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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

CHRISTENDOM – AND OTHERS – ASTRAY

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At the Table of the Lord

“IS NOT MY WAY EQUAL?”

IN OUR PORTION IN EZEKIEL we are reading of the righteousness and justice of God. As Ezekiel was moved by God to speak, he revealed to Israel and to us that the ways of God are equal. For the children of Israel had said, Ezekiel 18 : 25 :

“ . . . The way of the Lord is not equal . . . ”

When we look at the word used for *equal*, we find it comes from a root meaning “to balance,” giving the thought of a balance. The word is also rendered “to direct,” “to mete,” “to ponder,” “to weigh.” Can we, then, think of the words of Israel as, “The way of the Lord is not directed, weighed, or pondered.” How contrary to all that God is ! How lacking they were in understanding ! We might say, how adverse to the way of the Spirit !

In Isaiah 40 : 13, we read :

“Who hath *directed* the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him ?”

Who, indeed can direct the Spirit of God—when we realize we must be directed by Him ? When Israel said, “The way of the Lord is not equal” (is not directed), were they failing to grasp the power of that Spirit ? How easy this is to do, to overlook the power of God ! Israel did ; we can, too, brethren and sisters, for Proverbs 21 : 2 tells us :

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes : but the Lord *pondereth* the hearts.”

God does weigh our heart—with an equal balance, with justice, mercy and righteousness. If we are left to ourselves to weigh our hearts, we would not do it equally, for “every way of man is right in his own eyes.” Let us, then, brethren and sisters, allow God to ponder our heart, to show us that our own ways are not equal, but rather we all too often are deceived by our own desires and emotions.

In I. Samuel 2 : 3, we read the words of Hannah, who having known God’s mercy, *knew* that God’s ways were equal.

“ . . . the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are *weighed*.”

Does it not bring us up short to realize that He is a God of knowledge ? He knows all that is done, and “by him (our) actions are weighted.” How grateful we should feel that God’s ways are equal. He corrects us as a Father when our actions are after our own ways, and blesses when our actions are after His ways—His equal ways.

We know that David realized this ; for when he failed in numbering Israel, when he moved in the way that seemed right in his

own eyes, God weighed his actions and brought a plague upon Israel. At that time, David said, when faced with a choice of three punishments :

“ . . . I am in a great strait : let us fall now into the hand of the Lord ; for his mercies are great : and let me not fall into the hand of man.”

David sought God’s grace, allowing God to place upon him what was right. He did this because he trusted that God weighed over His ways that His ways *were* equal. Can we begin to see how God would feel as His people Israel, upon whom He had bestowed so much, responded by saying, “the way of the Lord is not equal.” ? Why would they respond in such an ungrateful manner ? Was it because they didn’t like the equal ways of God ; but rather sought their own ways, unfettered by the Spirit’s working to crucify their flesh ? Given our choice, uncontrolled by the Spirit, it is obvious which way we might choose. But, being born of the Spirit, must we not seek—indeed, rejoice in—His equal ways, recognising them as the only sure way to peace and unity ? Is this our spirit, brethren and sisters ?

“THE LORD WEIGHETH THE SPIRITS”

Proverbs 16 : 2 tells us :

“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes ; but the Lord *weigheth* the spirits.”

The Lord pondereth our spirits, weighing them in an equal balance. He compares our spirit to *the* Spirit to see if it is growing more like it. Paul helps us in this daily struggle, Romans 8 : 12-17 :

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Thus, he reminds us (verse 16) :

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

God ponders our spirit, weighs it against His Spirit. Is He dwelling there, driving out, crucifying the flesh, leaving room for that Spirit to grow stronger in us ? If so His weighing of our spirit will reveal it to us, to our brethren and sisters.

Let us, then, discern our spirit, brethren and sisters, seeking to do so in the way we believe God would look upon it, weighing it. As we look in this way, we discern many ways that must be changed to bring them into line with what God would have us do. Is this, then, our spirit expressed in Romans 8 : 15 :

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;

but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (being made sons), whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

What is the spirit behind the cry, "Abba, Father"? We remember the agonizing of the Lord Jesus in the garden. As He struggled to conquer His flesh, he cried out :

". . . Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee ; take away this cup from me : nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mark 14 : 36).

