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in opposition to the Dogmas of
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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

REMEMBER YE THE LAW OF MOSES MY SERVANT

THE HISTORY OF THE TRUTH IN THE LATTER DAYS

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

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“ Stir Up the Gift of God Which is in Thee.”

As these words in II Timothy 1 : 6 are read, we are permitted to see the Apostle's care and love for his beloved Timothy. It is remembered that Timothy, though young, was an elder, given the work. Nevertheless, here is Paul reminding him that in order to work faithfully and well he should

“ Stir up the gift of God which is in thee.”

Paul's care and anxiety is expressed—for the words “ stir up ” mean to “ rekindle.” Paul recognized that God's gift of the Spirit must be carefully tended to insure that continual burning which *only* consumes the flesh and preserves the Spirit. Paul knew, of his own experiences, the conflict between flesh and Spirit, and his desire was that Timothy might continually strengthen that Spirit to overcome, that his work might be blessed and Spirit-led.

These words are preserved in God's plan and they must apply to our lives for profit. Has not each one at times felt the need for a rekindling of the gift of God, a need for a renewing of the inner man, lest it perish? At times discouragement is felt, a far away, remote from God feeling. It is the flesh manifesting itself and for a time dominating. Can we not then be helped by the words of the Apostle—to recognize how great is our need for a continual rekindling of the Spirit lest the fire die and we perish also.

“ God hath not given us the spirit of fear.”

The exhortation to Timothy continues, helping us to perceive the qualities of the Divine gift. Paul explains :

“ God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

What is meant by a spirit of fear? This word means “ dread ” or “ timidity.” Surely, the gift of God is not one bringing fear and dread to those who are striving to keep it alive. Where then, does *this* fear come from, for in a degree we have all experienced it? The Lord Jesus's words in Matthew 8 : 26 help.

“ Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? ”

Little faith, this is the reason for dread and timidity, and this is what we all have to conquer. Where, then, is the remedy? His words again ;

“ . . . all things are possible to him that believeth.” (Mark 9 : 23, 24)
And the response of the father of the child possessed of an evil spirit ;

“ . . . Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief.”

Here is determination, “ Lord, I believe,” and with it an anguished pleading, “ Help thou mine unbelief.” This word “ help ” means

“to run at a cry.” Then, how continually we must see our great need and “cry” for help, believing that the Almighty will hear swiftly, and will in His good judgment give the help that is meet. Surely, brethren and sisters, our unbelief is ever with us, and needs the Father’s help that fear may be replaced with trust and faith. The holy relationship in the family of God which has been extended to us is kept *if* we are faithful. Paul tells us in Romans 8 : 14 ;

“ . . . *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*”

If sons, then, there must be, as in the natural relationship, real love and trust in our Father. Such a trust removes fear, for we know that *the* Father oversees and in a sense He will “run” to help as we cry. Paul’s message in Romans 8 continues (verse 15) :

“*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the spirit of adoption (to place as a son), whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*”

Can we fail, brethren and sisters, if remembering this in sadness, uncertainty, or fear, our cry is “Abba, Father” ?

The example of Peter and John in Acts 4 shows the trust of those who are striving to be sons and have ceased to be ruled by a spirit of fear. Witnessing faithfully, although having been apprehended as evil doers, they spoke and pleaded without fear, testifying to the name of Jesus Christ. Their listeners were impressed. It is recorded (verse 13) ;

“*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled ; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*”

Their courage and confidence in witnessing showed that they had been the companions of the Lord Jesus, and were reflecting Him. If only we could so stir up the spirit within us that it might be everywhere apparent that we, too, in a sense, had been with Jesus. These two knew the power of the Truth and allowed it to govern and to motivate their lives, and it showed. Fear was gone, and power was present. As Paul’s words tell us :

“*God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and a sound mind.*”

