

OCTOBER 1970

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

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NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“HERE AM I; SEND ME”

WE HAVE BEEN READING the words of God addressed to Israel through His prophet Isaiah. This man was chosen to bring hope to Israel, hope of God's kingdom to be accomplished through the Messiah to come. As a consequence, as we listen to God speaking through His prophet, we are hearing the hope of Israel. As Israel was encouraged, strengthened through their hope, we, too, may find the help we need to endure until that hope is accomplished. These are difficult times; the world about us has become more and more evil, lax in its morality, unheeding of law and order, polluted by mankind. It is a time of trial, or probation to determine if the hope of Israel will sustain us until Jesus returns.

Let us look, then, to Isaiah for that needed help. His very name spoke to our Hebrew brethren, for it means *salvation of God*. To His people, Isaiah prophesied of their deliverance. When we think of this great work given, we might naturally think how strong, how faithful he must have been to accomplish it. He often faced persecution, ridicule, danger, because of God's words which he spoke. Yet, when we are allowed a glimpse of Isaiah's spirit in this record, we see a meek man, one quick to turn to God for help in time of need, feeling meek and unworthy of such great responsibility.

In Isaiah 6, we read of the prophet's experience to strengthen. He saw (verses 1-3) a vision of God's glory:

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims . . . and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.”

As Isaiah saw the vision, his reaction tells us a lot, verse 5:

“. . . Woe is me! for . . . I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

In comparison to the glory, the perfection of God, Isaiah recognized and acknowledged how far short he came. He realized that, being human, he failed; he was a man of *unclean lips* and, as such, was not worthy to speak the words of God. “I am undone,” Isaiah said. We find this word is used for, “to be brought to silence,” “to be cut down or destroyed.” This was how he felt as he saw the glory of God, unable to respond, being sinful and, as such, not worthy to speak the holy words of God to Israel. In this recognition of his state, he is an example for us. We must realize, as our brother

did, that our nature, our lips which express the heart, are not naturally subject to God and are not able to do or speak the things of the Spirit. This is vital to our hope of salvation, for it makes us, as it did Isaiah, want to be different, to put away the flesh, to cleanse our lips.

“A LIVE COAL . . . FROM OFF THE ALTAR”

In this desire, help is given, Isaiah 6 : 6-7 :

“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar : And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips ; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

This is the work of the Spirit. It cleanses by destroying the flesh with all its inherent iniquity. To be touched on the lips with a live coal would be extremely painful ; it would burn deeply. Yet, in the wisdom of God, it was what was required that the prophet might faithfully go about the work.

Brethren and sisters, let us try to make this experience of Isaiah our experience. We must realize that we, too, are of unclean lips and are not worthy of the work of God. It is not easy to acknowledge that we are unworthy. It reflects the spirit of the publican who, when he entered the temple, prayed, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” We, too, must be able to recognize that we *are* sinners—therefore unworthy. When we are able to do so, from the heart, then God grants the blessing of cleansing by the Spirit’s fire. It makes us think of the fire which refines silver and gold by burning away the dross, that which can be consumed or altered, and leaving behind the precious metals which are untouched by the fire, and are so pleasing to the finer.

This was the mind of Isaiah—“I am undone.” Let us strive to make it our mind as we, too, are permitted to glimpse the glory and power of God. Do we seek the living coal, realizing it is the only means of cleansing for us ?

“AN OFFERING MADE BY FIRE”

As we think about this fire from the altar, our mind goes to the figure of the whole burnt offering, where under the law, the children of Israel brought a male from the flock. The priest offered first the head and the fat upon the fire, then the inwards and the legs were washed and added to the head. All was consumed by that altar fire. Does this not speak to us of the work of Jesus, the head, offered up, His flesh consumed by the Spirit, so that the rest of His body could be washed and, joined with their Head, become an “offering

made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." All consumed, leaving only the ashes which, having come through the fire, are precious to God.

