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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

IF THE DEAD RISE NOT... YOUR FAITH IS VAIN

IN THE WAY OF THY JUDGMENTS

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

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

FIRE FROM THE LORD

IN LEVITICUS, we find God's instructions to His children which were given to Moses upon Mount Sinai for their help. These instructions, whether they were His commandments concerning their living: whether they concerned the offerings; concerned the priests, Aaron and his son; or the tabernacle, were given to enable His people to be closer to Him and to each other. They were to help our brethren see God's purpose to be accomplished through the Messiah to come. We may think of these instructions as applying only to Israel, gathered there at Mount Sinai. Would it not seem in keeping with God's gracious provision that they are just as wonderfully helpful today as they were to our brethren at Sinai where they had actually heard the voice of God, and feared?

Let us try, then, to enter into the minds of our brethren as they listened to Moses, witnessed the provision of God to sustain them in their living, and as they looked forward to the salvation which the spirit of that Law promised.

As we consider all which God spoke to them, as we see the sacrifices prescribed to condemn and remove sin, to bring peace, and to make atonement; as we see Aaron the high priest washed, and then clothed with the holy garments, and consecrated by the necessary offerings; what lessons there are for us, brethren and sisters. At the end of their consecration, they offered sacrifices upon the altar. In all these things, we are impressed by the fact that fire was needed to bring about God's purpose.

"THERE CAME A FIRE OUT FROM BEFORE THE LORD"

In Leviticus 9:22-24, we read:

" . . . Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offerings and peace offerings . . . and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."

How impressive and how fearful to see that fire come down and consume the offerings there upon the altar! It would also cause our brethren to be filled with joy that here was a sign from God that their offerings were acceptable, that He was pleased with His people; and in love and mercy would provide this means of reconciliation. Fire is a fearful thing, capable of consuming almost all substances. How fitting it is that fire is used by God to reveal to His people, His power, His Spirit.

In Eden, when Adam and Eve were cast out because of sin, God placed at the east of the garden, cherubim with a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. By His Power, the way was barred ; there was no way at that time that flesh could partake of that tree of life. Not until as we read in Revelation 2 : 7—

“ To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

To overcome is, in a figure, to offer up the life to God, to allow the fire of the Spirit to consume the flesh with its lusts, and so when Jesus returns, there can be a way opened to that tree of life.

How impressive to Israel it must have been to see that fire burning upon the altar, signifying that only as it consumed the flesh could there be atonement, and life. The faithful would see first of all the flesh of Christ, the Head, the best part ; and then, after being washed, the rest of the body—all seen in the whole burnt offering. In addition, how impressive would be the fire that came out from before the Lord and consumed those offerings on the altar !

How necessary was that fire, for without it, the flesh could not be consumed ; without it the incense would not burn, and there would be no sweet smell ; without it the lightstand could give no light. Would not our brethren in Israel realise the great need for that fire, value it, pray for it, not just on the actual altar, but the power of it in their lives that their flesh might be consumed ?

How impressive it was that the Spirit spoke of the offerings as “ . . . a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord.” (Exodus 29 : 18). Was it the fire that made those offerings a sweet savour to the Lord ? What does it tell us today, brethren and sisters ? It is only as we allow the fire of the Spirit to burn and to consume, that our living sacrifice can be a sweet savour to God. We don't think of burning flesh as a “delightful smell”, as the words mean. Yet, how pleasing to God was the offering of His Son, who gave all His living ; and then dying upon the cross as He allowed His flesh to be crucified, consumed by the Spirit. Did not all the offerings under the law foreshadow that great offering ? What of ourselves, brethren and sisters ? Do we offer ourselves ? Are we ready to be placed upon the altar, ready to allow that fire to consume ? Only as we want to do so, are we ready to do so ; indeed, only as we agonise to do so, as did Jesus, can we hope to please God, can we hope to be acceptable to Him, can we hope to be joined to the sacrifice, and so find redemption because of the altar's fire.

PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD

David provides help for us in our struggle to value that fire, Psalm 116 : 12-15 :

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me ? . . . I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

Can we, then, with care and thought renew our vows, seeking that altar and allowing its fire to consume all that is of the flesh, that it might indeed be a sweet savour to God, indeed, that it might be a daily dying, the painful overcoming which is so precious to God—in His Son first which is our help *and* hope ? How often the Father spoke these words, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

Can we then perceive with our brethren in Israel how needful is that fire on the altar, placed there by God in His tabernacle, His dwelling place with men ? The fire hurts ; it burns ; it consumes, but only the flesh ; for were not the ashes, the precious part in God’s eyes kept and valued after the fire had done its work ?

“I WILL REFINE THEM”

God causes this fire to go about its work of purifying, of refining, continuously burning out those contaminating traits of characteristics which make us unsuitable for His use. In Zechariah 13 : 9 we read of Israel :

“I will bring the third part through the fire, and will *refine* them as silver is refined, and will *try* them as gold is tried . . .”

Does the fire, then, have a two-fold work in God’s eyes ? First, to *refine* and secondly to *try* ? “To refine”, we know is “to purify”. How can the fire do this ? As it burns, the impurities which cannot endure the fire are burned and float to the top of the silver or gold ; metals which are called “noble”, for the fire does not affect them. As the fire continues its work, more and more of the impurities are burned, and are skimmed off, and thrown away as dross, until that which is left has been purified, refined. Being pure, uncontaminated by less noble metals, the gold or silver is now soft, easily worked, able to be beaten into any shape the master wishes, as the cherubim over the mercy seat were beaten out of one piece of pure gold.

To *try*—the second purpose of the fire—is to examine, to test. As the fire works upon that which looks like gold or silver, it reveals very clearly whether that which has the *appearance* is real, or is it contaminated by something which makes it unsuitable to be used as a vessel, meet for His use. The fire is very searching

which God uses to try us. Job, under severe trial, could say (Job 23 : 10) :

“ . . . He knoweth the way that I take : when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

How easy it is to complain about the fire, to wonder why does it have to come upon me. Yet, if we think of it as God's trying, refining, should we not be glad, submit to it, and strive to let it burn away all that which is useless and abhorrent in His sight ? Does not Peter tell us, I. Peter 4 : 12-13 :

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the *fiery* trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you : but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

Let us, then, value that fire, that Spirit's working, even as the faithful in Israel discerned their desperate need for it ; for without that fire, there could be no sacrifice, no sweet savour, no incense, and no flesh consumed.

“STRANGE FIRE”

Yet, how easy it is to overlook the grace and love of God seen in that fire, as did Nadab and Abihu. They offered “strange fire” before the Lord and died by the true fire which came out from the Lord. How *could* they offer *strange* fire, we might ask, especially so soon after that fire came down from the Lord and consumed the sacrifices there upon the altar ? Was it because they did not perceive the wonder, the mercy, the great power of that fire which came from God ? “*Strange fire*” gives the thought of something other than that ordained of God. How easy it is to lose sight of how precious is *the* fire, the only consuming fire. In offering “*strange fire*”, they failed to sanctify God and died by the fire before the Lord.

We might well ask, brethren and sisters, how can we offer “strange fire” before the Lord ? If we fail to perceive that it is only the Spirit which can consume, only the Spirit that can cause the incense to give forth a sweet savour, are we in a sense offering “strange fire” ? If we deny the power of that Spirit in our living, allowing some other power to reign there, are we offering “strange fire” ? Surely, none of these things would be regarded as a sweet savour by God ; none would be acceptable because the fire of the altar was lacking. Something else was being substituted for the power of His Spirit, something which is thought to be just as good. As we consider then, brethren and sisters, the wonderful power of that fire of God, let us strive more surely to allow THE Spirit to work in us that which will please our God. J. A. DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

“This is the law of the Nazarite.” (Numbers 6)

UNLESS IT IS UNDERSTOOD and believed that the Spirit of the Law is the Spirit of Christ, search will be made in vain for present lively meaning, and the lesson this can afford.

Christendom do not even make a pretence that the Law affords help for “Christians”. They reject it out of hand with the view that its requirements were only suited to a primitive people, and lacked the love seen in the Spirit of Christ. This is an illogical and absurd concept, when it is recalled that Christ based the whole of His teaching on the law and the prophets. When asked “which is the great commandment of the law ?” He replied :

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

On these two comandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22 : 36-40).

