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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

AT A FRATERNAL GATHERING

COME... INTO A DESERT PLACE

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

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At the Table of the Lord

"TAKE UP THY BED AND WALK"

A GAIN, WE ARE PRIVILEGED to read the record of the life of Jesus as He began His ministry. This ministry commenced after His baptism by John in Jordan when the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove and God said: "... Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11). Jesus had come to John, seeking baptism to "fulfil all righteousness"; and by so doing, pleased His Father. The record concerning Jesus is that He was 30 years old when He began His ministry. We have read how He was taught as He grew up and so realised fully what God required of Him. It must have been difficult for Jesus to be patient until He became 30 years old and was told of God, now is the time of ministering. Yet, He waited patiently and pleased His Father. We have the record of His being left behind in Jerusalem when He was 12 years old. When Mary and Joseph returned and found Him among the elders, His words were: "... Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Yet, it was another 18 years before that ministry began. All this time, would not be spent idly waiting, but rather Jesus would be preparing Himself so He would be ready when God indicated it was time to begin His work.

After His baptism, Jesus was sorely tempted to use the newly given power of the Spirit to glorify Himself. However, He resisted that urgency in Himself; and when the trial was past, began to teach, to reveal to His people God's purpose in which He was so fully involved. All this, brethren and sisters, is given to us through the words, the eyes, the mind, the spirit of those who saw Jesus—like Mark whose record we are now privileged to read. This record is given to help make us feel as close to the Lord Jesus as Mark, or John, or James, or Peter were—indeed, as were all who heard His voice and in obedience to His words "left all and followed Him." Does it help to make us feel closer to the Lord Jesus? Can we see Him clearly so that we can more quickly, more fully follow Him in obedience to His words:

"... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

How powerful must have been His words, His presence, His spirit shining forth which made our brethren of old leave all and follow Him. We are called to do the same, brethren and sisters, to leave all, to deny self and its wants and follow Him. We can do it only if we are close to Him, aware of His spirit. Let us, then, as we read this record, take it to our hearts, apply it to our daily lives

so that we are helped to bring those lives into subjection to Him, rejoicing and feeling strength in His power.

THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT CAST OUT

We are impressed by the miracles Jesus did, the healing He accomplished through the power of the Spirit. In Mark 1 : 23-27, we read of a man with an unclean spirit. As a consequence of this unclean spirit, this man was "possessed"—not himself. Jesus healed him by causing the unclean spirit to come out. How telling are the words of that unclean spirit, Mark 1 : 24 :

" Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

Likewise do we not witness, in measure, this same miracle for we at times, recognise in ourselves an unclean spirit, a spirit which we know is displeasing to God, and to our brethren and sisters as well. We know that the only way to cast it out, destroy it is by the Spirit working through Jesus. Each one of us, through trial, through rebuke, has experienced such great deliverance from that spirit which can take us away from God unless it is cast out. Should not this, brethren and sisters, make us feel more closely bound to the Lord Jesus, make us strive more fully to deny self and follow Him as He wants us to do ? These experiences should help us over the rough spots, the difficult and sore trials which test our spirit. Are we possessed of an unclean spirit, or has that unclean spirit been cast out until what remains is a man of the Spirit, healed by the Spirit working through the Lord Jesus ?

What, then, is our reaction as we feel that healing, that casting out of the flesh, the unclean spirit that brings much distress and anguish as it possesses us ? Gratitude and submission, we would hope.

"HE TOOK HER BY THE HAND"

Further help is given in our desire to be close to the Lord Jesus, in the healing of Peter's wife's mother, recorded in Mark 1 : 29-31. She was "sick of a fever," and Jesus, verse 31 :

" came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up ; and immediately the fever left her "

How filled with compassion Jesus was ! How gentle ! How aware of her need for healing ! A fever, we know, can quickly incapacitate, making one weak and unable to cope. Again, it was through the power of the Spirit that a healing was accomplished. Help is found in the women's response to the miracle. We are told, ". . . . *and she ministered unto them.*" "*Minister*", we know, means, "to serve",

“to wait upon”. She had been greatly helped—healed—and now her desire was to serve, to please Jesus and those with Him, to give of her restored health and strength to help her brethren.

