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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

CHRISTENDOM - AND OTHERS - ASTRAY

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NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“Except Ye Repent”

THIS morning we have been listening to the words of Jesus. His words are of God, to our brethren of His time, and to ourselves today. Were He personally here in the midst of us this morning, would we not listen ever so carefully, moved by His spirit, by the power of His words, pulled by the great love which is seen in His work? Let us, brethren and sisters, listen just so. He **is** here, in spirit; we can feel His power, His love, His presence to help us to be closer to Him and to His Father.

We hear Him speaking:

“Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”

(Luke 13 : 2-3).

Further to help, Jesus used another example:

“Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, . . . think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (verses 4-5).

We may think of repentance as only being necessary in those seeking the Truth, or those in offense from the fellowship of the Table. But is this all?

Let us look at the full meaning of repentance. We find that it is made up of two words—“to think” and “differently”—helping us to see how repentance involves a “thinking differently.” Is there any one of us who does not need repentance, does not need to think differently? Our natural thinking, our instinctive reactions, are of the flesh, for we are fleshly creatures. We are called by God to overcome that fleshly mind, causing in us a continual warfare — a struggle to put it down, to conquer. In this intense conflict, we sometimes fail. We sometimes think and react in the old way—the way of the flesh, which we are striving to leave behind. When we do, we transgress, we offend God. He, in His love and mercy, shows us these failures, gently, kindly, and looks for a “thinking differently.” Yet, He still moves in love towards us, but more forcibly, more positively. For what reason—to punish? No! But to help us perceive the need and so to move to repentance — to “think

differently.” We know that God in His mercy does not condemn for mistakes, for wrongs, for sins we may do. If He did, who could get the victory? He does, however, condemn for refusal to change, to “think differently,” to confess and to repent when the wrong becomes apparent.

“Joy in Heaven”

To help us to see more clearly this righteousness of God, let us listen to Jesus:

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance” (Luke 15 : 7).

Is there any one of us which can say that we need no repentance, that we do not ever need to “think differently”? We must acknowledge that we do all sin, and therefore, must all know repentance. Yet how hard it is, for we are naturally proud, naturally inclined to feel that we are all right.

We can acknowledge we may have made a mistake, but do we truly perceive the reason behind the mistake, which caused us to be wrong, and do we think differently? When we do submit our hearts in this way, what peace it can bring, and as Jesus has said, what joy is in heaven!

To help further in this consideration, we read in Luke 13 : 6-9, where Jesus uses the parable of the fig tree to illustrate the long-suffering of God toward His people. The fig tree did not bring forth fruit, and the owner said, “. . . cut it down . . .” but the dresser of the vineyard said,

“Lord, let it alone this year also, till I dig about it and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”

If after all this care, there were no fruit, no repentance, the tree was to be destroyed. The Lord Jesus was speaking of Israel, who failed to repent, but He could be speaking of ourselves as well, for we are continually being tried to see if we will bring forth fruit. If we do, if we can think differently, realizing our failures, how pleasing to God. If not, He is long-suffering, extending His love to us, working and hoping that there will be a change, in thinking. Finally, however if there is no change, the command of God is, “cut it down.” We have seen it in our own experiences; we see it all through the Word of God to warn us.

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In the words of the Lord Jesus read this morning, how clearly we are shown the danger of not being able to think differently. When the woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years was healed by Jesus, the ruler of the synagogue said:

“ There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day ” (Luke 13 : 14).

Here was one who was versed in the Law, in the Word of God given to His people to bring them to Christ. But how lacking in understanding! How wrong in spirit — the fruits of refusing to think differently. He could not see that here was a work of healing on the sabbath, which is the very essence of the sabbath for which all the faithful look. What a complete failure to perceive the love and mercy of God accomplished through Jesus. Jesus said to him,

“ Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass . . . and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham . . . be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day ” (verses 15-16).

The flesh had the upper hand in that ruler, so that he could neither perceive nor think in the way of God, but only in his own way. He was truly unable to think differently, and so was condemned by Jesus—a telling warning to ourselves.

Jeroboam

The Word of God is full of these testimonies which are helps to us, warnings of danger, exhortations toward righteousness. In the reading in I Kings 13, we have the example of Jeroboam, a wicked king of Israel. A man of God came and warned Jeroboam to repent and gave a sign from God (verse 3):

“ . . . this is the sign that the Lord hath spoken; Behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes . . . poured out.”

