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in opposition to the Dogmas of
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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

CHRISTENDOM - AND OTHERS - ASTRAY

THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

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NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“The Acts of the Apostles”

WE have been helped each day as we have read the *Acts of the Apostles*. These were the acts of the followers of the Lord Jesus, who were given the work of proclaiming the Truth after His ascension to His Father. It was a difficult time for them. With Jesus gone, they would greatly feel the loss—would miss His Presence, His help, the benefit known by seeing His countenance. Yet He had promised them:

“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter . . . Even the Spirit of truth . . . I will not leave you comfortless. . . .”—*John 14:16/18*

The mercy of God would provide this Comforter—the Spirit to sustain them, to console when Jesus had left the earth. Further, in *John 15:26*, He said:

“When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth . . . he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”

In keeping with these words of Jesus, they were not left comfortless, but the Holy Spirit descended upon them as they were gathered together “in one place”. This, too, Jesus had promised:

“For John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”—*Acts 1:5*

Remembering this promise, the disciples would be anticipating its fulfilment. It was accomplished on Pentecost, fifty days after His resurrection—ten days after He ascended to His Father, when the Holy Spirit descended upon His faithful followers in the form of “tongues of fire”. This was the Comforter—to grant help in the work and the struggle to get the victory; to witness of Jesus; to proclaim the Gospel.

How merciful of God to grant this gift of the Holy Spirit in this way! We know the results. They spoke with tongues, were able to perform miracles, to proclaim the Gospel with great power. God was glorified, and many were added to the Ecclesia. It was the provision of God to help, now that Jesus had gone to His Father, leaving them to carry on His work.

These things were written for our help, brethren and sisters—help in the work given to us; help in the struggle to get the victory over the flesh, that presses so hardly upon us. If we can enter into

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the mind of these followers of Jesus, we can perhaps begin to perceive our blessing, in that we, too, are called, are helped, are sustained by the Comforter.

We, too, are physically separated from Jesus. We are not able to see Him, to look upon His countenance. Yet, through the power of The Spirit, He is in our midst, if we are determined to serve Him, and Him alone. As the disciples of old, we need help, we need comfort, we need an Advocate with the Father. The gracious Father knows this, and provides for us the Comforter, the same Spirit of Truth, to sustain all who belong to Him. This gift is granted at baptism, as Peter pointed out to those who asked him, "What shall we do?"

"Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."—*Acts 2:37/38*

And so to us also, that help is given, for the struggle to keep under the old man of sin, buried in the waters of baptism—and what a struggle it is to keep it under as we all know! How much that Spirit is needed, for only *the* Spirit can bring the flesh into subjection.

To further help, we have the example of our brethren of old, who received so clearly the Holy Spirit. As we read the Acts of the Apostles, let us discern the help they received in performing these acts; let us profit by their example of faith.

“ . . . They had been with Jesus . . . ”

Because they had received the Holy Spirit, the disciples of Jesus were different from the Jews who professed to serve God. They were sanctified, set apart, made holy. They were aware of this separation, this difference between; and rejoiced in it as a manifestation of God's care for them. Others looking upon them came to see it also. In Acts 4, we read how Peter and other apostles were persecuted, were imprisoned, and brought before the authorities. These authorities were the chief priest, the high priest, the captain of the temple—those who had the name of being Jews, but were not, for they failed to obey the God of Israel. These authorities questioned by what authority they did these things. The answer is found in *verse 8*:

“Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, said unto them . . .”

And he witnessed to the name of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God, giving glory to God. To witness in these circumstances was

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not easy; for by that witness, the priests and Israel were condemned!

In their witness, it was readily apparent that they were different, for verse 13 tells us:

“When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”

It was obvious that these were brethren of Christ. How would it be so apparent that “they had been with Jesus”? It was by the Spirit shining forth from them, showing in their countenance, in their words, in their manner. They were sustained in their witness, in their trial. It was a difficult time for them, yet help was so clearly given, that it was evident to all who saw them!

