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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

HELP, LORD

A BIBLE CLASS INTRODUCTION

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

“WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF ALL”

AS ISRAEL STOOD in the land of Moab, about to enter their promised inheritance, God spoke to them through Moses. He reminded them of all that He, their Father, had done for them, and re-affirmed the covenant with them as they entered the land. We know that this covenant involved two parties, God and Israel. Perhaps His instructions to our brethren in Israel can help us to value better our covenant relationship with God and to better keep our part of the promises, for we know that God will not fail in keeping His Word. In Deuteronomy 29 : 2-7, we read :

“ Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt . . . I have led you forty years in the wilderness : your clothes are not waxen old upon you . . . And when ye came unto this place, Sihon . . . and Og . . . came out against us unto battle, and we smote them . . . ”

How much God had done for them ! But, they needed reminding, for flesh does not remember and is not always grateful. We, too, brethren and sisters, do we not know that Hand working for us, as help is given : deliverance from sustained trial, sustenance in this wilderness ?

For all this, and more, what did God require of our brethren, of ourselves to day ? Deuteronomy 29 : 9-10 gives us the answer :

“Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them . . .
Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God . . . ”

Do these words speak to us, help us to do that which He desires? “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient,” had been Israel’s response to His Words. Is this our mind ? To help, God has given His law, revealing His purpose. There is help and guidance for our every need, and there is hope and promise to sustain us if it is valued. It is revealed yet how few really see and grasp it.

In Deuteronomy 29 : 29, we read :

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God : but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

We could read it : “that we may do all things to keep this covenant.” Or as was Israel’s response : “*All that the Lord hath said will*

we do and be obedient.” God reveals His “secret things”, the way of redemption, the hope of salvation only to those who are bound to Him by these words of obedience and love. If we keep the covenant, we can find help to perceive the “secret things” which, in a measure, are revealed for us through His love.

In our recent portion in Mark 12 : 28-29, when Jesus was asked, “Which is the first commandment of all ?” His reply revealed these hidden things of that law for us, verses 29-31 : “. . . . hear, O Israel” How important this is, for only with hearing can we hope to perceive the hidden things of God. Israel, as a nation, did not hear, and so were unable to keep their covenant with God ; and, therefore, lost their hope. Do we, brethren and sisters, truly hear when God speaks ? What are we to hear ? “. . . . The Lord our God is one Lord.” He is One—the only One—all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing ; yet, how many who profess to know the Word of God look upon Him as three gods in one. How empty ; how false ; how failing to give Him the honour ! Why would it be so ? Is it because of a failure to hear, to go to the Word of God, a failure to truly perceive those “secret things” found there ?

Jesus continues, verse 30 :

“. . . . thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength : this is the first commandment.”

In this is comprehended all the Law, along with the second commandment :

“. . . . thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” (verse 31).

Are these the “secret things” revealed to help us keep our covenant ? Let us look at this foremost commandment ; for if we can perceive it, we can be helped to please God, to be bound unto Him through Jesus, His Son, who alone kept the Law perfectly, and so can now mediate for those who are striving to be like Him.

“Thou shalt love the Lord” is the first commandment. Do we ? If asked, our reply would probably be, “Certainly we do” ; but let us look into our hearts, examine ourselves. How can we be sure ? Jesus tells us clearly :

“. . . . with all thy *heart* . . . thy *soul* . . . thy *mind*, and . . . thy *strength*”

How all-inclusive this is ! Let us look more closely.

“WITH ALL THY HEART”

Why is the heart involved? Perhaps we can find help in Acts 8 : 37, where Philip said to the Ethiopian who sought to be made part of the Body of Christ :

“ If thou believest *with all thine heart*, thou mayest ”

How important that the heart, all of it, is involved in believing and in doing. We remember Paul’s words in Romans 2 : 29 :

“ he is a Jew (one in covenant-relationship with God), which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that *of the heart, in the spirit*, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

The cutting off of the flesh must be of the heart, willingly done because of love for God. Jesus said, Matthew 5 : 8 :

“Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.”

