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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"**

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## At the Table of the Lord

### “She hath done what she could”

For help in our daily struggle to please God, we find His guidance in our daily portion. This week, we have been allowed to be with Jesus during the last days before His death, a time of struggle as He agonized to do His Father’s will. Yet, there were granted to him helps and encouragements in the way.

We have read, for example, in Mark 14:1:

“After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.”

Jesus knew His time of probation was almost over, that He would soon die to fulfill God’s requirements of Him, that He would face the ultimate test as a proof of faith in His Father and His Purpose.

God provided encouragement as He needed it most, to face what He knew was ahead. In Mark 14:3-9, we read of one such event, providing, too, for us example and help in our struggles to endure under God’s testing. Here, we read about Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. She came to Jesus

“... having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.”  
(v. 3)

Some present were indignant at what they considered a waste of precious ointment worth 300 pence; but Jesus, discerning the spirit of Mary, said:

“... Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.” (v. 6)

He valued Mary’s spirit and her deed, calling it a “good work.” What was that spirit? Verse 8 reveals it for us in Jesus’ own words:

“*She hath done what she could*: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.”

What a commendation of Mary in His words, “she hath done what she could.” What an encouragement her faith and spirit must have been to Jesus, as He struggled to obey His Father. He said of her, “she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.” In so doing, Mary must have recognised the work of Jesus, must have realised He had to die, and would do so in perfect obedience as the

unblemished Lamb. We remember from verse 1 that it was only two days to the Passover. Did Mary realise that Jesus would soon die, as typified in the Passover Lamb whose blood upon the door saved the children of Israel from death as long as they remained in the house? Had she listened as Jesus spoke of going up to Jerusalem to be crucified? Had she not seen the power of the Spirit working in Jesus to raise her brother Lazarus? Seeing this, she was able to grow in faith, for she anointed His body aforesaid to his burying, knowing that He must soon die and would be raised, thereby revealing her belief in Him as the promised Messiah.

**“The house was filled with the odour”**

As a consequence of her loving and believing act, we read in John 12:3:

“. . . and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

A testimony of how pleasing to Jesus and to God her “good work” was. Jesus said further concerning Mary:

“. . . Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.” (Mark 14:9)

When Jesus spoke of the gospel being preached, He was not merely referring to the record in Mark, or Luke, or John concerning Mary and her “good work”, but was speaking of the whole gospel, the good news concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. Mary believed that gospel, and it was this implicit faith which moved her to do “all that she could.” Mary could have believed fully and not have anointed Jesus to His burying, and would not have been accounted lacking in faith. She did not simply wait in submission for God’s purpose to work out, but she did more than was necessary and she did it “aforehand”, when she brought that ointment; for this was not just ordinary ointment, but spikenard. If we look up the word used for this *spikenard*, we find it speaks of a plant from which a most precious and fragrant ointment is made, plus a word meaning, genuine, true, unadulterated. This we see in the ointment brought, something which involved great perception, great effort and great cost to Mary. When we investigate further, we find this plant grows in the Himalayan Mountains in India, at an elevation of 11,000 to 17,000 feet. It was difficult to harvest, and obviously was brought a long way to reach Bethany. Mary could have used some other sweet smelling ointment, but no! She chose spikenard. We find that the only other place where spikenard is mentioned is in the Song of Solomon. In Chapter 1:12, we read:

“While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.”

Was this Mary's spirit as she did all that she could, recognising that Jesus would soon die and ultimately become the King? Further, in Song of Solomon 4:12-14, Jesus describes His bride, the Lamb's wife:

"A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse . . . Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard . . . with all the chief spices."

The spirit of that bride is:

"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out . . ." (verse 16)

Did the odour of Mary's ointment flow out, filling the whole house? Was not the spirit of the bride seen in Mary as she anointed Jesus? Truly, she *had* "done all that she could."

Does it make us stop and consider, brethren and sisters; have we done all that we can? Are we doers, not just readers, hearers, thinkers, talkers, but *doing* all that we can? This makes us think of James 1:22:

". . . be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

This thought is amplified for us in verse 23:

"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass."