Brethren and sisters, each one of us has experienced great healing. Do we respond as did Peter’s wife’s mother, by doing all we can to minister with the restored strength given of His Spirit? To serve faithfully requires an awareness of what is needed and a quickness in the effort to provide it. A faithful servant, longing to wait upon his master, tries to anticipate the master’s needs and so fill them. As we, brethren and sisters, feel the power of that hand that reaches out, that lifts us up, to heal, do we respond in a desire to serve, to follow Him, to be close to Him who has done so much for us? If we are to know His healing, we *must* be close to Jesus so that we can reach out to that hand extended in mercy and, in turn, extend our hand to all who are His.

“TAKE UP THY BED AND WALK”

In our portion for today (Mark 2), we have read of the one sick of the palsy. Palsy is a disease that causes paralysis, a sore affliction—one for which there was probably no cure. This man who suffered so did not despair, but got four of his brethren to carry him to Jesus. What great faith he showed in Jesus’ power to heal! What blessing he knew, too, that there were four who likewise had enough faith in Jesus and love for the palsied man to carry him. They loved him sufficiently to extend their strength and their time to help. The record of Mark tells us that they could not approach unto Jesus because of the press. This, however, did not deter them, for they were determined to get help for their friend, believing surely that Jesus could heal him. Moving in this conviction and trust, they climbed up on the roof and, having “broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.” These four, as well as the palsied man, realised that they must get close to Jesus if he was to be healed. They exerted all their strength to do so. We know the result—he was healed by the Lord Jesus, who said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee Take up thy bed and walk.” And the man did so, “and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.” (verses 5-12). The miracle made a marvellous impression on those who beheld it, causing them to glorify God, except the scribes who objected to Jesus saying “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” We can visualise what the healing meant to the palsied man. Jesus’ power had healed both physically and spiritually. The four brethren who bore him so faithfully, so diligently in the desire to come alongside to help, bending every effort to bring about a healing, would rejoice as much as the man who was healed, for their faithful labour was rewarded.

Is our faith, then, like that of this palsied man and his four brethren? How much we need to grow in that simple, unquestioning faith and in a closeness to Jesus that we, too, may be healed; that the Spirit working through Him might help our infirmities, and help, too, as we strive to minister to others in need.

Mark saw all this and has been caused by the Spirit to record it for our comfort and inspiration, to bolster our faith.

As we read this record, does it, indeed, strengthen our faith? Are we stronger, better servants of God because of it? If so, how thankful to God we should be for His blessing, and how ready to take heed to these words recorded for us.

J. A. DeF.

At a Fraternal Gathering

FIRST EXHORTATION . . .

THE FATHER WATCHES

“Let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.” (I. Samuel 26 : 24).

TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL Moses said, and his words should apply to us, “The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people . . . to make thee high above all nations . . . in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God . . .”

Of all the people of the earth none are as precious as these in the eyes of God. The whole of His purpose is centred in and around these; the whole of the work of His hands is with them in view. To them God says:

“Fear not . . . thou art mine.”

Because they belong unto Him He says:

“I have loved thee . . . every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him . . . I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour.”

The great Yahweh our saviour. Can we grasp it? “Before the day was I am he”. From everlasting to everlasting our God, and He says to us, “Thou art mine . . . and there is none that can deliver

out of my hand . . . This people have I formed for myself ; (us ?) they shall shew forth my praise." The Apostle says, "Predestinated according to the purpose of him . . . that we should be to the praise of his glory."

How exalted and intimate is the relationship between God and His people. So precious and so dear are they to Him they are described as "the apple of his eye", whosoever therefore adversely touches any of them, touches the tenderest spot of His affection. He is their Father, and the Father watches over His children for their good. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous . . . who is he that will harm you ?" This does not mean that there will be no suffering or persecution, but from the point of view of the Father none can injure those whom He has predestined to glory. They will be "kept by the power of God" for salvation. To be "kept" is to be guarded as by a sentinel, safe under his charge.