No flesh can look upon God. Only as it is crucified, cut off, can we hope to be among those who will see God when Jesus returns. We know from experience that the circumcising of the heart is not easy ; it hurts, yet Jesus said :

“Let not your heart be troubled (or agitated) : ye believe in God, believe also in me.” (John 14 : 1).

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law. His heart was perfect toward God. He loved God with all His heart. Do we believe in Him, brethren and sisters, knowing that He now sits with His Father and is able to mediate for us there? If we do, may not our hearts which are so easily agitated be eased, and Paul’s words in Ephesians 5 : 19-20 help us :

“ making melody in your heart to the Lord ; Giving thanks always for all things unto God ”

What is our heart’s response to His loving kindness? Is it heavy, depressed, resentful ; or, is it resolute, filled with melody, joy at the blessing, the love *He* shows for us? Is this one way we can determine whether we love God “with all the heart”? But, Jesus has told us to love Him—

“WITH ALL THY SOUL”

“Soul”, we know, comes from a word meaning “breath”, and involves our natural life, that which exists as long as we breathe.

Do we love God with all our breathing time on this earth, all our years of probation ? David said in Psalm 143 : 6-8 :

“I stretch forth my hands unto thee : *my soul thirsteth after thee*, as a thirsty land. Selah. . . *I lift up my soul unto thee.*”

David sought to lift up his life to God as an offering. Can we, like David, work to lift up all our living in gratitude and love ? It can only be done faithfully and consistently if we *do* love God more than life itself. To lift it up to God hurts, for we know the fire of the Spirit is to consume that which is offered up.

Hoping to grow in our love for God, let us look further at the command—

“WITH ALL THY MIND”

We find the word mind is made up of two parts : *because of*, and *understanding*. How can we love God because of *understanding* ? Hebrews 8 : 10 perhaps gives us a clue :

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel . . . I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”

A covenant—made possible because His Law would be in their minds and hearts ; and, there would be obedience because of understanding. Cannot our minds perceive the love shown in that promise as it goes in and takes over the *mind* and the *heart* ? Love must be in the mind, not just on the lips. How graciously He has shown us the sweet reasonableness of His wishes. They are simple ; they are practical ; and, because of understanding, there comes a moving in obedience. Is our mind, then, fixed upon God, on His ways, so merciful to us, not allowing it to be filled with other useless thoughts, or vain goals so destructive to true love. That our efforts to love God may be all-encompassing, Jesus completes His help by saying :

“WITH ALL THY STRENGTH”

Strength involves ability, power. Do we recognise that strength is ours only as God grants it, recognising, too, our own strength is limited ? We must ask ourselves how am I using my strength, my ability, for we all have a necessary measure of ability, each perhaps in different ways. How easy it is to dissipate strength by using it in other directions, so that when it comes to the things of God, we can lack, are weary and so cannot perceive or perform at our best. How do we come here this morning, brethren and sisters ? In love

for God, wanting to use all our strength for Him who gave it ; or, are we too tired too distracted to be alert, to truly give glory to Him ? De we give of our strength because we love Him ? If we can only summon up half of our strength, is it like bringing a blemished offering, not the best ? We need *all* our strength to keep the covenant. Noah gave of his strength for 120 years, able to do so because he loved God. David's words in Psalm 84 : 5-7 are meaningful to us in this consideration :

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee . . . They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appear-eth before God.”

Do we not experience this, brethren and sisters, as a difficulty is met, and faced forthrightly, trusting in Him ? We are given sufficient strength ; and, further, there is a store laid up for the next trial, made possible through His power and deliverance.

“THIS IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT”

It is revealed to us how we *can* keep our vow : by loving the Lord with all our *heart*, our *soul*, our *mind*, and our *strength*. It is not easy, for we like to use these for our own benefits ; but, if we truly love God, will it not show in how we act ? Our love for God, as Jesus reminds us further, includes—indeed, cannot be complete—without the same love for each other.

“AND THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF”

There is no room for love of self, but only for God and God's. Let us go back to Israel as they stood there is Moab, and listen to God's words :

“Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.” (Deuteronomy 29 : 9).

