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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

GILGAL

This morning our attention has been directed to Gilgal, just west of the Jordan River and near to Jericho. It was here that Israel under Joshua paused after their miraculous crossing of the Jordan and before beginning the conquest of Canaan. This land as promised to Abraham was to become their divinely granted inheritance. Our brethren experienced much of significance in Gilgal. Let us look at their circumstances at this time. Moses had recently died on the east side of Jordan. Joshua, whose name means savior and is the Hebrew name for Jesus, was appointed by God to lead Israel into the land as their 40 years of wandering ended. The Almighty encouraged Joshua in this great responsibility:

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Joshua 1:9.

So sustained, Joshua led Israel into the land. Obstacles were numerous; the first, already met, was the Jordan River. However, it had proved no hindrance. God had indeed been with His people in causing the waters, which flowed from the city of Adam to the Dead Sea, to be cut off, halted as the ark of God was carried into it, and Israel passed over on dry ground. How impressive and memorably instructive was this wondrous work! To Joshua and to the thoughtful in Israel, this would foreshadow the promised Savior, the Ark, who would in time to come rescue from the river of death, which flows unceasingly from Adam's day, a people who put their trust in Him.

After that crossing:

". . . the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho."

Joshua 4:19.

There they abode in their tents, for there the pillar of cloud stopped. Then under God's hand, Joshua commanded that twelve stones be taken from the midst of the river, from the place where the priests stood bearing the ark, and "leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night" (Joshua 4:3). When Israel and their children would ask: "What mean . . . these stones?" Joshua was to reply:

“... That the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters . . . were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.”

Joshua 4:7.

The stones represented these twelve tribes delivered from death by the ark. Joshua pitched them in Gilgal, explaining:

“For the LORD your God dried up the waters . . . until ye were passed over, . . .

That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.”

Joshua 4:23-24.

Here was a memorial, a witness and a promise of a people to be taken out of death to live for ever as the people of Joshua (Jesus), the Savior yet to come. It may well be that Joshua and the faithful in Israel in time of trouble or discouragement would go back to Gilgal and look upon that memorial pitched there, to renew their faith. However, to many this memorial may have been merely a “sacred” pile of stones, but to the redeemed, God’s people, it was a sure token, a sign and a promise that God would not fail nor forsake them.

We have a memorial of which we have partaken this morning: “This do in remembrance of me” (I Corinthians 11:24), reminding that through the Ark, Christ, there will yet be a people delivered from death. Our human minds at times do fail in awareness of God’s grace, and do we not need to be lifted up in determination to follow Jesus?

Let us look further at the event in Gilgal. Here Israel was circumcised, as the Almighty commanded Joshua:

“... Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.”

Joshua 5:2.

This was necessary for:

“... all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.”

Joshua 5:5.

We remember God’s requirement of circumcision as He established His covenant with Abraham:

“... ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.”

Genesis 17:11.

In Israel's long wilderness journey this token was neglected. In Gilgal this was remedied and all those born since coming out of Egypt were circumcised—a reminder that only by the cutting off of the flesh (circumcision of the heart) can there be a covenant relationship with God. As thousands of Israel were circumcised here, the Almighty proclaimed to Joshua and his people:

“... This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.”

Joshua 5:9.

Gilgal means a “rolling away,” as the mercy of God provided a means of removing the reproach (inherent in the flesh). All Israel had to be circumcised before entering the land; otherwise, there would be no hope of inheriting it and, more importantly, no hope of redemption.

Further:

“... the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even . . .”

Joshua 5:10.

Israel kept this significant feast in remembrance of God's rescuing them from death in Egypt, by the blood of the sacrificial lamb. Here in Gilgal, only four days after coming out of Jordan and circumcision, there occurred another significant reminder of God's mercy.

After keeping the passover, they:

“... did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the self-same day.

And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.”

Joshua 5:11-12.

For 40 years manna, the bread from heaven, had sustained them. It was unfailingly provided every morning, except on the sabbath. Predictably some grew tired of it and so loathed it. Yet they continued to gather it; they would have died otherwise. When Israel in Gilgal looked for the manna, there was none to be found.

It was no longer needed as a means of sustenance, for God now provided the corn of their promised land. However, we remember how Moses was instructed to take an omer of manna and:

“... lay it up before the LORD (in the ark), to be kept for your generations.

