

NOVEMBER 1981

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"

"THAT YE BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER"

"MERCY"

"HELP LORD"

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

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

All Communications

W. V. Butterfield
16 Westfield Road,
Cheadle Hulme,
Cheadle,
Cheadle, SK8 6EH

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

At the Table of the Lord

“Here am I, send me”

AS THE WORDS of Isaiah are read, we marvel at how God worked through His prophet to sustain our brethren in Israel and in these days, ourselves as well. Each time they are read we cannot help but be deeply impressed by God’s mercy and provision in sending prophets such as Isaiah to teach of His way and of His mercy. Even the name of this faithful man would make clear to his brethren God’s provision. Isaiah means delivered or preserved of God. As Judah listened to his words, recognized they were Yahweh’s, the preserver, would they not be touched deeply by the nearness of God, by His awareness of their needs and by the sure deliverance promised if they would only turn again to Him.

Perhaps a little background to Isaiah’s life will help us as we listen to his prophecy. We are told:

“The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” Isa. 1:1.

Thus we see his work covered a period of about sixty years . . . eventful years in the history of God’s people.

The first scriptural mention of this prophet is found in II Kings 19:2, at the time of Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, during the reign of Hezekiah. This king thought so much of Isaiah that he sent to the prophet for God’s help in the threatened state of Jerusalem, saying:

“It may be the Lord thy God, will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master, hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.” verse 4.

These few words give us an insight into how much Isaiah was valued by the king and all Judah, as a prophet of God whose prayers would be heard. That faith was not misplaced, for God did answer Hezekiah through His prophet.

“Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard . . . behold, I will send a blast upon him . . . and cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.” (verses 6, 7).

A most unlikely occurrence, naturally speaking, yet it did come to pass. Hezekiah and Judah were strengthened, Sennacherib’s army was destroyed and Sennacherib himself was killed in the temple of his gods by his own sons. As Judah saw the word of God come to pass, their trust in Isaiah and their faith in God would grow, helping them to be even closer to the Almighty, their deliverer.

We are not told very much about Isaiah’s work with Judah prior to the time of Hezekiah, but it must have been done with the power of God apparent, to enable Hezekiah to put his trust in him during this time of trouble. We are however, given some insight into Isaiah’s earlier circumstances. His calling as a prophet of God is recorded in chapter 6, verse 1. Isaiah was permitted a vision of the glory of God. He tells us:

“In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”

At this time Isaiah saw seraphims and the house filled with smoke. His reaction to this wondrous evidence was:

“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips:”
(verse 5.)

In response to Isaiah’s recognition of his need for cleansing, one of the seraphims took a live coal from the altar and, touching the prophet’s lips, said:

“Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” (verse 7.)

Then the voice of the Lord was heard:

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (verse 8.)

In grateful response to the revealing of God’s glory and power, and also for His cleansing, Isaiah’s willing reply was:

“Here am I, send me.”

Thus God called him to work with Judah, indeed giving him honor and responsibility because of his humbleness and willingness. So, to God's people through the years since this call came to our brother, help is given. His experience can inspire us as we are called to His work. May we respond in the spirit of Isaiah!

God looks to all those who are His people and wants them to serve Him, to do His will in spite of weakness, inability, or hesitation. We may have a feeling of inadequacy . . . "I cannot do it", thus how much we need the reassurance of our Father and faith in His working with us. In response to that help, we surely must rise up to the spirit of . . . "Here am I, send me."

Only a Remnant

As Isaiah responded and was sent to Judah, God spoke through him on many occasions to let His people know what He required, also to reassure and sustain them in their struggles to serve Him. Isaiah often spoke of a remnant, a small number who would be preserved by God, out of the vast numbers of unfaithful men in Israel, whom He would preserve because of their strong desire to honor their God. This remnant is spoken of in chapter 1, verse 9:

"Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

It is in God's purpose and mercy that His very small remnant shall be watched over and preserved until the coming of His Son to gather the members of His Body to Himself for eternity.

Isaiah again prophesied of these few, speaking of the time of the end:

" . . . there shall be as the *shaking of an olive tree*, and as the *gleaning grapes* when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea." Isa. 24:13,14.

From experience and observation we know about gleaning grapes . . . so very few, hard to find, but sweet and delicious, having held to the vine so long. Just so is there to be gathered a precious remnant which is to glorify God. The conditions in the land at this time spoken of are revealed by the prophet.

“Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” (Isa. 24:1.)

Also verses 5 and 6:

“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate.”

How fearfully well these words spoken 2600 years ago describe today’s world and what it is yet to be before the return of the Lord Jesus. The major problems that face today’s environment only confirm the words of God’s warning:

“The earth is defiled (polluted) under the inhabitants thereof.”

Men seek solutions, pass laws, spend literally billions of dollars to correct the pollution of this earth, but in vain. Even greater is the moral pollution affecting so strongly the lives of all the earth’s people. We know the only real solution is in God’s hands, and involves the remnant of which He speaks through his prophet Isaiah . . . as *they* are united to God’s Son at His return. Going again to verse 6 in reference to the curse . . . it *is* truly devouring the earth and only through God’s intervention to accomplish His promised purpose can this be ended. The curse is the result of disregarding the word of God, from Adam’s day, and can only be removed by the Son of God coming to gather to Himself His remnant as God has purposed since Adam’s time. Let us look again at Isaiah’s words, God’s words, concerning this remnant to be gathered as the gleanings of the olive tree and of the vine.

“They shall lift up their voice, they shall cry aloud from the sea.” (Isa. 24:14.)

These who make up His people, His remnant, will rejoice, giving glory to God as they have striven, though in frailty, to do all through their probation. Are not these the ones who, feeling God’s hand upon them, have responded, “Here am I, send me.”?

“. . . Glorify Ye The Lord in The Fires”

We read God’s continued instruction to this remnant:

“Wherefore glorify ye the Lord *in the fires*, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.” (verse 15.)

What does it mean to glorify the Lord in the fires? Perhaps Jesus can help us find an answer through His words:

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” (John 17:4)

Only by doing the work which God gives to us, no matter how great or small such a work may be, can we truly as a remnant glorify our Father. Isaiah was given such a work; we have seen how Jesus finished the work God gave to Him; in the same way we, Brethren and Sisters, are given a work in His house. Are we striving our utmost to finish it? We must recognize that Jesus’ work was not finished until he died on the tree, justifying and glorifying God as He cried out, “It is finished.” It is a life’s work for us as well, if we seek to be part of His remnant, those who have dedicated their lives to upholding and glorifying His Name, as Jesus’ brethren and sisters.

Continuing further, the prophet exhorts us to glorify our Father “*in the fires*”. What then does this teach us? The concordance reveals that the Hebrew word for fire is not the usual one but is often used as light (*uwr*). The plural of this word is *urim*, as it is seen in the Urim and Thummin, lights and perfections divinely placed in the high priest’s breast plate, evidence of God’s presence with His high priest for the guidance of His people. The same word is found in Numbers 8:2 where Moses was told:

“Speak unto Aaron and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give *light* (*uwr*) over against the candlestick.”

This light was reflected in and from those carefully selected, cut and polished jewels worn over the heart of the high priest. How scintillating this light, as the priest moved in his holy work, all reflecting to

the glory of God. Is this what God is looking for in His people, His remnant even now? . . . a people who are able to submit, able to be cut and polished and thus to become like precious gems which reflect the light, the brightness and beauty of His Spirit?

In the beginning God said, “Let there be light (*uwr*) and God separated the light from the darkness.” He is continuing now to separate out a remnant, those who seek to “glorify God in the fires” as Isaiah exhorts. They consciously work to reflect the light of His Spirit though failing so often. How few there are indeed who try with desire to do this.

Isaiah was striving to be one of the Almighty's jewels and so he responded to God's call, "... here am I, send me." Can we be helped, Brethren and Sisters, by his willing words, by his recognition and faithfulness? We can! We must! Let us determine anew to glorify our God "in the fires" and so hope to be accounted as true children of light when Jesus returns.

In this hope, our mind goes to the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins by which Jesus taught in Matthew 25:1-13. The five wise virgins had oil in their lamps while the five foolish ones neglected to provide the needed oil. Why were the wise virgins so well prepared? Was it because they loved the light, knew they had to be well supplied with it if they were to cope with the darkness which is all around, and so be ready? Perhaps their spirit was like Isaiah's, ever partaking of the Word of God, and only thus able to say, "Here am I, send me." Of these wise virgins we are told:

"... the bridegroom came; and they that *were ready* went in with him to the marriage:" (verse 10.)