Today as well, it is a difficult time, a time of trial, of testing for us, brethren and sisters. It is close to the time of the return of the Lord Jesus, and as a consequence, the testing is hard—sharp. Here, and across the sea, we face sore trial, painful illness, grave distress; the threat of prison, because of love for God’s Word—all allowed by our Father to try our faith, as our brethren of old were tested. We, like them, can have the help of the Spirit to sustain, to comfort, to support. In this testing, then, do we show that we “have been with Jesus”? Do we, by our actions, our words, our countenance, our bearing the trials, looking for His help, declare that we are striving to be of the Spirit? This is perhaps why we are called upon to face these trials, to prove our faith, our dependence upon the Spirit of God, which sustained our brethren of old. Let us then, brethren and sisters, turn to these *Acts of the Apostles*, and take heart, that we, too, will find unflinching help and deliverance, if we respond faithfully to that Spirit working with us.

“To hearken unto you more than unto God”

For continued help, we read of their further response in the face of trial:

“They called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.”—*Acts 4:18*

A sore trial! Stop preaching the Gospel, or suffer prison or death, was their choice. The answer was without question:

“Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than

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unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”—*verses 19/20*

With that, they went out and continued to preach the Gospel, and prayed:

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.”—*verse 29*

And once again, the Holy Spirit filled them, confirming God’s promise with them, sustaining, strengthening them to face whatever trial the name of Jesus might bring upon them.

As we read on, we see further testing, and with it, further help!

“The high priest rose up, and all they that were with him . . . and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.”
—*Acts 5:17-18*

Again these followers of the Lord Jesus suffered for His Name’s sake, but were not forsaken:

“ . . . the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this live.”
—*verse 20*

Even the prison could not hold them, for they were cared for by the Spirit. When they were brought again before the priests, and accused of preaching the Gospel, their answer was:

“We ought to obey God rather than men.”—*verse 29*

This is the spirit of Christ—to obey God first and always. It is the spirit of obedience expressed so well as He agonised in the garden, in “Abba, Father”. This is the spirit of subjection that God looks for in all His children. Is it our spirit, brethren and sisters? It MUST be, if we are to please God! Paul helps us in this requirement:

“ . . . for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”—*Galatians 1:10*

Paul, moved by the Spirit, pleased God, suffered for the Name of Jesus; indeed, eventually was killed, because of his faith in that Name! We, too, are called upon to face trial, to prove our allegiance to Christ, and to His Father. Let us face it in the spirit

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of Peter, when he said, "we ought to obey God rather than men". Truly sustained by the knowledge that Peter, the apostles, as well as all the faithful followers of Christ were helped by *the Spirit*, and we can be also.

“. . . If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it . . .”

If we face the trials in this conviction, sustenance is given through the Spirit from unexpected sources. The Apostles found this so, as recorded in *Acts 5*, when Gamaliel, a Pharisee, stood up and said:

“And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”—verses 38/39

Who would have expected help from such a man as Gamaliel? Yet, there it was, on behalf of these sorely-tried brethren of Christ, granted by the Spirit of God!

In our trials, brethren and sisters, we, too, find help, often from an unexpected direction; but we must recognise—all of it comes under the direction of *the Spirit*. He does not fail His people! Let us put our trust in that, as did our brethren of so long ago. What an encouragement it must have been to them as they realised that God had caused Gamaliel to speak on their behalf—and they were released from custody! They did not, however, escape hardship, for we are told:

“. . . and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.”—verse 40

To be beaten is painful, humiliating, degrading; yet, for Jesus' Name's sake they suffered it, as He had told them would happen.

“Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.”
—*Matthew 10:17*

How true this was—for here were His apostles being beaten; yet His words of comfort to them also had to do with the Holy Spirit:

“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same

hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you!"

—verses 19/20

What help—what guidance—what comfort they knew, even as they were being beaten! We can hope for the same strength from the same Source—the Spirit of our Father, if we are faithful in our witness, in our trust in Him.

“ . . . Rejoicing that they were counted worthy . . . ”

What was the reaction of these apostles to being beaten, being commanded not to preach in Jesus' Name?

“They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.”—*Acts 5:41/42*

What a pleasing spirit these brethren of Christ revealed as they responded to the Spirit of God working on their behalf! Their spirit is recorded for us in this portion of the Scriptures, entitled *The Acts of the Apostles*, so that, by their acts, we can be helped to move in the same faith, as God tests us to prove our spirit.

