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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"

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At the Table of the Lord

“THE GOOD GROUND”

THE LORD JESUS often taught His disciples in parables, revealing to them God’s mercy and love, His commands, but such were hidden from those whose hearts were not found with Jesus. The parables spoke of things which were familiar to His listeners so they might benefit more fully from them. Such was the parable of the sower, recently considered in our daily portion. It taught a lesson but not openly. In answer to His disciples’ question, “What might this parable be?”, Jesus said, Luke 8 : 10 :

“ Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.”

These parables, then, were a help to His hearers, a blessing to those who sought to know about the Kingdom of God through following Jesus. They are a blessing to us as well, brethren and sisters, as we listen, to the end we might know, “the mysteries of the kingdom of God.”

The word “*mystery*” comes from a root meaning “*to shut the mouth.*” To some, God’s words are mysteries, as if He had not spoken to reveal His purpose to be accomplished in His Kingdom. But, to those who seek—to us—if we are struggling to follow the Lord Jesus, they are revealed as He speaks to His children. Do we recognise the blessing, the privilege that He speaks to us to help in our struggle ? With the revealing of these mysteries comes a responsibility as well, as Paul tells us in I. Corinthians 4 : 1 :

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

Stewards are those given a charge to care for, to husband the goods of the master. Stewards are chosen as faithful servants who will work for the increase of the master’s goods. To such, the mysteries of the Kingdom of God are given. These mysteries, then, have been revealed to all His disciples and now to us as we strive to be His faithful stewards.

In this parable, it is Jesus’ purpose to reveal the way to the Kingdom of God. As we read it, do we perceive it ? A quick answer would be, “Of course, we perceive it ; we’ve studied it ; we’ve read it many times.” But, still, the question must be asked, do we ever really perceive all the mystery revealed ?

“THAT ON THE GOOD GROUND”

Let us look at the parable again, particularly that part which we hope may apply to us someday. Jesus tells us, verse 15, that the

seeds "on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." In these four words is found a life's work, a life of struggle, of agonising, of determination to bring forth fruit pleasing to God and His Son, the faithful Sower.

The Word of God, then, is that which brings forth the fruit, if it falls on the right ground. God, the wise Husbandman, looks for good ground hoping for fruit. Does this fifteenth verse help us to discern what is good ground in God's eyes? The Lord Jesus said, the good ground "are they which in an honest and good heart . . ." Does an honest and good heart, then, help to describe the good ground? Let us try to discern what is an honest and good heart. "Honest", we find means "*good*", "*worthy*", "*virtuous*". Perhaps, the Spirit's definition of an honest and good heart helps. David, who we are told was a man after God's own heart, tells us, Psalm 32 : 2, 5 :

"Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

No guile. "Guile" comes from a root meaning that which betrays and implies deceit or that which is false. Our heart can betray us, brethren and sisters, indeed does at times, for it is as Jeremiah writes :

" deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?"

Unless we can conquer our heart, circumcise it, it *is* deceitful, desperately wicked. If we can conquer its fleshly desires, does it not become honest and good, a heart in which there is no guile ?

"I ACKNOWLEDGED MY SIN"

David, as one who accomplished this circumcision of the heart, helps us further, Psalm 32 : 5 :

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

If our heart is truly honest, truly good, we are ready to acknowledge our sin, not excuse it, knowing that God "looketh on the heart." If we believe that, would we try to hide in our heart that which is evil and offensive to God? Going further to something which is difficult for us, after an offense and wrong before God done to one of his "little ones", do we willingly confess our fault to the one offended, seeking his forgiveness, knowing this is necessary before we can seek forgiveness from God ?

How much strength, spiritual strength, is taken to develop an honest heart, a heart circumcised, its flesh cut off. Are we helped,

then, to understand why God looks upon such a heart as “*good ground*”, that which receives His word, keeps it and brings forth fruit with patience ?

“BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD”

In our struggle to make our heart “*honest and good*”, “*good ground*”, how can we discern whether this is being accomplished ? Perhaps, James 1 : 22-24 can help us :

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass : For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

What manner of man *was* he ? One who beholds his natural face. We, if we are to be doers of the words, must not forget what kind of a man we *were*, shown to us by the Word of God, as in a glass, and must struggle to keep that natural man in subjection to the man of Spirit. If we do forget, we are hearers only because the Word doesn't go into the heart and circumcise it, make it good and honest. James goes on to help further, verse 25 :

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a *doer* of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

This is the man whose heart is good ground and as the result of all this brings forth fruit with patience.

“WITH PATIENCE”

How striking it is that even with a good and honest heart—good ground—it is only “with patience” that fruit can be brought forth God recognises this as the Husbandman and is patient in His waiting for that fruit. The example is used by James 5 : 7-8 to help us :

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*”

It takes great patience, therefore, to bring forth fruit, even with a good and honest heart. God knows this and where He sees that determination, helps to stablish such a heart. How ? By His word, the Scriptures, by His chastening, by requiring patience to prove our faith in His Word. “*Patience*”, we know means, “*to endure under*”. How difficult this is to do when we'd naturally like to get out from under trial, difficulty, hardship, reproach ; yet, we are being cultivated, pruned and watered by the Husbandman, patiently waiting for the fruit to manifest itself in our heart.

Can we, then, see why Jesus says, Luke 21 : 19 :

“In your patience possess ye your souls.”

To possess, involves to *purchase, to get hold of, to buy*. We do need to get hold of our flesh, to own it, ruling it. We learn from personal, sometimes bitter experiences, that it is only with great patience we can do this.

How helpful, then, is this parable, revealing the “mysteries of the kingdom of God”. It speaks, brethren and sisters, to show what we must be like if we hope to enter into this kingdom. It helps as we struggle to grow in patience, developing an honest and good heart, without which there can be no fruit to please the Sower. May He be glorified in His reaching out to us—let us be sure we are “good ground”.

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

“HE THAT KEEPETH THE LAW, HAPPY IS HE”

(Proverbs 29 : 18)

ONE OF THE WORDS of the Spirit for *wicked* in the original is literally *without law*. Law to the flesh is both restrictive and irksome. This makes the commandments of God grievous to most of mankind. All, including ourselves, find there is nothing easier, nor suits us better than pleasing ourselves. What disaster ensues, however, from such a wrong notion ! In the world during the last fifty years there has been a continuing and progressive setting aside of any respect for the Law of God. While men have promised themselves liberty, they have found themselves entangled in innumerable and hurtful problems. Orthodox religion has been powerless to stem the tide of wickedness—of lawlessness. A critical examination will show that Christendom is but a very thin veneer over the corruption and debasement which exists in all lands. Undoubtedly Christendom is astray.

Is it not a very sad thing that the great and good God of heaven who has given so much to provide for happiness is neglected, if not despised. Every one desires happiness, but true happiness will never be found outside the Law of God.

WHICH LAW ?

“THE POSITION OF THE OTHERS”

Three of the Groups—*Central, Dawn and Old Paths*—subscribe to practically the same Statement of Faith. In some instances stress is laid on the Statement by declaring that fellowship will only be

extended to those who accept it without reservation. This emphasis has tended to have one bad effect : to regard other doctrines not mentioned in the Statement as being matters of opinion.

Discussion with members has discovered that even the Statement is only regarded in a general kind of way, and not binding in the absolute sense as some would have us believe. It is declared in the Statement that it is necessary to believe that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." Yet one of the leading writers in the "*Testimony*" has said that he cannot endorse this one hundred per cent. When this Statement, printed in large type, and even buttressed with the phrase mentioned comes to be analysed carefully, it amounts to nothing more than a wall daubed with untempered mortar. Reservations may officially be denied, but liberty of interpretation is allowed.

