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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

CHRISTENDOM – AND OTHERS – ASTRAY

THY KINGDOM COME

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THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

LET US MAKE A NAME

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

"IN THE BEGINNING"

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED . . . " With these words, we begin again the reading of His word, given to sustain us, inspired and preserved by the power of the Spirit until today. From the start, His creation was very good—perfect—but was spoiled by man's disobedience to His simple, but vital, command, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree." Yet, in spite of disobedience, we know God, in His mercy, provided a hope of salvation in the seed of the woman, the Christ who was to come. As we, through His word, travel down the years after this creation, after the fall of Adam, how few we see who have tried to please God, sought to obey Him and so to glorify His name. We might well ask why should this be ; and if we can discern the reason, it may help us in *our* desire to glorify God, and have His approval when His Christ returns.

Perhaps our portion in Genesis II, can provide help as we read of those who about 100 years after the flood sought to circumvent God's purpose. They said, as they built a tower which they hoped would reach unto heaven, verse 4 " . . . let us make us a name . . ." What they wanted was as the Hebrew word means, "fame" or "re-nown". They sought to be renowned in the earth ; and in doing so, obviously, failed to give the glory unto God that is due unto *His* name. Indeed, God said of them, verse 6 :

" . . . and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do."

Can we perceive God's concern regarding these who sought renown ? " . . . *nothing will be restrained from them . . .*" "Restrain" we find, means "to fortify", "to fence about". God knew that nothing would be safe, fortified against these men if they were allowed to achieve their objective, to build a tower "to reach unto heaven." This was an ambitious programme, founded upon a desire to rise up above the earth, perhaps to escape another flood, perhaps fearing that God would bring judgment upon them for their lack toward Him.

There is much that is restrained from men, from that which they would imagine to do. God's word, God's law puts up a wall which separates. For those inside that wall, it is a protection, a hedge and, as such, is much valued. For those on the outside, it is an offence, a thing hated, to be torn down or breached. If this tower were built, the Word of God would no longer be of consequence to them. They would only grasp for more. God, therefore, confounded their language, making it impossible to go on with their ambitious building,

for they could no longer discuss the things they imagined to do. God made it very evident to them and has to us that He *can* and *will* confound all those who seek to follow the imagination of their hearts rather than the Word of God.

How quickly the mind of those who do not revere God's Word will plan or plot to overcome that Word of God, to circumvent it ; for that Word hinders, humbles, prevents any from having a name, being renown. We can, brethren and sisters, let our minds plan or plot if we are not truly seeking that Word as a defense, a restrainer. The imaginations of the fleshly mind are innate, and can be found in any one of us, apart from His Word, getting the upper hand.

"EVERY IMAGINATION . . . WAS ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY"

We think of the time of Noah—100 years before the building of the ill-conceived tower. God was sore displeased with the inhabitants of the earth. Why ? Genesis 6 : 5, tells us clearly :

". . . . God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Again, we find the imagination of *man* creeping in, seeking to negate the Word of God, which puts this restraint or fortification against the flesh. "Imagination", used here is a different word, meaning "to form", "fashion", as a potter does. That which the inhabitants of the earth, in the time of Noah, fashioned by their thoughts was only evil, contrary to God's Word. How could they have so little regard for that Word ? How could they be so evil ? we might ask. Yet, how easily we, brethren and sisters, can slip into such a situation, if we allow our flesh to fashion what *we* think we should do and so fail to submit to what *God* would have us do. In Isaiah 45 : 9, we read :

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker ! . . . Shall the clay say to him that *fashioned* it, What makest thou ? or thy work, He hath no hands ?"

We can ask, how could it be, the vessel complaining and criticising the potter—What are you doing ? What are you forming ?—wanting to be fashioned in some other way. Yet, who is *the* potter ? It is God. Can we question His hand, say to Him, What makest thou ? It is unthinkable ; yet, do we not do so when there is failure to submit ? Are we not saying to God, "I don't want to be formed that way" ? Are we, in effect, saying, "Let us make us a name above God's name," for, in so doing, we know better than God ; we are wiser than God. Can we, then, brethren and sisters, in failing to submit, be like those building a tower reaching up to heaven, trying to elevate ourselves above what we really are ? How harmful, yes,

disastrous is the imagination of the thoughts of our heart if it is contrary to the will of God ! Never can we hope to prosper if our own thoughts and wishes are permitted to work, circumventing even without awareness the righteous simplicity of His loving Word.