J. A. DeF.



“Help, Lord”

THE DEATH OF SAMUEL was a great loss to Israel. It is recorded :

“And Samuel died ; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his own house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.” (I. Samuel 25 : 1).

How particularly sad would David feel. The one whom he had looked up to was no longer there to counsel with him. It may be at such a time as this that David wrote the words of Psalm 12 that form the hymn :

“Help Lord, because the godly man
Doth daily fade away
And from among the sons of men
The faithful do decay.”

The help of God was greatly needed at such a time when a godly judge was taken away. How did this help come ? David had been most careful not to avenge himself upon Saul who had been such a persistent adversary. Patiently he had endured the injustice of Saul’s jealousy. David, after the death of Samuel was now hoping for help from Nabal the Maonite, who was a very wealthy man. David’s entreaty for help however fell upon deaf ears and upon a hard heart.

“And now I have heard that thou hast shearers : now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day : give, I pray thee whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.”

(I. Samuel 25 : 7 and 8).

The reply to the pleading was very wounding :

“And Nabal answered David’s servants, and said, Who is David ? and who is the son of Jesse ? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that

I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be ?” (I. Samuel 25 : 10 and 11).

Was Nabal a staunch follower of Saul ? No ! Rather was he thoroughly selfish and unappreciative.

Had David wished, he had sufficient power with the considerable band of followers he had to have helped himself from Nabal’s flocks of sheep and goats. But holding his men in check, he had desired to be honourable and petition the wealthy man.

“Who is David ? and who is the son of Jesse ? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.”

This was a false charge ; not that Nabal could feel justified in raising it ; for David had continually shown his loyalty to God in not avenging himself upon Saul. But this hateful remark of Nabal was but a prevaricating veneer to cover over a very hard and evil spirit.

How easy it is to be provoked by such a wrong spirit.

“So David’s young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword ; and David also girded on his sword ; and there went up after David about four hundred men ; and two hundred abode by the stuff.”

(I. Samuel 25 : 12-13).

It was at this point that God helped David through the instrumentality of the wife of Nabal. How excellent was Abigail’s counsel. There was no excusing by her of her husband, which really meant she did not try to cover up the obvious evil. In itself, this very fact was an exhortation and furthermore enhanced the counsel, which was to the effect that David was wrong to cut off in the attitude of the flesh, though on the face if it his intention might have appeared to be justified.

So the counsel of Abigail comes down the years. An evidence preserved on record of how God helps to correct and guide faltering and failing humanity whose hearts are truly towards Him :

“Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal : for as his name is, so is he ; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him : but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul

liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal." (I. Samuel 25 : 25-26).

David's response to this good counsel was not only quick, but hearty in its acceptance.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me ; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou."
(verse 32).

Have not these things been written for admonition and learning for those upon whom the end of the ages has come ? Though Nabal rejected to help, David *was* helped, even in a practical sense by the provision of food which Abigail brought along with her advice. Though David withdrew from avenging himself, he *was* avenged ! For God later smote the adversary for his wickedness.

The inherent prevarication in human nature is again portrayed at the time of Jeremiah. It was a time of religious falsehood. Jeremiah raised the cry that from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealt falsely. Smooth words were used when really there should have been a standing with Jeremiah with his message of warning.

"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace ; when there is no peace."
(Jeremiah 8 : 11).

To human sentimentality such an endeavour would seem to be kind. To put balm on hurt feelings, or to cover over difficulties. A trap that is ever present even to these times but it does not bring peace.

How useless in the days of Jeremiah to assure the people that all was well when the situation was far from right. But unfortunately human nature very frequently, does not want to be reminded that things are not right. The flesh persistently wants to proceed along the course that suits it, finding it too much trouble and too hurtful to alter.

God knew and knows of this weakness hence His exhortation through Jeremiah in the following graphic terms :

"Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord : Shall they fall, and not arise ? shall he turn away and not return ?

Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual back-sliding ? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright : no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done ? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.” (Jeremiah 8 : 46).

How effective in its simplicity the figure God used to remonstrate with His people :

“Shall they fall and not arise ?”

