

NOVEMBER 1972

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

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At the Table of the Lord

“QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT”

HOW OFTEN WE FIND that a few simple words of the Spirit can be such a great help in our daily struggle to overcome. Such is the case in our portion in I. Thess. 5 : 19, where we read, “Quench not the Spirit”. Only four words, but what a wealth of strength and guidance they can provide for us. God knew this and so caused Paul to write them over 1,900 years ago and has preserved them. Let us, then, strive to discern what God had in mind for us.

“*Quench*” we find, has the same meaning in both the Old Testament and the New, being used as “to extinguish”, “to go out”, “to put out”. In this connection, we think of a lamp which, when it is put out or quenched, ceases to give light. Perhaps this analogy can help us to grasp the spirit of “Quench not the Spirit”. We think, too, of a fire which burns and gives heat until it is put out or extinguished.

The law given to Israel can help us discern the Spirit’s message. Leviticus, chapter 1, speaks of the burnt offering Israel was commanded to bring, verses 4-9, giving complete instructions for the one making the offering, verses 8-9 :

“ . . . the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar : But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water : and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, *an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.*”

Was it the fire consuming the flesh which made the offering a sweet savour ? Is not the fire a figure of the Spirit’s consuming the flesh, first the Head and then the rest of His Body, washed and joined to the Head upon the fire ? Have we been shown, then, that it is the Spirit which consumes the flesh and, only in so doing, may the offering become not only that which is acceptable but also a pleasure ? Can we, then, discern why Paul writes, “Quench not the Spirit” ? Shall we not, then, allow it to burn to consume our flesh ?

“THE FIRE SHALL EVER BE BURNING”

Further, under the law, we read God’s instructions to the priests, Leviticus 6 : 13 :

“The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar ; it shall never go out.”

We find the word for “go out” is the same as that used for “*quench*”. We could read this instruction, “. . . it shall never be quenched.” What care and constancy was required for this work ! There could be no relaxing, the priests needing to be ever aware of that consuming fire ; a continuing supply of wood would be vital. What a great lesson it was to teach Israel that their God was *always* there ! His love, His power would never fail—only their own lack could quench the fire of the Almighty in their midst.

To help us grasp the power of that Spirit in the fire, we read in I. Kings 18 of the conquest of the priests of Baal by the power of God working through Elijah. They were challenged by Elijah to demonstrate the power of their idol in bringing down fire to consume their offering. Baal’s priests called on him from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, hear us. But, there was no voice, nor any that answered.” (verse 26). Nor, was there answer by fire all day. Then Elijah built an altar, putting on the wood and the offering. After this, he poured water upon the altar, the wood and the sacrifice and prayed (verse 37) : “Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God . . . ” God heard ! (verse 38).

“Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.”

Surely, here was evidence to Israel of the power of His Spirit which cannot be quenched, being shown to convince the people that He was indeed God. If we, brethren and sisters, feel the strength of that same Spirit working in us to consume the flesh, as we appreciate it is only of God that it can be known, we are helped to obey Paul’s injunction, allowing it to work.

If we let it work, consuming the flesh, there is the hope of being joined to the Lord Jesus our Head when He returns to gather up the members of His Body. Only the Spirit can do it—we cannot of our own strength. As we realize this, grasp the blessing of that Spirit’s fire, would we ever want to put it out ?

“MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE”

We have found that this Spirit of God works on behalf of those who love Him, who strive to serve Him because of that love. In the provision of the Lord Jesus, God’s love is seen, and that provision is valued, developing a closeness of spirit. As we, brethren and sis-

ters, strive to grow in that love, do we not find that we are growing in the Spirit, allowing it to consume more and more of our fleshly desires? In the Song of Solomon, we read of the love that grows between the Lord Jesus and those who are His, likened to the love known between the bridegroom and his bride. Song of Solomon 8 : 7 :

“Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it . . .”

Elijah certainly knew in a very literal way that many waters could not quench the Spirit, the fire, the expression of God’s love. This love is a power beyond our abilities to comprehend ; but we can trust in it—we have savoured it. We can join in the assurance with which Paul speaks, Romans 8 : 38-39 :

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Many waters”—yes, we do pass through circumstances, sad or difficult, which *could* quench mere human love ; but the Spirit’s love is quite different, for it comes from God alone—“it shall never go out”. It is only the flesh that seeks to quench the Spirit, that is not reached by His love ; for it hates to be consumed. Yet, if there is love for God, in return it will not get the upper hand.