And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years ... until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.”

Exodus 16:33, 35.

Although the manna had ceased, Israel knew always that the golden vessel of manna was preserved in the ark. It was a reminder that God had sustained them by the bread of life.

There were many changes for Israel in Gilgal. No doubt the presence of the pillar of cloud and fire also ceased, as Israel no longer wandered but had arrived in the promised land. What help they had, ever bringing to mind God’s faithfulness as he had spoken to Joshua:

“Have not I commanded thee? be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Joshua 1:9.

As our brethren moved from Gilgal, the captain of the Lord’s host appeared to Joshua (ch. 5:13-14)—a sign that the Almighty was indeed there with them. His people. This messenger of God answered Joshua’s question: “What saith my lord?” (Verse 14), by commanding him:

“... Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standeth is holy ...”

Joshua 5:15.

Here was confirmation that the Lord was with Joshua, never failing, as he began his conquest of the land divinely promised.

The first victory was Jericho, a fortified city commanding the valley of the Jordan and the mountain passes leading to Canaan. Israel at God’s direction compassed this city for six days, with the priests carrying the ark and bearing trumpets. They were directed:

“... Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.”

Joshua 6:10.

On the seventh day, at God’s command, they shouted, blew the trumpets, and the walls of Jericho fell. Obviously here was God’s power at work on behalf of His people. The manner of this

conquest points to the time when Jesus, the ark, is to return. Then He will lead and direct His people against all the contrary forces of mankind, those who refuse Him and what He proclaims. All opposing powers and teachings will be overwhelmed as they are met with God's irresistible power. Then the kingdom of God will be established, sovereign over all.

We think how God's presence was so very much in evidence in Gilgal, as our brethren were being prepared for the great conquest. There were the twelve stones as a memorial; the strong lesson of circumcision; the passover—their rescue from bondage. Here, too, the manna ceased and the captain of the Lord's host appeared to them. The Almighty had given His people much assurance that He would not fail nor forsake them, if they would in faith go forth into their promised inheritance.

Today, Brethren and Sisters, we look for the coming of Jesus (Joshua) to lead His people into Israel's hope—a kingdom, a King, a throne and a house to endure for ever. We are Gentiles but privileged to know that hope through baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us keep in mind the experiences of our brethren in Gilgal as with circumcised hearts we look for our hope's culmination, made possible only by His power and merciful presence as He has promised:

... "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Joshua 1:5.
J. A. DeF.

FORGIVENESS

Our portion in Matthew instructs about forgiveness through Peter's question to the Lord Jesus:

"... Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"

Matthew 18:21.

In answer the Lord Jesus replied:

"I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven."

Matthew 18:22.

The margin renders "seventy times seven" as "seventy and seven" indicating not a specific number, rather a number of no particular limit but of completion. To better illustrate the important underlying aspect of forgiveness, Jesus further explains with a parable saying:

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt."

Matthew 18:23-27.

However, as the parable continues, that same servant was owed a much smaller debt of 100 talents by another. When the debtor in turn begged for mercy and patience, he was shown no compassion:

"And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt."

Matthew 18:29-30.

When this was relayed to the king, he sharply rebuked this mean spirited servant saying:

"... O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me;

Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."

Matthew 18:32-34.

Because of his lack of compassion for another, his own debt was not forgiven, and this seems to be the main element of Jesus' teaching concerning forgiveness. The amount owed was not important, but the absence of empathy for another in a similar situation brought rebuke and punishment.

Jesus was teaching through Peter's question a valuable lesson to all who seek to follow Him. Without the father's pity and compassion, there would be no hope of eternal life for any, for transgression and offence against God have been ongoing since Adam and Eve's fall from grace in the garden. Therefore, just as the father forgives us in mercy, so too should we when wronged forgive our brother, showing compassion in the same spirit. Just as the parable's king was wroth with the unmerciful servant, so too warns the Lord Jesus:

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Matthew 18:35.

Jesus' words to the disciples concerning forgiveness show clearly what is the spirit of a faithful man in this respect:

"... If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Matthew 5:23-24.

This illustrates the necessity of clearing all personal offence with another before approach can be made to God. In this same spirit, the Lord Jesus emphasized to His disciples, the necessity of forgiveness when approaching God in prayer:

"And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us."

Luke 11:4.

