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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

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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

“CONSIDER YOUR WAYS”

WE have been reading the Word of God sent to us through His prophet, Haggai. These words were spoken to the children of Judah, restored to Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity. As they were engaged in the work of rebuilding the House of God, though few, these words were to accomplish God's desire to stir up the people in the building of this temple. The work of the House had been stopped due to fear of the adversary, and because of a lack of faith in those who had begun the building. In these sad circumstances, Haggai was sent to show God's people what He required of them.

How powerful, then, are these few words spoken by God's messenger at the direction of His Spirit. What an effect they had upon those who had left the work of the House. As we read the message, we find it can be a great help for ourselves as it was to our brethren in Jerusalem so long ago. For, sometimes we feel discouraged; sometimes we appear close to being overwhelmed by the adversary (often our own thinking, our own desires), so are not as quick or as diligent as we should be in the work of His House. God, in His wisdom, knows this and has caused these words of Haggai to be preserved for our help in such circumstances, just as He sent to Judah so long ago. Let us, then, brethren and sisters, listen with our minds open, ready to receive, ready to submit.

“THE TIME IS NOT COME”

Going back to the work of building the House in Jerusalem, we find the mind of the people expressed in Haggai 1 : 2 :

“ . . . This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.”

How easy it is to slip into such a mind about the work . . . “the time is not come” . . . because it may be difficult, because the adversary may hinder, saying it is forbidden to do it. There are always “reasons” . . . “It isn't time”; “I'm too busy”; “It's too much trouble”; “It's too hard”; “Besides, I don't like to do it” . . . how human it sounds! Have we ever used these words, or thought these thoughts? We all have, if we are honest with ourselves, for it is our flesh speaking. Human reasonings, yes . . . but how does it sound to God? As He hears such words, or as He reads such thoughts, it brings sorrow to Him; sometimes it arouses His anger. Yet, in His mercy, He sends help . . . help to overcome such thoughts . . . just as He sent His messenger Haggai to Jerusalem. He sends His message to stir up His people now.

“IS IT TIME?”

Let us listen :

“Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste ?” (Haggai 1 : 3-4).

Those in Jerusalem had time for the things *they* wanted to do, for their own comfort, shelter, needs, desires ; but did not consider the work of the House of God a necessity, overlooking the commands of their God concerning that House. If the House of God were allowed to lie waste, there would be no place to bring the sacrifice, no place to praise, to worship God, no means of communication with God through the high priest ; for we remember God speaking of His House as the place toward which He always looks. Yet, those in Jerusalem were apparently content to go about their own ways, saying, “the time is not come.” It was a lack, a disregard of the One who had brought them to their city and His city.

What was God’s response to their lack of zeal ? He did not in wrath destroy them, nor cast them off, but in His mercy and righteousness, sent His prophet. The words of Haggai 1 : 5 show us His kindness :

“Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts ; *Consider your ways.*”

How gracious ; how long suffering ; how like a Father : “Consider your ways,” he said. We find the word “*consider*” here is actually made up of three Hebrew words, giving the thought of “set your heart upon that which is high or highest.” The Almighty God of Israel said to His people and to us today, “Set your heart upon high and think about your ways.” What were their ways ? Verse 6 tells us :

“Ye have sown much, and bring in little ; ye eat, but ye have not enough ; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink ; ye clothe you, but there is none warm ; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.”

Their ways were not prospering but rather going against them in every way they turned. Set your heart on high ; think about what is happening to you ; are you blessed ? asks the Spirit. Further, in verses 7-9, we read :

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house ; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little ; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why ? saith the Lord

of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.”

“I WILL BLOW UPON IT”

Is this not sometimes our own experience, brethren and sisters ? We want something very badly, even though we may suspect it won't be the best thing for us. It may even distract us from the work of His House. It may take more of our time than it should. It may carry our thoughts from God and His requirements. We decide we must have it ; so we get it and bring it home, anticipating enjoyment, pleasure. And, what happens ? Something goes wrong, and it turns to empty ashes. “When ye brought it home, I did blow upon it,” said the Lord. How expressive this is . . . “to scatter, to lose, to give up.” God so reveals in His Fatherly kindness that it was wrong for us to have it. He says in love, “Consider your ways”; set your heart upon them and recognise that He is not pleased. Can we, any more than those in Jerusalem, expect blessing if our ways do not please our Father ? How expressive of His love are His words, “Consider your ways”.

