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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

LOVE NEVER FAILETH

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

THE WINEPRESS

We have recently listened to the words of our Brother David in the 84th Psalm. These words are very familiar to us; but, perhaps, by hearkening to them more closely, we can be helped to be like the one who wrote them, and more like the One of whom they speak, for in these words is revealed the spirit of David and the spirit of Christ.

The title helps prepare our minds to receive the message of the Spirit concealed here for His children.

“To the one who overcomes through the winepress (Gittith), the final harvest of joy, a Psalm for the sons made smooth.”

What sustaining these words can provide as we are struggling to be like the Victor, the One who *has* overcome, and what a great struggle it is; yet, we must go on in faith, in hope that God will help and lead us to that final harvest of joy symbolized by the winepress. Into the winepress go the grapes which have been so carefully trimmed, cultivated, nurtured, harvested, the fruit of the vine. The work of the winepress is the final crushing of this fruit which brings about the juice. How heavy the burden, how great the pressure, but how great the prize; for out of the winepress comes the reward of the husbandman for which he has labored so long, so patiently and so lovingly. This thought reminds us of Jesus' words in John 15:1-2:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Herein we see God's care for those who belong to His Son, verse 4:

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

Verse 8 tells us:

“Herein is my Father glorified, that *ye bear much fruit*; so shall ye be my disciples.”

The work of the vine, the objective of the husbandman is “much fruit.” First, we read of “fruit” then “more fruit,” and finally, “much fruit,” showing us what God looks for in His people, a growing and increase in the fruits of the Spirit. Where does this fruit of the vine go? Into the winepress for a final processing. For what purpose? Is it

not for the final harvest of joy? In John 15:11, we read Jesus' further words:

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

Our Father, His Son, our Brother David, all speak of the same end: Joy — first to God who works and waits for us, His planting, His harvest, and joy, also, eternal to each branch of that vine which has borne fruit. This is what the Spirit had in mind for those who overcome, who become the victors over their flesh.

We know of the joy in heaven when Jesus died on the cross, unblemished, the perfect sacrifice. Will it not also be so when at the Judgment Seat of Jesus, some will be placed on His right hand. We know, too, from Jesus' words in Luke 15:7 of the “. . . joy . . . in heaven over one sinner that repenteth . . .” The winepress, then, is the end of God's work, bringing that harvest of joy — joy for God, for Jesus, for those who can emerge from the Judgment of Jesus as the fruit of the vine, the harvest so pleasing to the husbandman. Should not the Psalm help us to look to *Gittith* as a hope, a means whereby we *can* bring joy to God if we are truly striving to abide in the Vine, nourished, growing and thus able to bring forth much fruit.

“HOW AMIABLE ARE THY TABERNACLES”

With this title in mind, perhaps we can turn to David's psalm with greater appreciation; perhaps we can find in his words the help of a spirit which we know brought joy to God and will do so at Jesus' return.

In verse 1, we read:

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!”

“*Amiable*,” we find, is used as “beloved,” or “well beloved.” “How well beloved are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!” we could read it. These words express the mind of one whose hope is in the winepress. Why so? Is it because David recognized that only through the presence of God in His tabernacle, in the pillar of fire and cloud, could there be sacrifice, mediation, forgiveness, redemption, and therefore, hope. How meaningful, then, that this Psalm upon *Gittith* should begin with David's words, an expression of his love for God's tabernacle, whether it be the tabernacle in the wilderness or the temple for which David prepared and Solomon his son was to build. It was the place of reconciliation, of fellowship with God through His High Priest.

David continues, verse 2:

“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord”

“*Fainteth*,” we find, means “to bring to pass,” “to finish,” “to reap.” It implies a fulfilling of purpose. The end of David’s living was a longing for the courts of the Lord. His need was great. Why were these courts of the Lord so important to David? What was to be found there? Perhaps verse 3 provides an insight into David’s need:

“Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even thine altars*, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.”

A real need provided for these birds of the air, a place of refuge, a place to bring forth, a need for all, not just the birds of the air. Do we not read in Matthew 10:31 Jesus words:

“ . . . ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

Sparrows are small, insignificant; there are great multitudes of them; yet, they are provided for, have a place to rest. Indeed, Jesus says of them, verse 29:

“ . . . one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.”