Power

If in faith, we do try to stir up the gift, then to each is given a necessary power. Within those who are striving, there grows, by correction and tribulation, a recognition of one’s own lack of strength and thus a dependence on the Father. How necessary that the weakness inherent in us be seen and acknowledged that help from above be sought and received. This was the experience of Paul (II Corinthians 12) where he speaks of a thorn in his flesh. We read (verses 8, 9) :

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness . . . ”
And then the response of Paul :

“ . . . most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Can we, brethren and sisters, make Paul's experience ours ? For, recognizing a weakness, he prayed to have it removed, but instead learned that the thorn was given of God to strengthen him that he might rejoice in the power of the Almighty. Can we, too, experiencing in our flesh the constant pricking, hurting, find in our very struggle to overcome, a real strength, a real power to help in that struggle ? Can we know Paul's mind, “. . . . for when I am weak (in the flesh) then am I strong (in the spirit).” Paul, in this way, became aware that the gift of God, His grace, *was* sufficient, giving the power necessary to *conquer* the weakness. Such was the power of the Lord Jesus to conquer *all* weakness and such is our help and example that we can strive to fellowship His sufferings and His overcoming, so knowing in a measure the power that was His.

The Spirit of Love

Paul's words continue telling us that power alone is not sufficient :

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

Without this love, the power is lost and so is of no avail. Paul also writes in I Corinthians 13 : 1-3 :

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling symbol. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”

How we must struggle to achieve to this, *the love* which is of God. How can we grasp that it is not *ours* ? The Apostle John helps us :

“Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (I John 4 : 10).

The meaning of love cannot be appreciated until we begin to realize *His* love for us and for all His people. As this awareness grows, it must result in a reflection of that love to the putting down of all selfish desires until there is achieved a selflessness, a giving of one's self to the Father and to His children. This is reaching toward that perfect love which was reflected in the one sent, the Lord Jesus. Having given this perfect example, John continues (verses 11, 12) :

“ Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another . . . If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

Brethren and sisters, do let us reach upwards toward that example, hoping to be perfected in Him. John tells us (verses 17, 18):

“ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment . . . There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear ; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

John’s words confirm those of Paul, “ God hath not given us the spirit of fear.” As love grows, fear disappears, power and strength is given, and the spirit-man is made strong and grows toward that perfect stature.

A Sound Mind

With the power and love, God bestows a sound mind. Examining this word in its original, shows it to mean “ sober ” or “ temperate ” and gives the thought of discipline. Is this not so, that with the spirit of power and true love, comes an ability to control our impulses and so bring all into subjection to His will ? As this discipline is exercised, it will be reflected in our walk, for it will become more steadfast and sure ; and the sound mind, which is spiritual health, is developed, helping always in the overcoming.

Neglect Not the Gift

The Apostle helps to impress our human mind with the greatness of the gift of God. How needful that it be stirred up, rekindled, lest all its power be lost to us. In I Timothy 4 : 14 he warns :

“ Neglect not the gift that is in thee . . . meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all.”

Does this not show, brethren and sisters, how this gift can be stirred up ? First by a meditating, or as the original word means “ to take care of in the mind,” then by the putting of the whole life into the seeking for and the service of God. As a result of so doing, we shall find that self is being put away, and the gift of the Almighty is consuming all that is of the flesh. If only we can keep it stirred up so that in a measure now and in full when the Lord Jesus returns, our

“ . . . profiting may appear to all.”

J. A. De F.

Remember Ye the Law of Moses My Servant

“ If a man steal an ox, or a sheep ” (Exod. 22, v. 1)

In all its statutes and precepts the Law was given to restrain the natural impulses of human nature, summarised by the Apostle John as “ The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

life." These, says the Apostle, constitute the life of the " world," simply because the " world " caters for self-gratification, a satisfying instead of a restraining of the native fleshly tendencies. Hence, whatever aspect of worldly life be considered, the election of its leaders and its priests, or its activities in schools or theatres, the fleshly elements have the predominance covered by a veneer of conventional respectability. Such is an abomination in the eyes of God ; so much so that any who are by their ties and affections a friend of the " world " are termed an " enemy " of God.