“NEITHER ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS”

In our desire to carefully consider our ways, we remember the words of God, Isaiah 55 : 8-9 :

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

How fully we can realise this if we truly consider our ways, especially when it is readily apparent that our ways are not prospering. Are we, then, being required to set our heart higher, upon His ways ? Are we being lifted up out of ourselves and brought closer to the ways of the Spirit, the ways that please God ? If we can set our heart higher, we will forget our own needs, our own weaknesses, our own tiredness, our own complaints or grievances, our own wants. Then, how pleased God is when we do His ways quickly, freely, not seeking our own, but looking “on high.”

“THE LORD STIRRED UP THE SPIRIT”

In response to God's words, the people of Judah did consider their ways ; and as a result, we read Haggai 1 : 12-14 :

“Then Zerubbabel . . . and Joshua . . . with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai . . . and the people did fear before the Lord . . . and the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel . .

and the spirit of Joshua . . . and the spirit of all the remnant of the people ; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God . . . ”

The Lord does stir up the spirit of all those who, in truth, do set their heart on high, who consider their ways. He will stir up our spirit, brethren and sisters, as we hearken to His words. It means to awaken. Sometimes our spirit seems to be asleep. God knows this ; this is our great comfort and deliverance.

Through Haggai, Jerusalem *was* stirred up and the work of building the house of God was finished. As it progressed, God was pleased and promised (Haggai 2 : 5-7) :

“According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you : fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts ; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.”

To those in Jerusalem who remembered the former House of God, the glorious temple that Solomon built, the one being built in Jerusalem by this small remnant must have seemed poor by comparison. Yet, it was the House of Yahweh, and, looking ahead, they and we can know how much greater it will be when “the desire of all nations” shall come and fill this House with glory as He has promised. This, brethren and sisters, was the hope of Israel. It is our hope, as well . . . if we, indeed, can set our hearts on high.

What a great help for us, then, are these words of God, written to Judah in Jerusalem because He saw their need. As we listen and realise how much they fill a need for us in these last days, let us together rejoice at the expression of His love, His mercy, His light which reveals our ways and says to us, “Consider your ways.” If it were not for God’s care for us as His children, could we hope to stay in the paths of righteousness ? Could we hope for a part in that House of God, of which He has promised, “I will fill this house with glory” ?

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — *and others* — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

“NOW THESE ARE THE JUDGMENTS WHICH THOU SHALT SET BEFORE THEM.” (Exodus 21 : 1)

IT is hoped that the article last month under the above heading showed that judgment must be made according to God's judgments, upholding the righteous, and condemning the wicked, the rebels. Throughout the Scriptures this is seen as a test of faith on the part of God's servants.

The following is a brief summary of the divine instruction on the necessity of judging for the preservation of the Truth by the condemnation and removal of rebels :

In the days of Seth, men began—

“to call themselves by the name of the Lord.”

(Genesis 4 : 26. Margin).

thus condemning those who were not so called.

At the time of the flood, those entering the Ark judged all outside as condemned by God, however genial, kind and apparently “weak in the faith” some may have seemed. When God shut the door of the Ark, it is obvious that it was not His will that the righteous should remain with those who might be called “weak”.

Abraham, by his obedience in leaving Ur, meaning *light*, condemned those making this false claim. Doubtless there would be in the city of Ur some who appeared weak and needed strengthening, but at the time of this division this was not allowed to prevent carrying out the divine command to separate.

Brethren and sisters in Israel were called upon to judge, to condemn by stoning to death those guilty of defying God's Law. In this there must be a lesson for today. That in withdrawal there is the same judgment, albeit a suspended sentence of death, only to be ratified by Christ at His coming, unless there is repentance, and return to the Body.

Departure from the Faith in one city of Israel was to be the responsibility of all :

“If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities . . .

the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known ;

Then shalt thou inquire and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you ;

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Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.”

