to pray openly, for He hears even when prayer is made in secret—in a closet. When prayer is made secretly, alone, figuratively in a closet, distractions are eliminated, we can give our mind and our heart to the desire to communicate with God, to come close to God through the office of Jesus. What assurance we have in Jesus’ words!

“Thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”

Prayers are heard, blessings are granted, help is given, deliverance is experienced—all through the power of prayer. Jesus knew this power of prayer, for He often prayed, and was rewarded openly, was strengthened, and enabled to overcome.

“ . . . Use not vain repetition . . . ”

Jesus further instructs for our help—

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

When we think of “much speaking” we are reminded of the experiences of Elijah with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, who sought to prove Baal was God by causing fire to come down and consume their sacrifice. Elijah said:

“The God that answereth by fire, let him be God . . .”

(I Kings 18 : 24)

The record in verse 26 is:

“They took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal **from morning even until noon**, saying, O Baal, hear us.”

And verse 29:

“ . . . it came to pass . . . they prophesied until the time of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.”

Here were “vain repetitions”, “much speaking”, but to no avail; no answer; for there was no Baal. Only God, who answered

Elijah's simple prayer. It is only God who can, who will answer prayer. "Vain repetitions". "much speaking" only show a failure to perceive that He can, He does hear. He is our Father; He will not fail to hear those whose prayers are presented by the Lord Jesus; whose prayers are from the heart, with a perception of God's hearing ear.

As The Father, He does provide in love for the good of His children. As His children, let us show by our prayer that we are striving to recognise the privilege of being His, that we look to Him as our Father for strength, in time of trial, for protection, for His care, for correction such as a loving Father provides for His children. The Lord Jesus did turn to His Father in prayer, in time of need, and was greatly helped in agonizing to conquer His flesh.

In Matthew 26 : 39, we read :

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

A simple prayer, not "much speaking", but a heart poured out in a time of agonizing. Verse 44 tells us :

"And he left them, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."

"Saying the same words"—would this be "vain repetition" ? NO! It was a cry for help, desperately needed, to the only One who could help, and who did help, for Jesus said, "Rise, let us be going; behold he is at hand that doth betray me". And went out to face the death required of Him, to prove His faithfulness and obedience to God. He got the victory over His flesh, which cried out so strongly in protest. By prayer, Jesus was able to overcome. We can, as well; if we pray in the spirit of Christ, in the way He instructs us so fully.

"Lord, teach us to pray"

We remember the circumstances recorded in Luke 11 : 1—where one of the disciples came to Jesus as He was praying, and said, ". . . Lord, teach us to pray . . ." There must have been something in the way that Jesus prayed which impressed this disciple, and moved him to ask for instruction regarding prayer.

Surely, being a follower of Jesus, he must have prayed! But he may have realised his need for help to be able to pray in a better way. In response to this request, Jesus taught :

". . . When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name . . ." (verse 2)

A prayer known as “The Lord’s Prayer”—used by many millions of “Christians” today ; but they are not heard. Why are they not heard, when these words are in exact accordance with Jesus’ teaching? It is because this prayer has become in their mouths “vain repetition”, for the prayer is not from the heart, but is a repetition of a form, so much so that the words are repeated without discernment. “Thy kingdom come”—Is there a real understanding among the 1300 Christian sects of what is involved in His kingdom coming? Most have no idea of what the words mean, and if they did, would not want it to come! Here is an outstanding example of those who pray without discernment, who pray before men, who seek to be heard by their “much speaking”. It is a grave warning to us, brethren and sisters, lest prayer become automatic, by rote, rather than from the heart; and surely, not the expression of a heart filled with gratitude that prayer is heard and answered!