If the Spirit of Christ were different from the Spirit of the Law, then here was the opportunity for Jesus to say so. It is no exaggeration to state, although it may appear so to those who are astray from the Truth, that the fulness of the love in the Spirit of Christ could not be understood apart from the Law, which shows in many remarkable instances how great this was.

With this conviction in the heart, the message of God, the Bible becomes one, and there will be a refusal to allow the mind to be sullied by the spurious notion of Christ’s love being different from and exceeding that which is shown in the Law. In Christendom— and the “others”—where the false teaching on “love” has been allowed to develop, their works make plain that they are ignorant of and opposed to the belief of the divine teaching on “love”.

It is hoped that the consideration of the present item selected from the Law may show this teaching in an incandescent light, although careful searching and submissiveness will be needed if the glory of this light is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

“THE NAZARITE”

“All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord”

(Numbers 6 : 8).

It may be as well to try and clear up a difficulty, which the careful reader will have experienced in connection with the vow of the Nazarite.

Seeing that God required *all* the congregation to be *holy*, in what way could the Nazarite exceed this? What were the circumstances requiring a brother to make the vow of the Nazarite? It could not be caprice on the part of the brother, which might give the unwarranted impression that he was “holier” than the rest. Such an attitude is condemned by the Spirit. This was the sin of the Pharisees, and of all who fed themselves on pride, and pay more attention to the “letter” of the Law, and fail to discern and show its Spirit.

To the question, what were the circumstances requiring a brother to make the vow of the Nazarite, no answer is found in the context of the law. It must be sought elsewhere in the belief that the message of God in its entirety will give the answers to all questions, where there is a diligent and humble enquiry, and it should be added, a prayerful enquiry, for God will guide the steps of those who diligently seek.

Help can be found in the divine record where God required the vow of the Nazarite to be made.

SAMSON, A NAZARITE FROM HIS BIRTH

At the time when Israel, because of evil suffered for forty years at the hand of the Philistines, God provided a deliverer by a miraculous intervention.

A woman who was “barren”, the wife of Manoah, had an angelic visitation. She was told she should bear a son, and with the added instruction :

“For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son, and no razor shall come on his head : for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb : and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” (Judges 13 : 5).

Both Manoah and his wife were alarmed at such startling news. The angel was sent again, to both this time, repeating the message and giving instruction to the prospective mother what she should do.

Samson was born, “and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.”

As a Nazarite, one separated or *holy* in a special sense for a work of God, Samson allowed his hair to grow—a sign to all Israel of the divine commission he was to carry out as the “deliverer”. This was the God-given token of his vow, and he was rewarded with prodigious strength as long as he kept the token. By Samson’s great power—which was divine—the Philistines were sorely beaten and humiliated. He resisted the entreaties of his brethren to submit to the Philistines lest worse should come

upon them. Agreeing to be bound, he soon showed that God was with him, when the "cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire". How marvellously God works ! Seizing the jaw bone of an ass he used it as a weapon and slew a thousand Philistines. The rest, doubtless, would flee in fear.

Samson became careless, and although warned three times, eventually showed he despised the token, telling Delilah wherein his strength lay.

Blinded, imprisoned, he became the sport of the enemy. He must have repented for his last prayer was heard. His hair had grown. The token had been renewed, and while the huge congregation of the Philistines were rejoicing in the display of Samson's strength, he was allowed to pull down the supporting "two middle pillars upon which the house stood", and some three thousand Philistines perished. Samson also died, as he had prayed he might.

What a warning is here for the people of God at the present time !

If the "*token*" of the separation is ignored or despised, blindness will ensue, and is not this what has happened to Christendom—who, it must be recognised, has developed from what was originally the Truth. Will the "others" heed the lesson ? Joining hands with the world is a sure sign of apostasy. This is seen in their members engaging in the world's habits and so-called amusements ; in uniting with them in various ways, in Unions, in business, in friendly parties. This is all too sad, so different from the original Christadelphians, then a despised but albeit a happy sect. Where today do the "others" experience the reproach of Christ ? At one time those coming to the Truth were compelled to leave home, ostracised by neighbours and scorned as they refused to be party to worldly celebrations such as Christmas festivities, and works or office dinners. All this "separation" has been allowed to disappear, so that "coming to the Truth" in the way of the "others" is no longer a "calling out". The One Body was and still is the sect "everywhere spoken against".