Deuteronomy 13 : 12-15.

What is the lesson for today ? That each member is responsible for all. No shirking of the responsibility for dealing with evil in the Body, by saying that “it is not our concern.” Clearly, a proof that in the matter of doctrine it is unscriptural to claim “Ecclesial Autonomy.”

In the endorsing of this teaching, Jesus showed that an evil member of the Body must be judged, condemned, and cut off :

“Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee ; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.” (Matthew 18 : 8).

The Lord was careful to give instructions how this was to be done. Mercifully, but yet with due regard to God’s honour. First, by seeing the offender alone. Then, if he does not “hear”, with “witnesses”, so that in accordance with the Spirit of Christ in the Law, “in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established”. Finally, by the Ecclesia admonishing. Failing to respond to these three opportunities of divine mercy, it is obviously wrong to go on parleying with the rebel. for Jesus says, he must be cut off for he is to be regarded as the “heathen man and a publican.” Jesus obviously would not regard such as a brother, and does it not seem out of place that those desirous of following Jesus should address such an one as “brother” ?

The Apostles followed giving the same divine guidance, which it will be noted in some instances is based on the Spirit of Christ in the Law :

“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ?

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.” (I. Corinthians 5 : 6-7).

“I would they were even cut off which trouble you.”

(Galatians 5 : 12).

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” (II. Thessalonians 3 : 6).

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome

words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness . . . from such withdraw thyself." (I. Timothy 6 : 3-5).

"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject." (Titus 3 : 10).

Note that the first admonition is when the "witnesses" visit, and the second when the offender is admonished by the Ecclesia.

**THE METHOD OF ESTABLISHING THE PRINCIPLES
OF THE TRUTH
AND DEALING WITH OBJECTIONS THERETO**

Every principle of Truth must first be derived from an understanding of God's purpose. Only by this means will correct conclusions be reached, and welcome relief found from becoming entangled in what may appear some contradictory statements of Scripture. Let us explain.

In youth there is a tendency to rely upon isolated verses to prove a principle of Truth ; which the adversary will be quick to counter with other verses which suggest the opposite. We have all gone through this time-wasting experience.

How much better to prove the mortality of man by showing that God's purpose with sinners is to convince them that sin merits death, and that the only hope is in the resurrection : to show that the idea of continuity of life at death presents insoluble difficulties inimical to the purpose of God. That only those, whose characters have been developed with the aid of God's Law are worthy, in the mercy of God, to survive. For the rest a future life would be no good to them or to anyone else. We need not elaborate for the present readers. Having established the principle that man is mortal from such a general consideration, then support can be found in all the many texts which show this.

Finally, the objectors' verses must be explained, not explained away. The heaven-bent mind grasps at such Scriptures as :

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

(Ecclesiastes 12 : 7).

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23 : 43).

And of course, there are a number of other verses which can be used to suggest a continuity of life at death. To all these there are satisfactory explanations to what appear to be contradictions to the general teaching of the Scripture, which, seeing the readers

know these, they need not be gone into at this time. Reference is made to this common ground with the readers, to show the way of establishing a principle of truth from a consideration of the whole purpose of God, and then faithfully and honestly meeting the inevitable objections.

**OBJECTIONS ANSWERED TO THE PRESENT NECESSITY
OF CONDEMNING AND "CUTTING OFF" REBELS
FROM THE BODY**

This may be called the negative aspect of the doctrine of fellowship; but only negative in the sense that the true servants of God are required to uphold the "cutting off" of rebels in these days, for the preservation of the Truth. Let rebels remain in the Body, and there will soon be no Truth, as the Scriptures warn, and the history of the Truth from the beginning clearly shows.

A very marked symptom of an apostate sect is the denial of this essential part of the doctrine of fellowship. They wince at the sight of blood shed at the cutting off; without realising it is better to amputate a Hymenaeus, than by retaining a cankerous member for the whole body to perish with an admittedly fatal disease. In their flinching from carrying out what is divinely required for the preservation of God's Truth, they resort to certain passages of Scripture, which they believe give them license for knowing better than God. Just as the Trinitarian will use or rather mis-use certain verses to bolster up his ill-conceived and grotesque ideas.

