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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

AT A FRATERNAL GATHERING

JEALOUSY

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

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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At the Table of the Lord

“Be not soon shaken in mind”

We have been listening to the words of Paul as he wrote to our brethren in Thessalonica. His desire was to help and comfort them, for we can see from II Thessalonians 1:4 that they were apparently in much persecution and tribulation. We recognize that while Paul was writing to a particular ecclesia, his words apply to all the called-out ones of every generation since. We, brethren and sisters, then should be able to find the particular help needed as did those of 1900 years ago. Is it not true that all those whose fervent desire is to serve God do know anxiety, tribulation, persecution? Indeed, such comes of God to correct us at times and to test our faith — a sore trial, as we all know from experience. Yet, what blessing can come, if we are able to stand fast, helped by the intercession of the Lord Jesus who Himself knew great tribulation, helped, too, by brethren and sisters who likewise are experiencing and struggling with this affliction.

Paul's words in II Thess. 1:4, 5 speak to us of that testing:

“So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.”

Our patience and faith in these sore circumstances can help others to endure, even as we ourselves find help. This is a great incentive to carry on, is it not? Paul further wrote (verse 7):

“And to you who are troubled *rest with us*, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”

Who is not troubled in these last days? We find “trouble” comes from a root meaning “to crowd,” or “to press,” giving the thought of being painfully pressured.

As Paul continues, we read in II Thessalonians 2:1-2:

“... we beseech you, brethren . . . that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled . . . as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

How strongly we feel that, as that day of Christ approaches, it is a time of trouble, of shaking, of testing, for verse 3 tells us:

“... that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first”

Are we not clearly shown, brethren and sisters, that this must come about; yet, being flesh, we are soon troubled, soon shaken in mind. Paul knew this, for he, no doubt, felt these same weaknesses. Yet, there can be no question that trial must be expected, and we must be prepared.

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh”
(Hebrews 12:25)

Our Father does speak in many ways; yet, we are naturally inclined *not* to hear, but rather to refuse to be governed by His word. What a great blessing that there is One who in mercy and love speaks — not always speaking, or requiring the things that *we* may like, but what He knows is best for us.

“Not soon shaken”

We read further in verses 26-28 of Hebrews 12:

“. . . Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

With sadness, we are seeing a shaking today. Can we find help in our brother’s words:

“. . . we beseech you, brethren . . . that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled”

Is not a shaken mind the first step toward a shaken spirit: uncertain and weak, ready to fail in a time of sore testing. *Shake*, we find, means “to waver,” or “be ready to fall.” How grateful we should be that the Spirit, through Paul, warns us against a wavering mind. Let us be prepared, then.

“Or be troubled”

This, too, Paul warned against; yet, all in His House experience trouble. We read in II Corinthians 4:7-10:

“. . . we have this treasure (hope of the day of Christ) in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

Earthen vessels are inherently weak, easily broken, making us aware of our need to depend upon our Father for strength; and, so give Him the glory. To see if we will do so, Paul reminds us, verse 8:

“. . . we are troubled on every side”

How true this is, brethren and sisters; true in Paul’s experience, true in our own day — we do seem pressed on every side. But from Paul the assurance is, if we trust in God, believing we are, indeed, earthen vessels we will be, “yet not distressed,” not anguished, not straitened,

but able to cope, through the help of God, through the example and strength of Paul and of our present brethren and sisters who know and share this trouble and tribulation. Can we begin to perceive more clearly why Paul wrote, "to you who are troubled *rest with us*"? Let us strive to do just that, brethren and sisters.

"No Rest"

Paul himself knew great pressure, as he writes in II Cor. 7:5:

"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears."

Could it be that the fears within were caused by those who were shaken in mind and troubled? What is the remedy? Verses 6 and 7:

"Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; And not by his coming only, but . . . when he told us your earnest desire . . . your fervent mind toward me . . ."

What a help these faithful brethren were to Paul as he was pressed, troubled, having no rest. He had written to some to correct; and, in doing so, had brought forth godly sorrow. And, as he saw their yielding spirit and that they were not shaken in mind, how much he was comforted in his own "troubles on every side." Does Paul's experience help us, brethren and sisters, to bear up ourselves and to comfort one another in these days of shaking?