Let us then, brethren and sisters, discerning their spirit, strive more fully to be subject to His Spirit, so that we, too, may please our Father, and hope for the promised eternal life to be granted to all who *obey God rather than men!*

J.A.DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

Where is the line to be drawn between those having hope, and those having no hope ?

[I]n last month's issue it was seen how in every dispensation God has drawn a *line* between those having hope, and those having no hope. How could it be otherwise? The idea there can be any doubt on this is an insult to the justice of God. A good father offers no rewards or administers no punishment to his children if they are unaware of the line between right and wrong ; how much more careful must be the perfect Father so that His children might know exactly the boundary between hope and hopelessness.

May it help to recall from last month's consideration this merciful care of the Almighty:

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How—in the time of Seth, “men began to call themselves by the name of the Lord”, showing there was a *line* even so long ago between the people with hope and those who had no hope.

How—when Noah preached, the *line* was dramatically drawn by those permitted to enter the Ark, and those who perished in the Flood.

How—when Abraham was required to leave his native city, a *line* of separation was shown by God between those having the hope of Abraham and those who had no hope.

How—in the days of Moses the *line* of separation could not be more clear, as Israel were led into the wilderness, where contact with any other people was physically impossible.

When the new dispensation was instituted by the Lord Jesus, and established by the Apostles, the *line* was seen with equal clarity. Those in the world were in darkness, “having no hope”; those “called out” came to the light of the Truth wherein only there was hope.

God, we see, has always spoken showing the boundary between those who have hope and those who are denied hope. This has stimulated the faith of the few called to the Truth, enabling them to feel that God was with them even as He promised. What of us who are permitted to hear His voice echoing down the ages, telling us time and again the same truth, the same need, and the same precious hope? Does it not make us feel like Elijah must have felt in Horeb; when having witnessed the mightiness of God in the wind, in the earthquake, and in the fire, he was permitted to hear the “still small voice”? How grateful we should be that we, too, may in these far off days still hear His voice. “But who will hearken for the time to come”?

Christendom will have none of this. Such definition of divine purpose is most irksome to them, for it would condemn those whom they seek to approve. Their “smooth sayings” and “fair speeches” would be immediately exposed as blatant hypocrisy, and as the base coin of Mammon for providing “livings”.

Those claiming to have the Truth must never flounder in this way, saying, “We must not judge”, otherwise their claims are as false as Christendom’s. May the point requiring righteous judgment be absolutely clear: Divine purpose shows that there is

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a *line* between the camp of those having hope and those without hope.

It is *not* wrong to judge all in the second camp as condemned and perishing ; indeed, it would be wrong to harbour any doubts on the matter. It would also be wrong to judge those in the first camp as being assured of life eternal ; a very different thing from having the hope of life. Such judgment of those in the first camp would be presumptuous, for it is reserved for the righteous Judge, who has said He will judge "every man according as his work shall be".

The question arises what is the position of one who deserts the camp of hope, or is expelled therefrom? A most important consideration, and vital to all claiming to have the Truth.

It should be immediately clear there is no middle ground between the two camps. When one leaves the camp of hope, whether expelled or of his own free will, inevitably he must join the numerous band of those without hope. Such a simple and clear view based on the whole of the Spirit's teaching sharpens the privilege of being with God, intensifies the horror of leaving those who have God, and signposts the way to life or death with immutable clarity.

The Pernicious Evil of Doubt

Doubt is the much sought tool of the faithless, by which he can break down the fence between the camps of God and the world, burrow under the foundation of the Truth, and allow for himself a hope which has never been sanctioned. His gambit in this wicked work is well known. We hear him say when certain scriptural principles are stated: "It all depends what you mean", and again "It is wrong to judge", or "Remember Christ's forgiveness and love", or "Why do you condemn instead of preaching positives"? So that the unwary, without realising what is happening, find that the *line* between the Truth and the world has gone: or is so blurred that none can say who has hope and who has not.

Doubt in this matter is a pernicious evil, and was never expressed in the pioneer days of the Truth. Then the *line* was clear: those inside had hope ; those outside were without hope.

To express doubt where God has declared His mind is nothing less than doubting God. How can those who are guilty of this expect to have God with them, and the hope of salvation this promises? Doubt as to where God has drawn the *line* may seem kind to fellow-men, allowing them hope ; but if this leaves

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them in ignorance of their perishing position, such kindness could not be more heartless and cruel. When such an attitude is stripped of the flimsy wrappings of what is called human charity, it is seen to be both genocidal and suicidal.

