

FEBRUARY 1976

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

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

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

THOU ART NEAR, O LORD

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

“WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND”

Every so often, certain words or thoughts seem to particularly stand out to help as we read the Scriptures. It is not without purpose that this is true, for it is help for us as God, who knows each one, desires that it should be. It is the spiritual food we seek from His Word, food which is to sustain us during this time of probation. The world around us is evil, full of violence and all the other lusts of the flesh. We, being flesh, can be pulled by its attractions if we are not daily renewing our strength, through the spiritual help found in our daily portion.

Just as we need each day the natural food to give us strength, to help us grow, so also the need is there, though we may not be quick to perceive this, for the spiritual food God, in His mercy and grace, provides.

Perhaps, one of these thoughts which seems to stand out so remarkably is found in Acts 17:11-12, where we read of those in Berea, those to whom Paul and Silas came, fleeing from persecution in Thessalonica; verse 11 tells us:

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed . . .”

We are told much in these few words about these people, which caused God to say that these were more noble than some. Why was this so? They “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily . . .” Perhaps, their minds can be a help today, as we seek to be spiritually stronger, more able to face what life in this present world brings to test us. To this end, do we not need to receive the word with all “readiness of mind”; do we, too, need to search the scriptures daily?

Those in Berea were Jews. Being in the synagogue, they heard Paul and Silas’ words and believed because they *did* receive, because they *did* search. We, brethren and sisters, are of God’s House, joined to Christ as His brethren and sisters. Yet, we, too, have an urgent need to receive and to search, for we can and, to our sadness, do often fail. If our heart, our mind is to receive His instruction with all readiness and to search out whether these things be so, we can find help today to be better able to put away the lusts of the flesh within, and resist those which surround us, and which can creep into the House, if we are not alert, aware, by being strengthened in His Word.

“READINESS OF MIND”

What is involved in “receiving the word in all readiness of mind”? We find this implies a forwardness of spirit, a *willing* mind; and, we know that a mind that *is* willing, is quick, anxious to understand, eager to please.

To help, then, God reveals others who had a ready mind, for example, in II Cor. 8:11-12, Paul exhorts our brethren in Corinth:

“Now therefore perform (complete) the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

Paul was speaking of help for the poor, and urging those in Corinth to complete what their willing mind had desired to do. Is the first requirement, then, as we seek to do that which is pleasing to God, a willing mind? Without this, there can be no perception, no performance, no completion, and so no blessing of God. It can be accepted (of God) if there is in us first a willing mind, and then a giving to God and to God’s.

In this connection, we think of the poor widow who cast into the treasury two mites, a most insignificant amount when compared to that given by those who, of their riches, cast in much. But, what did Jesus say of her? Mark 12:44:

“ . . . she *of her want* did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”

What was there about this poor widow that brought Jesus’ praise? Was it her readiness of mind, the willing spirit which moved her to cast in all her living? Are we, brethren and sisters, willing in mind and spirit to give all of our living? If so, we can hope for praise from the Lord Jesus.

“ALL HER LIVING”

What is involved in casting in “all her living”? We find the word used for “*living*” means, “life”, “good”. She cast in all that she had in this life, giving no thought as to what she would have left over to live on, what she would eat or drink, what clothes she might need, what her house was in need of, or even how her family or her friends might feel. No, her readiness of mind was toward God and God’s, and so

she was prepared to cast in her last two mites, literally all her living. It wasn't much, someone might say, but how much more in Jesus' eyes than the much greater amounts that those who were well off cast in. *She* would be in want because of her ready and generous deed; *they* would have much left over, for theirs was not "all their living." Is this a help to us, then, as we are striving to grow in readiness of mind. We find it is not easy, for the flesh rebels against such "foolishness." How strongly we have to fight that flesh, brethren and sisters. We remember Jesus' words when he found His disciples asleep when ne needed their support, Matt. 26:41, He said:

"... the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Do we not experience this so keenly, a willing spirit, but a reluctant flesh, a flesh which rebels against the requirements of God, a flesh which strives against a ready mind?