Does not the word of God clearly reveal for us just what we are like naturally? Alien from Him, from the Spirit. Why does it reveal this? Is it not so that we can change from our fleshly ways, and hope to be joined to Jesus and to God? But, James tells us that the hearer only

". . . beholdeth himself, and goeth his way (the old, fleshly way), and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." (verse 24)

There has been no lasting change in his fleshly ways in spite of having seen himself as God sees him.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and *continueth therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (verse 25)

Does this not apply to Mary who did "what she could", and it was counted as a good work by the Lord Jesus, a good work which filled all the house with a sweet smell? In addition, a testimony of her faithfulness has been kept on record in Mark, in Matthew, and in John as a help for us, a reminder to do all that we can. If we succeed in a measure in this work, will it not bring joy to Jesus, to God, and encouragement to one another as we, together, struggle Zionwards?

**“Some that had indignation”**

There were some present with Jesus who complained that the use of the ointment in this way by Mary was a waste; it could have been sold for 300 pence and given to the poor. On the surface, this might seem a commendable viewpoint; but, how quickly Jesus' words brought their minds back to what was right and of first importance:

“For ye have the poor with you always . . . but me ye have not always.” (Mark 14:7)

The minds of these complainers was on something other than the approaching death of Jesus, His struggle and ultimate victory as He conquered His flesh. How important that victory would be to all those gathered there in Bethany and to all who believe on Him! Yet, how easily we can lose sight of this, as did those who had indignation against Mary's aforehanded and perceptive work. These must have murmured, even as the “odour filled the house.” How lacking in perception, in spirit, we might feel; yet, how easy it is to do. It is only as we are striving to be His bride, showing love and care for Him, in obedience doing *all* we can, that we shall be able to rise above the thinking of the flesh and bring true pleasure to our Father, as Mary did there in Bethany.

We think of our portion in Deuteronomy 27, as Israel was commanded to set up stones on the other side of Jordan and to write all the law upon these stones. Why did God require this? Was it so that Israel could look upon those stones, read there His word, and see what manner of men they were? Further, we read that from Mt. Ebal were to be pronounced the cursings, and from Mt. Gerizim were to come the blessings. As the cursings of Deuteronomy 27 were read forth by the Levites, as the law was read from Mt. Ebal and the people were clearly shown the consequences of disobedience, it was required that

“. . . all the people shall say, *Amen.*”

They had to acknowledge that they understood and knew the law, and the cursings which would surely come if they failed to keep it. As all of Israel, some millions of people, responded together, “Amen,” how impressive it would be! “*Amen*” means, “so be it,” “it is truth.” All were involved; all understood, or said they did. Should not all those that stood by as Mary anointed Jesus to His burying have felt, it is truth, so be it — being not just “hearers of the word,” but doers, as was Mary as she did “all that she could”? Should we not be able to take this help directly to our living, brethren and sisters?

There is another record of one who did all that she could. In Mark 12:41-44, we read of a poor widow who cast into the treasury

two mites, while many who were rich cast in much more. Jesus said of this poor widow, she

“ . . . hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of *her want* did cast in *all that she had*, even all her living.”

(verses 43-44)

Is this not a similar spirit to that of Mary? The poor widow, in casting in all her living, had none left; yet, she had not held back. She did what she could, not counting the cost, not worrying overmuch about what she would do to live tomorrow. How could she do it, for it is not like the natural man to do so? Was it because she trusted in God, that if she did all that *she* could, God would provide for her? We have no doubt He did.

Can we, then, perceive how Jesus would take courage as He experienced the good work of the poor widow and of Mary, be encouraged to do all that He could? He did! He died!

Do these same deeds encourage us in the way, inspire us to do more — to do all that *we* can, to cast in *all* our living, hoping that it is pleasing and acceptable to Jesus and His Father? In this struggle, let us pray that the house may be filled with the odour of the ointment, that we may hope to be of that sister, that spouse who says:

“ . . . Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” (Song of Solomon 4:16)

J.A.DeF.



## **Christendom—and Others—Astray**

*The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.*

**“I have set before you life and death.”** (Deut. 30:19)

The final exhortation to the Ecclesia in the wilderness is eloquent and powerful.