Jesus further helps :

“Be not ye therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” (Matthew 6 : 8)

He **does** know ; for He knows all things, sees into every heart ; yet He **wants** us to ask, to pray unto Him. When it is done faithfully, discerningly, and in secret, Paul tells us :

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.” (Romans 8 : 26-27)

What a comfort ! What a privilege to know that there is One, Jesus, who can and does make intercession for us according to God’s will ; a will which He knows so well, for He alone perfectly obeyed that will during all His lifetime. He is at God’s right hand, by virtue of having perfectly served His Father. His office as High Priest is to convey prayer to God, with groanings. What does this mean, brethren and sisters? Does it tell us of His care and perception of our great needs, and of our lack? He receives our prayers ; His spirit reaches out to us at times, and fills the great gap between our weak efforts and the Almighty God, our Father.

Indeed we are greatly blessed, brethren and sisters. Do we realize the magnitude of that blessing? Do we value it and acknowledge it? If we can do so, we may hope for His Hand, responding to our supplications. As we experience response to

THE REMNANT

prayer, and realise it is our God responding, helping—we can perhaps begin to appreciate more fully the power of prayer.

“Prayer of Faith”

In James 5 : 15-16, we are helped in this appreciation.

“The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

How true this is, brethren and sisters ! It **does** avail much, as each of us has experienced. Our brethren of old knew the same experience. In Acts 12 : 5, we read of the disciples' faith when Peter was imprisoned :

“ . . . but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”

Without ceasing—it may appear as “vain repetition” yet it is not ; but rather prayer with importunity.

Their prayer “without ceasing” was answered that very night when Peter was delivered from prison by the angel of the Lord. We can imagine the mind of our brethren as Peter appeared unto them—grateful, appreciative, awed by the power of prayer. Let us strive to make our prayer in times of need, “without ceasing”, and we may hope to find deliverance, even as Peter did.

Again example helps, in Matthew 17, where the disciples were unable to drive out the unclean spirit, and in answer to their question as to why they could not, Jesus said :

“Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by **prayer and fasting.**”
(verse 21)

Prayer and fasting—to pray with the heart, and at the same time, to abstain for a time from some of the distractions or attractions in our life, may enable us to more fervently and completely give ourselves to communication with our Father. With prayer, righteous prayer, the help of God's Spirit is provided ; without it, there is NO power.

“Abraham . . . called upon the Name of the Lord”

How much we need, then, Jesus' instruction concerning prayer, that when we pray, we may more fully hope that God will hear, will accept our prayer through Jesus, and grant what He knows we

need. Our brother, Abraham, after he received the promises, we are told in Genesis 12 : 8 :

“ . . . there (Bethel) he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.”

We can easily visualise his prayer to God in thanksgiving and praise, as he realized the wonder of the blessings promised. Again in Genesis 13 : 4, at Bethel :

“ . . . Abram called on the name of the Lord . . . ”

Again he had reason to pray, to seek forgiveness for his lack of faith concerning Sarah in Egypt, and to thank God for his deliverance.

Further, the mind of the faithful in prayer is revealed in our portion in the Psalms. The 17th Psalm is entitled, “ A prayer of David ”, and begins :

“ Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.”

Feigned lips are deceitful lips, false lips ; an abomination to God, just as the false balance was, for the intent of feigned lips is to deceive, to get gain ; even as those praying, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. David would have prayed secretly, figuratively in a closet, and was heard because he discerned the need for prayer in a way pleasing to God.

Can we, brethren and sisters, grow more perceptive of the power of prayer, righteously done, as Jesus instructed us ? Do we fully accept that “ Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward you openly ” ? In time of need, indeed on all occasions, when we pray, let us keep in mind the help of the Lord Jesus, that our prayer may more fully be “ the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man ” so that it can “ avail much ”.

J.A.DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray

“ The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.”

“ Because he hath despised the word of the Lord . . . that soul shall utterly be cut off.” (Numbers 15 : 31)

LAST month, consideration was given to the “ calling out ” of God’s people under the old covenant and the new. In this issue

the promise is fulfilled showing the clearly stated principles of the Truth regarding the position of those who leave the ranks of the children of God. The question of supreme importance is what is the position of those who “Fall Out”? Are they still “brethren”?

