

APRIL 1973

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

CHRISTENDOM – AND OTHERS – ASTRAY

WHERE IS THE TRUTH?

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

CORRESPONDENCE

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

All Communications

W. V. Butterfield
16 Westfield Road,
Cheadle Hulme,
Cheadle,
Cheadle, SK8 6EH

J. Pinkerton,
38 Loughries Road,
Newtownards,
Co. Down,
N. Ireland

J. A. DeFries
R.D.1. Forestville,
New York 14062
U.S.A.

At the Table of the Lord

"Try the Spirits"

IN OUR RECENT PORTION IN JOHN, we have been reading of many people, made up of many different spirits and temperaments. We read of Judas, of Jesus, of Peter, of John, of Pilate, of Caiaphas. Each different, each mortal, each subject to temptations, each moved by a different mind or spirit.

Perhaps, if we can consider their minds, discern how some pleased God, how some crucified the Lord Jesus, how one stood by Jesus, how one close to Jesus denied Him, we can be helped to be spirits which do please God and His Son. Each one of us has a different temperament, a different mind; yet, if we are to please God, that temperament must be controlled, must be brought into subjection to His mind, His Spirit. We know from firsthand experience what a struggle it is; yet, it helps to realize that we are not alone, for all His children have faced it. Many have succumbed to the mind of the flesh; many have never left the mind of the flesh; a few have conquered that fleshly mind with the help of the Spirit. Let us look first at John 18 to see how God works to help by revealing each spirit for our example.

Judas

First, we read of Judas who was an apostle, one of the chosen twelve, one close to Jesus, knowing His mind, His spirit, His obedience to the Law and to God. Yet, Judas betrayed Him. The Scriptures tell us he was a thief, John 12 : 3-6. On the occasion when Mary anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus, and "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment," Judas said (verse 5) :

"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, *not that he cared for the poor*; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."

Judas' mind was not with the poor, but was obsessed with the love of money. He was a thief and sought to get his hands on the possible three hundred pence that the ointment might bring. As we think upon Judas' mind, perhaps we can understand his betrayal of the Lord Jesus. The thirty pieces of silver were of more value, more to be desired than the love of Jesus, than the presence of Jesus.

We can say, How dreadful to allow worldly desires to overcome love for God, love for the Son of God, love for the grace of God, seen in the presence of Jesus as the Christ! Yet, when we think

about it, are there not many who have allowed other things to enter their hearts, material things which can so easily take the heart away from God? Where there is a greater love for these than for God, they are as idols, and can quickly alienate us from God, and can cause us to betray Jesus as surely as did Judas. It is, then, a warning for us, brethren and sisters, as we see revealed the spirit of Judas, centred on self, seeking gain only in the material things, a thief, not caring for the poor, and so willing to betray the Son of God.

Peter

Next, we read of Peter, one close to Jesus, one to whom Jesus often turned in time of need or trial. Peter, James, and John are frequently mentioned as being with Jesus. We think of the time of the transfiguration on the mount. Matthew 17 : 1-4 :

. . . . after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain *apart*, and was transfigured before them . . . Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”

Peter’s intentions were good, but Jesus said (verse 9) :

“ Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

We remember also the agony in the garden, Matthew 26 : 37-43. Verse 37 :

“ he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them . . . tarry ye here, and watch with me.”

As He agonized, His disciples slept. He said to Peter, verses 40 and 41 :

“ . . . What, could ye not watch with me one hour ? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation : the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Peter was, indeed, willing, impetuous, eager ; yet, did prove that the flesh is weak. We remember how Jesus spoke when Peter sought to assure Him He did not need to die.

“Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou savourest not the things that are of God, but those that be of men.”