Did Jeroboam repent? No! He cried out in anger against the man of God, “ Lay hold on him! ” God quickly gave him a further warning: “ And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him ” (verse 4). What a dreadful punishment. How sobering, and how fearful! Yet, in mercy, God still gave opportunity, even to Jeroboam in all his wickedness. He moved to show him the power that could be on his behalf. In answer to Jeroboam’s request, “. . . The man of

God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again . . ." (verse 6). Jeroboam should have been profoundly touched, and should have shown repentance. But the record is:

"Jeroboam returned not from his evil way . . . And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth" (verses 33, 34).

As the fig tree in the parable, the house of Jeroboam was to be cut down.

Is not this a grave warning to us, and also a help? He did not prosper in his evil way, in his failure to think differently concerning the sin in which he was entangled. Nor will any prosper if there is a failure to repent. As with Jeroboam, evil starts out in a very small way, in departing from the way of God. His kindness reveals this to us, that we may perceive it, repent of it, and return to His way. If we do not, the departure continues, but not without warning from God such as Jeroboam knew, until all is lost, and the opportunity to think differently is gone. How sobering the thought! What care it should instil in us, that we may be alert to His hand, and be quick to repent, for repentance is the whole essence of our need and desire for redemption; and for the need of all those who have been called to it, from the beginning of God's purpose.

Jeremiah's Warnings

This is again shown to us in the record concerning Israel in Jeremiah's time. In chapter 44, we read of those left in Jerusalem after Nebuchadnezzar's capture of the city, and who ultimately went down into Egypt to escape the wrath of God. Jeremiah went with them, to witness to them of their idolatry and refusal to repent. God spoke to Israel:

" . . . I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate" (verse 4).

But they would not hear; they would not repent; and so they were cut off and destroyed in Egypt—a sure witness that none can escape His wrath. Yet even in this deplorable situation, we read in verse 28,

"Yet a small number that escape the sword (a remnant) shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah."

This is our hope, a possibility of redemption for those who will think differently, for would we not feel that those allowed to return to the

land from Egypt would have repented? How true are the words of Peter, and we may rejoice in them—

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise; . . . but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to **repentance**” (II Peter 3 : 9).

Let us, then, as we consider the help given so simply and powerfully from His Word, **think differently**, recognizing the need to forsake the wrongs done through allowing the flesh to show itself in our doings. Let us be quick to acknowledge wrong, no matter how small; let us hate it for what it is—the flesh, exhibiting its ugly nature. **Let us make our thinking different!** If we do, we shall know His loving care and mercy, His patience and justice.

We may have felt that repentance was a need in important or outstanding failures; but, brethren and sisters, is it not clearer as we have considered the help given by the Lord Jesus?

Thinking differently is our life's work; our daily, indeed hourly task, moving towards a shaping of the mind from one of the flesh, to the vitally different thinking and outlook which is of His Spirit, and which alone is pleasing to Him, and so brings us to peace.

J.A.De.F.

Christendom — and others — Astray (91)

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of Priests and an holy nation.”

Exodus 19 : 5-6.

EVERY command of God is good, and contains the greatest benefits for those who observe them. In the Ecclesia in the wilderness we have seen that the ‘Statement of Faith’ required by God was:

“All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient.”

Exodus 24 : 7.

It will be profitable to spend a little time considering the great blessing in this, so that obedience might be through loving appreciation and not by compulsion.

God, who demanded this 'Statement of Faith' from those who constituted the Ecclesia in the wilderness did not place them in a position where they could not know "all that God had said." We have seen the great care God exercised in giving the Law through Moses, and in addition making provision for the understanding of this Law in all its application to life through the Levites, the judges and the priests. By this means every brother and sister could know without any doubt "all that the Lord God had said."

It will be helpful to appreciate how good was this 'Statement of Faith' by which God's people were bound to Him. Every evil in Christendom and in the world at large can be traced to a departure from—"All that the Lord hath said." God's ways are perfect. He reveals in His Law how a people might live together in a loving peace. By this means He shows how the dreadful qualities which are part of our nature and cause strife, misery and bloodshed can be subdued. There is not an evil in the world which is disruptive of goodwill and peace that could not be controlled by an acknowledgment of—"All that the Lord hath said."

Christendom believes that by its own wisdom it can regulate the life of the families of the earth. They have forgotten, if they ever knew, that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Consequently, all in Christendom are lost in philosophical speculations, and suffer untold miseries as they endeavour to provide a substitute for God's way of directing life.