“NOAH WALKED WITH GOD”

In contrast to those whose hearts imagined only evil continually, we have Noah who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Why was this so ? Was his mind, the working of his thoughts, fastened upon God, willing to let Him fashion him, ready to submit to His hand as Jesus was when He said, “Not my will but thine be done.”

God spoke of Noah as, Genesis 6 : 9 :

“ . . . a just man and perfect in his generations, *and Noah walked with God.*”

What is involved in walking with God ? Does it not imply a joining to Him, a desire to be close to Him, to hang on to His every word, to value His protection, His care, His love ? It would mean a putting away of any imagination of our own heart and a submitting to Him. We remember His words to Solomon when he sought God’s gift of wisdom, I. Kings 3 : 14 :

“ . . . if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.”

Solomon did walk with God for a time, but later the working of the thoughts of his heart began to struggle against God’s Word, and we know the result. He departed, no longer walking with God, for God will not be joined with those whose imagination is contrary to His way.

So it can be seen from the beginning of His creation how the imagination of man’s heart, the fashioning of his thoughts was contrary to God, with but a few exceptions. Another such exception was Abraham, who allowed himself to be fashioned unto what God had in mind. How simple the command, Genesis 12 : 1 :

“ . . . *Get thee out* of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.”

. . . and yet, how difficult ! How easily Abraham could have argued, I like this place, Ur. I’m well established here. My family is all here. My possessions are such that I cannot leave them. But, no, we read, verse 4 :

“ So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him . . . ”

We know that this faithful response to the Father's hand was most pleasing unto God. There were no counter proposals, no circumventing, no half-way obedience, but rather, as Hebrews 11 : 8 tells us :

“ when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, (he) *obeyed* ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”

We all would like to know where we are going, what lies ahead for us, but we don't know ; we need, as Abraham did, to trust in God, walk with God, realising that *He knows* where we are going. Indeed, He leads us, instructs us, protects us through whatever we may dread. Are we, brethren and sisters, willing—yes, eager—to walk with Him, subject to Him as were Noah and Abraham ? If so, what blessing can be ours.

“BLESSED ARE THE . . . ”

We are helped as we listen to Jesus' words, Matthew 5 : 2-12, verse 3 :

“Blessed are the poor in spirit : for their's is the kingdom of heaven.”

What is Jesus' teaching here to help us find the blessing He promises. Are we poor in spirit, brethren and sisters ? Bowing down, submitting ? Is our spirit, our living, our mind, not proud, not insisting on having our own way ? In I. John 4 : 1, we read :

“ try the spirits whether they are of God . . . ”

“Try” means to prove. What proves the spirit of man before God? Is it his willingness to submit to God, ready to give his life to God, realising it is God who gave it and so it is really His ? This leaves no room for the imagination of the heart, but evokes a desire to show God how much His grace is valued.

In verse 5, Jesus tells us :

“Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.”

What is being meek ? The world thinks of the meek as being weak, easily imposed upon. But, listen to Jesus' words, Matthew 11 : 29 :

“ for *I am meek* and lowly in heart . . . ”

Jesus weak or unable to overcome ? Never, but rather what a submissive spirit He had. As in all things, He obeyed God, and so being meek, had strength. Moses was called by the Spirit, Numbers 12 : 3 :

“ . . . very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.”

Yet, how steadfast he was as he went in to the great Pharaoh and said, “Let my people go.” It took great courage to do this ; yet, it was done in submission to God’s Word unto him, in meekness. The world thinks of the meek as those who can be trampled. They are ridiculed because they are struggling to submit to God, to allow His Spirit to gentle *their* spirit. Let us take heart for such shall inherit the earth as kings and priests with Christ.

Jesus further tells us, verse 6 :

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.”

What does this mean ? Perhaps Jesus helps us with His words, John 7 : 37 :

“ . . . If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.”