When we do come forward with all readiness of mind, are we not helped? Is not our offering pleasing to God? It was required of our Israelite brethren that those who brought the material for the tabernacle should do so with a willing heart. We read in Exodus 35:5:

"Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord:
whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it"

Also in verse 29, we read:

"The children of Israel brought a willing offering
unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made
them willing"

Another example is found in Acts 16:14, where we read of one helped by God to find the way of salvation. Why did God show such mercy toward her?

"... Lydia . . . whose heart the Lord opened, that she
attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

Her heart was opened. How important that our heart be opened, be made ready, willing, as those in Berea "who received the word with all readiness of mind." Brethren and sisters, are we ready to listen to the words of God? Are we ready to consider the words of our brethren? Are we ready to consider that we might be wrong; and, so in need of thinking differently? Are we ready to submit one to another in the fear of the Lord? And, do we, brethren and sisters, care so deeply for the way of God that to help one another, to uphold

the Word of God, to be watchful and courageous — this is the main focus of our lives? However hard, awkward or unpleasant it may be, are we not required to please our Father as Paul beseeches us in His Name? Romans 12:1:

“. . . that ye present (yield) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

How vital, then, that our mind may never become one which is closed, unwilling to listen to the Word of God; not subject to His Hand upon us! How easily such a situation can develop, even when we may be convinced that we are as those in Berea, receiving the word with all readiness of mind! We think of those who, nearly nineteen centuries later, took their words to heart as they separated themselves from a “falling away” and took the name Bereans. Where are they today? Joined to the apostasy! Why? Could it be because the readiness of mind, the willingness of spirit, the opened heart is gone? It is a sober warning for us, brethren and sisters.

“SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY”

Further, we have read how those Jews in Berea “searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.” *To search* involves asking, questioning, judging, examining, giving the thought of scrutinizing. Is this our mind? We may “do our readings” every day; but is not more required? Are we not required *to search* the scriptures, scrutinize them, and so find the lessons and help they can bring, the comfort God puts there for His children? We have seen this morning how many of old, having a readiness of mind, were helped, had their hearts opened. Is this not part of the help we are so graciously given?

When a question comes, when there is a problem, what greater source of help can we find, what better action can we take than to “search the scriptures”? This was Paul’s exhortation to his beloved Timothy in I Tim. 4:12-16:

“. . . be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity (love), in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

We know from our own experience how difficult this is to do; yet, do it we must, if we are to be pleasing to God. Verse 13:

“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

Is this a part of “searching the scriptures daily” and thereby growing in strength, and help to do that which God looks for in His children?
Verse 14:

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”

By the word of the faithful elders, rightly received by faithful brethren and sisters, there can be a gift granted to us, the power of God working, helping, as we struggle to put down the flesh. Neglect it not, was Paul’s exhortation. Neglect means to lack in care. Can we neglect that gift, if we fail to get the needed spiritual strength through “*searching* the scriptures daily”? Paul goes on, verse 15:

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself *wholly* to them . . .”

This is how, brethren and sisters, we can examine, discern the scriptures daily, by meditating upon them, making them our rumination, as the cattle that chew the cud, extracting all the nourishment there is to find, giving ourselves wholly to them. Can we truly do this, if we are distracted, thinking of other things, as we “do our readings”? Is this truly a searching daily? Each of us, brethren and sisters, *can* profit greatly, can grow in spirit as we need to do so sorely, if we can keep hold of the “word of life.” Let us together resolve to do this.

How much help can be found in these few thoughts that seem to stand out from His written Word. Let us strive to keep in mind the spirit of those in Berea. May we, with them, be able to unite in the words of our brother David:

“Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of thy words giveth light Look thou upon me, and be merciful Order my steps in thy word” (Psalm 119:129-133)

What a privilege, brethren and sisters! What a blessing is ours! May we use and value it to the full.

J. De F.

CHRISTENDOM — AND OTHERS — ASTRAY

“To the Law and the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20)

Nothing could be more important than to understand the teaching of the Law of Moses for this dispensation. Christendom’s view of the matter can be ignored. They neither understand the teaching of the Law for those whom it was given; and choose to regard it as secondary, if indeed, they give it any place at all in Biblical teaching. Undoubtedly, Christendom is astray.

