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in opposition to the Dogmas of
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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

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

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At the Table of the Lord

“WITH BANDS OF LOVE”

Today, most particular help for us can be found in Hosea 11, where God's words through His prophet were directed to Israel and Judah. The chronology tells us that our brother, Hosea, spoke these words in 740 B.C. at approximately the time of the going into captivity of the ten tribes of Israel. They were scattered and have not been a nation since, although the tribes of Judah and Benjamin continued on for over a hundred years before they, too, became a captive people. Through Hosea, God spoke, 11:1:

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”

God, indeed, cared for His people and drew them out of Egypt's bondage. Verse 3 further tells us:

“I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.”

God has done much for His people, indeed does much for them today; yet, those whom He drew out of Egypt, those whom He healed — Israel — were not responsive, and turned from Him. They “knew not that I had healed them.” How could they have so failed in view of all His care for them, we might ask? Yet, there is the same danger today. We, too, can forget what God has done for us in taking us out of bondage, in a figure, out of Egypt, liberating from the world and its evil. As Hosea spoke to his brethren, they would be reminded of His deliverance provided for them so fully. Further, we read, verse 4:

“I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. . . .”

What did God have in mind here? We remember how He brought Israel out of Egypt (Exod. 19:4):

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.”

He drew them with bands of love. Because of His love, He did deliver from sore afflictions, and led them unto Himself as a separate, sanctified people, guided through their wilderness journey with the cloud by day and the fire by night. His Tabernacle was in their midst, to which they could look and know His Presence was there. He was their King. Truly, He did draw them with bands of love.

When we look to the original, we find the word “bands” is also used as “cord”, “rope”, “wreathen chain”. This makes us think of

the high priest and his garments. (Exod. 28:22-29):

(v. 22) “. . . thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of *wreathen work* of pure gold

(v. 24) And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate.

(v. 25) And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod

(v. 29) And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgement upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place. . . .”

By these wreathen chains, by these bands of love, those who are His are bound over the heart of *the* great High Priest. Jesus mediates for these, His people, as He enters into the Holy Place. Do we value this blessing, brethren and sisters? Do we appreciate what can bind our names over His heart, bands of love, cords of a man, the man, Jesus Christ, who in perfect love gave His life to God for His people. Because of that life given, He can now enter into God’s presence with our names there over His heart, *if* — and it’s a big *if* — we are bound to Him with bands of love. Not just His love which never failed — but by our own love in response, which unfortunately does at times fail, but a love in which we must be striving to grow. Are we aware, brethren and sisters, of these cords, pulling us in love out of the world, to a place close to His heart? There is the hope of escape from death if we can be bound there in love, love for Him, for His Father, for one another as the Israel of God, a people set apart by His drawing.

“I PRAY FOR THEM”

We have read this morning the familiar and touching words of Jesus in John 17, as He prayed for His brethren (v. 8-9):

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

Is this not a further evidence of the drawing by bands of love? Jesus prays only for those so bound, those who are God’s children, and are given to Jesus as brethren and sisters. Do we, brethren and sisters, discern this great mercy and grace, to be given to His Son, to be drawn out of the world, and covered by His prayer for us?

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What is that prayer? For we know that Jesus' prayer is only right and acceptable to God, for it is He who makes intercession for us when we know not what to pray for. His plea to His Father was and still is:

“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John 17:15, 16)