The 'others'—those who once had the Truth—have similarly failed. Having known the Truth their failure is all the more lamentable. They no longer believe that it is possible to know—"All that the Lord hath said," that they might be obedient. Although they may not realise it, they charge God by speaking of "open questions" with failing to keep His promise that He will reveal His will in all matters that He might be obeyed in everything. Like Christendom, the 'others' now attempt to direct their own ways on most matters with the result that they are a dismembered body, a "house divided against itself," and suffer like the world from many evils—from philosophical speculations, contentions, and a total lack of unity and "peace which passeth all understanding." The body of the 'others' is in a dreadful state. Dismembered and disfigured by suppurating ulcers of unbelief in the literal serpent and that Adam was the first man, and the indulging in nearly all the worldly practices which would have been condemned by the pioneers of the Truth . . .

There is no hope for such a decaying and decomposing body. The only hope is for individuals who will "come out" and appreciate that—

Division is a Divine necessity.

From the beginning the work of God has been to separate a people from the rest of mankind for Himself. This purpose was indicated in the first work of creation when God divided the light from the darkness. How pertinent it is that throughout the world, every day, there is a reminder of this divine purpose. The call to Noah and his deliverance, the call to Abraham, the separation of Israel from Egypt are great and telling memorials of the way God has worked, and does work, in separating the light from the darkness.

It is supposed that the 'others' would agree that those who are baptised into the Truth condemn the world as darkness and become joined to God through separation from the world. But it is important that this truth should be appreciated in its full meaning, and not just accepted as part of a catechism. Amongst the 'others' it has become customary to speak of only "preaching positives," and not to offend by condemning. Such an idea robs any teaching of real power. Jesus makes it plain in word and example that when the light is raised the darkness is condemned. When the 'others' are referred to the trenchant writings of Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts, and how they condemned the darkness, the excuse is made that times have changed and consequently it is no longer appropriate to condemn. What a confession! Human nature and ways have not changed. Does not the condemnation which Jesus heaped upon the ecclesiastical system which was to develop in the time of the end still apply? If the Lord had taught that times would change and modify the need of condemnation would He have spoken in such dreadful terms of that system which was to deceive the whole world? Certainly not. Deliverance of those in the darkness can only be achieved by condemning the darkness through the upholding of the light.

Assuming then that it is clear that in coming to the Truth there must be division from darkness, what is to be done when darkness, that is error, invades the Truth? Would God wish that those who have been delivered from darkness should return to the darkness? It is in this connection that the divine purpose of division is seen. Just as there must be division from darkness in coming to the Truth, so there must be division from darkness to remain in the Truth.

For—

"What communion hath light with darkness? God hath said I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

“Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, . . . and I will receive you.”

2 Corinthians 6 : 14-17.

God does not dwell in darkness. God is light and His presence will only be with those who “walk in the light.” “If we . . . walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth,” and God will not be with us. Such are “perishing,” and unless they are “gained” will perish finally. The commands of Jesus are simple to endeavour to restore those who are overcome by error or darkness. He shows that if there is failure to ‘gain’ then there must be withdrawal and such are to be regarded as “the heathen man and the publican.” This is the divinely prescribed way of dealing with the error of darkness for the preservation of the lightstand. For some reason best known to themselves some of the ‘others’ whilst consenting to this as applying to individuals, cannot see that it also applies to a number who embrace the error of darkness. They speak in unscriptural terms of the evil of a “wholesale withdrawal,” and that such is “crude and cruel surgery.” God demands that all error whether in one or many be dealt with in the present time in the same way. Is error made any better by a multitude embracing the darkness? All error is error whether espoused by one or many. It is darkness and must be dealt with as such according to the commandments of Christ if the lightstand of the Ecclesia is to be preserved.

Division, whether it be in one leaving the world, or separating from those who return to darkness is divinely required. Those who speak otherwise know not the Truth and are only the voices of darkness.

The obscuring of the light on division by reference to “Ecclesial autonomy.”

By “ecclesial autonomy” is meant that each Ecclesia is the master and controller of its own affairs. This is quite a satisfactory arrangement with regard to the ordinary business of ecclesial affairs, and was advocated by Robert Roberts as being a good principle for this purpose. Does it apply, however, to matters of belief? It is now suggested by the ‘others’ that this is the case. Referring to the debilitated state of the ‘others’ a correspondent suggests the setting up of a “Church Council” with a view to advising on matters which are rending that body. In this connection it is said that “Ecclesial autonomy is an important and scriptural principle of our community,” presumably meaning that each “Ecclesia” must be responsible for itself in matters of faith and belief.

