

JULY 1979

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"

"CHRISTADELPHIANS – THEN AND NOW"

"COME YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER"

"THOU HAST GIVEN A BANNER"

"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. A. DeFries
R.D.1. Forestville,
New York 14062
U.S.A.

At the Table of the Lord

“... Not by Might nor by Power ...”

HOW HELPFUL ARE THE PROPHECIES of Haggai and Zechariah — two of God’s prophets who have sometimes been termed “minor prophets,” implying that they may be less important than others such as Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah. When we read their words, we are helped by them as the Spirit intends, we can easily discern that this work was as important as that of those better known men of God. Through them we may discern the great help, instruction and encouragement which is in God’s purpose.

Perhaps if we can enter into the situation in Jerusalem at the time of Haggai and Zechariah, we can more fully perceive why God sent them — to do a work so needed by His people. Haggai 1:1 tells us:

“In the *second year of Darius* the king, in the *sixth month*, — came the word of the Lord by Haggai. . . .”

Zechariah 1:1 gives us the time of *his* prophecy,

“In the *eighth month*, in the *second year of Darius*, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah. . . .”

Twice in the span of two months, the word of God was spoken by His prophets. God, who is infinite in wisdom, must have recognized a great need for His people. What was this need? Judah — a small remnant had returned to Jerusalem after seventy years captivity in Babylon. The king, Cyrus, moved by God, had allowed those few to return, and had helped them by providing money, materials, as well as authority to rebuild the city and the temple. These few were busy in this work, although surrounded by adversaries who did all in their power to halt their efforts. Ultimately, the work of building was hindered because of the adversaries’ letter to king Artaxerxes, who then commanded that it stop. We read of this in Ezra 4:23-24:

“Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai — they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews and made them to cease *by force and power*. Then ceased the work of the house of God . . . *unto the second year of the reign of Darius* king of Persia.”

It was in this second year of Darius that the work of Haggai and Zechariah began with those Jews in Jerusalem.

“Then the prophets, Haggai . . . and Zechariah . . . prophesied unto the Jews which were in Judah and Jerusalem . . . Then rose up Zerubbabel . . . and Jeshua . . . and began to build the house of God . . . and *with them were the prophets of God helping them* . . . But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease. . . .”

(Ezra 5:1-5)

Minor prophets? Not to those feeble Jews in Jerusalem — nor to us today brethren and sisters, as we strive to be engaged in the work of His house, for even as did our brethren in Jerusalem, *we need help*. As great help came to them, it can come to us, through these men of God sent to sustain all who are seeking Him.

The very names of these men of God would speak to our Hebrew brethren. Haggai comes from a word meaning “to celebrate, to keep a solemn feast, to dance.” Surely, those labouring in Jerusalem, under such adverse circumstances, didn’t feel like dancing, celebrating or being festive; but God was there to help, working with them in the building of His house, that there could in time, be a celebrating — a keeping of a solemn feast. With His help it came about, for we read:

“And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the *sixth year of the reign of Darius* the king. And the children of Israel — kept the dedication of this house of God *with joy*.” (Ezra 6:15-16)

Festive? Further verse 22 tells us they:

“... kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days *with joy*: for *the Lord had* made them joyful — to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.”

That which had seemed so difficult, so improbable, so impossible, came to pass through the hand of God working through His prophet.

It was not all encouragement, for at times chastening was necessary to make His people “think differently”. We read His warning:

“Is it time for you, O Ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts; *Consider your ways*.” (Haggai 1:4-5)

How easily we can be so involved in doing our own things — to be so busy about our own desires or hopes, that the work of the house of God can be neglected. It is a subtle thing which can creep up, so that we are not aware that we are “dwelling in our own ceiled houses”. This applies not just to our place of living, but to anything to which we may devote so much time, energy, or strength that we neglect or be unaware of the things of His house, or the people of His house. Well does God, through Haggai, speak “Consider your ways”. This word consider is made up of three Hebrew words meaning “*put the heart upon*”. How much we need brethren and sisters, to put our heart upon our ways, examine them with great care and objectivity, not from the flesh’s viewpoint or desire. Verse 8 tells us:

“Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.”