What is involved in being taken *out* of the world? In such a position, one would be insulated from it, not exposed to its temptations, trials, tribulations; over-protected from it. If this were so, how could we be able to prove ourselves to God? How could we show Him that we are aware that He *has* drawn us with bands of love to Himself? It is the resisting of temptation, obedience to His word in the face of sore trial, that proves our love, our valuing of being bound over the high priest's heart. Jesus' prayer, therefore, was that His people might be “kept from the evil.” *To keep*, we find, means “to hold fast”, “to watch”, “to guard”. His yearning, therefore is that His brethren and sisters might be guarded, protected from the evil in the world through watchfulness. *We* must be aware of how evil, indeed, the world is, and we know how easy it is to become calloused about its evil, for it is so all-encompassing, so ever-present that we may, by familiarity, fail to “abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.” God, too, is watchful for us. He, of course, recognizes evil before it is even manifest, and warns us when we may be overlooking danger. He overrules all our circumstances, causes things to happen to us that should make us stop and consider, are we going wrong? Are we overlooking some command or precept? Are we truly aware of the evils all around us, and abhorring them? And, just as important, do we ever give any appearance of evil? If we are being drawn with these bands of love, the evidence of this is seen in His correcting, His chastening, making us stop and consider. Am I yielding to that drawing, or am I dragging my feet? Am I grateful for that drawing or, as God had to say of Israel, “they knew not that I healed them”?

Jesus' prayer continues, v. 17:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

Sanctify, we know, means “to make holy”, “clean”, or “pure”. Only as His word, His truth enters our heart and guides our actions through care and perception which help to remove the distracting cares and desires of our flesh, only then can we hope to be found over His heart, to know Jesus' love seen in His mediation.

To what end did Jesus pray? V. 26 tells us:

“. . . I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Bounds with bands of love unto Him, drawn unto God, drawn out of the world — what a blessing, what grace! Do we respond, brethren and sisters, with a heart which is open and undivided in its love?

“God had prepared the people”

How can we respond in a way pleasing to Him that draws us? Perhaps, our portion in II Chron. can help us. In Chapter 29, we read of Hezekiah, whose name in the Hebrew reads “strengthened of God.” He was one who truly loved God, one who was drawn with these bands of love, and who responded from his heart. How do we know this? V. 3 helps us to discern Hezekiah’s mind, his heart, his love:

“He in the *first* year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them.”

Here was quick action to do that which pleased God. He knew that the evil in the world had perverted Judah, causing them to forsake their God, His temple, His service. The house was defiled, the doors were locked, so that no one had been able to enter the temple to serve God in the way He appointed. Hezekiah decisively put the Levites and the priests to work, cleansing the house of the Lord of all its defilement. He said to the Levites, verse 11:

“My sons, be not now negligent: for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.”

Obviously, this had not been done; there had been negligence. But, Hezekiah went about putting it right very quickly, evidence for all to see of his love for God and His house. Is this not, brethren and sisters, a way we can show God that we *want* to be kept from the evil, *want* to put it away and do it quickly?

Under Hezekiah’s zeal, the house was quickly cleansed, sanctified in the ordained way, and Judah could once again bring offerings, incense, and commune with God through the high priest. Our chronology tells us that the time of Hezekiah’s cleansing of the house of God was approximately 726 B.C., only 14 years after Hosea spoke of their being drawn with bands of love, with the cords of a

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man. Would not Hezekiah have heard or read Hosea's words, and they must have made an impression upon him; and, through him, upon all Judah, especially, too, since the captivity of the ten tribes had happened in the interim.

In II Chron. 29:36 we are told:

“ . . . Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly.”

God *had* prepared or established them, returned them to His way of truth, drawing them with these same bands of love, and so the redeeming work was done suddenly (quickly, straightaway). Why was it so? Was it because there was wholehearted response in Hezekiah, in the Levites, in the priests, in the people to that love of God pulling them, delivering them, healing them? There was perception, great humility, courage, and immediate action.

As a consequence of their response, we know how greatly helped, blessed, and strengthened they were; and, how their enemies who sought to destroy the city of God were confounded. Were they not kept from the evil because they *wanted* to be? Is not this also *our* fervent desire? Let us consider this helpful and practical example which our Father has provided for us.

J. De F.

CHRISTENDOM — AND OTHERS — ASTRAY

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

“Thy Law is the Truth,” (Psalm 119:142)

In a world which is continually making laws and *breaking* them, it is most refreshing to consider a law that is unchanging and unchangeable — the Law of God, which as David declares is *the Truth*. This Law is the expression of God, Himself, “in whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning.”