It is proposed to examine the Scriptures used by these who once had the Truth, in support of their erroneous view, that there is no need for "cutting off" rebels; no need of spiritual surgery. As far as our experience goes the main passages of Scripture, which are wrested to attempt to prove this are:

That in Israel there were twelve tribes; twelve ways therefore into the Kingdom.

The assurance to Elijah at Horeb that God had preserved a "remnant". (I. Kings 19: 18 and Romans 11: 5).

That Jesus said: "judge not, that ye be not judged."
(Matthew 7: 1).

That a brother must not be judged because of what Paul said: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more."
(Romans 14: 13).

That it is wrong to judge before the "time". "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness." (I. Cor. 4: 5).
"The Lord knoweth them that are His." (II. Timothy 2: 19).

There may be other passages pressed into service of denying the necessity to “cut off” or “withdraw”, and if such are brought to our notice an attempt will be made to answer.

It is possible that the objectors’ misuse of the seven letters to the Asian Ecclesias, will have to be considered, and faithfully explained.

In the next issue, it is proposed to deal with the above items in turn.

(. . . 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 34

“A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech ; who drove him away, and he departed.”

THIS title needs no exposition. The meaning is quite clear. Suffice it to say that the title is part of the inspired Word. In the Hebrew Bible the title is the first verse. Why the translators of the Authorised Version should have not made it so, it is impossible to say. It is one of the many instances where the children of God, in their comparative ignorance may have given to them what is denied to those who only have the “form of godliness”, and consequently the hidden treasures of God’s Word are never revealed to them.

No longer should any of the titles of the Psalms be looked upon as captions given by men, like the headings which appear at the top of most Bible pages. The titles are inspired ; they are God given, and afford the means of finding the living power or Spirit, which the Psalms can convey.

Children have often been taught to recite this Psalm, which contains many sublime and uplifting thoughts. Yet they, and their parents cannot appreciate the great help in the Psalm unless what appears as the title is taken into consideration. Who has not heard, and perhaps valued the words :

“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” (verses 6-8).

But how much more these words come to mean when we know what were the "troubles" out of which David was delivered. Then we perceive how marvellous was God's protection, and the intervention of His angels. May we then spend a few moments with David, refreshing the memory of his experiences, which came to mean so much to him as expressed in this Psalm, and in which we may share.

DAVID'S TRIAL AT THE HANDS OF SAUL, AND DELIVERANCE

David had been anointed King, while his father-in-law was yet the King of Israel. A Gentile in David's position would have quickly assumed the position of ruler, even if to do so it had meant the assassination of Saul. Profane history is full of such accounts, such as the murder of Julius Caesar so that his rival Mark Antony might gain the crown. Since David had been anointed, and had right on his side, the killing of Saul could have been argued to be completely justified. David, however, knew that it would have been wrong to raise his hand against the "Lord's anointed". Hence, he restrained himself from doing so on more than one occasion. His appeals to the madly jealous Saul breathed the Spirit of Christ. Animated by this Spirit, David chose to suffer persecution, rather than sin by destroying Saul.

This Psalm allows us to know and feel the intensity of David's persecution; and what is so wonderful God's graciousness in the ultimate deliverance of David.

The circumstances causing David to become an exile are given. Through the provision of Jonathan, David was made aware of Saul's murderous intentions. Jonathan had pleaded with his father that David might be allowed to live in peace. In temper Saul even cast a javelin at his own son, so that he "knew that it was determined of his father to slay David." David was secretly informed by Jonathan, which allowed him to escape.

He came to Nob where the priest gave bread to David and those with him. Here, also, David received at the hands of the priest the sword which was Goliath's. A wicked spy was there—Doeg the Edomite—the chief of Saul's herdmen. Not an Israelite, which shows Saul's lack of appreciation of God's requirements when making his appointments.

David realised how he had been trapped, and determined to flee the land, to Achish the King of Gath. Unexpectedly, it might seem, this Philistine, a natural enemy of Israel, befriended David, and gave him a place in which to dwell—Ziklag. After fourteen months when Achish heard of how David had been praised in Israel in the words :

“Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,” his manner towards David was immediately changed making David “sore afraid”. David realised that he was now looked upon as an enemy and might be tortured or killed. What was David to do? Escape in the ordinary way must have been impossible. So :

“He changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.”