This is what pleases God, not our own houses, built, ceiled, complete, but His house finished. “I will take pleasure in it” and “I will be glorified”. How much this says, brethren and sisters as God’s words enter our hearts, “Consider your ways”. Sometimes God’s promises seem far off such as Haggai 2:20, 21-23;

“ . . . I will shake the heaven and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; (nations) . . . In that day, . . . will I take thee, O Zerubbabel my servant, . . . and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord.”

An impossible and unbelievable situation from the viewpoint of those few “feeble Jews” in Jerusalem, yet this was God’s promise — sure, certain, if they would consider their ways, change them if necessary, and get about the work of building the house. Sometimes as we are beset by problems, heavy burdens, temptations, sadness, the promises seem remote, yet they *will come* for He has promised, and *He* never fails.

God Remembers

Two months later, to those same children of God, came the words of Zechariah. We find his name in Hebrew means “*remembered of God*”. Would not this name remind those in sore difficulties, that God does indeed ever bear in mind — does not forget nor forsake those who are striving to do His will. He can and will strengthen us, brethren and sisters, even as He did those in Jerusalem in that critical second year of Darius which was such a low point for Judah and Jerusalem.

To help His children, God revealed certain visions to Zechariah — visions of His power working on behalf of His people, to destroy their adversaries. In Zechariah 1:7-11 we read of the horses sent forth. With what result?

“We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.”

How different from the situation at Jerusalem as Zechariah prophesied, yet we know, as did our brethren — it will come to pass.

Further we find God’s unfailing promise:

“I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.”

(Zech. 1:16-17)

Impossible? It may have seemed so to our brethren. Jerusalem then was a desolation, destroyed seventy years before — the walls

gone, the work of the temple stopped by such powerful adversaries. No, not impossible, God hath promised. Is it real, is it sure to us today, brethren and sisters?

Again, God's words come to us:

“Sing and rejoice, (a solemn feast, a Haggai) O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, . . . Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord.”

(Zech. 2:10-13)

Unbelievable in Jerusalem's precarious position at the time Zechariah spoke to them. We remember from Ezra 4:23 that their adversaries “made them to cease by force and power”. What great force was arrayed against those in Jerusalem — yet even that power and might was confounded as God wrought on their behalf.

What great encouragement God gave to His people then . . . and lest we forget, today also. In Zechariah 4 we see a further vision revealed to His people. The two olive trees standing by the golden candlestick, emptying of themselves, oil into that candlestick to make light, to be a light-stand. It would be hard for our brethren to visualize or to rise up to this — yet it was real — the vision of God to strengthen, and then His words to remind and to encourage,

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Zech. 4:6)

How much those words must have meant to our anxious brethren and sisters in Jerusalem, where the work of the house was stopped by the seemingly overwhelming force and power of the adversary. Lest we rely too much upon ourselves, God said, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit”. How telling to us, brethren and sisters — revealing who really rules — the power of the Spirit — for nothing can prevail against it.

“. . . They That be With Us”

We have many examples throughout the scriptures, of that Spirit working on behalf of His people. Let us call to mind Elisha's experience at Dotham. The enemy compassed the city with horses and chariots to destroy. His servant feared, and said, “Alas, my master! how shall we do?” (II Kings 6:15) How like the flesh that cries out so quickly, Alas what shall we do. Elisha's strength is found in his reply, verse 16:

“*Fear not:* for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

And then Elisha prayed and said, (verse 17)

“Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see . . . and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

Elisha knew this power so closely about him — knew the Spirit was there. His servant, not having the faith of Elisha, was unable to perceive God's power. How blind we can be at times to the help that is so close, if we can but take hold of it.

Hezekiah was also a man of God, who knew first hand that living power. As Jerusalem was surrounded by the armies of Sennacherib, he prayed for help and the result?

“Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and four score and five thousand. . . .” (Isaiah 37:36)

Impossible? Not to the One who said “not by might, nor by power but by my spirit”. Hezekiah's words to his people reveal his conviction, as he,

“ . . . spake comfortably (to the heart) to them, saying, Be strong and courageous, . . . for there be more with us than with him.” (II Chron. 32:6-7)

How few there appeared to be with Hezekiah, yet by His Spirit the power and might of Assyria was defeated.