THE VOW OF THE NAZARITE. THE LESSON FOR TODAY

Let those who think that beyond a general moralising in this Law they may as well tear out the pages giving particulars of this Law, God's holy Law. They do not need it. Is it sincere to declare, "all scripture is inspired", and regard its preservation as a blessing for the present, and beyond a formal assent dismiss a Law of God as having no present message ? How must God look upon such a heart ? True, we may not understand all ; but let this be put down to our ignorance, and not of God's unnecessary record. Then, with prayer and diligent application, we may be allowed to "see" what we have not seen before.

The Law states concerning the Nazarite :

“All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body.” (Numbers 6 : 6).

A curious instruction, so it may appear. But God knows best. Those who have experienced death of a near and dear one will know how strong is the temptation to believe that the “dead” have “passed away”, gone to some other life. The great God of heaven knew of this weakness, and in His kindness took steps to help, that His children might know that death is a product of sin, and that the dead are not holy. It is amazing how Christendom will look upon the vile as “holy” immediately death takes place. The late President of the Argentine, condemned and excommunicated by the Catholic Church, when he died how he was regarded by his fellow countrymen, and given a “state funeral”, and the head of this great Church said a “special mass for his soul”.

How helpful to know the truth about death—its cause, and in many, its finality.

The Nazarite however, might accidentally contact the dead. God, of course, knew this, and provided in the Law for this happening :

“If any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath *defiled* the head of his consecration ; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing . . .

But the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was *defiled*.” (Numbers 6 : 9 and 12).

This would be a powerful lesson to all that the dead were never to be regarded as “holy”, so much so that contact with them was *defiling*.

Even those who were not Nazarites were *defiled* by touching a dead body.

“He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.” (Numbers 19 : 11).

This would mean their exclusion from the camp for a whole week.

There must be an important spiritual lesson in this, quite apart from the emphasis that the dead were not to be honoured or “respected”, as is the custom by the sending of wreaths and the uncovering of the head. These customs are as meaningless as the sending of empty cars to follow the hearse, as is the practice of the Chinese. We remember seeing in San Francisco as many as fifty cars making such an empty journey. To the Westerner this might seem the height of folly ; but no more than the sending of flowers to the Eastern man. Much folly has been and is wrought in the so-called honouring of the dead.

THE LESSON FOR NOW. DEFILED BY THE DEAD

The call to the Truth is a call from darkness to light : from death to life.

If this is appreciated the answer to the question : "Why cannot one have the Truth and remain with friends in the Church, the Chapel, or with the Baptists?" will be immediately obvious.

All the sects of Christendom are in darkness, are dead. The call of the Truth is a calling out. To remain with the darkness, with the dead would be defiling. How could one believing in the principles of the Truth possibly fraternise and join in worship with those known to be dead. Any doing this would soon realise that their belief in the Truth was quickly debased and vitiated.

Yet the *Dawn* group of the "others", have made through one of their respected members of long standing the statement that there might be some having the Truth in the Baptists ! Darkness will certainly find it congenial to condone darkness. The inevitable "separation" which the Truth requires, with the reproach this brings is thus removed. But at what a loss ! The light of the Truth with the hope this affords extinguished.

The careful seeker will find that the divine instruction goes further.

Is it possible for an "Ecclesia" to become "dead"? A leader of the "others" would say "certainly not". However, we are not dependent on speculation here, for Jesus has said in a message preserved until today condemning the "Ecclesia" in Sardis :

"I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, but art dead." (Revelation 3 : 1).

The receipt of this message must have been stunning. There is no life in a dead body. Jesus, the life, could not possibly be there.

The lesson?—to stay with the "dead" and try and revive the corpse, as suggested by one of the leaders of the "others", who condemns "mass withdrawal". Obviously, this course could never succeed.

Jesus adds some most significant words :

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis (N.B. He does not say in the Ecclesia) which have not *defiled* their garments, and they shall walk with me in white : for they are worthy."
(Revelation 3 : 4).