(I. Samuel 21 : 13).

As the title of the Psalm says : this is why Achish “drove him away”. David’s grief at this time, his distress and fear, we should never know apart from this Psalm. And what is more important we should never realise David’s devout appreciation of God’s power in delivering him. This was to David an earnest of the salvation he sought, and which we, in company with David also seek. The melodious chords of this Psalm which must have sustained David’s heart, can also comfort and sustain ours.

**“I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES : HIS PRAISE
SHALL CONTINUALLY BE IN MY MOUTH.”** (verse 1)

Only by deliverance from some trying experience is the power of God appreciated. Then these words can find a spontaneous and sincere expression of the heart. When God has shown unmistakably that He has intervened on our behalf, as He did on David’s, then He is felt to be nigh, not far off. A condescension which seems beyond realisation. Yet there is no doubting the experience, just as there was no doubt about the power which delivered David in a most miraculous way.

Perhaps the first experience for many is in their seeking God. For a while they seem to have found Him in some apostate sect who profess to have *the* Truth. Then disappointment and disillusionment quickly follow. Instead of the light of the Truth shining clearly in the doctrines preached and practised, there is obviously a great lack ; a most frightening contradiction of holy writ ; a complete failure by the members to be “joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.” Efforts to see through the cloud of darkness to discern the light in such circumstances fail, and fills the mind with the cry : “Where shall I find Him?” Assurances from those claiming to be brethren do nothing to allay the anxiety, to dispel the darkness. Rather do they tend to make confusion worse confounded. Unknown at the time, God is watching, looking down, and by apparently natural circumstances leads those who are cast down to the light of *the* Truth. When this is found, the heart is overwhelmed with the glory revealed, giving a powerful and living

meaning to the Word not previously discerned, and making the darkness left behind appear more dark than ever.. The words of this Psalm then evoke a delightful melody in the heart of praise and thanksgiving, with the resounding chords :

“O taste and see that the Lord is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” (verse 8).

There are other experiences which tell us of the same godly care, making the faithful and sensitive mind realise that :

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” (verse 19).

Space will not permit to record a fraction of these : the deliverance in the First World War and the Second ; the release from the armed forces of someone who embraced the Truth in time of war ; escape from the “draft”, when arrest and imprisonment seemed the only outlook ; yet when all seemed so hopeless, by a combination of circumstances pointing to the work of a higher power, a marvellous deliverance ! And what a deliverance ! Making the words of this Psalm sound forth with a splendid and divine melody. May they fill our hearts as undoubtedly they did David’s, enabling him to endure to the end :

“I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants : and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.”

(verses 4, 15, 17 and 22).

(. . . to be continued)

The Gospel

SINAI THE PLACE OF JUDGMENT

INEVITABLY when the mind learns that there is to be a judgment of “the quick (those alive) and the dead”, the question that arises is, where will this take place ?

Christ clearly shows that the judgment will take place in the earth at His personal return. The Apostle Paul speaking on this theme to believers says—

“ . . . we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall

bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
(Romans 14 : 10-12).

Where, then, in the earth will this take place ?

The call to the Truth, is a calling out from the nations, “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (II. Cor. 6 : 17). The world from which ecclesias are taken (Greek *ekklesia*—that which is called out) is “spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” (Revelation 11 : 8).

The mind therefore, by such contemplation, looks back to the taking of a nation out of Egypt three and a half millenia ago under the divine hand ; which event became a type for believers throughout the ages. Concerning this, the Apostle Paul writes—

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ;

And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; And did all eat the same spiritual meat ; and did all drink the same spiritual drink : for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them ; and that Rock was Christ.”

(I. Corinthians 10 : 1-4).

When Israel “came out” they began a journey which essentially had to take them to Sinai before they could enter the “promised land”. Sinai could not be by-passed. The fact that forty years elapsed before they entered “the land” did not detract from the type. Israel could quickly have entered Canaan, after their visit to Sinai if they had been obedient. The fact is that the responsible disobedient ones were prevented as unworthy, but were not cut off at that time. God had a purpose of protection and blessing for their children, who were to be given an opportunity to be obedient, according to the irrevocable promises made to the patriarch fathers. Hence the disobedient parents were allowed to live forty years in the wilderness for the sake of their children.