Is this our spirit ? A placing of ourselves willingly and entirely in His hands, acknowledging our fear and weakness along with His great love ?

"MAKE YOU A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT"

As Ezekiel prophesied to Israel, speaking the words of God, his words help us who need strength so sorely in these last days before the coming of the Lord Jesus. Ezekiel 18 : 31 helps us in this way :

"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed ; and make you a new heart and a new spirit : for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?"

Israel must make a new heart *and* a new spirit—lest they die. Does not the same requirement of God apply to ourselves today if God's ways are equal ? We can easily say, I *have* a new heart, a new spirit ; yet, we must realize how often we fail, how often we do not move in the equal ways of God. To help in this consideration, let us listen to the words of one who was a man after God's own heart, Psalm 51 : 10, 17 :

"Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me."

And, verse 17 :

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Is this the new heart, the new spirit His children must seek, the spirit for which God looks, weighs, ponders ? David's words, "*renew* a right spirit within me," shows his recognition that the new spirit, the new heart must be constantly renewed, for it can quickly die if it is not. It is not simply a matter of receiving a new spirit, a new heart at baptism, and then everything is all right ; but a continual struggle to feed and strengthen that spirit as God weighs and reveals to us in His mercy how it needs renewing. What is the right spirit that David sought, that we must seek from God. Is it not the broken spirit, the broken and contrite heart which is so pleasing to God ? It is such a spirit that can say to God as He reveals our need to change, "Yes, I am wrong." This *is* the new heart, the new spirit, for the old one is being crucified, the old

heart is being circumcised in the spirit, not in the letter. We must ask ourselves, brethren and sisters, is my heart like that? Do we look upon it, striving to discern it as we know God does? If we can truly perceive what our natural hearts, our fleshly spirit is like, God tells us, as He told Israel, Ezekiel 36 : 26 :

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

A stony heart is hard, cold, unable to be impressed ; while a heart of flesh is warm, alive, impressionable. Verse 27 :

“And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

How contrary to our nature ; yet, it is what a new spirit and a new heart can accomplish in us. He has reached out to us in this wonderful way. Will we encourage that new spirit to grow, that new heart to thrive ?

“THAT THOU MAYEST LIVE”

Our brethren in Israel knew God’s love and mercy, knew, too, that His ways were equal. The law given to them upon Mount Sinai gave ample evidence that He weighed His ways and revealed them to His children, to help them find a new heart. In Deuteronomy 30, we read of His promise, verses 1-6 :

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee . . . which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind . . . And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice . . . with all thine heart, and with all thy soul ; (verse 6) . . . the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, *to love the Lord thy God* with all thine heart, and with all thy soul., *that thou mayest live.*”

It is only as our heart is circumcised as we strive to renew a right spirit that we can truly show that we do love the Lord our God, do truly perceive that His ways *are* equal, that He works with mercy, love and grace, “that thou mayest live.”

Brethren and sisters, do not these things help us to yield to Him, whose equal ways we acknowledge, and who *only* can “renew a right spirit within us.” ?

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — *and others* — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ
“The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people,
above all the people that are upon the face of the earth.”

(Deuteronomy 7 : 6)

PART III.

The Holy Spirit

AMONGST THE HERESIES which have infected certain sects of Christendom is the belief that the Holy Spirit may be possessed now in the ability to speak with “tongues”.

Certain evangelical sects are so inebriated with this idea that members utter sounds that have no correspondence with any language upon earth. Then others claim to be able to interpret ! In the hysterical fervour produced by such performances, audiences are galvanised with the idea that the Holy Spirit is with them as it was with the Apostles in the first century. Only a little thought is needed to see the unreasonableness and unscripturalness of this performance.

God’s message in the first century was so conveyed that everyone might understand in his own “*tongue*”. This was seen clearly on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were given the miraculous power of being able to speak in the various “*tongues*” of their cosmopolitan audience. Not a gibberish which none could possibly understand, but all marvelled saying :

“Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans ? And how hear we every man in our own *tongue*, wherein we were born ?

Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia.

Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes. Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our *tongues* the wonderful works of God, And they were all amazed.”

(Acts 2 : 7-11).

Seventeen languages in all yet all understood without the aid of an interpreter. If it were so then, why should it be different on any subsequent occasion ?