“I call heaven to record this day against you, that I have set before you *life* and *death*, blessing and cursing: therefore choose *life*, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

(Deuteronomy 30:19)

Notwithstanding such a clear and, what is most important to note, a permanent record of it, the Ecclesia failed to take heed. Time and again they departed from the Law and as a result suffered, in some cases, very bitterly.

God in His kindness sent prophets to repeat the warnings, but eventually these were ignored, so that the Ecclesia was removed from the land, and became exiles in Babylon for seventy years. Although allowed to return by a remarkable and kind overruling, the perversity of human nature (our nature be it noted), soon became apparent.

Then came the final warning that Jerusalem would be taken, and her people either killed or scattered into all nations as Moses in the Law had forewarned.

Reference may be made to the presence of Jews all over the world, always feeling unsettled and unsafe, as a proof of the truth of the bible prophecy.

But do not let us miss the most important lesson for us: that there is a constant tendency to depart from *the* Truth, and unless this is checked apostasy will be the result, and those professing the *name* that they live become dead.

### **Warning repeated to the early Ecclesias.**

“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.” (2 Thess. 2:3)

Complacency will refer this exclusively to the great Catholic development. Wiser counsels will realise that the warning is for all times. Again repeated to the Ecclesias in the epistles, and by the Lord Jesus to the seven ecclesias in Asia.

Laxity and infidelity will make the mistake of excusing developing wrongs by "comparing themselves with themselves", and concluding how much better they are. Some will go as far as to confess they have become like Laodicea, but are content to remain in such a body under the misapprehension that they must not "leave a sinking ship". The history of the truth from the beginning shows how mistaken is this view. Repeatedly the ship has foundered, and the truth lost by those professing to be in it.

### The Latter Days.

In the providence of the Almighty the ancient truth was brought to light again by those raised up for the work — the Ezras and Robert Nehemiahs of these times. In the persons of Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts, although they were human and made mistakes, their course was clearly set to maintain the Truth, and rather than see this precious jewel lost again amidst the rubbish of Christendom, they stood firm against error, and diligently purged out the leaven, which is always a danger. The lack of understanding of the doctrine of fellowship has carried thousands to the perishing of the unfaithful.

In 1864 R. Roberts under the urging of Dr. Thomas condemned the the ecclesia in Edinburgh for allowing the spurious suggestion that certain doctrines, beloved by Christendom, could be espoused: the personal devil, immortal soul, etc. Such a treachery allowed for fraternising with the world, but only at the cost of losing all that matters: *the* Truth and the life this promises.

It seems that God tests each generation to prove whether they will stand for *the* Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

Was it by "accident" that in 1885 two parsons who embraced the Truth, were trailed through the ecclesias. Both were trained speakers, eloquent and appealing. In their ungodly zeal they suggested that the scriptures were not wholly inspired. What liberty this appeared to give! Restrictions hitherto felt as irksome to the murmurers could be done away with. After much controversy the "leaven" was expunged, and some hundreds professing to be Christ's brethren were seduced, and lost *the* Truth. They set up as a separate body generally known as Suffolk St. When error in doctrine is embraced, the "broad way" will soon be chosen.

One of their meeting places, a former chapel, had on the notice board outside: "Public worship 6.30 p.m.". Could testimony be clearer that the world had been joined, although in their teaching there may have been a muted accent on certain doctrines of the Truth. This is never sufficient. Not only (as R. Roberts so clearly wrote) must the positive be declared, but also the negative:

“Positive belief (that is full assurance of faith) on one side necessitates and produces positive non-belief on the other. A man heartily believing the truth will heartily reject error: and if he does not heartily do the latter it is proof that he is incapable of heartily doing the former.”

It is wondered how many of the *others* would say “Amen” to such a non-compromising declaration.

After the death of Robert Roberts, the helmsman of the ship of truth seemed vacillating; at times appearing strong, and at other times ready to compromise for the sake of numbers. What was the root of this? Let the one speak for himself, although he has been dead a long while.

In 1921 C. C. Walker, the Editor of the *Christadelphian*, after the death of R. Roberts wrote, words calculated to sink the ship of truth like a torpedo:

“In nothing do we feel more bereft than in this question of fellowship.”

