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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

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

As a Little Child

The heart's desire of the Lord Jesus toward His brethren and sisters is expressed in the words to His Father in John 17 : 26—

“And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

With that purpose, all that He taught was to bring them close to His Father and to Himself. As we read His words, then, must they not serve to make us long for His name, and a part in it, and for the love which is the ultimate of such longing?

In Matthew 18 : 1, the question is asked “. . . Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” The Lord Jesus replied, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

How true! Our natural inclination is not to desire to be as a little child, but rather to feel that one has grown in the Truth (which we must do), and that because of this, there is a certain prestige and recognition, also a certain authority given. Is this why the Lord Jesus speaks of a need for being converted, or “turned,” to become as a child? Are there special characteristics of little children which are valuable in His eyes?

It is only necessary to watch a group of children, unspoiled ones, and grown-ups, comparing their actions. A certain simplicity and lack of pride we would notice in the children: a willingness to be led by the grown-ups. This is, then, a quality which we must develop. One who found favor in God's sight, because he was “after God's own heart,” has expressed himself so—

“Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.”

Psalms 131 : 1, 2.

Remembering this song is one of “ascent,” can we find his mind and profit in our journeying Zionwards? He was as a weaned child, which had behaved and quieted himself. A child in the process of being weaned, is restive, rebellious against leaving the milk and the comfort he has known. However, as the struggle of weaning continues, gradually there comes a submission, a quieting, a realization, perhaps, that the change is good. As the process

is accomplished, the child becomes content, quieted, in the new experience.

David had many such experiences, and have not we also, brethren and sisters? As we grow, trials come which for the moment, seem unbearable, and great hindrances, but when submitted to, we are made to know the benefit and by them, our faith is strengthened, our spiritual man is nourished. The underlying idea of the Hebrew word for "wean" is "return" or "reward" as when the mother having brought a child to a certain stage of development is now ready to reward the child with food suited to its more matured growth. And so the original word is sometimes translated "reward" or "benefit" or "deal bountifully" as in Psalm 116 : 7—"Return unto thy rest, O my soul: for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Surely the Lord does deal bountifully with us, His children, even to the placing of us in circumstances which will strengthen and increase our love and dependence on Him.

His Benefits

David continues in Psalm 116 : 12—14, where the same word for weaned is again used, and the response of a heart filled with gratitude and desiring to show it, is seen—

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation . . . I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people."

This brings to mind the words of the Lord Jesus, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Was this not the cup of salvation, the taking of that which means a complete paying of our vows, as David had determined to render? To do this, a putting away of all the impulses of the flesh is required, and a building and feeding for spiritual growth. How significant it is that the Hebrew word for pay is "shalom," peace. He recognized, as we must, that the only real peace comes from a keeping of the covenant which we have made with our Father. Oh, do let us strive to be like David, a weaned child, recognizing the great benefits and desiring with all the heart, to render unto Him our lives, which only can bring us to peace with Him.

Going back, then, to the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18, can we see more clearly why He chose the example of a little child to teach His disciples? His words were—

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Let us try to place ourselves in the position of the disciples as they gazed upon the indicated child. Would not the Lord Jesus' words concerning humility be unmistakably clear? That little child in the midst of Jesus and the disciples, would be a picture of humbleness, fearful of doing the wrong thing, seeking only to please the One who spoke to him.

In the endeavour to bring this teaching home to us, we have only to watch a small child—an unspoiled child.

Perhaps one of the first qualities which impress us would be that of responsiveness. When a hand is reached out, immediately the child responds, moved by implicit trust. How precious this reaction is to a father or mother. Can we begin to understand how The Father feels about His little children when He reaches out and finds a ready response?

“A Stranger Will They Not Follow”

Looking again at the little child, we notice how the desire is always to be near the parent or protector. There is such a sense of dependence, of a need for help, that a child wants his mother or father always in sight, ready to cling to. If, as His little children, we can develop this characteristic, would we not please our Father and the Lord Jesus? He spoke a parable about a shepherd and his sheep—

“ . . . The sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and he leadeth them out . . . The sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him . . . ” John 10 : 3—5.