Turning from this universal activity of worldliness so objectionable to the Spirit, how refreshing to be permitted the understanding of the divine law through Moses, which was given to make all fleshly tendencies appear sinful, all worldliness hateful, that the man of God might learn to restrain these things where they begin, namely in his own heart. This indicates at once the supreme value of the Law and shows why the Apostle Paul described the Law as " good." In all its teaching the Law exemplified the Spirit of Christ, and in its ordinances pointed forward to the grace of God, the Christ. When Christ came, died and rose again, the faith of those living under the Law was vindicated ; as indeed it is of those who come after the Law, who appreciate the noble sentiments of the Law, and know, when He came who fulfilled it, they were no longer under the Law, whose power was to condemn sinners to death, but under Grace, that is under Him who was full of *grace* and truth. Those living under the Law saw the grace of God in Christ demonstrated, but of necessity were to look forward to the fulfilment of the promise that grace would come in the Redeemer ; those who came afterwards see the substance of which the Law was a shadow, the grace, the Christ, but rejoice in that the Law has been preserved that they might understand fully the grace that is Christ's.

The marvel of the Law is seen in its power to take hold of each and every wayward impulse, restrain it, that the upholding of the Law might through faith obtain grace.

It is part of human lust to covet what is not its own. This deeply ingrained trait is responsible, says the Apostle James, for all wars and fightings in the world :

" From whence come wars and fightings among you ? come they not hence, even of your own lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not ; ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain. Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4, vv. 1/3.)

No wonder the Apostle adds :

" Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4, v. 4.)

How the superb goodness of the Law will shine in the eyes of those who appreciate that by its faithful application these lusts can be controlled : strife made to cease, and wars to end. In the Kingdom this will be the Law which will go forth from Zion. Meanwhile, its value is no less for those who appreciate it now and try to absorb its spirit even as Jesus so perfectly exemplified in all His teaching and life.

Now consideration is to be given to that part of the Law which condemned those who coveted their neighbour's ass or ox, and tried to gain possession.

“ If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it ; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.”
(Exod. 22, v. 1.)

The greater the crime, the greater the punishment, and so stealing the more valuable animal involved a fivefold payment as against a fourfold for the lesser animal. In this regulation of punishment is seen divine justice ; punishment calculated to deter the would-be thief, a power to restrain a weakness of men that they might become more like God.

Lesser punishment was inflicted on a thief who had not disposed of his theft by selling it, or who had not attempted to dispose of it by killing it.

“ If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double.” (Exod. 22, v. 4.)

Punishment was also regulated according to the seriousness of the offence judged by the time of day or night when it took place. For a theft in darkness, a man could be killed and “ no blood be shed for him.” In other words this was a permissible punishment ; but if the theft were in daylight, then, whilst his life was spared, the thief must restore double. If he could not pay, he must lose his liberty.

“ If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.” (Exod. 22, v. 3.)

The poor brother need not steal to live. The Law mercifully provided for his support. If he despised the Law then he became a bond-servant, making restitution for his wrong with his own labour. In such servitude he would have opportunity to consider how wrong he had been, and how merciful God was, and how valuable the Law, which showed in every phase the need of loving one's neighbour as oneself. The salutary lesson would not be lost on other brethren who witnessed such upholding of the Law.

“ If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten . . . ”
(Exod. 22, v. 5.)

The “ field ” or “ vineyard ” as the context shows is the neighbour's, for there are added the words :

“ And shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man’s field.”

