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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

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“In the Beginning was the Word . . .”

THIS morning, brethren and sisters, we are permitted to meet here to praise and honour God, our Father; to be sustained in our struggle to conquer the flesh; to grow in the desire to be closer to God and His Son. To help in these blessings, we have the privilege of partaking of our daily portion—the Word of God—given to sustain us as surely as the Manna was given to Israel to preserve their lives during the long wilderness journey. It is granted by the wise God, that we might grow spiritually. As is often the case, our three portions for today fit together so closely, so as to complement each other, to help us in our struggle to be godly instead of fleshly. It is not by happenstance that the portions tie together so closely, for all through the Word of God runs the thread of life, the hope of Israel. This helps us to realise the love and kindness of God in its provision, for in it we find the promise of eternal blessing if we can be subject to that Word.

In our portions for today, we are reading I Chronicles, dated about 1042 B.C. Ezekiel, written 587 B.C., and John's record written about 30 A.D. There are many years separating these men; but yet the same promise, the same hope.

Today, some 1900 years after John's record, we, brethren and sisters, are privileged to read the same words, to know the same promise, the same hope—all revealed through the same unchanging Spirit of God, revealing to us *the Truth*. As we read, are we receptive, are we moved by the wonder of it? We read the Word every day, and there is always the danger that it may become commonplace to us, even as the Manna did to Israel; the wonder of it was lost. This is only possible, however, if we lose our sensitivity to the Word, to the Spirit. With these thoughts in mind, let us turn to the food so graciously granted for our strength today.

“The Sure Mercies of David”

In our first portion (I Chronicles 17) we read of David, how he sought to build a house for God. How pleasing to God was David's heart's desire. It pleased the Father because David thought of God, put God first in his heart. It was because of this spirit, that David is called “a man after God's own heart”. As a result of his faithfulness, there were promises given to David—an unfulfilling covenant—the sure mercies of David. God promised David a house, a throne, a kingdom, a son to sit upon that throne,

a son who would be His Son, and of whom God would be the Father. Can we, brethren and sisters, enter into David's heart as he heard these words of God through Nathan, the prophet? His heart is expressed for us in David's words:

“. . . Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" (*I Chronicles 17:16*)

This was the mind which so pleased God, that moved Him to give these promises to David. In these promises, David saw *the* Christ—the Messiah, the Anointed One of God who would be the Son of God, who would sit upon David's throne for ever; who would build the house of God, who would be of David's lineage. As he saw this, David was moved to exclaim:

"O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears." (*verse 20*)

It was a great blessing because of faithfulness—David's faithfulness. It is a great blessing for us, brethren and sisters, for this Son of David is Jesus, the Christ, the Redeemer, the Lamb of God, foreseen in these promises.

God did not have to make these great promises to David; but He did in His love and mercy—to help us to hope even as David did, all the rest of his life. He had a great hope, a great assurance, and rejoiced in it, looking toward the day of its fulfillment. Brethren and sisters, we have the same hope. We will one day see David, may hope to be his brother or sister for eternity, if accounted acceptable to Jesus at the Judgment. How much we will have to share with David! Joy, peace, blessing—eternity. Does this hope truly live in us as it did in David? It may at times seem far off; but here, too, we find help in our daily portion in Ezekiel.

“. . . Dry Bones . . .”

The time of our reading in Ezekiel, is many years after the promises given to David. Chapter 37 was written in 587 B.C.—a significant time for Israel. In 588, Jerusalem fell to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, and was destroyed—all of Israel was taken captive—the temple was burnt. There was no house of God, no king over Israel, no throne. It seemed a hopeless position, with the promises to David apparently not to be fulfilled. All these were because of Israel's unfaithfulness; they had earned God's displeasure, and His wrath was upon them in judgment! How discouraging it might have been to those few who were faithful;

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who looked for God's promises. God, in His mercy, sent prophets such as Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, to help these few faithful ones ; to reassure, to remind, to strengthen our brethren of old. Most of Israel would not hear their words ; but to those who did, how clear the message!

God will not forget His promises. God will not forsake His faithful children ; those who turn to Him in adversity, in captivity, in tribulation, seeking His help, His sustaining. To such, much help is given as we read in today's portion, where the prophet is shown the valley of dry bones. Verse 11 explains for us :

“ . . . Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel : behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost : we are cut off for our parts.”