"Defiled"—"defiled". What does Jesus mean? He knew the Law of the Nazarite. The use of this word affords a strong connotation with this Law. To remain in contact with those described as "dead", *would* defile. Hence separation must have ensued.

Will some at least of the "others" heed the lesson?

(to be continued . . .)

“If the dead rise not . . . your faith is vain”

TOTAL EXTINCTION is something abhorrent to the fleshly mind, for one of the conceits of man is the ingrained belief that he is worthy of something much better than a hole in the ground after his departure from the land of the living. Not for him the grave!

“Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.” (Job).

. . . and from the highest intellectualism to the most backward of mankind this is shared in all, the hope or expectation that they will endure on in some form or other in that great “mysterious” age that follows death. Nevertheless from the heirarchy of Christendom to the Dervish dancing and sacrificing to appease the “spirits”, all lay their dead in the ground; “dust to dust” (Genesis 3: 19), and the fact that the Clergy of Christendom stand beside every interment and intone assurances that the Bible isn’t really true, calling God a liar, inexorably the “bottomless pit” receives the world’s dead.

“Where they have no more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.” (Ecclesiastes 9: 5).

One of the great doctrines of the Scriptures, being an integral part of the process of the salvation of man, is that of the resurrection of the *dead*. Christendom and the other religions of the world have become so steeped in superstition and the commandments of men, that the resurrection of the dead has been made of none effect to them, though some sects speak in a confused way of what they term “the resurrection of the body” to meet the “soul” which originally had entered the body at an unspecified point in time, and left it at death to re-enter at the resurrection, for reasons very difficult to understand. For the ordinary “Christian” the resurrection of the dead doesn’t mean a thing, and of them the Psalmist writes:

“. . . he is like the beasts that perish . . . like sheep they are laid in the grave, death shall feed on them . . . they shall never see light.” (Psalm 49).

These words of David, with those of the Prophets, are but another way of putting the teaching of the Lord Jesus when he spoke of those without hope as “perishing” and of the vast numbers of mankind who willingly, or in darkness, tread the broad road leading to “destruction”, called in the Bible by various names of Hades; Sheol; Hell; The Grave; and the Bottomless Pit. (see Isaiah 26: 14 etc.).

Abraham died in faith of the promise of God that he would

inherit the land on which he stood, forever ; Stephen said (Acts 7 : 5) speaking of the time of his death :

“ . . . he had none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on ; yet he (God) promised that He would give it to him for a possession.”

Abraham still sleeps “with his people” not having received the promise which has yet to be fulfilled (Hebrews 11 : 39-40) at the return of the Lord Jesus when :

“ . . . the dead in Christ shall rise first—then we which are alive and remain . . . ” (I. Thessalonians 4 : 16).

The reasonableness and simplicity of the Truth must be evident to any who set themselves to seek it. It lifts the smothering pall of confusion laid by philosophy and theology over the beauty and simplicity of God’s purpose with the dead “in Christ” ; for only they, we read, will be raised to judgement, to answer before him ; so the Word speaks of those that “sleep” and of “them that are perished” in a way most understandable :

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen ; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain . . . for if the dead rise not then is not Christ risen . . . then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.”

(I. Corinthians 15 : 12-18).

Could the apostle have been more explicit ? Are his words not a devastating blow against the senseless words of the Clergy at the graveside and elsewhere ? Paul’s argument is based on all the teaching of Scripture from Genesis ; that all in Adam die because of Sin, and all the dead since Adam have returned to the ground where they still remain, with the single exception of the Lord Jesus Christ whom God raised because he did no sin.

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

The Prophet conveys something of the joy that will be felt by those who rise in faith of immortality, for the voice that will call will be the voice of him whom they have not seen yet have loved: Jesus says :

“My sheep know my voice . . . verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; *and they that hear shall live.*”

To understand and believe the Word of God takes an adjust-

ment of the mind which has been steeped in comforting fables and nostalgic hymns of childhood. Jesus said :

“No man cometh unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”
(John 6 : 44).

To the seeking heart God gives understanding, for light can only come through the power of His Spirit.