We, brethren and sisters, are more precious in God’s eyes than many sparrows and He provides for us a sure place of refuge, of rest, His tabernacle, His courts. What are found in these courts of our God? “. . . *even thine altars*, O Lord of hosts” There are altars there, not just one, for in the tabernacle there were two altars, the brazen altar for the offering of the sacrifices and the golden incense altar. We know that these altars spoke in symbol to our brethren of the Messiah to come, the Lord Jesus.

The brazen altar was for the consuming of the flesh. To this altar were brought the offerings of God’s children, all of which spoke to the faithful Israelite of *the offering*, *the Christ* seen in the sin offering, the peace offering, the trespass offering, the whole burnt offering. Here upon this altar, the fire burned night and day; it was never to go out, always ready to receive the flesh and consume it, the work of the Spirit. In Israel, all brought their offerings, many perhaps mechanically because it was required, others because they thought about *Gittith*, the winepress, desiring to bring forth much fruit. There had to be a recognition of the need for purging as in the vine, so that more fruit could be brought forth. The flesh, that which fails to bring forth good fruit, must be cut off, burnt upon the altar, consumed by the Spirit’s fire. Those who brought their offering, perceiving this, were pleasing, acceptable to God; and to them, His courts *were* a place of refuge.

Can we, brethren and sisters, today show the same regard, the need for His courts, His altar which so effectively destroys the flesh; looking to *Gittith*? It is not a pleasing experience, allowing the flesh to be burnt, for it is painful, but it does bring forth fruit which endures. The ashes, that which is left after the fire has done its work, were pleasing to God. The world looks upon ashes as a waste product, virtually useless. Not so God; for in Israel, they were taken to a *clean place*, stored up, a remembrance, a fruit?

THE INCENSE ALTAR

What of the other altar in His courts. It is the incense altar, found in the Holy Place. On it was burned each day the holy incense, the sweet smell unto God. In Revelations 8:3 and 4, we read of the One who:

“. . . stood at the altar . . . and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.”

Moses was carefully instructed of God concerning this incense altar (Exodus 30:1):

“. . . thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon”

(verses 7—10):

“. . . Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning . . . And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a *perpetual* incense before the Lord . . . and Aaron shall make an atonement . . . upon it throughout your generations”

David would know that without that altar, there could be no prayer ascending each morning and evening, no atonement, and no perpetual incense before the Lord.

How precious, indeed, were those altars to our Brother David. Do we, brethren and sisters, long for, faint for His courts, His altars, without which there can be no place of refuge, no place of sacrifice, no hope of atonement? “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord.” Cannot this be our heart? Is this our crying out, as we look to the Victor, the One who has overcome through the winepress, the final work to the harvest of joy, the end for the sons who have been made smooth by the working of the Spirit?

All of our living is involved in this smoothing process, so necessary to remove the rough edges, the sharp corners. It is the cutting and polishing which fashions a rough stone into a jewel, capable of

perfect reflection, as the light falls upon it. This is a process which all who hope to be His jewels must go through. It is not easy, as we know from experience. To cut a jewel, such as a diamond, takes a sharp blow, skillfully directed along certain planes of the crystal. We are in a very rough form being creatures of flesh; and, we have One who has infinite skill, infinite patience, as well as infinite wisdom for this work. He deals us the necessary blows to fashion jewels meet for His use, full of beauty as they scintillate. This work is fraught with risk, for if the jewel is not perfect, if its crystalline structure is flawed, the skillful blow of the cutter can cause it to shatter and become lifeless, unable to reflect His light. The skill of the cutter is not lacking, but rather the material being worked with was flawed, unable to be made smooth.

Perhaps, brethren and sisters, these thoughts can help us. We may sometimes feel that the titles of the Psalms are not as important as the Psalm itself; but now let us listen again to the words of the Spirit, and may they give inspiration to hold fast.

“To the one who overcomes through the winepress, the final harvest of joy, a Psalm for the sons made smooth.”

