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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

CHRISTENDOM – AND OTHERS – ASTRAY

SOUND DOCTRINE

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THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

All Communications

W. V. Butterfield
16 Westfield Road,
Cheadle Hulme,
Cheadle,
Cheadle, SK8 6EH

J. Pinkerton,
38 Loughries Road,
Newtownards,
Co. Down,
N. Ireland

J. A. DeFries
R.D.1. Forestville,
New York 14062
U.S.A.

At the Table of the Lord

"I DO NOT FRUSTRATE THE GRACE OF GOD" (Galatians 2 : 21).

WHAT HELP THERE IS in the words of Paul to his brethren in Galatia, as he wrote to help them in difficult circumstances, being fearful lest they depart from the Truth. His warnings are helpful to us today—not, we hope, that we are in acute danger of departing ; but rather because of the ever-present danger of failing to please God in our living in this evil world. Paul writes, Gal.1 : 3-4 :

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that *he might deliver us from this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father."

His prayer was that his brethren might know, through Jesus, who was the fulfilment of the peace offering and the sin offering, that grace and peace from God. This is only possible as obedience to the commands of God is seen, not just in the letter, as apparently those in Galatia were doing, but in the spirit of the law. Paul further wrote, verse 6 :

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

They were turning away to something else which could only bring condemnation and death, for His grace in Christ was not valued.

In Galatians 2 : 21, we have read Paul's determination :

"I do not frustrate the grace of God . . ."

Why was it that Paul was so concerned ? Was it, indeed, because he feared that his brethren were in danger of losing the grace of God, of frustrating that grace bestowed upon them as brethren of Christ ? We find "*frustrate*" means to "cast off," "despise," "bring to nought," or "reject." It was his genuine concern, for we read in Hebrews 10 : 28 :

"He that despised (frustrated) Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses . . . how much sorer punishment . . . shall he be thought worthy who . . . hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ?"

What is this grace of God which Paul spoke of so often, feared lest his brethren lose, and feared too lest he "frustrate" ? If this can be perceived, we can be helped to grow in appreciation. To lose that grace was a serious position ; for Paul tells us Galatians 5 : 4 :

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ; *ye are fallen from grace.*”

If we fall from grace, it is obvious that salvation is lost, for “Christ is become of no effect.” Recognizing the grave danger, Paul was moved in love for his brethren to write. Does it help us to realize our danger, for do not all fail, all fall short, all experience the danger of falling from grace ?

“NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD”

We find grace is first mentioned in connection with Noah (Gen. 6 : 8), where God witnessed that this man found grace in His eyes. Why was Noah singled out to be the recipient of such great blessing ? Noah did not do as the rest of the evil world was doing. He did not walk in the imagination of his heart ; but rather (as v. 9 tells us) :

“. . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”

As a consequence, Noah found grace. What was the grace that Noah found ? The ark—a means of salvation from death, speaking to him of the work of Christ, the Messiah to come. And why ? Because he obeyed God. As long as Noah in faith built the ark in accordance with God’s pattern given to him, as long as he witnessed that the world was evil, soon to be destroyed ; as long as he in faith looked for salvation in the Messiah, he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah could have easily frustrated the grace of God through failing to build in faith, failing to witness, becoming discouraged as year after year went by, and the flood did not come. It was a period of 120 years that Noah was building that ark, believing God and obeying His commands. If we, brethren and sisters, were in Noah’s place, would we have gone on in faith walking with God, not frustrating His grace ?

The people of God have continued to know His grace since the time of Noah, indeed since it was so graciously offered after the failure in Eden. Israel, in the wilderness, found grace in God’s eyes. We read God’s word in Jer. 31 : 1-4 :

“. . . I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people . . . The people which were left of the sword *found grace* in the wilderness : even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The Lord hath appeared . . . saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love : therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.”

How did Israel find grace in the wilderness ? “When I went to cause him to rest,” the Spirit says. “*To rest,*” we find, means “to

settle." "to find ease." Much provided for Israel in the wilderness to save them from perishing, to give them rest, manna, water, the law, the tabernacle, all speaking to them, teaching them of their Messiah to come who would redeem, save from death to grant eternal rest. Was this the grace they found in the wilderness?