Who has heard of anyone stumbling and falling and not immediately picking himself up again (if able to do so).

“Shall” a man “turn away and not return?”

Who has heard of anyone with common sense having found he has made a mistake and has taken in his journeying the wrong turn off the road, not turning back, and retracing his steps, so that he can get on the right road again ?

But in relation to the godly way, and the heavenly requirement, what was found by the prophet as he warned the Israel of God ?

“ . . . they hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return” (to get back on the right road).
“every one turned to his course.” (verses 5-6).

Why ? Though the prophet had hearkened to God’s word, those he endeavoured to help “spake not aright” no man repented him of his wickedness (verse 6). There was no repentance in the expression “What have I done ?” (verse 6). This was a refusal to acknowledge, so having taken the wrong course, and therefore finding themselves in difficulties, unlike the man in a natural predicament who loses his way, there was a refusal to return even though God warned them.

From the mouth of The Lord Jesus Christ the same message warning against prevarication is discerned :

“He that is not with me is against me : and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest ; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself ; and they enter in, and dwell there : and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

(Luke 11 : 23-26).

There is no "middle ground", it is necessary to follow Christ's way, to accompany Him on the right way. Those who are not with Him are not for Him ; and therefore whatever sentiment may be expressed, (in that middle state) the individual is against Christ. When a man's spirit has been cleansed, it is important that he is with Christ, and remains with Him. But suppose the wrong spirit comes back, and the individual is receptive to that wrong spirit, allowing it to enter into him and take him over ? In the train of such a condition there is a worsening state, described by Jesus as seven times worse. How urgent and essential then, that there is a seeing with Christ concerning His light, so the evil cannot come back in again.

A house swept and empty (in the figure of Christ) is an invitation for that which belongs to darkness to enter in again. So the words of Jesus' warning are preserved :

"Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." (Luke 11 : 35-36).

A pure eye ; a true seeing with Christ, lets the sunshine in. But the eye that gives way to the flesh is impeded and dark corners are the result. There is no fullness of light. Here then, is a warning to be responsive towards God's help Whether through an Abigail ; or a realising of a wrong course and not allowing pride to prevent a retracing of the steps to the right road.

In being receptive to the light, the evil can be prevented from entering again making the last state worse than the first.

D.L.



A Bible Class Introduction

“Let love be without dissimulation”

AS BRETHREN AND SISTERS of the Lord Jesus our struggle in this life is to live in a way which reflects His love—for God, and for His brethren and sisters. That force in His life enabled Him to put down every impulse of His flesh, to wound the serpent nature in the head. Then He was able to ascend to His Father, to mediate, to redeem those of His house who can exhibit to Him and to each other that love which is beyond the human mind but which is a confirmation of the working of His Spirit.

Paul helps through our consideration of Romans 12 : 9 “Let love be without dissimulation.” Let us focus our minds on the particular aspect Paul has in mind for us in this instruction—dissimulation—not a commonly used word, but one which is used as hypocrisy whose meaning we all know very clearly. Hypocrisy involves playing a part—professing to be one thing but really being something entirely different. If we were asked “Are you a hypocrite?” the immediate reaction would be shock and a vehement denial. Yet Paul, indeed the Spirit, instructs “Let love be without hypocrisy.” Instruction of the Spirit is given because God is aware of what we are like and so in His infinite love warns us. Do we then, brethren and sisters, as we strive to grow in love, for God, for Jesus, for one another, let our love be without hypocrisy? There is no need to speak of the importance of love for we know Jesus taught that all the law is fulfilled in love—for God and for our neighbour. How can we tell whether in spite of all our struggles, all our vows, we are showing true love, without playing a part? There is much help given to us—much instruction of the Spirit by which we can measure ourselves if we are honest with ourselves. First we are shown what love is like by Paul in I. Corinthians 13—instruction with which we are all familiar and which we do not need to go into detail—but we can read Paul’s words and measure ourselves by them—we can search our hearts. What is the force in our living—is it love without hypocrisy? Or as we listen to the Spirit’s instructions do we perceive where we fall short—for we all do? And perceiving our shortcomings from the divine standard can we accept them and in love move to correct them. If we fail to do so are we in our heart, failing in the instruction given—“Let love be without dissimulation.”?