Doubt has been the greatest cause of the undermining of the Truth in these latter days, of destroying faith, of darkening the light of divine counsel, and of seducing many from the way of life.

The line today.

A hundred years ago there was no question of where was the *line* between those having hope and those without hope. This is expressed in the following words of an erstwhile leader of those who once had the Truth:

“In those far off days (1875), to withdraw, or be withdrawn from by that community whose Headquarters were in Birmingham, was . . . to be outside the One Body of Christ.”

What a change has taken place since then!

The camp of the “others” those who once had the Truth—is split into some twelve parts or more, the chief of which are known as *Central, Advocate, Suffolk Street, Dawn, Berean, and Old Paths*. Although divided, and refusing to meet with one another at the “Table”, each claims that every one in the other sections has hope! And that all are “brethren of Christ”. Why such should be divided seems incomprehensible. If they are “brethren”, and it is mutually agreed that all are worthy to be with the Lord at His “Table”, however can it be concluded that they are not fit for the company of mere humans of the different sects. Could anything be more inconsistent than to suggest that “brethren” of a certain sect are worthy to meet with the Lord, but are not fit to meet with “brethren” of another sect!

The most important question, however, is: Where should the *line* be drawn today between those having hope and those having no hope? It is clear that the “others” have drifted into a position where no such *line* exists; for there are many who would not condemn all members in the Churches and Chapels as being without hope. Is it not clear that history has repeated itself? That the declension of the first centuries has happened again resulting in the springing up of a heterogeneous group like Christendom, with conflicting beliefs and practices, conforming in many instances to the present world, although claiming that they are the Body of Christ. When the Truth is put to them that *the* Body of Christ

cannot be divided, the answer given is Christendom's answer: "We believe in the Body mystical". Whatever would the pioneers have thought that their labours to discover and deliver *the* Truth from the paganism of Christendom, could in so short a time have resulted in those claiming the *name* becoming in effect a miniature Christendom: Divided into sects, yet claiming they are all one; that they are all "brethren", and constitute the "Brotherhood". The *line* appointed by God throughout all time including these latter times, has been erased by those seeking numbers rather than *the* Truth, so that it has to be painfully recognised that the "others" are joined to Christendom, even if only tenuously, as they are in many cases by their practices and beliefs. (Proof of this will be found in the publication, *The History of the Truth in the Latter Days*, which may be had on request.)

The cause of the line being obliterated

If a careful look be taken at the words describing the belief of a hundred years ago, it will be seen the *line* between hope and hopelessness was indelibly indicated by a clear understanding of "*withdrawal*".

"To *withdraw* or be *withdrawn* from by the community whose Headquarters were in Birmingham, was . . . to be outside the Body of Christ."

There was no question then of a middle ground, or of hope being conferred on those from whom separation took place, be they few or many. In those days baptism meant separation from the millions in Christendom, and condemnation of all in Christendom as being without hope. This thought found its way into the old "Constitution", expressed in the following words:

"Doctrines to be rejected"

"That we are at liberty to recognise worship with, or take part in the religious systems around us."

Separation was clear, because the *line* was understood as divinely appointed, and to cross that *line* for personal reasons was an affront to God.

The *line* of separation was clearly defined by *withdrawal*: In the first instance by *withdrawal* from the world, and then when necessary *withdrawal* from unrepentant sinners.

We have seen throughout the history of the Truth from the beginning, this line of separation for the preservation of the Truth

and God's people, has been carefully marked by God. Doubt has been eliminated. The boundary between the holy and the profane has been clear. Obedience in the present dispensation to the commands of Christ (*Matthew* 18:15/18) and the Apostles has maintained this defence. To refuse to *withdraw* from the unrepentant, from the betrayer of *the* Truth has first blurred the defensive *line*; then as error has gained ground, removed it altogether, so that what was *the* Truth remains so only in name.

Truly history is repeated. The early Ecclesia of Sardis were told, "That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead". There is no hope, no life in a dead body. The Spirit shows that contact with the dead defiles. Hence, the "few names in Sardis which were not defiled" must have left those whom Jesus said were dead.