How many there were in the wilderness who murmured, complained, and rebelled, thus frustrating that grace of God. Even Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, when provoked by his brethren's murmuring, forgot for a moment the grace of God, when he failed to sanctify God, to believe God at the rock, saying, "must we bring forth water out of the rock?" Grace was given to Moses, yet he failed—suffered because of his failure. But, perhaps he had a greater perception of that grace of God, of how vital it was, how precious, needing to be cherished, valued, not set at naught. Can we profit, brethren and sisters, through the experiences of Moses? Can we grow in appreciation of His grace, valuing it above all else?

"PERSUADED THEM TO CONTINUE IN THE GRACE OF GOD"

In Acts 13, Paul spoke to those seeking God in Antioch (v. 38-39):

"Be it known unto you . . . that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : And by him *all that believe* are justified from all things . . ."

Verse 43 :

". . . when the congregation was broken up, many . . . followed Paul and Barnabas : who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."

Grace is not our right ; but rather ultimately a blessing given by God—His gift to those who believe on Him. This gift of grace constituting as it does all the blessings of His power, brings a grave responsibility.

Peter tells us of this, I Peter, 4 : 10 :

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

We know that a steward is one who has been given charge of his master's goods, a trusted servant ; and, therefore, charged with the responsibility of administering his goods. He must do it to the benefit of his master, not for himself. If God grants to us His grace, His complete and precious gift, do we value it? appreciating that this which He values He has entrusted to us? Each one who is struggling to glorify God has been granted this gift ; each of us has

been permitted this morning to partake at His Table, in the fellowship of His Son. Do we, having been entrusted with such a precious gift, minister it as stewards which are pleasing to Him, our Master ? "To minister," we find, means "to wait upon," "to serve." Could we, then, read Peter's words as, Even so wait upon one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God ? It is not easy to serve in such a spirit, for we may selfishly feel, I'd rather be waited upon myself. But, as we are helped to realize that we are, after all, only stewards, privileged custodians of that grace, and that we will be judged by how well we have ministered it, does it help us to be more selfless, more ready to serve, more aware of how Jesus served ? We have His example in John 13, where He washed His disciples' feet, verses 12-17 :

". . . Know ye what I have done to you ?"

Jesus asked as He washed their feet, and so they could be clean "every whit." Was this part of God's grace—that Jesus should be able to wash their feet ? Jesus told His disciples, verse 14 :

". . . ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

If we fail to do so, is this one way we can frustrate the grace of God, setting it at nought ? Who of us, brethren and sisters, can feel that our feet do not need washing ? Each one knows how often he fails. What grace from God that there is a means provided whereby our feet can be washed. But, let us remember how lovingly, how humbly, and yet how persistently He pursued this work of washing. Can we be stewards like this, one to another ?

It is not easy as we can all testify by personal experience ; yet, Paul tells us the reaction of one who values that grace, Galatians, 2 : 20 :

"I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Do we feel, brethren and sisters that to be crucified with Christ is an integral part of receiving that grace ? Even though we are crucified with Christ, even though the desires of our flesh are denied, killed, we can live in the spirit, the new man growing stronger, guiding our living in the way of salvation, All this helps us to more strongly struggle to put down our flesh when it rears up in protest to the responsibilities of being faithful stewards of His grace.

"The life which I now live (the new life—the old man crucified) *in the flesh* I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me,

and give himself for me." We all live in the flesh. How much easier if we didn't have to struggle so hard against it ; didn't have to acknowledge to God, and to one another, "I've failed again." We must, however, face that we *do* live in the flesh, and yet may know the grace of God, if we can live in obedience to His commands as Jesus did so fully. He did, and so loved God and His brethren that He agonized all through His life to finish the work God had given Him to do. Is this the grace of God—the gift of His Son, with all the blessing and power of God to help as a means of salvation for those who seek to honour Him ? Who else can know such blessing, such grace ? Can we, then, brethren and sisters, firm in determination with our brother, Paul, as he said, I do not frustrate the grace of God."

J. A. DeF.



Christendom — and others — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

*THE DOCTRINE OF FELLOWSHIP AS SEEN IN
THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.*

It need not be mentioned that Christendom has no idea of the doctrine of fellowship. As a society they make their own rules, and as frequently break them when occasion suits them. God is not in all their thoughts, although they are careful to give a "religious" flavour to their teaching and actions. This suits the multitude, who have "itching ears" and do not desire sound doctrine ; who demand "smooth things" of their leaders, so that they might have the best of both worlds : the present, and the one they believe they will inherit, which if they knew the truth, is no more than the cold clods of earth.