Did not Jesus say when baptised of John, Matthew 3 : 15 :

“ . . . Suffer it to be so now : for thus is becometh us to fulfil all righteousness . . . ”

Jesus, by His act of being baptised of John, did declare God’s righteousness, and His own desire to obey God in all things. We know His whole life was dedicated to the righteousness of God. Can we, in striving to follow Him, partake in a measure of His righteousness ? Do we realise how needful for our eternal life this righteousness is ? If we have ever suffered, even moderately, hunger or thirst, we know what a torture it is to our body, indeed, we die if deprived of food and drink for a long period. Do we feel the same urgency and need, brethren and sisters, to partake of the spiritual food and drink ? Do we reach out for righteousness as if for life itself, realising that without it, there is no hope of life, of being filled ? Did not Noah hunger and thirst after righteousness as he sought to walk with God ? He *was* filled, for we are told : “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord,” and was saved from death by the Ark.

Did those who sought a name, as they built that tower, hunger and thirst after righteousness ? The answer is obvious, brethren and sisters. Are we, then, helped to be more ready to submit to the potter’s hand. It is painful ; it is often disrupting ; it brings loss. But, He works with us in His wisdom, seeking to make us vessels meet for His use ?

J. A. DeF.

Christendom — and others — Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ

“DEDICATION AND WITNESS”

ACCORDING TO THE *Christadelphian* 1975 is to be a year of “dedication”; and 1976 a year of “witness”.

In order that those who once had the Truth may see how far they have departed from its *simplicity* reference to the Law of God will reveal His mind on such matters.

It may seem very impressive to collect a large sum of money, (£100,000 is suggested) towards the “dedication”, and then to spend it on what is believed to be a “witness”.

The underlying idea whether it is recognised or not, is to use modern publicity for the ostensible furtherance of the Truth. A little examination of the Law will show how far this is from *the* Truth.

The idea of a mass meeting in Trafalgar Square, London, followed by a march of some two thousand to the Albert Hall will certainly make an impression; but will it be a means of upholding *the* Truth in either word or substance. Another suggestion, not necessarily connected with the campaign, is that there should be a public meeting commencing with the rendering of the Cantata, “Olivet to Calvary”. Any means adopted such as this is to divert attention from the vital message of Truth, whatever may be said in a subsequent address. The “call” of God to the Truth is not coloured or varnished by any gentile expedient. There can only be a coming to the Truth for its own sake, for its obvious intrinsic merits, and for its pure freedom from any worldly attractions. The latter will undoubtedly draw the public, and may result in numbers being increased, but however successful this is, or however big a group becomes, without *the* Truth it is *dead*.

It would be interesting to know whether the proposed gathering in London will be accompanied by a band, which will subsequently lead the march. Many will be attracted by a band, but few by the simplicity of the Truth.

“When the son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?”

A pertinent question is whether the “march” will be confined to one group of Christadelphians or not. It does not matter, for all now using the same name—*Central, Suffolk Street, Dawn, Advocate, Old Paths*, the “*Seventy Group*” are obviously involved by using this name, whatever they may claim to the contrary.

It should be possible to show what the Spirit of Christ in the Law has to reveal regarding such modern publicity.

THE LAW

Reference to the Law is generally understood to be the Law of Moses, as so frequently used in the New Testament.

It only requires a little thought to perceive that there was a *Law* in operation before Moses ; in principle the same, but differing in application according to circumstances.

The slaying of an animal in Eden to provide skins for a "covering" is clearly an element of the Law.

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."
(Hebrews 9 : 22).

A clear understanding of this shows that for any hope of deliverance from an eternal grave there must be a recognition and confession that death is the just punishment for sin, and only by the covering provided by the Redeemer can there be hope.

In the struggle with the flesh, grief suddenly struck the family of Adam and Eve. Two sons were lost in one day ; a righteous one killed ; and the other confirmed in a hopeless life. Even though the life of Cain was spared, he became an outcast.

How did this tragedy so early in the history of the Truth come about ? Abel, a "keeper of sheep", brought "the firstling of his flock *and the fat thereof.*" This reveals Abel's simple belief in the first-born, the Redeemer also by reference to the fat, that he made peace-offerings ; a recognition that he needed to make *peace* with his maker. None of these things would have been done unless there was the Law of God in operation at this time.