Concerning those who "obtained a good report" by faith, we find there were many who because of their faith were delivered by the power of God from circumstances which otherwise would have proved insurmountable. We learn therefore that the power of God our Father is ever present to help us in all our circumstances if we have faith in Him. With faith comes trust, the mind approaching closer and closer to God, rejoicing in the abundant evidence of His care. There is developed trust, and this removes those ever-anxious cares so very evident in this troubled world. Trusting in the Lord, and in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, our requests being known to our Father. The result is, the peace of God, which we are assured, "shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus."

How privileged it is to feel we are being kept by the power of God. Always in close communion with God as was Abraham. Trials will come to prove whether we are placing our trust in Him. We may be in "heaviness through manifold temptations", but "the life (is) much set by" or valuable and estimable in the eyes of God. For what reason do trials come ? It is that the trial of our faith, being so much more precious than gold which perisheth, "may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." God says, "I have created thee for my praise." Trials and tribulations are the process by which God is creating us for His glory. He requires faith to be shown by us which is so precious in His sight, and if we have it, then we are kept by His power for salvation.

How sobering it is to consider that while faith is operating, the believer becomes precious in the eyes of God, being associated with

His Beloved Son, and His eternal purpose. Trials will come to each of us, but if there is complete trust, and strong faith, evidence will assuredly be given that His power is working, and the realisation that it is there to help, strengthen, encourage, and deliver. Should we lose faith however and begin to trust in the flesh, then the power will be taken away. We remember the king of Israel who when passing through certain adversities said, "This evil is of the Lord. Why wait we for the Lord any longer." He became bitter in heart and even blamed the prophet.

We must keep close to God, and in daily communion with Him, "casting all our care upon him, for he careth for us." The Father is watching, and it is written, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Can a women forget her sucking child?" It is just possible she may. "Yet will I not forget thee" says God. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my Hands." "None can pluck them out of my Father's hands," says Jesus. We may boldly say then, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The angel of the Lord, encampeth round them that fear him, and delivereth them. David speaks of this care of God for His children, Psalm 41 : 1-3 :

"The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive ; (the life much set by, or valuable and estimable) The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing : thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

Even in sickness then, the Father watches over his children, and will heal if such is His purpose. Then verses 12-13 :

"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."

Surely all God's children can repeat, Amen and Amen.

The Father was watching when the three friends of Daniel were cast into the furnace of fire. "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire" said the king. This was true. "He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt ; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." The Father had sent an angel to protect them. Again when Daniel was put into the den of lions, the king came to the den and said to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions. Then said Daniel unto the king . . . My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."

The life of this servant of God was much set by, and he was delivered.

A prosecuting counsel of a child of the Father can be turned into a defender if God so wills.

David reflecting upon his experiences exclaimed :

“Thou, God, art my rock in whom I will trust, my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

We remember he had to flee because of his foes. He found a place of refuge in the cave of a rock, and there experienced the protection of the Father, and was moved to say :

“Be merciful to me O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul (life) trusteth in thee, yea in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast.”

This is what we are to be like in the day of calamity, and this is where we are to go for protection.

We have to pass through experiences to get our trust strengthened, and if we hold fast it will be increased, and will become firmer as we endure the trials, until it is like a rock, which means that we belong to God, that we are of THE ROCK. We have to become like this because the Lord said, “Upon this rock will I build my Ecclesia, and the gates of *sheol* shall not prevail against it.” Are we then each being built upon the Rock ? Wind and storm will come, but our trust will not be moved. The promise is :

“They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, (giving protection to the city) so the Lord is round about his people . . . ”

What an impressive figure, and so David said :

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved : he that keepeth thee will not slumber.”

The Father watches, His eyes are upon the righteous, His ears are open to their cry.