The lust of the eyes and flesh, with its covetousness, is seen in a multitude of nefarious practices, from downright open stealing to underhanded meanness that there might be gain by cunning. Or sometimes pride enters where there has been a quarrel, and in the form of spite will do much to harm the supposed offending part. Whether the object be to gain unlawfully or to hurt, both are wrong in the eyes of the God of Israel. To take vengeance, even if there appears justification is wrong just as taking goods. Both are condemned that the Spirit of Christ might survive, for covetousness and vengeance are inimical to the Spirit of Christ. Let a brother indulge in either of these evils and the Spirit of Christ in him will soon be dead.

The Law sought to teach the brotherhood, which was Israel, in the practical everyday things of life this most important lesson ; and so a brother moved either by covetousness or vengeance, who injured his neighbour’s possessions, must be punished, and must make restitution. How valuable and uplifting such a law would be at the time ; how it would inculcate the Spirit of Him who was promised—the Redeemer, the Christ.

“ If a fire break out and catch in thorns . . . ” (Exod. 22, v. 6.)

“ If a fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the field be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.” (Exod. 22, v. 6.)

How frequently the Law shows wonderful care for the “ neighbour ” by requiring brethren to exercise forthright consideration of what might result from their actions to their neighbours. Thorns had to be destroyed, and then, as now, fire was a convenient means of doing it. The brother was required however, when making the fire, to take care of his neighbour’s crops. If these were destroyed, even accidentally by the fire, then full restitution had to be made. No excuse was permitted, that the wind had changed, that he had failed to observe the inflammatory nature and near proximity of his neighbour’s corn. The damage caused must be made good, and inability to pay could involve a brother being sold as a bond-servant to liquidate his debt.

In the pattern set by this Law is a powerful teaching to every brother and sister at the present time. They are their “ brother’s keeper.” As their actions affect their brother they will be judged. If their brother is affected adversely by a careless word or action, lack of forethought will not be an acceptable reason to the Spirit. The plea or apology that is sometimes made that such a one requires to be understood and he does not mean all he says, will not be heard in the true Ecclesia. Is this aspect of life in the Truth the

point the Lord Jesus had in mind when He said ? :

“ Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” (Matt. 12, v. 36.)

By nature we are all prone to excuse ourselves when something we have done has resulted in injury to our brother. Particularly is this seen to be the case in the voluble talker. How needful that each and all of us should weigh over carefully the words of the Lord which take the mind to the judgment, when excuses will be of no avail. A worse case is where something injurious has been said or done, perhaps because of lack of forethought, and then excuse made that it was only in fun. Such deception is unmasked by the Spirit and represented for what it is.

“ As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows and death. So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour and saith, Am not I in sport ? ” (Prov. 26, vv. 18/19.)

The deception of the flesh may deceive our brethren, may deceive ourselves, but will never deceive God ! God is never mocked by pretence or any subterfuge. How gracious He is to show us His searching of all hearts that they might be purged by the Spirit and furnished with its beauties ; that even now hearts naturally vindictive and often at enmity might become truly united, and enjoy a foretaste in the blessed family of the Father and His son, of that precious unity which will last for ever in the day when such hearts are granted the reward. The achieving of so great reward then, depends to what extent we are truly our brother's keeper now.

(To be continued)

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

“ Master, we would see a sign of thee ”

Of all the Signs of the end given by the Lord Jesus, the most important, if not the most impressive, is perhaps the one given to the disciples on the Mount of Olives, when He warned them :

“ Take heed that ye be not deceived ; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and the time draweth near.”

No sign has been more clearly fulfilled than has this one, for the number of religious sects claiming the name of Christ and saying, in effect, *I am Christ*, is legion. More remarkable still is the fact that so many of them believe that Christ's return is at hand, proclaiming, in fact, that *“ the time draweth near.”*

To the thoughtful mind the situation is baffling : a host of sects of widely differing beliefs, and divergent outlooks, often divided themselves, and all testifying that *“ the time draweth near ”* ! What confusion ! Does it mean that when Christ returns, the

“elect” are to be drawn from some or all of these sects, a heterogeneous assembly indeed? Such a view, which seems to be commonly held, constitutes an absolute denial of the simple scriptural teaching:

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

When once the impact of these words has been fully felt, namely that there can be only *one* true Body of Christ, a united whole with no internal divisions or “fellowships”, then Christ’s warning against false bodies who proclaim “the time draweth near” takes on a gravity and a seriousness not previously appreciated. To every sincere mind, it constitutes the challenge, Do I *really* belong to the One Body of Christ?