Were they in a sense, "glorifying God in the fires", in the light from God with which they prepared themselves? To the five foolish who had failed to provide the means of light, of glorifying God, Jesus replied, when they appealed to Him, "Lord, Lord, open to us." with the words:

"Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Verses 11, 12.)

Brethren and Sisters, if we are to be known unto the Lord Jesus as part of His remnant, we must ever strive to move forward, to the light, in the spirit of our brother Isaiah, "Here am I, send me."

J.A.DeF.



“That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Cor. 1:10)

THIS IS A DIVINE COMMAND, perhaps more honoured in the breach than in the upholding by those who once had the truth. The idea became prevalent (much to the shame of its teachers) that this only applied to first principles. But where is the authority for such a specious interpretation? The command is all-embracing and does not allow for a binding in one aspect of the Truth, and a licence in another. This faulty interpretation has led to disaster.

From the time when one in Liverpool said he believed the earth was flat and not round, the declension has gone on until those who once had the Truth are in dis-array by all kinds of private interpretations. What is the root of this divisive work?

Is it not pride? A failure to come together and reason together (not debate which seems so beloved by those who have not the Truth), and be prepared to “submit to one another in the *fear of the Lord*.”

What a vast difference there is in brethren meeting together to find the divine interpretation, and the debating which is only a manifestation of pride. This has wrought havoc amongst those who once had the Truth. Yet in classes where debate has taken the place of ‘finding’ the divine mind, the expression has been heard: “What a good class”. Shame indeed.

The truth on any matter will not be found, apart from the help of the Spirit. It must be obvious that those who have left the Truth have lost the Spirit. It must be obvious that those who have left the Truth have lost the Spirit, and consequently although they are fairly numerous they are in disarray. No interpretation is certain. Members can choose whichever interpretation suits them. Factions, in consequence abound. On any matter, on all matters, they can no longer know what “saith the Lord.”

The Brethren and Sisters in Israel

They were required to be united in the same mind and in the same judgment. In the days of Moses any questions which could not be settled were to be referred to him. Why? Was it not so all, every one, could be of the same mind. Once different views are allowed, or rather indulged in, the sanctity and the authority of the Truth is lost. The liberty, the supposed liberty has become a snare by which those professing the name are denied the power. They have become no more

than drift wood on the sea of human speculations. How dreadful this must appear to the Most High, who has given His word that His mind may be known on all matters, and those who claim to be His children may rejoice in the unity of the Spirit.

The Spirit is the power of God given to those who are His, that they may be guided into all Truth. As new views arise affecting the daily lives of those "called", what a comfort it is to know that they are not left to speculate. Indeed, is not this why the Spirit which is to guide God's people into all truth is called the "comforter" in the English version; in the original a "calling alongside". Let us pause and consider what a privilege it is to be called alongside the Lord Jesus and His Father where our puny minds can be furnished with the divine. There is not another people on earth so blessed. In their conferences, parliaments, senates, debate is the predominant feature, used to bolster up different and opposing factions. Human cleverness in this is no substitute for submission to "one another in the fear of the Lord". The father of debate is pride; an abomination to the Lord. Men in their eloquence may be clever, may be appealing, but far removed from the divine essential of "submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord". Judgment which excludes pride is just this; a means of allowing the mind of God to be sought in all humility and being allowed to rejoice in its simplicity and truth.

What power could be more uniting than God's power, the Spirit, shared and rejoiced in by those called to be His.

W.V.B.



Mercy

HOW OFTEN WE should contemplate the mercy of God and His kindness extended to us as His children. Our desires, actions, thoughts, intents and purposes must always be in respect to God's condescension to call us out to be His children and to give us the hope of eternal life.

We are helped in our desire to live in God's mercy by the words of David in Psalm 86. David was one who recognized that mercy, dwelt in that mercy, desired that mercy and was granted that mercy of God. When we look at Psalm 86 verse 5 David's words tell us:

“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”

Here David reflects the knowledge of God, that He is the source of all mercy and the One through Whom true mercy can come.

David recognized that mercy comes only by calling on Him (verse 3):

“Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.”

How significant and needful for us to realize that God not only is merciful, and that we can call on His mercy, but we *must* do so if we are to receive that mercy. “. . . I cry unto thee daily” was David's prayer. Our prayer must be similar, if we are to seek God's hand upon us to bless and chasten, because both, we must admit, are merciful provisions.