Those who once had the Truth have fallen into Christendom’s disparaging of the Law; at least by inference, if not by direct assertion. It is a striking fact that the Old Testament, containing the Law, occupies no less than two thirds of the holy writ. If the sentiment of Christendom and the ‘others’ — those who once had the Truth — were correct, then the word of God is out of balance: their view amounts to saying that by far the major part ought to have been given to the New covenant, and perhaps none at all to the Old. How dreadful must this falling away appear to the giver of the Law — the Most High — who has preserved His appeal at the conclusion of the Old Testament:

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” (Malachi 4:4)

Again the importance of the Law is most impressively stated in the New Testament; Jesus said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:17-18)

The meticulous care of the Spirit in preserving the Law is seen that “not one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass — till all be fulfilled.” The ‘*jot*’ or ‘*jod*’ is the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the smallest letter and appears insignificant. Nevertheless, it is important, being the first letter in God’s name — *Yahweh*. It would seem that the ‘*tittle*’ is the small projection which distinguishes the letter ‘*mem*’ from ‘*samech*’ — see Psalm 119:97-104 and vv 113-120. These apparently small items in the script of the Law, Jesus said,

should not 'pass' — till all be fulfilled. If consideration is given to the care with which the scribes took when copying the Law it would be seen there was a divine overruling that the accuracy of the inspired record should be preserved in every detail, and this supports the welcome declaration of Jesus that even "Till heaven and earth pass", one detail of the Law would not remain unfulfilled.

How dare any professing His name disparage the Law in any way? Such action amounts to a denial of Jesus, and shows a complete lack of understanding of the teaching of the Law for Israel at the time it was given; and why it has been so carefully and fully preserved for *our* "admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Then what saith the Spirit through the Apostle Paul?—

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

The Position of the Law then and now.

How important it is to understand the application of the Law at the time it was given, careful to observe that the Spirit of the Law was seen in Christ: and that the letter of the Law in Israel imposed punishment at the time for rebels, which in the present dispensation is finally reserved for the judgment seat of Christ.

This distinction will prevent the using of letter of the Law for the present dispensation. As an example the rebel under the Law must be stoned, put to death: withdrawal from a rebel now is not the same as stoning but is to be the prerogative of Jesus at His Judgment. Why? Is it not because there may still be a working by God, if the departed has not trodden under foot the Son of God, to show him the need for repentance. Otherwise why the warning?

"For if we sin *wilfully* after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." (Hebrews 10:26-35)

When '*Divisions*' occur, there are those in different parts of the world who by reason of distance, or perhaps some other circumstances, strive against the apostasy, and apply themselves with great diligence to try and recover the Truth, incurring much reproach and suffering. Could it be said of those who may be outside the Body for a time that they *sinned wilfully*?

It must be remembered that God is not unmindful of such, and in *His* time, will show them where is the true Body, that they might be joined to Him again. How long, it may be asked? If time were not to be allowed, and were not in the hands of an all-wise God, it would mean that at the moment of Division, then many, very many, would be eternally lost, who had never heard or been given the opportunity to take the right step. If time is to be allowed — who is to say how long, but God in heaven? — be it a week, a month or maybe years, He is mindful of what is needed and will do the right thing at the right time.

Experience has shown the reasonableness of this. Divisions have carried some away who did have the Truth, but in the mercy of God have been shown their position, which they have been glad to renounce and testify to their fellows, and become joined to the One Body again.

There is wisdom in all the ways of God. Those who are left for a time with the wrong group in a division, use their energies to try and convert those who are wrong. Has God a purpose in this? Experience seems to show that He has. At the right time — *His* time — not only the ones who have been striving against the evil, but others are caused to leave the apostasy.

This has been the belief and practice of those in the Remnant as the writings over the past forty years show.

May the reading of this fall into the hands of some, who deplore the laxity in their group, and wonder what they should do?