Was the live coal from the altar, which touched the prophet's lips, a part of the consuming process seen in the figure of the whole burnt offering? Do we, then, welcome it, much as it may hurt, as it destroys the flesh, as it consumes that which displeases God in each of us, as it leaves only that which is precious in His sight? When the fire had accomplished its work, Isaiah became God's messenger, to bring deliverance to His people. If we allow the Spirit fire to accomplish its work in us, brethren and sisters, we, too, are permitted to go about His work, grateful for the privilege. The prophet's experiences are a help for us in our struggle to be His messengers.

"WHOM SHALL I SEND?"

As soon as the live coal from the altar had accomplished its work, Isaiah "heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah's response in gratitude and in the desire to glorify God was, ". . . here am I; send me." His flesh must have trembled at the prospect of going to his brethren to tell them of their idolatry, but when that flesh was consumed by the fire, his immediate response was "send me" for he was anxious to be about that work. How much easier it is to sit back, to let others do it, especially if it is a difficult or distasteful work that is required. The mind of Isaiah is a help to us in these times which may be difficult for us. If we move in Isaiah's spirit—"Here am I; send me"—like the prophet, we can be helped in whatever circumstances the "being sent" may place us.

Again, Isaiah's experiences help; God said, verse 9:

" . . . Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."

How difficult it is to go to a people who will not see nor understand. From our own experiences, we find pleasure in working with those who are responsive, who hear, who perceive, who value what is presented. But, when it is necessary to go to those who are rebellious—who will not hear, nor perceive, we are inclined to shrink from it, to put it off. It may be unpleasant; it certainly isn't enjoyable; yet, our spirit must be, "Here am I; send me." As Isaiah went to his brethren in Israel, he often must have been greatly discouraged, must have been disappointed at their lack of response to the Word of God. Yet, he was helped, encouraged by His God, verse 13:

“But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return . . . so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

A promise given to His messengers—there will be a tenth, a *remnant*, a holy seed that will be the substance, the pillars of His House. With this encouragement, Isaiah went forth in faith, doing all that God required as His messenger, sustained always by the hope that a few—a *remnant*, one or two here or there—would hear, would see, would respond, so becoming the holy seed.

A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY

When we say, as did the prophet, “Send me,” what a grave responsibility is laid upon us. The going forth must be in keeping with God’s commands. It must be done circumspectly, carefully upholding God’s righteousness, condemning the evil, upholding the right. It must be done with firmness yet with love, as we can visualize how the Lord Jesus would do it. All too often, we can be blinded, perhaps with our children or with those who are close to us, failing to discern that which displeases God and, therefore, failing to condemn it as wrong in His sight. When we say to our Father, “Here am I ; send me.” let us be sure that we are rising up to our responsibility as His messengers. If we can go with our lips touched by that Spirit from the Altar, we are helped, directed, and strengthened even as was our brother, Isaiah.

Let us, then, go forth resolutely in that spirit, brethren and sisters ; for if we do, we may be allowed to be a help toward salvation to one or two whom God wants as His holy seed, and we may, with Isaiah, know God’s approval.

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — *and others* — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

ALL WILL HAVE HAD the experience of meeting those who wishing to prove some pet theory, have taken certain passages of Scripture, and by oft repeating them seem to have persuaded themselves that what they believe is right.

An example of this happened many years ago in the case of a relative who wished to believe that death was not the end. Vainly we tried in our youth to show that he was wrong ; that death was a just sentence for sin. Looking back we can see that all our argument was of no use. Although intelligent, all that our relative could

say, was that "the dust returns to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." We ought to have realised that argument was useless, and that there was no desire to understand the Truth of God with the blessed provision of life which it promises.

Christendom abounds with this type, although perhaps not so numerous as fifty years ago, because belief now is so hazy and ambiguous. In either case Christendom is astray.

Let us beware we do not fall into the same error concerning the simple principle that there are only two positions for mankind before God : In the One Body undivided, or outside that Body. In the first case there is hope, but none in the second. So the Spirit in accordance with this declares that the "world lieth in wickedness". It must follow that if the One Body is left, either voluntarily or by withdrawal, then such reverts to the second position and is without hope unless he repents and returns. This brings withdrawal into true scriptural perspective ; delivers it from a matter of opinion and of doubt to one of conviction for the benefit of the erring, and also for the benefit of the Body, by all being caused to "hear and fear." Does not the Apostle Peter say ? :

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

(II. Peter 2 : 21-22).