Verse 13 of this Psalm reflects another aspect of God's mercy:

“For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.”

Here is a recognition of an overall intense mercy. It speaks of God's encompassing provision — His grace seen in that mercy, for here David recognized the only means of truly overcoming. Isn't this what God has promised? A promise through His great mercy that there is a means of overcoming our flesh, and so a means of holding fast to the hope held out. But David's words speak not only in the past tense, but the present and future. It speaks of the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly struggles in which he recognized help. He was looking to the end of God's purpose by looking back to the deliverance already granted. This speaks to us likewise in the things which we have known in blessings and trials, all of which we know, have been overruled by

God. Only as we recognize this can we make our cry to Him daily, thanking Him for the deliverance and forgiveness, and for giving us the understanding of the true deliverance which is to be when His purpose is accomplished.

Further David speaks of God's mercy in verses 15 and 16:

“But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.”

Here David puts himself in the place of a child of God. He desired to be after God's own heart, we know, and in order to do that, he recognized he needed mercy. God, he recognized was full of compassion, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy and truth.

God desires all His children to come to salvation. Yet, He looks to the heart to see if we really are obedient children. Here David's heart is revealed in verse 11, to show what it was and how it was that he sought this help:

“Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.”

Was not David saying, — if I know what is required, then I can walk in it according to Thy word? The important aspect is the last part of that verse: “. . . unite (or join) my heart to fear thy name.” How was this possible? Only as David recognized (and as we must recognize) through God's provision, through the One who ultimately did overcome — the Lord Jesus, was there shown that fear and perfect reverence to God's name. David's desire was to have his heart joined to God, and he recognized how much reverence played a part in this joining. When we go to Psalm 103, we see revealed there mercy coupled with that fear:

“For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

(verses 11, 13, 17, 18)

We see that this fear David spoke of was a godly fear as he remembered the covenant relationship he had through God's mercy.

How great is God's mercy, and how great the fear we must have to receive the mercy, to revere and respect His mercy as we look to the ultimate purpose of God. The first verse of Psalm 103 perhaps reveals what our need must be to have that fear:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

Bless, as used here, means to kneel or bow down and reminds us that our living must bow down to God. This is similar in thought to Psalm 86 verses 1-5:

"Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.
Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."

Only by bowing down to God will He bow down with blessing towards us. Paul in Philippians chapter 2 verses 9-11 perhaps reveals God's ultimate mercy and summarizes the thoughts expressed by David:

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

How much is contained in these few words, which give authority and credence to those thoughts of David "... every knee should bow ...", by bowing down, glory is given to God. When there is a bowing down, God directs His mercy in return for the fear and reverence shown.

Indeed, God's blessings and help are close, to provide whatever it is that is needed, as we call upon Him in the same spirit as shown in Psalm 86 verse 1:

“Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy.”

God will only hear those who are truly poor and needy, who recognize the flesh must be put down in kneeling before Him if there is to be a condescension by God to hear His children. Is this why David says in verse 2:

“Preserve my soul; for I am holy”.

This perhaps on initial reading might seem difficult to understand — that David would perceive himself as holy. Yet, when we look up that word holy, we find it means to set apart and isn't this exactly what God wants His children to be? Set apart from the world and all its evil ways. “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Desiring to be after God's own heart — “preserve my heart because I am holy”. Wouldn't David be looking to the ultimate purpose of God, when those who have feared God might be joined in glorifying Him?

The continuation of the second verse says, “. . . save thy servant that trusteth in thee.” How is it that we might have this saving grace? Through a trust which speaks to God from the heart — that truly exhibits whether or not our living and our heart is joined to God's in perfect unity. We must ask ourselves if we are seeking the help that God provides? If we are, we value and seek whatever it is that we know God shows is best for us, whether it be blessing or chastening, we know it is given in His mercy. And, it is only through that mercy we can be saved, to attain to the delivered state God has promised.

Can we value then what God holds out to us, as David did, and as he says in Psalm 86 verse 12:

“I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.”

Evermore — for this time and forward. For what has taken place in the past can only serve as an encouragement and help now and in the future.

So as David looked for God's help, seeking to grow more like God — more holy; we likewise must strive to do so in the hope of obtaining God's mercy.

M.C.S.

Help Lord

“And Samuel died,” so begins the 25th chapter of the first book of Samuel. It was at such a time as this that the Psalmist could cry out:

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

So there is the Psalm to consider:

“Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail
from among the children of men.