Those who have been privileged to know the foolishness of Christendom's teaching ; those who once had the Truth are quickly following their way. It is a shrewd way of keeping a mixed and growing multitude together, but is it not realised that such, however large, are in no different position than Christendom. They may feel safe in numbers, when they are destitute ; destitute of the Truth, destitute of God. They may hold on to the name meaning "brethren of Christ," and regard all such, in spite of grave doctrinal differences and worldly practices as "brethren," but such flesh-pleasing teaching is but the strong under-tow of a tide pulling the "others" into the overwhelming waters of mire and dirt.

It seems remarkable that none of their leaders, acquainted with those things which corrupted the early ecclesias, and from which the great counterfeit of Christendom has grown, can see the cause of such a great apostasy, and fail to see that it is now being repeated in their midst ; and teachers are allowed to deceive the simple so that the falling away is either obscured or denied.

How sad that those who had the "pearl of great price" should be prepared to trade this in for the synthetic gem of numbers, and more numbers ; campaigns and bible exhibitions, which have a show of godliness but deny the power thereof.

A letter recently received shows how deplorable is the position of this miniature Christendom ; how all their great efforts are in vain, and how they have lost what is above price :

"In the year 1870 my grandfather brought the Truth to- The late Robert Roberts was a frequent visitor to my grandfather's home . . . Looking back over the years, I feel the stability of the Truth as I first knew it has gone . . . Therefore your monthly magazine and the reading of the "History of the Truth" are a comfort to me."

What has caused this latter-day falling away ? And may it be realised that in any falling away, this is not to another department of the Truth, but obviously is a falling away *from* the Truth. The failure to understand the doctrine of fellowship, its holiness, its supreme importance as taught throughout the Word is the plain and simple reason. An example of this blessed provision is selected this month from the book of Joshua, the book that is resplendent with the Spirit of Christ, even as *Joshua* is but the Hebrew for Jesus.

THE TRESPASS OF BRO. ACHAN

We ought not to speak of Achan as a "brother" in view of his departure from the faith ; but he had been a "brother" as one of the ecclesia in the wilderness.

The account of his departure from the faith gives a valuable practical lesson on the doctrine of fellowship, no longer understood by the "others," who would have all men professing the name to be regarded as "brethren."

Jericho had been taken by divine blessing and power. Lest the brethren might be drawn from the Truth, by the imposing things found in the captured city—and who of us can not be influenced by what we see?—the care of God is seen in this command through Joshua. (Jesus).

"Keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and *make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.*"

(Joshua 6 : 18).

The latter words are worth careful meditation. Could it possibly be that the failure to obey by one in the camp, in the ecclesia, would make the whole a curse, and the cause of *trouble*?

Present-day advocates in the "others" of latitudinarianism would immediately rise up and shout "No". Their shout, however, is against the God they claim to serve. The divine record will show that this is so.

The ecclesia, doubtless fortified in their feelings by what had happened, moved to Ai. The inhabitants were fewer than at Jericho. It could easily be taken, so they thought. Two or three thousand brethren would be more than sufficient to assault and take the city.

The expedition, in spite of the relative small strength of the enemy, was disastrous. The men of Ai "smote about thirty and six men" and chased the brethren and "smote them in the going down." What an unexpected calamity, causing the hearts of the ecclesia to melt, and become as water.

Joshua was overwhelmed. What had happened to cause such an unexpected disaster? Both he and the elders put dust upon their heads and prostrated themselves before the ark for a whole day. Mercifully, even though these things happened to the Ecclesia so long ago, God has preserved the record for *us*, that we might understand true doctrine, the doctrine of being permitted His blessed fellowship. We read, but do we observe? that—

"Now all things happened unto them for ensamples : *and they are written for our admonition*, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. 10 : 11).

Let us take heed, not just in a general sense, but making the specific point of the "ensample" *ours*, for as the Apostle says :

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
(1 Cor. 10 : 12).

"ISRAEL HATH SINNED." (Joshua 7 : 11)

The prayer of Joshua on the occasion of the disaster, and God's answer will not fail to impress the sensitive mind seeking to please God :

"Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us ? Would God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan !

O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies !

For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth : and what will thou do unto thy great name ?" (Joshua 7 : 7-9).

God heard. God answered.

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up, wherefore liest upon thy face ? *Israel hath sinned . . .*" (Joshua 7 : 10).