Sinai was a most important stage of the journey as previously stated. There the law was given, and it is by His law that God judges. The law was part of His word, which Christ fulfilled completely in expression and action, concerning which Jesus declared :

“ . . . the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge . . . in the last day.” (John 12 : 48).

The spirit of the law, as distinct from its ordinances, is clearly shown by this to be as essential today as in those early times. It will be the standard or measure of God’s judgment, and rightly so, be-

cause there could not be two standards, one for Israel of old and one for Gentile believers of later times, for God is perfectly just.

At Sinai God revealed His presence in a powerful and miraculous visitation. At Sinai "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" was heard. God's arrangement was that "when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount" (Exodus 19 : 13). A reminder that in the last day "the trumpet shall sound" gathering through the resurrection all that have participated in Israel, Jew and Gentile, to this place of judgment. (I. Thess. 4 : 16 and I. Cor. 15 : 52).

The importance of Sinai in the purpose of God is implied in the Psalms :

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels : The Lord is among them, (as in) in Sinai, in the holy place." (Psalm 68 : 17).

These words are spoken in context with reference to Christ, who "hast ascended on high" and "hast led captivity captive" (see also Ephesians 4 : 8). What Jesus has done, and the blessings and gifts that have been bestowed by Him upon those called out are an earnest of the ultimate blessing and deliverance. But not until after Sinai, and therefore the judgment.

Moses speaking of the coming up from Sinai after the judgment, of which the coming up of Israel of old was a type, declares :

"The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints ; from his right hand went a fiery law for them." (Deuteronomy 33 : 2).

Again in Habakkuk 3 : 3 it is declared :

"God came from Teman, and the HOLY ONE from mount Paran."

Again concerning the "Holy One" it is written :

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save . . . for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, *and the year of my redeemed is come.*"

(Isaiah 63 : 1-4).

How remarkable then to contemplate that at the present time Sinai remains a place apart. In this world of modern communications it is still strangely remote, desolate and uninhabited, though not so far, by present standards from large cities such as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, or Cairo. Is it not perhaps significant also that the nation of Israel is now in control of the Sinai Peninsula, preventing access by the armies of the Arab powers ?

Sinai remains a living testimony in its awe-inspiring setting of God's visitation of old to bring to Israel His judgments. It is a witness also to those "called out" that there is a place of judgment prepared by God for them.

D.L.

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

"FEAR NOT : FOR I AM WITH THEE : I WILL BRING THY SEED FROM THE EAST, AND GATHER THEE FROM THE WEST ;

I WILL SAY TO THE NORTH, GIVE UP ; AND TO THE SOUTH, KEEP NOT BACK : BRING MY SONS FROM FAR, AND MY DAUGHTERS FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH."

(Isaiah 43 : 5-6).

ISRAEL may seem to be operating efficiently against her enemies at the present time, no doubt helped by the confidence which successes in recent years have engendered. But the United States policy of holding back aircraft, which Israel desires, is a blow to that nation. Israel of course, has helped her own position where the balance of power is concerned by her continuing ability of destroying the weapons of the opposing forces. A recent claim was that Egypt lost another five MiG 21 jets after a dogfight over Suez City; a few days previously four more had been accounted for. The total number of aircraft therefore, which Egypt and Syria have lost since the June 1967 war ended, has now reached 102, during which time Israel lost only 19. Other factors also help Israel's position. The Arab cause was weakened as a result of recent clashes in Lebanon between the non-Moslem Phalangists and Palestinian guerrillas. Fighting on several occasions became general in Beirut with gun fire crackling across the various roads and streets ; and the absence of official security forces in the districts of conflict inferred that the government itself was unable to give authoritative directions to end the street warfare.

Nevertheless some political observers fear that the balance of power may move away from Israel in the mid-seventies, with the possibility then of direct U.S.A. intervention on the Vietnamese pattern, because Israel, like South Vietnam, is a small, Westernised anti-Communist country.