J. A. DeF.



Christendom—and Others—Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

The Law in Eden

Mention has been previously made that although the 'Law' generally refers to the Law of Moses, there was the Law of God in operation from the beginning. The mind and purpose of God has never changed, even as He is unchangeable. What a blessing! For were it otherwise where would poor mortals be? Just the victims, as they often are of capricious and cruel masters. The Law given to Adam and Eve was clear:

“Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the *knowledge of good and evil*, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
(Genesis 2:16-17)

A cursory reading of this law has led to the erroneous conclusion that the '*evil*' was wickedness. It is obvious that this could not be the case, because the giving of the law, so clearly expressed, meant that the breaking of it would be wicked. So grievous that death was to be the punishment for the breach of the law.

“For in the day that thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die.”
(margin)

'Evil' is used in the Old Testament in two senses: 'Punishment', as when God declares "I make peace and create *evil*"; then as *wickedness*; when God says the "fear of the Lord is to hate *evil*." The context will readily supply the correct meaning.

The 'evil' which God imposed on the first parents for the breach of His law was undeniably great. First, after breaking the law, "they knew they were naked". Here was an unexpected calamity; a serious 'evil'. The human race, the world over, experience this 'evil', causing shame, which is what God intended; and the eager seeking for a 'covering'. There is only one acceptable 'covering' as God showed to Adam and Eve. The provision of skins for the purpose, entailed the slaying of an animal, the shedding of blood, without which there can be no remission of sins. Why? Because the blood is the life, and the death caused by the shedding was to be recognised as the mete punishment for sin. This, recognised in the heart, with appropriate acts of obedience, was and is the only means of sins (of which we are all guilty) being 'covered', and hope of life obtained.

May we take the next 'evil' which comes from God, the putting enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, last, as it is intended to give deep consideration to all that is involved in this.

So that the woman was made subject to an 'evil' which again today is universal.

"I will great multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." (Genesis 3:16)

From East to West, North to South, this 'evil' is felt, although the origin is not recognised. Should it not be recognised that in the multiplication of the human race because of death: the need for birth should be regarded as pointing up the reason — the divine reason. Often, there is much joy in the birth of a child without the underlying divine reason being recognised. So God in His wisdom has tempered the joy (for indeed it should be a joyful occasion) to make us think of His purpose, with man and the earth.

The most accomplished gynaecologists and obstetricians must bow to the divine will; the imposition of this world-wide evil. This should make us think.

The next 'evil' associated with this was and is:

"Thy desire shall be (subject) to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Genesis 3:16)

Properly understood this is not an 'evil'. Space will not permit to bring forth the great beauty of the divine blessing in the relationship of man and wife. There is nothing of a masterly nature permitted in the husband; nor of a clamorous one allowed in the wife. As "heirs together of the grace of life", they were to exhibit God's purpose in His Son and those called to be His bride. In the 'woman' showing deference to the man, but not at the expense of the Truth (1 Peter 3:6) she is given the privileged position of being an example to all of the submission to Christ as the *head* of the Body. A clear understanding of this will make a brother like Abraham.

"And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother (husband) a thousand pieces of silver: behold he is to thee a *covering of the eyes* unto all that are with thee."

(Genesis 20:16)

This divine relationship between the bride and groom was to bring out the best spiritual qualities in each, and show God's purpose in preparing a "bride" for His Son, and that a desirable family could grow up in such an atmosphere.

“For I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”
(Genesis 18:19)

What a great blessing on a faithful and correct relationship!

The last evil in a word — was *death*. Again experienced by all humans as the graveyards in all countries testify. Adam and Eve had been warned that this would be the ultimate outcome of sin. They did not heed the warning. Consequently, they suffered what was the penalty for their transgression. In the meantime, they were driven from the garden, and were to experience a very different life than that enjoyed in Eden:

“Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Genesis 3:17-19)

A hundred years ago the toil of daily work was much more in evidence than it is today, fulfilling to the letter the ‘*evil*’ placed upon Adam and his successors. The introduction of various chemicals appear to have mitigated the ‘*evil*’, but with what result? No one can say what damage is being done by these. True, they appear to help, but at what a cost no one knows. Crops and wild life tend to suffer, and what is worse, the ultimate product, food, no longer has the life-giving properties it once had. Artificial aids are being used in an attempt to remedy this. Such is sodium glutamate, but may these not do more harm than good?

Now may consideration be given to the cryptic sentence placed upon the serpent and the woman, and in particular to that which is mentioned in connection with this?