So it seemed to those whose hope was dim, for there is nothing more empty of life than dried bones, scattered upon the earth, without form or shape. Yet, for the faithful, the promise of God still held :

“ Ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land : then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it. . . .”
(verses 13 and 14)

Impossible! the scoffers say. Our Hope! the faithful say. In His righteousness, God has promised—He will not fail.

Further, Ezekiel was caused to see the vision of the two sticks—Judah and Israel, reunited as the kingdom promised to David. In fulfilment of this, the Word of God through Ezekiel continues :

“ David my servant shall be king over them ; and they all shall have one shepherd. . . . And they shall dwell in the land. . . . I . . . will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them : yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
(verses 24-27)

It has a familiar ring ; these are the promises to David ; this is the Hope of Israel re-affirmed in the midst of sore trial, captivity, and tribulation.

Why was Ezekiel caused to so speak? To sustain the faithful ones, to strengthen their hope, to feed them with the daily portion,

as the Manna in the wilderness ; and to remind of God's love and mercy.

As *we* read it, brethren and sisters, do we receive it as the sustenance of God? Do we see why He has granted it, preserved it through all these years—so fully revealing His love and His purpose? As to Ezekiel, to those in captivity, its accomplishment may seem far off, especially so when the temple was destroyed, no king, no throne—but, “THUS SAITH THE LORD . . .” How great is His blessing, His assurance, for those who trust in His Word. Ezekiel would know that the promised Messiah must come from the line of David ; would know, too, that in captivity in Babylon, was King Jehoiachin—of the line of David. The record in II Kings 25, tells us of God's Hand upon Jehoiachin to assure all the faithful—

“It came to pass . . . that Evil-merodach, King of Babylon . . . did lift up the head of Jehoiachin, King of Judah out of prison: and he spake kindly to him. . . . And he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.”
(verses 27-29)

Ezekiel, Daniel, all the faithful would know of it, and take courage, remembering the promises given in God's Word.

All this should be a help to us today, brethren and sisters, in the midst of an evil, ungodly world. We may seem very few ; the hope may at times seem remote ; yet, we, too, have His Word—our daily portion, to sustain us in the hope of Israel, the hope of David, the hope of Ezekiel.

“In the Beginning was the Word . . .”

To confirm all this for us, we have our portion in John I, Verse one tells us so strikingly:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Does it begin to make the picture complete, brethren and sisters? From the Beginning, there has been God's Word ; by it, He first separated the light from the darkness, when He said, “Let there be light . . .” Involved in all His Word is His Anointed One, His Son, His Messiah, His Christ—whether that Word was directed to Adam, to David, to Ezekiel, to John, or today to ourselves. It has been there from the beginning, and will be to the end—His Word—our portion, our strength, our Hope! All His Word is fulfilled in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:14 tells us:

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“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.”

Jesus came, the Word fulfilled. He was flesh—made of the same nature as you and me ; but never failed. He served God in perfect obedience to that Word ; He died in submission (full of grace and truth) ; for what purpose?

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (*John 1:11-13*)

Sons of God—what a blessing—what a privilege! How is it possible? “*As many as received him*”—this is the key. To receive Him—to receive the Word which teaches of Him—His Word—our daily portion. If we receive it, we have *the power* to become the sons of God! The power of the Word is given to us, enabling us to be God’s sons. By it, we have the strength required. By it, we are given the authority. By it we have the inspiration of a sure hope! Does this not help us to value, to appreciate it for what it is—the provision that means life for us, just as the Bread from heaven meant life in the wilderness for Israel?

It speaks of Jesus, of God’s purpose to be accomplished in Him. It is timeless ; for in Adam’s time, in David’s, in Ezekiel’s, in John’s, in Paul’s, in Dr. Thomas’, in our own time—to those who truly value it—it is LIFE!

Can we then perceive why John said:

“This was he of whom I spake . . . And of his fulness have all we received, and grace upon (margin) grace . . . grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (*John 1:15-17*)

“Grace upon grace . . .” heaped up, in His Word, in our daily portion. Let us be sure, brethren and sisters, that we grow to perceive that grace—be sure we grasp that grace. How? By receiving His Word, for if we do, we receive Jesus, and have the power to become the Sons of God. *Power* involves strength, liberty, authority. It is only in the Word that we can find that power, for only in the Word can we find Jesus—for He is The Word.

His Sons! Made possible through the Word—our daily portion. Let us then seek it as we seek food—that we may strive more fully to live in the spirit of Christ, and find the power to become acceptable Sons of God.