“Falling Out” under the old covenant

While Israel were “called out” by God to be a separate people, and so were the Ecclesia, they were also constituted a Kingdom—the Kingdom of God, with the Almighty as their King. They were governed by God’s Law, which was designed to keep the people separate, that is to be holy like God, who was and is holy. Sin, when repented of was forgiven but the unrepentant sinner, the rebel was seen as defying God. To prevent his insubordination from spreading he was required to be destroyed; to be stoned to death and then hung upon a tree. In the stoning the congregation showed they were of the same mind as God who required the “cutting off” of the rebel; and by the hanging of the body upon the tree, to be seen by all, Israel were taught “to hear and fear”. In other words to realise the consequences of sin not repented of. Such a one, so clearly condemned both by God and the Ecclesia, could never be regarded as a “brother” who might be approved at the Judgment. God would not require the destruction of a “brother” by the Ecclesia, and at the same time allow the Ecclesia to think and speak of him as a “brother” implying he still had a hope of life at the Judgment. Neither could they say they must not judge. Obviously they did judge according to God’s righteous judgment, otherwise their hands would not have stoned the rebel to death.

Herein is a principle of the Truth seen in God’s dealing with sin, which is preserved for our learning and admonition. Only sentimental charity will brush aside this solemn lesson, and will do so at the risk of showing despite to the Law of God with the consequences that such an attitude must bring:

“He that despised the word of the Lord . . . that soul shall utterly be cut off.”

Care will be needed to see how the same principle of dealing with sin and sinners is carried forward into the New Covenant, with this difference in application: that in the Old Testament times the rebel was punished there and then, even if he were required to face a future judgment; in the New Testament it will be seen that the Ecclesia must separate or withdraw from him, in which position he is condemned by God and the Ecclesia and will be by Christ at

the Judgment unless he is permitted to repent and return to the Body.

Apologists for error often refer to the falling away of Israel to plead for leniency in dealing with sinners ; in saying they cannot and must not judge. They overlook that in the Ecclesia of old, in the Kingdom, when rebels were not destroyed, the whole Ecclesia or nation suffered. God brought upon them severe penalties by way of chastisement, which destroyed many, and caused all eventually to make a repentant cry to God for deliverance. Have present-day professors of an easier way for sinners forgotten the bitter trial brought upon Israel by the famine, which at the time of Elijah, lasted three and a half years ? Have they forgotten the pestilence which consumed seventy thousand in the days of David ? Do they choose to forget the dreadful hardship suffered by all when Nebuchadnezzar took captive their King, put out his eyes after slaying his sons, and forcibly removed all the brethren and sisters to a strange land ? Do they not recall at this time the Temple was left ruined by fire, and the land desolate ? These things are not merely recorded as history. They have a message for us, that God did not tolerate rebellion either in the individual or the Ecclesia.

When the people of God became incorrigible they were removed from God's land and driven as exiles into all nations, where in they have found no ease, neither rest for the sole of their feet, but instead " a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind ". Are these things true ? Has God's foretold judgment upon rebellious brethren and sisters been fulfilled ? Has it no message for us ? Or will it still be said that present conditions are not so bad as those which existed in Israel ? Will vain man be more righteous than God ?

God judged at the time in the days of the Old Covenant. His people were required in a signal manner to endorse that judgment. In no circumstances were they permitted to say that they must not judge. To do so would have made them despisers of the Law and the victims of God's wrath. May we now be prepared to see how the unchanging and unchangeable God applies the same principles in dealing with rebels for this :

" Falling Out " in the New Testament

We have said that the same principles are applied, but suited to the circumstances in which the people of God, although " called out " are not a kingdom. Scattered amongst the nations, it will be

seen that the Spirit required rebels to be condemned by the Ecclesia, and to be removed by withdrawal, awaiting the condemnation of Christ unless they were permitted to repent and return. In the Old Testament a rebel was condemned by being "cut off". In the New Testament the rebel is also condemned when he is withdrawn from by a faithful Ecclesia. Judgment in both cases is according to the Law of God. This is not presumption, but submission to the declared will of God, that His people might "judge righteous judgment". Where these principles are understood and believed, there will be a much more serious concern shown over sin and sinners, who will arise in the Ecclesia to test its faith, and its loyalty to God.