Peter’s spirit *was* willing ; it was right, but his flesh was weak— even as is yours and mine, brethren and sisters. In this eighteenth chapter of John, verse 15, we read :

“ Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple : that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But *Peter stood at the door without.*”

Peter didn't go all the way to be associated with Jesus. Why ? Was it because his flesh was weak ? Did he fear the consequences ? He denied Jesus three times, in spite of Jesus' previous warning. We know from Luke 22 : 62, that for this Peter sorrowed greatly, for we read, “Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”

He realized his failure, realized how weak his flesh was and grieved bitterly for what it brought him. How different a spirit from that of Judas, who failed, did not truly sorrow, indeed couldn't be reached by the Spirit. Peter learned from his failures, was forgiven for them, was strengthened by the Spirit and became a pillar in the house of God, giving of himself, feeding the sheep as commanded by the Lord Jesus. We believe he will be a pillar in the House of God when Jesus returns. What a help Peter's experiences can be for us, brethren and sisters, for our flesh is woefully weak ; we fail. Yet, in those failures, we must recognize that Jesus looks upon us just as surely as He looked upon Peter when he betrayed him. As we become aware of this, we too must be ready to weep bitterly, to show that godly sorrow which is so needful for a cleansing before God. Only this is acceptable to God, to Jesus as we seek forgiveness and help to strengthen our spirit. Can we alert ourselves to the great zeal and willingness, which, when it comes to reality, all too often dissolves in fear ? We are all like this in a measure. Can we, then, look upon Peter's example, as a help to us today, look too for the hope of forgiveness in God's mercy when we fail as Peter did, and determine that our repentance will be as fruitful as his ?

John

At the same time, we have the example of “another disciple”, John 18 : 15 :

“ that disciple was known unto the high priest, and *went in with Jesus* into the palace of the high priest.”

That disciple was, we believe, John. He followed Jesus even at the risk of his life, into the palace, even though apparently well known as a disciple of Jesus. This took great faith, courage, trust in God, a disregard for the consequences—prison or death with Jesus.

As Jesus saw John at His side entering the palace of the high priest, how encouraged He would feel, how much He would value the love, the spirit of that brother. What a help for us too, brethren and sisters. Can we follow his example, reflect his faith, his love

for Jesus? Can we, in a sense, be there when our brethren are suffering or fearful? If so, he will know we love him even as Jesus knew and remembered.

John loved Peter as well : verse 16 tells us :

“. . . Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and *brought in Peter.*”

John sought to help Peter, to strengthen his spirit, that he should be identified with Jesus and not deny him. How needful it is that there are those, like John, who are alert, ready to help by example, by deed. Peter still denied the Lord Jesus in spite of John's efforts ; yet, how full of love for Peter John was—indeed, he *was* his brother's keeper. We are helped by John's love, first of all in our desire to be like John, ready to help. And, also when one may come to help us in the spirit of John, we must be ready to receive the help, not resent it or ignore it. Peter did not ignore it nor resent it, but failed through weakness. The flesh being the same in each one of us could cause us to resent and lose this work of love.

How pleasing to Jesus was the spirit, the mind of John. We know he continued in that same mind, for Revelation 1 tells us of his steadfastness 63 years later in exile on Patmos, “for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

The Scribes and Pharisees

The Jews, His own people, took Jesus to the judgment hall of Pilate, clamouring for His death. They were especially guilty before God because of their knowledge of God's purpose seen in the Law. They failed to perceive that this man, Jesus, *was* the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the hope of Israel. Why was it so? Perhaps, John 18 : 28 helps us discern :

“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment : and it was early ; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled ; but that they might eat the passover.”

How empty was their zeal, their spirit, for they feared to enter a Gentile hall lest they be defiled and so be prevented from keeping the Passover feast. Yet, here was *the* Passover Lamb before them, condemned to die because of their insistence while they worried over being prevented from eating the passover ! How illustrative of the emptiness of the letter, missing completely the spirit of the feast ! We can easily condemn such a hard spirit, such an empty gesture as being blind, imperceptive, abominable to God ; yet, how

easy it is to slip into the letter of the law, and to lose the power of the Spirit.

When that power is lost, how quickly we can fail to see the obvious, as did the Jews as they crowded around the door of the judgment hall, demanding the death of their Messiah. Verse 31 :

“ . . . The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.”

Yet, here they were demanding His death. No doubt they left the door of the judgement hall feeling righteous, having accomplished what *they* desired, went to their houses and kept the Passover. As they kept it, they might even get the news of Jesus' death. How far from the Spirit ; yet, they claimed to be God's chosen people, keeping the Passover as an evidence of this.