Here too is embodied the spirit of "leave thy gift at the altar", for without forgiving all indebted to us, we cannot hope to receive the Father's forgiveness for our own trespasses. This however

requires an honest inward scrutiny and the humility to recognize and confess one's own failures needing absolution,

When Nathan revealed David's sin with Bathsheba—a grievous transgression involving his adultery and Uriah's death, David was smitten with remorse and prayed:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."

Psalm 51:1-3.

He quickly perceived his failure beseeching God for mercy and forgiveness, to wash away his iniquity and renew a right spirit within him—one pleasing to the Almighty. God was merciful and forgave, and in so doing touched David's heart to show the same compassion to others:

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Psalm 51:12-13.

The Lord Jesus while suffering on the cross forgave His persecutors saying:

"... Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Luke 23:34.

He looked on His crucifiers not with anger or retribution but in compassion, asking the Father for their forgiveness in not perceiving the great wrong they were committing.

Stephen while being stoned, reacted with this same right spirit:

"(They) cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Luke 7:58-60.

Stephen was stoned while witnessing to God's Word and the name of Jesus Christ. By so doing, he condemned the Jews for failing to accept their Messiah. They seeking to still his tormenting witness—"cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord" to stone him. Knowing he was about to die, his last thought was to fall asleep with his own trespasses forgiven, and so with compassion asked God's forgiveness upon his murderers.

With these examples in mind, how effectively we are shown the answer to Peter's question—forgiveness is not to be extended seven times, or seventy times seven, but without number and completely, in mercy and compassion displaying the same loving kindness we hope to receive from the Father.

Paul likewise exhorts his Ephesian brethren:

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Ephesians 4:31-32.

Let us be instructed by these examples from His Word to be ever mindful of our own shortcomings, that when called upon to forgive our brother, we do so exercising compassion and love from the heart.

M.C.S..

**“NOW THE SPIRIT SPEAKETH EXPRESSLY . . .
IN THE LATTER TIMES . . .”**

Timothy 4:1.

The writing of the Apostle Paul to Timothy warns of an apostasy which would arise:—

“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats . . .”

Timothy 4:3.

In recent months there has been considerable controversy concerning the behaviour of Bishops and Priests in the Catholic Church. A very small minority it must be admitted, who have broken their vows of celibacy and so have had to leave their clerical office.

Now it is clear from the scripture that it was never the teaching of Christ or the Apostles for believers to abstain from matrimony.

How then did it come about that the Catholic Church with a multitude of adherents and with thousands of priests, should require celibacy of their clerics?

It seems that this requirement came about gradually. In the year 910 William, Duke of Aquitaine, and his wife, Ingelborga, made over the town and manor of Cluny for the erection of a Benedictine monastery. The donation stipulated that the monks should “ardently pursue celestial converse and sedulously offer prayers and petitions” for the donors of the manor and for people at large. The monks, the stipulation declared, should be free in perpetuity to retain their possessions without alienation and to elect their own abbot without any interference. The independence of the monastery from secular and ecclesiastical authorities, except protection by the pope, meant that it was free from all feudal obligations. This was a new feature and eventually other monasteries arose and were similarly inaugurated. At Cluny the decision was made to reform the Church, and the demand was made that the clergy would be required to be celibate.

Some time later in 1074 Pope Gregory the Seventh shortly after he was elevated, prohibited clerical marriage and any lay investiture of ecclesiastical positions. The congregations were told to refuse to receive the sacraments at the hands of married priests. The inference was that married priests were unworthy and so the sacraments would be invalid. The papal decree was aimed against the power of the Emperor Henry the Fourth. The German clergy in Henry’s entourage were therefore greatly dismayed, for they were

largely married, and Henry on their behalf tried to fight back against the papal decree, and lost. A diet of princes meeting in October of the year 1076 in Tribur on the Rhine, decreed that Henry must resign all royal insignia and that only if he made peace with the pope would his status as emperor be reviewed in four months' time. Henry therefore did penance. Clad as a suppliant in white wool, he stood barefoot in the snow to gain audience with the pope. He was eventually admitted after a long wait, but strict obedience to the Church was imposed upon him. However Henry later turned his defeat into victory when he led his army into Rome and set up another pope. But celibacy remained.