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation (*trouble*), that we may be able to comfort them which are in any *trouble*, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

(II Corinthians 1:3, 4)

Paul knew *that* comfort of God and so can be such a help today. What a blessing we also know in a time of trial, to have such comfort. Do we value it, brethren and sisters? Do we truly? How can we tell? Perhaps in the same way that God can tell. Do we receive it, having received the comfort in time of trouble; are we strengthened and determined so as not to be soon shaken in mind and troubled?

All of us feel at times that we are almost overwhelmed; yet, let us listen again to our brother in II Corinthians 1:8:

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life."

How hard it must have been to continue in such dire circumstances; yet, Paul's thoughts were for his brethren, grateful for their comfort, and at the same time bringing comfort, exhorting, "be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled." Let us, brethren and sisters, strive to follow this inspiring example.

The Lord Jesus was certainly troubled on every side; yet, gave all His life for His brethren and to His Father. He has said to us:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1)

It is not easy to remember God's promises when one is troubled or shaken in mind. Yet, He, through the Redeemer, is the only enduring help we have:

"In my Father's house are many mansions (abiding places) . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

We cannot say we *always* keep this hope in mind, brethren and sisters, trusting in this divine promise. In verse 27, we read Jesus' further help:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

What comfort Jesus provides for His people! As He spake these words, He continued (verse 31):

". . . Arise, let us go hence."

The "hence" to which Jesus went so willingly was to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He agonized to do His Father's will, which was so difficult for His flesh. In the midst of His own great struggle, we remember He did all He could to give peace, comfort to His brethren.

Paul continues:

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions (that which has been committed unto you) which ye have been taught . . . Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God . . . Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work." (II Thessalonians 2:15-17)

This is Paul's prayer for us. Who else has such help? And, it is *always* there, if we seek it! Do we respond to it in gratitude and in love for the God of all comforts, brethren and sisters? How can we do so in a way that is acceptable to the One who bestows such

mercy? Again, Paul expresses it so simply in II Thessalonians 3:13:

“But, ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.”

Weary implies being faint or weak. What is it that can make us weak in well doing? A shaken or a troubled mind, for such can undermine our work, our ability to submit to God, and to one another in love.

How well our Heavenly Father knows that we are, indeed, earthen vessels!

He “troubles” us for His purpose; yet, He will help us to stand, unshaken in mind. Let us take hold of the loving assurance in Psalm 103:13, 14, 17:

“ . . . as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust . . . But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting”

J. A. DeF.



Christendom—and Others—Astray

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

“Neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering.” (Leviticus 2:13)

The Law continues:

“With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.”

Whatever would Christendom understand for *present guidance* from this divine instruction. It would have been fatal for the children of God at the time of Moses to dismiss this as of no consequence. This would have amounted to a *despising* of the Law which plainly declared the penalty of death:

“Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off: his iniquity shall be upon him.”

(Numbers 15:31)

Those possessed of the Truth should be able to know the divine reason, obviously important behind this command for Israel, and be able to deduce the lesson for today. God is unchangeable. The principles of His Truth never vary. Different generations are given suitable ordinances to express these, but the teaching underlying them is the same.

Christendom is ignorant of the Truth. Christendom is astray. No interest is shown by them in the Law, which they should know is the Spirit of Christ; and so in respect to the important detail under consideration, they would scoff at the idea of it having a divine lesson in the past or present.

The Divine Lesson in the Past.

One of the marvels of the Truth is the way its power is illustrated by reference to the natural. This applies in numerous ways.

Food without salt in the natural is both unappetising and un nourishing. Salt gives taste to the appetite, encouraging the essential fluids for mastication and digestion.

In days gone by the inhabitants of parts of Africa were so short of salt, that the colonial powers would trade boat loads of valuable cocoa beans and other commodities for that which scarcely cost them anything — a quantity of salt.