Many are the examples recorded, of those who endured the test of their faith and character. Job sorely tried, mentally and physically, retained his trust in God, and found Him to be “very pitiful and of tender mercy.” How helpful to remember this when adverse circumstances overtake us. David, when counselled to kill his adversary who was seeking his life, resisted the temptation. He spared the life of his enemy, and exclaimed :

“Behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.”

David put his trust in God, whom he regarded as his Rock, his Shield in the day of trouble.

None of the called is at first fit for that to which they have become related. Tribulation is necessary to crush that which is natural. The experience is exceedingly painful to the fleshly nature, but the Father is watching. The divine hand will administer the purifying process where willing submission is shown and says the Apostle, “Of his own will begat he us . . . that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures”, created for his glory. This is the calling and reward for which we are to be fitted. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.”

We have the record of those whose trust was in God. There was Joseph, loved of his father. The feelings of his brethren led them to plot to kill him. His life was much set by in the sight of God. He was sold as a slave into Egypt, and had to endure the ignominy of false accusation. His feet, we are told were hurt with fetters of iron, but the Father was watching : “I removed his shoulder from the burden : his hands were delivered from the pots.” He heard “a language he understood not” ; the people cried before him, “Bow the knee.” This was an experience he had not “understood” previously. The Father had delivered him from tribulation.

Jeremiah had to undergo much trial and false accusation. Many times his life was in danger, but “much set by in the eyes of the Lord.” God had said unto him, “They shall fight against thee : but they shall not prevail against thee ; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.” He was kept by the power of God, and was protected. He was cast into the dungeon and sank in the mire. He was left to die ; but he did not die. God sent an Ethiopian to deliver him, and later, he found favour when many of his enemies and persecutors were slain, or taken captive into Babylon.

These are examples set before us of trust and faith. Do we fit in with them ? Do we feel that our lives are so precious to God that we are being kept by His power because He has formed us for Himself, a people to shew forth His praise. Does He not say ? :

“Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel . . . even to your old age I am he ; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you : I have made, and I will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

“To whom will ye liken me . . . and compare me ?”

This is our God who requires us to be strengthened in trust and to abide under the shadow of his wings :

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion :
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ; he shall set
me up upon a rock.”

In the tabernacle Israel made, the children of the Father are represented by the shewbread. Twelve cakes of fine flour, set upon the holy table before the Lord. Upon them was placed the pure frankincense, that it might rise up a memorial before the face of God. Can we not discern the True Israel being spoken of there ? They were before the face of God, always on view, always being watched by the Father for their good. They had been prepared by the refining process as typified by the fine flour. Surely we see in this that the tribulations through which we have to pass are the method for the refining.

Each of these cakes were two tenth deals. Does not this speak to us of a measure ? Tribulations measured by the Father to constitute us the “shewbread”, *bread of the faces* upon the table, a people who are to be for ever in the presence of God. Before His face now, and always, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations ; and “He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.” He has said, “The rod of the wicked shall not rest (to remain) upon the lot of the righteous ; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.” When the rod has done its work, it will be taken away. Hence the appeal of the Spirit :

“Ye that fear the Lord. praise him ; all ye seed of Jacob, glorify him ; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted ; neither hath he hid his face from him ; but when he cried unto him, he heard.”

This is the way God is fitting His people for His glory ; fitting them for the time of which the prophet speaks :

“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”

Fitting them also for the time when the Lord Jesus will take His people and show them to His Father, and when the great God of power, will then be a gentle speaking Father, and they His Family throughout the ages of eternity.

R.W.

“Come . . . into a desert place”

WHEN JESUS SAID, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile” does it not express a recurring need felt even by the Lord Jesus, and which is no less a need in our case? When He at last obtained solitude after the jostle and strain of the day’s work of healing and preaching it was evening and “When he had sent them (the multitude) away, he departed into a mountain to pray.”

So the desire for a certain amount of quiet was shown to be more than having an opportunity in which to eat—though it was said that Jesus and the disciples “Had no leisure so much as to eat.” (Mark 6 : 31). A time of spiritual refreshment in solitude was in fact regarded by the Lord Jesus as of greater value than eating on occasion, when He referred to this spiritual refreshment as “Meat to eat that ye know not of.” This could be a reminder to us that the life of the Truth should not find us constantly on the move—even in practical works of the Truth.