“YIELD YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE”

To help us in this life-long struggle Paul writes Romans 12 : 1 :

“I beseech you therefore brethren . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God . . . and be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .”

Our ability to yield our bodies a living sacrifice is perhaps a measure of our love for God. As our brethren in Israel brought their sacrifice ; and, if faithful, perceived in that sacrifice the purpose of God to be accomplished in the Lamb—would they in love be most careful to bring an acceptable sacrifice—one perfect, unblemished, to express their perception of God’s love seen in the provision of that Lamb. As we too perceive that love expressed in the provision of His Only Son, are we moved to bring *all* our living to God ? If one in Israel brought a slightly blemished offering—the second or third best of his flock, keeping back the best for himself—was this love ? It is the same with ourselves, brethren and sisters, if we profess to love God, to give our lives to Him yet do it holding back, failing to give it fully—is it love without hypocrisy that rules in our heart ?

Let us be specific, for this is the help we need to truly look into our hearts. Each of us brethren and sisters, as members of the Body of Christ are responsible. Responsible for our own living, our own life’s offering and responsible as well for the unity and oneness of His Body. We know in our hearts whether we are striving to live as Jesus, as God would have us do—trying to overcome the weaknesses we are all subject to. Each knows his own particular problem. I’m too sharp—I’m too soft, I’m too fearful, I’m too prejudiced, I’m too critical, my attitude turns away rather than helps. We all know at least in part, brethren and sisters, where our struggle is. If we are striving to grow in that love which is without hypocrisy, won’t we be trying harder to overcome that weakness that we recognise in ourselves—to yield our body more holy, more acceptable to God ? These weaknesses hinder love, indeed can if not controlled, destroy it. God will test us and continue to do so, on these weaknesses to see whether we can control them—how—by love for Him, and for His.

In addition to striving to control these human failures in ourselves, we have another just as important responsibility, our brethren and sisters of Christ. If we see a failure, a wrong, a transgression in another—if we know there is a problem, which if let go could cause the loss of a brother’s or sister’s spiritual life, or injury to the Body, are we not required by Jesus’ commands to go to him and in love seek to help save him. This is divine love, without hypocrisy.

To let such a wrong act or manner go uncorrected, because of fear, because of personal feelings or love so called for the person involved, is not showing love in its fulness as the Spirit requires. We remember when Peter protested against Jesus going up to Jerusalem to suffer persecution and be killed, seeking to shield Jesus from what was required of Him, Jesus quickly cut through Peter's over-protection and said :

“Get thee behind me Satan (adversary) for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men.”

Misdirected love, unperceptive love on Peter's part added to Jesus' burden. How easy it is because of a feeling of fleshly love to over-protect, to shield one who is close from what is required of God for their living to be holy, acceptable to Him. How far-reaching is the searching of the Spirit's words, brethren and sisters, as we allow them to shine into our hearts to reveal what is there—to remove the dissimulation which can lurk there, perhaps unknown to ourselves.

Another example to help is found in Galatians 2 : 11 where Paul says :

“When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed.”

Peter had as verse 12 and 13 tells us dissimulated—moved with hypocrisy—in that he ate with the Gentiles on some occasions but on others through fear did not. It took courage on the part of Paul, love without hypocrisy, to withstand Peter to his face, recognising too the evil fruit of Peter's pretence in that others were led away as well. Paul's love was without dissimulation and by it gained Peter's love and esteem as we perceive in Peter's words (II. Peter 3 : 5 :

“ . . . even as our *beloved* brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.”

So we see here also in Peter's spirit when Paul withstood him to his face, an example of love without hypocrisy. Peter did not rebel, did not become angry, not feel hurt, letting personal feeling interfere with his receiving of Paul's loving action. How easily the flesh rears up when we are told we are wrong, preventing the work of the Spirit in love to help us be better brethren and sisters of Christ, to grow in that love without dissimulation which is required in all those who are His. Is how we receive love a measure of our love ?