NOAH

Again we see that the Law was observed although Noah lived some sixteen hundred years after the creation.

When the Ark rested upon Mount Ararat and Noah and his family returned to a washed and purified earth, offerings were made to God. This proves that the Law must have been in operation at the time.

May we now come to see the Spirit of Christ in these things shedding a light upon "Dedication and Witness".

DEDICATION AND WITNESS IN NOAH'S DAY

It is no exaggeration to say that the work of "dedication and witness" at this time occupied one hundred and twenty years. What

form did it take ? Parades, Anthems to attract the disobedient and wicked people ? Obviously, no. Instead a huge boat was built upon dry land. Many questions must have been asked of Noah by the ignorant, and the answer would always be the same :

“My spirit (indeed the Spirit of Christ) shall not always strive with men.” (Genesis 6 : 3).

“And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me : for the earth is filled with violence through them ; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” (Genesis 6 : 13).

This was God’s “dedication and witness” ; a period of warning prior to the destruction of all living, by the flood.

When the “others” gather in Trafalgar Square or any place will this be their witness ? They should know that the present is no different from the times of Noah. Jesus emphasises this as the condition prior to His coming :

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

When the “others” gather to make their “witness” will it be to build an ark, metaphorically, and warn all of the imminent and impending dangers ? Their fore-fathers did. As a result they became the “sect everywhere spoken against.” Does it not seem that Hymns in which the rebels are asked to join are a mockery if not a perjury of divine Truth ? How could those (ignorant voices) be lifted up in praise to Him, whom he has determined to destroy with violent irresistible punishments so that the “slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth to the other” ?

To help the thoughtful to see where the Truth has been lost, and departure has taken place, a booklet will be sent on application entitled “The History of the Truth in the Latter Days.” This will reveal how easy it is to be deluded into thinking the form of godliness is the power, a disease which has infected the whole of Christendom and the “others”.

(to be continued . . .)



“Thy Kingdom Come”

WORLD RELIGIONS have shown, and Christendom particularly has proved that the human mind is capable of hearing and accepting in childhood certain statements which can be repeated, or intoned or listened to for a lifetime in complete illusion. Uncounted numbers of people have confidently based their hope of life after death on the meaningless repetition of words which they neither understand or seek to prove. These circumstances occur in every creed, religion and denomination, and under this heading are those who have been familiar from childhood with words from what is commonly known as The Lord's Prayer—“Thy Kingdom Come.”

Jesus preached “the Kingdom” during His ministry in Galilee and Judea and in preaching this “gospel” He brought a “strange” and what must have been a refreshingly new message to the few who responded to Him, especially to the poor and needy. Jesus preached from the law and the prophets and those who exclude the Old Testament from evangelical “gospel” preaching today fail to realise that Salvation was offered to all the world from its pages. The Kingdom preached was the hope of David, Moses and Abraham who all died, as did the prophets, believing that the time would come when God would set up on earth His Kingdom which would never pass away.

Christendom has changed the warm rich hope of a perfect existence on this earth, so utterly desirable to mortal dying man, into a hotch-potch of fables and lies which in their repetitive folly are against all reason and as the day of Christ's coming approaches there can be no desire for it in the hearts of a world immersed in pleasure seeking. Yet God has said : “As surely as I live, my glory shall cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea ; and before Jesus every knee shall bow.”

The curse will be removed from the earth in that day and the desert shall blossom and bloom like the rose. Babel will no longer exist and all the earth will speak with one tongue, impelled to thank and praise God continually because of the glory He will have wrought on the earth and for the peace and love and unity of existence under the rulership of Christ the King and His redeemed.

Why is this glorious prospect hidden from so many ? Especially as the Bible has the greatest world wide circulation. The reason is seen in the answer of Jesus to the disciples when they asked Him why He spoke to the Jews only in parables. (Matthew 13 : 10-16) :

“Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the

Kingdom of Heaven, *but to them it is not given* . . . for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with heart and should be converted and I should heal them."