In the Ecclesias which came into existence there were inevitably different nationalities, each limited to speaking and understanding his own language or *tongue*. So apostolic guidance was given for meeting this need.

AN "UNKNOWN" TONGUE

Confusion has obviously arisen by the reference of the Apostle in giving guidance to the Ecclesias by what is meant by the "unknown" tongue. Can this possibly mean a tongue or language the like of which there is none upon earth? In view of what happened at Pentecost, would God choose to use a private code, only to be "interpreted" by someone claiming to understand an unearthly language. Such an idea is absolutely contrary to God's declared intention in the law—which please remember is the Spirit of Christ:

"In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people."

(I. Corinthians 14 : 21).

What did the prophet mean? The context shows:

"But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line . . . Wherefore hear the word of the Lord . . ."

(Isaiah 28 : 13-14).

As the Apostle so clearly says:

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."

(I. Corinthians 14 : 33).

A careful look at the Apostle's guide to Ecclesias having brethren of different languages will at once make clear what is meant by the "*unknown*" tongue.

Certainly not unknown in the sense that it was different from any current language; but *unknown* by those whose native tongue was different from that of the speaker.

Let it be carefully noted that the word "unknown" is not in the original!!

This appears in the translation in italics, because it was evidently the desire to make it clear that the "*tongues*" or languages used could not be understood by all; and to speak without the understanding of all would not edify. A foreign *tongue* or language was only to be used, where some brother was capable of understanding and translating for the benefit of all, for the building up of the Ecclesia.

This is why Pentecost stands out as a miraculous provision, when the miracle was obvious and simple, testified by the listeners saying:

"And how hear we every man in our own *tongue*, wherein we were born?"

There was no babel of unearthly sounds, requiring an alleged interpreter to make known God's message. God would never work in such a confused and devious way. Indeed there was and is no need. The ability of the Apostles to speak foreign languages was

miracle enough, without all the tedious learning which attends the acquiring of another language. To suggest that God would use some unintelligible babel of talk to convey His mind is nothing less than an insult to Him.

**A CHALLENGE TO THOSE CLAIMING TO SPEAK IN AN "UNKNOWN" TONGUE.
THE DEMISE OF THE TRUTH IN AUSTRALIA.**

We have suggested that a recording be made of this performance. A glossary constructed of the words used. Seeing that God is not the author of confusion, the alleged interpretation should be consistent. Each word should have a distinct meaning. A repeat performance would soon prove the undoing of these charlatans !

Why do they claim to speak in this way ? The answer is pride : in drawing attention to themselves as God-chosen vessels, singled out to utter a babel of sounds, which they claim to be a direct visitation of God. The claim is both unnecessary and monstrous ; and will at once be rejected for what it really is : a dreadful imposture of claiming the "Holy Spirit".

What says the Spirit in this connection ?

"Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues (note the Apostle does not say an "unknown" tongue), what shall I profit you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine ? And even things *without life giving sound*, whether pipe or harp, *except they give a distinction in the sounds*, how shall it be known what is piped or harped ?

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle ?

So likewise ye, *except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood*, how shall it be known what is spoken ?"

(I. Corinthians 14 : 6-9).

God is not without life, like the pipe or harp. God *is* life. Let the babblers of unintelligible jargon point to any instance in the Old Testament, which was the Spirit of Christ, wherein this confusion was used by God to reveal His will ! Or in the New Testament, for in neither case is there a record of indistinct sounds, requiring an "interpreter".

Further, it is evident that the Scriptures are a sufficient revelation of God's mind and purpose, and woe to those who would presume to add to them. Did not Jesus say in the conclusion of the bible message ? :

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." (Revelation 22 : 18).

A dreadful penalty indeed !

“And that servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with few or many *stripes*. (“Stripes” in the original is the same as “plagues”).

The wicked nations are to suffer dreadful “plagues” or “stripes” when Jesus returns. Those rejected are told by Jesus to depart from Him—to go where ? Into the world, into the nations where their heart has been, there to receive the divine retribution according to the extent of their wickedness. A dreadful end, which does not bear contemplation. But let it be realized it will certainly come, for Jesus has said so.