Such an expression promotes doubt, and stifles any action to preserve the Truth by purging out the leaven; either individually or by division. So that the *others*, or at least some of them, allow themselves to say that “nowhere in the scriptures is there any command for the condemnation of a brother by a brother.” The resulting chaos is to be expected. Every man may do that which is right in his own eyes.

*The Testimony* magazine for July 1976, illustrates the development of the apostasy in the Early Church, and comments:

“It must be clearly recognised, however, that the dramatic shift from the faithful bride of Christ to the Roman harlot was a subtle process.”

The author perceives the “subtle process” at work in the *Christadelphian* community today, as he shows in his last paragraph:

“The developments in the first-century ecclesia which have been outlined . . . eventually resulted in the creation of the Roman harlot. *Within the Christadelphian community similar trends can be identified* — the growth of organisation, the respect for worldly wealth and position and the *changing emphasis on first-principle doctrines.*”

To prove this is so, take a look at the *Christadelphian Endeavour*. Its first issue bore a cross on the front. It argued that we should be less self-assured that we have the Truth. The claim was later made that the “*Endeavour*” was trying to do the same work as the Bishop of Woolwich.

“We *may* not agree (note the doubt, at least the lack of condemnation) all that the Bishop has to say . . . but all these attempted solutions are the product of men struggling to snatch from disaster a generation which is on the brink of it, and present God to men and women who refuse to know Him.”

This is “leaven” indeed. Correspondence appearing in the “Christadelphian” shows there is a growing tendency to look upon the harlot as part of the bride; either joining in their “services” or going over to them.

The appeal of the Spirit to those troubled, perhaps bewildered, is

“What *fellowship* hath righteousness with unrighteousness . . .

Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, (which obviously implies condemnation) saith the Lord.”

(2 Corinthians 6:14-17)

(to be continued)



## Fraternal Gathering Addresses

### IN THE LAST DAYS — “A SHAKING”

“Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners.”

(Hebrews 12:3)

The verse which forms the subject of this consideration supplies a general answer to why we can profitably consider Him (Jesus) that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. It says: “Lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.” That means by our likewise suffering the wiles of the devil. We are not protected all the time from the very painful poison darts of evil thinking. It may pay us to go a little deeper and consider why we have to endure such things in common with the Lord Jesus, though His tongue was guileless. Should it not help our peace of mind if we can see the reason, and so *refrain from fretting and fuming at the nastiness we have to endure from time to time?* Sadly, as has ever been the case, this nastiness can come from within the House of God as well as from without. This is nothing new, as every generation of biblical record tells the same sad story. A witness to the peevishness of the flesh, in spite of the calling of God to leave such ways and show no evil, but brotherly kindness one toward another. However, we are not so much considering where persecution comes from as why it does, and what it should accomplish in us when we have to suffer it. This will protect us from being overcome by the evil.

Let us consider the qualities which we are called to exhibit, after the example of the Lord Jesus: beautiful and noble qualities; no less than the grace, or graciousness of God. Long-suffering; that means not easily provoked; not giving out evil, though evil is received. Patience; enduring without kicking over the traces; not soon angry. Just judgement — even if it is to one’s own loss of face. Compassionate, tenderhearted, yes, also towards one who may be in trouble for his own folly. Sincerity, which is a form of honesty; unselfishness. To appreciate the real value of these qualities, we have only to imagine what it would be like to live with some one, if either one was greatly lacking in only one of these qualities, how grievous it would be. And if both parties were lacking it would not only be grievous but stormy! This is not the way to enjoy life, and God knows very well it would not only be pointless but unjust to give people an extended life containing evil because of sinful nature.