(. . . *to be continued*)

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

At the time of David when the Ark of His Presence came to Jerusalem there was great joy. Burnt offerings and peace offerings were made and David pronounced God's blessing upon the people. A tangible evidence of the blessing of the occasion was when every one of the people received bread and wine and a goodly piece of meat. On that day a Psalm of thanksgiving was made and all the people responded by saying "Amen" (1 Chron. 16:36)

It may be as well to note that at the time David did not act in rigid conformity with the ordinances of Moses.

"So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God." (1 Chron. 16:1)

The tent which David pitched was not the tent of the tabernacle of Moses. This shows that a rigid conformity was not for ever kept of old, and therefore strict adherence to old patterns is not necessarily required. Neither does an apparent deviation necessarily indicate laxity. God at that time had been displeased. For three months the Ark of God had been in the house of Obed-edom because some had been brought into a work for which they had not been chosen according to the Law. Hence the death of Uzza.

God pronounced the judgment of His holiness at that time. But when the Ark was finally brought to Jerusalem, there is no indication from the divine record of disapproval of a technical deviation. It is recorded:—

"So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required:" (1 Chron. 16:37)

This was a work in the place of God's presence, namely the tent of the ark. The tabernacle of Moses where the ark of God had formally been was in another place:—

"And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the Lord in the high place that was at Gibeon,

To offer burnt offerings unto the Lord upon morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which he commanded Israel; And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the Lord, because his mercy endureth forever;" (1 Chron. 16:39-41)

Though God had been displeased over those who had been wrongly used for the work there was no condemnation of this arrangement. Rather was David given the blessing of the promises at that time: and there is no remonstrance in the following words:-

"Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in: For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another." (1 Chron. 17:4-5)

May there be a lesson in this account for the last days? A storm of protest cannot be raised in retrospect, because the ark had not been placed in its former place in the tabernacle. It cannot now be called a departure from the requirements of God even as it was not then. Yet in the wilderness, before Israel entered the land, the holy requirement was for the ark to reside in the most holy place of the tabernacle.

Is there not in this account, as in others matters, an indication that God requires spiritual inclination, rather than an unswerving technical service of His requirements. The spiritual inclination of David and his people is seen as the ark, in those days of old, was brought to Zion with joy and thankfulness. An earnest of that final day when the Ark, The Christ, will come to His Zion.

The Spirit of the Law at the time of Christ.

In the New Testament it is recorded:-

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," (John 1:17-17)

Perhaps this assertion ought to be considered carefully. Superficially it would seem the above words indicate the law of Moses was

inferior to the truth as revealed through Christ. On reflection this could not be, for the truth of Christ was the result of what He derived from the law of Moses. Why then the assertion, grace and truth by Jesus Christ, but the law by Moses? Perhaps the context of the times when these words were first uttered, should be kept in mind.

When Jesus came it was to visit a people who should have been keeping the law of Moses. But they were not keeping that law according to the Spirit of The Truth, therefore how could they have the grace of God? At that point in time it could be said to those zealous supporters of the letter of the law, who were so extreme in their technical outlook that they denied Christ and His Spirit. That grace and truth had come to that generation by Jesus Christ! It is recorded that Jesus (and therefore the Spirit) came unto His own and His own received Him not. Why not? Was it not because they were bound; captivated; by their rigid interpretation of the law? Religious, but not capable of going further than a strict keeping of tenets. Those however who perceived in Jesus something far different from what they were accustomed received the help they so greatly needed. Hence the declaration which still applies:—

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

Judaism brought forth converts undoubtedly. But by what means were they born? Is there some indication in the phrase “born — of the will of man . . .”? Because it was the will of man, many extreme things were forced upon the people, which became will-worship to the denial of the Spirit so evident in Christ. The will-worshippers therefore condemned Christ for not following their will-worship. So the grace and truth they could have had, giving them the right to the claim of children of God, was denied them.