In Australia the Editor of the *Christadelphian* laconically reports that a “brother” claims to have had the experience of “speaking in an unknown tongue” ; further, that following withdrawal from him by his own meeting he has been accepted by another : confusion indeed, which could have been dispelled if the doctrine of fellowship were understood. Such an heretic ought to have been condemned at once and rejected by all. Condoning has allowed this leavening heresy to leaven all.

POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE PRESENT TIME

From what has been written it should be obvious that the Word forbids any claims to possess the Holy Spirit at the present time to enable miracles to be performed. The Word of God is complete, and requires not, as it did in the days of the Apostles, any additional witness ; except in the surrounding creation, and the wonderful preservation of God’s ancient people, the Jew : their return to the Land, and generally in the eloquent signs of the times.

But this still leaves a difficulty, over which much strife has taken place, and the attempt will be made to resolve it.

While it is clear that the gift to do miracles is not with us, there are many references that the saints in every generation are possessors of the Holy Spirit as for example Pauls says :

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you ?” (I. Corinthians 6 : 19).

Jesus adds concerning baptism :

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3 : 6).

Begotten not by natural seed, but as Peter informs us by the “incorruptible (seed) by the word of God.”

No resolution of this apparent difficulty will be possible until it is recognised that the Holy Spirit was given in different degrees, and for differing needs. This is seen particularly in the ministering to the

brethren in the early ecclesias. The record needs to be very carefully read, bearing in mind that the Holy Spirit was imparted for a particular need by the "laying on of hands."

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

(Acts 6 : 3).

These were chosen, whom be it noted already had the Holy Spirit, but for the particular work an addition was necessary so :

"The Apostles, when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them." (Acts 6 : 6).

And so the "word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly."

To this thought might well be added that the gift of the Holy Spirit in the days of the Apostles, enabling those on whom it was bestowed, only allowed each to do certain works—not all works, hence :

"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom : to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit,

To another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit,

To another working of miracles ; to another prophecy (teaching) ; to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues (note not "unknown" tongues) ; to another the interpretation of *tongues* (one able to understand foreign languages) :

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He pleases (*orig.*)."

From these considerations we see how the Spirit in apostolic times afforded different gifts, as a necessary witness, when the Bible was not complete, and supplied the Ecclesias with all that was needed in the absence of a written record.

Now there is still the difficulty to be faced ?

Is it possible to possess the Holy Spirit now ?

Certainly this is seen as unnecessary as it was manifest in the early Ecclesias, for we have the entire Scriptures which they did not have And any claiming to do miracles—for all the aforementioned "gifts" are in a sense miracles, are making a grossly false and unnecessary claim. The one claiming to speak with *tongues* is perhaps the worst of all such. But—

WE MUST BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT

Jesus said that through baptism we become *new* creatures. This word *new* is significant. Its connotation has always to do with the Spirit, begotten by the Spirit born of the Spirit, does not change our nature, neither does it confer upon us super-natural gifts. But unless we have this Spirit—the Spirit of Christ—we are none of His. Not that there is any outward sign, except in the matter of behaviour, of courtesy, gentleness, and all that pertains to godliness. This is the *new* creature, which during probation can be proved to be a “vessel to honour”, and in every way different from a vessel fitted for destruction in which the Spirit does not dwell. And there is no Spirit of God which is not *holy*. So Paul says, in making a vivid comparison between those who have come out from the world, and those who are of the world :

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit (holy) which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

(1 Cor. 2 : 12).

May an attempt be made to enjoy the power and provision of this intangible but very real gift. Paul also says :

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear (that is the spirit of the world) ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.”

Note particularly the next verse :

“*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God.*”

(Rom. 8 : 15-16).

It is difficult to put this delightful experience into words. Like the flower which opens to the sun’s beneficent rays, so the mind which has received the (Holy) Spirit of Christ, finds a warm and delightful enlightening as the purpose of God opens up to his view, spreading from one part to other parts of the word, and knitting the whole into an exquisite and exalted pattern, which requires no philosophical or mathematical proof. The proof is an experience: greater than any theory. Realised in the mind ; felt in the heart—so much so that the wonder is that others cannot see it !

THE ORIGIN OF THE CONFUSION ON WHETHER THE HOLY SPIRIT
CAN BE POSSESSED NOW.