This means that the doctrine of fellowship has been completely

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lost and is confined geographically within the limits of each "Ecclesia."

From what has been said it must be clear that God never intended that if an Ecclesia embraced darkness this should not be the concern of the rest of the Ecclesias. The reader is referred to the publication "The History of the Truth in the Latter Days," in which it will be seen that the pioneers of the Truth accepted responsibility for **all** Ecclesias. When it was so necessary for a division in connection with the removal of the darkening doctrine of Partial Inspiration, every Ecclesia was required to define its position and take its stand. This meant that wherever this doctrine had been embraced, or where there was a refusal to separate from those who had become darkened by this evil teaching, there was division. This was righteous surgery, and instrumental in saving the light of the Truth from darkness.

Let us hearken once more to the Spirit of Christ in the Law on this matter:

"If there be found among you . . . any . . . that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing His covenant,

And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and **inquired diligently** . . .

Then thou shalt bring forth that man or woman . . . and shalt stone them with stones, till they die." Deuteronomy 17 : 2-5.

This was the divine requirement for the removal of darkness from the Ecclesia in the land. The Spirit of Christ seen in this teaching is applicable for today. Wherever there is error their must be diligent inquiry in order to remove the error lest the darkness creeping in will obscure the light.

The true Body is one composed of many members with one head, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this Body, although the members may be separated by many hundreds of miles, God requires that each shall be responsible for all, and all responsible for each. This is a wonderfully protective blessing for the preservation of the Truth, and for the provision of those few who are resolved to be their "brother's keeper."

May there be a healthy appreciation of God's arrangement for keeping the darkness in the darkness and preserving the light in the light. Away then with the philosophy that belongs to the darkness and may some of the 'others' resolve to find the warm and brilliant light of the Truth in the One Body. (To be continued . . .)

Correspondence

Letter from P. A. Stratford, New Zealand.

We thank you for your circular letter of the 15th September, entitled "Important Confidential . . . to Christadelphians."

Though we have not seen your August issue, we may anticipate your reaction to the tragic position, where "Scientists," and others attempt to make the Word of God fit their views and speculations.

We are not conversant with your overall views concerning Christadelphian beliefs, as epitomised in the A.B.S.F. (i.e., without reservations or addendum), and we would be pleased to receive your brief answers to the following:—Do you agree with the above Statement of Faith, and if not, where does it conflict with Bible teaching? Where do you differ from the present "Old Paths" fellowship of Christadelphians? Do you consider it essential for Salvation that one must believe in present possession of the Holy Spirit?

Referring to the Lord Jesus' declaration to Nicodemus (John 3) "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." "That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Does the term Spirit here refer to that change from the human to the Divine nature, following acceptance at the Judgment seat? If we apply it to be concurrent with baptism, that would not necessarily assure one's entry to the Kingdom would it? If we limit its significance to the above change, we may still wholeheartedly believe (as the present writer does) that enlightenment, belief, and obedience here have not resulted without the working influence, the drawing power, and the merciful guidance of the Spirit of God. What more can we claim in the present age?

If we are to attain to the enjoined oneness of mind, the present state of the world in every direction surely warns the time is short.

REPLY

Thank you for your very interesting letter of October 10th, in response to which copies of the August, September, and October issues of our magazines have been sent to you by sea mail.

To help you understand our position may we say that we claim

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to uphold all the original Christadelphian doctrines. With the above magazines we are sending you a copy of our publication "The History of the Truth in the Latter Days," which will show you more precisely our position.

The only reason we do not use the name "Christadelphian" is that this now covers so many worldly doctrines and practices, that it has become as meaningless as "Christian."

To express in a few words the difference between ourselves and the "Old Paths": They believe that there is hope of salvation in any one of the sects of Christadelphians. We do not, because Christ is not divided. There is only One Body—undivided. If the errors are such as to merit division, then they should be serious enough to separate from the fellowship of God.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." 2 John : 9.