At first sight this seems a strange statement, but it is divine and therefore must be true. Only one brother and his family had rebelled against the command of God, *yet this involved all Israel*, in a most striking manner, for God said :

"They have even taken of the accursed thing . . . and dissembled . . . Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed." (Joshua 6 : 12).

But listen to the grave momentous words which follow, emphasising for us the doctrine of fellowship.

"Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. (Joshua 6 : 12).

Here was unmistakably a breach in the fellowship with God, *because* one brother in the ecclesia had rebelled against His command. Unless there were speedy and righteous action, the consequences would have been the loss of God, the loss of the Truth, the loss of the inheritance. Here is food for thought for the leaders of the "others," who are "tout-à-tous" to all men. In the kindness of God, the righteous action needed, and the remedy, was given.

"SANCTIFY YOURSELVES" (Joshua 6 : 13).

May these words, this instruction by the God of heaven, sink into the hearts and minds of the "others" who are compromised by heresy in their midst, and who are grossly misled by their elders who say they must not judge. The divine record is again for *our*

admonition, not merely of historical interest. God said :

“Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow : for thus saith the Lord God of Israel. There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel : thou shalt not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.”

(Joshua 6 : 13).

What do the no-judgers think of this ? Only one family in the ecclesia was guilty, yet all were involved to the extent of being temporarily deprived of God’s help.

God revealed the guilty as He can and *will* do now, that their evil may be removed. In the case of the ecclesia in Joshua’s day, the evil ones were condemned and destroyed. Today, those who are evil, if unrepentant must be condemned and expelled. In that position there is no hope for them. God may work on their behalf, but unless they return to the One Body, they must face the Judgement of condemnation and destruction. In such a position outside the Ecclesia, outside the camp, the cherished and meaningful address of “brother” is inappropriate and must be *suspended*. If this is not done there can be no sanctification, and the Truth will be lost.

In the words of our respected correspondent :

“Looking back over the years, I feel the stability of the Truth as I first knew it has gone.”

The divine remedy is clear. May there be a hearing of God’s merciful offer, and an embracing of what is required.

(to be continued).



Sound Doctrine

“. . . the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . and they shall turn away their ears from the truth *and shall be turned unto fables.*” (2 Tim. 4 : 3-4).

THE ORIGINAL OF the English translation “endure” is explained to mean “hold up” and the original Greek word rendered “fable” is *muthos* or myth. Against which the Apostle warned when he said :

“. . . rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith ; Not giving heed to Jewish fables (myths) and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Unto the pure all things are pure : but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure ; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

They profess that they know God ; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (i.e. void of judgment).

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine . . .”
(Titus 1 : 13-16 & ch. 2 : 1).

The history of the Jews at the time of Christ and the Apostles constitutes a most solemn warning. The Pharisees and the Sadducees are particularly referred to in the divine record ; and the perusal of Christ’s contention with such places them in the category of those against whom the Apostle warned. The Sadducees though professing to be of the priestly class, were in effect more political than religious and ever prepared to fraternise with secular rulers. At the time of Christ they were partisans of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. Philosophy dominated their thinking which had in some respects become fused with Greek Philosophy. The Greek philosophers at that time had rejected the former belief in gods, and converted the stories about such into symbolic myth. The Sadducees likewise attempted to do the same in their view of divine history.

The Pharisees on the other hand were bitter enemies of the aforementioned class. They professed to uphold the law of Moses most scrupulously, and were awaiting the divine vindication of their efforts.

Christ however and His forerunner John Baptist did not vindicate but condemned. As a result they became recipients of scorn and bitterness ; anything that could be seized upon to retaliate was taken hold of by the Pharisees, and their efforts to this end are summed up in those illuminating words of Jesus :

“Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation ? and to what are they like ? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced ; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine ; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking ; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners ! But wisdom is justified of her children.” (Luke 7 : 31-35).

The truth of God is justified by the efforts to show it as sound and reasonable in those who uphold it. When the Pharisees condemned the disciples for failing to wash their hands before eating they were really seizing upon another metaphorical stone to aim against Jesus. But Jesus proclaimed against them to the multitude at large in the following terms :

“Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man : but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.”
(Matthew 15 : 11).