It is clear that the One Body cannot be divided, and that where division has taken place, those espousing the wrong either by being guilty of it or fellowshiping those that are, have departed from the Faith, and again are without hope, unless they repent and return.

In order to bring to the attention of many in the divided sects of Christadelphia the gravity of their position, these articles are being written to show the value and the immutability of God's judgments, and in addition to point out the simple truth that a divided Body in which each sect speaks of the others as "brethren" is self-condemned in proclaiming what amounts to a divided Christ.

To support this erroneous position, certain passages of scripture are taken, without regard to the principles of the Truth or context in the same manner as the relative who cherished the false hope that death was not death but the gate of life. One of such passages which it is now our duty to examine is :

“JUDGE NOTHING BEFORE THE TIME, UNTIL THE LORD COME.”
(I. Corinthians 4 : 5).

As was seen last month if there is to be no judgment, there is bound to be departure from the Faith. It may seem kind and charitable in the case of those who have espoused some false doctrine to speak of them as “brethren”, and give them the impression that they still have the Truth and the hope which this provides. Such an attitude is destructive of the Truth, and is bound to lead to the rapid increase of apostasy. The *others*, who have tried to defend their position, by claiming that they must not judge in such cases have forfeited the precious hope which only true judgment can provide.

Now it is our duty to examine the meaning of the above passage, and to show that it does not contradict the specific command of the Lord Jesus to “judge righteous judgment”.

We need to look at the context going back to the previous chapter, remembering that in the original there were no chapter divisions so that often the argument is broken by such and tends to give a wrong impression. The Apostle says :

“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours ; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours. And ye are Christ’s ; and Christ is God’s.”

(I. Corinthians 3 : 21-23).

Continuing the Apostle goes on :

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found **faithful**

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment (note the margin is *day*) : yea, I judge not mine own self.” (I. Corinthians 4 : 1-3).

The exhortation of the Apostle to the Ecclesia in Corinth was that they were not to glory in men as evidently some were doing, some saying they were of Paul and others of Apollos. Such judgment was contrary to truth, and the brethren and sisters needed to be reminded that the day was coming when however honourable a brother might appear, the Lord would bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Then, and only then would those who were found worthy “have praise of God.” This is why the Apostle says “it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s *day*”, for it is the divine day that will reveal all.

To help the brethren and sisters in Corinth to refrain from “comparing themselves with themselves”, and to realise that it is wrong to glory in men—even in the Apostles—Paul goes on to say :

“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes ; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

For who maketh thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou *glory* as if thou hadst not received it.”

(I. Corinthians 4 : 6-7).

Is it not a fact that in a Body where men are glorified to an inordinate extent, because of their ability, or education, then the rank and file place their trust in these instead of in God and His Word ? There is perhaps nothing which has tended to captivate men’s minds, and make them impervious to the light of the Truth, more than the unwarranted exaltation of men, who, by their eloquence or education have given an impression of glory which is not true glory. In this connection the state of Christendom provides an ample warning. Many learned, many noble, many wise in this world are deceived with regard to the future life because they glory in men, whom they feel, because of their education, know far better than they do, and so they are led to place their trust in the glory of men rather than in the glory of God. The warning could not be more eloquent or powerful for the present day, where this same tendency has evaporated faith as men with Gentile learning and education have assumed the leadership of the *others*.

It is most helpful to learn from the Apostle’s letter to the brethren and sisters in Corinth, that the words above did not prevent him saying that they were required to judge in matters affecting the purity of the Truth.

“FOR I VERILY . . . HAVE JUDGED ALREADY”

(I. Corinthians 5 : 3)

“For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (I. Corinthians 5 : 3-6).