In this they acted against themselves. Their proud claim that they were the children of Abraham and therefore children of God, was false. They had no “right or privilege” to it. If only they had considered the record of old, **AS CHRIST HIMSELF HAD CONSIDERED IT**, they would not have been bound; ensnared; by the law: would not have fallen due to their extreme interpretation of it.

As circumstances brought a change, not displeasing to God, at the time of David, so following Christ's work, a further change took place, because again circumstances had altered. What a time the Apostle Paul had however, in convincing some of his brethren they should not push their own interpretations of what God required, based upon the law.

The disputing was very great to the detriment of the Body, but was finally quieted by the Lord's Apostle Peter standing up to make the declaration which has come so beneficially down the years:-

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon
the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor
we were able to bear?
But we believe that through the grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

(Acts 15:10-11)

Such scriptures help the mind to feel after the balance of the Truth, which is so essential. It is evident that at the time of David, it was the essentials that mattered and not rigid technicalities.

Hence the joy and the blessing in such an atmosphere, which prevailed as the ark of the Lord was brought with singing unto Zion.

D.L.

**“THOU ART NEAR, O LORD; AND ALL THY
COMMANDMENTS ARE TRUTH.” (Psalm 119:151)**

Probably one of the difficulties human nature experiences is the fight against itself (in The Truth) is to realise that God is near and not afar off. When Jerusalem was encompassed by the great army of the King of Assyria at the time of Hezekiah it would seem that God had withdrawn Himself. All the fenced cities of Judah had been taken, even though a large amount of silver and gold had been paid to Sennacherib. The Assyrian king wanted nothing less than the transportation of the Jewish nation to his own land. How confident was this enemy:

“Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?”
(2 Kings 18:33)

“Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.” (2 Kings 18:25)

Nevertheless amongst those few feeble Jews **WAS THE GOD OF TRUTH!** Would God take note of their needs, would be the question in the minds of many Jews. The king of Assyria obviously thought otherwise. He sent a letter from Libnah to Hezekiah at Jerusalem. The burden of the letter is contained in the following

“Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?” (2 Kings 19:10-11)

It was true that Sennacherib had been very successful, and this very fact placed Hezekiah and the Jews in a position from which, in the ordinary way, they could not escape. What was Hezekiah to do? If God was not near they would be lost. In a situation of this kind where there can be no help from man, God is glorified. Seeking for the near presence of God, Hezekiah went to God with the Assyrian message:

“And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.”

“And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, Lord thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.” (2 Kings 19:14-16)

“Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.” (2 Kings 19:19)

God did hear this plea and to show that He was near, Isaiah the prophet was sent with words of comfort. It was pointed out that the Assyrian king had over-reached himself and was therefore fighting against God and His purpose. So the words of the Most High are preserved for His people of all ages to take comfort.

“Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom has thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel. By thy messengers thou has reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.

I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places. Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldst be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.” (2 Kings 19:22-25)

In these words it is clearly shown that it was not because God was afar off and unmindful that Jerusalem was in such straitened circumstances. God had allowed the Syrian king to perform that which had been accomplished. His own people had been allowed to suffer as a result of the machinations of such a fleshly enemy. But

God would yet be glorified in that a *remnant* would be saved!
Hence the words:

“And the *remnant* that is escaped of the house of
Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear
fruit upward.

For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a *remnant*, and they
of hosts shall do this.” (2 Kings 19:30-31)

Is there a lesson for these last days in these words? The flesh has had spectacular triumphs against the Truth in these times. Many have been taken captive by error. Numbers have decreased. The question may again be raised, is God afar off or is He near? It is in times of need and difficulty that God is glorified. His power to help, more readily perceived, when it is realised that only He can deliver. That He will save a *remnant* is seen in that earnest of salvation those many years ago, when the angel of The Lord smote in a night, 185,000, in the camp of the king of Assyria.

Ezekiel, one of a remnant.

Ezekiel the prophet lived in very apostate times. He had to endure the experience of seeing the decline of his people who had been separated for the work of God. His message sums them up in the following words:

“Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any
tree, or than a branch which is among the trees
of the forest?

Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will
men take a pin of it to hand any vessel thereon?”