With Jerusalem in the time of Haggai and Zechariah there seemed little to encourage. Yet, He promised:

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house: his hands shall also finish it; . . . they shall rejoice and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel. . . .”

(Zech. 4:9-10)

What has the plummet to do with God's promise? We know a plummet is used in the building of a house, to be sure the walls are square, and properly lined up with the corner-stone. Does it speak of judgment — of the time of the assembling of His house when all will be built upon *the* corner-stone. Are we, with His help, building even now? And to *His* standards? Will we be there to conform to the master builder's plan? Perhaps Isaiah's words can help:

“then saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation . . . Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies. . . .” (Isaiah 28:16-17)

In the time to come, His judgment will show whether we do conform to the corner stone, the foundation. We are being tested now, brethren and sisters. Will we labour to build His house; will we believe; will we trust? It is only through a conviction that it will be done “not by might, not by power but by my spirit”, that we can carry on, being sure that there are indeed more with us than with them.

J. A. DeF.

Christadelphians then and now

THE HISTORY OF THE TRUTH is a sad one. Departure from its principles is constantly seen. Throughout the divine record this is so, and only by the kindness and mercy of God has the truth been preserved, or rather revived from time to time. The history of God's nation reveals this. Departure from God's ways brought punishment upon the brethren. In their extremity they cried unto God and He heard and eventually delivered.

It seems surprising that it was soon after the revival of the Truth under the hands of Dr. Thomas that there should be departure from the Truth. These caused divisions, with inevitable pain and distress.

In 1873 — only two years after the death of Dr. Thomas — contention arose over the nature of Christ. The protagonist of error — Ed Turney of Nottingham — proclaimed that the nature of Christ was “clean”; not subject to sin like those of other mortals. In this attempt to exalt Christ it was not realised that they took from Him the glory and honour in the “overcoming”; for if Christ were “clean” in nature, not subject to sin there was nothing to overcome. Such a theory made Christ's “overcoming” nothing more than a pretence — a theatrical display. What was worse was the lesson of the cross was erased. When Jesus in His death was hanged upon a tree, it was to show to all and for all time God's condemnation of human sinful nature, even as it was declared in the Law:

“Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree.”

(Deut. 21:23)

Nothing could be plainer to show God's view of sinful nature. It is true that Jesus never sinned, but He bore our nature, and this imposed upon Him a trial of indescribable severity. This is seen, as we are allowed a peep into His mind in Psalm 73:

“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.

Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain.”

(Psalm 73:2-6)

As Jesus ruminated upon the position of these apparently prosperous He went on:

“If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.” (Psalm 73:15-16)

In the struggle which these thoughts imposed Jesus overcame — seen in the words that follow:

“Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

Thou castest them down into destruction.

How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment.”

(Psalm 73:17-19)

Truly, the wicked, however imposing they may seem, are only like the grass of the field which “withereth, then forever fadeth.” This is the end of all flesh apart from the mercy extended to those who are His children. However great, however brilliant it matters not. God is no respecter of persons. Just look at an English pound note on the reverse where is shown the portrait of Sir Isaac Newton. One of the most brilliant of all men. The laws of motion he enumerated are still considered basic today. In addition he made many important discoveries which still have a cardinal place in present-day studies. But where is he? Although he studied much of the scripture, and wrote a commentary on the apocalypse, he is no more — and never will be because he never belonged to those called to the Truth. Perhaps he was too clever, for God does not call the “great” as the Apostle Paul says:

“For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: That no flesh should glory in his presence.” (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

The “clever” mind is not receptive to the Spirit, for it seems to them that the Truth is too simple, and does not attract brilliant intellects. There is a desire in Christendom to have clerics who are learned, who can boast of special university training and such degrees as “doctor of philosophy”. It is distressing that those who once had the Truth have fallen into the same error. Higher education has robbed them of the simplicity which belongs to the Truth. Their leaders have consequently become the learned in the wisdom of this world as testified by the university degrees they bear. It is all very sad. Christ had no such learning; and the pioneers of the Truth had no time or inclination for what is so valued amongst men — the imposing qualifications of university education. The more this is followed, and wrongly valued by the congregation the nearer those still professing the name are to the churches and chapels. In the days of Robert Roberts and for some time afterwards the light of the Truth was vigorously upheld; its principles were the foundation of public lectures and the specious claims of contemporary religious belief was exposed and vigorously condemned. This meant arousing

the wrath of contemporary religious leaders and their flocks, so much so that brethren after giving a lecture sometimes had to flee for their lives. This was how Christadelphians were *then*; but now nothing must be said or done that might offend. Many are the artifices adopted to attract audiences — choral recitals, tea meetings etc. but which only serve to increase numbers who are not really interested in what is *the* Truth, and what the Truth requires.