In this case whereby the Body had been defiled, the Apostle Paul judged and required the brethren and sisters in Corinth to do the same. "To deliver such an one unto Satan," would be to withdraw and hand him over to the Adversary—the world. Jesus has warned that in the world where the flesh is in opposition to Him it will be consumed and destroyed ; as He says :

"Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ;

That ye may eat the *flesh* of kings, and the *flesh* of captains, and the *flesh* of mighty men, and the *flesh* of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the *flesh* of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."

(Revelation 19 : 17-18).

Careful consideration of the Apostle's words will show how important withdrawal is—to deliver the guilty to Satan, otherwise the "spirit" will not be saved. The day of the Lord will certainly come, when those who falsely claim to have the Spirit and to "have eaten and drunken at His table and in His presence", will be rejected ; will be told to depart into the world wherein the severe judgments of God will destroy all those whose faith has been a pretence.

How fitting is the last verse quoted in which the Apostle says, "your glorying is not good". Is not this a further reminder that where there is glorying in men instead of glorying in God, there will be departure from the Faith and leaven will enter the Body.

The solemn warning of the Apostle should ring in all ears, calling upon each to examine himself whether he be in the Faith—

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."
(I. Corinthians 5 ; 6).

(. . . 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 39

To the Victor, the One who Overcomes, by acceptable praise (Jeduthun). A Psalm of David.

THE CREATION OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD is a wonderful blend of essentials, one interdependent on the other. The human voice either in the spoken word or song would be of no use whatever unless God had created the air on the second day capable of transmitting sound. The arrangement in its perfection and beauty leaves one speechless in the admiration of what God has done.

The melody of song can have a most uplifting effect. In Springtime the chorus of the birds is enchanting. It is perhaps not always realised that this is a gift to man, and especially to His children, that they may look forward to *the Spring* which is to come after—

“The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; (And) the flowers appear on the earth; (And) the time of the singing of the birds is come.” (Song of Solomon 2 : 11-12).

Many and wonderful are the ways in which God witnesses to His purpose, and which are perceived with gladness and thankfulness by His children.

“TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN”

As we have seen on previous occasions the original text does not contain the word *musician*. The meaning which is hidden in the inspired title of the Psalm is : “To the Victor, the One who overcomes.” Many of the Psalms are entitled in this way. They refer primarily to the Lord Jesus, the greater Son of David, and by revealing His grievous struggles and the means by which He overcame, afford untold help to His brethren and sisters.

God in His kindness shows how the Lord Jesus is aware of our frailty and our need for help in the conflict with the flesh. This is seen in a beautiful and supreme degree in the appointment of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest of His people. This is not just a titular office, but a great provision involving continual effort on the part of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of His Father. The Apostle Paul says :

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can-

not be uttered. (Do not these words mean with 'heart-appeals' beyond the power of words to express ?).

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Romans 8 : 26-27).

With this empirical fact in mind, there would be no doubt as to whom prayers should be addressed. Those who have suggested that they might be offered to Christ, obviously do not understand the office of Christ and His position as a great High Priest.

Perhaps we would all wish to confess that we have not always sufficiently appreciated this blessed appointment for the helping of our infirmities. And so in the Psalms we have an insight into the intimate struggles between the flesh and the Spirit, and the means whereby there might be an overcoming and the achievement of victory. Shall we then look at this Psalm intently ?

**"I SAID, I WILL TAKE HEED TO MY WAYS, THAT I SIN
NOT WITH MY TONGUE :"** (verse 1)

These words strike a very harmonious chord, whose melody will be most helpful in overcoming. The same thought is expressed by the Apostle James :

"My beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." (James 1 : 19-20).

We all must admit there is a weakness in us to be too ready to speak and not sufficiently ready to listen. Further, when confronted with an adversary temper can be roused, and wrath ensue which the Apostle James is careful to point out, "worketh not the righteousness of God." God's estimate of one who "ruleth his spirit" is eloquently stated in the Proverbs :

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

(Proverbs 16 : 32).

Valour on the battlefield is spectacular, and on the spur of the moment a soldier may execute a courageous deed. Such are greatly honoured by the world, and medals won for bravery are proudly displayed. God shows that in spite of such courage and sacrifice this spirit is not that which He desires. Truly, the one who by taking heed to the Word, and "ruleth his spirit" is mightier than "he that taketh a city."