Jesus shows clearly the disastrous effect of allowing a rebel to remain in the Ecclesia. He says, if a member of the Body, a "hand" or a "foot" offends, these must be "cut off". Otherwise Jesus solemnly declares the Body will perish in "everlasting fire". Does not the history of the Truth show this to be the case? Departure from the Truth, when unchecked by not removing the defiling member, has caused that "Body" to lose the Truth. Its fate is to be cast into the "lake of fire", which will consume all those falsely claiming to be the "Body".

In the mercy of God opportunities are given to sinners that they might repent. God does not immediately "cut off". It is a divine principle that for "three transgressions, and for four" God will "cut off". The Ecclesia is commanded by Christ to observe this principle. The transgressor must first be seen "alone" with the honest endeavour "to gain" by love; then if this fails he must be seen "with witnesses", and if this is unsuccessful, then the Ecclesia must admonish. Finally, if these three opportunities are spurned, a further meeting of the Ecclesia is required to carry out the withdrawal. Then Jesus uses some strange sounding words to describe the effect of withdrawal. He says:

"Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"

(Matthew 18 : 17)

Some of the "others" have been heard to say that in these commands, Jesus is dealing with offences against a brother! This interpretation is obviously so spurious as hardly to need refuting. True, Jesus says, "If thy brother shall trespass **against** thee". But whoever would dare to suggest that the consequences for offence against a brother are to be more dreadful than a sin against God? Imagine, too, that if this were to be a correct understanding, then the one who had been offended must regard his brother as "an

heathen man and a publican ” ; yet meet at the same altar, joining in the same offering saying they were one ! No ! Such ideas are confusing and confounding of the Truth.

The original shows that the words of Jesus may be translated, “ If thy brother shall trespass **before** thee ”. Whether the word used be “ against ” or “ before ”, the meaning of Jesus is clear. When a brother is made aware of transgression in another he has a responsibility to try “ to gain ” the lost brother. The “ sin ” is “ before ” him, or “ against ” him in the sense he must deal with it.

Let us next give careful consideration to what Jesus requires of the Ecclesia, when the rebel is withdrawn from ; and must be regarded, Jesus says, as “ an heathen man and a publican ”. To be dealt with in our July issue.

—To be continued

The Titles of the Psalms

“ Speaking unto yourselves in Psalms . . . making melody in your heart unto the Lord.” (Ephesians 5 : 19)
PSALM 18 (continued)

“ To the one who overcomes. A psalm of David.”

LAST month it was seen that the lengthy Title speaking of David’s deliverance from “ the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul ” was part of the Word of God. This lengthy Title in the Hebrew Bible is shown as the first verse.

Help has already been afforded in seeing in the trials of David the necessary means for the development of a Christ-like character, which, in the case of David merited the description : “ A man after God’s own heart ”. David was not born with such a heart. This transformation could only be accomplished by the power or spirit of God, working with David, and over-ruling the trials necessary to crush the competing influences of his nature. The lesson is strikingly clear ; as expressed later by the Apostle Paul :

“ My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

(Hebrews 12 : 5/6)

Natural jewels are only formed from the earth by great pressure. The spiritual jewels which are to shine with ineffable and eternal glory cannot be made from the dust of the ground, unless this is subjected to the pressure of trials, carefully and lovingly regulated by the perfect Father.

As we have seen David's grief during his trials was great. At times almost unbearable. The song of this Psalm speaks of God's deliverance of David enjoyed at the time, and telling David and ourselves of the absolute certainty that "weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning".