“THE FIRE OF THE LORD BURNED AMONG THEM”

In Numbers 11 : 1, we read of an occasion when the fire of God came in judgment against Israel :

“And when the people complained (is this a way of quenching the Spirit ?), it displeased the Lord : and the Lord heard it ; and his anger was kindled : and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the *uttermost parts of the camp.*”

How significant that it was those in the uttermost part of the camp, those farthest from the Spirit of God, seen in the fire and the cloud over His tabernacle? Those on the fringes had put themselves in a position far from that Spirit. There were the ones whom the anger of the Lord consumed. Could it be because they were the ones who sought to quench the Spirit? The record continues, verse 2 :

“And the people cried unto Moses ; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched.”

The fire was restrained by God after it had done His work among those who were far from the Spirit. Does this work of God with Israel help us, brethren and sisters, to heed Paul’s admonition, to seek to be close to His presence, revealed to His children ?

How great is the danger that the Spirit may be extinguished if we do not seek Him. In the time of Samuel, this was a grave possibility in Israel. It was because of Eli’s permissiveness with his evil sons. The Spirit was not being heeded ; it was in danger of being quenched, and so God intervened in sending Samuel. We read in I. Samuel 3 : 1 :

“And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli.
And the word of the Lord was precious in those days ; there was no open vision.”

The guidance of God was withheld because of the evil in the land ; the Spirit was not allowed to rule in the affairs of Israel under Eli’s sons. In verses 3 and 4 we read :

“And *ere the lamp of God went out* in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was . . . that the Lord called Samuel . . . ”

There was the danger that the light of God in Israel might go out or be quenched, as we find the word to mean. How seriously the children of Israel and their leaders had failed in their duties, and even more so in the valuing of the holy things.

We know from Exodus 27 : 20-21 that God commanded :

“ . . . thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the *lamp to burn always* . . . it shall be a statute forever . . . on the behalf of the children of Israel.”

This lamp was, of course, the seven-branch candlestick, the lightstand in the Holy Place. This was the lamp that caused the jewels in the breastplate over the heart of the high priest, to reflect, to scintillate as he went into the Holy Place with the blood of the sacrifice and the prayers of his people. If this lamp were to be quenched, there would be no light in the Holy Place, no lightstand, indeed, no Presence. Truly, the Spirit would be quenched—Israel forsaken. God did not allow that lamp to go out, for He called faithful Samuel. Does not this situation in the time of Eli show us how easily the Spirit can be quenched if there is not care, diligence, love and fear of God ?

“OUR LAMPS ARE GONE OUT”

The Lord Jesus helps to see the importance of this warning concerning the Spirit. In Matthew 25, He teaches, by the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish. The foolish took no oil with them for their lamps, while the wise provided oil in their vessels with their lamps. When the bridegroom came (the Lord Jesus) the five foolish ones said to the wise, verse 8 :

“ Give us of your oil ; for our lamps *are gone out* (are quenched).”

The wise, having oil, had their lamps burning, and when the bridegroom came, the record is (verse 10) :

“ they that were *ready* went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

These wise *were* “ready”, for they knew the importance of keeping their lamps supplied with oil, not quenching the Spirit. The evidence of their faithfulness, of their love for God, for Jesus as the bridegroom was the burning lamps. Is this not, brethren and sisters, a help for us to discern the importance of Paul’s command? We might well ask, How can *we* quench the Spirit ? There are many ways, that the Spirit can be hindered or stifled, not due to any lack on the part of God, but rather by our failure to be alert, sensitive, seeking His guidance. Let us consider a few practical thoughts in this connection.

When we fail to encourage those who are struggling to overcome, when we are so concerned about our own problems, living or work that we do not reach out to help, to offer the “cup of cold water” that may make all the difference to the one in need, are we not quenching the Spirit ?

When we fill our lives with work, play, home, hobbies, or other activities to the crowding out of time for meditation, reading, companionship with those of like minds, for our children who are growing in spiritual need as well as practical needs, are we not quenching the Spirit ?