They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with
flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.”

(Psalm 12: 1-2)

“The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are
exalted.” (verse 8)

There was great lamentation in Israel at the death of Samuel, the sad thing is that the respect for his work did not go deep enough.

“To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of
rams.”

This had been Samuel’s message to them. Furthermore Samuel had courageously said to Saul —

“The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, and hath
given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou.”

But the great support of the people for Saul in his evil cause showed that Samuel was respected only so far as his indisputed position as a judge in Israel was concerned.

The conclusion therefore must be drawn that his message, his work, was not valued or heeded as it should have been, therefore the general condition of the nation was far from good. No wonder the Psalmist could say with fervour:—

“The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest of the sons of
men are exalted.

How true! The vile allow and encourage the vile. That is what Saul did. The good leader on the other hand takes in check that which would mar peace; mar mercy, and would cause injustice and engender arrogance.

It is remarkable to note that just before the death of Samuel, Saul appeared to show repentance. What a warning this is that repentance is more than words; and more than tears.

“And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.” (1 Sam. 24: 16-17)

“And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.” (verse 20)

When Samuel died, David departed into the wilderness of Paran. Others with Saul may have been impressed by Saul’s tears but David knew better. It requires more than tears or words, there must be fruits; and David had seen no fruits of repentance from Saul. David of course, was in the minority, very much so, and so could do nothing other than wait patiently and behave prudently as far as he was able. So there we find him, in the desert, that part of the land that separated Israel from the wastelands of Sinai. We find him in need, in adversity, and in fear.

But the scene depicted in the divine record changes and we see another man with whom things were going well. A wealthy farmer of Maon, whose place of business was just north of Mount Carmel. Here was one who could help David in his need. David asks this one for help having previously been in the position of being able to do this man Nabal harm, but had rather extended protection to him. Surely Nabal would reward him in his need? So we see he sends some of his men with a plea for provision. The plea however, was rejected; David was rewarded evil for good; a reminder of how Christ likewise experienced such hurtful treatment.

Now one of the greatest tests of human weakness is the control of ones feelings when we find we have been rewarded evil for good. David, a man after God’s own heart, was no exception in this. It was indeed a great test for David because the rejection of the plea for help was addressed in words that assumed a tone of righteous reproof:—

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

Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?" (1 Sam. 25: 10-11)

So there was reproof instead of help and the veneer of excuse took on the attitude that it was David who had broken away from his master, Saul, and therefore did not deserve help; what prevarication!

David's anger was uncontrollable at the injustice of this insult.

"And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff."

(2 Sam. 25: 13)

Following this we get an insight of how a spiritually minded person can do much good in soothing hurt and anguished feelings (which though not to be excused can be understood)

"But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields.

They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him." 1 Sam. 25: 14-17)

This young man who spake to Abigail obviously was a sensible and understanding individual, and must have been on good terms with the mistress of the place. Able to speak without fear, in confidence to her about her husband. This in itself tells us much about the character of Abigail. She obviously was approachable, and ever ready to lend an ear to a word spoken in season; to hear counsel, even from a young man. Neither the young man, or even Abigail could have known that David was on his way with 400 men carrying swords. But they were able to enter into the feelings of David, and realise the dreadful hurt received, and foresee the repercussions that would result.

But here is perhaps a lesson; for this was something Nabal could not see or enter into, therefore he could not sense the repercussions that would follow. In other words he was senseless and therefore hard. This is a lesson, for the senseless are hard, and to become as hard as Nabal would undoubtedly bring disaster. But Abigail had the answer, though she herself was not at fault:—

“And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.

“And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.” (1 Sam. 25: 23–25)

“And now this blessing which thine handmaid has brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

I pay thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.” (verses 27–28)

Is this not a remarkable example? Abigail took the blame on the grounds of oversight. She backed up her words by the tangible fruits of provisions she had brought and assured David that she did not think he had broken away from his master. Moreover the most wonderful thing of all, she told David he was wrong; but in such a way, in such a reasonable way, it could not cause offence:—

“And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel: That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.”

(1 Sam. 25: 30–31)

Oh what a wealth of help from all those years ago, as we consider how God worked to help the one who cried for help. Here is the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of Christ. David undoubtedly recognised it, and was greatly encouraged thereby, and we can also be helped as we not only enter into the feelings of brethren and sisters who have gone before us, but also endeavour to follow such examples in these days.