Much help is forthcoming from the consideration of an incident which occurred during Christ’s ministry on earth. Certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees, had approached Him with the demand, “Master, we would see a sign from thee.” There came the withering reply “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign” with the intimation that there should be no sign other than that of the prophet Jonas. Here was a rebuke which should cause all *now* trying to discern the “Signs of the Times” to pause and to ponder, for if those looking for a sign from Jesus 2,000 years ago were denounced as “evil and adulterous” what of those now looking for the signs of His coming? Might the same condemnation apply?

The example of Nineveh

Much light is thrown on Christ’s seemingly harsh rebuke by His remarks which followed. He warned them that:

“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” (Matt. 12, v. 41.)

The mind is taken to that unique case in history when a whole city, “from the greatest of them even to the least” repented at the teaching of a prophet of God. At the time Nineveh was great, a mighty city, yet one so wicked that its destruction was required of God. Only its immediate response to the warning message of Jonas spared it from utter annihilation. Has not this record of the men of Nineveh been preserved through the ages as a lesson to all generations? One of the hardest things in life is to confess when proved to be wrong, and to repent at the warning voice of admonition. The Ninevites did this. They repented, and in so doing, saved themselves from destruction and provided an example for all succeeding generations.

The generation in which Jesus lived was different. It likewise heard the voice of admonition from a prophet, one greater than

Jonas, but to what end? Few confessed their way was wicked and the majority failed at the biggest of all stumbling blocks, the necessity of repenting when proved to be wrong. Had the scribes and the Pharisees who approached Jesus that day taken heed to the example of the men of Nineveh, and had repented first at the teaching of John the Baptist and later of Christ, then the question of a Sign from Jesus would never have entered their minds.

This failure to repent was not the only condemnation of that generation, for the Lord Jesus proceeded :

“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it ; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” (Matt. 12, v. 42.)

This again is an example unique of its kind. A powerful and prosperous queen is prepared to leave her people and her country for the distant city of Jerusalem, that she might hear of the wisdom of Solomon. Throughout all ages, her example has been preserved as an exhortation to all who would seek divine wisdom. Alas, in Christ's day there were not many “Queen of Sheba's,” prepared to make great sacrifice to hear the wisdom of a greater than Solomon—so few, in fact, that Jesus had to declare, “The queen of Sheba shall rise up with this generation, *and shall condemn it.*”

Once again the mind pictures those Scribes and Pharisees as they sought to tempt Jesus with the demand “Master, we would see a sign of thee.” Little did they appreciate that the one they were addressing was “a greater than Solomon,” but had they shown a fraction of the zeal for wisdom as was shown by the Queen of Sheba, they would have soon discovered this, and caused to exclaim “Behold the half was not told us.” Most certainly they would not have arrogantly demanded of Jesus a sign as proof of His authority. His wisdom would have convinced them of His identity as the Messiah of Israel. How powerful was this indictment of Christ! Here before him was a generation which neither sought wisdom from one greater than Solomon, nor showed repentance at the teaching of one greater than Jonas. Yet they had the temerity to ask for a “sign”! Is it surprising that Jesus should rebuke them as an “evil and adulterous” generation?

What of Today?

What of the present generation? Is it any better than the one in which Jesus lived? Would the same condemnation apply now? Just as in the days of the Scribes and Pharisees, there is in the world “a form of godliness.” Many, many sects teach “the time draweth near,” whilst a host of monthly magazines carry articles on “The Signs of the Times.” But how does it appear to the Lord Jesus in heaven? Would the same rebuke be heard:

“ O, ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times ? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign . . . ” ?