So the question is, how can we learn these godly attributes that make possible a life that is peaceful, beautiful, joyous and profitable? Let us think what we find in life in actual practice, with ourselves,

and in the world generally. We may have observed that we can rub along with many in the world for years without ever seeing greed, jealousy or spitefulness or even anger, and other ugly ways of the flesh, where no situation has arisen to provoke these things. Then, suddenly, a day might come when to our shock and grief we fall victim of the most horrible and painful evil of which we never thought the one in question was capable. If that situation had never arisen we might have mistakenly thought that person was a better character than he really was; not knowing his potential to do such evil. This shows how frail and superficial is human judgment. Probably we all have had such unpleasant shocks from certain ones on occasion, but in fact, does not the same principle apply to ourselves? If we were never provoked to do evil, might we not think there was no evil in ourselves? But when we are tempted, as Jesus was so sorely, then it is we see — and God sees — how far, or how little, our characters have become aligned with God and His Son. We know how Jesus was tempted by His own flesh, as illustrated by that famous spell in the wilderness after His baptism. Also how He rose up to such appalling blasphemous contradiction of sinners, such as those who attributed His works to the prince of devils; and also the terrible mocking and cruelty at His trial. All these things He endured without guile being found in His mouth. And what did it do for Him? It proved that He was indeed the Victor over His flesh; that His character was the image of God's, and being perfect, He was given victory even over the grave, and life for endless days.

So we see by considering the grievous experience of Jesus, and from our own observation, that it is only by what we suffer that we can be proved, or learn obedience to those divine precepts of long-suffering, patience, unselfishness, not being vindictive etc. If we never suffered, how could we be long-suffering? If never provoked, how could we be patient? If we never had to make any self-denial, how could we be unselfish? Let us examine the process a little more closely to see how it works. As we well know, we are not just led into one provoking situation to prove us, and that is the end. It is time after time that we have trial, and sadly, for many of us, almost as many times we fail. However, where there is godly sorrow and hating these failures, may come the day when at last our response to the provoking situation or temptation is godly. What joy, if at last we can begin to see a learning of obedience to the divine way, by the things we suffer: repeated trial having wrought an improvement. No room for boasting of course; at best we could only say "We are unprofitable servants, we have only done that which is our duty to do."

Let us think however what this means to our peace of mind: gone is the frustration and fretting, if we can see the anguish of trial is

working a good work in us. This is how considering the sufferings of Christ helps us not to be weary and faint in our minds; there in Jesus is the finished product: tried, tested, and proved in godlikeness under the worst conditions. And we know the reward — life and joy for evermore.

So let us not only consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, during this moment of time only, but any time; this week, next month, if we are provoked, tempted, evil spoken of; Jesus and His people have suffered all this before. They learned godliness by the things which they suffered. One, without faltering, others, more slowly. We can learn the same if we, through the Spirit, keep in mind God's ways. These things will protect us from being weary and faint in our minds, and give us courage to face bitter experiences as our brethren before us.

A. E. I.



**“LET YOUR SPEECH BE ALWAYS WITH GRACE,  
SEASONED WITH SALT, THAT YE MAY KNOW  
HOW YE OUGHT TO ANSWER EVERY MAN.”**

(Colossians 4 : 6)

The letter to the Colossians shows how though living in the world, the child of God can be lifted above dissatisfaction and greedy ambition which is having such a devastating effect upon human life at the present time.

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:” (Colossians 3:22)

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

(Colossians 4:1)

In the following this instruction the believer is taken out of the turgid troubled stream of human life, in its daily struggle over the earning of its livings. It is not a time for action yet, against the so obvious corruption and injustice in the sphere of earning daily bread. That time will come.

This is a time when it is required that there should be a walking wisely in relation to present day conditions. Help is given as follows:—

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

(Colossians 4:5-6)

Great is the implication of this instruction. To walk in wisdom, or be wise in behaviour towards those who are without is what God requires. In what way, the question may be asked. The answer is given “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.” An offensive or an insipid manner can bring difficulty and let the Truth down. It is not required for the Truth to be used as a cudgel upon every man that is met. This would give a “show” of holiness and therefore superiority over such. Even when it is required that an answer be given, which means that in the first place there must be a question, endeavour is to be made to be wise in the answer that is given. It is to be with grace, which means to avoid unpleasantness if at all possible; and also of course to avoid sentimentality which can so easily cloud “reason”. It is not really an answer, which someone could be expected to receive, if a good “reason” cannot be given. It is not appropriate to merely say it is felt that such and such is wrong. This is purely sentiment, a motivating which is insipid. Could it be said that there is the piquancy of salt in such an attitude? Salt, of course, is the emblem of the covenant. “Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.” (Mark 9:49) “Neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering.” (Lev. 2:13) God’s covenant, or promise, is made clear to those who seek Him. It is as absolutely distinctive and piquant as the figure used for it, that is salt. The covenant of God embraces all the witness of The Truth, for it is the foundation of it, and the power of it in the simplicity and the relish of reasonableness of the Truth’s requirements. This, then, is the basis in knowing how to “answer”, for the covenant will supply the means of reply.