The maliciousness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees prevailed amongst that sect and defiled them. It was what was in the heart that really mattered and not their *Kosher* scrupulousness. Referring to Isaiah, Jesus quoted against them :

“. . . well did Esaias prophecy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their lips ; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
(Matthew 15 : 7-9).

Are the same human weaknesses evident today, as in the days of the Pharisees and Sadducees ? It must be so, for human nature does not change. Recently a letter was published in a national newspaper which had been sent in reply to a previously published letter from a leading dignitary of the Church, who was advocating support for the World Council of Churches' action in assisting “liberation movements” in Africa :

The reply said :

“Whether such support is or is not politically justified is a difficult and debatable matter . . . What is not open to question is that such support is un-christian, in the sense that no one with an unbiased mind can read the Gospels and believe that Christ would have given it His support . . . The political system under which a country lived and whether an

individual was rich or poor and oppressed was a matter of indifference to Him, or rather to be poor and oppressed was to be fortunate in being less open to worldly temptations. Such an attitude of mind (and I repeat that no honest reader of the Gospels can doubt that such was Christ's mind) is a world away from the attitude of the World Council of Churches.

I suspect the reason is that most churchmen today do not sincerely believe in the eternal life to come, and as a substitute seek fulfilment in the present transitory life."

These remarks define the modern Saddusaical position. What then of the modern Pharisee? They are seen as a people concentrating upon a host of doubtful precepts which will not bear up to the scrutiny of reason,

". . . ordinances, (touch not ; taste not ; handle not ; which all are to perish with the using ;) after the commandments and doctrines of men . . ." (Colossians 2 : 20-22).

Obedience to the commandments and ideas of men is a false humility ; such things stultify the warmth and reasonableness of the truth. Those who uphold this "form of godliness" really deny the "power" of Truth and its wonderful balance. The truth, as Christ said, is concerned with what is IN the man and not so much the outward appearance.

Is there a danger of the people of God declining into tenets and precepts without the Spirit? The answer is that Israel were once the people of God before they became Pharisaical ; and so the warning remains on record of a time when *sound doctrine* would not be endured (held up), but rather a turning away of ears from the truth.

D.L.



The Titles of the Psalms

"SPEAKING UNTO YOURSELVES IN PSALMS, MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART UNTO THE LORD." (Ephesians 5 : 19).

Psalm 57

"To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave."

THIS IS THE "title of the Psalm", but verse one in the original Hebrew text.

As we have previously found the translators have experienced great difficulty with the "titles," and have consequently more or less transposed the original Hebrew words. This has led to them being disregarded in the main. Yet the beginning or "title" must be of great importance as supplying the purpose of what follows. Gentiles would never think of publishing a book on some kind of instruction without a title. God is not less reasonable.

"To the chief Musician," we have found from the original can be freely translated: "To him that overcomes, the victor." It is not necessary to repeat the proof, which has been previously given, except to say that the word "Musician" does not occur in the original text. This was no doubt introduced by the translators in the mistaken belief that the Psalms were solely for choral performance.

When it is recalled how much emphasis Jesus places upon *overcoming* in His last message, it is not surprising to find that the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms makes reference to this.

The word "*Al-tas-chith*" is interpreted in the margin "destroy not." This word is composed of two—"al" meaning "not", and "*taschith*"—"destroy" The usual Hebrew for "not" is "lo" What is the significance of this other form of the negative? It is often used by the Spirit to express entreaty, as distinct from a stern rejection, and its meaning may be conveyed by the English words: "I pray do not". As previously seen "*Michtam*" means gold, but does not refer to the metal, but rather to the imperishable faith of godly men, which may be suitably represented by the noble metal of gold.

The Title may then be better understood by the following translation

"To him that overcometh, the victor, "I pray do not destroy," the gold-like faith of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave."

In this there is a reference to Christ as well as David. Christ

overcame : so did David. Those like David will eventually be seen not as martial warriors, applauded by a band—and a following ignorant multitude, but as having come out of great tribulation.

David's experience at the hands of his father-in-law must have been sore, making him feel that God was far off, and that he was nigh to destruction. His appeal is recorded :

“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me : for my soul trusteth in thee : yea in the shadow of thy wings will I take my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.”
(verse 1).

Depressed as David must have been, nigh to destruction, he felt—

“My soul is among lions . . . whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.” (verse 4).

Comfort came. Assurance was granted in what must have been a long and grievous trial from a brother, who should have been his help. Many in the Truth have experienced the reward of evil for good at the hands of so-called brethren. There is no more bitter or trying experience. May the melody of this Psalm fortify the heart against all the machinations of the evil ones like Saul.