Will the reader please remember that we are not desirous of maligning. Our sole desire is to save some from the morass of doubt and infidelity. Our appeal is that consideration might be given to the provision of God to help by considering which Law we are called upon to observe in this dispensation. The question may seem so elementary as to be unworthy of being asked. Let us pause. The ready answer which misses much is that we are required at this time to observe the Law of Christ. What is this, or rather what does it include ? When it has been suggested that the Law of Christ embraces the teaching in the Law of Moses a storm of protest has been received from many of the *others*. They say with a loud voice: "We are no longer under the Law but under grace". The way in which they speak suggests they have a liberty of thought and action denied to the brethren and sisters in the Ecclesia in the wilderness ; that God has changed His Law in dealing with those who are to be heirs of salvation. This is impossible, for God changeth not. What then is the answer that will solve this difficulty, and open up to the devout mind a great treasure of divine wisdom for present help and guidance ?

There are some words used by the Apostle Paul, difficult at first to understand which give the answer :

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."

(Romans 3 : 21)

If we read this verse with a little alteration, then the meaning of the Spirit will become clear :

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."

This is no less than an endorsement of what Jesus declared :

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy but *to fulfil*.”
(Matthew 5 : 17)

A casual reading will attach a wrong meaning to the words of Jesus—*to fulfil*. It could not be that Jesus meant that the teaching of the Law was to finish, because the whole of His preaching was based upon and an elaboration of the Law of Moses. The great mistake that is made is to assume that because the ordinances of the Law, the sacrifices and the offerings, ceased after the death of Christ, that the Law should be relegated to the limbo of the past, and so reduced to an anaemic instrument devoid of the power of that life blood which the Law of Moses gave to the teaching of Christ.

It is hoped, in subsequent articles to go over certain of the sacrifices and offerings of the Law, to show that while they had their teaching for the time when they were given, there is in them the living power of the Spirit to provide essential guidance for today. It will be found that without an appreciation and veneration of the Law of Moses, the true hope of Israel and the means of realising it will never be discovered.

(*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 41

To the Victor, the One who Overcomes, A Psalm of David

HERE IS ANOTHER PSALM, providing a sustaining melody in the heart unto the Lord for those engaged in the difficult but not impossible task of *overcoming*.

Overcoming is not easy. That is why God has provided so much help so that His call to those whom He desires to see with Christ in His Kingdom might be achieved in His strength. The Word of God can be read in two ways. As a matter of history which makes no impression upon the heart or mind ; or as the living and powerful Word of the Spirit capable of impressing the mind and heart at the present time, with those things which God desires to see there. How grateful we should be that there is so much help provided ; so much care for those called to salvation ; so much love shown in the abundance of food from heaven that those who are His should “lack no good thing”.

How different is the victory to be achieved by the people of God from those who are accounted conquerors in the world. Men in command of men are generally imperious if not arrogant. Those who belong to God are accounted "*poor*" and of an entirely different type. This should show to us most clearly that the leadership of men in the world is to be avoided at all costs, and the heart surrendered completely to the One who is the captain of our salvation. We are permitted to look more closely at this class whom God approves and will approve in the day of Christ, and consider whether or not we fit in to such a select and divinely approved community.

"BLESSED IS HE THAT CONSIDERETH THE POOR"

(Psalm 41 : 1)

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor : the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive ; and he shall be blessed upon the earth : and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing : thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." (that is for his good). verses 1-3.

A casual reading would suggest that those who are to be blessed consider the poor, that is, those who are the victims of poverty. The meaning of this word *poor* has a far broader application than this. In the original, the word is *weak*. Undoubtedly this is a quality many times seen in those who have little. But the *poor* in this sense are not always *weak*. Jesus defines the characteristic of those who are *poor*.

"Blessed are the *poor in spirit* : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5 : 3).

It is true that rich men are generally proud, selfish, "answer roughly", and inconsiderate of the "poor of this world". So that it is no wonder the call of the Truth comes more frequently to the poor than to those who are possessed of much. But even those who are "the poor in this world" are not always "rich in faith", and many times are found to have an underlying hard spirit, quite opposed to that which is weak and therefore submissive to God's requirements. Pride is often associated with the wealthy, but the poor of this world are often discovered with the same abomination.

God declares through the prophet :

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is *poor* and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Isaiah 66 : 2).