So the people of The Truth are placed in the world, but are not of it, therefore are required to conduct themselves with care in it. Shortly present things will pass, with all the avarice, the trading, and the injustice of the age. But amongst the difficulties of these times there is provision, even as for Elijah of old who was told:—

“Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon . . . I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.”

Elijah, obviously, must have behaved himself wisely in the situation in which he was placed in those days. For Zarephath was the dominion of his enemy Jezebel. Nevertheless he was helped as also was the small family to which he was sent, and this promise of help is

extended by inference to these times of trouble and evil, which speak of the approaching end of the present dispensation. It is a time when care is needed in walking "in wisdom toward them that are without."

"Redeeming the time", saving it from unnecessary and unpleasant contention, and using it for those who have "ears to hear".

D. L.



## Trade Union Membership

In recent legislation the "closed shop", forbidding any to work in a particular firm unless a member of a Trade Union has been made tighter.

Exemption on conscientious grounds now only seems possible if it can be proved that he belongs to a religious body, whose beliefs forbid Trade Union membership.

Some time ago in Belfast a Christadelphian objected at his place of work to joining a Trade Union. He was abruptly told that he must join or leave, as the Shop Steward was also a Christadelphian. If it were right for him to be a member, then it could not be wrong for one belonging to the same body.

To have on record our position the following meeting was held:

"At a Special Meeting held on the 30th August 1976 in the Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester, we, who were originally Christadelphians, but separated therefrom because of their departure from the original doctrines, and are now known as the "Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia", make a solemn declaration of what has always been our belief, viz:

That it is contrary to the teaching of Christ for any member to be joined to another body such as a Trade Union or Trade Association as shown in the issues of our official Magazine over many years.

Any member joining a Trade Union would, unless he repented, be withdrawn from, and be regarded as no longer in fellowship."

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

“Let no man deceive you *by any means*: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . . .”

(2 Thess. 2:3)

It is so easy for the mind to relegate the above warning to the demise of The Truth in the first and second centuries without realising that here is another example of a prophecy that has had more than one fulfilment. Seventeen centuries passed after the above words were written and the counterfeit of The Truth flourished, even as Christ foretold. Multitudes were lost, their lives wasted, because it was a time of “deceiving and being deceived”.

Then The Truth sprang to life again through the energetic work of one or two with whom the hand of God worked. As a result a body of people came into existence, known as Christadelphians. Would the Truth remain pure and firm unto “the end”, which was now approaching? The founders strove to make this the case, for nowhere in the earth was there a body so enlightened.

But the pattern of human behaviour does not change. From the beginning of time there has always been a falling away and therefore a spurning of the mercy and goodness of God, and a rejection of the opportunity He has given. What a sad and confused picture emerges as the behaviour of those called to The Truth in the last days is considered. Shortly after those in The Truth had adopted the name Christadelphian, trouble arose in Nottingham (where in June of the year 1848 Dr. Thomas had made his first public proclamation of The Truth.) The details of the controversy were not made public, but an announcement was made that “the obedient believers in the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ at Nottingham, having lately come through a trial which has left them purified and strengthened in faith, though slightly reduced in numbers” had resolved to adopt the constitution devised and adopted by the New York ecclesia in 1853. Obviously a number, even though not many, fell away at that time, for they walked no more with the Nottingham ecclesia, which felt purified and stronger.

It was not long after this that George Dowie of Edinburgh began (in 1866) to advance his beliefs “that rejection of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not a necessary qualification for immersion, that only the righteous will appear before Christ to receive their

rewards, and the Devil was a supernatural being in heaven. After hesitation, and due to the firm stand of Dr. Thomas, there was withdrawal by the Ecclesias from those who held such erroneous views in Edinburgh. This was a falling away, as much to be condemned as that of:-

“. . . Hymanaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; *and overthrow the faith of some.*” (2 Timothy 2:17-18)

In 1873 a pamphlet was issued in which 32 questions were listed concerning the sacrifice and nature of Christ. It was suggested that Jesus did not come in mortal flesh, therefore was not descended from Adam and had a “free” life. E. Turney had preached in his respected position in Nottingham the very opposite of such ideas for fifteen years. He now “renounced” his previous convictions and re-associated himself with the Dowieites (from whom he had divided) and who re-commenced circularising the ecclesias and joined hands with the “Renunciationists”.