Here is a challenge facing *every* one who professes to be a brother or a sister of Christ, and to be awaiting His return. Let each ask himself, or herself, Is my search for divine wisdom such that “ the queen of the south shall rise up ” and condemn *me* ? She came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ! And again, let the question be asked, Is my response to the teaching of the Scriptures such that “ the men of Nineveh shall rise up ” and condemn *me* ?—for they repented in sackcloth and ashes at the preaching of Jonas !

Unless we are prepared to rise up and take to heart the examples of the Queen of Sheba and men of Nineveh, then why consider the “ Signs of the Times ” ? Would not the divine judgment once more apply :

“ A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ” ?

J.R.M.

The History of the Truth in the Latter Days

“Christadelphians” and “Re-union.”

It is now over one hundred years since Dr. John Thomas was led to the Truth and delivered from all counterfeits. Some fourteen years were spent in this process, and at last when he came to realise that his previous immersion was into a sect which had not the Truth, he knew that this was not a baptism. He took a most courageous and faithful step. There being no Body of believers possessed of the Truth, he arranged for his baptism by himself, except for the necessary aid of being put under the water. The account of this is given in “The Life and Work of Dr. Thomas,” written by Robert Roberts.

“Dr. Thomas came to the conclusion that he was an unbaptised man ; that when he was (previously) immersed he was immersed into a sect merely, and not into Christ; that being ignorant at that time of the one faith and one hope, he was yet in sins. Accordingly the doctor asked a friend to accompany him to the water, and there addressed him in the following terms: ‘I desire you to immerse me. All I ask of you is to put me under the water, and pronounce the words over me, ‘Upon confession of your faith in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, I baptise you into the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.’ I don’t ask you for any prayer or any ceremony. All that is necessary I will do for myself, except the mechanical part

of putting me under the water, and your utterance of these words.'

"With this understanding, the doctor's friend immersed him. The doctor did not ask for re-immersion on the supposition that the administrator could add anything to its efficacy. 'Thus,' says the doctor, 'after a journey of fourteen years, I had found the truth, which, on the ocean I declared I would not rest till I had found, should I be permitted again to tread on terra firma; but, in all this journey I had been directed on a course very different from what I would have selected if I had been left to map it out for myself. I had been entangled into preaching and editing, and taking part in distasteful theological controversies, which, however, in their combined influence, brought me to a knowledge of the one faith, and the obedience which it demands.'"

Such a step meant a severance from previous associates and a loss of position among them. Those who had been close friends in some cases became the bitterest enemies, but with Dr. Thomas nothing mattered but the Truth. In a sense it was like leaving his country and his father's house, and as far as the future was concerned he obeyed the divine call to come out, not knowing whither it would lead him in regard to companions on the way. The immediate prospect was there would be few fellow-travellers, but the loss of members was no deterrent to a spirit like that of Dr. Thomas where the Truth was at stake. Some time after his baptism, he was scorned by his enemies for only having twenty three members with him in Richmond, Va. From such small, insignificant, and unpromising beginnings the Doctor laboured to make the witness to the Truth as powerful as possible, both in the States and later in Great Britain, that others might be delivered from the counterfeits, which could only offer a spurious salvation. To all these his appeal was the same: "Obey the Gospel, with its one hope and one faith, and come out and be separate."

The name "Christadelphian"

Nearly twenty years of intensive labour in the Truth passed before any name was assumed by those embracing the Truth. Often they were spoken of by their enemies as "Thomasites." The name "Christian" was by this time far too non-descript, and, of course, could not be used by the brethren as a distinguishing mark. Like all major developments in the Truth, the circumstances are over-ruled in an unexpected way. No convention was called to consider the choosing of a name, but the choice, or rather the compulsion of taking a name, was forced on the brotherhood by pressure of outside circumstances.