The “Enmity”.

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put *enmity* between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
(Genesis 3:14-15)

We will leave the sentence placed upon the serpent for a moment, and concentrate on the two seeds: the seed of the woman, which we know refers to Christ and those in Him; and the seed of the serpent.

“The seed of the woman.”

The characteristic of the “seed of the woman” was that he would *bruise* (crush) the serpent in the head. The head is where the thoughts arise; often contrary to the will of God. The account of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness shows this clearly. The thoughts which were in opposition to the divine will were *bruised* or *crushed* immediately they arose. This was not accomplished by an earthly power, but by Jesus using the Word of God.

When He was tempted to turn the stones into bread (and this temptation must have been great after being without food for forty days) Jesus refused to use the divine power to satisfy His flesh by His appeal to Scripture:

“That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4)

The serpent power in this temptation was *bruised* or crushed.

Not only did Jesus *bruise* the ‘lust of the flesh’; but also the ‘lust of the eyes’. Jesus had power. He was God’s Son. He knew, were He to use it wrongly then as mentally He reviewed all the kingdoms of the world would become subject to Him. Trial would appear to be over. Victory complete. This required that He should worship the ‘diabolos’; the ingredient in humans which makes them natively opposed to God. Would He allow Himself to do this? The decision of Jesus was immediate:

“Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Luke 4:8)

Truly the serpent-thoughts were crushed — ‘bruised’. There remained the ‘lust of the eyes’ to combat. This is strong in all of us, particularly as ‘pride’. Jesus knew what was written of Him: that He would be “as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground . . .”

“Despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” (Isaiah 53:3)

Suppose He were to climb the pinnacle of the temple; cast Himself down trusting in the angels of His Father to deliver Him — a very clear proof to be the Son of God, a most powerful temptation; but Jesus knew His Father’s mind, and that such a serpent-thought, logical and demonstrative it would seem, must be crushed. He dismissed it with the words:

“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” (Luke 4:12)

Much is compressed into the short sentence, but sufficient for the moment to note how Jesus overcame the ‘lust of the eyes’, and crushed the evil thought.

It was because He overcame in all things, ever crushing the serpent thoughts native to the human mind, that when He was crucified He was raised from the dead, and will shortly 'bruise' in all the earth that which belongs to the serpent.

There are not many who will follow the Lord Jesus in this warfare, and become part of the 'seed of the woman' — the multiplied seed, not on the usual basis of human procreation, but through "faith" in God and all His promises:

"Then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

The Jews of Jesus' day while making this claim showed they were the 'seed of the serpent'. Jesus said unto them:

"Ye are of your father the devil, the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." (John 8:44)

What was it — precisely — that God placed between the two seeds — the Christ's or righteous, and those in opposition to Christ, the wicked? To repeat, God says, it was—

"The Enmity"

How important to know what this was. The casual may reply that the 'Enmity' is the 'hatred'. But could we ever accuse God of placing *hatred* between any individuals or groups? Such a view is not tenable.

Being blessed with the whole of the Word, we have the answer for those who will receive it. Speaking of Christ the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

"Having abolished in his flesh the *enmity*, even the *law* contained in ordinances." (Ephesians 2:15)

Yes the answer is clear to those whose hearts are open to receive: the 'Enmity' is not 'hatred', but the *law* of God, and due consideration will show that this is just what separates the two seeds. The seed of the woman uphold the law (even if it means condemning themselves), and this inevitably brings condemnation on the seed of the serpent; who care nothing for the *law* and consequently there must be a great barrier between the two; as great as there was between Jesus and the unfaithful Jews.

Continually the seed of the serpent are saying, "Come let us be friends; why be so particular?" They are perishing and often become by their subtle serpent appeals to cause others who might be saved to perish also.

The whole voice of scripture, the voice of God, is to deliver those who will *hear* from such a disastrous and eternal fate. It does please

the flesh, to extend the hand of friendship to any religious people, but the cost is the loss of life. It has happened in the development of Christendom, and now is at work in the "others", where complaints are being made of members looking for friendship and affinity with the sects of Christendom.