To have hope, it is essential to find God's *line* between those having hope and those having no hope, and place oneself on the right side of that *line*.

"Philosophy and vain deceit" will place the *line* to suit the whims and fancies of flesh; to include friends and relatives, even those in disobedience to God. The Apostle says:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy and vain deceit*, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (*Colossians* 2:8)

"*Spoil you*"; or in other words *rob you* of what God in His great condescension offers on certain conditions clearly defined by Him, which are not grievous except to those desiring to serve the flesh. When it is found on the day of account that all is lost, that stealthy robbery has taken away the most precious possession, God will not be to blame; but only those who have allowed doubt, which is "the deceitfulness of sin" to seduce their minds.

Doubt is not of God. Let the darkness of doubt be chased from the mind by the brilliant light of Truth; always speaking with simplicity and certainty; continually appealing with gentleness yet firmness; and ever shining like the penetrating rays of the sun revealing the only "way that leadeth to life".

—*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 24

A Psalm of David

THE plaintive tune of the previous Psalm is now left, even as God's people will not forever have to experience trial and suffering. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” This change for the people of God is certain: as sure as the light of morn follows the darkness of night. To capture this assurance is sustaining. This Psalm provides the melody of joy, the song of victory, and the chords of triumph, which, if they fill the heart, will provide strength in present difficulties and anxieties.

“The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.”

—*verse 1*

“The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

“For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.”—*verses 1/2*

Surrounded as we are by a world that knows not God, that denies God by its theories and claims, it is as well to stop and think: to realise the greatest achievements of men are as nothing compared with the wonderful creation which men are permitted to inhabit and enjoy.

To the superficial thinker, science seems so wonderful, but it is entirely void of true understanding. Scientists may be able to suggest *how* certain phenomena take place, but are lost to explain *why*.

Rain, they know is vapour drawn by the heat of the sun from the oceans, condensed as clouds, and later deposited upon the earth as the waters of rain. Ask them *why* the water of the seas can know to respond to the heat of the sun; *why* they are able to know to become clouds; *why* they later shed their contents as rain: to these fundamental questions, scientists have no answer. They are baffled. They know nothing of how inside each tiny drop of water the mechanism of responding to heat and cold is effected. All they know is *how* it is so by what they observe, but of the

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secret means by which these things take place they are totally ignorant.

Questioning of this fundamental character soon pricks the scientist's balloon of knowledge, leaving the listener as puzzled as the "learned". Truly, we can rejoice in being delivered from such vain speculation; and accept humbly and joyfully the divine account, realising it is true, and that:

"Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt."—*Job 11/12*

Then the melody of this Psalm can fill our heart, without a jarring note. Truly:

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?"

—*verse 3*

No question could be more important, containing as it does the destiny of every one seeking God and His Truth.

The earth has only been given to the children of men for a time, which is soon to expire. Then many will learn to their inconsolable anguish that the "earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof".

Those truly seeking are not left to themselves. A divine chart is given for their guidance to the day when they may be redeemed, and the whole world cleansed from present defilement and corruption. Here in this Psalm is the chart; as a melody which can fill the heart. The few chords which give this guidance are made the more powerful by their simplicity and brevity. The questions are: "Who shall ascend?" "Who shall stand?" Harken to the Spirit's trumpet-like sounds:

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; (He) who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."—*verse 4*

Where hands are *clean*, then actions are *clean*. This means that the life is *clean* in the sight of God. A life can only be made clean or pure by being given the covering of Christ's life as by a garment. Further, by keeping this precious garment "unspotted by the flesh" there is the hope of being accounted *clean*. Yet all men sin; and sins do spot the garment. Cleansing must be in the appointed way, so that in a beautiful figure the garment provided

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for a covering is “made white in the blood (the life) of the Lamb”. Those who have availed themselves of this merciful provision are they who will be accounted *clean* in the last day.

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more . . .

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

—*Revelation 7:16/17*

Perhaps the most difficult task facing each one is to keep the heart *pure*. There is so much in the present age which is *impure*. There must be a way, however, of accomplishing this. Yes, the Spirit shows the way:

“Unto the *pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*”—*Titus 1:15*

A little time and meditation are necessary to absorb the wisdom concentrated in these few words. We remember a worldly executive guilty of every imaginable evil, quoting these words in defence of his wickedness. To him any form of evil became *pure*, if looked upon as *pure*! How readily the precious word of God can be perverted to suit the fleshly mind.