In 1864 America had become involved in the dreadful civil war between the Northern and Southern States. Over half a million men ultimately became involved as combatants. Conscription, or as it is termed in the States, draft, threatened the position of the brethren. What should they do? Perhaps they were helped in their inexperience to realise that Satan's wars are not for brethren by the fact that this was a civil war, and it would not be beyond the possibility of a brother in the South meeting a brother from the North in mortal conflict. Certainly, the brethren in the States were greatly perturbed, and at the point of their extremity, Dr. Thomas arrived from England to offer them practical counsel on how to meet the inquisitional threats of the Federal provost-marshal. The brethren were determined "to be shot at their own doors rather than serve in the armies of the North or South," but nevertheless feared the coming ordeal before a provost-marshal's court, especially as they were so few, and in the eyes of the world not really a religious body at all! They were as nobody.

The American Laws provided for exemption from bearing arms to members of "denominations." What denomination could the brethren claim? It was at this very critical juncture that the wisdom and experience of Dr. Thomas helped them in their difficulty. First, a name had to be chosen to offer a distinguishing mark to the authorities. Dr. Thomas said:

"I did not know a better denomination that could be given to such a class of believers, than 'Brethren of Christ.' This declares their true status; and, as officials prefer words to phrases, the same fact is expressed in another form by the word 'Christadelphians' or (Christou adelphia) Christ's brethren."

Then a certificate was prepared for the ten brethren in Ogle Co. Illinois, to be presented with their appeal. This read:

CERTIFICATE

"This is to certify, that (names of the ten male members) and others constitute a religious association, denominated herein for the sake of distinguishing them from all other 'names and denominations,' Brethren of Christ, or in one word, Christadelphians; and that the said brethren are in fellowship with similar associations in England, Scotland, the British Provinces, New York and other cities of the North and South . . .

"This is also to certify, that the denomination constituted of the associations of ecclesias of this name, conscientiously opposes, and earnestly protests, against 'Brethren in Christ' having anything to do with politics in wordy strife, or arms-bearing in the service of the Sin-powers of the world under

any conceivable circumstances or conditions whatever; regarding it as a course of conduct disloyal to the Deity of Christ, their Lord and King, and perilous to their eternal welfare.

“This is also further to certify that the undersigned is the personal instrumentality by which the Christian Association aforesaid in Britain and America has been developed within the last fifteen years, and that, therefore, he knows assuredly that a conscientious, determined and uncompromising opposition to serving in the armies of ‘the powers that be’ is one of their denominational characteristics. In confirmation of this, he appeals to the definition of its position in respect of war, on p.13 of a pamphlet entitled ‘Yahweh Elohim,’ issued by the Antipas Association of Christadelphians assembling at 24, Cooper Institute, New York, and with which he ordinarily convenes.

Advocates of war and desolation are not in fellowship with them or with the undersigned.”

John Thomas.

The authorities accepted the “official” presentation of the brethren’s case, but knew not that indirectly they were responsible for the choice of a name, which at that time meant just as much as the name “Christian” at Antioch some eighteen hundred years previously.

The name “Christadelphian” now

Ninety years have passed since the insignificant and despised few who held the Truth adopted the name “Christadelphian.” For many years it served as a clear distinguishing mark, and because of this it brought scorn on those who bore it. The acceptance of the name in very many cases meant the loss of work and friends and relations. The old “Christadelphian Magazines” bear testimony to the separateness which was enjoined upon the bearers of the name, for in not a few instances there is recorded, that upon embracing the Truth, daughters had to leave home, sons became outcasts from fathers, families were ostracised in the villages in which they lived. Truly they experienced what Jesus said:

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law . . . And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

(Matt. 10 vv 34-36)

With the growth of numbers and the work of suppressive elements, the name “Christadelphian” is no longer the distinguishing title to a few despised persons, bound together by a common hope.