Paul in the wisdom given unto him, that Peter knew and valued, has written unto us, brethren and sisters :

“Let your love be without dissimulation.”

Let us take heed and look into our hearts and struggle harder to grow toward that love which will enable us to share eternity with the God of love and His Son.

J. A. DeF.



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

“And both these kings hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table, but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.”

(Daniel 11 : 27).

THIRTY YEARS AGO the leaders of Russia on the one hand and America and Britain on the other, met together at Potsdam and agreed to a division of Europe. The demarkation line between their spheres of influence in Europe would run from the Baltic to the Adriatic. From this division came the term “East and West” which could alternatively be described as “North and South”. For thirty years Europe has been comparatively free from conflict, except for the troubles in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but it has been an uneasy peace. Nevertheless, to a large extent Russia has restrained itself from helping revolutionary communism in Western Europe to which agreement it subscribed at Potsdam, as requested by the western powers.

Now thirty years later there has been another conference. This time at Helsinki where thirty-three world leaders, or their representatives, took part along with the representatives of the two “super powers”. The conference was dominated by the two world powers, Russia and America. From it proceeded 300,000 words supposedly “to become the agreed standard of international behaviour, and also the banner of individual ‘human rights’”. National frontiers are not to be altered except by agreement. Nor are any of the states contributing to the pact, to interfere with the government of another. The leaders of the two world powers underlined that they mean to keep what they have declared and promised to adhere to.

To the world at large it seems a step in the right direction. Perhaps, even, to some a very great step. Conferences of this kind can lull the peoples of the world into a false sense of security. To those however who look for the signs of His coming and the end of the world great help is afforded by the scripture to enable these political events to be viewed in a true light.

Daniel’s prophecy declares that both these powers (kings) “shall speak lies at one table, but it shall not prosper”; for there is to be

an end of all the evils of the present, "at the time appointed".

This truth raises the question of what would Russia do if Czechoslovakia again inclined itself to "liberation" as during the days of the Dubczek régime. What would America do if Chile turned again to the Allende brand of communism? Would these powers be determined to honour the Helsinki agreement? Already there is a suspicion abroad that Russia is subsidising the Portuguese Communist Party, whose actions are not helping to stabilise the government of that troubled country. The hypocrisy of the Helsinki agreement, however, is possibly shown up even more by the ceremonious signing by Turkey endorsing that "frontiers are unchangeable except by agreement" which presumably Turkey does not think applies to itself, hence its military intervention in Cyprus where it established a new frontier by splitting up Cyprus into two zones by force of arms.

Furthermore the Vatican, which was represented at Helsinki, no doubt solemnly endorsing and acclaiming the step towards more civilised behaviour for individual "human rights", has, since that conference, been very pleased to accept for a private audience with the Pope, the leader of Uganda. Charged, along with South Africa, the Soviet Union and Spain as being guilty of violating human rights "on a disturbing scale". In Uganda along with the other countries mentioned, it has been said that people have been imprisoned for their beliefs, denied fair and speedy trial, and tortured or executed. The Vatican however stated that the Ugandan President's meeting with the Pope was in a cordial atmosphere during which the Pope told his Moslem visitor that he felt "special bonds of affection" for the Ugandan people, and thanked the African leader for the written assurance that "foreign religious personnel would always be welcome" in Uganda. The Pope was pleased to receive from Uganda the first and only woman Ambassador to the Vatican.

The two great powers, particularly, have been talking about "mutual balanced force reduction in Europe". Such talk seems to indicate a desire to reduce tension, so that sure peace may be gradually achieved. Seeing however that Russia is part of Europe, such talk seems to be meaningless jargon, for there does not seem to be the slightest indication that Russia intends to set an example by reducing its war potentials. Rather the opposite, for America's Central Intelligence Agency has recently indicated that one of the world's most brilliant nuclear physicists and an originator of the hydrogen bomb, who fled to Russia from the West twenty five years ago, after successfully spying for the Soviet Union, has been at work in a top-secret laboratory on the shores of Lake Baykel in Siberia, endeavouring to develop yet another awesome weapon. The space

physics and gravitational experiments being conducted are for the purpose of harnessing the force of gravity ; the control of which might enable an engineless aircraft to be developed. This seems to be an astonishing ambition ; but so was the atomic weapon some thirty years ago.