Men perish through the hardness of their hearts. Paul, speaking to the one Body, in Thessalonica writes (II. Thessalonians 2 : 7-12) regarding the return of the Lord Jesus—that before that great event, one must be revealed, *the man of sin*, the head of the vast apostate body. He represents all, Protestant and Roman Catholic, who are ignorant of The Kingdom.

"Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness or unrighteousness in them *that perish* ; because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

He has been ably assisted by the clergy of all ages and all denominations, "unfaithful shepherds" whom Jesus castigates as "hypocrites—whited sepulchres", who today proliferate, in extraordinary dress and in "holy tones" (Dr. Thomas) preaching and taking wages for a gospel "which is not a gospel" (Galatians 1) which neither they nor their hearers understand, and today "every man does that which is right in his own eyes." (Judges 21 : 25).

When Samuel Johnson was asked to comment on belief in ghosts, he replied, "All reason is against it, but all belief is for it." How true this is ! The world is riddled with superstition, pandering to a gullible public thirsting for assurance while they continue in pleasures. A repetition of the situation in former times when :

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land ; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means ; and my people love to have it so : and what will ye do in the end thereof." (Jeremiah 5 : 30-31).

The same warning in a different context comes from Paul (II. Timothy 4 : 3-4) :

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, *having itching ears* ; and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Even those who had the Truth having now lost the way, are fast receding from it into the darkness of worldwide unbelief, through their joining with error.

The Kingdom of God on earth will be the Kingdom of David restored with joy, holiness, repentance, obedience and striving (Revelation 21 : 27) :

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie : but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

The world through its lusts has rejected the wonderful promise of inheritance of the earth with Christ for evermore, preferring to serve the “prince of this world” and “his” assurance that they shall never die even as they are lowered *into the grave*. Jesus was truly explicit :

“But I say unto you I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.” (Matthew 26 : 29).

In this hope, all the called and faithful “sleep”, who have died.

J.P.



The Message to the Ecclesia at Laodicea

(Revelation 3 : 14-22).

Meditations on a Bible Class

THE MESSAGE TO LAODICEA was the words of “the faithful and true witness” to a people who were neither faithful nor true. Jesus speaks of Himself in this context as “the beginning of the creation of God” which brings into focus that everything which moves on this earth has been created on His behalf and this grand design is being prepared for Him. How unworthy of the gracious opportunity given to them had the Laodiceans proved to have been :

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” (Revelation 3 : 15-16).

The Laodiceans as an Ecclesia had become as the “ejecta”, poi-

sonous and obnoxious to the Body, in a situation where they could not possibly be absorbed back in again. But they were not aware of their disastrous position for they were saying :

“I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked” (without His covering). (verse 17).

There is perhaps no better description of complacency as shown in this letter : they were absolutely self-satisfied. There was nothing in them “to refresh”; so were incapable of *really* giving “a cup of cold water” to a needy one. Nor had they the heat of zeal, so were quite satisfied to be without Christ. Hence the strong words of Jesus that they did not belong to Him any more than “the ejecta” belongs to the body of a sick person. This message to this apparently prosperous community was from “one who had known need”, for Jesus had never been “increased with goods.”

The question might then be raised as to why Jesus gave counsel in this letter “buy of me gold tried in the fire (the true riches of faith refined by trial) . . . and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed . . . and anoint (rub in) . . . eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

This advice is immediately seen to be qualified by the following :

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if *any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup (banquet) with him and he with me.” (verse 19-20).

Did this mean that Christ would go back into the Ecclesia again because of one responding ? Surely not ! No ! Christ would not enter into the evil community, for how could He work in such conditions? But a few were being given an opportunity, as Christ knocked upon “the door” of individual hearts, who ought to have been shocked to learn of their true state. “If any man hear . . . and open . . .” was the call. Some had obviously not reached the dreadful and wilful condition of “treading under foot the Son of God,” for Christ would not then have knocked.

No doubt most of the community would reject the message as spurious, their hearts would be so gross as to have no conscience as to how God was viewing them. How blind human nature can get ! Their downfall brought about by the deceit of respectability making them think they are alright, and able to trust in their “own righteousness”. “Be zealous therefore, and repent” would require individuals to seek to be right with the adding of “a fifth”, which means

far more than just saying "I am sorry". It would require action as part of "the overcoming", so essential if there is to be a true following of Him who "overcame".