Then came Martin Luther in the 16th century, and also Protestantism. Luther proclaimed every occupation was a calling, since all Christians are priests. This elevated the family man, the wife and the mother. Luther, originally had said, "They will never force a wife upon me." But then he met Katharina von Bora, and he reasoned that marriage would please his father and displease the pope. He married therefore, though a priest, and Lutheranism began to expand. But then the council of Trent was convened in 1545 which sat at intervals for 18 years and was clearly under papal control. This council insisted that the rules of the Church regarding clerical celibacy were to be enforced, and that specific Protestant doctrines were to be rejected. So the Catholic Church and celibacy of its priests continued in the tradition that has expanded from that earlier time in the tenth century at Cluny, though not a requirement of the word of God. The Protestants on the other hand established the Protestant clerical family and the parsonage.

But is it not amazing that the Church of Rome should still be able to enforce the rule of celibacy after so long a time, and in the face of such laxity, which affects the world at large, as a result of new philosophies. It is a proof of the power of the Word of God which will not fail to be fulfilled and which has declared:—

“... the spirit speaketh expressly ... in the latter times ...”

A FULFILMENT

As one moves amongst the products for sale in the retail store, the eye is often arrested by the healthy glow of oranges, lemons, grapefruit and also vegetables of various kinds labelled as the produce of Israel. It is then that the scripture comes to mind:—

“... the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and even rejoice with joy and singing...”
Isaiah 35:1-2.

What a change this is from the prevailing situation of a little over a century ago.

A report in the Ecclesial Magazine (1878)

“The ecclesial magazine reported on a lecture given by a Professor Porter, of Belfast, Ireland, on “Palestine and Prophecy.” It reads as follows:—

After describing the country’s physical features, he spoke of the rich nature of the soil and its products, remarking that nobler crops of grain than those that were raised there he had never seen in England or even on the richest prairies of America. Then, in eloquent and picturesque terms, he described the desolation which filled the land. There were many, he said, in those days, who denied the reality, and there were a few who denied even the possibility of prophecy as the prediction of future events. There were others who confined prophecy to what might be called its moral department in the revelation and development of truth; but independent of all other evidences, he confessed that he could not possibly hold such views as these after visiting Palestine, and comparing the land with the Bible. One saw there at every footstep how prophecy anticipated the future. In passing over these desolate fields, in passing through these ruined cities he had constantly before his eyes irrefragable proof that men who lived from 25 to 30 centuries ago uttered and wrote predictions which science could not have taught them, which human wisdom could not have foreseen—which time has converted into facts of history. These old Jewish seers sketched the progressive ruin of that country and people with a vividness and described their state as it is in our own day with a graphic power which the historian could not possibly surpass, showing, as the lecturer believed, that their eyes must have opened and their pens guided as they wrote, by that God

who alone is omniscient and omnipotent. Palestine is emphatically a land of ruins, and every ruin in that land is fulfilled prophecy. He then proceeded to place before his hearers, as far as it was possible within the limits of a lecture, that evidence of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies which he confessed, had carried conviction to his mind. Amongst the ruined cities which he described were Jerusalem, Ekron, Ashdod and Askelon, and in referring to the last, expressed his belief that ere the present century was finished, the very site of the city will have been blotted out, so fast is the sand of the desert covering it. Having finished his instructive and attractive sketch, Professor Porter in conclusion, said we had heard much, in recent times, of the opposition of science and scientific research to revelation; but he maintained it was not science—it was speculation and unsupported theory under the name of science—which was opposed to the Bible. Let the language of the Bible be only interpreted and the facts of science honestly investigated, and he predicted then the fullest harmony. From the most minute scientific investigation, whether conducted by the historian, the antiquarian, the geographer, or the ethnologist, he maintained the Bible had nothing to fear."

What a change has come about since that time, a little over a century ago, when the Irish Professor travelled amongst the ruins and desolation of Palestine. Israel now is a vibrant, rich, agricultural and manufacturing land. It is a miracle considering the previous neglect of centuries, and the great political resistance of various gentile powers to Jews and the land of Palestine being once again united together as in the days of old. It is an impressive contemplation when a travellers' experience of the 19th century is compared with the reality of Israel's present day prosperous position, even though great hostility has continued towards it from surrounding enemies.