But apart from this, the Soviet military appears to have no intention of allowing a reduction in its war potential. Rather the Russian military leaders are tending to be still critical of the Washington Summit agreement of 1973. That agreement was for the purpose of ensuring United States-Soviet communication if a threat of nuclear war arose. But a Soviet army newspaper has inferred the pact as being little more than a scrap of paper. Also Pravda itself has recently criticised the agreement saying that the United States strategic qualification which provided for a possible use of atomic weapons in the event of a Russian conventional attack in Europe, makes the United States stance inconsistent with the 1973 agreement.

Russia is seeking for a complete ban on nuclear weapon testing, including underground atomic bomb experiments, not covered by the present test-ban treaty. Strangely however the U.S.S.R. still wants to allow the testing of nuclear devices for "peaceful purposes" ! How America could be expected to accept Russia's word that its tests were only for "peaceful purposes" cannot be imagined. While the U.S.S.R. is experimenting on the shores of Lake Baykal, so also in the U.S.A. there is experimentation where a new generation of sophisticated weapons, following the Pershing missile, are expected soon to emerge.

Meanwhile from China comes the assertion that the Soviet Union now has larger stockpiles of guided missiles and greater nuclear fire power than the United States. China accuses Russia of preparing war under the comouflage of détente. In warning Europe, China has declared that the situation is comparable to the pre-World War two years, when Hitler's troops were being prepared for the attack while he "talked glibly" of peace and international co-operation.

"The Soviet revisionists", China says, "are playing the same shameful role of Hitler." Perhaps this assertion is not as hysterical as it may sound to the world at large ; for the scripture *has* foretold :

" . . . they shall speak lies at one table . . . "

D.L.

**A Word to the Wise
from the Pen of Dr. Thomas**

The flesh is always devising for itself yokes of bondage which God hath not imposed. This propensity to be doing what is not asked to do, and neglecting to do what is told, is the foundation of all “the will worship, and humility and austerity” of the body, which constitutes the godliness of the Old Adam. The world is full of it. We see it in the superstitions of Rome, Geneva and so forth ; and we would be glad to say, that we did not see it amongst those who have believed and obeyed the gospel of the Kingdom of God.



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. Alternative Week : Revela-
tion Study.

As this is being written, preparations are going forward for a visit to England, God willing. The counsel, companionship and inspiration such a visit brings is a help to all here as well as to those privileged to enjoy these blessings first hand.

Supplications are often on behalf of those who are ill or undergoing trial, that in His mercy, healing and deliverance may be granted in His wisdom .

As the weather turns cooler, heralding the coming of fall and winter, it is a sign to us of the inevitable purpose of God, unchanging, proceeding in accordance with His design. May we be helped to conform to that purpose in the hope of being allowed eternal blessing when Jesus returns

J.A.DeF.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.
Breaking of Bread : Sundays, 11-30 a.m.
Bible Class : Mid-Week.

We have been pleased to know that Brother and Sister De Fries have been able to visit England again. At the time of writing we hope to make the journey to Manchester to meet them. Our thoughts are with the elders at this time in their special work together.

We are also continually mindful of those in ill health.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER : Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.
Sundays : Breaking of Bread : 11-30 a.m.
Lecture on the first Sunday in the month at 3-30 p.m.
Bible Class : 7-30 p.m. in the above room Friday evenings.

We have been blessed with the visit of Brother and Sister De Fries of Eden, New York. Help has been given by them in very many ways in both material and spiritual things.

Counselling with them on problems which are inevitable has shown the value of the Spirit's help, and we are grateful for the resolution of what appeared to be difficulties.

Brother DeFries gave a lecture on October 12th and an exhortation on October 19th, which were beneficial to all.

Our visitors are due to return on October 23rd. We shall be sorry to see them go, but are thankful that contact with them and the others in Eden can still be maintained by correspondence.

W.V.B.