The meaning of the Spirit's help is clear. Feed the mind on only those things which are *pure*, and purity of heart will result. Remembering, “that as a man thinketh in his heart so is he”, the result of such exercise and care will be a purity of life.

This may be the more readily seen if the converse is considered. People, whose minds are constantly polluted by the effluent of the present evil flood, become base and depraved; which is discerned in their conversation, and seen in their countenance. Any original trace of spirituality, of virtue, of nobility, gives place to sensual features, sordid expressions, and an animalistic appearance.

How wonderful is the *power of the Truth* to change us: To deliver us from ourselves! How gracious is God in providing the means of deliverance from becoming no better than the brute beasts, which consume God's goodness without any thought of the blessing, and after a brief while return to the earth, above which they have never risen in thought or deed.

Can we not feel how good God is, how right He is, that only those appreciating His help may rise above themselves and finally join in the joyous chorus of victory expressed in the conclusion of this Psalm:

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in

“Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.”—*verses 9/10*

Every thought, every effort and the greatest diligence is a small price to pay to be accounted worthy of belonging to such a glorious and magnificent host.

—*To be continued*

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

“When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble. . . .”

—*Habakkuk 3, verse 16*

HABAKKUK the prophet was allowed a vision of what would eventually overtake the nations of mankind. When he wrote the message the Jews were still a sovereign people and the time of the end was a long way off. What he saw by the Spirit, however, was sufficient to cause him alarm because of the magnitude of the destruction which the vision portrayed.

In these present times the world has come to see the production of the most fantastic weapons that herald the time of destruction which Habakkuk foretold. But unlike Habakkuk there is not the trembling at the thought of what might happen, and no crying out to God that divine mercy might be extended to preserve and keep some from being involved in such anguish. This is because the world has grown used to living in a godless age in which men expend their energies and resources in continually producing an ever-increasing destructive force of weapons of the most horrible kind. If the world could take stock of itself, and compare the present with the past it would realise that for all the modern amenities, mankind has never before been in such an

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extremity. In advancing scientifically it has also slipped down the incline away from the place of preservation and safety. One more slip and the world will go over the cliff into the abyss from which the nations of men as they now exist will never emerge.

Governments and nations, however, have committed their minds so rigidly to the furtherance of their own particular schemes of what is believed to be for their self-interest, but on the other hand is purported (for propaganda purposes) to be for the world's welfare, that it is only a matter of time, and a short time at that, when World War III will commence.

There are a multitude of evidences indicating not only what is being threatened but also of what is coming. To mention germ and gas warfare preparations, and "the bomb" is only to outline the many things that are being prepared. It is when the methods for delivering such things are considered that their frightful significance is realised.

There are submarines on the high seas at the present time carrying Polaris missiles, capable of being delivered accurately at a range of 2,500 miles. One of such submarines is alone armed with more explosive power than was wreaked during the whole of the Second World War. These vessels can patrol for two months continually submerged beneath the waters. There is nothing that approximates in any respect beneath the ocean in the world of nature which is as potentially savage as such vessels.

After the Czechoslovakian crisis the U.S.A., as one example, stepped up its defence preparations. The Sentinel anti-missile system, calculated to cost more than £2,000 million was given the government's sanction, though previously as an economy measure it had been thought wise to abandon it. The U.S. government's view is that co-existence with the Communist powers depends on "the continued military strength of the United States", though still hoping that talks with Russia on arms limitation can be held "at an appropriate time". America is obviously not thinking the present is a convenient time for a tapering-off of its war production. In fact there is considerable thinking in U.S. military quarters that it is time to strengthen the navy. Of 932 combat ships, 599 are at least 15 years old. The Russians, however, have built the majority of their combat ships in the last ten years. Also, there has been talk of sending American troops as a "temporary measure" into Europe to take part in N.A.T.O. exercises early in the year. The U.S.A. is beginning to look east-

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wards again, aware that developments in the Mediterranean regions probably constitute a greater threat than Communist infiltration in Vietnam. Recent times has seen the appearance of Russian fleets in the Mediterranean with bases as far West as Algeria, and there has been a massive supply of Russian arms to Arab countries.