Although the original for the word *poor* in this reference is different from the one in the Psalm, it is synonymous. We cannot be

better than God. Indeed we are called to be like Him, which with our best endeavours we have to confess we often fall short. Whereas the world flatters the proud and pays by far the greatest attention to these ; those in the Truth will only be blessed by God, who like Him, consider the *poor*—those that are “of a contrite spirit, and tremble at his word”.

David was rich in a sense, yet he was *poor*—*weak*, always submissive to the Word of God, and revealing a contrite spirit and a readiness to submit to the Word of God. It was because of this characteristic of David, that in spite of his great sin, he has been described as “a man after God’s own heart”. Oh ! that we could rise up to be like him by drinking in his spiritual words which have been preserved, and help us see how vain is pride, and the need constantly to examine oneself and be prepared to admit when one is wrong. It would be impossible for any other class of people to extend a sympathetic understanding to those who are *poor*—*weak*—because they could not possibly understand. The door to such a blessing of God is open, but the flesh finds it most difficult to pass through this door. The path that is required to be taken is like that of the Lord Jesus, a suffering of reproach ; of trial whereby self-importance is suppressed, and dependence upon God is established. Is it not worth while making a determined effort to pass through this door, for in spite of the suffering which this will entail, there is a far greater comfort and joy to be obtained in walking with God than with pride and vanity. Reproach which has to be suffered can take various forms. The Psalm speaks of one which is most difficult to bear.

“ALL THAT HATE ME WHISPER TOGETHER AGAINST ME.”
(verse 7)

In times of emergency when brethren are threatened by the powers that be, the pressure from without causes a much closer binding together of those within. We have experienced this. This greatly strengthens the determination to obey God rather than man. Comfort and much help is found in hands being joined together in the resolve to honour God. Possessions in the times of such crises are seen at their real value—vanity. Readiness to distribute to those who become victims is spontaneously forthcoming. Much spiritual benefit is gained by such suffering. The tribulation which presses heavily is no longer borne by one, but by all. The eyes are called to look beyond the present to that glorious day when those who come out of “great tribulation,” can have their robes washed “and made white in the blood of the lamb”.

In this Psalm another form of reproach is referred to which is much harder to experience, but has been the lot of all who have stood for the Truth :

“All that hate me whisper together against me : against me do they devise my hurt.” (verse 7).

We know that this exhausting trial came to Jesus. The Psalm indicates as much :

“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”
(verse 9).

No one needs to be told that this is a reference to the treachery of Judas. The account of the betrayal of Jesus can be read without grasping what this meant to him. Judas was called to the Truth. Jesus was prepared to give His life for him. Efforts were made to help Judas as was the case for all the other disciples. Nothing can be more grievous, or the cause of greater anguish, than treachery in one who has been trusted, and for one whom every effort has been made to help. Such is the wretchedness of human nature that this experience not only came to Jesus in a most pointed and dreadful manner, but it also happens to everyone who follows in the steps of Jesus trying to uphold the Truth against all enemies.

Robert Roberts felt this to a most bitter and poignant degree, causing him to write :

“Many are the bows and galling the arrows directed against us, but we care for nothing but getting through on the Divine side, with as many as God may have enabled to discern the day of their visitation.”

COMFORT

God is the God of all comfort. This is seen many times in how He upheld those who trusted in Him. In their bitter trials they were sustained. A divine messenger was sent to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane supporting Him in His determination to face the grievous ordeal that was before Him. There must have been the same merciful provision when Jesus was dying on the cross. His cry : “Why hast thou forsaken me?” cannot refer to God deserting Him, but rather as explained in the Psalm 22 to show the reasons why Jesus was required to die as one who was “cursed” according to the Law.

We know that the spirit of this Psalm sustained Jesus in His trial, and if we look at the Psalm we are considering we shall find that He was also sustained by the concluding message of this Psalm, as was David, and as we can be if we will receive the Spirit as a living and invigorating message :

“But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen." (verses 10-13).

May we recall that the enemy did all possible to triumph over Jesus. Having put Him to death all the measures that crafty men could devise were taken to prevent His resurrection. The third day saw the triumph of God over His enemies. The soldiers slept. The earth quaked. The stone was rolled away. The tomb was empty. Jesus had risen from the dead and later ascended to immortality—a triumph which none on earth could or can overcome.