J.A.DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

“There will I commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims.” (Exodus 25:22)

BUT will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?” Such condescension seems impossible, that the great Eternal should choose to dwell with men, whose power is so small, and whose days are so fleeting. Yet it was seen last month that God did dwell with the Ecclesia in the wilderness, and that He promises to be with the one true Ecclesia now.

The consideration is so inspiring and exhilarating, that it will not be vain repetition to meditate further upon this prospect; yea, to see perhaps a little more of God’s intention in dwelling with His people of old, and with those who are His people at the present time.

When Israel were called out of Egypt to meet Yahweh, they were instructed to make a “tabernacle” or dwelling for the Most High. This fact is so well known, so commonplace, that the full meaning may escape us; that here is ample proof that God would and did dwell with His people—“in very deed”.

The specification for the making of this dwelling was most precise, given to us in good measure in the divine record, and shown to Moses in its resplendent fulness “in the mount”. Moses was told concerning the particular place in the tabernacle in which God would dwell:

“There will I commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.” (Exodus 25:22)

The cherubim together with the mercy seat standing on the ark were in the Most Holy place, into which no man could enter except on one day in the year—the “day of atonement”.

Let us have vividly in mind what was implied by the High Priest’s proceeding into God’s presence on this day. He was required first to make a sin-offering for himself, and then with the blood of the offering, which was the symbol of his life, he could go into the holy presence of God. But not without incense:

“... that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.”

(Leviticus 16:13)

There was not to be the slightest presumption. To enter God’s presence without due regard to His Holiness and greatness,

merited death. Incense, which is a beautiful and fragrant figure of the "prayers of the saints", invested the whole proceedings with submissiveness in acceptable supplication. Then, and only then, would the life seen in the blood be accepted as it was sprinkled before God on the mercy seat. When the high priest had completed the offering for himself, then he went out, and made a similar offering for the people, so that their life seen in the blood might be accepted by the great and living God.

In this Law, as in all the Law, was the Spirit of Christ, graphically showing at one and the same time God's majesty and greatness, and His marvellous loving-kindness in providing a means whereby the mortal High Priest and the brethren and sisters might have their lives accepted by God—on the day of Atonement.

To have been present and witnessed the offerings; to feel the awe-inspiring truth that any carelessness in going into God's presence would mean death; to realise that although the Creator was so great, that even "the heaven of heavens could not contain" Him; yet here in this simple dwelling He could be approached, and His favour be found in the accepting of the lives of all who were "afflicted"—and so were made *at one* with Him—would be an overwhelming experience telling of a loving-kindness and mercy that in very truth did reach unto the heavens.

Christendom are ignorant of the fact that in this Law is the Spirit of Christ. Hence, their gross presumption in daring to approach the Creator as though He were a shop-keeper who will be pleased with their custom, however small this might be. Their worst offence is seen in despatching millions of their fellows at death, immediately into God's presence without any regard to the divine conditions or the characters of those who have died. If men were taught so carefully by the Spirit of Christ in the Law, that God must be sanctified by those who would approach unto Him, then the folly and wickedness of Christendom is at once evident. Truly Christendom is astray.

Those, who once had *the Truth—the others*—have hastened in Christendom's path. Much of their present writings speak of God, as willing to accept anybody on almost their own terms.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is made to appear as though God will receive with open arms at any time those who once had the Truth, but have become wanton rebels. The parable was never intended to teach such sickly sentimentality, in which the justice and righteousness of God are completely dissolved by the waters of so-called love and charity. Briefly, the parable was to show to all who had "ears to hear", the hopelessness of the self-righteous Pharisees likened unto the son who stayed at home,

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who proudly declared that "neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment": in contrast to the publicans and sinners who would be allowed to come to the Truth if they showed true repentance.

Now, if we are to understand the profound and lively meaning of God dwelling with His people, then consideration must be given to

The Cherubim

These were golden figures made out of *one* piece of metal along with the mercy seat or lid, which covered the Ark.

Doubt has been expressed on the etymology of the Hebrew word *cherubim*; but careful investigation makes clear the divine meaning. The word is a compound of two words, which in English letters may be written thus: *Ch rub.* (*Chrubim* is merely the plural of *Cherub*). *Ch* is the Hebrew for *like* or *likeness*; *rub*, the lexicon states is "one of the highest epithets known in the Hebrew language, and signifies great in power, and wisdom and glory; or whatever can be termed perfection".