Will any hear the cry of the Apostle:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and *touch* not the unclean; and I will receive you." (II Corinthians 6:17)

(to be continued)



Love Never Faileth

What a tremendous exhortation is contained in the words of I Corinthians 13.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” (v 1)

What use it eloquence without *love*? What use is any gift without *love*? How can there be a rising up to the love of which the apostle speaks? Some have gifts of expression that can command attention; but without love as the motivating force, it has no more effect than a pleasing or arresting noise. An expression which is from the depths of the heart is the expression of love. It is only too easy, however for the expression to emanate from a concern for self, for a furtherance of one's own thinking and therefore self elevation and display. This is a human tendency which only the cultivation of love can help remove. Love transcends the great works spoken of in verse 3.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing.”

To make the greatest sacrifice without love, is of no avail. Philanthropy or martyrdom is something human nature obviously can rise up to without the heart being right toward God in the way He desires. A man indeed can get acclaim for his self-giving, or sacrifice. If this is the motive then his work has not been the work of love, even though on the surface it may have so appeared. How subtil is the human heart and how great is the need for godly help to attain truly right motives, untarnished by the desires of the flesh. The struggle with human nature which would cause the mind to swerve from those motives which are the product of love never ceases in this probationary time.

The Apostle is very explicit in detailing the ingredients which make this godly love so precious.

“ . . . it suffereth long.”

This is evidently not a disposition which fumes and denounces because its conveniences or comforts are interfered with. It will be remembered how Jesus said:

“Suffer little children to come unto me.”

His convenience or comfort was put on one side even though He was no doubt feeling tired at the time the remarks were made. And

Love “is not easily provoked.”

What an embarrassment, and what a difficulty, when some get quickly excited, swiftly lose control, and as a result are sharp with their tongue. This trait causes other members to be on their guard, to be careful to avoid clashing. This fault, a product of the flesh, whatever the guise it comes in; such as wanting to be firm for the Truth, spoils the building up of love and in no wise does it belong to it.

Love “thinketh no evil.”

It is so easy to jump to conclusions. That which thinketh no evil however requires clear evidence, does not make suppositions as to motives. Therefore there is no injury to other minds through impulsive imputations.

Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.

If this had been the mind of all, there would not have been the “great falling away” of these last days.

Love “beareth all things.”

It does not burden others with its difficulties; tends rather to avoid magnifying its own problems. Not that it keeps itself to itself, or its problems to itself. But is an example of courage in bearing up, because it has strong belief and hope. When love increases, and therefore these qualities are seen, then there is the strength of endurance, to continue until the Day of Christ and beyond. For it is recorded:

“Charity (love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

(I Corinthians 13:8)

D. L.



because of which His disciples wished to relieve Him, and themselves doubtless also, when those children were brought whom the disciples would have sent away.

Love is "Kind"

When it is considered how gentle and gracious Jesus was to those in need of care and help, a facet of love, which shines as an example, is perceived. The bereaved widow woman at Nain whose son Jesus raised to life is one example. Jesus was mindful of her great need. He showed kindness and concern.

Love envieth not.

It will be remembered that it is recorded, "who can stand before envy?" There is no place for envy in the quality of love. How easy it is for the natural mind to dwell on comparisons. 'Look what he has got and I have not.' How difficult to eradicate this completely from the thinking. But then to the aid comes the reminder that love envieth not.

Love vaunteth not itself.

It is so easy to put oneself forward to obtain recognition. Love however gets recognition another way. Its example in not vaunting itself brings about esteem for that very quality of not vaunting itself. Its motive is not for self, but for the good of the Body; and in the mind that has reached such a stage there is no "puffing up", no exalted opinion of self, and of self's capabilities. As a result there is deference which is such a help to unity.

Love does not behave itself unseemly.

Here is tender care for appearances, for conduct, so that the Truth is not brought into reproach. Unseemliness can be seen in bad conduct, or in careless conduct. Even in over-righteousness, which can give to those outside a fanatical impression, or an aloof and 'holier than thou' attitude. When the life of the Apostle Paul is contemplated it will be noted how careful he was to avoid unseemliness.

Love "seeketh not her own."

How easy it is to be self-centred. The introversion can be so great that there is a failure to think of others due to pre-occupation of thinking only of oneself. What a benefit, even to self, as well as others if the mind can escape from the snare of being self-centred.