All this was in the heart of Jesus, comforting and sustaining Him, so much so that for "the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame".

This triumph speaks volumes for all who are Christ's, and are determined to withstand the trials that are inevitable and so at the last be found worthy to be with Jesus for ever.

(To be continued)

Who Hath Contentions ?

(Proverbs 23 : 29)

THE QUESTION THAT IS POSED in the above quotation is supplied with the answer in the following verse :

"They that tarry long at the wine ; they that go to seek mixed wine." (verse 30).

Undoubtedly the figure of the drunken man is used to describe those who are hopelessly deceived. The book of the Revelation describes the inhabitants of the earth as being made drunk with the wine of the false woman. This is particularly so as the time of the revealing of Christ draws near.

Wine takes away the conscience, when indulged in the way described in the Proverbs. Men who might be ashamed in their better senses laugh over their riotous behaviour and are merry about it. This is a fitting figure of the state into which the world has fallen. Because of the decline in the standards of behaviour there is woe, sorrow, contentions and babbling. Babylon—confusion, aptly describes the situation. Unnecessary wounds—wounds without cause—because the drunkenness of deception has added fuel to man's aggressive tendencies ; blows are struck from all sides.

Vietnam, Cambodia, Israel, a forbidding of arms to South Africa, then a change of policy, and as a consequence the developing Black nations in turn feel angry. The deception is so great that not one leader of mankind has the ability to perceive what to do and where it will end. The eyes of great and small are all clouded.

THE SERPENT'S BITE

The exhortation to those who would heed the counsel of God is seen in verse 31 :

“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.”

Why are the nations, religions, sects and societies deceived ? To a greater or lesser degree all are deceived. Have they not been attracted in the first place by what has been offered to them. Then when they have drunk they become addicted ! That is why the truth voices itself in a day of very small things. The whole of mankind is too stupified to respond to the simple message of God. The minds of all have become dull to true wisdom. The wine that has been partaken of has been attractive in colour, it is red, sparkling in the cup, smooth to the palate. Flesh delights in and becomes addicted with smooth things. But what good is the smooth and easy way when in the end the serpent's bite ends the matter for all time ? The eyes of the deceived behold, or conjure up strange things. Distorted or perverse utterances come from their heart. How strange are some of the reasonings of the deluded who all the time think they can see. How distorted are the excuses made to bolster a false position. What a dangerous state to be in :

“Yea thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick ; they have beaten me, and I felt it not : when shall I awake ? I will seek it yet again.” (verses 34-35).

When the Truth makes its testimony—“I am not sick”, is the reply—“Beaten me ? I don't feel anything.” When the senses are dulled chastening, divine chastening has no effect, a change for the better is not effected. “When shall I wake up, I will ask for more of it.” At times individuals have been noted in whom there has been a stirring, an awakening to Truth, but the false wine has proved too potent. The addiction has been too great and so there has been a going back to it. The false has been sought yet again.

Where is the warning for those in the Truth? Is it not that many who once had the Truth have been in this way overcome, and so are embraced in the prevailing deception. It is necessary to continually appreciate deliverance from deception, especially when it is seen how tremendous is the delusion. Many are kept from seeing the light of the Truth because the false appears to be well blended to suit the palate. Some who have been at times attracted by the light have lingered too long with the false, and to tarry with it has proved fatal to them. It is so easy to be attracted to that which seems to offer delight. This has been man's weakness from the beginning of time, from the days of the forbidden fruit. It is necessary to keep reminding oneself that the *bite of the serpent is deadly*, the sting of the adder is sharp.

THE TRUE CUP OF BLESSING

The wine that deceives is deadly—it doesn't deliver from woe, nor does it grant peace, but rather is the cause of contention. Help to deliver from its temptation is given in the following words:

“My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things. Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh, For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.”

(verses 15-21).