It is not difficult to appreciate that salt which gave such benefit to the appetite and digestion, illustrated in a telling way the essence of the *covenant* in all offerings to God.

The *covenant* was explicit and clear. When recited in the ears of the brethren, they understood; and could, when faithful, say

“All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient.”

Perhaps the importance of this instruction may be appreciated when the tendency for men — “religious” men — to devise their own ways of making what they claim is a “service” to God.

These are countless, and as many as they are false.

One only needs to reflect on certain functions to see this. In a “christening service” who is being served? God? Certainly not. Gathered round the font is usually a display of pride in dress and ornaments, each vying with the other to be one better. Followed by some kind of banquet, with the inevitable “Christening cake”. Consider who is really being served. Will God accept such service? The “salt of the covenant” is completely lacking in all this, hence it is nothing more than an abomination in the eyes of the Almighty.

The same may be said of what is called the “wedding service”. Where the service comes in, it is impossible to see; and the only one being served is the chief participant — the bride.

The maid to be married at Church, will, if funds allow, regard it as “her day”. It must be a “white wedding”. If accompanied by an organ and choir, singing the “voice that breathed o’er Eden”, emotions will be aroused, and the bride will feel most important and gratified. Truly, it is “her day”; but certainly not God’s. Not one iota of the *covenant* is to be found in such a charade.

Men will go to extreme lengths, often causing much sacrifice and self-denial, if not pain, in rendering what they claim is a service to God. In this pursuit they have worn hair shirts, causing great discomfort, if not pain; they have mounted the steps in Rome on their knees of the Spanish Church. The more pain, it is supposed the better they felt. Each ascent brings a degree of absolution from sin, so it is claimed. But what foolishness, as the Apostle says:

“Which things indeed have a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.” (Colossians 2:23)

In most of the so-called services, where obviously the “salt of the covenant” has no part, pride is seen. The wearer of the hair shirt, the one who fasts, the walker in bare feet through the snow, perhaps without them recognising it declare — “Look how holy I am.”

Mark Twain had a gem of a riposte to one caught up in this kind of service. A man, who had been guilty of something dreadful, told him he intended to go to Sinai, and climb Mt. Horeb, and there recite the ten commandments to atone for his guilt. To which Mark Twain immediately said:

“Would it not be better to stay at home and keep them?”

The Divine Lesson for Today

Since the Law was the Spirit of Christ, no detail can be without help for present guidance.

The “*salt of the covenant*” must be present in the lives of God’s people now; adding to their “service” or offering that piquancy acceptable to their God. It means that guidance will be sought on all matters affecting private and ecclesial life; that what is done may be in accordance with God’s will; in keeping with the blessed covenant they have been permitted to enter with the Almighty. No longer will it be a matter of pleasing self, or choosing policies which by compromise will keep diverse elements together. This is what is happening to those who once had the Truth.

Their leaders are educated, that is according to the wisdom of this world, and are looked upon by the rank and file much in the same way as the laity of the great churches regard the hierarchy.

What matters most to these leaders is keeping numbers, and increasing numbers by embracing those of different groups. If the result is considered, the position is tragic. In 1957 Central were supposed, on some man-made basis to unite with Suffolk St., who as a group, left the Truth in 1885 by denying that the scriptures were wholly inspired, or condoning the evil by accepting as members those who did.

Apostasy has thus been increased. The wordliness of Suffolk St. has permeated the supposed union. Readers are invited to read the “History of the Truth in the Latter Days”, wherein details are given of the downward trend in doctrine and practice, so that it can truly be said of the present that “every man does that which is right in his own eyes”. He can conform to this world, so avoiding the reproach of Christ; instead of being transformed so that they “may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” They can join unions, worldly pleasures, fraternise with the sects of Christendom, but only at the inestimable loss of *the Truth*.

Next time a meal is had, and it is said, “Pass the salt, please”, may this be a reminder of the covenant without which our lives become insipid and valueless to the Creator.

(to be continued)

At a Fraternal Gathering

IN THE LAST DAYS — “A SHAKING”

HOPE

“I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn . . . yet shall not the least grain fall.”