Is it not a great help to us that God has revealed the spirits of these men ; their motives, their hopes and their ends ? A help to know what God looks for, a John who pleased Jesus and God ; a Peter who, although weak in the flesh, was willing in spirit and so God worked with him and strengthened him. Will He not do the same for us, brethren and sisters ? Here is help, comfort and, at the same time, warning lest our spirit become like Judas or like that of the Jews. Let us look carefully at ourselves, brethren and sisters, in the light of this help.

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — *and others* — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ
“Ye shall be holy : for I the Lord your God am holy.”

(Lev. 19 : 2).

THESE FEW WORDS of the Law contain an inexhaustible treasure : an inestimable wealth of divine meaning. They are the essence of the Spirit of Christ. To attempt to show their practical import, their help, their far-reaching provision is almost impossible. A little time spent, however, on their contemplation will prove most helpful, and enable alert minds to see the folly of the apostasy, and the dreadful plight of those who overlook that God is holy, and requires His children to be like Him.

The attributes of God's holiness is almost beyond comprehension, as affording the only means of hope and present guidance. Were God to be like men, subject to human passions, which is the opposite of holiness, where would we be ? Destitute of a standard which is not only impeccably right, just and true ; but without the invaluable help these qualities afford and guarantee to God's children.

Holiness implies not only a separation from all evil to which human nature is prone, but a forthright condemnation of all who are wicked, astray from God, and consequently are unholy. This aspect is of the utmost importance. As R. Roberts declared it is of no use affirming a proposition, unless there is a denial of the opposite. He cited the example of belief in *one* God, which, as he said, was worthless unless there was a hearty condemnation of those professing three Gods. Let it be noted that in his view it was not sufficient to refrain from the judgment of these. They were to be condemned as not "abiding in the doctrine of Christ", and so were without hope. The lack of such a sound and firm stand for the Truth has led to a great apostasy in those claiming to be followers of R. Roberts' teaching.

The position of Christendom

What has caused the abomination of the Apostasy of Christendom ? They profess belief in God's Word, in Christ, and make a fair show of zeal. Yet it is evident that Christendom is astray in spite of such claims. Jesus in the most trenchant language condemns the whole system, and is clear that this condemnation means the annihilation of all belonging to it—unless there is repentance :

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness : and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of the names of blasphemy . . .

And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth."

(Rev. 17 : 3 & 5).

Jesus not only condemns, but shows what this condemnation means : destruction without hope, unless there is repentance. For He said :

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

(Rev. 18 : 4).

For those who fail to condemn like Jesus did, and say they are not to judge, are in a woeful position, the blood of their dupes being upon their own heads.

Condemnation—its divine meaning, and implication

It is of the utmost importance to realise that the incipient cause of apostasy is failure to condemn those who do “not consent to the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus.” The start of apostasy is most subtle. A particular heresy may be condemned, then followed by the amazing statement that those guilty are not to be judged. Amazing is the thinking of such tortuous minds : to say they will not fellowship the guilty, and in the same breath declare they will not judge them ! Is not failing to “fellowship” a positive judgement ? Does not this mean if they will not be involved in the heresy by fellowshipping, it is an emphatic judgement ? To add that the judgment must be left to Christ when He returns is a confusing and confounding of the Truth, in a most specious form. The attitude allows for friendship with the heretic for he does not feel condemned, and the apostasy mushrooming from such thinking is plain to see. Those who once had *the* Truth, now divided into many sects, are made to feel they have hope, though guilty of heresy. What a denial of God’s declared will concerning such ! What deception of all concerned, which can only lead to a consummate apostasy : as abhorrent as that which has sprung up from the early churches, and now boasts of its numbers and riches.

God will not be mocked by such treatment of His holiness. Those who depart from sound doctrine have not God ; in spite of fair speeches to the contrary. Failure to warn these is as sinful as it would have been had Noah in his preaching said : “We do not condemn you. We do not judge you. But we cannot partake of what we believe is heresy by fellowshipping you ; hence we must leave you and enter the ark.” Did Noah fail to condemn and warn what this meant ?