**“Let your women keep silence in the churches
(ecclesias)”**

(I Corinthians 14:34)

This is a divine command. Behind every command there is a sweet reasonableness of Godly care. It was not in the purpose of God that the woman should be exposed to the hurly-burly of public advocacy. The man was to be her protector from such; a “covering of the eyes”, as Abraham was to Sarah.

To emphasise this provision, the command goes on to say—

“Let your women keep silence in the churches. For it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church.”

(I Corinthians 14:34-35)

Those who have departed from the Truth have no respect for divine commands. In fact they have no compunction in denying them, as the following report shows:

“If the Church were to ordain women as priests it would not be contradicting Christ’s intentions as recorded in the Bible, says the Vatican’s Biblical Commission. The commission voted 12 – 5 in favour of the view that the Bible does not say “no” to women priests.

The commission appointed by the Pope is an international group of Bible experts who act as advisers to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Scriptures.

Their decision built entirely on the Scriptures is a surprise after the Pope’s statement in April, 1975, that Christ did not call women to the priesthood. It is a technical conclusion and does not in any way commit the Roman Catholic Church.”

Will the ‘others’ flout the divine command, as was done at Pemberton in 1933? To be fair, the resolution allowing ‘sisters’ to speak at Business Meetings was rescinded, but only for the sake of peace; and never was the grievous sin confessed and repentance appropriately expressed.

W. V. B.

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

“I will . . . multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 7:3)

“According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things.” (Micah 7:15)

The time for the fulfillment of the above prophecy is yet in the future. But signs and wonders are most surely evident. It is a wonder that Israel, as a nation, still exists. The concerted efforts of the Arabs however have been prevented by divine over-ruling. The Syrian Egyptian alliance has been broken up. The Lebanon is in disarray. Syria and Iraq have no amity. Jordan has done an about-turn. Having reconciled himself somewhat with Syria, Jordan's leader, at the time of writing, is planning a visit to the Soviet Union, following a visit by the leader of the Russian air forces to Jordan. This change of circumstance is a reminder that the scripture has recorded that at the time of the latter day attack upon Israel by the northern power:

“. . . these shall escape out of his hand (i.e. out of the hand of the king of the north) even Edom, and Moab, and the Chief of the children of Ammon.” (Daniel 11:41)

A move towards an agreement with the Soviet Union will no doubt contribute towards such an escape. It is obvious that Jordan's previous loyalties with the West is now a thing of the past. This no doubt will result in increasing enmity with Israel. So there is the recent news that Jordanian troops have begun to build fortifications along the frontier opposite Israeli positions. This is taking place at the northern part of the border near the junction of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers. A road network is also under construction linking various Jordanian villages; no doubt part of the overall military plan.

This brings to mind the prophetic condemnation of the power to the east of Jordan:

“Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance (forces) in the day of their calamity; Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”

(Obadiah v 12-14)

Meanwhile the position of America towards Israel generally remains stable. The leading Democratic contender for the United States Presidency has promised "unswerving" support for Israel's right to exist. A sure token that the "king of the South", who is the leader of the West, and therefore of the south, as obvious by present day political demarcations, will be the mainspring of the opposition to Israel's enemy from the north; even as divine prophecy has indicated.

Israel is being drawn towards links with southern powers whose origins began in the West. Israel and South Africa for example have a mutual agreement to help one another scientifically and technologically. Also in the field of agriculture, their respective food production programmes, are to be aided through their coming to a mutual understanding.

In the background of the east-west troubles looms the mighty populous China. Not at the moment presenting any cause for the West to fear her, for China is at loggerheads with Russia, which she regards as her traditional enemy. Various political and covert military moves that China has made in recent years, it would now begin to appear, has been for the purpose of keeping Russia out of south-east Asia. Of the various South-east Asian perimeter countries, which have seen conflict over the last few decades only Cambodia, however, is really allied with China. India is Russia-orientated, leaving Pakistan inclined to China. But China is a latent force eventually to be reckoned with. She has tried to gain a foothold of influence in Africa and is now doing the same in Egypt, where recently a Chinese trade delegation made a visit. An agreement on trade co-operation was ratified, also a large Chinese loan to Egypt to help finance the purchase of Chinese materials for new Egyptian industry. China is obviously trying counteracting moves against Russian influence, which is extending itself into the Indian Ocean by Naval presence, as well as by political means. Australia, which for many years has seemed well away from scenes of tension and conflict is now being more urgently drawn into the political vortex. It would no doubt suit China admirably if the United States and Russia was brought into a mutually destructive conflict. For over twenty-five years there has been trouble on the Chinese Russian border. A conflict which weakened Russia therefore would, in Chinese eyes, be a great help to that country.