(Amos 9:9)

For more than a century those called to The Truth have known that they were living in the last days. But as generations have passed away the end is still awaited. God has restrained Himself to fully work out His purpose. So a few yet remain through the mercy of God, having an opportunity, which they would not otherwise have had. God still allowing “time”, before the day when there will be “time no longer”.

But there has been a shaking. Very great it has been. How wonderful His mercy in that there is still some who have the privilege of His Truth, enabled to “hold on”, though beset by great troubles and grievous departures. It is natural to feel down cast at these things. How necessary then to remember this is a sign of the end. So it is recorded:—

“This word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken . . . that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” (Hebrews 12:27)

It is part of human frailty to feel shaken when untoward events occur, throwing a cloud over the people of His Truth. But this is a test of faith.

To the ecclesia at Thessalonica the Apostle had to write:—

“We beseech you, brethren . . . be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

(II Thessalonians 2:1-2)

The Apostle must have experienced the difficulty of some being troubled due to something he had written, or which had been written. Or even perhaps because of something which had been said. His exhortation was most carefully expressed, be not *soon* shaken. Given in a beseeching tone; reminding also that the Lord Jesus *will come*, gathering those who are responsible to Him, with all the implication of such a gathering together. Could any of those who remain be *soon* shaken if there was a full realisation of responsibility as a result of the precious opportunity given?

However it cannot be expected that all will remain absolutely firm. The Spirit knows the weakness of the flesh, even as Jesus knew it in His brother Peter:—

“Verily, I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice . . . Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:30-31)

Peter was greatly shaken by the work of the adversary; thrown about as in a sift or riddle, which was used to shake the corn into a desired place for being kept or preserved while causing the chaff to be scattered or shaken out. So much so that Peter denied his Lord three times and was also vehemently angry, though he had previously firmly promised he would never do such a thing. It was weakness which caused this, rather than a lack of love for his Lord. Jesus knew His friend, and prayed for him. Knew also that he would eventually overcome his weakness. Jesus also knew that Peter would be quickly grieved in heart because of his slip.

This account gives hope, and reminds that Jesus is mindful of weakness, and if there is true love for Him He will intercede for help to be given.

Perhaps as help is received and a becoming stronger there will also be the endeavour to remember the charge that Jesus gave to Peter, in His love:—

. . . when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

When there is such a strengthening by feeling mortified at personal weakness with a determined resolve to be more stable. Perhaps there will then be response to such help from God through His Son, that there will be more endeavour to help the brethren in some way or other. Each one needs assurance, comfort, a strengthening of arms, and of the hands which hang down.

The prophecy of Amos reveals God’s pronouncement through His servant, against the apostasy of old:—

“Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord.”
(Amos 9:8)

The form of godliness in the days of Amos could not continue for it dishonoured God whom they claimed to serve. Israel were to be surely led away captive from their land. What a shaking that was, what a disaster! ! A great testing for the few faithful ones, when they considered how weak and few they appeared to be, due to the exile,

and so many of their brethren lost for ever. As they reflected upon the former glory and greatness they would feel very downcast. But they were not to be overwhelmed by sorrow; rather, were they to have hope. "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations", God had said. "I will sift them as corn is sifted in a sieve." So the few who were faithful would recognise their grievous affliction as the work of God to further His purpose. So they were shaken about amongst the nations, buffeted by circumstances and trials, in difficulty and under oppression. Daniel and his companions, for example, were some of these. Those who lost hope, gave up their identity, were shaken out. Carried away like the chaff, useless and never to return, even as the natural chaff which in agriculture is discarded and eliminated. In the age-old process of shaking the grain to separate it from the lighter worthless material, inevitably some of the grains are so thrown about they are lost with the chaff.

But not so in the purpose of God with those He wants to keep, whom He desires to separate, gather and preserve. Wherever His people have been placed in the nations, in any particular time or generation, none whom He has found to be desirable, as distinct from chaff, will ever be lost. For here through Amos is His immutable promise:—

"I will sift (or shake) . . . Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."