This would mean a coming out of Laodicea into the apparent austerity of fewness of numbers. In such straitened circumstances faith in Christ's help would be necessary.

The thought, which has been propagated by some, that they have a duty to stay with "the Laodicean state" to try and "save the sinking ship" is in opposition to what Christ commands. It is impossible to bring a Laodicean Ecclesia back "en masse" into The Body. There can be a general appeal to such, but experience shows only a few have "ears to hear."

Time after time a Laodicean situation has been reached, and as events have shown there have perhaps been eight or ten repsonive out of ninety, or twenty out of thirteen hundred. It was impossible to bring the thirteen hundred back. The leaders of the Apostasy (twenty four arranging Brethren on the platform) used the gambit of resigning by walking off because of the lack of confidence in them by some. The few who were endeavouring to rise up to the spirit's requirements and through whom its sword worked. After resigning the procedure was to ask the mass for a vote of confidence and they were overwhelmingly brought back on to the platform by majority vote of those who had "need of nothing."

In America the interest and love had so ebbed, and the standard had become so lax and worldly that the communities should have been abject. Instead only six or seven responded to His mercy, for the rest, their hearts were not generated by *the power* of love. Impoverished in spirit and knowing not. Miserable because they had not the joy of the Truth, which is the only true joy. But to the responsive is the promise that He will banquet with them, The spiritual food *will* be given, and ultimately they may be allowed to sit with Him in His throne (verse 21), which means a place in the Kingdom of God.



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

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the World. If any man have an ear, let him hear.” (Revelation 13 : 8-9).

SO THE LAST BOOK of the Bible, described by intellectuals as a “mystery”, but which in its own words was sent to “*show* unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1 : 1) warns of the peril of the last days. “All that dwell upon the earth” are to worship a system which God condemns. Only those whose names are written (and therefore bound) “in the book of life of the Lamb”, will be delivered.

The system, which is so attractive to human inclinations by reason of its numbers, its power, and its “works” will draw either forthright of tacit consent from “all”. The question might be raised as to how non-conformists and stalwart dissenters could ever be persuaded to worship what their predecessors so hotly repudiated. It is here that the principle of fellowship is revealed. There are some who would never openly “worship”, but they fall down through their “worshipping by proxy”. So the leaders of sects and denominations hold out their hands to “the system” and thereby shepherd their congregations into a position of acquiescence, which really means acceptance. These speak of the “good intentions” and “respectability” of those who are leaders of “the system”. Therefore “their names” in effect are given to it, making it “full of names” (Revelation 17 : 3).

This trend is now very evident, and presently the outcome, as the system completely takes over, will bring a trial for those who are “*shown*” the Truth. For :

“ . . . he causeth all . . . to receive a mark (his mark). And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name . . . ” (Revelation 13 : 16-17).

Recently a publication has emerged called the “Common Catechism”. Its composers comprise some forty Continental Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians. They started this work in 1969, “to make a full statement of their common ‘Christian’ convictions.” The book reveals that Catholics and Protestants have settled their differences in their fundamental beliefs. Furthermore they have come to the view of accepting “a pluriform church”. This means that differences of doctrine are not regarded as important but rather

are to be expected, and in no way do these differences breach "their fellowship". So in this way there is an identifying with "the system"; "names" are inscribed to support it, and the efforts and sacrifices of men of "Reformation" times are forgotten.

At the time of writing Britain is getting ready for the "Referendum" to see whether its people in the main are for or against Britain's participation in the "Common Market". As arguments swing "to and fro" the political debate has tended to submerge the work of an interdenominational organisation that wants to keep Britain "in" on religious grounds. The group called "Christians for Europe" has an Anglican bishop as its chairman. The organisations' view is that continued membership for Britain is most desirable "because of the spiritual strength" such union gives. Its leader says the E.E.C. has given Britain "a wonderful opportunity to refurbish our spiritual links with the Christianity which once very largely shaped our own traditions." He saw a united Europe as the means of "helping to slay the dragons of enmity, fear, and poverty not only in Europe but in a much wider sphere of the world's surface." High sounding words conveying an appearance of humanity and concern for the underprivileged. But past and present history do not support the professed sincerity of "the system".