We may suffer severe trials like David. Indeed, we must if we are to inherit the companionship of David and those like him throughout the endless ages of peace and joy. But will it not in that day clearly be seen to be worth this when there stretches before the vision an endless, painless, tireless and eternal future ?

The melody of this Psalm is most consoling. The beautiful pathos is reached when the climax to the work with David is seen to be achieved in his words :

"Thy gentleness hath made me great." (verse 35)

Gentile notions are that the God of the Old Testament was anything but gentle. Instead He is looked upon as a God of anger and only suited, they say, for dealing with a people, whom they conceitedly regard as inferior to "Christians"; primitive, if not barbarous. Such unwarranted pride is utterly false and must appear abominable in the eyes of God who has shown that He is unchangeable and is the same God in the Old Testament as revealed in the New.

David realised, although his trials were severe that there was a divine purpose in them. At the end of his life we have this acknowledgment, "Thy gentleness hath made me great". Do not such words tell us that David would not have wished his life to have been any different ? That the trials wrought in him a "greatness", which could not have been achieved in any other way ; and that they were the means of bringing him to "know" God, to realise the truth of what is said through the Prophet Isaiah, "Fury is not in me" ?

This aspect of "gentleness" in the character of the Almighty is seldom appreciated ; and the transmission of its appealing merit to David shows how wonderful are the ways of God in bringing His people to be like His Son, who was the "express image of Himself",

and who can, in the mercy of God, be joined to the Redeemed in the day of Christ's return.

Let us consider in some detail the working of God upon David to bring him to a greatness seen in "gentleness". Great men are usually harsh and rough in their treatment of others; the opposite of gentleness. Such a quality as gentleness, considered by the world as weakness is despised by the mighty and noble; but we can see and feel that it is appraised as being the only characteristic worth immortalising.

"Gentleness" requires self-control, restraint, a quenching of an irritable and angry spirit. This is where trial is needed, for only when circumstances go against us do we tend to lose our temper.

David had many such trials, particularly at the hands of Saul. There was no mistaking Saul's intentions. He was determined to kill David, either by his own hand or some other's. David had to flee for his life, as he said to Saul, "Thou huntest my soul to take it". "After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog, after a flea?" David a "dog"! A dead one at that; a "flea"! How wretched must David have felt to use such words.

When David uttered this plaint, Saul was at his mercy; caught without any defence in the cave at En-gedi. A portion of Saul's garment was cut off, and in the hands of David. This would have told most men that their end had come. Instead David restrained his own men from despatching the hapless Saul, and so affording further opportunity for Saul. David's heart, and what a heart to emulate, "smote him". "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master . . . to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord."

Let us follow David as he went after Saul out of the cave. He bows himself to the ground, listen to his appeal to his jealous father-in-law:

"Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee: and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed." (1 Samuel 24:10)

What an example have we here of a Christ-like heart. A refusal to take vengeance, and to rely entirely upon God for deliverance although this would mean further suffering by the threats of Saul's insatiable anger. Can this "greatness" of such gentleness be ours?

THE REMNANT

Perhaps not to the same extent. God has given to us this example to help us together with the testimony that those who rely upon God, waiting His time for deliverance, will eventually be vindicated.

Contrast this magnanimity of David, this greatness of heart with others ; with Joab's brother Abishai. When on a later occasion Saul and his own men were cast into a "deep sleep", and Saul could easily have been slain, Abishai was quick to say :

"God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day : now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time."
(1 Samuel 26 : 8)

More than ordinary perception is needed to see God's working in this. The "deep sleep" that rendered Saul such an easy prey was from the Lord. Does not this show that God was testing David again ? Helping by the lesson which David had to face in overcoming impatience and feeling which must have been David's, and so bringing forth of a "gentleness" which truly made David "great" in God's eyes ; and equally makes David great in our eyes.