“The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God . . . because they are spiritually discerned.”
(I. Corinthians 2 : 14).

In the teaching of the resurrection of the dead, much help is given when we perceive that only those who are responsible to God through belief (the “called”) will be raised to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and of them, few will be accepted and “have a part in the first resurrection”, i.e. complete, as in the case of the Lord Jesus, the firstborn of the dead ; the rest, cast back into the world to live out whatever few days will remain to them in the agonising knowledge of what they have lost.

Let us ponder this : Jesus *only* won victory over the grave and became “the firstfruits of them that slept.” (I. Corinthians 15 : 20).

Only they who have believed “the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ” will have hope of sharing in His victory and coming forth out of the ground when He calls ; for there is *only one faith* and the belief in the resurrection of the *dead* forms part of it.

J.P.



“In the way of thy judgments”

(Isaiah 26 : 8)

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment : thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty : but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people : neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour : I am the Lord.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart : thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself : I am the Lord.” (Leviticus 19 : 15-18).

WHAT RESPONSIBILITY this instruction places upon the people of God. In what way can there be unrighteous judgment? “Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty.” This instruction is aimed at two weaknesses. In the case of the poor ; the sentimental heart might be overswayed because he is poor ; a feeling of compassion for the person’s lowly circumstances. The command is not saying there should be no compassion, it is really saying compassion must not over-ride and take the place of judgment when judgment is required. The other weakness is defined as the honouring of the person of the mighty. Again this instruction is not laid down against honour being given where honour is due. Only that honour or respect for those held in esteem must not be so magnified as to take the place of judgment, and over-ride it, when judgment is required.

“In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.”

So respect of persons should not take the place of judgment. Immediately following this instruction comes the command :

“Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people.”

Talebearing can prejudice judgment and means that only one side is heard or spoken about, and often the person spoken of is found guilty before he may be proved innocent. The ready hearer of the tale is obviously at fault for he wants to hear it, and relishes what he hears ; this means he has judged a matter before he has heard it ; for a matter is not heard unless all the relevant facts are available and this rarely comes from one side involved in a matter.

There are other guide lines connected with this theme. The next one is as given at the end of verse 16 :

“Neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour.”

The man who stands against his neighbour’s blood is a cruel man, referred to as “a man of bloods”. There is no vestige of judgment in those who have failed in this way. For example Joab killed Absalom not out of righteous zeal for his king, but out of malice and vengeance because of the way Absalom had badly treated him in the past.

Doeg killed the priests of the Lord ; not out of any desire to be faithful to king Saul but to further his own interests, of obtaining favour from the leader ; and no doubt because he enjoyed cruelty as well. The standing against the blood of the neighbour was seen particularly in the case of Ahab and Naboth. Naboth was accused of blaspheming God and the ruler, and was stoned to death because the people obviously were not observing God’s requirement to “do no unrighteousness in judgment”. The people participated in a work purported to be dealing with terrible blasphemy, when really the motive was to achieve the desires of the flesh namely Naboth’s desirable vineyard, the inheritance of his fathers, which he would not sell even for greater gain, as a matter of principle.

So Naboth died because there was a “standing against his blood.”

Further instruction is given :

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour and not suffer sin upon him.”

What is the balance in this profound instruction that searches mans’ heart to its core ? If there is hatred of a brother in the heart it is the easiest thing in the world to rebuke him. But is this righteousness in judgment ?

So if there is a work of rebuking to be done there must be no hatred otherwise such an one is not qualified to rebuke. In fact is rather in need of rebuke himself. Again the penetrating words of the Spirit are brought to bear upon human nature (verse 18) :

“ . . . Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people.”

Vengeance, God says, belongs to Him. Men are not qualified to take the place of God in this respect. Moreover to bear a grudge, that is “keep anger”, could never set the tone for “righteous judgment”. Hence the words :

“Be ye angry, and sin not : Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” (Ephesians 4 :26).

At the end of Leviticus, chapter 19, after divers other instructions, the subject of righteous judgment is once again taken up.

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure.

Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have : I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them : I am the Lord.” (Lev. 19 : 35-37).