This is an aspect that Martha had to be reminded of, possibly because practical works sometimes come more easily, and can even be an escape from meditating on lessons more needful.

There seems to be much more than a tenuous connection between the suggestion of the Lord Jesus to come apart with His disciples, into a desert place and rest a while, and the purpose of the Lord God of Israel in taking his Son, Israel, apart from the burdens of Egypt into a desert place. The original reason for the Exodus, given by Moses to Pharaoh was to do sacrifice to God in particular, but implying drawing nigh to God in general. This could only be done by the giving and receiving of the Law. Making acceptable sacrifice to God necessitated, and still does, a Law; else how could God’s people know what He required, and what is pleasing? Besides the giving of the law—which is a way of life—the way that law is received is of the utmost importance. It is like the sower sowing seed which fell on to different types of ground. It is only under suitable conditions that the Word could take root and bare fruit. If the conditions were not right, the Word, or the Truth, however good it was would either be choked or starved, and good acceptable fruit would not be seen even in those to whom the Word was given.

Whatever is figured by the desert and the populated areas it is evidently in connection with the conditions under which we receive and live the Truth. So may we examine the purpose of going apart into a desert, and the value of being there, as it was in the mind of the Lord God of Israel, and the Lord Jesus, who also chose the literal desert as a retreat on more than one occasion.

Sometimes we refer to ourselves as being in a "Desert", but there may be more than one aspect of instruction in Israel's exodus from Egypt. The implication was that Israel could not do acceptable sacrifice to God unless they did come out of Egypt—for the cardinal principle we know so well that there must be a separation from the darkness before there can be dwelling in light. Egypt is the world, and England is the world, and the desert is the world, in the sense that it is not the reward—the promised land. But there is a vast difference in conditions between the populous world of Egypt, or England, and being in the desert. It is these desert conditions that we say we are living in, as were ancient Israel, during the probationary time from calling out of darkness and before entering the land. What do these two different types of conditions mean to us? Just as there was so great a difference between Israel in the wilderness and Israel in Egypt, should we not see a great difference in the conditions under which we serve God, compared to the circumstances in which we lived prior to our calling out?

The most conspicuous feature of a desert is that it does not receive rain water from heaven, and as a result it is lifeless, barren and unappealing. This should be how the world comes to appear to us when we are serving God: having been called out of Egypt—though still in the world. This view of the world is very different from how it appears when we belong to the world. When we belonged to "Egypt" it may have appeared, for a time, adequately watered, prosperous, with plenty of life, a number of good people, having spiritual literature, and so forth. However, when we are called of God, what used to seem lush green and well watered to us is exposed as being an illusion. The world then takes on the appearance, figuratively, of a lifeless desert, because it is seen to have nothing to offer for the support of life. So there is a transposition of the world in our eyes, from "Egypt" to "Desert".

Abraham probably had this very experience as he lived in the city of Ur—claiming to be Light. It would have its culture, and from the very fact that Abraham dwelt there, he might very well have thought that it was indeed a city of Light and Life—watered from heaven—at one time. Then, with the calling out of Abraham by God, the Light of Ur would have looked different to him. For he obeyed the call, not even knowing where he was going to, nor did he ever wish to return. Does this not suggest to us that the world—even the culture of Ur of the Chaldees—had taken on the likeness of a figurative desert to Abraham? It was not Light after all, it was not watered from heaven, it was not life, so he had neither reason nor wish to stay in it.

A pertinent question for us, then, may be: "Has the world be-

come barren, like a desert to us ; and if so, does it present the same freedom from distractions, or counter attractions from God, as a literal desert would offer ?”

Let us think how a literal desert just has not the facilities for distraction from God ; little scope for elaborate hobbies or pastimes, simple recreation, no social life with the outsider whatsoever, no cinema, television, or public house, no extravagances in food or clothing.