At the beginning of this century certain evangelical sects were loud in proclaiming their ability to do miracles, to speak with “tongues”. In those days *the* Truth was not passive. It met every challenge. So the declaration was made that this claim was false ; and by over-emphasis it was said, “We have not the Holy Spirit.” This was true in the way the imposters were claiming, but led to a

misunderstanding for there is a sense, a scriptural sense, in which we do and must have the Holy Spirit. David had it, for he said, "Take not thy *holy spirit* from me." And unless we have it in the way explained, we are bereft of that which alone promises salvation for :

"After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the *Holy Spirit* of promise."

(Eph. 1 : 13).

From the foregoing it is hoped that the fog of confusion will be dispelled : that we must possess the Holy Spirit in order that Christ can dwell in us ; but to claim its possession in the Apostolic sense is a base fraud, which the righteous will be quick to expel as dishonouring to God, and subversive of His Truth.

(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 56

*"To the chief musician upon Jonath—elem—rechokim,
Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath."*

THIS IS THE TITLE of the Psalm as it appears in the Authorised Version : in the Hebrew Scriptures it is verse one, This is a formidable looking title, but when split up into its separate parts not so frightening—Jonath—dove : elem—silence : rechokim—far-off places. The message at the door of this Psalm then reads :

"To the Victor, the One who overcomes, as the dove of silence in far-off places, by the golden faith as David's, when the Philistines took him in Gath."

God chooses to hide His precious treasure from the wise and prudent of this world. The door may only be opened, as in this Title, by those whose spirit is toward Him. This is a comfort to those who comparatively are unlearned, for they are permitted to gain access to the light inside ; while the clever of this world are thwarted in their most industrious attempts to secure a sneaking glance at His secret.

"THE DOVE—IN FAR-OFF PLACES."

David was an exile in Gath, because of the mad and unreasonable jealousy of Saul. Truly, "jealousy is as cruel as the grave." Instead

of David showing a vengeful spirit, he tried to help Saul, often at the risk of his life.

The Spirit represents him as a *dove*, a bird possessed of a remarkable gift, an urgent and strong desire to return to its home. But David was compelled to suppress these feelings, and was forced to remain as the *dove* in *far-off places*. And trusting in God for ultimate liberation, he manifested a faith comparable by the Spirit to gold tried in the fire.

THE DOVE OF SILENCE

David had proved his warrior-like faith to all Israel, but this only caused Saul to be more jealous. The thought that any great and successful soldier of the world would ever endure such humiliation as David did is at once beyond belief.

The power which sustained David's heart can be heard in the Psalm :

"Be merciful unto me, O God : for man would swallow me up ; he fighting daily oppresses me. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." (vv 1 and 3).

David's anguish, nevertheless, as he was kept in far-off places was great :

"Thou tellest my wanderings : put thou my tears into thy bottle : are they not in thy book ?" (verse 8).

As the greater son of David is brought to view by Isaiah, it is seen how much David was like his Lord. In the words used by the prophet to describe the Master, it is only the figure that is changed—a lamb instead of a dove—the substance is the same.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Isaiah 53 : 7).

And in fact was not the Lord Jesus the "*dove*", for when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, did it not descend upon Him in the shape of a *dove* ? And was he not compelled to wander in *far-off places*, and many times in the face of great provocation and bitter trial was He not eloquently *silent* ?

The future for David is certain. The future for the Lord Jesus has already been assured. And so the future for all who endure as the "*dove of silence*" in their wanderings is seen :

"Who are those that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows ?"

"I will make thee an *eternal* excellency, a joy of many generations." (Isaiah 60 : 8 and 15).

No man can understand how the *dove* can find its way home,

without all the navigational aids used by men ; no man without the Spirit can understand how those like David will eventually find their way to Zion, there to receive the "blessing, even life for ever-
(to be continued).

" The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the World"

" . . . if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."
(Matthew 24 : 24).

SPEAKING OF THE LAST DAYS Jesus warned of great deception adding with emphasis "Behold, I have told you before."
(Matt. 24 : 25).

Jude later speaking on the same subject warned about the work of some as follows :

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who *SEPARATE THEMSELVES*, sensual, *HAVING NOT THE SPIRIT.*" (Jude verses 16 : 19).