When we do not listen to others who may come close to help, to guide, to counsel, are we not quenching the Spirit ?

These are but a few of the many ways that the Spirit, which works on behalf of His “little ones”, can be quenched. In this connection, we think of Jesus’ words to those on His right hand side at His Judgment Seat, Matthew 25 : 40 :

“ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Perhaps, our consideration of Paul's exhortation can help us, brethren and sisters, to discern the importance of growing in the Spirit, feeding it always, allowing it to consume our flesh—in the hope that when Jesus Christ returns to gather together the members of His Body, we may be counted among those who have allowed that Spirit's fire to burn away all the evils and ugliness of the flesh, making what remains pleasing to Him : a sweet savour, suitable to be taken to that clean place for which we hope and wait.

J. A. DeF.



Christendom — *and others* — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

“Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk” (Ex. 32 : 19)

THE TRUTH IS A LIFE, and that is why the Law, the Spirit of Christ, is essentially practical, and touches upon all phases of individual and ecclesial activity. This is why the Law is so valuable to all in *the* Truth today. Without it we should be bereft on a host of questions ; devoid in many ways of the Spirit of Christ.

Christendom’s contempt of the Law is their folly. Were Christendom to regard the Law as divine, and essential as a guide for today, then the many hurts of violence perpetrated in the name of Christ would cease. The Law is not like any human code or pontifical encyclical—rigid, brittle, lifeless—it is on the contrary not only capable of giving what is required of man, but supplying him with the beauty and grandeur of the Spirit of the living God, so that he is not like some automaton, or some soldier doing things but not knowing why, but becomes ennobled to be like his God in character, even as he is “made in his own image and likeness.” This lack on the part of Christendom is why their devotees “worship they know not what”, and millions obey their priests without the slightest transformation of character ever taking place. How sad is the spectacle of Christendom ! Truly Christendom *is* astray.

**“THOU SHALT NOT SEETHE A KID IN HIS
MOTHER’S MILK.”** (Exodus 23 : 19)

Whatever would Christendom make of this injunction for guidance today in divine ways. Unless it were intended to teach some important lesson it would not be included in the Law ; unless it were necessary for present help, it would not have been preserved. Let this simple fact not only be appreciated, but with gratitude let it be revered as fulfilling what Paul wrote to the Roman Ecclesia :

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for *our* learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15 : 4).

The meaning of the particular law that a kid was not to be boiled or stewed in the milk of his mother is quite clear. Searching is required to discover the Spirit of Christ, which it is capable of shedding in our hearts.

God is the author of all life ; the Creator and Sustainer ; but how few recognise this, so that human life all over the world is looked upon as of no special value. Men, women and children are daily being slaughtered in many countries by the wanton acts of godless men.

Now to discover the Spirit of Christ concealed in the Law that the kid must not be cooked in the milk of his mother. "Why" ? we can imagine the children of old, asking their parents. Perhaps if at this stage we can allow ourselves to "become as a little child", we, too, can receive the power and beauty of the Spirit contained in this Law. The child would be told that the provision of milk to sustain the kid was a *miracle* ; undoubtedly a provision of God. To cook the kid in that which God intended should be to sustain it, would not only mask this truth, but destroy the Spirit of Christ it was intended to teach. Regard for God's provision for life, even amongst animals, would exalt the mind above its native sadism. A man, who is unkind and cruel to his dog, treating it brutally, is regarded with loathing. The words of *the Spirit* give articulation to this thought in a most expressive way :

"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."
(Proverbs 12 : 10).

A man who is cruel to his animals could never be kind to his fellows. What is the use of exhorting men to be kind and forgiving, while the religious leaders condone the destruction of men and women, by teaching how best to bayonet a man, or destroy with bombs or napalm.

Can we not see, can we not feel what tenderness was instilled in Hebrew children by having the Spirit of this Law explained to them; how they would perceive God's hand in the creation of the milk just when it was needed, which must not be used to destroy a mother's own offspring. The lesson that all life is of God would be impressed, and in those belonging to Israel it was to be for an eternal purpose.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." (Romans 5 : 33).