A free translation of *Cherubim* then is: the *likeness of divine glory*.

Who were represented by these cherubim made out of the same piece of gold as the mercy seat or covering of the Ark? Were they not to show to the Ecclesia in the wilderness that God was pleased to dwell with those whose life had been accepted by Him on the mercy seat? Not only during their wilderness journey, but throughout their probation, and for ever when the Israel of God shall have attained to immortality seen in a figure in the incorruptibility of gold. Hence the cherubim, representing the Saints, were perfectly *one* with the mercy seat. They typified the people of God made *one* with the mercy seat or covering, the Christ, and *one* with God. A powerful figure illustrative of the excellence of this abiding unity, as Jesus said:

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." (*John 17: 21/23*)

Their sanctification was signified by their resting upon the Ark of witness, upon the covenant or Word of God. Again, this aspect is confirmed by Jesus:

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

(*John 17:17*)

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Conceived in the beautiful and glorious figure of the cherubim is all the work of God in Christ, showing a mercy beyond description, that God was and is pleased to dwell with His people to sustain them in all *the* Truth, that they might have the hope of being eternal companions of God and His Son.

It is seen that the brethren and sisters in the Ecclesia in the wilderness could know *the* Truth as we can, and receive the divine provision, protection and guidance as we may have. How blessed we are if in such a case. Without it our profession is a theory bankrupt of any living power, only holding out the hope of success in debate; destitute of any of those essential provisions for this life, and the life promised beyond the present fleeting existence. God is not felt to be nigh. Communion in a true sense lacks reality. Approach in prayer is mechanical, devoid of any feeling of entering into the presence of the great Eternal, there to be heard and blessings granted according to the divine will and wisdom.

Why two Cherubim? “The Two Witnesses.”

The care of the Spirit in a choice of figure is always eloquent of *the* Truth. God could have appointed a number of cherubim; say seven, when there might be a ready answer as to what this figure of completeness signified. But He did not choose seven; only *two*.

Careful reflection on the divine record will show the reason:

“There will I commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from *between* the two cherubims.” (*Exodus* 25:22)

The appointment of two to represent the people of God provides an intimacy which no other figure could. God in their midst, close to all, nigh to each one; there communing with His people. Have we appreciated what is meant by God *communing* with His people—with us? Perhaps not. Unless this is experienced it cannot be appreciated. And it can only be experienced in the One true Ecclesia; for God is not with any other Body, whatever their profession.

It is essential to consider the divine view of the two cherubim; to think of God's feelings in this appointment, if we would fully understand. There could have not been the slightest pleasure to God in dwelling between two cold metal figures. His purpose is not with “gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device”, but with those who through His Son will allow the working of His Spirit in them, that they might become perfectly *one*—as seen in the unity of the cherubim with the mercy seat. This thought makes us realise that the dwelling of God is with

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His people, who will submit to Him, and, as we have seen, their unity with God is seen in the oneness of the cherubim with the mercy seat ; giving a promise for all that is necessary in the life of probation, and for the life glowing with incorruptibility seen so clearly depicted in the Most Holy place.

The two cherubim then, with God's presence between them, represent the Israel of God in their mortal unity, but with the promise of an eternal union with God and His Son.

In this sense the understanding of the "two witnesses" in the Revelation will be appreciated.

When God dwelt between the cherubim His blessed and infinite power was seen preserving and protecting, in the sense mentioned in Revelation chapter 11 verses 5 & 6.

"And if any man hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth . . ."

This power was manifest on more than one occasion as when the three companies of a rebellious king endeavoured to arrest the Prophet Elisha:

"If any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

Again, the divine record is full of instances where the power of God has turned the sword of the enemy upon himself as in the days of Midian.

"These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy."

The Prophet Elijah prayed that it should not rain during the time of the rebellious King Ahab, so that Israel might receive a salutary lesson. The prayer was Elijah's, but the power which gave fulfilment was of God.

"These . . . have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

So great and devastating was this power on behalf of the "two witnesses" that in the days of Moses the most mighty power on earth was compelled against his wish to release the people of God from bondage.