Here is shown the heart of the great Creator towards those inclined to Him, His desire for His children to be wise. To be wise means to be sober, not trivial, not light in thinking, careful, balanced. My reins, says the Creator, shall rejoice when thy lips speak right things. Don't envy those who seem to have joy which the false purports to offer. Regard the way of the Lord, respect it all the day long, for there is to be an end. There is to be a reward. The expectation of the wise shall not be cut off, but contrast that expectation with the end of the figurative wine bibber. Abject poverty, to those lulled by the false cup who will be inadequately clothed, not covered with the covering which wisdom provides. Their expectation is false—therefore it shall be cut off.

How thankful should God's children be for the true cup. The cup of blessing which is not a mixture, not a mixed wine. It is given through the over ruling provision of God in a right proportion. The Spirit helps those that truly seek God, to understand, so that their expectation might be truly realised.

D.L.

“Shorn Women”

IN THE *Christadelphian Magazine* for 1927, under the above heading, the following appeared :

A presumably unshorn sister writes anonymously as follows: “I should be grateful if you would express in *The Christadelphian* your thoughts regarding the present fashion of sisters having ‘bobbed’ hair. Do you consider it to be consistent with the Word of God ? Yours in Christ Jesus, on behalf of some sisters.”

ANSWER : Phoebe should sign her name. We would not have ‘given her away’, though we have to ‘work in a glass hive’ ourselves. Our ‘thoughts’ on this ‘fashion’ are begotten by those of the apostle Paul and his appeal to ‘nature’, which embodies God’s ideas. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul deals with the question of women and worship (I. Cor. 11) Women should be covered. ‘For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn ; but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered . . . Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him ? But if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her : for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.’ (verses 6, 14-16). ‘Instead of well set hair, baldness,’ was a threat of divine judgment upon the ‘wanton daughters of Zion’ (Isaiah 3 : 24). If these remarks hurt some excellent women, we are sorry, but the fault will not be with us, but with ‘the fashion of this world (which) passeth away.’ (I. Corinthians 7 : 31).

Departure from the Truth inevitably leads to conforming with the world, and to the Body once possessed of *the* Truth becoming indistinguishable from the world. Particularly is this seen to be the case as former “sisters” become more and more addicted to the goddess of fashion.

In 1927, there was a beginning of such conforming with the world, as the mild attempt in the foregoing quotation from the *Christadelphian Magazine* shows.

In the same year the *Dawn* Group published a pamphlet stressing the need for “sisters” to observe the divine commands, and to refuse to follow the fashion of the world. However, it was not long before doubt was cast upon the precepts affecting “sisters”. Flesh uncontrolled is like a horse without a bridle, restless until it gets its own way. Apostasy in this particular took the usual form. First

by raising a doubt, then by condoning that which had previously been condemned, and finally justifying the breach of what had been recognised to be the requirements of the Spirit. This was done by one of the leaders of the *Dawn* in a most unworthy manner. Quoting the words of the Apostle, "but if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God", he said that this meant the Apostles words were to be taken only as a matter of opinion and personal interpretation.

When it is realised the Apostle is setting forth the divine appointments in respect of the Ecclesia as seen in the creation of man and the woman, and the relationship of the man to Christ, and the woman to the man, how dare anyone say that his remarks are without divine meaning and authority ! The words the Apostle used to suggest this—"if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom"—will impress the devout mind that the principles which he set forth and were to be seen particularly in the woman in regard to her hair and covering, and also in the man were in no circumstances to be the subject of dispute or contention, for such will undermine the sublime principles to be exhibited in the man and the woman as the creation of God, showing His purpose in His Ecclesia.

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

"FOR, LO, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, THAT I WILL BRING AGAIN THE CAPTIVITY OF MY PEOPLE ISRAEL AND JUDAH, SAITH THE LORD : AND I WILL CAUSE THEM TO RETURN TO THE LAND THAT I GAVE TO THEIR FATHERS, AND THEY SHALL POSSESS IT. AND THESE ARE THE WORDS THAT THE LORD SPAKE CONCERNING ISRAEL AND CONCERNING JUDAH. FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD ; WE HAVE HEARD A VOICE OF TREMBLING, OF FEAR, AND NOT OF PEACE."

(Jeremiah 30 : 3-5).