At the present time there are upwards of twelve sects bearing this name divided from each other, yet each professing that the reward can be obtained in any one of these sects! But as difficult as this is of comprehension from a preliminary consideration, the matter becomes more complex and grave for all the sects when it is realised that amongst these sects it is indisputable that the following heresies and wrong practices are condoned:

Christ's nature was free from the impulses of sin—so that he never really "overcame."

The Bible is only inspired where there was revelation, and in factual matters depended upon a human element liable to err—in a phrase, "Partial Inspiration."

That those enlightened who were not baptised would not be judged.

That the righteous will emerge from the tomb immortal.

That affiance with the alien, and marriage, is permissible.

That "yoking" in Trade Associations and Unions is permissible.

That brethren may go to law for recovery of debts.

That divorce can be obtained in a court of law.

That brethren may vote, take an oath, become councillors, magistrates, mayors, Freemasons; serve in the Police Force and in certain sections of the Army.

That the world's amusements may be enjoyed—smoking, cinemas, theatres.

Taking an overall view of such a situation, where is the distinguishing feature that such are not of this world, and are "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them"? It is no exaggeration to say that a composite picture of Christadelphians of all sects embraces most of the heresies of Christendom and certainly the conventionally respectable pleasures of the world. How sad that the once significant name "Christadelphians" has followed its predecessor "Christian," to mean nothing more in distinguishing a people upholding in all things apostolic doctrine and practice.

It is hoped to trace the history of this sad state of affairs which is no less than a departure from *the* Truth, that light may be thrown on the present convulsions of some Christadelphian sects as they endeavour to achieve "Re-union."

Confusion will be seen to arise from a failure to understand the doctrine of fellowship. How strange and unscriptural is the teaching that various sects are not fit for each other's fellowship because of some doctrinal errors, and yet one and all proclaim that some from each sect may be in the Kingdom, thus suggesting that all are fit for God's fellowship. What a contradiction and what a travesty of truth!

(To be continued . . .)

News from the Ecclesias

Beeston (Notts.)—Adult School Room, Acacia Walk, Beeston.
Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.0 a.m. Sunday School,
2.0 p.m. Bible Class, 3.0 p.m. Thursdays : 7.45 p.m.

Interest was once again shown at our last monthly lecture in August, two present having attended most of the previous lectures. The local paper also published a report: they made the offer, which was accepted, so providing an opportunity to witness further amongst the people in the district.

Our Fraternal Gathering is arranged for October 20th, when again we look forward to experiencing the refreshing which the Father grants to such as endeavour to serve in purity of heart.

We are grateful for the ministrations of Brother J. Smith.

H.J.S.

Criccieth.—Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc. Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.0 a.m. Revelation Study, 3.0 p.m.

The summer season being now over, we are able to reflect on the happy time spent in the company of nearly all the brethren and sisters from the Manchester Ecclesia together with Sister Carter and Sister Lois Carter from America, and we are grateful to them all for their participation in the work.

Several "Christadelphians" from the Midlands have been interested in the leaflets here—and also several other visitors from towns adjacent to Manchester, who have stated their resolve to attend lectures there. We are grateful for being permitted to witness to them.

—per J.R.M.

Eden, New York.—Grange Hall, Church Street. Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.15 a.m. Sunday School, 10.0 a.m. Revelation Study, 1.30 p.m. Bible Class : Mid-week alternately in Forestville and Hamburg.

We are grateful for the Father's care in the safe return of Sister Carter and Sister Lois, and for the blessing granted in the contacts and benefits. An added joy is ours, for Sister Peggy Crossley arrived with them, and we find her presence stimulating and refreshing.

Plans are in hand for a special lecture to be held, God Willing, in Jamestown, N.Y., on September 25th, at 8 p.m.

The Sunday School Picnic was enjoyed by all, at Chestnut Ridge Park, on Saturday, September 1st, the privilege being emphasised by ideal weather, and the wonder of The Creator's handiwork.

J. A. DeF.

Other "News" left over for lack of space