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, (the judgement upon the condemned), moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ; by the which he *condemned* the world.” (Heb. 11 : 7).

Noah did condemn. Noah did dramatically show this meant destruction unless God’s warning were obeyed. The result, the catastrophic result should completely silence those who pretend to condemn by saying they cannot “fellowship” for fear of being implicated, and yet blithely say : “we will not, we cannot judge you !”

We know what happened to those God condemned through Noah. These perished in the waters of the flood, without God, without hope.

May it be worthwhile reminding ourselves of a possible facet of Jesus’ warning :

“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” (Luke 17 : 26).

In Noah's day there was only *one* Ark ; not a fleet bearing different sects. One fellowship constituted of those in the Ark. Nothing between this fellowship and “others”, only the engulfing waters of condemnation and destruction.

A word must be said about R. Roberts “speaking inadviesedly with his lips”, which the lax have used to their destruction. At the time of the Inspiration Division, he said at one point, “we do not judge you, but refuse to fellowship you lest we be implicated in your error”. Were the whole of his writings on the Inspiration controversy to be carefully considered, it would be perceived that these remarks, which have been so pressed into service by apologists for error, are entirely out of character with his stand, and forthright condemnation of those guilty of undermining the very foundation of Truth.

Dare it be said of anyone denying the Inspiration of the Scriptures, while we will not fellowship you, we do not judge you ? Would a candidate for baptism saying he did not believe in a wholly inspired Bible be accepted ? Refusal means condemnation ; a certain judgment implying that such a one is without God and hope in the world.

Let those who misuse this writing of R. Roberts find any scripture to support their error : that refusal to fellowship (confined by many sects to the breaking of bread) are not to be condemned although guilty. We challenge them to produce any scriptural proof of such a manifest contradiction of the doctrine of fellowship.

God's holiness forbids such tampering with His word. Let those who console themselves with the wresting of R. Roberts' writings on the matter realise the calamity which has ensued. A conglomeration of sects professing the name, enjoying the mutual salutation of “brother”, and yet collectively harbouring nearly all the errors of Christendom, and falling into the practices of the world which is at enmity with God.

The *Dawn* group has led the way to such apostasy, saying “all fellowships constitute the Truth” and “they must not judge any man in the matter of salvation”—baptised or unbaptised ! Small wonder one of their writers says that all are “in Christ” and says that he would not confine this to Christadelphians, but possibly there may be some in the Baptists and Chapels.

Our appeal to these who have so obviously allowed themselves to be deceived is the appeal of Jesus—

“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

(Rev. 18 : 4).

(to be continued . . .)

Where is the Truth ?

FOR CENTURIES this has been a very important question. If we are complacent, then the question will not interest, for we are quite satisfied as we are.

However, on the other hand, if we want to be right, the question will be of interest, and even stir us to examine our present position. All divisions, have one thing in common, all say, “we are right”. Therefore, a correct and scriptural answer to our question is of vital importance and necessary to us, because our eternal welfare is at stake. One thing has been clearly relevant in the recent divisions. This is, that views have been re-accepted, that were once denied. These views have been accepted just to fit in with the faction newly joined. Such reveals the tendency of our own human nature, to tolerate error, providing we are comfortable in our new environment. Such an experience is by no means a new one. We find the Apostle Paul reproving the believers at Corinth because there was envy, strife and division (factions) in their midst. “I am of Paul, of Apollos, or Cephas”. “Are ye not carnal in doing this, says Paul”. He goes on to reveal that they were not called to follow men but Christ. He is the One Foundation of God’s building. Those they were calling themselves after, were ministers of the Word of God to them, builders upon THE FOUNDATION. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Christ Jesus.”

“Do ye know that you are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you ? Ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s” (I .Corinthians 3).

Again, the Apostle had to reprove the Galatian believers. They were being enticed back under the Law, to believe in the necessity of circumcision for salvation and obey the letter of the Law. It is hard to believe that these various factions were beginning within

30 years after Christ's ascension to the Father's right hand. Since Paul's day these divisions or factions have greatly increased, as he said they would. (Acts 20 : 29-30).