In this Psalm we have particular help to achieve such a desirable

end and the approval of the Almighty, for let it be remembered that the meek will inherit the earth when the mighty have been removed therefrom, for ever.

How do we refrain from being angry when in the presence of an adversary? How do we quell wrath in us before it arises? Let the Psalm supply the help we need:

“I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.” (verse 1-2).

Words could not be simpler to show how the meek spirit is to be developed, by keeping guard over the door of his mouth. Trials such as experienced by the Lord Jesus and David will eventually produce the “broken spirit”. This is a very different thing from gritting one’s teeth and just hanging on to what is right; but rather describes one whose spirit is developed after the pattern of the Lord Jesus, and is without conscious effort a “humble and contrite spirit.” This leads us to consider something else concealed in the title.

“TO JEDUTHUN”—OVERCOMING BY “ACCEPTABLE PRAISE”.

The word *Jeduthun* is related to *Judah*, which means *praise*. The word *acceptable* has been introduced to emphasise the kind of praise God requires.

There were those in Israel who were capable of “a very lovely song”, and “a pleasant voice and able to play well on an instrument”, but this was far from “acceptable praise”. The Prophet Ezekiel condemned them by saying, “For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” “Acceptable praise” can only arise from a heart which has been tried, which has been chastened, and which has passed through experiences that have produced a “broken spirit”. Do we not feel that this is the significant melody in this Psalm? The plaint of David is:

“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears.” (verse 12).

There are tears of anger, tears of self-pity, tears of bitterness, but the weeping of David and also of the Lord Jesus was that which produced the learning of obedience.

Worldly ambition is no aid to the development of the spirit required by God. As David says in the Psalm:

“Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

Surely every man walketh in a vain shew : surely they are disquieted in vain : he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.” (verses 5-6).

The solemn truth of these words will impress every receptive mind, and lead to a valuing of the only worthwhile ambition—the attainment of *acceptable praise* by a life devoted with singleness of heart to the Almighty. The figure used by the Spirit to describe the prayers of these may capture the imagination—

“The smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God.” (Revelation 8 : 4).

How great is the beauty of holiness and the condescension of the Almighty God, that mortal man with all his frailty might aspire to a position of fragrance in his appeals to the Most High.

This was undoubtedly achieved by David as the Psalms show, and will be in a measure by those who are His true brethren and sisters.

(. . . to be continued)

The Gospel

CHRIST TO RETURN TO RAISE THE DEAD WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE TO HIS JUDGMENT

THERE have been great religious leaders who have declared that Christ will not return to this earth. They have almost spoken pityingly of those who “sincerely but vainly await His return”.

Those who propagate this view, and their adherents, will particularly be asleep when Christ returns in a quiet and unobserved way, for He has declared :

“Behold, I come as a thief.

Blessed is he that watcheth . . . ” (Revelation 16 : 15).

The words of the angels to the disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven were not meaningless, nor were they for their immediate comfort alone :

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1 : 11).

Note the words “in like manner”. Just a few saw and witnessed His departure. Just a few believed. The world was quite unaware,

and a little later those professing to believe in God (at that time the Jews) would not accept the evidence.

The witness of the disciples is still available to day, written indelibly in the Word of God, but the world chooses to ignore it. One of the reasons for such an attitude is the current and almost universal belief in an immediate "after life" when a person dies. If "immortal souls" depart to be with Christ in heaven after the decease of the body then the need to look earnestly for His return is obviously removed. Those who have never known any other belief than this will not see Christ for the Word of God clearly shows :

"Man that . . . understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." (Psalm 49 : 20).

The hope in an "immortal soul" is no hope at all, and makes an individual absolutely devoid of essential understanding. All such after decease remain in the tomb, like the beasts, "death shall feed on them" (verse 14). Their soul will not be redeemed from the power of the grave (see verse 15).

What a beautiful figure of hope is portrayed to those who in Truth have looked forward to Christ's return :

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust : for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." (Isaiah 26 : 19).

The prophet Daniel reveals that the time of resurrection will be the time of judgment for those who are raised :

". . . many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament . . ." (Daniel 12 : 2/3).