God's word is forthright in its condemnation :

"Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above *all that is called God, or that is worshipped* . . . And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming . . . whose coming is after the working of Satan . . . with all *deceivableness* of unrighteousness in them that perish ; *because they received not the love of the truth*, that they might be saved." (II. Thessalonians 2 : 3-10).

There has been a multiplication in these last days of sects and denominations "*called God*." As ecumenism gains momentum whether Britain says "in" or "out" the stage is set for the exaltation of "the false prophet" above "all the names" which are "called God". Only those having "the love of the Truth" will escape "through sanctification (being set apart) of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (verse 13).

How meaningful in this context is the exhortation :

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught . . ." (II. Thessalonians 2 : 15).

D.L.

“ Let us make a name . . . ”

WHEN PRIDE EXALTS ITSELF disunity follows. Nations rise, as did Nazi Germany, their claim resounding that they were the *Herrenvolk*—the master people ; who were to have a millenium of triumph. But Nazi Germany was broken, and its leaders slain and scattered.

The lesson of the Tower of Babel has long been forgotten by man. But for those who have been given eyes to see, there is witness in the multiplicity of tongues of the hand of God in evidence, to curb pride. Genesis chapter 11, reveals that at one time there was only one language. But in that unity there was pride, so the cry was raised :

“ let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven . . . ”

What an exaltation of human ambition ; but not ending there for additionally there was a desire :

“ and let us make us a name.” (Genesis 11 : 4).

So the evil was divided and the pride for a time was curbed by God’s restraining visitation. Their language was confounded and as a result they were scattered to become the many nations which exist to the present day. An undeniable witness, to those who have eyes to see, of God’s abhorrence of pride, and how effectually He can humble by dividing that which is evil. Many lessons can be drawn from this early illustration of how God works. The Almighty who overruled the division of mankind, has brought about the downfall of many other projects of men in like manner.

“Christendom”, who claim to be Christ’s domain, are as divided as the nations. But just as the nations strive for unity through the ironical title of a “United Nations Organisation”, so does “Christendom” through its ecumenical movement. The lesson however does not end there, for those who had The Truth in these last days have themselves become divided. Pride has brought about the downfall through a desire to make a name for themselves rather than in a waiting for God to guide them.

These things afford a necessary lesson for Proverbs 13 : 10, declares that :

“Only by pride cometh contention . . . ”

It is a fact that inherent in human nature, perhaps more pronounced in some individuals than others, that in some shape or form there is a desire to have an argument. When the argument is won,

or the debate is thought to have been brought to a successful conclusion in the vanquishing of the other side, pride receives a boost. But those who truly seek to honour God, and not please themselves, while invariably having to witness and contend for the faith, feel themselves to be fellows of the prophet Jeremiah who said :

“Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth.”
(Jeremiah 15 : 10).

The Truth has to contend against the wrong which belongs outside, but how sad if contention comes inside as a result of pride. If there is a desire to make a name for oneself invariably disaster will follow, for God is still the same God who worked against those who wished to make a name for themselves in those early days after the flood.

It is right for questions to be raised in an Ecclesia, and for doubts to be voiced so they can be resolved for Ecclesial profit. But contention can never bring profit to an Ecclesia. This possibility of contention which is such a pitfall and a destroyer of unity, has always been in existence.

In writing to Titus the Apostle had to warn :

“ *avoid* foolish questions . . . and contentious, and strivings about the law : for they *are* unprofitable and vain.”
(Titus 3 : 9).

Contention is indeed a vain work, for there is nothing positive that can result, only a hindrance to unity. Obviously this was something of a general failing in evidence at the time of the Apostle Paul, for again writing to Timothy, he warns :

“Neither give heed to fables . . . which minister questions rather than godly edifying Now the end of the commandment is love From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling ; desiring to be teachers of the law ; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.” (I. Timothy 1 : 4-8).

When is the law of God not used lawfully ? Is the possible answer a simple one really ? When it is used in a mere legalistic form, overlooking that the law is not some cold logical code for ascetic or stoical behaviour, but rather for the purpose of helping hearts to respond warmly to The Eternal Law Giver, whose reasonable instructions and requirements far transcend all the codes and practices which men bring into, and have brought into control their way of life.