In the days of Robert Roberts some arose, "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them ! (Acts 20 : 30) even as the Apostle Paul forewarned. But what of events since ?

"Grievous wolves" have not spared the flock, and so consequently "the flock" has been greatly diminished. The facts of recent declensions, really should speak for themselves, except that the adversary has been so adroit in the phrases he has used to excuse and bolster his position, that many have been deceived, as Jesus foretold as a sign of the last days.

THE 1954 TROUBLE

In 1954 trouble arose in "the household" as a result of precipitate action. Certain matters were placed before the Ecclesia at Nottingham whose individual members had been informed previously of a meeting that had been arranged at which "something of vital importance" was to be considered and "all must be present". Certain letters were considered, but the presence of the writers of those letters was neither desired nor required. In fact the writers, whose work was to be condemned, as purported to be shown in the

evidence of their letters, were given no official notice of the meeting so that they could go to defend themselves. This action was quite contrary to the tradition of the Body, who from its early times since the days of John Thomas and Robert Roberts, had assented to the following accepted guidance as to procedure :

“It is a maxim of universal law (divine included) that no man is to be judged without a hearing. If it be true of one man, it is true of a number of men, and to be applied as scrupulously to an erring ecclesia as to an individual delinquent.”

The excuse to get round such a blatant infringement was the informing of the Nottingham Ecclesia that no charges were being brought against the writers of the letters, but it was to be a matter of fellowship that the members of the Nottingham Ecclesia vote for an Ecclesial Resolution an extract from which reads as follows :

“The Nottingham Ecclesia having heard . . . the correspondence . . . are convinced that this is a work of evil. We condemn the striving and contention over vain, hurtful and unprofitable matters as being contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and leading only to schism in the Body.”

The schism which the resolution was supposedly drawn up to avoid, was now obvious, for the Manchester Ecclesia which knew nothing whatsoever about these matters before the Nottingham meeting, could not accept such an unjust and erroneous action.

1964 AND THE DOCTRINE OF UNCLEAN MEATS.

Though “the Remnant”, who were in the minority, did all possible to help the majority see their upholding of error, there was little or no response. Ten years later a further effort was made to help by the publication of a booklet entitled “An Appendix to the History of the Truth in the Latter Days—the 1954 Division.” There was no response, but little wonder because the most extraordinary things were taking place amongst the majority, which was then unknown to “the Remnant.” The following is an extract from a further resolution dated August 3rd, 1964, from a general assembly at Wellington, which absolutely deceived and ensnared those who should have known better :

“We of the assembly . . . assembled . . . for reflection and Spiritual strengthening in the preparation for the call to the Lord’s presence, have found it required of us to make sure that there shall exist among us no contamination regarding things clean and unclean. After having examined the question with prayer and care, we find the Word of God : Swine’s flesh, also such things as rabbits and mackerel, among others, are Divinely declared as unclean—they are not to be eaten, but to be an abomination.

And the Lord to whom we appeal declares : I am the Lord your God—ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves and ye shall be holy. These ye shall not eat—the swine. Again, “There is a people that provoketh me to anger continually, they eat swine’s flesh.”

(Isaiah 65 : 3 also Isaiah 66 : 17)

Having escaped the pollutions of the world, if they return it is like the washed sow wallowing in the mire. 11. Peter 2 : 20 Therefore swine, that is any part of it, to whatever use it is put, is defiling, whether eaten at home or in any other place—it is defiling. The light has come and hence the condemnation. All who toucheth these unclean—they shall be unclean, their flesh ye shall not eat. If they are then polluted, as it is said is offered upon the altar of the Lord—and remember our Altar is Christ—and the table made contemptible, can such bread be shared by those who honour the command ? And is not Christ our Altar and the bread we offer the emblem of His Body ? Therefore there can be no fellowship between those who are so made unclean and the members of the body of Christ.”

This resolution was completely accepted, at any rate in the formal sense until just after the decease of the leader of the majority, who in 1954 had been the one who precipitated the action which caused the division at that time. But in February 1971 some began to have second thoughts, if they did not have them before (?) They expressed their change of mind in the following extract :

“In February 1971 it was discovered that the Fellowship of the Truth in the days of Brother Thomas and Robert Roberts was conditional upon rejecting the doctrine that some meats are to be refused on the score of uncleanness. The discovery was made by reading a copy of the original “Constitution of the Birmingham (Temperance Hall) Christadelphian Ecclesia” adopted in July 1886, at the end of which is a list of doctrines to be rejected . . . It is important to note that this list has remained absolutely unchanged to the present day so far as the Birmingham (Temperance Hall) Fellowship of Christadelphians is concerned.