“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed : I will sing and give praise.” (verse 7).

The future for such is assured as David declared :

“I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people : I will sing unto thee among the nations.

For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens : let thy glory be above all the earth.” (verses 7-11).

(to be continued).



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

“. . . *Evil shall go forth from Nation to Nation.*”

(Jer. 32 : 25).

A zealous writer for Truth about the year 1883 or maybe 1884, speaking about world trouble, recorded the following :

“This subject—is one that has no charm for the generality of mankind. Men do not like to think of coming judgments . . . The expectation of them, still more the enunciation of them, is regarded as indicative of a low born and vulgar fanaticism. Refinement is supposed to be shown by the more popular idea that the world will gradually hush into millennial tranquillity without disturbance to the present order.”

He went on to say “Will the change from the kingdom of men to the kingdom of God be instantaneous, or the slow result of a universal process ? Will Christ steal upon the earth in a time of peace, and quietly destroy the powers of the earth with their armies, in a single night, as in the case of the Assyrians in the days of old ? Or will He be manifested when wars are rife, and trouble abroad ? The testimony is very explicit on this point. He then quoted the following verses :

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people : and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time : and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” (Daniel 12 : 1).

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ;

Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” (Luke 21 : 25-26).

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth : they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried ; they shall be dung upon the ground.” (Jeremiah 25 : 32-3).

Following these references he commented: "These testimonies answer the question. They show that the change which will introduce the kingdom of God on earth will be accompanied by troubles on a scale without a parallel in history; that the whole world will be involved in political difficulties and suffer from the many evils incident to such a condition. But we shall find that another element of trouble will characterise the times of the second advent—that God Himself will operate in visible judgement upon the nations of the earth—that natural perplexities will be supplemented by miraculous retributions. The testimonies to this effect are numerous and emphatic."

What was happening in the earth in the years 1883/1884 when these words were written? Nothing particularly spectacular. The French had been conducting a small war in Madagascar and also in China. There were riots in Bosnia. Britain was sending General Gordon to the Sudan where the Mahdi had defeated Hicks Pasha. In 1884 General Gordon arrived in Khartoum to withdraw the Egyptian garrison, but the fall of Khartoum was still 12 months off and the disaster that overtook that city could not have been foreseen nor was it expected. China had given way to the French and recognised the French protectorate over Annam. Bismarck had signed a "Re-insurance" treaty with Russia and in Austria Martial Law had been proclaimed to check anarchists.

There was nothing alarming about the world situation at that time. But the writer for Truth was under no illusion; he believed the Word of God; and therefore was not lulled by a comparatively peaceful situation in the earth. So he penned the words already quoted which could be used as an apt description of the present evil times "... troubles on a scale without a parallel in history ... the whole world will be involved in political difficulties."

Following his decease there have been two world wars. The second one ranging over a far wider area than the first. Since then politics have become more and more involved.

Another writer for Truth commenting upon world events just after the first world war, with particular reference to what is prophesied in the book of Revelation made the following suggestion:

"The pouring of the 6th vial upon the Euphrates meant a judgement on the human interest connected with that river. Might not the seventh vial into the air, on the same principle, mean divine wrath upon man in so far as his interests are affected by the literal air? At least it must be acknowledged that there is something startlingly significant in the fact that just as the 6th vial, according to all the authorities, is hastening to its close, aerial warfare should

begin for the first time in human history. The wrath of God with the wicked as His sword had been manifest on land and sea and rivers. Now for the first time it appears in the air." Please note that there has been a clearer understanding of the Revelation since that time, which to some extent supplements this exposition. Nevertheless the words are quoted as an illustration of the progress of the evil in the world as experienced by different generations in the Truth. The quotation was written about 1920 or 1921 at a time when air travel, or air warfare was being conducted on a very small and puny scale.

It was in 1920 that a United States seaplane was piloted by A. C. Read from Newfoundland to England via the Azores. Acclaimed at the time as a great feat. In that year the Cranwell Royal Air Force College was founded and Sir Geoffrey de Havilland also set up his aircraft company. The following year 1921, the Airship R 38 exploded over the River Humber. No one realised or could realise at that time the vast scale of aerial war operations that would ensue with the coming of another world conflict, still eighteen years away.