Jesus said:

“I am the way, the *truth*, and the life.”

(John 14:6)

This testimony makes the Law and Jesus one. Nothing could be more powerful to show that the Spirit of the Law is the Spirit of Christ. Since “Spirit” is the power of God, the power of the Law was the power of God, and Christ was the living embodiment of that power.

“For in him (Jesus) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

(Col. 2:9)

What a different view this gives to us of the Law, than is commonly held either by Christendom or those who once had the Truth. Instead of looking upon the Law as effete, and of little help in the practical living of the Truth today, it is abundantly clear that to know and benefit by the teaching of Christ, it is essential not only to know the Spirit of the Law, but to realise the invaluable help this can afford in living the Truth today. The apostle Paul had no doubts on this:

“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good.” (Romans 7:12)

The laws of all nations, of all time, are at the best, only puny imitations of God’s law. The laws of the people seek to punish, but God’s law seeks to reward. Do those — the “others” who once had the Truth — realise this when they affect Christendom’s view by saying “we are no longer under the law but under grace”? Do they realise what they are casting aside? Later, let us examine this. It is good to remember that:

“The Law of the Lord is perfect.”

(Psalm 19:7)

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There is nothing superior to perfection. The Law of the Lord could do and can do what no other law can. May the “others” realise this to their eternal welfare. Let us listen carefully.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting (restoring) the soul (the life)” (Psalm 19:7)

Life is precious. Men will give all they possess for its fleeting preservation. Eventually the end comes, and life is finished in an eternal grave.

The Law has the power of God. Sufficient to restore the life. God, the Creator of the present life offers, in His mercy, the power of an endless life through the Law, by Him whom the Law foreshadowed.

To understand and appreciate the immensity of such a blessing, stretching to all futurity, the background given in the Psalm will repay patient meditation. Stay! Let us listen! Let us see!

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” (Psalm 19:1-2)

The immutability and excellence of God’s power is seen in the heavens. There, the sun, moon and stars have their appointed places. They declare a law which is perfect. As “day unto day uttereth speech”, the message is that just as men are able to calculate the times and places of the heavenly bodies, so as we gaze upon such a magnificent wonder, we see a clock, which is never fast and never slow. Truly, an object lesson of surpassing beauty and excellence, telling the same story day after day, that the **“law of the Lord is perfect.”**

As David continues his exultation, we can join him in silent wonder:

“There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

There line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” (Psalm 19:4)

The words of one of our hymns expresses a similar thought:

“The spacious firmament on high
with all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens — a shining frame —
Their great Original proclaim.

The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Doth his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land,
The work of an Almighty hand."

With such world-wide testimony, to the greatness and goodness of God as seen in His Law, do not some other words of David echo in our heart?

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." (Psalm 107:8)

The present condition in the world is like it was in the days of Noah. General blindness to God's law, and pursuing only those things which appeal to our wretched nature. As the flood came and destroyed all except a few in the Ark, so we are living near to a similar catastrophe, when the "Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Then the judgments of God will purge the earth, as effectively as did the waters of the flood, and the "knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." Only the Law, the perfect Law of God, can bring about such a delightful and desirable change. Let those who would minimise the value of the Law of God think upon these things. The Law is the expression of God's voice, of God Himself, seen and heard from the beginning. This truth is contained in the cryptic message of John:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

This statement used to be a stronghold of the Trinitarians. So much so that brethren were at great pains to give an explanation to disprove the claim; an explanation which was over-elaborate and complicated. The Truth is simple, and when the right exposition is found of any difficult passage, this will be delightfully clear.

Let us try to expound the meaning of these words. It will delight the seeker after *the* Truth to discover that the inspired record shows that the "Word" is recorded in the beginning. This "Word" is seen in the first chapter of Genesis in a very striking way: before the work of God on each of the six days, it will be noted that there is the record of the spoken "Word". On the first day:

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

And so with every day's work, first the voice or Word of God is heard and seen recorded; a clear evidence that—

"In the beginning was the word."