AFTER THE WAR of 1967 it seemed that the Arabs were broken and Soviet influence in the Middle East had been thwarted. The Jewish exiles who had returned were in a very strong position ; the nation could now turn its attention more energetically to the tasks of peace.

It also seemed that America would regain some of its influence with the Arabs, for the nations who had been defeated began to think that Russia had let them down. But Russia was not prepared to give up so easily, even though at the time she had refrained from military involvement because of the determination of the United States not to stand aside if there were interference.

As the king of Jordan and the Egyptian Foreign Minister flew to America to seek United States support, Russia began to work on a plan albeit costly, to establish herself with the Arabs again. Within twelve months all the armament that the Arabs had lost in the six day conflict had been replaced by Russia, but there was also the additional help of over three thousand military advisers including Soviet Generals.

Early in 1969 after receiving such support the Egyptians particularly felt they were in a position to begin a "war of attrition" against Israel. As the attacks increased Israel responded in the best way she could. She was outnumbered as she faced the enemy across the Suez Canal ; also the Egyptian Army had a superior mass of artillery. But in the air Israel still had the initiative even though outnumbered three to one. Attacking missile sites and lines of communication with swift strikes with its highly efficient air force the "war of attrition" was suppressed.

Russia watching and waiting began to pour in more sophisticated weapons early this year. SAM-3 (Surface to Air Missiles) along with Russian operators and also trained Russians for the anti-aircraft guns and MIG-21 fighters arrived in Egypt. Soon after this three Israeli planes were shot down in a week. Israel's air-force chief described Egypt's new capability as "the Russian fist covered by an Egyptian glove".

This resumé brings the mind to the last development in August when Israel and Egypt accepted the American peace plan of a 90 day cease-fire and negotiations with the help of an official of the United Nations Organisation.

But the fighting has not finished, the Palestinian guerillas are still at work. Moreover Israel is not sure that Egypt will be honourable ; rather does she wonder whether Egypt agreed to a cease-fire to gain time to establish her military strength. This is "fear, and not peace", even though the world with its eyes upon the Middle East hopes it will be peace.

The leader of the United Nations, in the knowledge of what this age of technology is capable, has warned of what a third world war could mean. A year ago he said that the Middle East conflict could become a new Hundred Years War ; at the time of this state-

ment he also said that after two years of diplomatic consultation "a peaceful solution seems as far away as ever".

The outbreaks of violence made it "even more possible that we may be witnessing something like the early stages of a new Hundred Years War". He continued with an exhortation that, "There has never been a situation in which all the Security Council's prestige, resources and persistence, and the support of other member states as well were so vitally needed to reverse a disastrous trend." Time, he went on to say, was not on the side of humanity. "It is not only the threat of war which must deeply concern all responsible people, but also some of the other major problems of our age which can only be tackled and solved by real international co-operation and action, and whose solution is indispensable to secure an enduring peace."

Twelve months later the absence of response to such an exhortation by the leader of an organisation to which a majority of nations contribute is in itself a striking lesson of mankind's folly. Moreover, the worsening situation indicates how much it is a time "of trembling, of fear, and not of peace".

The voice of warning was again expressed by the U.N.O. Secretary General in the recent 25th Anniversary celebration of the setting up of the United Nations. The U.N.O. leader said that Governments must show "a far more consistent and sincere confidence in their own ability to co-operate through the United Nations". There was no alternative except failure of the world to survive. The U.N. on its political side had worked best only when members were "sufficiently alarmed by a crisis" to give it the authority it needed and to co-operate wholeheartedly with it.

It does not need a clever man to realise how the world is living on the brink, though a clever man may chose the best phrases to describe the situation. "We are ready to fight a nuclear war". China has been saying. From the United States has come the news, some time ago, that America has tested a new Hydrogen weapon said to have a destructive force approaching one million tons of T.N.T. There was speculation that this might be a spectrum bomb with a device releasing devastating heat rays. At any rate the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission said the test was "very important to national security." The blast shook a twenty-nine storey hotel 100 miles away and created a cavern in the earth nearly 700 feet in diameter, displacing 10 million tons of rock.