There were brethren with David, who had the same opportunity to learn as David, who were efficient and competent, but they lacked a change of heart. Such were Joab and his brethren of whom David said :

"I am this day weak, though anointed king ; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me : the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." (2 Samuel 3 : 39)

We know what the end of Joab was ; the end of all such who have failed to change their hearts, making them soft through the trials which God provides. Yes, Job, learned the same lesson through trial so that he could say, "For God maketh my heart soft".

Many become great in their own strength which is of no avail. Few like David will be able to say at the end of their probation. "Thy gentleness hath made me great". How wonderful if by the help of David we have learned through him and the spirit which he shows to overcome so that this may be said of us in the day when David's greater son returns.

—To be continued

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

“ THUS SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS, HEARKEN NOT UNTO THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS THAT PROPHECY UNTO YOU : THEY MAKE YOU VAIN : THEY SPEAK A VISION OF THEIR OWN HEART, AND NOT OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LORD.

“ THEY SAY STILL UNTO THEM THAT DESPISE ME, THE LORD HATH SAID, YE SHALL HAVE PEACE ; AND THEY SAY UNTO EVERY ONE THAT WALKETH AFTER THE IMAGINATION OF HIS OWN HEART, NO EVIL SHALL COME UPON YOU.” (Jeremiah 23 vs 16-17)

CONSIDER the present world situation in the light of the above words. The religious head of Christendom continually calls for peace. The heads of the Churches pray for peace, and advocate that every avenue must be sought by the secular leaders to bring it about. The politicians make some endeavour to thrash out the vexing problems that are causing so much trouble, but always with an eye on their own self interest and national prestige.

Christendom and its leaders declare that in striving for peace, even though imperfectly, a christian duty is being performed. Some believe that through U.N.O. there will be peace. Others say that evil will not overtake those who do their “ Christian duty ” ; that consolation is ever available for those who profess Christ in these troubled times.

The pertinent question however is, what is the true message for these times ?

In context with the scriptural warning that forms the heading of this article is the clear declaration :

“ For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard His word ? Who hath marked His word and heard it ?

“ Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind : it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.” (vs 18-19)

THE REMNANT

The people of God cannot enter into the work of promoting peace amongst the nations. They cannot pray for the peace of the nations in the present order of things. To be true to the message which God has so graciously revealed to them they must declare that there can be no peace until the coming of the Prince of Peace. Their work, in effect, is the work of Jeremiah who declared in his message to his generation :

“ . . . from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely : For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace ; when there is no peace.”

(Jer. 8 vs 10-11)

Concerning those who profess to speak for God, and who say that what they advocate is the Christian message the word of God declares :

“ I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran : I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.” (Jer. 23 v 21)

Let not the reader think that the meaning and fulfilment of the prophecy is buried in antiquity and the events of the past. That the words apply only to ancient Israel. The message is for all generations hence the further declaration :

“ The anger of the Lord shall not return, until He have executed, and till He have performed the thoughts of His heart : **IN THE LATTER DAYS YE SHALL CONSIDER IT PERFECTLY.**”

(verse 20)

In the light of what God has stated look at the world situation in these last times and consider carefully.

At the beginning of April the Secretary-General of the United Nations predicted that peace talks between Washington and Hanoi on the Vietnam war would begin “ very soon ”. He was at Geneva, the place of the monumental failure of the League of Nations. He said, “ I believe the talks will result in the unconditional ending of the American bombing of North Vietnam.” At the time comment was made that the North Vietnamese said initial talks should deal only with an end to the bombing but it was likely that, once they began, the Americans would want to discuss reducing the fighting on a wider scale. America proposed Geneva as the place for the talks, and the 76-year-old diplomat who was to lead the U.S. peace negotiating representatives stood by, ready to fly to Geneva at short notice : The possibility of the North Vietnamese wanting the talks

somewhere nearer to their homeland was kept in mind however. Suggested alternatives included New Delhi, Moscow, Prague, Warsaw, Vientiane, the capital of Laos, and Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital.