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Unlike the voice of man, the voice of God is able to transmit the power necessary to accomplish that which is spoken. The voice of some men, captains, have moved great armies, but this is nothing compared with the achievements when God speaks.

“The voice of the Lord is powerful . . .
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness . . .
The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and
discovereth (i.e. maketh to appear) the forests.”

(Psalm 29:4-9)

This voice or word obviously belonged to God, or as John expresses it, the “word was with God”. As the voice of man identifies him, both by sound and things spoken, so the “*word was God*”. It can be understood—

“All things were made by him, and without him
was not anything made.” (John 1:3)

The purpose of God was to provide a Redeemer in His Son for sin and death-stricken man. This great central development of the purpose of God finds an admirable context in the foregoing:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,
(and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only
begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

Eloquent words to describe the first coming of Jesus, and the godly attributes He would display, showing unmistakably that he was “the way, the truth and the life” emphasised when it is recalled that Jesus was—

“The end of the law for righteousness to every
one that believeth.” (Romans 10:4)

May we now consider how wrong and unscriptural is the claim by the “others” that in the sense they mean it when they say “we are not under the law but under grace”. A true statement, but a perverted application. A careful examination of the Scriptures will show that although the ordinances of the Law ceased at the death of Christ, there was no alteration in the principles of *the Truth*.

**“The Law was given by Moses, (but) grace and
truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)**

It will be noted in the A.V. that the word “but” is in italics and does not appear in the Original. This helps tremendously to see that the grace and truth were not excluded in the Law, but that which the Law foreshadowed came in the person of Jesus.

This is made very clear by the Tabernacle being “*anointed*”, or in the Hebrew, *Messiahed*. Every piece of furniture, and the Tabernacle itself were fragrant with the special “*anointing*” oil, which was to teach the delight to be found in Him, whom the Law foreshadowed. Nothing could be more powerful to show that the Law was a vehicle of “*grace and truth*”, prophesying the time when Jesus was to appear, so that those who appreciated these things could exclaim with Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother,

—“**we have found the Messiah.**”

It is a vain conceit to suggest that in the two dispensations, one of the Law, and one of Christ, that the latter are in a more privileged position before God, perhaps superior in being worthy of a better treatment by God. This idea would make God the author of confusion, and unjust in that those living in the present dispensation are more leniently dealt with than were those under the Law.

The Word has only *one Spirit, one God*, and those who would suggest otherwise are obviously astray from *the Truth*, as is all Christendom. May this warning be heeded whilst there is time!

(to be continued)

“BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS AMONG YOU”

(2 Peter 2:1)

It may be felt that these words only apply to the time when they were written. They have, however, been preserved for these days. Have they had their application in recent times? May they still have at the present or during the time that remains? The context is startling:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” (2 Peter 1:19)

These days are dark indeed. So dark that none of the leaders can see anything but a catastrophic future. The Russians, it is reported, are now convinced that there will be a nuclear war, and are hastily preparing to mitigate the disaster for their own people.

Peter states the great truth. There is a light amidst the prevailing darkness. He exhorts that heed should be given *until* the day dawn. That is the day of Christ, which can only save the world from total homicide. “And the day star arise” in *our* hearts. In the original it is the “*morning* star”. This speaks of Christ, who said:

“I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and *morning* star.” (Rev. 22:16)

It is a transcending thought that we may have Christ in our hearts. There to sustain, comfort, and guide.

Peter continues this exalted theme:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20-21)

Then suddenly adds — “*But*” — here we need to pause and realise that in spite of the light in the darkness, and the help this can give that there were “false teachers”. Let it not be thought as previously stated that this only applied to the time of the Apostles and before. Its message has a very present meaning as the history of the Truth over the last hundred years shows. Time does not seem to go on long before “false teachers” arise.

The list of heresies introduced by these over even the past fifty years is a long one.