We recall the report of where a brother spoke to a large audience in London, and by his message made them feel “at home” and comfortable. Sis Roberts was present. When she spoke to the one who gave the lecture she said all seemed to be well entertained by what he had said. These were not words of praise, but of irony. Whether the brother in question received the rebuke we know not.

It is interesting in considering Christadelphians *then* and *now* to consider how the hymns at public lectures came to be used — or rather misused. It was customary to have hymns at such meetings at one time. The brethren were exercised as to whether the stranger could be asked to sing praises when in ignorance of God and His Son. The first expedient so that the singing of the hymns could continue was to give the “stranger” a hymn book without music, and with a notice stuck on the front that this was not an invitation to sing, but to allow their minds to be exercised by what they heard. It was not long before the notice disappeared from the front of the book and was placed inside! The ways of dealing with conscience can be very subtle. By this subterfuge it was believed that those who were against any possible offence to the “stranger” would not be aroused to protest (at a business meeting), while those more anxious to uphold the principle of the Truth would be somewhat satisfied by the compromise.

Are not the difficulties of hymns at lectures where the stranger must not be made to feel he belongs, when obviously he does not, best be overcome by not having the singing of hymns at lectures?

The difference between Christadelphians *then* and *now*, is seen in the attitude to the stranger. Formerly, while he was treated with every courtesy and given every help, it was made plain without being offensive that he was “outside the camp”. To give any impression that he “belonged” when obviously he did not was doing the stranger a great disservice; in fact imperilling his life by giving the impression he had hope when not being baptised he “was dead in trespasses and sins”. When life is at stake what care should be used not to give a wrong impression. Better risk the possibility of what might appear at the start of an offence, than suggest what amounts to a false security. Explanation of the true position will be received by the right mind, and later with gratitude help the mind to be

established in such an important principle of the Truth — that there is no hope apart from being baptised — “buried with him by baptism into death.”

It is not uncommon now to find those who once had the truth denying this principle by saying that someone who has been associated with the Truth but died before baptism, that God’s mercy would be extended to him; a failure to recognise that God who “calls” has the power to keep alive to give opportunity for His commandments to be obeyed. Such a solemn and important truth is now neglected by those who once had the truth, and still make the claim of being in the truth. There will be many sad awakenings when Jesus comes, for Jesus warns there will be those there (what a warning to us!), who will be told:

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25:41)

The human mind (and all our minds are human) the possibility that these words could ever be said to us! They must be said to many who by their knowledge and profession appear to have the truth, but because of failure have belied their trust, and are thus condemned. Excuses in that day will be of no avail as the Lord so clearly shows:

“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (i.e. taught) in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And *then* will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, that work iniquity.” (Matt. 7:21-23)

The solemnity of these words with their grave import for every one of us should cause us to pause and deliver ourselves from complacency; to abandon any tendency to excuse our failures, but be ready to admit and “confess our faults one to another”. It seems overlooked that this is a divine command, but do we keep it? Are we prepared to submit to one another what will only allow us to obey this precept? Let us stop and ask ourselves when we last obeyed it. It is in our intimate life that the Truth should be seen. If it is not then are we not failing and be accounted reprobates when He comes.

This critical and frank self-examination will only be found amongst those who have the Truth. Those who once had the Truth, but have departed from it, are like those in Laodicea of whom Jesus said:

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind and naked.” (Rev. 3:17)

“Naked” — the covering given in baptism lost. The warning given by Jesus ignored:

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” (Rev. 16:15)

A “shame” that will mean rejection and finally death.

W.V.B.



“Come Ye Blessed of My Father”

AS WE WAIT BRETHREN AND SISTERS, for the promised return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, we have come to know how difficult it is to keep our determination and the preparedness we know God will look for, in those to whom He has revealed His Truth. Difficult indeed! Why is this so? Because the demands of God, being established upon the love of righteousness, are opposed to the natural working and ways of our flesh. In order then, to reveal ways pleasing to God, it requires the crucifying of our flesh which is at times, far from easy to do.