How true these words have been proved. Even in our day after all these years there are factions who seek to obey the letter of the Law, rather than the Spirit. They bear the same Pharisaical characteristics of hardness of spirit. Maligning those they have once respected as brethren and sisters. Like the Pharisees they have their traditions, to make the Law more grievous than necessary, many with little or no scriptural backing or testimony. How can such be truth when they return to the burdens they have been redeemed from ?

In John, chapter 8, as in other passages in the Gospel records, we find the Lord Jesus contending for the Truth against the Pharisees and their contemporaries. The contention of the Spirit against the carnal mind. On the one hand the Christ of God, on the other hand, those He describes as of their father the devil.

At verse 12, Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World". How important light is, first to the natural creation, then to the spiritual creation. Commenting upon this Paul says at II. Corinthians 4 : 6 :

"For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Then, as now, the world required a spiritual Light. Israel, the people of God, were in darkness as was the whole world. The Light came, "but the world comprehended it not." John, chapter 8, gives a strong example of this :

"I am the Light of the World," said Jesus.

Light and Truth are inseparable for they are the work of the Spirit of God.

Darkness and error are also inseparable, they are the work of that old serpent the Devil and Satan, the god of this world.

"You are from beneath," Jesus told the Pharisees, "I am from above and not of this world." Thus we see, the stage is set, the earthly or carnal against the spiritual, such are the conflicting elements of this chapter.

The Law of God, to Moses, was given to deal with earthly things, works of the flesh. Matthew records Jesus as saying, chapter 5 : 17 :

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Note in this chapter, how Jesus in each example, moves from the actual transgression, the works, or letter, to the motive, the intent of heart and mind, the Spiritual. Now here in John, chapter 8, we see this principle in action. The Pharisees were testing the attitude of Jesus to the Law. The serpent does not change its tactics, it always attacks a declaration from the Word of God. A woman caught in the act of adultery, is brought before Jesus. According to the Law, she should be stoned. "What sayest thou?" Jesus was asked. At first He did not answer, but instead began to write upon the ground. When asked again, Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

Then He continued writing on the ground. Did the Pharisees realise, that by this action, Jesus was fulfilling a prophecy? Very likely they did, for we see them leave His presence one by one. At Jeremiah 17 : 13, we see what Jesus was very likely writing :

"O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed ; they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters."

Yes, they are written in the earth to which they belong and not in the Lamb's Book of Life.

"Hath no man condemned thee?" asked Jesus. "No man, Lord," she answered. "Neither do I, go and *sin no more.*"

Jesus was in no way defending the woman, she had transgressed, but she was no worse than those who had brought her to Him. They too were transgressors of the Law of God, and thereby forfeited the right to condemn another. The Apostle Paul weighs up the situation at Romans 2 : 21-23.

Jesus was not sitting in judgment to condemnation, that was not His present mission. Now He came as "The Light of the World". "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." What exactly does this entail? Our answer is to be found at verses 31-32, of John, chapter 8 :

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ;
And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Here then is the Truth. It is conditional to keeping, or, continuing in His words. Such is the Way of Truth. The Primary command is that "we love one another," as John explains throughout his first letter. For example at I. John 2 : 9-10, we read :

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.”

Could anything be clearer than this exhortation from an Elder of the True Ecclesia of Christ ?

We have often considered the great theme of love ; we still must, for it is the Foundation of the Truth. But we must do more than just consider. We must obey our Lord and Master in thought, word and deed. If we continue in the way of obedience we shall know the Truth and it will make us free. What freedom was Jesus speaking of ?

Freedom from the bondage of the Law. Freedom from the Law of sin and death. When He gave His discourse upon the Law as recorded at Matthew 5, it will be noted that He finished upon this theme of Love (verses 43-48). If love is in the heart and mind, we shall keep the law in its fulfilment and thereby walk in Truth and Light.

Jesus said : “I am the Way the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by ME.” (John 14 : 6).

J.S.R.



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

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . Having a form of godliness BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF : from such turn away.” (II. Timothy 3 : 1-5).