Some time ago were two who were apparently very devout and knowledgeable, and seemed to give their lives for the Truth. As leaders they were greatly trusted and admired. When it was desired that we should have our own tunes for the hymns to sever the distasteful link with the "others", and because these two had no knowledge of music they could not fully retain their position as leaders. First, they stopped singing the hymns; then developed the crotchet that the hymns should not be sung at all, as this was reserved for the Kingdom. Pride had been hurt. Pride claims its victims. They lost the Truth, and returned to the darkness of their own making.

Oh! What a dreadful enemy is pride, inherent in all of us. The Apostle reminds us of those who rose up against Moses.

"And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown." (Numbers 16:2)

To the human mind these by their number, and status would seem to be right. "How could so many, so important be wrong?" it would be said. Their challenge to Moses *seemed* right.

"Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holdy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." (Numbers 16:3)

Their reference to the congregation was true; perfectly scriptural. But how sadly misapplied by pride. This is the way of the "false teacher."

The way Moses met this challenge is a superb example of restraint. He fell on his face, and did not "bring a railing accusation against them." These "false teachers" brought upon themselves "swift destruction" as they were "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

The warning not heeded in the Latter Days.

The history of the Truth in the past one hundred and twenty years has been no different than formerly. Men, influential men, by virtue of their education, have arisen "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."

Before the death of Dr. Thomas, there was the need to separate from such — led by one, Geo. Dowie. He contended that belief in a supernatural devil or in an immortal soul should not be made a test

of fellowship. The heresy placed them to where they belonged: back in the world of Christendom.

Then in 1873 another personable and persuasive man arose "speaking perverse things", by the name of Edward Turney. He renounced the truth concerning the nature of Christ, saying Christ could not have sinned; that His nature was different from ours.

A great schism was caused in 1885 by two parsons who had embraced the Truth, but found its restrictions too irksome. Well educated, well spoken they succeeded in drawing away many into the error that the Bible was only partially inspired. This meant that the very foundation of the Truth was destroyed. As a result a group of very many still retained the name "**Christadelphian**", but obviously had departed from the original teaching.

There have been later Divisions, details of which may be considered in the booklet "The History of the Truth in the Latter Days." (This may be had on application).

In 1957 the Central group of **Christadelphians**, claimed to have affected a "Reunion" with those who departed in 1885, and were known as Suffolk Street. There was no reunion on a godly basis; but one achieved by political manoeuvring.

It is interesting to read the comments of the one time Editor of the Berean, G. H. Denny, on the Suffolk St. position.

"The Suffolk St. meeting took up the position that withdrawal was not necessary (when a brother or sister departs from some element of the Truth), as the offender would by and bye leave of his or her own accord. They 'went out from us because they were not of us' (1 John 2:19) is often quoted in this connection. From 1885 until the present time the Suffolk St. Community have, therefore, never withdrawn from any of those who have espoused false doctrine."

"As a result, all sorts of views contrary to their 'Statement of Faith', are held by various members of their Ecclesia. i.e. Immortal Emergence; No judgment for Saints; A personal supernatural devil; Existence of Jesus in Heaven prior to His birth; Jesus, the Son of Joseph in the ordinary course of nature; The Bible partially inspired; Jesus not of our nature, but possessing 'clean flesh'; and so on."

"The Suffolk St. policy was clearly set forth in a resolution which enabled them to extend fellowship to a Dowieite Meeting in Nottingham (Chaucer St.) in 1905, and which was passed at a special Ecclesial meeting, at which the present

writer (G. H. Denney) was present, to the effect that any brother or sister would be welcomed to the Table of the Lord, who substantially accepts our 'Statement of Faith'. The result of all this is that today a brother may hold what views he likes and retain his fellowship with them; the only obligation laid upon those who espouse false doctrine being that they shall not be allowed to hold permanent office as Managing, Speaking, or Presiding Brethren.