Men like to make laws. Men then like to go further and put their various interpretations upon laws that have been set up by certain precedents of the past. Which is why there are appeal courts, where the so-called more learned ones of the Judiciary debate upon certain court findings and the proceedings that have led up to those findings. Huge volumes of past proceedings are gone into, and comparisons of past precedents are made with the immediate case under review before them.

There is never any warmth in their deliberations ; rather a mere intellectual approach, which treats the individual or individuals involved in their considerations as "a case" and nothing more. The misery and heartache caused by these long deliberations and wranglings of the judiciary is probably incalculable, and the cost to the defendants very great.

Can this attitude come into the Body ? Could it confidently be said that it could not when it is evident from the divine record that this was a trend in the days of the Apostle ? The Apostle makes a sound practical observation when he says :

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient . . . and if there be any other thing that is contrary to *sound doctrine*."

(I. Timothy 1 : 9-10).

The law then was not made to minister questions, but rather to show men what they are by nature, and in showing them, to help effect a change in them. "Strivings" in the context of what the Apostle warns against is really "a swerving aside" and becomes a "vain jangling". The expression "vain jangling" is possibly quite meaningful. There is no harmony in a jangling sound ; and as the jangling proceeds it becomes wearing and unsettling. This is not constructive and follows no clear or ordered theme. So is the ministration of questions which "gender strife". So there is a lesson from early times of the need to seek meekness ; for when men exalted themselves in the past they became confused.

And all down the years of men's history, especially the history of the Truth, the same lesson is seen. Some in these last days have made a name for themselves to their utter confusion. They have "a name" which carries with it a degree of respectability and honour, but their inconsistency denotes the absence of the Divine Hand to guide them.

But where God works help is given to enable the mind to discern the real purpose in His Law, for :

". . . . the end of the commandment is charity (love)."

(I. Timothy 1 : 5).

D.L.

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, Hamburg
and Orchard Park. Alternative week : Revelation Study.

Correspondence and interest on the part of Christadelphians and others continues, encouraging in the work.

We value the letters from brethren and sisters, as links in the hope which binds us together in these last days.

As the spring season brings about the renewing of life, it takes our mind to the hoped-for return of the Lord Jesus, when, we pray, a renewing of life may be granted, if found faithful at His Judgment Seat.

J.A.DeF.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

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

With the coming of Spring weather and the consequent influx of holiday makers we have found work in the Sunday School on April 27th. Three attended who were here several Sundays last year. One attended an address last summer given by a Brother from Manchester and is looking forward to another opportunity this year.

The subject of "the Creation" is being gone into and with the wonderful surroundings of sea, shore and countryside this seems to especially impress ; so different from the subjects so often taught in the Schools. In these times of uncertainty we are trusting in the guidance of God in all our affairs.

per D.L.

NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN, Northern Ireland.

Breaking of Bread, Sunday 11-30 a.m.

Sunday School 2-0 p.m.

Bible Class—Wednesday evening.

The Fraternal Gathering in Manchester provided another opportunity for brethren and sisters to meet again after long winter months of separation. We are grateful that some from Ireland were permitted, in our Father's care, to make the journey and receive those spiritual benefits so necessary in our work Zionward.

J.P.

MANCHESTER : Ryecroft Hall annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.

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

Lectures on the first Sunday in the month.

Wednesdays : Bible Class 7-15 p.m., Milton Hall, Deansgate.

God has promised that He will dwell in the midst of His people to overrule their affairs. On the morning we were given the option of the above Hall for Sunday meetings, in the evening we were told we must quit our previous Hall by the end of the month.

The new Hall, although not central, has certain advantages. Its location is well known, also it is well appointed and clean, and situated in the midst of what is virtually a park. This is in marked contrast to the condition and environment of our previous meeting place.

The Lecture for June is entitled :

“The Only Hope in a Hopeless World.”

By God's Intervention in Christ's Second Coming.

But, for whom ? (Luke 2 : 36).

We are encouraged by the interest of a few which continues.

W.V.B.