The reference to meteyard, weight or measure brings to mind the human tendency to use one measure for one and another measure for another. And where oneself is concerned we always desire a full measure for self, though we are tempted to give the other less. It is probably very striking that in this context God should declare :

“I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

Israel had to endure injustice in Egypt. That which they had suffered and been part of before they “came out”, was not to be allowed to revive amongst the brethren in their new life. God was well aware how quickly human nature forgets. What Israel might have lamented over in Egypt it was liable to excuse, or even encourage, as time dimmed the remembrance of the great injustices done by the Pharaoh. The word of God was the perfect answer to safeguard against the power of the flesh, hence the praise of the Psalmist :

“Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.”

“Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

Great peace have they which love thy law : and nothing shall offend them.” (Psalm 119 : 137 and 164-165).

In the margin the caption to verse 165 is “they shall have no stumbling block.” God’s judgments, His law, helps men to see themselves in His true light ; being so enabled, the hurt of stumbling can be avoided. The more the realisation of the benefit and protection of His instruction ; protecting from self, the more sincere can be the joining with the Psalmist in the praise of His righteous judgments, which are so perfect, and so complete in design for the peace and the well-being of men. So the Psalmist could say :

“The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting : give me understanding, and I shall live.” (verse 144).

From the book of Leviticus, chapter 19, His righteousness or rightness, is seen in the special reference to "equal balancing", which apart from His provision frail human nature with all its traits is incompetent to perform.

D.L.



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

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him : and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind . . . he shall enter into the countries, and shall enter also into the glorious land . . . and the land of Egypt shall not escape." (Daniel 11 : 40-42).

AFTER YEARS of political retreat from Egypt and other areas of the Middle East the English speaking nations are again in the ascendancy to the south of the land of Israel. It is all the more amazing that the United States President, pressed sorely at home by political accusations, should have had such tumultuous success in his visit to Egypt. "We can trust Nixon" said a huge Egyptian banner. The vast crowds of welcoming people were not solely there as a result of the work of "cheer leaders". Egypt and its people obviously prefer "Democracy" to "Communism". But Egypt of course has its reward ; the United States is to assist Egypt to build a nuclear power station which when completed is expected to have an output of about half the present capacity of the hydro-electric scheme of the high dams of the river Nile. A second nuclear power station is also planned.

So Egypt is being brought forward into the realm of the more advanced nations, and her President is undoubtedly pleased at the prospect. Especially as America has brought her influence to bear upon Israel in effecting compromises, even with the more obstinate Syrian Government that war with the Arabs has receded and Israel may soon become a people "brought forth out of the nations" dwelling "safely all of them." (Ezekiel 38 : 8).

The United States has not however merely succeeded with Egypt. There has been a Suadi-Arabian agreement to enter into a "special relationship" with America for economic and military co-operation. This is another stepping stone in the U.S. plan to

achieve a major political and economic hold over the Middle East. America will now be active in Arabia, expanding the Arabs military capability, and as a result will no doubt benefit from an expansion of that country's oil output upon which the American way of life so depends. U.S. officials have not been able to hide their hope that there will be similar agreements with other Arab countries, and this is indeed likely, even though the territories of ancient Israel's enemies Syria and Iraq are still Soviet orientated, and it would seem will remain so in accordance with prophetic indication.

In the ordinary way, having turned enemies into friends, it could have been expected that friends would be turned into enemies. But this has not been so. The United States has retained its special relationship with Israel. In fact when the U.S. leader arrived in Israel following his Egyptian visit he reminded the welcoming crowd at Ben Gurion Airport that the United States and Israel had been joined in friendship from the time of the re-birth of the Jewish State twenty six years ago. His words were :

"I can say only that the friendship we have for this nation—their courage, their tenacity, their firmness in the face of very great odds—is one that makes us proud to stand with Israel, as we have in the past in times of trouble, and now to work with Israel in a better time, a time that we trust will be a time of peace."

The President said he was glad Israel understood the purpose of his journey to the Arab States, and also appreciated the reason for his scheduled visit to Moscow. His aim was a peace that would be just and equitable "one that provides the opportunity for each nation to maintain its independence and its security against all those who might threaten it." Toward the end of the 1967 war when he last visited Israel, this, he said, seemed an impossible dream. Now it seemed possible, "what we want to do is to make that possible dream come true with your co-operation, with your help." The Israeli President welcomed the United States leader as the first American President to visit Israel while in office. He was heralded as the personification of "the mission of peace in our area which the American administration under your guidance and leadership, is pursuing."