God's people in every age would have been quickly swallowed up by the nations, were it not for His invincible power to protect and preserve. The Ecclesia of old escaped destruction through the kindness of God exercising this power. God warned that if they forsook Him, then He would forsake them. Finally, this aspect of

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the two cherubim, the “two witnesses”, embodying God’s presence with His people came to an end because of their disobedience. The Roman armies captured Jerusalem in A.D.71 after a long and bitter siege. The Temple was pillaged; its holy furniture paraded in triumph in the Capitol in Rome along with the enchained Jews who had been taken during the battle. Here was a foreshadowing of the “killing” of the “two witnesses”, remarkably illustrated in a coin struck at the time at the instance of the victorious Roman General Vespasian:



The inscription: “IMP. CAES. VESPASIAN AVGVSTVS PONTIFEX MAXIMVS TRIBVNICIA POTESTATE PATER PATRIAE CONSVL III”, means: “Emperor Caesar Vespasian Augustus the Supreme Pontiff with Tribunician power. Father of the Fatherland. Consul for the third time.”

The reverse is the relevant point: “JUDAEA CAPTA. SENATVS CONSVLTO.” meaning “Captured Judea by the decision of the Senate”. Look at this carefully. See on the left the triumphant Roman General Vespasian with his short sword of authority, the *parazonium* raised in triumph while his left foot treads down the helmet of the defeated Jew. In the centre, the palm of victory signifies the Roman victory. On the left a weeping Jewess mourns as she surveys her captured land.

As a nation, the “two witnesses” were “killed”; not to be restored until the coming out of the grave “full of dry bones” at the bidding of the “man child, who (is) to rule all nations with a rod of iron”.

Dr. Thomas gave an interpretation of the “two witnesses” as seen in history, but frequently he hinted at a final fulfilment,

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which it has been the privilege of those blessed with God's presence to discern.

When the immortal power of the future is again seen in the earth in the person of the Lord Jesus with His Saints, their work will be the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel. None of the mortals could become part of the "two witnesses" were it not for the same invincible power exercised on their behalf as was seen in the days of Moses. The Revelation shows that the work of Christ and the Saints on behalf of those who will be called at this time from the nations will antagonise the powers that be, will infuriate the Roman religious "beast", which will muster all the resources at its command to "kill" those who, at the behest of Christ, have espoused the Truth. Their victory will not be like it was in the time when the Roman armies captured Jerusalem, but will be short lived. Those "killed" will be raised, and as the Revelation of divine glory proceeds according to a well ordered programme, the Roman religious "beast" and all pertaining thereto, which has been and will be in opposition to the Christ will be destroyed in the "lake of fire".

Not until then will the earth be cleansed of all the power which has "deceived and corrupted the earth".

A glorious consummation indeed, which can only be achieved by becoming associated with the divine presence now, to be found in the One Body.

To be delivered from the prevailing deception and the growing contagion of evil at the present time is a blessing as great as experienced by the Ecclesia in the wilderness; and with the promise of being able to enjoy the glories of immortality in the presence of God and His Son seen so dramatically prefigured in the golden cherubim.

W.V.B.

The Titles of the Psalms

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

PSALM 25

(A Psalm) of David.

IN this Psalm the glory of God is well concealed. God never intended that His glistening jewels should be seen by those only casually interested, or vulgarly curious. This is why He declares:

“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” (*Proverbs* 25:2)

If God had revealed all on the surface, searching would be unnecessary; the exercise which this inspires by its rewards would be void; and the test of faith in seeking the deep things of God would not exist.

Jesus explains that this was His reason for speaking in parables:

“Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

(*Matthew* 13:13 & 15)

It is amazing that the most learned of men take texts of Scripture for their sermons, but are never able to penetrate the veil cast over the glory which God has concealed. Hence, their utterances, however grandiloquent, mean nothing more to the hearers than they do to the speaker. Just words pleasantly and entertainingly spoken, without any voice of “authority”; without any revealing of the mind of the great Author. Although imposing by their learning, and cultivated manner of speech, they are as Cowper wrote:

“The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry hem! and reading what they never wrote,
Just thirty minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene.”

Unbounded gratitude is felt that what God has denied the “mighty and noble”, He has been pleased to reveal to those who

by comparison are only "little children". The glory hidden by God in this Psalm is seen in the original Hebrew; wherein the twenty-two verses commence with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, with minor exceptions. Why did the Almighty make this arrangement? Not by accident, surely! Was it not that in the days when written records were few, memory could be helped to remember the inspired Word. Gentile children are taught the alphabet by association with everyday things; Thus *a* is for *apple*. In God's arrangement the letters of His alphabet were to bring to mind important aspects of the Truth for young and old. The first Hebrew words in this Psalm, beginning with *Aleph* is *unto thee*:

"*Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*" (verse 1)

What an inspiring and sustaining thought to have in mind; to look to the God of Israel for help and salvation, which had been given so bountifully in previous times.