(Ezekiel 15:2-3)

How insignificant the vine is, when compared to other trees, so much sturdier and greater in size. The people of God are likened unto a vine, for they are not called to be the great ones of the world. Of old that vine was burned because of Apostasy. Likewise at the end of the days has not the vine of His people withered? Is there anything meaningful in the vine without fruit to His glory? For it can achieve no other really profitable work (“shall wood be taken thereof to do any work?”)

But when Ezekiel proclaimed this testimony against the former vine there was still a *remnant*. Ezekiel was one of them. So was the prophet Jeremiah! May comfort be taken from this when considering how the latter day vine has withered and become unprofitable to God due to apostasy.

In trouble God is not afar off.

The book of Acts shows the Apostle Paul in difficult circumstances. To be brought before rulers and kings for His Name's sake was not an easy situation to have to face. But in all the distress Paul experienced, it is evident from the record that he knew God had always been near to him from the time he responded to the truth.

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:22-23)

Paul belonged to a *remnant*. This was part of his trial; and brought trial upon him. Those who had apostatised hated him for his uncompromising witness. Yet it is quite obvious as the situation of those days is now looked back upon, that his witness was true, and right. Paul was able to see the spirit of the Truth in the law and the prophets. Those who reviled him, who had the power of numbers and influence, were well aware of the writings of the prophets and Moses. But they were not able to face up to the lucidity of the Truth unembroidered with philosophy. They could not bear to humble themselves in admitting the rightness of that which they had always despised. So though believing in the resurrection, they could not accept the powerful turn of events of that time, in that the One whom they had slain, who was the very embodiment of the Truth, had risen from the dead, which event was the beginning of the resurrection itself!

Paul never was free from difficulty. He was continually surrounded by trials and problems. But he knew that this was not because God was afar off. Therefore he did not waver under these things. His faith continued firm to the end. What an example and a comfort the consideration of the lives of the faithful of old provides. Hezekiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Paul. Great was their suffering; long enduring their problems. But they learned that God was still near to them, enabling them to continue their witness, because they belonged to His *remnant*.

D.L.

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

**“As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our
watching we have watched for a Nation that could not save us.”**

(Lam. 4:17)

For over twenty-five years Israel has been a member of the United Nations. She has looked for support from that organisation; she has received help politically and materially from the United States. But how vain is the help of man; something which Israel is to be caused to see, as the mighty purpose of the Creator inexorably works to its final dramatic conclusion. Now that the Suez Canal has been opened as a result of the tripartite bargaining of Egypt, Israel, and the United States, and the first Israeli cargo for twenty years has passed through, it would seem that something is being achieved in the Middle East deadlock.

But the lament of Jeremiah two thousand five hundred years ago has a prophetic ring in its message:

“ . . . in our watching we have watched for a nation
that could not save us.”

God is the only One who can and will save the descendants of Abraham, even as He delivered them eventually from captivity all those centuries ago.

“ . . . OUR EYES AS YET FAILED FOR OUR VAIN HELP . . . ”

Twenty-five years as a member of U.N.O., which more than once failed its professed peace keeping responsibilities in the Middle East, has not achieved a respectable or secure place for Israel in that council of the nations. How disenchanted the Israeli leaders must feel at the vote in the United Nations last November when by a considerable majority that organisation declared that Zionism is a form of racism. Israel's foreign minister was caused to comment that the U.N. “once a force for peace . . . is now a source of tension in the world.” A United States spokesman's opinion was that the “abomination of anti-Semitism” had been “given the appearance of international sanction.”