It may be as well to metaphorically underline that not even the *least* shall fall. This surely is a message of hope to any who may feel cast down, who wonder whether they can hold on. The shaking is of God and if there is endeavour to be worthwhile (grain) as distinct from lightsome, worthless chaff, there will not be a shaking out, for God has the shaking in His control. Every one who is a potential participant in His harvest, and who shows to Him something which He sees is valuable and worth-while, will be kept through present days of adversity by His Almighty hand.

The harvest gathering into the barn will most certainly come; in it's finality it will be a tremendous event. Even though in each generation there may have been only a few grains left after the much sifting and shaking process in the removing of the chaff. The total result from the beginning, will be *very much grain*; fully gathered — for not the least grain shall fall.

D. L.

Jealousy

Jealousy is a product of pride. It cannot bear one to have a position or possessions, which it is thought should be theirs. It is cruel. Cruel as the grave, the Word says.

Gathered around the opened earth into which the dead are to be lowered, looking around at the mourners, observing the tears and distraught feelings of those close to the deceased, gives some idea of how cruel is the grave; of how horrible is jealousy.

We have seen a daughter cling to the coffin of her mother, about to be taken to the graveyard, wailing with inconsolable grief. We have seen a middle-aged woman gazing with eyes swollen by tears at her father as he lay in his coffin, but there was no sympathetic response; nor could there be. We have seen the parents of a seven-year-old just pronounced dead, shouting at him in disbelief that he was dead. Gradually becoming cold the inevitable had to be accepted. Yes, death is an unrelenting enemy. The grave is cruel. Jealousy is just as cruel.

Jealousy is not based on reason. Simply on vile emotions, which only the Spirit can control. To know the extent of this reprobate trait will help us be on our guard, and seek the Spirit's aid to thwart it.

Saul and David.

The jealousy of Saul of his son-in-law David is scarcely understandable. David had delivered Israel by the slaying of the boastful champion of the Philistines, Goliath. The rejoicing in Israel knew no bounds, but brought with it the seed of jealousy in Saul. When he heard the women "come out of all the cities of Israel" singing—

"Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This was sufficient to make Saul jealous. He was very wroth. Such is the fruit of jealousy. Instead of rejoicing in what God had done through David he said: "What can he have more but the Kingdom?"

From that time the frenzy of jealousy possessed Saul. Twice he threw a javelin at him.

When David escaped to his house, his life was preserved from Saul's pursuers by his wife's ruse. Placing an image in the bed and some goat's hair on the pillow, they were deceived. While they waited for David to come out, he had been let down the wall of the house by his wife and escaped.

Like all jealous, Saul was full of self-pity. He felt no one helped.

Spiritual discernment was blotted out, otherwise he would have realised God was not with him. He cried:—

“All of you have conspired against me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, *that there is none of you that is sorry for me.*” (I Samuel 22:8)

Later Saul was told by the men of Ziph that David was in the wilderness of Maon. Saul moved quickly to take his prey. David must die. Jealousy could not be satisfied with anything less. David was trapped; but God came to his aid.

“But there came a messenger unto Saul saying, Haste thee and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing David . . .” (I Samuel 23:27-28)

The invasion of the Philistines ought also to have reminded Saul how David had previously been the means of defeating them. But jealousy, once it is really ingrained blinded Saul to all reason as the following incident shows.

Saul was told David was in the wilderness of Engedi.

“Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.” (I Samuel 24:2)

Nearby was a cave into which Saul entered unaware that David and his men were in the darkness of the sides of the cave.

What an opportunity for David to despatch his jealous enemy! David’s men said:

“Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul’s robe privily.” (I Samuel 24:4)

David hesitated. His “heart smote him . . .” and he said unto his men:—

“The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord’s anointed . . .” (I Samuel 24:6)

When Saul left the cave, David followed him, and in a most humble and eloquent appeal showed how he had spared Saul’s life.

“My father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand.” (I Samuel 24:11)

Saul was undone. He wept. Tears can come easily to some. He confessed his sin. He appeared repentant when he said:

“Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.” (I Samuel 24:17)

David knew that there was no true repentance. Where were the fruits “meet for repentance?” So David left Saul and fled from Saul’s inveterate jealousy.