A falling away indeed, to those already fallen away. Those striving to uphold the principles of The Truth had no doubt about it; nor do they have to this day.

In 1885 further trouble came to a “head”. Perhaps it would be more apt to say further evil, leaven, was revealed, which needed to be purged from the Body so that the Body would be purified and strengthened. R. Ashcroft the ex-Congregational Minister, immersed in 1876, was ambitious for a new magazine called “the Exegetist”. The first issue, which turned out also to be the last, propagated the philosophy that inspiration of the scriptures did not ensure freedom from error in small details of scripture. R. Roberts, having, no doubt, learned some very deep lessons from previous fallings away took swift action. Here was a test of fellowship. Every member of the Birmingham meeting was sent a letter enclosing “a postcard on which was printed a statement necessary to be made . . . those who return this card through the post, I will send a ticket of admission to a meeting to be convened for the consideration of the next step to be recommended”. Considerably more than half responded, and received tickets for the meeting when it was decided to establish a new ecclesia, “Temperance Hall”. As for the others (Suffolk Street) who did not respond to R. Roberts, their failure in the main was that they did not:-

“. . . justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.”

(Deuteronomy 25:1)

They did not believe in “withdrawal” from any leaning towards “partial or erring inspiration” though believing themselves that the

original writings were “free from error”. Thus R. Roberts came under attack for upholding that God had, and was able, to preserve His message to mankind and in making a stand for it. The attack was perhaps summed up in the words of J. J. Andrew:—

“When the article entitled, ‘Theories of Inspiration’ was published it did not appear to contain the elements of a test for the Brotherhood . . . there is reason for concluding that if the article in question had been unnoticed it would have proved a dead letter — the question arises as to whether the mode of attack was a wise one. You already know my mind on this aspect. From more than one point of view, I should not hesitate to describe it as a grave mistake . . . . You created for the opposite side a sympathy in some quarters where previously there was no such link . . . . You alienated many who were at one with you in the main. Moreover, the great prominence given to the subject had the effect of spreading the disease which your drastic methods were intended to cure.”

This criticism of course was mere human reasoning. It should have been abundantly clear that sympathy for that which is wrong, is wrong sympathy. That if the “disease had spread”, it could only have spread in hearts prone to such a disease. Those who made the wrong decision were obviously already on the slippery path of apostasy. This was indeed a falling away, and not to be treated any differently than “Dowieites” or “Renunciationists”.

The next “trouble” which arose, and came to a “head” in 1894 began to ferment in London in 1892 when there was dissension at a Bible Class concerning resurrection to judgment of unbaptised “rejectors”. J. J. Andrew in Britain and Thomas Williams for the United States and Canada later defined their position as follows:—

“If it be recognised that Adam brought death upon the entire race by his sin, that baptism frees men from the permanent power of death, *and that such of the baptised as die will rise through their relationship to Christ*, but that it is possible God may, by His independent power raise some others, this would not be considered a barrier to fellowship.”

How subtle! Human reasoning holding out that God may raise “some others”. Giving parents in The Truth a hope of possibilities for their dead young ones which God has not given. Sentiment of this kind is no different than the reasoning of the serpent which said, “Ye shall not surely die.” Moreover the erroneous view of the non-responsibility to judgment of unbaptised enlightened rejectors of The Truth is brought in under cover of the phrase “such of the baptised as die will rise.” Was this a falling away or not! ? Minds

which make a stand for error, who are blind to their failure through their unyielding pride, and those who are their victims through their own personal failures can justly be all bracketed in the same category whether Dowieites, Renunciationists, or Advocates, as the followers of J. J. Andrew and T. Williams became known.

Divisions have continued throughout this century. Concerning these events, it can be conceded that both sides on occasion may be wrong; but surely only one side can ever be right.