Lest it be thought we are departing from reality, let us remember that this was literally the case with our own brethren and sisters in ancient Israel, arranged by the same God of Israel.

While in this age we are not called to live in tents on the sand, can we appreciate the principles of those circumstances which God established for His people in a desert ? A simple life, without the distraction of various interests, obligations, and cares, which are really part of the world of England in our case, not found in a desert. Is the modern way of life, with all its literature, its occupations, its interests and temptations, as barren and useless as a desert in our eyes ?

The Truth, or God’s way of life, is the most perfect and reasonable balance, and we are not suggesting that we should abandon respect for our employment, or let the home become neglected and untidy ; the garden run wild, or the car go to ruin. Are not the principles that God is trying to show us, that all these would-be distractions must not become our life, and in effect making the Truth the “Distraction” ?

The only things that were life to Israel, were God’s presence among them, His Law, His provision of manna, water and clothing. Everything else was desert and lifeless, and could not be a pre-occupation to the Israelites—apart from the gold which they brought from Egypt. When that was misused and made into an idol the whole nation was nearly wiped out.

If the world is as unprofitable as a desert to us, all activities beside the Truth will be viewed as possible distractions, even though some of them are very necessary—like earning our living, and preparing food. The only thing left in the world that is life to us, like being in a desert, is God’s presence, and His Truth.

But if the world to us is full of interest, temptations, and obligations, the danger is that we are not separated in mind, to living in the wilderness at all ; we are not looking upon the world as a desert, but having flesh pots, and melons, and nice things as did Egypt, for some of the Israelites ; then the Truth may be the distraction

while our lives are centred on the things of the world—things of modern society. It is a serious thought, but tendencies in this direction can arise very easily.

Can we not then consider the matter, realising that what the world offers as a way of life is not rich or fertile, but as barren as a wilderness? If this is our mind we have come apart into a desert place, and can find rest.

But how can we find rest if we are mixed up with the pursuits and hubbub of the world while still trying to live the Truth? We will then have “No leisure so much as to eat”, or more profoundly, to feed upon God’s food from heaven.

A.E.I.

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

“WOE TO THE MULTITUDE OF MANY PEOPLE, WHICH MAKE A NOISE LIKE THE NOISE OF THE SEAS; AND TO THE RUSHING OF NATIONS, THAT MAKE A RUSHING LIKE THE RUSHING OF MIGHTY WATERS!

THE NATIONS SHALL RUSH LIKE THE RUSHING OF MANY WATERS; BUT GOD SHALL REBUKE THEM, AND THEY SHALL FLEE FAR OFF, AND SHALL BE CHASED AS THE CHAFF OF THE MOUNTAINS BEFORE THE WIND, AND LIKE A ROLLING THING (THISTLEDOWN) BEFORE THE WHIRLWIND.” (Isaiah 17 : 12-13).

THE TEMPO OF LIFE INCREASES. The nations rush on like the lemmings to their destruction. The arms build-up is formidable. The U.S.A. has over a thousand long-range missiles and thirteen hundred submarine launched missiles. In addition America has over two thousand long-range bombers. The Russians have over a thousand missiles with a range of four thousand miles, with several hundred submarine launched missiles. The Soviet has only four or five hundred long-range bombers, but a vast array of tanks. Some nineteen thousand compared to N.A.T.O.'s six thousand six hundred. In tanks, aircraft and men, the Russian army and its allies are actually superior to the West.

But all this vast array, all this formidable weaponry which is capable of rushing the armies of mankind from one place to another. Indeed life in the cities, fast communications which speed the traveller from place to place, are dependent upon one natural and much sought after ingredient—oil !

Men have really become snared in the way of life they have made for themselves, which so desperately needs oil. If they were to be suddenly deprived of this mineral there would be chaos and there would be no rushing to and fro. The great highways would become silent, the roar in the cities would be stilled. Yet this is what is to happen. “The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters : but God shall rebuke them . . . ”

It is not mere chance that the bulk of the world's oil deposits exist in the Middle East. This is the area where God is to begin His great work of subduing the nations so that “swords may be turned into ploughshares.”