It seems that beyond a certain point jealousy is incurable. It is chronic. In the end Saul suffered the ignominious death at the hands of those, whom David had so gloriously humiliated by his trust in God; while David prospered “withersoever he went.”

How careful we must be to guard against any of our weaknesses becoming our character, and so incurable; thus meriting rejection at the Judgment.

W.V.B.



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

“Take heed that ye be not deceived.”

(Luke 21:8)

It has been said that the warning given by the Apostle Paul:—

“... that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed”

(II Thessalonians 2:3)

relates only to a fulfilment in the early part of this era. Further perusal of the message however should show that there has been a “letting” (restraining) which when taken away will reveal the one:—

“... whom the Lord shall *consume* with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the *brightness of his coming*.”

(II Thessalonians 2:8)

It has recently been declared (probably exaggerated) by a spokesman for those who are upholding the traditionalist tridentine mass movement, dividing the Roman Catholic Church:—

“The situation is extremely grave. The errors committed by the second Vatican council were so enormous” (that there were few illusions about the success of an interview that might settle the matter). The situation was now “graver than at the time the Protestant reform movement began.”

Such division has a “restraining” effect, even as other events early in this century and in the nineteenth century. The one who is to be destroyed “with the brightness of his coming” has not yet been revealed in his fulness. True there has been something of a fulfilment in the past. But the day of Christ will not come, “except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed . . .”, “. . . and he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark . . .” (Revelations 13:16) Truly, something yet to be, even if there was something of a fulfilment in the past.

“ . . . A falling away first.”

This, apart from the above matter mentioned, is a sign of the last days and of the near return of Christ. For nearly a century the history of The Truth has been a history of falling away. When division takes place it is a time of testing and the need for great care, for Christ said “Take heed that ye be not deceived.” The flesh is so prone to adopt a sentimental charitable view. It shrinks from condemning wrong, which if not condemned opens a palatable way for allowing excuse of wrong which suits everybody including oneself. The standard is thereby made easier, which of course then is no longer the standard of The Truth, but rather a mere profession of religion.

In 1933 a division occurred which was really a simple issue, but has been made difficult for the undiscerning by the many side-tracks and counter-charges the apologists for the wrong have made prominent to cover up the basic issue. On January 18th 1933 The Pemberton Berean Ecclesia by a majority vote passed a resolution:—

“The sisters be at liberty to give helpful suggestions at business meetings, and also to ask questions at the Bible Class through the medium of paper.”

A minority opposed this showing how unscriptural it was, for it is commanded, “Let your women keep silence in the Ecclesia.” (I Corinthians 14:34) Such were not heeded, therefore in accordance with the principles laid down in Matthew 18 they withdrew from the error and awaited the support of their brethren in other Ecclesias. This was not only in keeping with the spirit of The Truth but also according to precedent, for long before this it was the common view:—

“If the matters of difference . . . do not affect the question of the truth or the commandments, it is the duty of the lesser to submit to the greater number . . . Suppose, however, the case is more serious than this. Suppose the majority decide upon something that involves the denial of the Truth, or the violation of the commandments, the minority might have to

consider whether continued fellowship with the majority would not be inconsistent with their duty to Christ. There is a time to separate as well as to hold together . . . let them inform other ecclesias of their act . . . which will put it into their power to consider whether the minority are entitled to their recognition and sympathy If . . . the charges are established and owned to by the majority, and the grounds of them persisted in, the course of the minority is clear: let them withdraw (if the case warrant it) and announce their action to all whom it may concern In the majority of cases (individual) the withdrawal of one ecclesia is practically the withdrawal of all, since all will respect it till set aside, and since, in most cases, a concurrent investigation would lead to its ratification”

The above is quoted to show in a general sense what has been regarded as a guideline in the early days of The Truth, in the latter days, though in conjunction with the same it had been admitted:—

“When the commandments of Christ are remembered and acted on (and Jesus says none who fail to do so are his brethren), it will be easy to carry out any system of rules. In fact, a small company where Christ is in the heart ascendant can get on best without set rules.”