But re-union was effected in 1957 between the Birmingham "Central fellowship" (formerly Temperance Hall) and various groups that were born from the errors previously mentioned; the main group linking with them being Suffolk St.

What then of the falling away foretold for the last days? Has the position resolved itself? Is the falling away no longer a fact? According to one Christadelphian spokesman there never was a falling away as seen in the following:—

"When we see what is, we are thankful; but we think of how much better it might have been with unity. Two facts emerge. First: That where there has been zeal, self-denial and scriptural study, good progress has been made . . . Secondly: There has been a succession of setbacks owing to divisions which never should have taken place. Divisions on the wholesale scale, into groups and parties, are contrary to the teaching of Christ and the Apostles, but are characteristic of the Apostacy where men have striven to lord it over others. The call of the gospel is to individuals, and in cases of dispute or offence, individuals should be dealt with. (Matt. 18:15) (John 7:51) Each man should be dealt with separately as in an English Court of justice, and not in batches as has been done by tyrants in all ages. Passages of scripture have been quoted in support of wrong action in regard to fellowship, but not one of these, if carefully examined, will justify the methods and principles which have been too often followed with sad and far-reaching results."

If this be the case, why not join with "Christendom" who also have zeal, self-denial and scriptural study? How fallacious this reasoning that only "individuals" should be dealt with.

It has led to one ecclesia withdrawing their fellowship from a member, who was then enabled to "join" the next nearest meeting, which in the man's own words received him with "open arms". To a devout mind this is evidence of "falling away".

The fact is that those who have "fallen" have set their sights upon a target other than the true one. By this they have condemned the

work of the faithful early workers (on which they claim themselves to be founded) as being wrongly actioned in regard to Fellowship. So those who were right are really "wrong", and those who were wrong could be so with perfect impunity as long as they were in groups and not individuals. The target at which "the fallen" aim is prestige and therefore numbers, hence the following remarks some years ago:—

"... the Truth has made considerable progress, so that the number of Christadelphians must now be nearly ten fold what it was immediately before the division in 1885. When we see what is, we are thankful . . ."

What however is seen by The Spirit? For example there is no unity concerning divorce in the Central group. In March 1950 Birmingham Central issued a statement headed "Divorce and Re-marriage." The unanimous view of the leaders was that they ought not to commit themselves to requiring their members who divorce and re-marry to cease the unlawful alliance as a condition of fellowship. This however is not the unanimous view of the members, who nevertheless continue to associate together in "fellowship". What a far cry from the days of J. Thomas and R. Roberts. So down the years comes the prophetic warning for the last days:

"Let no man deceive you *by any means*: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . ."

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, Buffalo, Hamburg, and Orchard Park. Alternative Week: Revelation Study.

The annual Sunday School Outing is planned, God willing, for August 28 at Chestnut Ridge Park, where it is anticipated all may enjoy games and companionship.

Our minds and thoughts are with our brethren in Manchester as they are allowed, God willing, to assemble in Fraternal Gathering. How we would rejoice to be permitted to meet with them, but do pray for that blessing when Jesus comes to assemble all His people from every generation.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who are ill, asking that His healing may be known.

J.A.DeF.

### **“PENTRIP”, Black Rock, Portmadoc.**

Breaking of Bread: Sundays, 11.30 a.m.  
Bible Class: Mid-Week.

We were greatly privileged to be at the Manchester Fraternal on 30th August. Both were able to attend due to the unexpected offer of special conveyance which we gladly accepted.

There has been contact here with two Christadelphians; we can only hope that in “casting our bread upon the waters” we may find some outworking, if it be His will.

per D. L.

### **MANCHESTER: Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.**

Sundays: Breaking of Bread: 11.30 a.m.  
Lecture on the first Sunday in the month at 3.30 p.m.  
Bible Class: 7.30 p.m. in the above room Friday evenings.

The Gospel has been proclaimed this month in the lecture entitled:

“There is one body.” (Ephesians 4:4)

Fellowship with God and His Son is life in the One Body now, and for ever if faithful.

Correspondence continues with some suggesting more than usual interest, which is a source of encouragement.

W.V.B.