It is true that the U.N.O. has played a part on the troubled area of the Golan Heights in having an observer force between the

Israeli and Syrian forces. It is also evident that a further withdrawal in that area by Israel would please many member nations of the U.N.O. Such a move back by Israel, however, would only bring greater threat to those Galilean settlements dominated by the Golan. What a broken reed the U.N.O. really is! Even while its professed peace keeping observer forces are stationed in the Golan there are reports of fedayeen raiding across this frontier, intent upon violence. This is never followed by U.N.O. protest or condemnation. Instead, the U.N.O. as a body, is giving support to the organisation from which the raiders originate and from whom they receive instructions. The Palestinians (and therefore the Palestinian guerilla movements) have been granted observer status by the General Assembly. Even the United States has agreed to the Palestine Liberation Organisation taking part in the U.N.O. deliberations on the Middle East situation. How vain it all is! The U.N.O. sending a peace keeping force to the Golan and at the same time voting for those who are infringing the peace keeping in that area. Whose avowed intentions have been expressed in the following answer to a question as to what Syria and the Palestinians can do now that Egypt has made peace with Israel:—

“These sides (i.e. Syria and the Palestinians) have great military potential, and when the battle starts, the Egyptian army and people will not remain outside it. Don't forget we have the Arab nation and our international friends, like the Soviet Union, behind us.”

The P.L.O. is seeking to have Israel expelled from the U.N.O. . . . Nevertheless the tacit recognition by the United States of the guerilla organisation continues. Apparently this change of policy is reported to have stemmed from the President himself. Preparations are being made for the next Presidential election, and no longer does the American leader feel he can rely upon New York and other cities with large Jewish populations for their vote. The government's policy of criticising New York, and the government's reluctance to help relieve that city's financial crisis has caused alienation. It appears that the President may have decided to change his Middle East policy to suit those American groups who are mainly interested in improving the United States relations with the Arab oil exporting countries. Whatever the reason for the shift in United States policy, the Syrians are very pleased at the recognition of the so called Palestine Liberation Organisation by those great powers which participate in the Security Council of the U.N.O., which carries the executive authority.

The reaction of Israel has been one of calculated defiance of the U.N.O. bringing in the P.L.O. and has declared it will not participate in Council debate in which the P.L.O. will be represented.

Israel, it can be said in the light of prophecy, will not lose anything by such reaction. What will the U.N.O. do when the northern hordes descend upon the land? By past performances that so called peace keeping force will be proved to be a mere paper tiger. Meanwhile the Soviet Union is building up its forces. Even now there is over four million men in the Russian military, double that which the West can muster. An American leader has admitted that the Soviet Union is in the position in which it has the initiative. The great problem for the United States "is the very powerful ground and attack forces and growing mobility forces of the Soviet Union that can be used around the periphery." The American Spokesman said Russia is producing seventy per cent more tactical aircraft than the United States, and in ground forces equipment there is the vastly greater production ratio of seven or eight to one. The Soviet share of gross national product for armament is fifteen per cent compared to five per cent for the United States.

Truly these signs of the times indicate the situation as foretold by Jeremiah in the sixth century B.C., "... we have watched for a nation that could not save . . ."

Out of the holocaust that is coming will spring the realisation that only God through the person of His Son can save. Then will come the fulfilment as spoken by Jeremiah:—

"The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished,
O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away
into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O
daughter of Edom; (Arabs) he will discover thy sins."

(Lam. 4:22)

D.L.

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: Revelation Study.

The work of sounsel and building up goes on in the Body, a work all the more important as it appears that these can be the last days before the return of Jesus. In addition, the work with the young ones in the Sunday School continues with the prayers of all brethren and sisters especially that the hearts of the scholars might be touched.

Minds and supplications have been with a sister here in her particularly hard and demanding circumstances and gratitude is felt for the help given.

The Sunday School Party is scheduled for February 21, God willing. J. DeF

“PENTRIP”, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

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

Bible Class: Mid-Week.

Following the turn of the year we look forward once more to the Spring when brethren and sisters may again be able to visit these parts to the blessing of our mutual help.

A card of appreciation has been received from a family who attended a Bible address last summer — who received a magazine. We have had the company of two with whom there have been discussions on the Word. per D.L.

MANCHESTER: Rycroft 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.

It is hoped to proclaim the gospel this month by way of the following lecture:

“ . . . Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matthew 24:22)

Who are the elect?

Those who are perishing seem to be heedless of their position, and so for the most part, ignore the opportunities to deliver themselves before it is too late. Yet they confess to the hopelessness that pervades the world and all human affairs. W.V.B.