A BIBLE CLASS

Bridleth Not His Tongue (James 1:26)

The introduction of James' epistle sets the tone for his letter to the "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," encouraging faith, patience and an enduring in God's word to keep one from the natural uncleanness of the flesh and the surrounding evils of the world. Verse 8 goes on to warn:

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

James 1:8.

A double-minded man is one who vacillates between two minds—unstable, not constant in all his ways. Therefore, James speaks of the need to be strengthened from the Word of God to restrain the flesh:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;
For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

James 1:19-21.

Wrath, natural to the flesh, makes itself known among those quick to speak and slow to receive instruction—those who exercise no restraint upon the carnal man within. Our verse under consideration fortifies this attitude and explains the danger evident when one does not follow His precepts:

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

James 1:26.

One who gives the appearance of godliness but doesn't curb his tongue, speaking without thought, deceives himself, for this is the flesh speaking and not the spirit. To bridle is to curb or restrain, and how important to practise this control for, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34).

It is also from James' writing that we have the familiar words regarding the tongue and its danger:

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!
And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

James 3:2-3, 5-6.

The tongue is a clear indicator of what kind of person one is. James in this epistle recognized that all fail, but restraint is so necessary, for sin often begins with words followed by action. Similar lessons can be learned from the Proverbs, where Solomon writes:

"Whosoever keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles."

Proverbs 21:23.

"He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction."

Proverbs 13:3.

We think of the Lord Jesus who exhibited such courageous restraint against Pilate and the elders at the time of his trial and crucifixion—a true indication of a spiritual man of unrepachable character.

The use of the word "seem" as used in our consideration, "If any man among you seem to be religious," reminds of the Scribes and Pharisees, who the Lord Jesus called a generation of vipers, for their outward show of piety and appearance of godliness while inwardly they were much different:

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

Matthew 12:34-36.

They had an appearance of being religious, praying in the street corners and wearing phylacteries or frontlets on their forehead to exhibit their devotion to God's word. Yet their words were idle, not backed by sincerity or good works — without spiritual

purpose or profit. With this example in mind we can better understand the importance of James' exhortation of restraint. Just as a horse is fitted with a bit and bridle to control his actions, we too need restraint and direction in order to walk in God's path and not go headlong in our own way.

It is difficult to keep our tongues under control, for James tells us that "the tongue can no man tame," yet the Spirit can, and if we are subject to the Spirit's teaching, we will endeavor to do so:

"To every thing is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;"

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7.

Wisdom says sometimes we should speak and sometimes be quiet, and that is difficult for the tongue to do, as David in the Psalms says:

"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

Psalms 34:13-14.

The Spirit through David, teaches that if the tongue is kept from evil and guile, seeking peace, this is well pleasing to the Almighty. Those, who with God's help and mercy, attain unto that hoped for state, are seen in vision by John as recorded in Revelation. They are those who:

". . . were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.

These are they who follow the Lamb wherever he goeth.

These were redeemed from among men, the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Revelation 14:4-5.

There is guile in the flesh for we all fail, but here in vision we are permitted to see the 144,000 free from the danger of failing, being blessed with the gift of immortality.

As this is our goal to be counted among those so blessed, let us heed James' words and be mindful of the need for restraint, not only in our words but in our actions as well.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter’s clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay . . . So the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken . . . they shall mingle themselves . . . but they shall not cleave . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom . . .”

Daniel 2:41-44.

The above concerns the prophetic dream that came to Nebuchadnezzar of old. He saw in the vision a great image representing the empires of men.

Dr. J. Thomas writing about this subject says:—

“The organisation which this vast empire will assume, when fully developed, is represented in the second chapter of Daniel by a Colossus in human form . . . representative of what should be “in the latter days.” . . . This scene has never been exhibited before the eyes of the world, because the constituents of the Colossus have never yet been put together so as to form the Image of the scene . . . Now, while the head, breast and arms, belly, thighs, legs and toes, have all existed, the feet have not yet been formed; so that it has been hitherto impossible for the Colossal Image to stand erect, as Nebuchadnezzar saw it in his dream . . . But how little do the puppets, through whom Providence works out His purposes, understand the times and tendencies to which they belong! They propose, but the disposition of all things is of God.”

(Quoting Lord Palmerston, the British politician, Dr. Thomas continues):—

“There is to be no more fighting for conquest or aggrandizement . . . but for the liberties of oppressed nations, and to establish the freedom and independence of Europe . . . I am confident it will be crowned with success.”