By acknowledging such as "brethren" and as part of the "brotherhood" is manifestly a refutation of this divine teaching, and declares in effect that the doctrine, which was denied and caused the division, is of no particular importance. If, because of false teaching the fellowship of God has been lost, then we should be acting unfaithfully to God in pretending that this is not the case. Charitable as we may wish to be, we cannot improve upon the ways of God and the instruction which He has given for our guidance.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is only one Spirit, spoken of as "Holy" when used by God for His eternal purpose. God has not several kinds of Spirits some Holy and some not. Those called to the Truth are begotten by the "Incorruptible Seed" or Word of God. Their birth into the family of God is certainly not of the flesh. Then it must be of the Spirit. This does not mean that these cannot sin or are incorruptible.

The Apostle Paul makes the matter plain when he says:—

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Corinthians 3 : 16.

Speaking later the Apostle says:—

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you." 1 Corinthians 6 : 19.

Now we may have the Spirit of God in earthen vessels, as “the earnest of our inheritance until redemption.”

The “birth of the Spirit” must commence at baptism and the Spirit must be retained throughout probation. Then in the final fulfilment of the words of Jesus there may be a “birth of the Spirit” which will effect the change of our vile bodies to be made unto His glorious body.

W.V.B.

The Gospel

“The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.”

The promises of Abraham and the Fathers.

ON the bank of the river Euphrates, north-east of the Persian Gulf, stood the ancient city of Ur. This was a place of idolatry, for though it was called the city of light, which was the meaning of its name, this was obviously a false claim; therefore its inhabitants walked in the darkness which is the environment of all those who know not the gospel.

This city was thriving in only a matter of a century or two after the flood, in a world that had quickly forgotten the lesson of the days of Noah and had corrupted God’s way upon the earth.

The divine record takes the mind abruptly and dramatically to consider one who turned his back upon the luxurious living of such a place, indeed upon his family, also, because of the call of God to higher things. The record is wonderfully concise in its account:—

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12, vv. 1-3).

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It is not necessary to be told at this point that Abraham believed God, and greatly respected the heavenly counsel, this is explicit in the words:—

“ So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran ” (verse 4).

Haran, it can be stated, as it later came to be known, was the place in the Euphrates valley some 600 miles north of Ur where the kindred of Abraham settled after they all left Ur of the Chaldees. But we see that it was not only necessary to depart from Ur, but from his kindred also in their new place of settlement. The wisdom of this requirement of God is seen in the following quotation:—

“ . . . Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (Hebrew, nahar, river, not deluge) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac ” (Joshua 24, vv. 2-3).

The way of separation then, was the way of protection and preservation from the evils and temptations of false worship, the counterfeit of the Truth, which had so quickly become prevalent. But let it be noted that though Abram responded, it could not have been an easy step to take. It would be a wrench to leave his kindred; and he was already advanced in years when “ he went out, not knowing whither he went ” (Heb. 11, v. 8).

Nevertheless when Abraham crossed the river and made the long and arduous journey of several hundred miles to Canaan he carried with him the glad tidings of God’s promises for his obedience. They can be listed as follows:—

“ I will make of thee a great nation.”

“ I will bless thee and make thy name great.”

“ Thou shalt be a blessing.”

“ I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.”

“ In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

The breadth of such promises it is hoped to later explain when the re-affirmation of them is considered. Sufficient it is at this point to

say that when Abram reached the land of Canaan he was not left to ponder whether it was the place to which God had told him he would be led.

“ . . . the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him ” (Genesis 12, v. 7).

The record reveals that Abraham had his trials in the place of his new environment, but he was also greatly blessed. Famine threatened, so he went down into Egypt for sustenance, only to experience fear, and suffer difficulty as a result of it; but in his trial over the taking from him of Sarai his wife by Pharaoh there was granted an assurance from heaven that God was working with him when God intervened by plaguing the house of Pharaoh; which visitation quickly prompted that potentate to release her.

Abram was made to realise by such circumstances that Egypt was not the place for him, so he returned to the land to which he had been directed, and as the years went by Abram not only prospered but also his nephew Lot. The time came when they had to part because of the increase of their herds, and Abram unselfishly allowed his nephew to make the choice of the direction in which he was to go and Abram would thereupon go in the opposite direction. Lot was ambitious, “ the plain of Jordan was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah,” and so it was to that area in which the inhabitants were so wicked, that Lot directed his steps, later to experience grievous trouble and great loss as a result of his choice, a lesson for subsequent generations to ponder.

It was at this point that God came to Abram again:—

“ And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward.

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee ” (Genesis 13, vv. 14-17).