There are some politicians in the Western world who are pro-Arab in outlook, blaming the continuing dangerous situation largely

upon Israel. They overlook that Arab nations caused the trouble in the first place, and though they have lost much they have only themselves to blame. Jerusalem, that is the old city, was barred to Jews until 1967; now Israel has control, it is understandable that she is not prepared to relinquish it. The Arabs have only their own previous transgression to blame for Israel's firm political line.

The outlook for the present is that both sides will lose men in continuing half-war and both will be under economic strain. Eventually the half-war will become a full scale one again. But what assurance there is in Scripture that Israel will not be destroyed. God has declared :

“Fear not : for I am with thee : I will bring thy seed . . . ”
(Isaiah 43 : 5).

In context with this promise is the divine declaration :

“I will say to the North, Give up ; . . . bring my sons from far . . . ” (verse 6).

At the present time there are about three and a half million Jews in the Soviet Union. Leaders of Jewish communities outside Russia believe that a large proportion of these would like to emigrate. In 1959, half a million Jews took the risk of declaring Yiddish to be their mother tongue. This meant they would become liable to particular governmental surveillance. Russia, no doubt, would like the Jews to become assimilated amongst its people, but a great many do not want to totally lose their identity. A factor that helps to keep their distinctive communities is the still traceable anti-Semitism in the common people of Russia and also in official propaganda. So Jews are instinctively drawn to each other. But Jewish institutions are greatly curbed, or forbidden altogether such as schools and newspapers. Only one Jewish monthly “Sovietish Heimland” is published in Yiddish. A few books have also been allowed to be printed in Yiddish, but they are strictly non-political and non-Zionist. The Soviet rules are against a positive Jewish way of life.

If Jews could leave Russia they would almost certainly go to Israel. Some have relatives there, and there is also the historical and emotional drawing power of the land of their forefathers. But the Soviet Government keeps the door closed. In recent years only a very few Jews have been allowed out of the country. These have been mainly old people or the occasional single member of a family who was left behind in Russia in the chaotic final years of the Second World War.

The U.S.S.R. uses the argument that Soviet Jews are not being discriminated against because of a rule that applies to all Russian

citizens of having no right of emigration. But there are other reasons why the North will not "give up". Soviet prestige requires an appearance of all its citizens being patriotic and happy. If Jews were to leave Russia in great numbers the U.S.S.R. would lose face, it would not appear to be quite the workers' and farmers' paradise which Soviet propaganda claims. There is also the Middle East question itself. An area which Russian leaders consider very important in the furtherance of their international policies. The Arab world is the place for Soviet economic, political and military penetration at the present time. Having greatly supported the Arab cause, Russia obviously finds that large-scale Jewish emigration if allowed would turn the Arabs against them. Israel with two and a half million inhabitants is detested by the Arabs; if Russia were to permit the population of Israel to grow to four million by releasing Jews from Soviet territory then its own Middle East schemes would be greatly undermined.

Though there have not been pogroms in recent times, there have been "trials" with a racial slant to them; an admittance that Soviet Jews are a national as well as religious grouping. There has been the ugly daubing of swastikas in the Soviet Union, particularly in the region of Bokhara. Also an increasing press attack on "international" Zionism and on the State of Israel. How inconsistent when communism is admitted to be "international"! The Jewish communities position in the Soviet Union is obviously not an easy one; and hope is denied to them of eventually leaving for a better existence because mass emigration is not going to be allowed.

Here is a sign, for the situation reveals that the time is near, according to the purpose of God, when the divine decree will go forth to the North saying, "Give up".

In the context of this prophecy God declares:

"I will work, and who shall let it?" (margin, turn it back?).
(verse 13).

"Thus saith the Lord . . . which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow." (verse 17).

The time will surely come when the weapons of man's device and his war-like activities will utterly cease. Fear will then give place to the joy and tranquility of peace.

D.L.

Correspondence

Letter received from B. S. Snelling, Surrey. Editor of the Old Paths Magazine :

I am grateful to you for complying with my request that you should let me see a copy of your magazine in which you criticise the *Old Paths*.