And then the Lord Jesus added, “I am the good shepherd.” Those sheep knew His voice and followed Him, because they were close, seeking His protection, and so we are helped to see what is necessary in order to become true children of God.

An outstanding trait of a young child is guilelessness. How often have we seen a youngster readily confess his wrong-doing to a father or mother, when they inquire. And how different as they grow older and wiser in the world's ways! Doesn't the heart reach out in delight to this little one who, hiding nothing, confesses wrong? Such we know is the reaction of the Heavenly Father as He watches His children, seeking this quality which endears. In the Revelation (ch. 14 : 4, 5) another aspect of these children is described—

“ . . . These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among

men, being the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile.”

This is our hope, brethren and sisters, but will be fulfilled only if we are able to shake off the wisdom of this world, and become in many ways, as little children. For the eyes of the Almighty are always upon these “little ones,” just as in our own experience, a father’s eyes are always on his children. The Lord Jesus shows us in Matthew 18 : 10—

“ . . . For I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

What a blessed state to be drawn into! His angels encamp around us, if we love Him. And further—

“Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”
(verse 14)

This is the overruling care and love of an all-wise Father, even our Father, brethren and sisters. Can we let the Lord Jesus’ exhortation move us, to reach for that position of being “little ones” in His sight?

“Except Ye Be Converted”

The Apostle Paul reminds us of the great alteration which we must make, in I Corinthians 2 : 14—

“ . . . the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Surely, Paul spoke from experience. He had felt before the journey to Damascus that the “little ones” were foolish, only fit to be despised and persecuted. But what a contrast, as he became converted, himself becoming as a little child, and reaching out in love and spending for the many other “little ones.”

Can the “conversion” in us mean just as great a visible difference? It must, and through becoming altered, we shall grow steadily in spiritual stature; yet, beginning to show these many qualities which please Him, for—

“ . . . Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18 : 3.

J.A.DeF.

The History of the Truth in the Latter Days

“Christadelphians” and “Re-union”

The birth of the Truth as a Body in the middle of the last century was not without travail. Many had become attached to the Body out of interest in the political expositions by the Doctor, a subject on which the Churches and Chapels were both ignorant and silent. Neither had there sprung up the many sects whose stock-in-trade is chiefly in the line of using scripture to show what they think will soon take place in the earth. The Doctor's grasp of these prophecies, his deep insight into apocalyptic symbols, brought a conviction to his discourses on world developments which impressed the many thousands who listened to him. Of these quite a few became nominal members of the Body, glad to have some understanding of the events leading to Christ's coming, but not a little reluctant to give up some of the Church dogmas, acceptance of which at the time denoted a man's respectability in the eyes of his fellows.

It is difficult for one unfamiliar with the religious atmosphere of that time to realise what it meant to discard the doctrine of a “personal devil,” or of the “Trinity” and the “immortal soul.” Those who did were regarded by the kirk or church as heretics, outcasts of God, and were to be ostracised by all “good Christian people.” The Kingdom teaching of the Truth with its solid and real appeal, in contra-distinction to the hazy doubtful fantasy of heaven-going, will make its appeal to thousands; but when it comes to bearing His name “without the gate,” suffering reproach, how few are prepared to walk any more with Him! “Let us have the glorious reality of the Kingdom” is the silent plea of human reasoning, “but without the reproach.” “We do so want to be accounted good fellows by the Church and Chapel people.” Such human reasoning is only calculated to bring spiritual death to the individual who engages in it, and to any community which condones it, as the history of the Truth in the latter days shows so clearly and yet so painfully.

The First Falling Away 1864-66

The manifestation of evil first showed itself in Scotland where kirk influence has always been greater than that of the church in England. A plea was made by one of the members of the Edinburgh Ecclesia for:

The Doctrine of eternal torments.