The Middle Eastern oil nations are physically weak, numbering about a dozen, the main producers being Saudi Arabia, Iran and Libya, followed by the small yet extremely oil rich kingdom of

Kuwait ; yet these weaker countries could make things very difficult for powerful European nations. Japan also would be seriously affected if Middle East oil was withheld. The United States is not so physically affected, having oil for its own needs, but directly or indirectly America has vast amounts of money invested in Middle East oil (nearly a third of all its foreign investments).

Such a situation makes the Middle East area and North Africa a very important strategic consideration for any nation. Nearly all Western Europe's oil requirements is supplied from this area, and the same applies to Japan. It is not only transport that needs this source of power, but industry as well, which consumes a tremendous amount of fuel oil that has largely replaced the use of coal. There is also a great need for oil products for machine lubrication purposes, and there are many other features of daily life that have come to rely on by-products of this mineral.

Until recent times when oil has become far more important in economic considerations, Russia seemed content with extracting from its own oil-fields. But the Soviet policy, of which the Western nations are becoming more acutely aware, is not only to have political influence in the Middle East, but also a share in its mineral wealth.

An oil pact was signed in Moscow in July 1969 between Russia and Iraq for the purpose of extracting oil from North Rumaila. The field is due to come into production in early 1972. Japan also is attempting to get a foothold in the area, having successfully arranged concessions for oil exploration both on and off-shore at Abu Dhabi.

Whether they like it or not nations are becoming more and more tied up with an area, which apart from oil, would have no attraction, being mainly desert. But at the hub of these affairs is the tiny, and to many, the insignificant nation of Israel. In the eyes of the Creator however, the land of Israel is a jewel. His eyes are upon it, and to Him it is more important than all the other nations and their interests. The divine priority will be the establishing of a righteous state for the descendants of Abraham. This purpose when it is fully carried out will undoubtedly interfere with the world's oil-flow.

The nations of course, will not like interference, nor threats to their oil investments. Hence the prophecy :

“The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters ;
but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off . . . ”

D.L.

Correspondence

with James Carter of the "Testimony"

Was Jesus crucified on "our Friday" ?

LETTER SENT TO J.C.—

It is noted in the "Testimony" for June, that you said that :

"Jesus ate the ordinary Passover on the 14th Nisan (NOT the 15th).

He was crucified at 9 o'clock on the morning of the 14th Nisan (our Friday). He was in the tomb the 15th Nisan, which was the first day of the remaining six days of unleavened bread.

He was raised from the dead very early on the 16th Nisan."

Perhaps you would explain in view of this, how Jesus came to be in the grave for three days and three nights (Matthew 12 : 40) ?

REPLY FROM J.C.—

With regard to your query, I really must return the question to you, and ask you why so repeatedly Jesus said that he would rise the third day, and the two on the Emmaus Road said "This is the *third* day since these things were done." They were speaking after the event on the Resurrection Day, so they certainly knew.

Please put your reply in the "Remnant" and let me have a copy, for which many thanks.

LETTER TO J.C.—

This letter seems to make for more confusion. In your article as clearly quoted, you only allowed for Jesus being in the tomb from "our Friday" to the first day.

You were asked to reconcile this with the statement of Jesus that He would be in the grave for three days and three nights even as Jonah was in the whale. (Matthew 12 : 39).

If you are unable to reconcile what Jesus said with what you have written, would it not be better for you to say so ?

LETTER FROM J.C.—

You don't seem very anxious to face up to the problem I have returned to you. In the New Testament we have 13 references to Jesus being raised from the dead on the third day. There is one

reference to Jesus being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Seeing, therefore, your problem is 13 times as great as the one you have referred back to me, surely it is up to you to face the major problem first. Did Jesus rise the third day, or not? Don't evade it again.