Dr. Thomas then resumes:—

“There may, indeed, be no more fighting between France and England, as belligerent principals: but their leaders are all wrong in supposing that “the age of conquest is past for ever,” and that they will succeed in establishing the freedom and independence of Europe. There never has been

such an age of conquest as that which will soon open upon the world; and as to the establishment of European freedom and independence, the war to be initiated is the setting in of an overwhelming inundation that will submerge them under one of the most terrible and scorching despotisms that ever wrung the heart of nations . . ."

So a United Europe was thought of in Lord Palmerston's day. Since then what Dr. Thomas thought would happen came to pass in the dreadful First and Second World Wars.

Now, after the Second World War, another British politician of great renown (Winston Churchill) spoke up and said on 19th September, 1946:—

"I wish to speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe.

"This noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and most cultivated regions of the earth, enjoying a temperate and equable climate, is the home of all the great parent races of the Western world.

"It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics.

"It is the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern times.

"If Europe were united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and glory which its three or four hundred million people would enjoy.

"Yet it is from Europe that has sprung that series of frightful nationalistic quarrels.

"Over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings gape at the ruins of their cities and homes.

"Among the victors there is a babel of jarring voices; among the vanquished the sullen silence of despair.

"That is all Europeans have got by tearing each other to pieces and spreading havoc far and wide.

"Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if it were generally and spontaneously adopted, would as if by a miracle transform the whole scene.

"What is the remedy? It is to re-create the European family, or as much of it as we can, and provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom.

"We must build a kind of United States of Europe.

“The process is simple. All that is needed is the resolve of hundreds of millions of men and women to do right instead of wrong, and gain as their reward blessing instead of cursing.”

Following this the European nations began to co-operate. The European Coal and Steel Community came into existence in 1950, and then the European Economic Community (EEC) began to develop in 1955 and was ratified by the Treaty of Rome in 1958. This brought about a European Parliament.

But Britain hung back from joining at first, and then had difficulty negotiating an entry into membership, which British industrialists were eager to obtain. But after Britain joined a trend was opened up and the EEC was enlarged by other countries joining. Britain then appeared to have become an influential associate in the European unity. But at the time of writing the British Government is having particular trouble with some of its own Conservative Party members over its European position. As yet they are a minority of this party, but are a very vociferous and influential section, and are pushing anti-European ideas. At the same time the British Government has disgusted European nations by going back on an agreement to radically cull the British beef herds suffering from the brain softening disease which it is feared can be passed on, in some cases, to those eating such meat. This British change of plan is likely to result in a continued banning of beef exports from Britain to its EEC neighbour countries. It is really a high handed action on the part of Britain by taking such a stance without consulting its associates.

The former British Foreign Secretary is reported to have said recently, “We support the Government (over Europe) and are no longer going to shut up for fear of being told we are rocking the boat.” But the former Chancellor retorted, by saying his colleagues are dinosaurs and added, “the reality is that Britain will not join (a single European currency) under a Tory government.”

Here is the evidence of Daniel’s prophecy beginning to be fulfilled, “They shall mingle themselves . . . but they shall not cleave . . .” Oh yes, the image confederacy shall stand up, but its foundation will be weak as iron interspersed with clay. This will ultimately topple and completely disappear to be replaced by the Kingdom of God, “which shall never be destroyed.” Daniel 2: 44.

THE REMNANT

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. and Pleasant Ave.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.
 Sunday Afternoon Class 1.45 p.m.
Midweek: Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg and
 Fredonia
 Every Third Week: Revelation Study

Interest in the Remnant's position on the part of concerned Christadelphians gives encouragement in our work of witnessing to the simplicity and hope found only in His Truth.

The year 1996 has brought varied circumstances to all. With the recognition that all this is under His hand, we rejoice in the blessings and seek the lessons which can bring increased guidance and thanksgiving.

J.A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.
Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

The year is nearly at an end and the new year approaches. It causes one to wonder what the next year will bring. This past year has itself been a significant one, with the new government in Israel, and for all the political efforts of the Powers to bring about peace between Jew and Arab the situation no further along the road to a solution. It is a reminder that man cannot solve the ills of this world; only the Prince of Peace can effect the great change for good that is so sorely needed.