A storm broke in the assembly, some demanding withdrawal, others arguing for a continuance of fellowship. There followed a series of meetings to discuss the doctrine of “natural immortality”

in relation to the Truth. It was this inherent desire to escape the "pains of death" which was threatening the existence of the Truth, just as happened in the Garden of Eden by the lying philosophy of the serpent who said "Thou shalt not surely die," and which alluring teaching has captivated the whole of Christendom to their everlasting destruction. The discussion lasted three Sundays without any positive results.

One, David Watson, of Dundee, wrote at the time:

"I had never heard, or had paid no attention to the fact that men do not possess immortal souls . . . We allow great liberty of conscience in such matters which are not essentials."

A prominent member at the time was a Mr. George Dowie who took part in the discussions, but refused to say whether he would receive into fellowship persons who at the time of their baptism believed in the immortality of the soul and eternal torments. He refused to admit that the holding of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was inconsistent with the holding of the faith of Christ. He declared that death does not annihilate, and further stated that he believed all heathens would be raised such as the Esquimaux.

To continue in fellowship with such truth-destroying notions would have meant the loss of what had so recently been gained—indeed the Truth itself. Charitable opinion speaks much on such occasions of staying with those who are wrong to help put them right. Such purveyors of a fallacious charity claim that duty to Christ requires it. How far removed are such voices from the voice of Christ, from His Spirit expressed in all the Word of God!

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump . . ." (I Cor. 5 vv. 6-7).

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John vv. 10-11).

Staying with the evil beyond the time required for suitable admonition can only corrupt the good: and is a conduct dishonouring to God and to Christ, and is subversive of the Truth. Accordingly, in 1866, where discussion and appeals failed to convert those in rebellion to the doctrine of Christ, the only Christ-duty was to withdraw.

The Birmingham Ecclesia in fulfilment of this duty passed the following resolution:

“That the Ecclesia, having heard read to them, and having considered the report of a discussion on the bearing of the immortality of the soul on the one faith, which took place on Sunday, April 8th, Sunday, April 15th, and Sunday, May 6th (1866) among those in Edinburgh, styling themselves “Baptised believers in the Kingdom of God,” and meeting in Union Hall, 98 Southbridge, the Ecclesia consider it their duty, as witnesses of the truth, to disavow with the so-called “Baptised believers in the Kingdom of God,” and requests the secretary to write to George Dowie, the Secretary of the community in question, apprising him for the information of himself and the said community of this their solemn decision.”

Commenting on this painful but necessary experience for the preservation of the Truth, Robert Roberts wrote:

“The friends we had left contended some of them for the existence of a personal supernatural devil of some kind, and others denied that the Lord would dispense life and death to his people in judgment at his coming, maintaining that all of them would come forth from the grave immortal and enter into life eternal, and that the only question to be settled between the Lord and them would be the question of their rank and position in the Kingdom.”

“Fellowship”—The Underlying Issue

Robert Roberts writing of the division, which inflicted much anguish upon him because of his personal connections with Edinburgh, says:

“A strong issue was taken on the subject of requiring the rejection of error as a condition of fellowship. Our Doweite friends thought it sufficient that truth in its positive elements should be admitted.

“At first sight, it might appear superfluous, and even unwarrantable, to set forth points of non-belief as basis of faith, but a moment’s reflection will dissipate this impression, and reveal the negative side of faith to be of equal value with the positive.

“Every affirmative proposition has a converse. Every yes has a no, and if a man is not prepared to accept that “no” it shows his “yes” is not worth much. For instance, if a man profess to believe in the God of Israel, he is bound to be

able to say that he does not believe in the gods of the heathen. If he were timorous about affirming that latter, would it not show that his belief in the God of Israel was no belief in the real sense, but merely a fragment of polytheism, which recognised different gods for different nations?"

Those who talk about the present need being the preaching of positives in order not to offend the worldly listener would do well to weigh over these weighty words, and also those which follow (written at the same time by Robert Roberts).