In the absolute sense these "riches" are unsearchable, but much of their faith-imparting treasure is received by those who seek diligently, and with simplicity.

The same lesson was emphasised in another item of the Law, to which little regard is paid today, even by those who believe that the Law was inspired in the same way as with the prophets, apostles and the sayings of Jesus.

“IF A BIRD’S NEST CHANCE TO BE BEFORE THEE . . .

. . . in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young ;

But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee ; that it may be well with thee, and *that thou mayest prolong thy days.*” (Deuteronomy 22 : 6-7).

Imagine a group of youths coming upon a nest, destroying the mother bird and young, and then being told it displeased God to such an extent, that their days would be shortened. Such a protester would be scorned, if not man-handled. But we are trying to understand the mind of God, so solemnly expressed that continuity of the present life could be imperilled by failure to keep this simple law.

What was behind such a law ? Why did God give it ? To check human wantonness and delight in destruction, in killing. Again a powerful reminder to the Hebrew children of old that all life is God’s, and His purpose is that His children in appreciating this, might have their minds exalted to the sublime fact that some will enjoy His life for ever.

Where the laws of God are disregarded men suffer. Wild birds in Italy are regarded as a delicacy. Shooting of larks, swallows and others has so reduced bird life in this country that insects, caterpillars and other pests abound, and the tuneful song of such birds has disappeared. Now attempts are being made to attract large numbers of swallows to rid the painful pest of mosquitoes. By neglecting God’s laws men suffer in the natural ; but, of course, they suffer much more by becoming spiritually barren.

Let us then rejoice in being delivered from the darkness of Christendom. As dark as the darkness of Egypt, and with gratitude look to the Law as the Spirit, the light of Christ, to illumine our path that we do not falter, “groping for the wall like the blind”. It is a precious exhortation for us, that if we believe not Moses, we cannot believe in Christ.

(. . . to be continued)

The Titles of the Psalms

**“SPEAKING UNTO YOURSELVES IN PSALMS . . . MAKING
MELODY IN YOUR HEART UNTO THE LORD.”**

(Ephesians 5 : 19)

Psalm 53

*“To the One who overcomes, the Victor, upon or through
Mahalath (weakness), Maschil (instruction), a Psalm of
David.”*

IT IS MUCH EASIER to follow the multitude, even to do evil, than walk in the way of the godly. As the title of this Psalm shows there is help, instruction for those who feel weak, when in opposition to the majority. And who amongst us have not felt this ? A sore trial indeed, starting when we are young and continuing through life. “What! You don’t smoke, you don’t swear, you won’t attend a dance, what do you live for ?” Such is the scorn experienced from work-mates, which can press hard upon us, making us feel *weak* indeed.

The Title gives a pointer to the lesson in the Psalm ; instruction, help, can be received enabling victory to be achieved even in weakness.

“THE FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART, THERE IS NO GOD.”

The scrutinising eye will quickly perceive that the type of man referred to does not go about proclaiming he is a fool, one lacking in wisdom and godliness. This is concealed in the many who outwardly may make a fair show but whose heart is far from God. Perhaps the leaders of current religions present the best example.

Throughout the Churches of the world, every week certain “prayers” are recited from a book, certain “services” held in supposed worship of the God of heaven, but question any of these on the issues of life and death, and all that is offered are the opinions of men ; no definite statement, “Thus saith the Lord”.

“Wherefore the Lord said (and this applies today) forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouths, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.” (Isaiah 29 : 13).

Yes, it is most often heard what people *think*, what are their opinions, than a humble reference to what God has declared. Men's opinions are so contradictory, and often confounded that the mass of people are starved of the "power of godliness", and have to be content with the valueless "form of godliness". To be delivered from such a worldly respectable multitude is a tribute to the kindness of God, who says through David :

"God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God."
(verse 2)

How good it is to know that salvation from prevalent corruption does not depend upon man. God is in heaven. He does look down upon the earth to see if there are "any that . . . understand, that . . . seek God."

The whole scheme of redeeming men is *not* subject to chance. It is He who overrules in this important matter, even as evidence clearly shows He controls the great nations, raising up and casting down. For He . . .

"Hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." (Acts 17 : 26).