“We may illustrate the unsoundness of this contention by what has actually and recently happened in the Suffolk St. Meeting. A brother holding a pernicious view has been in fellowship there, and was elected as a speaking brother. The Arranging Brethren deputed two of their number to interview him, with a view to ascertaining if he had altered his mind on the particular point of doctrine. Their report was that the brother still held to his old opinion, and therefore he could not be elected to office. The flimsy character of his defence is seen in the fact that this brother regularly lectures for meetings outside his own.”

Proof of departure by those professing to be its custodians could not be more clear. Truly the leaven has spread, so that the whole mass of Christadelphia is dead. They may have a name that they live, but facts show they have left the Truth, and are *dead*.

An appeal is made to the anxious “to come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.”

W.V.B.

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

“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)

Some thirty years ago an author and historian writing under the heading of “Mind at the end of its Tether” admitted that he saw:—

“The world as a jaded world devoid of recuperative power. In the preceding sections, (of his world history), he said, a wishful disposition is manifest to think that man will pull out of his entanglements and start a new creative phase of human living. (But) In the past two years, in the face of our universal inadequacy, that opinion has given place to a stoical cynicism. The old men behave for the most part meanly and disgustingly and the young are spasmodic, foolish and all too easily misled. Man must go steeply up or down, and the odds seem to be all in favour of his going down and out.”

Now in these times there is far more evidence than the above writer had of men’s slide down towards what he spelled “out” as the finish of mankind. A short while ago nuclear experts from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology met together to consider where the atomic age was taking the world. It was a gloomy conclusion that the world is doomed to nuclear war BEFORE the year 2000 unless all countries give up national sovereignty and agree to a single authoritarian world government.

The experts would be proved right except for one thing. Even as Jesus promised, the days are to be shortened, “cut off”. The affairs of mankind taken over by an agency, far higher than the highest agency of men. Jesus is *indeed* the Saviour of the world, how greatly this is underlined in the context of these dreadful times. Without Him there can be no future for anyone who comprise this present generation.

Who can tell what the morrow may bring forth? Would the third world war proceed on the lines of the first and second world wars to a final armistice and settling down when nations have worn themselves out? It does not require much imagination to visualise that if allowed to run its full course, with each side of the opposing forces determined to succeed or perish, then the third world war would indeed mean that all would perish.

America was obviously determined to use atomic weapons in August 1945, because of their devastating effect. How foolishly optimistic then would anyone be to think nations with stockpiles of these things in 1976 would not in any circumstance dream of using them.

Perhaps if these deadly things were on display in countries which have hoarded them, the public mind would be caused to reflect more deeply. But they are carefully guarded and hidden away and it seems because of this a vain optimism prevails. It is virtually the outlook that if you ignore and close your eyes to the danger the threat or problem will go away. But the danger is so real that Jesus by the power of God said that if the days were allowed to run on to the conclusion of the sixth millenium *IT WOULD BE TOO LATE!* No flesh would be saved.

Does this lawless, degenerate age, generation deserve saving, is a question that may be asked. The words of Jesus imply they *DO NOT*. For divine intervention will be for the sake of the "elect".

It may be as well to reflect upon an event of some 3,800 years ago, to perceive that God does not extend salvation to the undeserving.

In Israel today, on the shores of the Dead Sea is a little place called Sodom, which name commemorates a tremendous catastrophe, by fire, which overtook a people. Over three and a half millenia ago Sodom was an extremely fertile place. It is described as follows:-

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." (Gen. 13:10)

"Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (v. 12-13)

Today the valley of the plain is lifeless. A salt sea, salt marshes, and tortured twisted dry and barren rock. Israel finds it useful to extract potash from the area, and potash is that which is left after a burning. When the time appointed for Sodom's destruction came God was mindful of one man and his family. The words of scripture are very explicit:-

"And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord:

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And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.”

(Gen. 19:27-29)

How sudden was the destruction and how unexpected for the vast majority.

“The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.” (Gen. 19:23-25)

Even some of Lot’s family perished in that overthrow. Why?! Because they preferred to believe the sight of their eyes rather than the pleading of their father and the dictates of conscience. The situation is fully described:–

“And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.