To come now to another spokesman for Truth writing at the close of the year 1939. The second world war had just broken out, but the dreadful time coming could not fully be realised. This is what was said :

"At the time of writing the world is waiting for the storm of war to burst in all its fury over Western Europe. France and Britain have been at war with Germany over ten weeks now, and up to this time there has been no major action on land, sea or in the air. The contending forces are facing one another and waiting, the French in their Maginot Line of underground forts, and the British Expeditionary Force in their prepared entrenched positions are expecting a German offensive. They are reluctant to take the initiative on account of the very bad weather of the approaching winter, but are expecting the German army to move either against the French positions, or, as they have concentrated troops on the borders of Holland and Belgium, by invading these countries to outflank the Allied Armies and to obtain air bases from which they may attack Britain. The world knows that when the forces of powerful nations energetically engaged in war are loosed, the destruction of all that has been looked upon as the progress of civilisation is inevitable. The loss of life ; the destruction of great cities ; industrial areas which represent the concentrated efforts of men over generations laid waste in a few weeks ; these thoughts, coupled with the famine and disease which of necessity follow the desolations of war, holds them in check. The nations are waiting, looking for an opportunity to strike a vital blow . . . Such is the con-

dition of the world today—nations rising against nation ; wars and commotions ; and in the midst we see the Jewish “fig tree,” beginning to put forth leaves.”

Looking back from this present point of time and 34 years have elapsed since that writer was commenting upon the lull before the storm. There is now another lull ; but the storm gathering is far more ominous. No one in 1939 could have envisaged the horrors of the A-Bomb and the H-Bomb, nor did they realise at that time how quickly supersonic flight and space orbits would come ; not to speak of voyages to the moon.

But the present generation sees these things and the perceptive cannot hide from the fact that the words of scripture did not overstate when it was foretold that there should be “a time of trouble, such as never was,” and that “a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.”

Will the violence cease ? Will peace come ?

Without the scriptures to assure there could be no answer to such questions. Indeed without the promise of the scriptures the outlook for the future would be hopeless. D.L.



Correspondence

Letter from J. S. Blackwood :

“Many thanks for the magazine which is read and re-read and kept for future reference.”

Comment :

Gratitude is expressed for this appreciation and the amount sent to defray cost of postage. May the appreciation lead to the action required by the God of heaven. W.V.B.



News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK : Grange Hall, Church Street.

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

As we discern how evil are the ways of the world and realize the return of the Lord Jesus could be any day, how grateful we feel for the hope of deliverance ! May we find strength to hold fast in these last days, united more strongly in the bonds of His Truth and in that hope known only in His Body.

Our hearts and minds have been with the brethren and sisters, united in fraternal gathering in Manchester.

Encouragement continues in the work of unfolding the Truth to one seeking the only way of life.

J. A. DeF.

“*PENTRIP*”, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

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

Bible Class : Mid-week.

During August it has been the privilege of one to attend the Fraternal gathering at Manchester, and grateful for the strength received.

We have been visited by three Christadelphians who live in this county and who meet in Anglesey. A magazine was taken and we await another visit.

On Sunday afternoon August 12th, three children attended the Sunday School who came last year. They also attended the following Sunday, when nine others also attended, 3 adults and 6 children, who belong to the sect of Plymouth Brethren.

We are thankful for the work of witnessing and for strength received. Looking forward at present to the visits of brethren and sisters.

Per. D.L.

NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN, Northern Ireland.

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

Sunday School 2-0 p.m.

Bible Class—Wednesday evening.

How good it was for those of us who were permitted to be at the Manchester Fraternal on Bank Holiday week-end. We were helped by the exhortations and gladdened by the face-to-face meeting with brethren and sisters; our only sorrow was the absence of some because of illness and the ties which made the long journey impossible to others.

J. P.

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

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11-30 a.m. Lectures on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. Fridays: Bible Class 7-15 p.m. Milton Hall, Deansgate.

We are encouraged by the interest shown by some correspondents, and also of one who desires talks as he frankly admits he has not found the answers to satisfy his mind.

Also the young ones, now almost grown up, are showing more than a passing interest, and helping them is a joyful experience.

Brother Pinkerton gave us welcome help on Sunday, August 26th. We were glad of the company of Sister Pinkerton and Sister T. Williams. We were privileged to have our Fraternal Gathering on August 27th, when helpful consideration was given to "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

W. V. B.