Yet the nations, great as they seem in the plenitude of their power and glory :

" . . . are as a drop of a bucket . . . All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him as less than nothing, and vanity." (Isaiah 40 : 15-17).

The solemnity of these words is not readily appreciated. Listen to Nebuchadnezzar at the zenith of his power. He could never have believed that Babylon, created by the might of his power, and the honour of his majesty would pass away as a dream. But where is Babylon now? Humbled in the wastes of an arid desert. The immensity of this divine declaration is not readily received by minds mesmerised by the pomp and majesty of national pride. Yet the boastings of Alexander, the eloquence of the great Roman, Cicero, have long ago ceased. And what remains are but ruins of a national glory that has perished. The word of God is true. It can never be gainsaid.

How impressive and stunning is the thought that God cares not for nations as He looks down from heaven, for His—

"Eyes . . . run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." (II. Chronicles 16 : 9).

The Spirit of Christ in the Psalm aptly describes the plight of all nations of all time :

“Everyone of them is gone back : they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (verse 3).

Let the mind scan the world. Can a nation be found that is godly? Not one. More value to God is one righteous man, than any nation. There are millions of people on the earth ; and many more *in* it. These are perished for ever. Only those like Abraham will rise to see that what God has said, and seems so impossible to human eyes, was and is indeed true. This glorious climax will come.

“When God bringeth back the captivity of his people.”
(verse 6).

(. . . to be continued)



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

“KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT THERE SHALL COME IN THE LAST DAYS SCOFFERS . . .

walking after their own lusts,

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” (II. Peter 3 : 3-7)

THE ABOVE WORDS ARE IMPRESSIVE. In a few verses they sum up the situation past, present and future. They take the mind back to the lesson of the past when the world was overthrown and submerged beneath the waters of the flood. They bring the mind to the present, to consider the mocking statements of men who laugh at the suggestion that God will send His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, to deliver the world from total destruction. This message also takes the mind to the future, when the cleansing to be effected will be by fiery judgments, that will consume the world and its works, so that the glorious creation of God may survive.

God is not slack concerning His promise of deliverance, by the purging out of evil, as Peter states (verse 9). But His hand for the present is stayed, for one or two more to respond to His call. The day of the Lord however will come and then opportunity will have an end as far as this dispensation is concerned. It will come unexpectedly “as a thief in the night”—it will steal in upon a world that is unaware.

Hence Peter’s words of warning bringing attention to that disaster of old which consumed the world, but saved Noah and those who entered with him into the Ark. The flood was foretold and came. Every tree that Noah hewed down; every plank that he fastened

together to make the ark, every blow from his hammer upon the timber objectively cried out in warning to the contemporaries of Noah as to what was coming. But amongst Noah's contemporaries there was no uneasy conscience disturbed by the contemplation of evil deeds witnessed or performed. Noah was derided for building a boat upon dry land. But in due time the flood came. It came unexpectedly and inexorably ! Day after day as the scripture records rain beat down "and all the fountains of the great deep (were) broken up".

The vastness of that great overthrow is witnessed today by sand and sea-shells found upon the tops of the Himalaya mountains !

This article proposes to consider in a brief way, what has been brought to light concerning the flood, in the researches of these modern times. In 1899 the following statement on the Deluge was published by what are termed "the Higher Critics" :

"Postponing the various interesting questions, as well as comparative folk-lore as of biblical theology which are connected with the title of this article let us confine ourselves at the present to the relation between the Hebrew Flood story and that of Babylonia . . .

What was probably the true origin of this Babylonian Deluge story, looking at it by itself without comparing the Hebrew records ? The first thing that strikes us is the harmony between the narrative and the local conditions of Babylonia, which justifies us in regarding that country as the native place of the story. It is more difficult to determine whether any real historical event lies at the foundation of the narrative, or whether we have to do with a mere myth. In itself it would, of course, not be inconceivable that in days of yore an unusually extensive flood from the Persian Gulf, combined with continuous rain, burst upon the Babylonian lowlands, and destroyed countless human lives ; that a dim tradition of this event was preserved and that the Babylonian Deluge story was a last deposit produced by this genuine occurrence. Judging, however, from what is known of the growth of myths and legends, especially among the Babylonians, we think that this is far from probable. The entire character of the narrative, and the connection with other myths indicated above (not quoted in this present article) are much more favourable to the view that we have to do, not with a legend based upon facts, but with a myth which has assumed the form of a history."