But weeks passed and the talks had not begun ; what was the difficulty ? There was no agreement as to where the talks should begin ! Eventually the U.S. Secretary of State announced that America was ready to enter into "contacts and negotiations to end the war in Vietnam without further delay". "Our concern is to save lives and to serve the cause of humanity, not to make propaganda." The American diplomat also said that it was "time for a serious and responsive answer from Hanoi", adding that "any one of our fifteen suggested locations would offer an atmosphere conducive to serious negotiations". The North Vietnamese had suggested a meeting in Warsaw or Phnom Penh in Cambodia. These places however, it turned out, were unacceptable to the U.S.A. leaders at the time they were proposed. The situation provoked a popular cartoonist to do a drawing depicting the U.S. President seated in his office looking at a world map when the door of his office was flung open and a colleague was seen to dash in carrying a brief case and waving an agreement paper. Underneath the cartoon was the caption relating the exclamation of the excited diplomat, "I think we've agreed on a place to hold talks about a place to hold talks".

Rumours began to circulate. French sources thought that Paris would be the venue acceptable to both sides. Britain discreetly urged the United States to come to a decision. The British view according to one report was that the U.S. should have accepted Hanoi's proposal that talks should begin in Warsaw. The Pope also repeated a plea for talks to begin for the purpose of ending the war in Vietnam. "Let us implore all the interested parties to think resolutely in terms of military truce and honourable negotiations". Hints of coming talks were promising, he said, and added : "May the show of strength be transformed into a competition of generosity. May victory go not to arms but to a justice which recognises rights to freedom and the common needs of work and peace." Continuing his speech he said, "It would be most admirable if these great collective egoisms closed in upon themselves—such as racialism, nationalism, class hatred and the domination of privileged peoples over weaker ones—were made to open themselves out to the courageous and generous adventure of universal love"

At the time of writing it is still not settled where the talks should begin. In Paris the U.N.O. Secretary-General again made a

pronouncement that he hoped preliminary peace talks would start soon. He said Warsaw, Geneva, Paris, and Phnom Penh were all suitable venues for talks. But rumours continued, Mexico was mentioned as a possibility, then it was said that Vienna had been agreed on as the meeting place. But the U.S. State Department categorically denied that any agreement had been reached on a site for talks.

Will they ever agree on a place to meet for the purpose of reaching agreement? Time will show; but the message of God is clear: even if they do meet and reach some agreement, trouble will still come, "there is no peace".

D.L.

Correspondence

Letter from D.C.D., Eltham, S.E.9

"If I might offer a word of advice without giving offence—your publication does not give me the impression that love prevails in your teachings. And of course it should, since it is the most important aspect of our developing characters as the apostle tells us so plainly. If we do not reflect to some degree the love that is divinely manifested towards us, then the great name of Yahweh will not be made known in us.

"I cannot see any valid reason for separation between those in light other than the teaching of heresy. Farther than this the apostle Paul does not go—how then can we?"

Reply

Love, as generally understood, is a very different thing from the love revealed in the Word. Love which excuses and condones error is not love. Error unrepented of leads to death.

Is it true love to refrain from showing those in error their need to repent? Is it true love to allow them to perish lest by pointing out their error they are offended? Did Jesus hesitate in condemning those who needed to repent, for fear of offending? Doubtless, the Priests regarded His message as unfriendly, hostile, and without love. But was it?

The religious leaders were responsible for a dreadful crime ; leading multitudes into apostasy and death. Would it have been true love to have overlooked this ? Jesus thought otherwise. For the sake of those who might be saved from this evil influence, He branded the leaders in the most caustic terms : “ Hypocrites, Whited Sepulchres, Serpents and Vipers ”. Would you view such expressions as showing love ? Perhaps not ? But they were the means of conveying love to those who might be delivered from the shackles of misplaced trust and complacency ; even though to Jesus they imperilled His safety, and ultimately led to His dreadful death. This attitude reveals what is true love, as distinct from the love which overlooks all defying of God and His Truth ; but usually is not prepared to brook in the slightest degree any offence against ones-self.