The next Hebrew letter—*Beth*—is found commencing the words *I trust*:

"O my God, *I trust* in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me." (verse 2)

How stirring to the loins of the faithful mind, that there could be a looking to God which would inspire *trust* in Him, for as the divine alphabet continues God is shown to be *good* by the Hebrew letter *Teth*.

"*Good* and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way." (verse 8)

The excellence of God's *goodness* rises as the sun shining in its strength above all the so called lights of men; extinguishing them by its very brilliance, and sending its beneficent beams to the ends of the earth. We need to realise the Truth of what Jesus said:

"None is *good*, save one, that is God." (Luke 18:19)

Let it be realised that whatever degree of goodness remains in this polluted earth is of God. Without Him there would be no goodness whatever. This is why as the world hastens from all that is godly, goodness disappears, and in its place evil of every kind abounds. The world is having to learn at a great cost in pain and suffering, not to "put their trust in princes", in whom there is no goodness.

The hearts of those drawn by God's *goodness* is made to rejoice that they can be enfolded in that which is altogether *good*; not only for the present brief existence, but in the prospect of an eternal and blessed *goodness*.

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Now if we may remove a little more of the covering to see fully the glory of God concealed in this Psalm:

“I am Alpha and Omega.”

These words were used by Jesus in His last message given to John in Patmos. The *Alpha* and *Omega* are the beginning and last letters of the Greek language in which the New Testament is written. They say in brief that Jesus was the complete and only writing of God. The Word of His God was so indelibly written upon His heart, that it was no exaggeration for Jesus to be called —“The Word of God”. What a volume of meaning is here! We think of God’s word in the beginning, in the Law, in the Psalms and in the Prophets, and the essence of all these writings was to be seen in Jesus who was the “Word of God made flesh, full of grace and truth”.

Jesus is the beginning of the New Creation. Many are seen with Him in prophecy in the Revelation. Each and all will have the Word written upon their hearts; not the worldly words of Gentile wisdom, but the Spirit words which made Jesus the Word of God.

When the throng of the Redeemed appear with Jesus in the earth, it will be seen that they have one thing in common; that all will have had hearts soft and tender; amenable to the writing of the Spirit, and thus transforming them from their native flesh with all its hard and proud tendencies, to the likeness of the Lamb of God, in whom they will be privileged to rejoice for ever through the unfailling *goodness* of God.

The melody of this Psalm is simple. There is no orchestral accompaniment, no full organ, which might detract from its simple melody. The song of the Hebrew alphabet is heard in its simplicity, and may become ours as it was the song of the brethren and sisters of old.

The final letter, the final note may then be ours:

“Let *integrity* and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.” (*verse 21*)

—To be continued

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

“ Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.” (Psalm 137 vs. 7 & 8)

HOW remarkably persistent are the Arab people in their demonstrations of hatred against the Jews and particularly the nation of Israel. They do not learn their lesson. The Straits of Tiran incident, when Egypt blockaded Eilat, Israel's Red Sea Port, which provoked the last large-scale conflict, the aftermath of which was most costly to the Arabs economically and territorially, has not been a sufficient jolt. In the skirmishes since, their spiteful deeds have recoiled heavily upon them. When their agents attacked and hi-jacked aircraft belonging to El-al, Israel's own air-line, the repercussion upon Arab aircraft was far greater. Now the few Jews still living in Arab countries are being terrorised. At the time of writing, nine Jews and five Arabs ostensibly accused of spying for Israel have been hanged in Baghdad's Central Prison and then their bodies were strung up in what is called the Liberation Square of that Iraqui city. What a cruel exhibition, and for no other purpose than to enable the Arabs to gloat from a safe distance at another blow against the Jews. It has been said that though the Government of Iraq says they were spies, it seems incredible that they could have been because of the restrictions already placed upon Jews living in Iraq.

As expected, Jews throughout the world have been shocked and upset at the news, and Western Governments have been perturbed. Especially when it became known that half a million people, including schoolboy guerilla trainees, marched through Baghdad in support of the hangings.

Thronging about the bodies of the executed men, still slung from ropes, they clapped their hands in rhythm, chanting anti-Israeli slogans. The bodies each bore a sign around the neck giving the man's name, religion and the charges against him.