"There is a negative as well as a positive side to the faith in our day, for the simple reason that there is a spurious faith to be destroyed before the true faith can enter the mind . . .

"One of the first acts of a valid profession of the truth is to repudiate "the profane and old wives' fables" which abound in the disguise of truth. If a man shrink from the rejection of the fictions of so-called Christendom, it is a sure sign that his apprehension of the verities of the gospel is very weak, if it is not altogether *non est*. Positive belief (that is full assurance of faith) on one side necessitates and produces positive non-belief on the other. A man heartily believing the truth will heartily reject error; and if he does not heartily do the latter it is proof that he is incapable of heartily doing the former."

Going back to the issue before the brotherhood, whether it were right to fellowship the various errors of Doweism, Robert Roberts speaking of those who would only affirm the faith and not reject the errors put forward by those falling away wrote:—

"They wound it in its tenderest part; they rob it of its principal glory; they deny its chief testimony of itself, viz., that without it a man cannot be saved. They insult it by saying in effect, 'Yes, these things are true, but they are of no particular consequence; a man may be saved without them.'

"It is here that Doweism is most hateful. It makes a profession of the truth, but covertly gives it the lie. It kisses it with the mouth, and with the hand stabs it to death. In words it protests friendship and agreement, but in actual working it makes greater havoc than the adversary."

Such were the words of the forthright upholder of the truth at a time of grave crisis, when indeed the existence of the truth was imperilled; and Robert Roberts recognised that "division" in such circumstances was not only right but absolutely necessary "that those that are approved might be made manifest." He wrote of this painful but necessary step for the truth's sake:—

“’Tis ours to abide by the truth, measuring all men and things by it, and accepting every issue to which it guides us. Division and bitterness, even to fire, were foretold long ago as the result of the truth’s working among men; we therefore need not be discouraged at realising them in an unexpected form now.”

Dr. Thomas’s comments on the action of Robert Roberts must have been most sustaining to a young man of twenty seven, drawn into battle for the truth’s sake with those old enough to be his father. The Doctor had previously written that the leaders of the falling-away in Scotland, “Duncan, Dowie, Fordyce and Co. were blind leaders of the blind.” In writing to Robert Roberts commending his attitude, the Doctor wrote:—

“You are right” adding that a line must be drawn “between faithful witnesses and pretenders in Britain.”

That line was drawn when the division took place, and the division will be regarded by those having the spirit of the truth as a God-sent provision for the salvation of the Truth from the grievous errors of Christendom. In such minds there will be no lament that division came, but gratitude, even if mixed with sadness that those called to the truth should show so soon a lack of appreciation of so great a treasure. Better that friends, relatives and numbers be lost rather than the “pearl of great price.”

Modern “Christadelphians” and this division On which side are they?

To many minds the word “division” only speaks of feuds occasioned by clashing personalities, and so should never take place; but if they do, the sooner they are forgotten the better.

The foregoing history of the Truth in the latter days and the faithful application of scriptural principles shows clearly that division meant no less than the saving of the Truth. If this were a correct and scriptural view as held by Doctor Thomas and Robert Roberts in 1864-6, then it must still be the same today. If any oppose the actions of those faithful brethren now, then on whose side do they place themselves—with the faithful who withdrew, or those “pretenders” who had obviously fallen away? The fact that the events took place ninety years ago should not be allowed to diminish the importance of this question. Only the apologist for error will wish to dismiss the matter with such generalities as, “Well, they are all dead.” and “I know nothing about the matter. Why bother?” Such expressions may sound plausible and may even sound charitable when accompanied by expressions such as, “We

are not to judge," but they overlook completely the vital issues involved amounting to no less than the preserving of the Truth.