Jesus Himself explains further what will be involved at the time of His advent :

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : And before him shall be gathered all nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats : And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

(Matthew 25 : 31-34).

Those on the left hand "go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal."

The question of course may be asked : who are these described as "all nations gathered" ? Here in the words of Christ is the evidence that before the disciples went forth to preach to all the nations ; at a time when Jesus had come only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel". His intention, even as the purpose of God intended it to be, was that following His immediate work, hope would be extended to the Gentiles, and opportunity would be given for them to understand the Truth. Hence the redeemed are prophetically portrayed in the book of Revelation singing their praise to the Lamb of God in the words :

"Thou art worthy . . . thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Revelation 5 : 9).

During the centuries in all parts of the world, sometimes here and sometimes there, there must have been those who have been privileged to know the Truth. It has doubtless been a history of revival and again of declension, though unrecorded. All that have known the Truth will be responsible to the divine judgment seat and therefore will be raised whether they died in the faith or not, whether they availed themselves of the knowledge granted or otherwise. Those found approved in that day, will comprise a great multitude "which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues." (Revelation 7 : 9). It will be a time of great joy and rejoicing. But for others it will be a bitter day. The enlightened rejectors of the Truth for which Christ stood, who have claimed to have eaten and drunk in His presence, and that He has taught through them (Luke 13 : 26), upon them, Christ's pronouncement falls with a fearful tone :

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." (Luke 13 : 28).

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

“THEY HAVE HEALED ALSO THE HURT (BRUISE) . . . OF MY PEOPLE SLIGHTLY, SAYING, PEACE, PEACE; WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE.” (Continuation of last month's theme).

(Jeremiah 6 : 14).

AT THE TIME OF WRITING much is again being said about moves towards a peace settlement in the Middle East. But what a poor effort it seems to be. To date Israel has complained five times to United Nations officials about Egyptian infringements of the cease-fire agreement.

The United States tactic seems to be one of trying to bury at least some of the Israeli accusations by refusing to reveal any conclusions which United States intelligence analysts have reached (though the U.S.A. seems to be inclining towards accepting the Israeli charges) over work that Israel says has been done in Egypt (since the cease-fire) on missile batteries less than 20 miles from the Suez Canal.

America, undoubtedly, must have considerable information to hand. Sufficient to upset Egypt, which according to one report, has officially informed Washington that it opposes supervision of the cease-fire by American satellites or high flying U-2 planes. These American devices, apparently, can see far into Egyptian territory even though operating well inside the Israeli side of the cease-fire line: Though they fly very high they can search out by means of high-power lenses and cameras much of what is going on below. Egypt, perhaps, would not be so touchy if she did not have something to hide.

Egypt has stated through its press that she does not intend, as the U.S. suggested to enlist Soviet assistance in watching the Israeli side. That could lead to “dangerous complications” not in the interests of world peace! Israel and Egypt should be left to supervise the cease-fire on their own!

Obviously Egypt is not apprehensive about any Israeli preparations for renewal of the conflict, for she knows that there has not been anything on the Israeli side comparable to what Egypt, with Russian technical help, has been doing.

The Arab world however, is naturally split over the cease-fire, and in the background is China looking for an opportunity to exploit the Arab differences. Peking Radio denounced the Soviet-backed American initiative as “a new Munich”. As yet, no Arab

State has taken sides in the Sino-Soviet dispute, but China is looking for adherents.

Recently the Sudan's President flew to Peking, and the new Chinese ambassador in Cairo has been holding talks with the Arab Socialist Union. Yet for the present it appears to be suiting Russian diplomacy to give something of a tacit assent to the cease-fire arrangement, even though originating in the United States, and though unpopular in some quarters where Russia has been trying to gain influence.