SPEAKING OF PETER and the Apostolic succession, Dr. Thomas wrote the following remarks :

“Having thus become Christadelphians, or Brethren of the Christ they had crucified and slain, they had placed themselves in such a position, that, on their arrival in Rome, they would be regarded as apostates from Judaism ; and no longer worthy of fellowship in the Synagogue of the Jews. It can easily be conceived what an excitement would be created in the Jewish Community of Rome. They would, of course, tell the story of what they had seen, heard and done ; but, from the temper of the Jews in those days, we may know that, if they had no other evidence than their own assertion, they would be accused of falsehood and blasphemy ; and accounted as worthy of a like fate with the Nazerene. But, the Spirit in Jerusalem had provided for such an eventuality in Rome and elsewhere. He knew that “the Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven” after the feasts were over, would have to return to their several countries and friends ; and he knew also, that such extraordinary facts and doctrines as he had prepared for mankind, required no less than the attestation of Deity in his co-operation with his witnesses. Hence, he not only moved Peter to specify the condition upon which believers of the Gospel of the Kingdom might be loosed from all past sins ; but he moved him also to promise the baptised ‘the gift of the Holy Spirit’. Filled SUFFICIENTLY with this, they would be prepared for any emergency that might arise. What, then, was necessary to equip these new converts for the work of introducing the gospel of Jesus Christ among the Jews of Rome ? It was necessary that all things they had heard from the apostles should be brought to their remembrance ; and that they should be guided into all the truth (John 14 : 8-14). This was as needful for them in Rome as for the apostles in Jerusalem . . .

These saints in Rome (Apoc. 1 : 20) were infallible teachers and rulers whose infallibility was not of themselves, but of the holy spirit ministered to them by Peter and the Eleven.

This guided them into all the truth, and brought all things to their remembrance ; so that they acquired a mouth and wisdom from Christ, which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay nor successfully to resist.” (Luke 21 : 15).

Dr. Thomas wrote the above to emphasise that no one in these times can claim infallibility, as the leader of “Christendom” claims, as also his predecessors.

A special dispensation of the Spirit was undoubtedly given to the Apostles and their successors to confirm by signs and power the wonder of the Gospel. Thus through the Apostles and their immediate successors the Spirit called out from the gentiles those who would respond to its working and so become transformed as new creatures in Christ.

But men during the centuries found it very agreeable to their pride to claim for themselves the indwelling of that power so evidently manifest in those early days. Erasmus for example is quoted as saying :

“The spirit makes us gods ; the flesh makes us beasts ; the soul makes us men.”

So men were tempted to deify themselves by virtue of the spirit. And Irenaeus speaking of the perfect man said he :

“Consists of these three, flesh, soul, and spirit. One of these saves and fashions—that is, the Spirit. Another is united and formed—that is, the flesh ; while that which lies between the two is the soul, which sometimes follows the Spirit and is raised by it, but at other times sympathises with the flesh and is drawn by it into earthly passions.”

These views propagated by Erasmus and Irenaeus of “partitioned flesh” were really a carry over of the superstitious Hellenistic view, and there were many other egotistical ideas of like category over the centuries, but the pride evident in such views stands in the way of men rising up to acclaim the power of godliness, for pride is the opposite to it.

Hence clause 25 in Doctrines to be Rejected as endorsed in 1883 :

“That a man cannot believe without possessing the Spirit of God.”

What some since have failed to endorse and uphold is that just as Dr. Thomas confirmed as existing in the days of the apostolic succession, so also now, men are brought to understand the power of the gospel through the working of The Spirit. For Christ, and the work of Christ in any particular generation only operates through

those who are in their generation His brethren, belonging to Him as the united members of His body.

That Robert Roberts was aware of this principle is implied in the following extract from a letter written by him in the month of March 1885 :

“Many of you are lonely : and you think how advantageous and gratifying it would be to be associated with a large ecclesia. If you were within reach of such a body it would be your duty to associate with them, and take part with them in the work Christ has given to all his servants . . . but there is another side from which you may take comfort . . . Your connection with the truth is more direct and sweet than perhaps it would be if you were in the midst of a large body of professors.