The descendants of those who fell away in Scotland drifted as would be expected into all sorts of speculations opposed to the "wholesome words of Christ," and later in the course of their migration back into the world joined hands with "Christadelphians" who became known as "Suffolk St. Christadelphians." Writing of it is necessary to show how "Christadelphians" of this group regard the various personalities of the Division of 1864-6. In 1939 there was published an article on "The Story of the Truth" by a member of Suffolk St. Under the caption of "The Pioneers" appear these words relevant to the deliverance of the brotherhood from Dowieism.

"The Story of the Truth—The Pioneers"

"By the term "The Truth" we understand nothing new, but a combination, lost through recent centuries, of harmonious Scriptural Truth, with the elimination of Error. For this we are indebted to John Thomas, M.D. of England, and later of America . . . Dr. Thomas landed in Liverpool on 1st June 1848 . . . In Glasgow . . . admirers, and also opponents, arose rapidly, as in the adjoining towns, and especially in Edinburgh.

"In persons, the premier place, as effective and lasting pioneer must in honesty be given to George Dowie of Edinburgh, 1824-1895, a man of sympathy, tact and action, a pioneer from the year 1849. In his house on Sunday, March 27th, 1853 was held the first Memorial Service of those holding the views of Dr. Thomas . . . There was in Edinburgh the Norrie family (Robert Roberts married a member of this family, Jane Norrie), headed by old Bro. Robert Norrie, a man of quiet disposition . . . There were with other stalwarts in Edinburgh, James Cameron, Grierson, Gordon Mitchell, William Laing." (Some of these are mentioned by Robert Roberts as supporting the heretical teaching of George Dowie).

The same writer who extols these as pioneers for the Truth, who in fact were guilty of undermining it, speaks of Robert Roberts as follows:—

"Of Robert Roberts one speaks with diffidence: Notwithstanding his zeal and many good qualities . . . he was not in favour in the later years in Edinburgh. His autocratic methods were not those which met with Scottish favour."

On which side is this "Christadelphian"? This is not at all a personal issue. The evidence is overwhelming that this "Christa-

delphian” and many of his Suffolk St. members uphold those who fell away from the Truth, as “pioneers,” and the one who defended the truth at the time is branded as a trouble maker and the cause of division, who according to Scripture should be avoided.

Now that “Temperance Hall Christadelphians” have decided by majority to join “Suffolk St.” where do they stand on this vital issue? For truth or against truth? For Christ, or against Christ?

In November 1956 issue of “The Christadelphian” appears an article entitled “One Hundred Years Ago.” Reference is made to a visit to Edinburgh and the discovery of certain manuscripts which throw light on the early work of Doctor Thomas. Then there is an appreciation of one of the early members of the Edinburgh Ecclesia, a Bro. John Forman who died in 1858. Concluding the article are these words:—

“The Edinburgh Church was rent in twain in later years. Humanly speaking, much of the trouble might have been saved had he (John Forman) lived, but we can at least say he was relieved of much worry.”

Perhaps the writer of these words is ignorant of the facts, that division came to Edinburgh to deliver the truth from pernicious and subversive errors; and so is not to be regretted. Are the “Temperance Hall Christadelphians” now being led to those, who, in these matters of truth and error, uphold the wicked and condemn the righteous?
(to be continued).



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

In recent times, much exhortation and encouragement has been granted the children of God from a most unexpected source. Nearly ten years ago, an Arab goatherd dwelling near the northern shores of the Dead Sea, accidentally stumbled across a cave containing ancient biblical manuscripts. Since then, no fewer than ten other caves containing scrolls have been discovered in the vicinity, which was once thought, on account of its barrenness, to be the site of the ancient city of Gomorrah.

It now seems clear that these Scrolls, older by a thousand years than any previously found, formed part of a comprehensive

library belonging to a small community of people which dwelt in that desolate region approximately two thousand years ago. Not all the manuscripts are biblical. Some are commentaries on portions of Scripture whilst others recite various rules and commandments which had to be rigorously observed by members of the community, now believed by many to be the Essenes, a strict religious sect mentioned by Josephus. Since their discovery, archaeologists, philologists, palaeologists, and many other "ologists" have been busily engaged in examining and deciphering these most remarkable manuscripts which for twenty centuries have so miraculously escaped the devastations of insect life and of the elements. Every month, new papers and new books are being published, at the same time fanning a host of controversies which have arisen in connection with the Scrolls. Little did that Arab goatherd realise what his "chance" discovery would lead to!