We, during our probation, are placed in trials, situations designed to test our hearts, circumstances watched over by God, through which our determination to serve can be revealed. To move and feel our lives are being overruled depends upon a sensitivity of spirit. This speaks to us of the separation there must be between the things of this world and the things of God, if we hope to be among those He will call “blessed”. We must carefully examine ourselves in the anticipation of the return of Christ, knowing of His judgment to go forth upon those who have heard His word. In Matthew 25 verse 34, we have read the words which will be spoken at that judgment,

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”

How wonderful will be the sounding of those words in the ears of those accounted to be worthy at that time. Is not the hearing of those words our hope? How important it is that we examine our efforts now, to see how we compare to that which is expected of us during these times of travail.

To help us to know what is required, Jesus goes on to tell us in the 35th and 36th verses saying,

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

We can draw the conclusion then that those who are to be found on Christ’s right hand are approved, because during their probation they had served Him by giving Him, in time of need, those things which were necessary.

In verse 40, Jesus explains how this service must be rendered by us today as He says:

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

How clearly these words speak to us of our responsibility and care one for another. What we do for our brethren is looked upon by Christ, as being done unto Him. This is the essence of our fellowship, of the relationship founded on love that we are allowed to share with the household of God. Let us then examine these words of Jesus so that we may learn from them how better to serve Him, by our giving to each other. They can help us in our struggle to maintain our hope of acceptance, during the time which remains until His return. Going back to verse 35 we read, “I was an hungred and ye gave me meat.” The word hunger we find conveys the thought of toiling for daily sustenance and perhaps in Matthew 5 verse 6 we are helped to see what it is those who are striving to be joined to Christ, must crave after:

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

In order to receive God’s blessing, we must realize how necessary it is to toil for righteousness, for we know how difficult it is to put down the desires of the flesh which attempt to fill us with things contrary to the Word of God. Our spirit must hunger after that which is right, so as to control the yearnings of the flesh. Jesus’ example of overcoming in the wilderness, speaks to us of the determination we must have, as well as the trust, that we will be sustained by the Word of God, which was provided to fill His spirit during that sore trial. To provide for one another requires a perception of what is needed by others, and a coming alongside to provide whatever is necessary to help. This is expected of us who are striving to be joined to Him as His bride. It is a quality that His Bride will possess, for we read in Proverbs 31 verse 15,

“She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.”

Are we like this? Let us examine inwardly and compare, for if we are doing likewise to our brethren, we are doing this also for Christ.

Continuing in Matthew 25 verse 35 we read, “I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:” How much our physical well-being depends on water. Without the provision of water to quench thirst, our bodies would soon become dehydrated and die. When we thirst, it is our bodies which tell us so, reminding us that a drink is necessary. In like manner, in the Body of Christ, we must recognize that thirsts develop, and that there are often times when refreshing is needful. What a comfort and reassurance it is to know that when a thirst develops in us, that we can go one to another to seek relief. But, such a willingness to come and reveal a thirst requires each of us to be waiting and willing to reach out and provide whatever it is which can quench. Jesus reminds us in Mark 9 verse 41:

“For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.”

Let us then be more aware of this means of refreshing each other in the trials which come upon us and exercise the love which it requires, knowing that by so doing, the reward we hope in, may be granted.

Returning again to Matthew 25 verse 25 we continue, “I was a stranger, and ye took me in:”. Help to perceive what is meant here, is perhaps given by David in Psalm 39 verse 12:

“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.”

Just as his fathers were strangers, as all called out by God from the world, David recognized he was a sojourner — one passing through, attempting to submit his life to the will of God. Here we must realize that, like David, we too are just sojourners, strangers to the world in which we live, in a journey towards the greater dwelling of God. In this journey, we are to serve Jesus as His words imply, by taking one another in, or as these words mean, “to accompany, to assemble together”, giving the implication of being joined together as one. Have not our experiences shown us how needful is this drawing together in unity, to strengthen, to sustain, to comfort in times of need and to keep us in our journey. Let us take care then that our footsteps are made in love for each other, to the building up of the closeness which is required, thereby, coming even nearer to Christ and God.