When you are in the midst of such a body, persons and things and questions and agitations of a purely ephemeral character are liable to come between you and the great things of God. It is natural it should be so in the present position of the testimony of God in an evil world.

If an ecclesia were wholly composed of men and women in subjection TO THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT, it would be different : connection in that case would be an unmixed good. But the state of an ecclesia never has been such— not even in the days of the Apostles. There is always a large admixture of the mere secular element, who accept the truth as a theory, BUT WITH WHOM IT HAS NO PREVAILING POWER IN THE AFFECTIONS AND LIFE. Consequently there is a constant liability to the stirring of influences unfavourable to a godly life in Christ : questions and agitations and strifes, having their origin in personal ambitions and petty interests, WHICH DISTRESS AND HINDER THE NEW MAN IN CHRIST JESUS.”

In quoting the above it is to be noted this present article is using the extract to illustrate Robert Roberts view of THE POWER necessary for the growth and well being of THE NEW MAN, rather than underlining what may have been a too extravagant extension of comfort to those in isolation, who miss the counsel of the spirit evident where there are a number of believers.

The sublime understanding of how to look at the way the Spirit works in, and through individuals who strive to be faithful, has been lost by those who have been long claimants of the truth in these last days. This in itself is a sign because Jude explicitly says :

“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**. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God . . . ” (Jude 17-21).

One thing seems certain. Those who “deny the power” will certainly not have it ; and so to use Robert Roberts’ words are left in the category of a secular movement, who accept the truth as a theory.

A man, or a number of individuals constituting an ecclesia, are only what they are according to whether they respond to the spirit working in them or otherwise. The “secular mind” brings up all sorts of crotchets or indulgences which thrusts the truth down to an arena of debate, very much after the example of gentile law. It is of course no new thing, for the Apostle Paul had to tell the Galatian Ecclesia in effect that they had become “secular”. He says :

“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth ?

They zealously affect you, but not well : yea, they would exclude you (or us) **THAT YE MIGHT AFFECT THEM**. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing . . .

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again **UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU**.” (Galatians 4 : 16-19).

Some have risen up in these last days who claim to have “the power” but in works they deny it “having not the spirit”. Their indifference to propagating what they proclaim as their right cause, and their adherence to extreme technicalities, and their demands of their followers, does not bear comparison with the life of Christ. Yet the word is emphatic :

“ . . . ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Romans 8 : 9).

Christ was reasonable and He was compassionate, even though uncompromising with error, and He most strongly condemned what has now become known as the Pharisaical attitude.

His helping of the infirm and needy in the days of His weakness became the earnest of His present work for those who realise they have nothing to boast about. But who can say, with fervour in seeking “the power”, Amen to the following :

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit . . . ” (Romans 8 : 26-27).
D.L.

Correspondence

Comment :

Your answer as to where we fail to uphold the Truth by withdrawing from those “who abide not in the doctrine of Christ”, fails to give any evidence for which we asked, except to say we refuse fellowship to you and your mixed group.

You must be aware of the heresies within your group and its affiliations; as recently reported by the Editor of the *Christadelphian* notably amongst which are :

The “Bell” heresy of saying Jesus had not our nature.

The possession of the Holy Spirit, enabling certain to speak with tongues.

“Differing views on fellowship”.

Divorce, etc.

To relegate these matters by saying that at Christ’s coming His “brethren” will see eye to eye is an obvious failure to understand and apply the doctrine of fellowship *now*, which requires that all

“speak the same thing, . . . (and) ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

(I. Corinthians 1 : 10).

Your writings have a zeal and warmth lacking in most Christadelphian periodicals, but is it according to godliness ?

It is not necessary to remind you that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”. This is what has happened to Christadelphia, because of their failure to apply the doctrine of fellowship, with the result that this society may now have impressive numbers and many social activities, like a miniature Christendom, but it is no longer the “sect everywhere spoken against” as it was when it had *the* Truth some fifty or sixty years ago.

W.V.B.

Logos Publications
12th February, 1973

Dear Brother Butterfield,

In reply to your letter of the 5th January, we wish to state that in our opinion the comment that we included in Logos, was fair comment in view of those issues that we have seen.