To the servants of God, the unearthing of these Dead Sea Scrolls can only be interpreted as yet another act of kindness on the part of the Creator himself. They certainly provide welcome encouragement for His children "on whom the ends of the ages are come." From the mass of information which has come to light, two things stand out. Firstly, the Bible has been completely vindicated before its many critics: one of those engaged in deciphering the Scrolls recently confessed that "every single book on biblical criticism will now have to be re-written"! Secondly, it is now very evident from some of the non-Biblical scrolls that their owners devoutly believed the Old Testament Scriptures, and had one great hope—the coming of the Messiah of Israel. They believed He would come at a time when violence should cover the earth, and that in the conflict which would follow, He would take an active part, after which, with the help of His followers, there would be a righteous reign of peace.

Their whole lives centred around this expectation which they seemed convinced would be fulfilled in their own day and generation. For this reason they had separated themselves from all mankind, endeavouring to live as a holy community ready and prepared for the great day of God. Whether these people had the Truth in all its purity, it is difficult to say, nor do we know whether those who were contemporary with Jesus recognised Him as the Messiah. One thing is clear: they knew the only hope for the world lay in the coming of the Messiah, an event they expected at any time. Perhaps this fervent belief accounts for the unusual way in which they buried their dead. Many graves have been unearthed in the vicinity of the caves. Each was the essence of simplicity, so unlike the ornamentation found in ancient tombs, and in every case the body had been laid pointing north—south, with the head toward

the south and the feet towards the north. There must have been some purpose in arranging for the head to always point south. Perhaps it was a witness to their conviction that "God shall come from Teman (south)."

No one now awaiting the coming of Christ can fail to experience a throb of excitement at these discoveries, realising that here was a community of people separated from the world, and awaiting the "great and terrible day of Yahweh," when the Sun of righteousness shall come with healing in his wings. What a powerful reminder that truth, the Truth, never changes, and that in every age, true believers have looked forward with faith and hope to this great day when the Messiah should come. Yet whatever excitement may be ours as the secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls are revealed it would hardly be comparable to the excitement which their owners would experience could they be permitted a glimpse of the earth as it is today. To their eyes, undulled by familiarity, the world panorama would be frightening and staggering as they perceived how inexorably the divine prophecies of the last days are being fulfilled. They would recognise the mighty King of the North, ready to come down upon the people "gathered out of many nations." They would be impressed at the sight of the Arab nations, so determined in their bitter hatred to remove Israel from the promised land, precisely as the Scriptures foretell. But perhaps above all else, they would be overwhelmed at the state of the world as a whole, bringing forcibly to mind that time of old when God decided to intervene with a flood.

"As it was in the days of Noah"

This striking reference to one of the earliest events recorded in Scripture is worthy of careful attention, for it was in answer to the specific demand of the Pharisees as to when the Kingdom of God should appear, that Jesus declared:—

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." (Luke 17).

Through the kindness of God, the record of Noah's day has been preserved, enabling us to discover exactly what it was like at that time. We learn that:—

"The wickedness of man was great in the earth . . . Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . The earth also was corrupt before God . . . And the earth was filled with violence."

Is it surprising that the record should continue with:—

“And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt?”

Here, then, is a pattern of what the world is to be like at the time of the end, as implied in the words “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” True, there has always been violence in the earth, and there has always been corruption, but at the time of the end, these words of Scripture are to shine with unprecedented brilliance. Were this not so, then Christ’s warning about the days of Noah would lose all its power.