Continuing in verse 36 Jesus said, "Naked, and ye clothed me:" All through the Word of God we see the shame which is associated with being unclothed. From the beginning, how a covering was provided to Adam and Eve by God because of their sin. When we fail, and we do so often, it is our flesh that is exposed, making us appear naked and in shame before God. At such times as these, how dejected and cast down one who has erred feels. At such times, is presented the opportunity for brethren to come and show forth faith in works as James in chapter 2 verse 15 and 16 tells us;

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

Let us remember that we are to be profitable servants of Christ, and we can be so only as we are profitable one to another.

Further in verse 36 we read, "I was sick and ye visited me:" The word sick used here means to be strengthless and is used in a variety of applications. When we think of our own strength in comparison to God's great power, we must admit to the weakness of our own capacities, which at times fail us, reminding us of what we truly are. In such periods of weakness, we must take thought to our position as our brother's keeper and exert the energy required to visit or as this word means, to look out for each others well-being in the sight of God. We must again be as the bride in Proverbs 31 where we are told in verse 27:

"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

We at times, may not feel inclined to extend help to others when it is needed by them, because it isn't convenient for us, but, let us be mindful that slackness is not a virtue of the bride.

Concluding, in verse 36 we read, "I was in prison, and ye came unto me." We are helped to see what is required here by the words of Paul which he wrote from Rome as a prisoner, unto Timothy in II Timothy chapter 1 verse 16 - 18:

"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."

Do we not see in Onesiphorus' example, that spirit which Jesus was referring to, for we see from Paul's words how Onesiphorus' coming was a comfort and relief to him.

Must we not take to heart the lesson taught here by this example, that we must constantly be ready to extend comfort, help and encouragement to those who are in difficulties, those who may be suffering from trial and testing. Even if divided from our brethren by thousands of miles, we can come in prayer alongside to ask that help be granted of God and that His will be accomplished. If we can do such, being ever mindful of God's indication to guide our living, we might too be reckoned as Onesiphorus whose name translates as "profitable servant".

As time is allowed to go on, let us regard it as time given us to show forth our profitableness one to another, and to Christ, for we know He will say, "Come ye blessed of my Father" only to those who have served the needs of the least of those his brethren.

M.C.S.



"Thou Hast Given a Banner."

(Psalm 60 Verse 4)

SUNDAY 3rd OF JUNE is commonly known as "Whit Sunday." "Whit" is an abbreviated form of "white", a colour worn in celebration of Christ's resurrection. In the north of England in particular, and especially in Manchester and districts, many processions are seen on this day, people walking the streets in white, or uniforms. At the front of each procession is a banner held aloft by two men, advertising the group, or church to which they belong. Only on these occasions does the Creator come into their minds at all; music and general entertainment is what appeals, which means that it is the creature who is being served rather than The Creator. What about the few who do desire to serve their Maker? In Psalm 60 verse 4 we read — "Thou hast given a Banner to them that fear thee, that it might be displayed because of the truth." It is clear from this passage that none other than the faithful receive this banner. There are many who claim to serve God yet their works deny Him, for they do not have the banner. Seeing then that the banner is only given to those who fear God, it must of necessity include all the faithful from the beginning. One particular example that comes to mind is Noah, who "prepared an ark for the saving of his house",

knowing that God would destroy the earth, by water, because of the great wickedness which covered the earth. This came to pass and only eight people Noah's family, were saved (by water). Others had the opportunity but they scorned Noah for his belief in God and so they were destroyed, never to rise again. When the waters were finally assuaged and the face of the earth was seen to be dry, God set His bow in the cloud, a token of God's everlasting covenant with Noah and his seed, the faithful, and that token, the rainbow, can still be seen now in our time; the sign that God, in His mercy, will never again destroy the earth with water. This rainbow appears like a huge banner sublimely arching over such an extensive area.

Isaiah 11 verse 10 tells us: "and in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign — "Banner" of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and His rest shall be glorious." Here again we see that it is only by seeking that we shew ourselves approved in the eyes of God in associating with the "banner", a great blessing indeed.