Such is the dreadful political situation that prevails at the present time, and what chance would the tiny nation of Israel have in the ordinary way as one of the buffer countries of the power struggle?

But God has promised:

"According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things." (Micah 7:15)

At the present time Israel has a problem of what to do about the West Bank captured from the Arabs in 1967 as a result of the Six Day War. Many in Israel are against annexing this territory. There is almost universal agreement on the other hand that it should not be allowed to become a Palestinian state. Nor do many feel inclined to return the territory to the jurisdiction of Jordan; even the Arab inhabitants of the West Bank do not want this arrangement.

As a result of Government hesitation some Jews have taken the matter into their own hands. An organisation called the Gush Emunim (Group of the Faithful) decided to occupy Kaddum (near Nablus), a hill in an Arab populated part of the West Bank. A spokesman for this organisation declared, "The Bible says it is our land and we shall keep every inch of it." Though the Israeli government has opposed such unauthorised settling, it is a fact that since 1967 there have been sixty-eight settlements established in land taken from Jordan, Syria and Egypt. Many Israelis believe that these settlements ought to be the absolute demarcation behind which Israel should not retreat. Even the Prime Minister has advised Jordan Valley farmers to "Plant Olives", a longer term investment, for they have to wait seven or eight years for a crop. Meanwhile Arabs of the West Bank have become restless, demonstrating against the settlements, causing considerable work for Israel's army, who are required to contain the militancy. It is not an easy situation for Israel; and in the ordinary way the future could be very dreadful. Especially when the strength of the opposition is measured, Islamic power extends from West Africa to South-East Asia.

A little while ago forty-two Moslem states sent representatives to a special conference in Istanbul. Turkey made a concession at the time to allow the Palestine Liberation Organisation to open a diplomatic branch in Istanbul. Iran likewise did the same. What is so significant about this meeting, is the resolution approved by all those states, that the struggle should continue, to force Israel to give up occupied territories not only obtained in 1967 but also in 1948.

This situation really is a measure of the let-down of the Jews by Britain in the first place, who had promised the Jews a *national home*. Also of the mistakes made by the United States in 1948. Britain's failure to be honourable to the Jew certainly did not bring success with the Arabs, and the decline of Britain in the world is an indication of her punishment.

But what would be for Jewry a hopeless, irreconcilable situation in the long term in the ordinary course of events, means nothing where divine power is concerned.

In the days of old the mighty hand of the Lord was seen in the saving of Israel from Egyptian slavery. In the latter days that same mighty hand will be seen working on behalf of the children of Jacob, for God has declared His immutable counsel:

“According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things.”

D. L.



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: Revelation Study.

Amidst trials, both individual and ecclesial, we have been given encouragement in certain, partial outworking of a brother's home problem and in the continued indications of God's guidance in a sister's work. We are grateful and feel helped to continue in the work of building and strengthening each other in His house in these last days.

J. A. De F.

“PENTRIP”, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays, 11.30 a.m.
Bible Class: Mid-Week.

We have been very pleased to have a visit from Sister Slaney and Sister L. Bouchet on June 6th and during the week. We are also pleased to have a visit from Brother and Sister D. Lancaster and Brother S. Lancaster on June 27th and July 4th.

On Sunday June 27th at the Young People's Class attended by some from Manchester, there was also attendance by a young man from the Midlands who also came last year. Also a mother whose children have attended previously. Some discussion took place afterwards.

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.

The gospel to be proclaimed this month is by way of a lecture, if the Lord will,

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

What does it mean to ‘believe’; and also to ‘perish’.

The Brethren and Sisters are reminded of the Fraternal Gathering arranged for Monday, August 30th in our own room. Meeting 2.30 p.m. Tea 4.30 p.m.

W. V. B.