May I ask if you will give me space in "The Remnant" to reply to your criticisms and will you agree to print my reply without deletion and amendment ?

REPLY :

Yes, by all means we will give you space in "The Remnant", for your reply, providing that you will accord to myself the same facilities in your Magazine—and always providing that they are not too long.

Further letter received :

However I cannot see any justification for the condition you impose on my being allowed to reply in your Magazine to criticisms you have made therein regarding *The Old Paths*. You made specific criticisms of us (not completely correct) and mentioned *The Old Paths* by name at least three times. These called for a reply.

On the other hand, we have not been criticising *The Remnant*, and hence there is no reason why we should give you space in our Magazine.

If you decide to withdraw your condition, I am still ready to send you my reply, provided you agree to print it in full.

REPLY :

It would seem that if we are both desirous of making known the Truth, as we believe it, then there should be a mutual desire for the copies of our letters to appear both in the *Old Paths Magazine* as well as in the *Remnant*.

There is one point which must be mentioned before I conclude : that if in the *Remnant*, any incorrect fact has been stated, as distinct from deductions from such fact, then quite apart from yourself, it is my duty to make a correction and an apology. Will you please say.

Further letter received :

Under the condition imposed by you and in the absence of the assurance for which I asked, I do not wish to make any comment to you regarding your criticisms of *The Old Paths* . . .

NOTE :

If readers are desirous of seeing the comments made against *The Old Paths* in the February Issue of the *Remnant*, a copy will be sent on request.

W.V.B

News from the Ecclesias

Eden, New York. Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread 11-30 a.m., Sunday School 1-30 p.m., Bible Class : Midweek ; Forestville, Buffalo, Hamburg and Orchard Park. Alternate week : Revelation Study.

As our brethren and sisters have been allowed the privilege of the fraternal gathering, our hearts have been with them, looking toward the time of the gathering when all the brethren and sisters of Christ will be assembled for eternity. Our prayer is that we may be found acceptable in that day.

As this country is torn by strikes, violence, crime, riots, protesters, we long for the time of Jesus' return, believing this great event is the only solution. These signs reveal that time to be very close.

As two from here hope to be in England, God willing, in August, gratitude is felt for the love seen in the plans and thoughtfulness on their behalf.

J.A.DeF.

Northern Ireland. Newtownards, Co. Down.

Two from Ireland through the Father's care were present at the first Fraternal Gathering in Manchester, and felt greatly the blessing and help of the exhortations, and the renewed associations with all there.

We are very grateful to all who looked after them in so many ways, helping to make their visit both happy and free from any anxiety.

J.P.

Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

It has been the privilege of one from here to attend the Fraternal Gathering on Monday, 30th March.

The Sunday Meetings including the Sunday School Address were most uplifting.

Then the Fraternal Addresses on Monday, all being particularly suited to the present time, were greatly appreciated.

We were grateful for the ministrations and counsel of Bro. J. Smith on March 15th.

It was a happy occasion to have met our new brother and sister and also to note the improvement of so many who have been suffering ill health.

We were also pleased to have received the dates when the various brethren and sisters and our American visitors also, are hoping to visit us this summer, and we look forward to these blessings.

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.

On the occasion of the Fraternal Gathering on March 30th, the visits of many brethren and sisters, helped us appreciate how Paul felt when he was greeted by the brethren as he journeyed to Rome. "He thanked God, and took courage."

The consideration of the subject, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts", was most helpful and comforting in the midst of difficulties being experienced by various brethren and sisters. We were grateful for the help of Bro. R. Wood.

Lectures for the month of May are generally entitled, "There is no substitute for God", being a witness against an article in the Reader's Digest for April : "Is there a substitute for God ?"

W.V.B.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

An invitation is extended to an Address
to be given at a

Private Meeting for Christadelphians

Saturday, 9th May, 1970, at 3-30 p.m.

in the

GRANVILLE HALL, Y.W.C.A.

5 Granville Road (off London Road), LEICESTER

"The History of the Truth in the Latter Days"

The essential doctrine of fellowship.
How the Truth may be preserved or lost.

Speaker Mr. W. V. Butterfield

Questions Allowed