Returning to Psalm 60, let us note the first part of the title, — "The chief musician upon Shu-shan-e-duth", or, "to the one who overcomes upon Shushan, a Lily, we see there a connection between the Lily and the faithful, — strong, firm and upright, not easily blown over or uprooted. The psalm continues to show how the people had been astray from The Way of Truth, and so consequently were punished in the manner described in verse 1: "O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered (broken) us; thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again." verse 3: "Thou hast shewed thy people hard things, thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment." Yes, all of us have been shown "hard things" and have had to learn the hard way. Many fail to learn and therefore continue to drink the wine of astonishment, thus not only deceiving themselves but causing others to be deceived, not appreciating God's blessing, namely — *The Banner*.

We recall the account of how Moses became victorious over Amelek. When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, when he let down his hand Amelek prevailed; and the account goes on to shew that when Moses hand was supported Israel were the victors.

Then in Exodus 17 verse 15 we read: "And Moses built an altar and called the name of it 'Je-ho-vah-nis-si'" — that is "*The Lord my Banner*". Those engaged with Moses in this important work were truly the supporters of "the banner".

David, along with all the faithful, expresses his mind in Psalm 20 verse 5: "We will rejoice in thy salvation and in the name of our God we will set up our banners."

W.G.B.

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

“The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” (Rev. 17:12-13)

UNDER THE TREATY OF ROME there are as yet only nine nations in the European Economic Community. But in prospect this confederacy is to become a ten nation alliance.

Recently, at the instigation of its prime minister of the last five years, Greece has signed an agreement to join the Common Market. The Greek leader has worked towards this ever since he came to power when the Greek army dictatorship was overthrown. There have been difficulties because those EEC countries who are large wine producers, feared that if Greece came into their midst, Portugal or Spain would also follow as part and parcel of such an arrangement. This would affect French agriculture, for Portugal and Spain, as well as Greece, can supply many wines and agricultural products at a far lower price than France.

The Greek Prime Minister however managed to overcome such reluctance by persuading those in opposition that the Greek candidacy should be treated on its own merits, and not as part of an arrangement which would inevitably bring in Portugal and Spain.

One of the tactics deployed by this able leader was that if Greece was put off entry, there could be another coup by extremists. By this threat or by other means, the Greek Prime Minister has won generous terms for the entry of his country, satisfactory to his farmers, industries, and the nation's tax-payers in general. The final ratification however depends upon his success in maintaining the support of the Greek Parliament, this however does not seem to present a difficulty seeing he has an overwhelming majority. So it does seem that Greece will become the tenth member of the EEC on 1st January 1981.

There may be more considerable import in this trend, than immediately seems apparent. From the time of Constantine the Great there have been differences between the eastern catholics and the western. When Constantine founded Constantinople, the centre of gravity of the Roman empire was shifted from the west to the east, and the provinces of that section of the Empire were preponderantly the richest and most resourceful. Byzantium then became a second Rome. Furthermore it was in that area that the Roman Empire had its frontier against the great Powers of Western Asia. Through the

union of Church and State by Constantine, the Great Roman Empire became The Holy Roman Empire, and Rome and Constantinople were its two influential pivots. At the time the Church was ruled by many Bishops under five Fathers who were known as Patriarchs (from a Greek word meaning Fathers). These were also known as Popes (from the Latin word also meaning Fathers). Of course the most important of these Fathers was the Pope of Rome in the West. But there was also the very important Pope of Constantinople in the East.

From the beginning there were differences between these two religious leaders. It was generally regarded that Rome was a very special place because of the belief that Paul and Peter and very many other early Christians had died as martyrs there. The Pope of Rome therefore considered himself the highest authority of the Church. But on the other hand the Holy Roman Emperors looked upon Constantinople as the seat of their authority, and therefore the seat of the church there, was also regarded of the highest order, by virtue of its geographical position.

The religious leaders of the Eastern and Western sections of the Empire were therefore jealous of each other, but adding to the difference was the fact that in the East, Greek was spoken, and in the West, Latin, and often when translations were made from the original Greek scripts into Latin, the meaning of words derived therefrom were slightly changed. Beliefs and practices also changed. As a result there was often unfriendly discussion between the Church of the East, and the Church of the West.