Nottingham Corn Exchange Berean Christadelphian Meeting having heard of the division of Pemberton wrote to the majority to fully ascertain what the majority believed in connection with the division which had taken place. It was soon confirmed by the answer received that they were in unrepentant error. The Nottingham Corn Exchange Meeting thereupon met to consider the case and withdrew from the majority at Pemberton, so upholding the right of the minority. But as time went by it became apparent that other ecclesias were not righteously supporting the minority. Instead there was a charge made that the minority had acted precipitately, and again that their having to wait for other ecclesias decisions concerning the Pemberton division “would be no great hardship”, while efforts were made by several with that Pemberton majority already withdrawn from. Those who had upheld the minority’s withdrawal by also withdrawing from the Pemberton majority made themselves clear in the following terms:—

“The first duty of the ‘Majority’ is, to be reconciled to the ‘Minority’ by a confession that the ‘Majority’ had transgressed the command, and that such transgression requires withdrawal.”

When the Nottingham Corn Exchange Ecclesia took action, there was not the slightest suspicion on the part of the members of that

meeting that other Ecclesias and the Berean would not act in like manner. The first intimation that this would not be the case was when the Nottingham Ecclesias' resolution was not published in the Berean Magazine. The next shock was when Pemberton majority were induced by influence from certain quarters to rescind their unscriptural minute "for the sake of peace". It was following this that in response to requests, "The Master's Household" magazine appeared to put the facts before the Ecclesias, for the upholding of the Word of God, and for justice to be done. When the magazine appeared it was stated there was a determination to keep clear of descending to personalities, which in the Truth's warfare was most objectionable. No names had been mentioned, for in such matters the evidence, it was declared, is the most important feature and not individuals. But the other side of the division, which had now spread from Pemberton throughout the Berean Christadelphian Body had spoken of the leader of the Nottingham Corn Exchange Meeting as "the most abominable liar that ever disgraced the history of the brethren of Christ" while at the same time he had still been addressed as "dear brother" (in Christ). When such a charge was made it was said at the same time that evidence for this was in the course of preparation for publication. Thus the charge was put on record before the evidence was collected and shown. Nor was the offer accepted that the evidence could be printed in the pages of "The Master's Household."

With minds so prepared to accuse and excuse; and who used the age-old carnal weapon of a counter charge to suppress the attempt to deal with the wrong, the breach could not be healed. (The counter charge was that Nottingham allowed Sisters to speak in regular Sunday afternoon classes, rightly or wrongly, this had nothing to do with the immediate issue.) Those who had made a stand for the upholding of the word of God knew they would be insincere to "drop matters of such import for the sake of peace."

To the undiscerning it would appear that matters should have been dropped and a rejoicing should have taken place throughout all the Ecclesias involved in the division when the minority at Pemberton were finally persuaded by the Berean to join up with the majority again, on the following basis:-

"As so much trouble has been caused on the question of Sisters speaking in the assemblies of the saints, we, the Pemberton Ecclesia, (majority) having carefully weighed over all the evidence brought to our notice, and desiring to obey the Word, wish to express ourselves as follows:-

"Whatever may have been our position in the past, and whatever ideas may have been advanced, in interviews with brethren at any time, we now believe that the Scriptural

command of the Apostle Paul forbids Sisters speaking in the mixed assemblies of the Saints, including Business Meetings, and Bible Classes, *but questions and suggestions may be submitted through a brother, and this we are prepared to uphold.*" (Signed . . . Rec. Bro.)

Note how the last sentence still conforms to the resolution of Jan. 18th 1933 previously quoted. In the above statement the discerning will perceive, apart from the above point which shows a harking back to that which had been so disastrous and wrong, there was no expression of a repentant spirit, and no asking for forgiveness for all the acute distress caused. As for the Recording Brother, who had led his flock into such disgrace, where was the recognition that the leader of the minority was now the one who was more fitted for such a position of responsibility?