Here was a tangible promise, not something unsubstantial beyond the skies which counterfeit religion erroneously promises. The land

upon which he walked was to be given to him and to his seed for ever. Here was a promise of everlasting life which would be enjoyed in the possessing of the land to which he had been directed, moreover his seed, was likewise embraced in this magnificent promise. Who was this seed?

The Arabs at the present time claim to be the seed of Abraham, and so they are in one sense as the descendants of Ishmael the son of the Egyptian handmaid of Abram's wife. The Jews are also his progeny. But who was the seed to be promised eternal life in the land of promise? The seed, it can be stated at this point, would be the one foretold, of whom God had promised from the beginning to send, as this article will later endeavour to explain. This promised one would be miraculously foreshadowed in a son that should be born to Sarai in her old age.

It will be necessary for the sake of condensation to pass over further incidents in the life of Abram, but in passing it is thought expedient to touch upon what can be referred to as:—

The Vision of Abram.

The times in which Abram lived were dangerous, there were already confederacies of powers in the earth which clashed with each other. It was at a time of world trouble that God came to Abram again in a vision with the reassuring words:—

“Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15, v. 1).

It was at this time that the childless and now ageing Abram was caused to look up towards the mighty expanse of the star-lit heavens to behold their uncountable number. “So shall thy seed be” was the promise.

“And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it” (Genesis 15, vv. 6-7).

The history of Abram's progeny, the Jews, was then related to him, though as yet he had no child:—

“Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great substance . . . in the fourth generation they shall

come hither again. . . . In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates ” (Genesis 15, vv. 13-18).

But considerable time was yet to elapse, before Abram was to have the promised son around whom these pledges revolved; years in which his faith would be tested. Why the delay? So that when his son Isaac was born, this miracle of their old age would be a great sign of how God would overrule all circumstances to ensure that eventually the “ seed of the woman,” promised in Eden, would come, to be a blessing to the perishing race.

Just before Isaac was born, when Abram was ninety-nine years of age and his wife Sarai ninety the Lord appeared to him again promising that the time had now arrived when he should have the son spoken of. It was at this time that Abram’s name was changed by God to Abraham. No longer to be named “ Father ” but rather “ Father of a multitude ” as his changed name was to mean:—

“ . . . for a father of many nations have I made thee ”

(Genesis 17, v. 5)

Sarai was also to be named Sarah, Princess, for “ kings of people shall be of her.” Further to this Abraham was told again that the land of Canaan in which he dwelt as a stranger would be given to him and his seed after him as an everlasting possession. Again the reiteration of the promise of an eternal inheritance of the earth according to God’s future purpose. The condition of this covenant being:—

“ . . . Walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee ” (Genesis 17, vv. 1-2).

The trial of Abraham.

The years went by and Isaac grew towards manhood. Each formative year that passed for Isaac, brought his father Abraham nearer to the greatest test of his life. Suddenly the trial was upon him. The divine voice called to Abraham with the commandment,

“ Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of ” (Genesis 22, v. 2).

Abraham was faithful, he obeyed. For three days he journeyed with

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his son, upon whom was the sentence of death. Eventually, unaccompanied, they came to the place where the sacrifice was to be performed. Abraham did not hesitate, he built an altar of unhewn stone, bound his son upon it, and took the knife to slay him. He had not faltered, even to the point of giving up the son which God had given to him, and in whom in a measure the promises were bound up. It was at this juncture that the hand of Abraham was stayed by the angel of God, and behold a sacrifice in place of his son was provided, for behind Abraham a ram was found that was caught in a thicket by its horns.

This fulfilling of the test was not without its reward. The promise of God came to Abraham again. A promise more valuable than all the riches of the east and the west:—

“By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice ” (Genesis 22, vv. 16-8).

Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh, or as the divine record explains its meaning, “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.” The eye of Abraham looked down the ages in faith, at this time, to the day when God would send His son, His only son from out of the descendants of Abraham, who would be the acceptable sacrifice, Who would be delivered from death by the hand of God on the third day; and in that very place, Moriah, where Jerusalem was later built, the sacrificial work of the Son of God would be seen. As Jesus later expressed it:—

“ . . . Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad ” (John 8, v. 56).

Abraham understood the gospel, he knew God's promises would not fail. He believed that if Isaac was offered “God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure ” (Hebrews 11, v. 9).

How precious was the gospel promise to Abraham. He knew, as the Apostle Paul later explains it, that the seed to be blessed was Christ:—

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3, v 16).