And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.” (Gen. 19:12-14)

The sun shone in the sky. The crops flourished. They had plenty to eat. Life was carrying on its own sweet familiar way, what was Lot talking about?! So the warning was despised. His in-laws did not treat their father-in-law seriously enough. So Lot’s family who were joined to such made the wrong decision to stay and “not come out”. Sudden destruction therefore overtook them along with all the others of whom it can be assuredly said they fully deserved the destruction which came upon them.

In a measure this account brings to reminiscence one of the experiences of the Second World War. In the northern parts of Britain and Wales, particularly at the beginning of the war, the conflict seemed almost like a story, and certainly a long way off. At times one would not have realised there was a war except for startling headlines constantly appearing in the news media. Then in December 1940 a siren wailed in Manchester one evening and suddenly devastation rained down as the German Airforce came over the city, wave upon wave. Land mines came whistling down, followed by explosions which caused the ground to tremble. It was a sudden and fiery destruction. Everywhere brightly illuminated by the innumerable unquenchable fires. The fire services unable to cope, and barely able to contain the blaze from engulfing "all". A brother in the Truth at that time looked from his mountain retreat in the Pennines and beheld the plain of Manchester on fire. Such an experience removed the war from a theoretical and "long way off" vista. Suddenly, it was there amongst all, including those in the Truth. What a blessing and comfort it was, to know the assurance of Jesus' words, that for the elect's sake there would be deliverance. Oh that there might be a belonging to them, a nearness to receive through His care of them, His protection.

May a few in these last days not make the mistake of thinking "What is there to worry about?" The sun still shines, and life goes along in its usual way. The words of the Lord's Apostles have been preserved to alert to the dangers of indifference and self satisfaction, of thinking, there is no immediate threat, why bother unduly, there is plenty of time. That was a very false and foolish concept in the case of the members of Lot's family who perished.

It is recorded:-

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.
But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

(1 Thess. 5:2-4)

Those who are caught by the Lord's day will be caught out because they are in darkness. The brethren who are in the light, who are therefore the "elect", will not be overtaken however, for they have been enabled to see what they should do. Even as Lot, all those many years ago was helped to see, because he also belonged to the "Elect".

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How indifferent the present generation is to the warning of heaven. They have no excuse for the scripture is filled with warning. Even foretelling the indifference and careless attitude which will prevail just prior to the destruction of the last day. So again it is recorded:—

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

(2 Peter 3:1-4)

The above scripture voices the modern day tendency of saying “What are you bothering about?”, “Why be prophets of doom?”, “Things are no different today than they have been previously.” This was what the sons-in-law of Lot not only thought themselves, but prevailed upon some of Lot’s family to think likewise. History proves who was right and who was wrong, which raises a question, what would have happened to Lot, if he had allowed his family to turn him from his convictions? The answer is obvious. There can be no mistake about it, there was a Sodom, a prosperous and indulgent place, but it now lies at the bottom of a Dead Sea.

A token of those who suffer the destruction of unquenchable fire. A warning for these last days, which unless they be shortened, no flesh shall be saved, including the “**elect**”.

It is now 1976, and not long to the end of the sixth millenium. The world cannot possibly go on for another twenty four years and survive. This thought should enable the mind to perceive even though the sun still shines in the sky, and generally there are still three good meals available each day, the sands of time have nearly run out. Time is not going to be allowed to run its full course.

Will there yet be one or two who will heed the message of Lot for the last days. “Up” (alert yourselves) “get you out of this place.” A call for real separation, to escape the judgment which will fall upon those from whom the “Lot” class will separate themselves. It is only by separation there can be escape; those who belong to the world

will receive the world's judgments. This the evident warning throughout all the Word of God.

Who are the “**elect**” then? Are they not those who truly respond, not just in theory, but whole-heartedly to God's call to “come out”. A despised few, even as Lot was despised. But not despised in the sight of God, for through His Son He describes them as His “**Elect**”.

D.L.