Israel is situated in the very centre of this combustible situation. After nineteen hundred years of their scattering they have returned

to their land only to find themselves vulnerably exposed in a world trend in which "men's hearts are failing them for fear."

The U.N.O. Secretary General says the organisation only receives real support when the nations become "alarmed by a crisis", and looking prophetically in retrospect has voiced the phrases "with all their genius and their skill they ran out of foresight and air and food and water and ideas." Or "they went on playing politics until their world collapsed around them." Or "when they looked up it was already too late." The scripture reveals there can be no escape by flesh nature from their predicament.

"When they shall say, Peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." The alarms and the crisis keep coming, it is the travail spoken of, and particularly for Israel, in the midst of it all, it is "fear, and not . . . peace."

How those who know the Truth should rejoice in the comforting assurance that at such a time described as one in which every man is seen "with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness" (Jeremiah 30 : 6) Israel will have their hearts changed. "They shall serve the Lord, their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." Jeremiah 30 : 9).

This will be the time of salvation and glory for all saints found worthy to inherit a world delivered from all the evils and the snares so apparent at the present time.

D.L.

Correspondence

Letter from S. Vince, Carshalton, Surrey :

Thank you for the Magazine. On page 221 you quote from A. T. Butler :

I have just turned up the magazine with the article. It reads the complete reverse of your copy as printed. You have inserted the word "not" ! This is not in the copy before me.

I should be pleased if you would immediately correct and let me have an acknowledgment.

Reply :

Many thanks for your letter of November 9th, drawing my attention to the insertion of the word "not" in the quotation from the Dawn Magazine for April 1969.

This makes the correct quotation as follows :

"We feel convinced as a result of the evidence which we have that many have left the Truth (all fellowships) during the last few years, because they allowed the world and its allurements to permeate the sanctity of a home, which at one time was a holy place."

While the incorrect quotation is regretted, this in no way affects the point we made from the quotation that the writer of the article in the Dawn, states that *all fellowships constitute* "The Truth".

As we said previously, when we saw this we telephoned one of your members who said he disagreed with it strongly, as also did the Assistant Editor of the Dawn, L. J. Walker.

On which side are you ? That all fellowships constitute "The Truth", or that only one fellowship can do so ?

It must be obvious to you that if all fellowships constitute *the* Truth, then surely it does not matter to which you belong and makes the existing divisions both a farce and a denial of the doctrine of fellowship, which requires that those in the true fellowship should be united.

W.V.B.

News from the Ecclesias

“PENTRIP”, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread : Sundays, 11-30 a.m.
Revelation Study : Mid-week.

We are grateful for all the letters and enquiries which have been received from the brethren and sisters in this time of physical weakness, and do appreciate their prayers and supplications.

It is hoped that due to these we may be able to report improvement in the near future, if the Lord will.

per J.S.

NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN, Northern Ireland.

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

We are grateful that one from here has been allowed to visit Manchester for the Sunday School party ; also that Bro. David Pinkerton has been able to go over this week-end, his first visit to meet with all the brethren and sisters there, as a brother, at the Table of the Lord Jesus.

J.P.

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.

We are grateful for continued interest, evidenced by letters received. The opportunity to witness to His Truth is a privilege and supplications are that the efforts made may be blessed.

Supplications are made on behalf of those who are ill or under trial, that God in His mercy may bring relief when His purpose is accomplished.

J.A.DeF.

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.

On Saturday, October 31st, we held our Sunday School Party when we had the help of Bro. R. Wood of Dudley, who gave an Address showing with the aid of maps and charts, the events which are to transpire when Jesus Christ returns—from the Judgment in Sinai, to the establishment of His Kingdom with Jerusalem as its Capital. Also Bro. Wood assisted us on the Sunday, November 1st, by way of exhortation and lecture, both of which provided much spiritual food.

We were pleased to have with us Bro. David Pinkerton of Ireland, Sis. Wood and Sis. Ruth Wood, Bro. and Sis. Peacock of Dudley. These times of refreshing are a great comfort, as it is evident the days of the Gentiles will soon end.

W.V.B.