This seed would “possess the gate of his enemies” slaying those who would curse His coming; taking over the rulership from the present powers of men, who in essence are usurpers over God’s heritage, and therefore enemies of the way of Christ. Through this seed would also come a blessing to all nations, a new age, a new world of righteousness. This seed would also be multiplied, in that in Him, a multitude of faithful ones like father Abraham would become participators for all time in the divine association with Christ, in the Kingdom of God upon earth, after the resurrection, and the gathering together of the “quick and the dead.”

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus: And if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3, vv. 27-29).

(to be continued . . .)

D.L.

News from the Ecclesias

Newtownards, Co. Down, N. Ireland.

The Manchester Sunday School party was attended by Sister Nancy Pinkerton and three members of the S.S. We are grateful for safe passage given, and to those who provided loving hospitality for all. Much gratitude is felt for the re-assurance, counsel and help received in our recent need; in this we have been blessed, and feel again the comfort of the presence of His Spirit, working for good.

J.P.

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Eden, New York. Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Sunday School 1.30 p.m. Bible Class (alternatively Revelation Study) mid-week: Forestville and Orchard Park.

The recent mailing of the circular to Christadelphians has brought thus far, thirteen responses to Eden. Knowing that these warnings are of God now, as they were sent through His servants in all ages, the anxiety is to witness faithfully, whether they hear or forbear.

We gratefully acknowledge the overruling care and guidance which has revealed and delivered from serious difficulties. Israel's God is aware, and never fails. J.A.DeF.

Pentrip, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sunday 11.0 a.m. Sunday School 2.30 p.m. Eureka Study: Thursday, 7.30 p.m.

It is with interest and feeling of encouragement we hear of the interest of some for the things of Truth as a result of recent work carried out.

The attendance of one of us at the Manchester Sunday School Party on Saturday, October 30th, and the help received at the Table the following day has been a source of strength to us, truly a provision of God and of His mercy that we were so able to attend.

Letters also received have afforded much comfort. There has been some discussion here recently with one from Borth-y-Gest with whom we have had contact previously, but the one concerned conveyed the feeling that she was satisfied with her position as a member of the "Witnesses." per D.L.

Manchester. Memorial Hall, M.A..PS. Building, Albert Square, Manchester.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Lecture 3.15 p.m. Thursday, 7.15 p.m., Onward Hall, Deansgate. Saturday Bible Class 3.45 p.m. For dates please refer to plan.

The Sunday School Party was held on Saturday, October 30th, when the subject considered was, "Incidents in the journeys of the children of Israel through the wilderness." The demonstration, aided by the children reciting appropriate verses, dealt with the

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deliverance from Egypt, the passing through the Red Sea, the provision of manna and of water, the blessing of God at Sinai, and the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness.

To help to an understanding of these great blessings the children gathered quantities of a tiny white seed representative of the manna. They were told that the Hebrew word "manna" meant a "gift," and that Israel were not to keep the manna overnight lest it should "breed worms and stink." When this was done in one case real live worms were seen! In a drawing of the landscape of the wilderness there was a rock which when tapped a representation of water came out. This water followed Israel in their wilderness journey as one of the scholars recited from I Corinthians 10, and satisfied the thirst of the people and their cattle. The great blessing of God at Sinai was seen in a drawing of an eagle swooping down from its nest to "bear its young on its wings." This figure was used by the Almighty to show how He looked after His people in the wilderness. To impress on all minds the reality of what befell Israel when they murmured, a vivid drawing was shown of Israel at the time when they were bitten by the fiery flying serpents. There were the dead and dying. Consideration was given to their appeal through Moses, and the instruction of the Lord for a serpent of brass to be fixed upon a pole. This was done and the lesson more clearly understood that those who were evil were like serpents and would see in the crucified serpent a condemnation of themselves. Looking upon the serpent was a confession of wrong and a pleading for mercy which God granted by their being healed from their death-dealing bites. This part of the demonstration brought home to all what God intended to show when Jesus was lifted up even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. We have all received the sting of the serpent and are dying! By looking upon the crucified Son of God we are enabled to see the condemnation of Jesus and of ourselves and find merciful deliverance by being baptised "into His death."

We have been pleased to have Brother and Sister Harrison and Sister Silliter from Nottingham, Sister Williams from Wales and Sister Pinkerton from Ireland. Brother Harrison helped by giving us the word of exhortation and also a lecture. W.V.B.