So there was a pandering by the Berean to a situation for which there was no excuse. The parting of the ways was reached, when at the obedience to Christ's command there was withdrawal from open and resolved heresy. The leader at Nottingham Corn Exchange Meeting laid on record the following:—

"While there exists a sincere readiness to join you again upon the understanding that every Command must be obeyed — That open disobedience requires Withdrawal — that Withdrawal after 'admonition as a brother' means rejection as a heretic — and they are to be as the Heathen and the Publican. If you can believe me, I don't think anything could have separated us, other than a waxing cold regarding holy commandments."

The reply to this, even to this day, is summed up in the following terms:—

". . . that when fellowship has been withdrawn from a brother he is not to be counted as an enemy but admonished as a brother." . . . The Word says, "Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as *a brother*." The Nottingham community disobeyed this injunction . . . When *they* withdraw fellowship from a brother, he must no longer be addressed as 'brother'."

These words speak for themselves to the discerning. A scripture is thus mis-used.

Little wonder it was found necessary to place on record the following:—

"We repudiate the 'ism' which declares that in all its sections (whatever has been the heresy bringing division) the elect of

God exists. Which salutes all such, as the brethren of the Lord merely going by different roads to Salvation. In other words we repudiate all who teach (or refuse to separate from those who teach) that those on the right hand of Christ will be selected from all the different sections of Christadelphianism. Thus the name, Christadelphianism corrupted, moves away to the number of those inscribed upon the Beast.”

“Take heed that ye be not deceived.”

D.L.

The Common Catechism

Forty Continental Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians commenced in 1969 to formulate the above named work. It took four years to complete. Their efforts have been described by a popular religious spokesman in the following terms:-

“Perhaps the most promising way forward — strongly backed in this volume — is provided by the concept of a pluriform church in which differences of doctrinal emphasis are accepted as inevitable but *provide no basis for breaches in fellowship*. From this point of view the deep divisions created by the Reformation were quite unnecessary — at least on religious grounds — and The Common Catechism indicates how much has been lost by keeping Catholic and Protestant thinkers apart during the past four centuries.”

It has also been said:-

“ . . . And a very good and exciting thing it is that there should be this visible evidence of the way old and shameful divisions are breaking down and new and fruitful working together is developing.”

Another church spokesman, for an interdenominational organisation “Christians for Europe” has placed on record the following:-

The E.E.C. gave Britain “a wonderful opportunity to refurbish our spiritual links with the Christianity which once very largely shaped our own traditions.”

After pondering the above may the following be noted from the days of the pioneers:-

“It is the duty of the friends of The Truth to uphold it as a basis of union among themselves, by refusing to receive those who deny any part of it. Paul demands withdrawal from ‘any man’ who obeys not his word, — ‘delivered by epistle.’ ”

(Christadelphian, Sept. 1885 p. 388)

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.

We are grateful for the evidence of God's hand working in His House, to help, to chasten, to guide, to remind that there is no hope of salvation other than His Word. May that Word govern our lives until Jesus returns.

As we go about the work given, we pray for His guidance that His will may be done, His name be glorified.

The Sunday School Outing was enjoyed by all, as the weather cleared long enough to bless with sunshine after a morning of rain.
J. A. DeF.

"PENTRIP", Black Rock, Portmadoc.

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

We have been pleased to have had a visit from Bro. Butterfield and Sis. Beryl, and to have various items of Ecclesial news. We are grateful for Bro. Butterfield's help on two Sundays.

Several weeks ago there was some further attendance of three children at the Sunday School which gave us an opportunity of sharing in the work.

As winter approaches it is hoped that one from here may be able to spend a few days in Manchester.
per D.L.

MANCHESTER: Rycroft 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 monthly Lectures are being continued. God willing. This month the Lecture was:

"The Gospel the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth

What is involved in belief?

But beware:" Colossians 2:8

It is sobering when withdrawal must take place, for it has been the painful duty of the Ecclesia to withdraw from Doris Packer, who has allowed herself to be drawn into the world.

Consideration is being given to national advertising of the "History of the Truth in the Latter Days", in the hope some hearts may be touched by the 'power of godliness'.
W.V.B.