In Israel the Prime Minister addressed a special session of the Jewish Parliament in Jerusalem. He said the hangings were further evidence of what the Arab governments “ have ordained

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for the Jewish people and for each of its individuals if they could do as they pleased". "Between the design of genocide and its perpetration there stands the state of Israel alone—Israel and all its strength." Referring repeatedly to Iraq by its ancient name of Babylon he quoted from the Psalm that forms the heading of this article. "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us". With an emotional phrase, he told those who were listening to his speech on the atrocities, "The Lord shall avenge their blood." Western Press commentators have written in context with this the glib expression that "his countrymen expect that it will be Israel's military arm that will be the avenger". So God is not really taken into account in all this, and even Israel boasts in its own arm of strength, though the Word of God is drawn upon for appropriate and impressive phrases.

But God is truly the avenger, and will repay the inhumanity of those who have not taken His purpose into account. The words of the Psalmist indicate that God will remember the evil and hateful intentions of those who have said concerning Jerusalem. "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof". He will also remember the great power of these present times which occupies a position similar to the position Babylon occupied of old. "O daughter of Babylon (thou) art to be destroyed."

A token of the coming of God's day of vengeance (for any who have "ears to hear") is seen in news which has not been given a great deal of publicity. Arab countries have been suffering recently from what men would refer to as "natural disasters". Heavy floods throughout the Middle East caused millions of pounds of damage. Persia, Turkey, Syria, the Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt have all been badly affected. Approximately one hundred people it is thought have been drowned and thousands have been left homeless in South-West Persia. The situation was made more unpleasant because hill villages were invaded by thousands of poisonous snakes fleeing from the floods. At the same time an earthquake was felt in the city of Gargan in North-East Persia. In North-Eastern Syria helicopters were rescuing 10,000 marooned villagers, and the inhabitants of the large town of Hasaka were cut off by floods, so that essential supplies had to be dropped from aircraft. Parts of Damascus have been under water. The Euphrates has overflowed its banks. Sheep and cattle have been lost, and essential foodstuffs denied to many people.

The Arabs, by these executions in Iraq, have outraged public opinion in the West, including France, and their subsequent out-

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bursts of accusations against Britain and the U.S.A. as retaliation to the criticism provoked in those countries by their own actions.

In Baghdad, 10,000 Iraqis demonstrated outside the British Embassy shouting slogans condemning British interference in domestic affairs of other states. Their ill-considered actions do not help their cause at all, but what is more significant, the U.S.A. and Britain are made to lose any sympathy for the Arabs they may have had and consequently are more disposed towards the Jews. This is how the divine plan intends the situation should be. These things are tokens and reminders of the gradual working out of the purpose of God, which will be the only means of solving the Arab-Israel problem.

D.L.

News from the Ecclesias

Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

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

Eureka Study: Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

It has been a great blessing to receive the Magazine each month, and to hear of the work in various parts of the world—and to learn of the welfare of our brethren and sisters.

As Spring time approaches once again we look forward to visiting Manchester and to the visits of our brethren and sisters to these parts.

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.

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

The lectures this month are entitled: “What is man—Without God”, and the first one: “The madness of his space adventures. World impressing, but never bringing man nearer to God. Where is God?” A little interest has been aroused. It is difficult in this material age to provoke any great interest, but we know if we are careful to be subject to His guidance, any desiring the Truth will be “called”.

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.

When this is in print, all being well, we will have made our witness in the Newtownards Town Hall on February 8th, the subject—“Is the faith of Christendom the faith once delivered to the Saints?”

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Our thoughts are with all who suffer, requiring medical care, and pray that recovery may be speedy.

The deteriorating state of the world, as well as the calendar reminds us that the day we look for and long for, cannot be far distant, when all ills will be healed, if we remain faithful.

J.P.

Eden, New York : Grange Hall, Church Street.

Breaking of Bread, 11-30 a.m. Sunday School, 1-30 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek—Forestville, Buffalo, Hamburg, and

Orchard Park. Alternate weeks: Revelation Study.

The appeals of Brother Steiger continue, that he may be granted exemption from military service for his conscience's sake.

As events in the world fit more closely into the required pattern prior to Jesus' return, we rejoice at the blessings granted of knowing His Purpose, and having the hope of being allowed to participate in its accomplishment.

J.A.DeF.