Russia seems bent on instigating an attack on Israel, as one political observer expresses it, and the West is preparing to offer its resistance. It is significant that last November a clear warning to the Soviet Union was issued on behalf of N.A.T.O. This was to the effect that the West would regard further Communist attacks—even outside the N.A.T.O. area—as a threat to N.A.T.O. security. Austria and Yugoslavia were particularly named as being clearly linked to such security. An American political spokesman, speaking at the time with the approval of the President-elect said, “The Soviet Union must be formally informed that if anything happens to West Berlin or any N.A.T.O. country it would mean war”.

Such is the world situation at the commencement of this new year, when men are going around with the usual platitudes of wishing happiness upon each other in the days ahead.

Those who have been privileged to know the mind and purpose of God are shown clearly by His divine message that such happiness cannot come nor can it be sustained for very long.

World War III will come instead, and with it a time of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”. The signs of the approach of such a time are very evident in the present war preparations, and in the world situation as it is now so clearly developing, just as the scripture said it would develop. Those who desire “His Spirit” see from the words of God’s servant Habakkuk what their attitude should be. They should be acutely aware of the threat that hangs over the world, and what it will mean to mankind when this present stage in man’s affairs gives place to general hostilities. In humbleness their attitude should be a crying out to the God of Mercy and Peace, who can protect from all evil, that they along with Habakkuk the prophet, “might rest in the day of trouble”.

D.L.

Correspondence

Letter from J. G., Luton :

“I did enjoy reading the Article on Marriage. But would you explain Mark 6:17 wherein John rebukes Herod? This does not seem to agree with what you have written. . . .

“Your Article should be given to every one to read in the Meetings. It would shake some of them today who agree with Divorce.”

Reply :

The record in Matthew 14:3/4 states :

“For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife.

“For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.”

Evidently Herod had married the wife of his brother, Philip. Had Philip died then the marriage of his widow to Herod would not have been condemned. The fact that Herodias is spoken of as the *wife* of Philip, and not the widow indicates that Philip was still alive, and had divorced his wife. Does not John’s condemnation of Herod agree with what Jesus taught?—“Whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery.”

It would be as well if the *others* who have left the Truth, because of fellowshipping those who agree with divorce would remember that the upholding of the right by John the Baptist cost him his life ; but his faithfulness assured him of life without end.

May there be some who will become fellows of John, and disassociate themselves from those who say, in effect, his sacrifice was not necessary.

W.V.B.

News from the Ecclesias

Eden, New York : Grange Hall, Church Street.

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.

Thoughts and supplications are with those in illness and trial. God in His mercy grants deliverance in His own time.

Requests for the August magazine and *The History of the Truth* booklet continue to trickle in. Interest, however, does not appear to be lasting, but the witness has been made.

Continued appeal for conscientious objector status for our Brother Steiger is being made with the help of letters of testimony from members of the Body. May God's will be done.

J.A.DeF.

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

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

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

Letters have been received expressing appreciation of the Article in the November issue on "Marriage and with reference

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to the present contention on Divorce"; one requesting thirty-six copies for distribution to his Meeting. May further consideration liberate some of these from the apostasy which has engulfed them. May they see whatever is the position in their own particular Meeting, they are responsible before God for affairs in all Meetings they fellowship.

Bro. R. Wood (Dudley) has given us welcome help by way of exhortation and lecturing on 1st December.

W.V.B.

Newtownards, Co. Down, N. Ireland.

Breaking of Bread, Sunday, 11-30 a.m. Sunday School,
2-30 p.m. Bible Class, Wednesday.

A very pleasant and helpful weekend was spent in company with Bro. Butterfield, who visited us last month. We thank him for making the journey and for his help on Sunday morning.

Another year ends and the increasing signs of the return of the Lord Jesus becoming more evident, make us exceedingly grateful for our calling out of darkness into light and hope in the One Body of Christ, and the assurance of His promise, which can only be received through a humble submission to His Will.

The year has again shown us the working of His power in opening the eyes and unstopping the ears, when seeking hearts are repentant and submissive to believe and obey.

J.P.