Why should Russia, after spending so much money on Egypt, be inclined towards peace negotiations? Is it not because Israel has defended herself much better than Russia expected, and so for the present Russian aspirations in the area must wait. Russia has a certain pre-occupation in the Far-East at the moment where she sees a growing "yellow peril". It is not without significance that Russia, stepping over East Germany, has signed a non-aggression pact with West Germany which is becoming a strong country again. The West German Chancellor and his Foreign Minister think the treaty they have signed with Russia will ensure peace in Europe. Following this the Soviet Premier has agreed to pay West Germany a visit, and the West German Ministers of Economic and Scientific Affairs are to go to Moscow for talks on increased economic and scientific co-operation.

The French press in general, it is reported, has commented favourably upon France's partner in the E.E.C. signing the West German-Soviet Union Treaty. But one French newspaper critically assessed the situation when it stated that :

"Moscow welcomes the treaty because it safeguards the western frontiers of her empire and her expansionist bases in the Mediterranean : destruction of the European and Atlantic communities would remain the constant objective of Soviet policy, and the Soviet Union would stop at nothing to detach Germany from the Common Market and from N.A.T.O. at any time in the future when it seemed possible."

Another comment was that the treaty would have been impossible had not the former French President reconciled himself with West Germany nine years ago, and had he not pursued a policy of co-operation with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.

Events in this respect have moved favourably for the Soviet Union, and by reason of propaganda and skilful diplomacy a considerable body of opinion in the West believes that the Soviet leaders are inclined towards peace. Many think Russia is interested in bringing about peace in the Middle East.

The following assessment by a political observer, however, reveals another picture :

“The impression has got around in some quarters, in Europe and America alike, that the Russians are almost reluctant about their intervention in Middle Eastern affairs, that they have been drawn into them against their will, and that they exert a ‘moderating influence’ over their Arab allies. In truth the Soviet leaders from Stalin onwards have never made a secret of their Middle Eastern aspirations. Thirty years ago when Stalin and Hitler were discussing how they would carve up the world after their victory in World War II., the Soviet Government insisted on a secret clause which read :

‘The Soviet Union declares that its territorial aspirations centre south of the national territory of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean.’

That was frank enough. In fact, Russian aspirations in the direction of the warm-water ports of the Eastern Mediterranean pre-date the Soviet regime. The Soviet leaders today are in fact pursuing Russia’s imperial policies. But today they have a much more pressing reason for moving into the Middle East and dominating the area. That reason is that the Soviet Union is today suffering from a shortage of oil, . . . statistics alone suggest that even today the Soviet economy needs 100 million tons more than it has available, and this figure will grow year by year. The explanation is very simple : the rate of growth of Soviet oil production is falling off, while the growth rate of consumption is rising . . . The original plan for 1970 (i.e. oil output) . . . was scaled down . . . they were forced later to conclude that the oil industry was incapable of fulfilling even the lower target . . . The only countries which could supply the quantities Soviet industry needs are still outside the Soviet sphere. The Russians appear to have an objection in principle to importing oil in any large quantities from any country which they do not control politically . . . They are unlikely therefore to become major purchasers on the world market, even if they could afford to do so. Why should they, when a much more promising solution offers itself ? From the Soviet point of view acquisition of control of the rich oil-producing regions of the Middle East is the only hope they have of satisfying Soviet industry’s thirst for oil in the foreseeable future. And it does not appear to be out of their reach . . . whatever tactical moves they may make, no one should doubt the Soviet leaders long term aims : ever increasing control of the Arab “socialist” states with the introduction where possible

of 'progressive' men into government, and the overthrow of the Arab rulers who have not yet seen the light . . . One of the most important developments in the Soviet Union in recent years is the implied acceptance by the present leaders that they have no hope of winning the "peaceful competition" of which Khrushchev used to speak. The Soviet economic system is not capable of expanding faster than the free economics of the west ; it is in fact lagging behind in most important fields. The idea of grabbing the oil in the Middle East must have even greater attraction to the men of the Kremlin today than the idea of installing missiles in Cuba had to Mr. Khrushchev . . . The temptation must be great indeed. So great as to make any thought of a "lasting peace" in the Middle East reached with Soviet acquiescence only laughable. Moscow has nothing at all to gain from peace.