When it was fully realised that the Ecclesia . . . had formally accepted this doctrine by their 1964 Resolution . . . great concern was felt for the following reasons. If the Spirit of God had guided the brethren in 1886 how could the Spirit have guided the brethren in their completely opposite decision in 1964 ? In 1886 the brethren decided these meats were *not forbidden* and to withdraw from those who said they

were forbidden. In 1964 the brethren decided these meats were forbidden and to withdraw from those who said they were not forbidden. Upon reflection it became evident the Truth does not change like this and therefore one of those decisions must be in error. Further it was perceived that the 1964 resolution created a very serious problem. It made the 1886 decision to be in error and that those who were immersed after 1886 were immersed into error and this error continued to 1964. In 1964 no acknowledgement was made of this error by the Ecclesia . . . and none were re-immersed or baptised into the Truth, and so in 1971 the Ecclesia . . . was meeting at a table, having never been truly baptised.”

Resulting from this matter being gone into there was division in the *Ecclesia of Christ* ; for a majority insisted that the elect cannot be deceived and therefore was not deceived in 1964 and so the resolution of that date was because of further light.

The minority while repudiating the wrong doctrine ameliorated the position in the following terms :

“It was not generally realised in 1964 that this issue had become a controversy among the brethren before 1886, but now the matter has been raised again by the bringing to light of the 1886 resolution, responsibility also comes with this light. We are in no position to judge or condemn those who have died since 1964 and we are assured a just judge will always make due allowance for old age and failing powers, but now the light has come revealing the error, continued refusal to face this light must surely bring condemnation.”

But in 1942, as quoted by the minority, the following was clearly stated in the August issue of the magazine of “the Body” :

“In the last days a testing time must come . . . Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them and to purge and to make them white, even to the time of the end.”

(Daniel 11 : 35).

“It is divinely testified that those who do not abide in the doctrine . . . are without God . . . But what is doctrine ? *At the end of the Constitution of the Christadelphian Ecclesia*, which embodies their *Basis of Fellowship*, quite a number are mentioned . . . doctrines which it is declared must be rejected for anyone to be in the Faith. So that anyone holding one of these doctrines would be outside the Faith : without God and in the position of aliens . . . But that constitution was formulated some 40 years ago.”

“To declare this truth is not assuming any prerogative, it is not setting oneself up as a judge—it is but witnessing to

what is declared in the word of the living and unchangeable God.”

The fact is that though “the Body” clearly knew the truth at that time it has since been deceived by that of which Christ foretold. The declension began in 1954 and accelerated into complete confusion in the years following. It must not be assumed that the elect cannot be deceived, the only inference that can be drawn from Christ’s words which form the heading of this article, is that there will be a *remnant* at His return who will not have been deceived.

Space will not allow for much further evidence, which would show how great has been the deception of these last days.

The human mind is very devious, and its reasonings have brought about the downfall of many who have not been sufficiently alert in these last days. Such a course of events constitute a sign of Christ’s coming, who said :

“Take heed that no man deceive you.” (Matthew 24 : 4).

D.L.

Correspondence

To R. F. Barnett (until recently one of the leaders of the *Ecclesia of Christ*, but now separated from this Body, having established a group called *The Apostolic Fellowship of Christ*. This group now condemns the *Ecclesia of Christ* as being without Christ since 1964, when a Resolution was unanimously passed forbidding the eating of “unclean meats.” Yet R. F. Barnett and those with him remained in this “dead” Body until 1971—without Christ, without hope !)

Recent developments provoke us to write to you.

Having received into your group three ex-members of the *Ecclesia of Christ*, who until recently were with us for six years, it is understood you have accepted them because you now condemn the cruelty they experienced in the *Ecclesia of Christ*, and the unrighteous withdrawal from them in 1966.

(1) To be consistent all your members should repent of this iniquity, and endorse the rescinding of the withdrawal, as you have done. Do you intend that this shall be done ?