The American President in turn explained that his peace ambassador who has been so active recently was only coincidentally the first American Jewish Secretary of State ; he was really chosen as the best and foremost man for the job. Then he went on to praise the armed forces of Israel and re-iterated that the traditional policy of friendship for Israel was not in danger. Under no

circumstances did the U.S. quest for better relations with some of Israel's neighbours mean that support for Israel was diminished.

Those who look for the signs of Jesus' coming however will not regard the appointment of a U.S. Jewish Secretary of State as coincidental. The hand of God is seen in all these events; and the effect of His work in the affairs of nations is all the more underlined by the unsuccessful national President having so much success internationally. This provoked Pravda the Soviet newspaper, to utter the chagrined remark that the American leader's Middle East tour coincided with attempts to belittle Soviet influence in the Arab world.

From the Northern Yemen territory, associated geographically with Sheba and Dedan of old, has come the news of a coup to change the government which was becoming too friendly with adjoining communists. The Yemen ambassador to Britain has returned to his country and is expected to be prominent in the new government there. The change has been welcomed by Saudi-Arabia which quickly voiced that "no foreign intervention would be allowed by Arabia whatsoever". A warning seen by political observers, as directly aimed at the Marxist Republic of South Yemen. Saudi-Arabia hates communism, and no doubt will do whatever it can, not only to bolster up the new regime in North Yemen, but perhaps also bring about the downfall of the government of South Yemen. So events bring about a change in the pattern of influence. The King of the South is having the way prepared for him for the role divinely ordained. As for Israel, it is quite obvious that such a strategic area, at the cross roads of three continents, is regarded by the southern power as very important—possibly even as the key in the United States plan to contain communism in that part of the world. Hence the resultant agreement in which America has guaranteed Israel's oil supplies and other essential raw materials, and the promise to Israel that America will co-operate with nuclear energy technology and the supply of nuclear fuel from the United States. Israel wants to obtain nuclear power reactors from America, and these it seems she will receive.

So the stage is being set for that final conflict, out of which Israel will be delivered by their Messiah, when the King of the North successfully invades those territories in which the King of the South is endeavouring to establish his influence at the present time.

D.L.

News from the Ecclesias

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread : Sundays, 11-30 a.m.
Bible Class : Mid-week.

We have had the pleasure of the company and help of Brother and Sister D. Lancaster and Brother S. Lancaster. Brother D. Lancaster exhorted on Sunday morning, June 30th. In the afternoon three attended the Sunday School : one adult and two young ones. The subject was : "What must I do to be saved ?"

We feel encouraged and look forward, hoping to be able to give a further witness during the summer months.

—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.

We are looking forward very much to the hoped-for visit of Brother and Sister DeFries. The summer months bring the opportunity to spend a few days holiday together and some from Ireland are eagerly anticipating those days, this month. Also two hope to be at the August Fraternal. All these arrangements are subject to His permission.

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, Hamburg and Orchard Park. Alternative week : Revelation Study.

The postponed visit to England is now planned for August 8—September 3, God willing. It is anticipated in the need for counsel and companionship.

The stirring events in the Middle East with the nations beginning to take their prophesied positions makes us realise how near the return of Jesus Christ can be. May it be real enough in our hearts to help us be more ready when He comes.

Much gratitude is felt for the supplications and coming alongside in our recent loss. God does grant help in a time of testing.

J.A.DeF.



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

Sundays : Breaking of Bread 11-30 a.m. Lectures on the first Sunday in the month. Wednesday : Bible Class 7-15 p.m. Milton Hall, Deansgate.

The brethren and sisters are keenly looking forward to seeing Brother and Sister DeFries from the States in this country on August 9th. We hope the visit will be permitted to our mutual benefit.

Arrangements have been made for the holding of our Fraternal Gathering in our own Hall on Monday, August 26th. Meeting—if the Lord will—at 2 p.m. Tea 4-30 p.m.

W.V.B.