REPLY—

Never have we inferred that Jesus was not raised on the third day. Undoubtedly He was. But this has nothing to do with the question put to you. You said, Jesus was crucified on "our Friday". How could this allow for what Jesus said that He would be in the grave three days and three nights even as Jonah was in the whale for this period?

Reference to Jesus saying He would be raised the "third day" confirms this, but still leaves you with the same difficulty and error as in all Christendom who claim that Jesus was crucified on "our Friday." Memorialised by Catholics in not eating meat on Friday, and calling the day at Easter "Good Friday".

It is sad to see one who is a leader of those who once had the Truth falling into the same error as Christendom!

Correspondents are invited to write when the explanation will be given that what Jesus said that He would be in the grave three days and three nights is absolutely true, and still allows for Him being raised on the third day. Quite impossible if He were crucified on "our Friday".

W.V.B.

News from the Ecclesias

NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN, Northern Ireland.

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

Sunday School 2-0 p.m.

Bible Class—Wednesday evening.

The evidence that we are in the last days is shewn by the increasing apostasy of Christendom and in those who had the Truth as they converge under the banner of the man of sin. The warning is to the One Body to remember the words of the Lord Jesus our Head, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be . . ."—eight people saved—one family!

The need which we all recognise is for an ever-strengthening of the bonds which bind us as a family, together and to Him. In this we were helped by the visit of Sister Slaney for a few days and the enjoyment of her company; also in the visit of Bro. and Sis. DeFries which was most welcome and exceptional after their long absence.

We feel that the contacts between Bro. DeFries and those who are separated by distance will prove helpful to all.

J.P.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

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

Revelation Study : Mid-week.

During the month of August we have been greatly blessed. On August 8th Bro. and Sis. Hill were here and we received his help on the Sunday.

During the week we had the pleasure of meeting Bro. and Sis. DeFries from the States, Bro J. Smith, Bro. A. E. Iago, Sis. Slaney, Sis. Crossley from Manchester, and Bro. David Pinkerton from Ireland.

Many profitable evenings were spent together with help from the Word.

On Sunday, August 15th, Bro. J. Smith exhorted us and the following week was a happy time indeed and enjoyed by all in the peace and quietness.

On August 29th one was privileged to get to Manchester for the Sunday meeting and to the Fraternal Gathering on Monday, to

meet nearly all the brethren and sisters and to be uplifted by the pure words of Truth which is so precious, especially in these last days.

We are grateful for all the help received.

—per J.S.

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.

The work of witnessing through newspaper advertising continues, God willing, in an attempt to reach out and help any struggling to know what God requires.

Our hearts and minds, in prayer and supplication, are with all those undergoing trial, asking that God be with them to strengthen and sustain, according to His purpose.

We look forward to the return of the visitors, anticipating the sharing and strengthening of family bonds.

As we witness the efforts of the world to reverse its staggering problems, only to see their attempts fail in vain, how we yearn for Christ's return and the end of all failing efforts !

—per M.C.S.

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.

Our hearts were saddened on September 1st to see the departure of our American visitors, Bro. and Sis. DeFries. So much help had been received by all in the Ecclesias in this country and in Ireland by counselling together that their departure was keenly felt. Much benefit has accrued to all in the Ecclesias by the help so freely and unstintingly given.

On Monday, August 30th was the occasion of our Fraternal Gathering, which was a most inspiring occasion, the right hand of fellowship being given to Bro. DeFries by our Presiding Brother on behalf of all in this country, indicating the bond, the fellowship which is ours whether present or absent, but showing in a practical way an appreciation of this glorious fact permitted by the Father.

The subject of the exhortations was : "This people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise." (Isaiah 43 : 21). We were thankful to have the help of Bro. R. Wood of Dudley and of Bro. DeFries. Visitors from other Ecclesias including Wales and Northern Ireland were most welcome and their support by their presence much appreciated.

Having enjoyed together this time of building up and feeling strengthened and encouraged we hope to go forward with renewed zest in the wonderful privilege that is ours, of testifying to *the* Truth that we may be, under the hand of God, the means of a few more espousing the only hope that is worth while.

W.V.B.