For your convenience enclosed please find R. Wood’s circular of June 1967, of which you had a copy at the time. Please note in particular p. 8 in which he said :

“It has opened our eyes to the appalling state of Nicolaitanism which prevails in the “Ecclesia of Christ” (*of which you were then a leader*) and we have been able to see this even against our own inclinations, that we might disassociate ourselves from that which is so hateful to the Lord Jesus . . . upon reflection and consideration it has enabled us to see that Nicolaitanism has destroyed the Truth in what was the “Ecclesia of Christ.”

(Glad to note that you have at least discovered the same vacillation in the present leader of the *Ecclesia of Christ*, which prevented us from establishing unity in 1954).

(2) Further, you say that the 1954 Division was due to “open schism.” (your magazine August 1972 p. 91).

May we ask you to supply proof of this, which we believe to be absolutely untrue. For your help enclosed please find a copy of the “Appendix to the History of the Truth in the Latter Days.”

How utterly confused your members must feel when you confess, you and many with you, have belonged to a dead body, without Christ, without hope for seven years! Proved in that those “baptised” into the *Ecclesia of Christ* during this time have been “re-baptised” by you!

This has led you into an inextricable error: that those who died during this period of being without Christ may have hope, for God is merciful! How far this may take you into the darkness may be realised when certain others say Sunday School teenagers who die before baptism have hope, because God is merciful!

Can you give one scriptural proof that God has ever allowed His mercy to violate His Truth? Could not God easily have kept alive those who have died in error? You must know He could, rather than allow for any tinkering with His unalterable Truth.

One last point: You blame, or it is perhaps better to say you excuse the introduction of the error of forbidding “unclean meats”, because the then leader was “very, very old.” *But you were not, and the rest with you were not.* Had you and these no responsibility to God to reject the error at the time? You know the answer, and the inescapable conclusion as before God. For it is with Him our actions must be judged, and not by man, even if “very, very old”, for you will remember that although Eli was “very, very old” this was not allowed by God to excuse his wrong, for which he suffered greatly at the hands of God.

Oh! what a dreadful confusion you have made for yourself and those misled by you. It is hoped that this may be realised before it is too late. The time is near when you will not be able to blame

your failure on a “very, very old man”, or for that matter on any one else.

It is intended to publish this in our Magazine, *The Remnant*, and in fairness will also publish any reply you may care to make.

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 Party is planned for February 24th, God willing.

As we begin another year, we wonder what 1973 will bring. Will it be the year of Jesus' return ?

We rejoice at the guidance and clear indication given in the work with the two who are seeking God's way, and are grateful for the supplications of all in this work.

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 New Year has opened with news that is heartening to all, and we rejoice with those who do rejoice in His mercy. The work in the States is of great moment to us, and with all we pray that it may be blessed in fulness.

We are grateful for the thoughts and supplications on our behalf, which we know to be stronger than all the works of man.

The New Year turns our thoughts in anticipation to happy days of reunion with the approach of visits from those we love.

J.P.

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

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

We have received a number of letters from different parts in Britain, and also from Australia and New Zealand, enquiring for copies of our publication "The History of the Truth in the Latter Days."

One writes from Melbourne saying she has been lent a copy, and is "very interested in the contents" and goes on to say that "if you cannot supply me with a copy, would you let me know where I could obtain one." One is being despatched immediately. We have no bookselling organisation. Indeed, from experience of this in other quarters it has tended to commercialise what was the Truth.

In the difficulties which are inevitable, we believe we are being helped, but know that at the end there must be a "shaking" as divinely foretold. Only those who endure to the end can hope for the glory promised.

W.V.B.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays, 11-30 a.m.
Bible Class: Mid-week.

During the winter we greatly miss the companionship of the brethren and sisters, who come to Wales for holidays, and we are looking forward to the Spring and Summer when these visits may be resumed. They mean so much to us who are in comparative isolation, but we have been blessed by the visit and company of Sister L. Bouchet.

The witness to the Truth continues by the large Poster at Criccieth Station and the giving out of leaflets.

—per D.L.

Acknowledgement

Remittances have been received from a number of readers to cover postage, which time does not permit to acknowledge individually. This opportunity is taken of expressing our thanks.