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

“ . . . Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity.”

(Luke 21: 25)

The British economy moves precariously onwards; the floating pound sinks as the dollar is buoyed upwards. But even the stability of the American economy is in question as the Dow Jones industrial index fluctuates. There is a malaise of discontent and uncertainty in human society; this is indeed as Christ foretold, “distress of nations, with perplexity.”

The signs of what is happening to the world are markedly evident. The list has a most ominous ring.

Nato experts believe the Russians are building their fleet to a point where they will be able to challenge the American Navy on equal or superior terms.

Last year the Soviet Union built three thousand tanks and one thousand three hundred fighters or fighter bombers. American had produced six hundred and fifty tanks and two hundred and seventy five planes.

Russia has doubled its production of medium-ranged missiles from what it was manufacturing five years ago. These are targeted on Western Europe, including Britain, and are now being deployed at the rate of one every week.

Furthermore Russian economic strength is indicated by its ability to produce over twelve million barrels of oil daily, more than was thought possible at one time. Exports of oil and natural gas gives the Soviet Union a tremendous hard currency income, enabling it to buy Western grain, machinery and equipment and to increase support to its Warsaw Pact partners.

In reply the United States President has ordered full production of neutron warheads, which kill people by radiation but cause hardly any damage to buildings. Russia has reacted to this challenge by declaring “we will respond to the challenge of this extremely dangerous step.”

One of the original team of scientists who developed the hydrogen bomb has voiced a warning at an international seminar of the ideal time for the Soviet Union to issue an ultimatum to the United States. It would be a Sunday in August, and the main reason for this was that the Russians had now developed such an efficient civil defence organisation that they could save ninety five per cent of their population if a nuclear war broke out. That is why Moscow would have to issue their "surrender or perish" ultimatum in summer. During the harsh winter, the weather conditions would slow down the massive evacuation to shelters far away from the urban centres.

This Professor urged the production of "missiles fitted with small nuclear warheads which would be very sophisticated and manageable and able to destroy in the air heavier and less manoeuvrable long-range missiles. "It is enough that the man in the Kremlin has doubts. If the American anti-missile defence system becomes really efficient, as soon as possible that will be the first step towards discouraging him . . . but if the USSR manages to manufacture a powerful defence system, but the West does not, then I predict a nuclear war."

"In this case, there is no doubt that with a fraction of its power, Russia could bring America to its knees, and she would still have enough power to take over the rest of the planet."

When questioned what should be done if the Soviet Union was not deterred by what he called "little Bombs". His answer was, "Then we must attack ourselves. But we must not start with the satellite countries in Eastern Europe who are our potential allies. The attack must strike the Soviet Union directly." "The difference between the pacifists and me is that they want to do away with nuclear war. I want to stave off all wars."

What perplexity and what distress! So there is a development of nuclear anti-nuclear missiles, no doubt to be followed by anti-anti nuclear missile devices, and there is no way out. Meanwhile economies are depressed by the vast expenditure on such things, and the masses mutter and thresh as they see their standards of living decline.

It is as Christ foretold, indicating His personal return as the only solution for the mess and the potential horrific situation into which the nations have entangled themselves.

D.L.

EDEN, NEW YORK: Grange Hall, Church Street

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Sunday School 1.30 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Orchard Park.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Our hearts have been united with the brethren and sisters as they have met in Fraternal Gathering in Manchester. The message of love received closely binds us together in these last days.

Recent concerned inquiries from several Christadelphians give a welcome opportunity to witness and are an encouragement that there may be yet a few who will hear.

J.A.DeF.

“PENTRIP”, Black Rock, Portmadoc

Breaking of Bread: Sundays, 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek.

We have been pleased to have the company of Brother and Sister W. G. Butterfield and Sister Heason, also Sister Slaney, Sister Francis and Sister Eunice Francis on July 12th.

We do appreciate the effort of our brother which gave much food for thought.

The three sisters said what an enjoyable holiday they had received that week. We trust we can continue in the work of thus helping one another.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER: Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread: 11.30 a.m.

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

We are told that bread cast upon the waters may be seen after many days, which encourages us as we find that the distribution of this magazine amongst those who once had the truth is provoking enquiries and request for our booklet: “The History of the Truth in the Latter Days.” Any questions which readers of this may have we will endeavour to answer.

W.V.B.