In the early days the usage of images of any kind in the church was strictly forbidden, but in the process of time statues and paintings of what were enunciated to be Martyrs, Saints and Apostles began to appear. In the West it was mainly statues, in the East painted pictures, called ikons, a Greek word which means image. Controversy developed over this difference of representation, amongst other things, and finally in the year 1054 the schism came. The Greek Orthodox Church was born in the East, and the Roman Catholic Church in the West.

But it was the Roman Church which flourished as barbarian Franks, Gauls, Danes, Goths and Huns eventually were persuaded to give allegiance to the church in Rome, whereas the Empire in the East began to crumble. Over the centuries many attempts have been made to unite the Greek Orthodox Church with the Roman Church, but as is evident, without success.

At the present time there are two groups of Eastern Churches. Those forming the Orthodox include the Traditional Byzantine patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem,

and the national churches of Russia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Rumania, in addition Orthodox communities exist all over the world. The other group is the Armenian and Coptic churches.

The primacy of the patriarch of Constantinople however, is now largely an honorary one, for the general belief is that the various patriarchs are equal, and therefore there is no single head of their Church. But this church is still powerful in numbers, for it is estimated that there are one hundred and fifty million adherents, of which there are one hundred and twenty million in Europe, and about twenty million in Asia.

Perhaps by reason of the geographical position of its supporters, the Orthodox did not take part in great Western controversies about the Bible, nor was affected to any degree by the Reformation. It has continued all these centuries as the Holy Orthodox Catholic Oriental Church, the name Greek being given to it, because it was Greek in origin. Russia at one time was the great stronghold of this religion, but though it has been assailed by the Soviet Bolsheviks the Orthodox still has considerable support from the peoples of Soviet Russia.

It is worth noting that in recent times there has again been attempts to improve relations between Rome and Constantinople, the result has been that in 1965 the two Churches agreed to retract the excommunications cast on each other in A.D. 1054, which in those days formalised their Great Schism.

It is not difficult to now see that the Greek movement to join the partners in the treaty of Rome is likely to bring that country's religion much closer to the predominant Church of the European association, and thereby acknowledge the leadership of the Roman Church.

Meanwhile the Pope is gaining ground eastwards in another direction. His arrival in Warsaw, his native country, as the first non-Italian Pope in four centuries, caused a tumultuous welcome. Hundreds of thousands thronged the streets and church bells pealed. The Polish government had found it necessary to have its President at the Airport to welcome this visitor from the Vatican. Helicopters flew overhead, and a guard of honour lined the terminal approach.

The Pope was well prepared for the occasion for he said:

"I come as a pilgrim to my native land, to which I remain deeply attached by the roots of my life, of my heart and of my vocation. I thank you for not forgetting me."

So an unmistakable trend is seen. There will be ten kings (kingdoms) who are to have "power . . . with the beast", and concerning the beast itself, it is to be supported by "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (verse 15)

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 and Orchard Park. Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

As various trials are felt in His house, both here and abroad, we are made to feel a great yearning for that day of release, promised to those who overcome.

We are grateful for phone calls, for letters reaching out and keeping us close to one another in these last days.

There has been no response to the recent article on divorce and remarriage mailed out with the March magazine. While the lack of response is disappointing, we are grateful for the opportunity to witness on this vital question.

J. A. DeF.



“PENTRIP”, Black Rock, Portmadoc

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

We shall be thinking of the contemplated visit to America in these difficult times when travel is not at all certain.

We are most grateful for all letters received and for the work in the magazine.

We are also thankful for the great over ruling care we have experienced and for the summer weather, much appreciated after the cool spring.

Brother Butterfield's and Brother Smith's attendance at the Table of the Lord here in May was of great encouragement and we do thank Brother Butterfield for his ministering work.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER: Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread: 11.30 p.m.

Bible Class: 7.30 p.m. in the ante room to large hall,
Wednesday evening.

By the time this appears Brother and Sister D. Lancaster should be in the States, there to help and bring back help that the body now separated by three thousand miles of ocean may be knit the more closely in the bonds of the Truth.

We shall miss them but believe that fruit will be seen in the work being undertaken and we are grateful that this being permitted. In this great work the hand of fellowship is being extended to Bro. D. Lancaster to express our love and care for all across the seas, and to show that the ecclesia here is joined in this privilege.

W.V.B.