The critics it seems were confident in their own doubts ! But then

emerged upon the scene an Oxford Graduate, Leonard Woolley. He began an archeological dig in Mesopotamia just after the first world war. For twelve years he conducted excavations at Ur of the Chaldees for the Trustees of the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. There were British and American archaeologists in the expedition, and they discovered remarkable things.

The most remarkable was absolute evidence of the Flood. This is what Sir Leonard Woolley records :

“In the early spring of 1929, in the hopes of getting some chronological evidence, we began sinking shafts below the level of the deepest graves. Almost at once discoveries were made which confirmed our previous views, if such confirmation were necessary, just below the floor of one of the royal tombs, in a layer of burnt wood ash, there were found numerous clay tablets inscribed with characters of a much more archaic type than those of the inscriptions in the graves.

. . . The wonderful civilisation illustrated by the contents of the graves, which I shall describe later, had always seemed to imply a long past behind it ; now we had proof of just such a steady growth as we had assumed.

The shafts went deeper, and suddenly the character of the soil changed. Instead of the stratified pottery and rubbish we were in perfectly clean clay, uniform throughout, the texture of which showed that it had been laid there by water. The workmen declared that we had come to the bottom of everything, to the river silt of which the original delta was formed, and at first looking at the sides of the shaft, I was disposed to agree with them.”

But something prompted Woolley to order the men to carry on digging. His narrative continues :

“The clean clay continued without change—the sole object found in it was a fragment of fossilised bone which must have been brought down with the clay from the upper reaches of the river—until it had attained a thickness of over eight feet. Then as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped, and we were once more in layers of rubbish full of stone implements flint cores from which the implements had been flaked off, and pottery. The great bed of clay marked, if it did not cause, a break in the continuity of history, above it we had Sumerian civilisation slowly developing on its own lines ; below it there was a culture which seems not to be really Sumerian but to belong to the race which inhabited the river

valley before the mixed race of the Sumerians had come into being.

One object which lay with the flints and potsherds under the clay was of prime importance. It was a brick of burnt clay. Now, the ruins which we had previously excavated at Ur cover a period of more than two thousand years and one can generally recognise at a glance and nearly always confirm with a metre scale the date of any wall or isolated brick.

But this brick was different from any we had ever seen ! Certainly it belonged to a period of which we had had no experience hitherto, and in a curious way it gave the impression of being older than any brick we had seen but what it did conclusively prove was that in this early age it was not a village of mud huts and reed shelters, but contained permanent buildings solidly constructed, the town of a civilised people. No ordinary rising of the rivers would leave behind it anything approaching the bulk of this clay-bank—eight feet of sediment imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which deposited it must have been of a magnitude unparalleled—a whole civilisation which existed before it is lacking above it and seems to have been submerged by the waters.”

How did the so called higher critics react to this remarkable discovery ? Were they taken aback at this irrefutable evidence ? No, the work of “higher criticism” went on in other directions fulfilling the prophecy of the scripture which forms the heading of this article, “that there shall come in the last days scoffers”.

The flood was foretold as the scripture states and it has been proved that it came. Christ has foretold that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. The warning of impending destruction even now is ignored even though it has been proved from a hiding place in the ground that destruction came upon a previous heedless and godless population.

The world has not learned its lesson ; it still does not respect the Word of God and is not prepared for the day of the Lord. But “as a thief in the night” that time will most surely come, and only those who have entered into the Body of Christ and who remain therein to receive the protection promised (as those who entered the Ark) will be delivered from calamity. Meanwhile ignorance, a willing ignorance, persists ; and there is no fear of God provoked by contemplation of His judgments in the past. Hence a parson can now conduct a “Communion Service” where parishioners eat cream

crackers and drink coffee instead of bread and wine ; as recently reported. The Minister explained his reason in the following terms, that he wants to “face up to 1972” and would have preferred a pint and a pie to the coffee and cream crackers “but I can only go so far”, he said.

So is fulfilled the prophecy of Peter, who said that in the last days would come scoffers who are willingly ignorant.