You ask a question as to where do you fail to uphold the Truth by withdrawing from those who abide not in the Doctrine of Christ.

In answer to that, we state that the paragraph is a simplification of your attitude and that it is not related to reality.

For example, we believe that we abide in the Doctrine of Christ, equally with yourself. But you do not extend Fellowship to us. And as we consider the evidence that you supply in your own periodical we believe that you are extreme in this matter.

Certainly, you do not conform to the attitude adopted by Brother Roberts and Brother Thomas, whom, at the same time, you verbally uphold.

We note that you intend to publish your comment in the March issue of "The Remnant", and of course we realise that you are quite entitled so to do.

We look for the time when the Lord Jesus shall return, and with infallible wisdom, will guide the affairs of mankind to a satisfactory conclusion. That relates both to the affairs of the world about us as well as to the Ecclesias. We pray for the coming of the Lord Jesus and the blessing that He shall bring at that time when the servants of Yahweh shall see eye to eye in things in which they today differ.

Yours fraternally

To the Editor of "Logos" :

It is noted in your issue of November 1972 (just received) you say :

"The Remnant is extremely negative, each issue reporting withdrawals or disfellowships ; yet it speaks of love, and advocates it among brethren. It has an article : Beware of Crotchets ; and certainly its readers should heed this in regard to its extremes of fellowship."

Having gratuitously published a statement about us, which we believe to be untrue, we ask the courtesy of your publishing this our reply :

- 1 Wherein is there proof that in "each issue . . . withdrawals" are reported ?
- 2 Wherein are we failing to uphold the Truth by withdrawing from those who "abide not in the doctrine of Christ" ?

It is intended to publish this in our March issue, and we shall be willing to publish any reply you care to make to justify what you have written about us.

Letter received from a Christadelphian :

"I enclose a few postage stamps to help with the postage of the "Remnant" Magazine, and at the same time would express appreciation of your article on the Holy Spirit in February issue."

Comment :

It is believed that many others of the various sects of Christadelphians will come to see that the article is not only scriptural, but gives a clear understanding of how confusion has arisen through failure to achieve a balanced view on this important subject.

We cannot help but feel that this letter has arrived at a time when we are being denounced for our views on the Spirit, and so may cause those who have condemned us to think again.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that there is no Spirit of God, His power, which is *not* Holy. Those Christadelphians who have so strongly condemned us, and say that they have not the Spirit, should realise that their confession means nothing less than they "are none of his." (Romans 8 : 9).

If only they would realise this for life depends upon it.

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.

We rejoice at the baptism into the name of Jesus Christ of Earl Stokes, formerly Baptist, on February 22nd.

The guidance and help given over the last year has born fruit in this birth of the Spirit. Together, with our new brother, we look for the coming of the Lord Jesus to end this time of probation.

Until that day, we struggle together to get the victory over our fleshly natures.

The Sunday School Party was held on February 24, when slides of Israel were seen, taking the mind forward to the time when the hope of Israel will be accomplished in the coming of the Messiah.

The very evident hand of God is seen working in His Body. How grateful we feel for the guidance and the ability to counsel together.

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.

How greatly we rejoice to know that another has in the mercy of our Father been called to the knowledge and hope of a place in His Kingdom. Knowing that all have been included in the loving welcome he has already received we would add our supplications for blessing and joy. Our thoughts and prayers are for the full recovery to health and easement of pain to those who suffer.

J.P.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread : Sundays, 11-30 a.m.

Bible Class : Mid-week.

The magazines have been very helpful. There is much food for thought, and it is good to hear the good news from America. What a comfort to the labourers there. We must learn the example of patience from them—and do our best here.

We have in mind those who labour or are in sickness at the present time, and also in our supplications, and are looking forward to the expected visits of some in the early spring.

—per D.L.

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 all rejoice with those across the seas in the saving of a life now begun in Christ Jesus.

The Fraternal Gathering to be held in our own Hall on April 23rd is looked forward to as a divine means of uniting and building up the members of the One Body.

W.V.B.