One wonders what that ancient community of people who dwelt by the shores of the Dead Sea, would feel like, were they allowed a peep at the world today. The earth filled with violence! The wickedness of man great upon the earth! Even in this last week or two, these words have taken on a more real and significant meaning. The world is fast becoming a seething mass of hatred, in danger of exploding into open bloodshed at any minute. The history of Noah’s day is surely being repeated, giving a new urgency to the words addressed by God to Noah:—

“And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt . . .

“And God said . . . The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence . . .” (Gen. 6).

The power of this divine warning can easily be lost on account of familiarity, especially so in view of the world wars of recent years. It is easy for the mind to dismiss this reference to Noah with an assenting nod that here is just another example of Scripture fulfilment. To do this completely overlooks the powerful warning concealed in the words of Christ which follow:—

“They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.”

Here is a sharp reminder that Christ is to come as a thief in the night, taking the world by surprise just as did the flood in the days of Noah. There is to be no advance warning of the day and the hour. So unexpected will be Christ’s return that all the “rudiments” of life will continue until the very day He comes. What a signal warning is here for those who echo the question, “Tell us, Master, what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?” Upon such, devolves a most urgent duty which should supersede all others—that of being absolutely prepared for the coming of the

Bridegroom. With what diligence and singleness of heart should the work be pursued of extracting from the Word oil for the lamp, bearing in mind that many will be found lacking.

The importance which Jesus attached to this example of Noah is apparent from the fact that He immediately proceeded to refer to the days of Lot, when similar conditions prevailed. In his days, too, they “did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold.” But the same day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven! Those two cities of wickedness, Sodom and Gomorrah fell in a day, taken by surprise—“as a thief in the night.”

Impressive as this warning is, there is an even greater one for all who look for salvation in the return of Christ. As the mind travels back to those far-off days of Lot, one thought and one fear should predominate :—

“Remember Lot’s wife”

How these words of Christ should ring in our ears, implying as they do that a real danger exists of being like Lot’s wife. Here was one mercifully preserved from the destruction of Sodom, only to suffer divine retribution in another way. To all believers, she is held up as one whose heart was with the world, whatever her profession may have been. Is there any greater danger these days? It is easy to proclaim we are living in the last days, to decry the world for its wickedness, to give lectures on the “Signs of the Times,” and to rejoice in the fulfilment of scriptural prophecy—and yet for one’s heart to be in the world. Oh! the warning, “Remember Lot’s wife.” How we should strive to heed it as never before!

J.R.M.

News from the Ecclesias

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.

Contacts continue in Vancouver, B.C., and it is planned to advertise in several papers in that area in the hope that some who are disturbed may respond.

There have been two requests for further literature resulting from the articles on fellowship enclosed with the October magazines. Thus, in the mercy of God, the witnessing takes place and the warnings are given.

J.A.DeF.

Manchester.—Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.30 a.m. Lecture, 3.15 p.m.
Thursdays : 7.15 p.m. at Onward Hall, Deansgate. Law of Moses Class : Second Saturday each month at 3.30 p.m.

The brethren and sisters have been actively engaged recently in the issuing of a new pamphlet of which 10,000 copies have been printed, entitled "A Key to the Scriptures—What is it? Where can it be found?" The object of this pamphlet is to provoke enquiries from those who have a deep regard for the Scriptures but are baffled as to what is the divine message. It is hoped in this way we shall be led to help some who are to be called to the Truth in these closing days of Gentile times.

Correspondence is taking place with a number in the endeavour to show in a spirit of meekness where The Truth can be found.

W.V.B.

Enfield—6 Chase Hill, Enfield.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11.30 a.m. Sunday School 2.30 p.m.

Recently we greatly welcomed Brother Smith from Beeston at the Table. These visits do much to help us, drawing us closer to each other in true love and unity. We thank Brother Smith for his ministrations.

Encouragement is felt by the progress of the children at Sunday School. We are grateful to the Father for being able to take part in this work.

M.McD.

(Other "News" next month)