Equally illusory is the belief that the Soviet leaders are interested in maintaining the State of Israel. It may be true that Israel was once useful to the Russians as a means of establishing themselves in the Middle East. But it is now an obstacle to the establishment of the Soviet "new order" in the Middle East—an obstacle that must be removed."

As this situation is considered the aptness of the scriptural message once more comes vividly to mind :

"They have healed also the hurt . . . of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace ; when there is no peace."

(Jeremiah 6 : 14).

"Therefore hear, ye nations and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words . . . Thus saith the Lord, Behold a people cometh from the north country . . . they are cruel and have no mercy ; their voice roareth like the sea . . . against thee, O daughter of Zion." (verses 18-23).

The peace efforts may give Israel a little balm in their troubles, to repeat last month's consideration, but "there is no peace". No real and lasting settlement can be achieved, as the scripture reveals; and even the perceptive political observer can discern this.

What a blessing it is to know through the Truth of God, that behind these events the Creator is working out His wonderful purpose, to the end that Israel will be established when all the great powers who seem to dominate the political arena at the present time will be no more.

D.L.

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.

Much gratitude is felt for the care and love shown on behalf of the two from here who have enjoyed the privilege of visiting our brethren and sisters.

Thoughts will have been with all permitted the Fraternal Gathering at Manchester.

We rejoice at the blessing of the baptism of David Pinkerton. As the day of the return of the Lord Jesus draws near, our supplications are that we, together, may be sustained in the struggle to overcome.

Inquiries continue to be received. We are grateful for the opportunity to witness to His Truth and pray for help to do it faithfully.

J.A.DeF.

NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN, Northern Ireland.

Breaking of Bread, Sunday 11-30 a.m.
Sunday School 2-0 p.m.
Bible Class—Wednesday evening.

With very great joy and deep gratitude to our Heavenly Father we record the baptism of David Pinkerton, son of Bro. and Sis. J. Pinkerton, on Saturday, 22nd August, 1970 at Newtownards, and his receiving the right hand of fellowship on Sunday morning following.

To have with us on this very special occasion Sister Nancy Brown and Sister Lois Carter from the States, also Brother D. Lancaster and Brother Iago was very pleasing and most uplifting to us all. We thank Bro. Lancaster for his help in the work both on Saturday and Sunday, and Bro. Iago for the exhortation on Sunday morning. We would also like to thank our brethren in Manchester for their help in the preliminary arrangements so essential at these times, and so gladly given.

J.P.

DUDLEY : 233 Stourbridge Road, Holly Hall.

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

Wednesdays : Bible Class, 7-15 p.m.

We are glad to report that we have now obtained a room in the Hawbush Community Centre, near Brierley Hill for the meeting for Breaking of Bread on alternate Sundays.

On the first Sunday, July 26th, we were pleased to have the company and fellowship at the Table of Bro. and Sis. D. Lancaster, and Bro. S. Lancaster of Manchester. Bro. D. Lancaster helped us with the word of exhortation for which we were thankful.

R.W.

MANCHESTER : Memorial Hall, M.A.P.S. Building, Albert Sq., Manchester.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11-30 a.m. Lecture, 3-30 p.m. Tuesdays : Bible Class, 7-15 p.m., Onward Hall, Deansgate.

A most joyful and spiritually uplifting time was spent at the Fraternal Gathering on Monday, August 31st, when many brethren and sisters from this country, from Ireland and two from the U.S.A. were present. A letter read to the Meeting from the Ecclesia in Eden, New York, made us feel close to them in spite of the great distance between us. By conversations and exhortations we were all made to feel one, making us yearn for that time when, it is hoped in the mercy of God, we shall be able to be not only one in spirit but one in nature with our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were glad to have the help of Bro. J. Pinkerton of Ireland, on Sunday, August 30th. Although the Lecture was widely advertised the attendance was disappointing. We know, however, these matters are not in our hands.

Thursday, September 3rd, saw the departure of our two sisters Sis. Nancy Brown and Sis. Lois Carter to U.S.A. We were sorry to see them go having enjoyed their company and help for nearly five weeks. We hope that as they return they will be able to convey something of our feeling and love for those who are so far away yet are very near in heart.

W.V.B.