Your final words indicate there may be hope, if you will carry out what you say : “ Separation from the teachers of heresy ”.

In the Group to which you belong the following heresies prevail as you will doubtless know :

Adam was not the first man created by God, but was chosen from an existent race. This denies the divine record, and undermines the doctrine of the atonement. For proof see the Christadelphian Magazine for September, 1965, Article “ The Origin of Man ”.

That the serpent in the Garden of Eden was not literal. A denial of God’s word. Proof see the Christadelphian Magazine for July, 1965, Article “ Eastward in Eden ”.

The Christadelphians are joined with the Bishop of Woolwich and the Church Councils in what they say is a work of trying to snatch individuals from impending disaster. Proof see the Endeavour Magazine for Autumn, 1967.

There are other “ heresies ”, but the above should be sufficient to test whether you are prepared to leave this darkness for the light of the Truth.

W.V.B.

An Appeal

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF SHALL NOT STAND CORRECTION

In last month's issue an important phrase was omitted from the second paragraph which should have read :

“ This letter reminded me of the time when, in deep anxiety and distress of mind occasioned by the evident disunity and lack of the Spirit of Christ among those whom we believed had the Truth, I was led to see, in the course of duty in the A.B. that **they were in direct fellowship with the Churches** through their connection with other Christadelphian fellowships.”

J.P.

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.

Progress continues with those seeking Truth. The response of a searching mind is a joy to see.

A lecture is planned, God willing, for 4th June, in Hamilton, Ontario, hoping to reach some of those concerned in the Christadelphian body.

By the time this is in print, we are hoping, God willing, to have the benefit of visits by Bro. and Sis. Butterfield and Sisters Beryl Butterfield and Peggy Crossley. These visits are a blessing permitted to strengthen the unity in the bonds of Truth.

J.A.DeF.

Dudley

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11-30 a.m.
Wednesdays : Bible Class, 7-15 p.m.

The Special Lecture arranged for Christadelphians was duly given on Saturday, 27th April, at Birmingham. A number were present and listened attentively. Discussion with some took place after the Lecture and interest was shown.

THE REMNANT

It was sad indeed to be reminded how the name "Christadelphian" once so noble and so honourable has now lost its original meaning as referring to "the sect everywhere spoken against", and become as non-descript as the term "Christian".

R.W.

Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread : Sunday, 11-30 a.m.

Eureka Study : Thursday, 7 p.m.

We are grateful for the opportunities that we both enjoyed of attending the Manchester Meeting one on 12th April, and the other on 5th May, and to be benefitted spiritually therefrom.

Although living in such an outlying district we are grateful that there seems always a work to occupy us here.

Our thoughts reach out to the visitors to the States and our prayers are that the fellowship may be strengthened the more especially in these last days of Gentile times.

per J.S.

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

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11-30 a.m. Lecture, 3-30 p.m.

Thursday : Bible Class, 7-15 p.m., Onward Hall, Deansgate.

At the Fraternal Gathering on 15th April, it was good to see many brethren and sisters from other Ecclesias ; all gathered together to be helped by the Spirit. The exhortations on "To him that overcometh" were a God-given means to this end, for unless we overcome besetting sin then we shall be lost. There is a difference between a stumble, and a continuing in a wayward tendency. The first can be forgiven ; but the latter shows unfaithfulness which will merit death.

Encouragement is felt by all in the work of God calling out at home and abroad a few more for His Son. In this prospect of increase we rejoice.

On Saturday, 27th April, the Address in Birmingham for Christadelphians was attended by many. The subject : "Christ's coming—near. Signs not usually considered. Grave warnings for those holding doctrines which He says He hates". Subsequent discussions showed interest which it is hoped will lead to righteous action.

W.V.B.