D.L.

The Demise of the Truth in Australia

CONFUSION HAS PREVAILED for a long time amongst those professing the name in Australia. It started in 1904 when one, Bell, resurrected the heresy of Ed. Turney that Christ had not our nature. A man of influence, he drew many to destruction.

Since then other heresies have arisen and attempts at unity by the late Editor of the *Christadelphian* have proved abortive. They succeeded in erecting some kind of fence by juggling with words, it appeared indeed as a wall, but being daubed with untempered mortar, there was no strength to resist the battering of old and new heresies.

It is confessed in the *Christadelphian* for September 1972 that there are many things troubling the minds of those professing the Truth in Australia : the false teaching on the atonement, the spurious claim of having the Holy Spirit to speak with tongues, and what is most important a failure to understand the divine doctrine of fellowship.

In addition controversy rages whether all, including babes are “alienated” from God.

Where the simplicity of *the* Truth is left, and the doctrine of fellowship either ignored or not understood, then the result is the professing of a name that they live, whereas they are dead.

The grievous blight in Australia is not confined to that continent. Already the plague has spread, and will spread undermining and destroying those who regard conformity as unity.

It is intended to deal with the four heresies in subsequent articles.

W.V.B.

Correspondence

Letter received from W.C.W., Birmingham :

I would like to place on record my *appreciation* of your continuing to sending me copies of the *Remnant*—which I read !

I would like to know your views regarding the present day operation of the Holy Spirit and individual re-birth by the Holy Spirit.

I would like to see some articles on these matters.

Do *not* misunderstand me about these matters ! I am *deeply* and very *sincere* in knowing your mind upon these questions.

REPLY :

May we in the first place refer you to the preliminary article in this issue on "The Demise of the Truth in Australia". You will see that included is the promise to deal with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We hope in discussing the important doctrine of fellowship your interest will prompt the action which God requires, and is essential to salvation.

W.V.B.

News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK : Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread 11-30 a.m. Sunday School 1-30 p.m. Bible Class : Midweek, Forestville, Buffalo, Hamburg and Orchard Park. Alternate week : Revelation Study.

The Sunday School Outing was held on September 23, blessed by good weather. The addition of the two new scholars added to the enjoyment and help of the day, as well as providing benefit for them.

The safe return of Brother and Sister Steiger from England is a source of gratitude to all. The joy they found in the companionship of those of like mind is shared by all here.

Work with two continues, blessed by God's hand obviously working. We are grateful for this guidance and for the help granted in God's mercy in these last days.

J.A.DeF.

NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN, Northern Ireland.

Breaking of Bread, Sunday 11-30 a.m.
Sunday School 2-0 p.m.
Bible Class—Wednesday evening.

The need for counsel and trust has never been more apparent among brethren than at this time of His approaching return, and we were glad of the opportunity afforded recently for discussion, also grateful for hospitality and loving care.

Memories are bright of the recent companionship and help enjoyed with our visitors.

Our thoughts and supplications are continually for all who suffer in ill health.

J.P.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread : Sundays, 11-30 a.m.
Revelation Study : Mid-week.

It has been our privilege to have the company of Bro. J. Smith of Manchester on the first weekend in October, when we received both exhortation and counsel.

Although there were no children at the Sunday School we did think of our new scholars in the States for we are always eager to receive news concerning their progress as the work proceeds in faithfulness.

—per J.S.

MANCHESTER : Memorial Hall, M.A.P.S. Building, Albert Square, Manchester.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread, 11-30 a.m. Lecture 3-30 p.m. Tuesdays : Bible Class 7-15 p.m., Onward Hall, Deansgate.

On September 18th, Bro. and Sis. Steiger left Manchester Airport after a stay of four weeks. Much was accomplished by their visit. The bond which will finally be seen uniting peoples drawn out of all nations, tongues, and peoples—for ever—was tasted and the experience helped in looking forward to this glorious consummation.

Interest has been shown in the current month's lectures on the Jew. Meetings have been stirred by the brother lecturing being questioned. It is seen how true are the words of the prophet that present-day Jews like many of their ancestors are blind, although they have eyes. The witness in the lectures has greatly helped to see the power of the precious Truth.

W.V.B.

