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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

### “Strangers and Pilgrims”

**I**S IT NOT TRUE as we go about our daily living, seeking to bring it into subjection to God’s will, that we may sometimes feel discouraged, wondering whether we can make it? The demands of that struggle, the every-day work, our responsibilities, circumstances about us, all contribute to what seems a heavy load. At such times, we may, in weakness, feel the load is too much, too hard to bear. This is not surprising, for we are all subject to the weaknesses of the flesh and its complaints.

We remember how David on many occasions felt overwhelmed as circumstances pressed upon him. Indeed he wrote:

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? . . .” (Psalm 42:5)

*Disquieted* we find has the thought of making a loud noise. Is not the flesh inclined to be like that — making a loud noise in its seeking to be heard? This word is used as tumult, cry aloud, be troubled, or be in an uproar. Isn’t this thought inherent in each one — if I make a loud enough noise, or commotion, I’ll get my way? We see it often in a child; we feel it in ourselves. As the flesh is straitened by God’s word, it makes itself clearly heard, seeking its own way; thus, undermining our faith in God and His Son.

However, we have been given a powerful weapon against that disquieted nature we possess — against the flesh with all its tumult. David knew that help and tells us, “. . . *hope thou in God . . .*” Simple words, a simple thought; yet, so effective, so devastating to the flesh. It is more than just a theory or a wise saying. It is a reality — the only antidote to the tumultuous crying out of our nature. *Hope*, we know, means to stay, to trust, to be patient, implying a waiting on God’s purpose, knowing it will surely come about when He is ready.

It may at times seem far off; yet, it is near, for God is near. Jesus is here in our midst this morning, if we meet faithfully, hoping in God.

What a blessing it is to have such a hope! To help it become more real, we have listened to Peter’s words:

“. . . Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people . . .” (I Peter 2:9)

Do we, brethren and sisters, fully comprehend this — do we recognize what a truly great blessing this is? Is this what we are — what we are called to be — our HOPE? Peter wrote, “Ye *are . . .*” — not Ye will be . . . but “Ye are . . .” — TODAY!

### **“A Chosen Generation”**

Let us examine this hope, striving to make it more real by so doing. *“A chosen generation.”* *Chosen* means called out, elected, and is used by Jesus,

“... Many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22:14)

Also in Mark 13:20:

“... Except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath *chosen*, he hath shortened the days.”

A time of sore trial, trouble, a time when hearts might be cast down, disquieted; yet, for His chosen ones, the days are shortened — their trial made bearable.

These people so privileged and selected, are designated by the Spirit as a *“generation.”* This word we find used as offspring, kindred, and so we could read it, “a chosen offspring.” Through the work of His beloved offspring, Jesus, we are granted the opportunity of being His chosen people, if faithful. Do we perceive and value this, our position? Small and feeble, perhaps now; yet, in time to come, having hope of becoming *the* people of God, kings and priests reigning with Jesus in His kingdom.

### **“A Royal Priesthood”**

Now Peter tells us, we are a “royal priesthood.” Royal involves belonging to a king. We are called to belong to THE King, the Lord Jesus, to serve Him in a way acceptable to His Father, in the hope of doing so eternally. Peter has also written:

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, *an holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)

Are we, brethren and sisters, striving to offer up sacrifices — our life, our living, the flesh put down, crucified, the heart circumcised from all the desires and fears of the flesh? This is the work of a kingly priesthood now — until, as we read in Revelation, we may say:

“And (He) hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father. . . .” (Revelation 1:6)

This glory is yet to come, if we can now reveal a mind, a spirit striving to be a kingly priesthood, offering up acceptable sacrifices.

### **“An Holy Nation”**

*Holy*, we recognize, means consecrated, set apart. The original word for nation is “ethnos” from which comes ethnic — a word we hear so often today. Ethnic we find means a people distinguished by having certain customs or characteristics. Can we conclude that an

holy nation is a people distinguished by being set apart, consecrated; made this way by being His chosen people, and so belonging solely to Him? How does this happen? Peter's next words tell us.

**“A Peculiar People”**

Peculiar is used in Acts 20:28:

“Take heed therefore . . . to feed the church of God, which he (Jesus) hath *purchased* with his own blood.”

This ecclesia has been redeemed to be a “peculiar people” by His life given. Do we realize the blessing, the hope this purchasing brings, brethren and sisters? Further to this thought, we read Paul's words:

“. . . In whom (Jesus) also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the *purchased* possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The purchased possession — His people — His *peculiar* people — gathered to Him for eternity, only possible because the required price was paid by the Son of God.

God requires also of us to put away our flesh; to realize that we have been “bought” and to Whom we now belong. Thus, our first love, our loyalty, and all our hopes are in the One who has purchased us with so great a price.

With this hope clearly in mind — “. . . a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. . . .” — can we lift ourselves up in spirit? To what end? Peter continues his exhortation:

“. . . That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

(I Peter 2:9)

How can we “shew forth” His praises? This word involves “going forth as a messenger” — a messenger of the One who has called us. The way we respond, the way we live, can be a praise to Him. Again Peter helps us to see how this can be done:

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you *as strangers and pilgrims*, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”

(I Peter 2:11)

Abstain from all that seeks to destroy the spiritual man. How are we to do it? “As strangers and pilgrims.” What is involved in being strangers and pilgrims? As a “peculiar people” can we, should we belong to the world with all its fleshly desires and pleasures, its affiliations, its loyalties, its distractions? We are to be strangers. What are strangers? The word implies dwelling in, but not belonging to, as we read of Moses who “. . . was a stranger in the land of

Madian (Midian). . . .” Acts 7:29. He was an Hebrew — a passer-through; not a Midianite, although he lived as an outcast in Midian for forty years. He dwelt there for all that time waiting upon God, trusting in God, hoping in God (although he may have been cast down, disquieted at times), and was finally called of God back to Egypt, to redeem His people out of bondage.

**“I am a Stranger in the Earth”**

David, a king of Israel, beloved of his people, ruling in Jerusalem, wrote:

“I am a stranger in the earth. . . .” (Psalm 119:19)

Further in thanksgiving to God when the materials for building the temple were offered, David said:

“. . . Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly . . . ?

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners . . . our days on the earth are as a shadow. . . .” (I Chronicles 29:14-15)

This makes us think of the faithful ones in Hebrews:

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and *embraced* them, and confessed that they were *strangers and pilgrims* on the earth.” (Hebrews 11:13)

These were men of faith, sojourning only, having no roots, dwelling in tabernacles. Do we feel like that, brethren and sisters, seeking a continuing city; or, are we distracted by trying to establish our own place on earth? If we are convinced that, in His mercy, we are a “chosen generation”, with all the promise this involves, let us strive to show forth the praises of Him who has called us to be such. Let us be Hebrews indeed.

Peter began his message:

“. . . To the strangers scattered (dispersed) . . . *Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God . . . Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” (I Peter 1:1-2)

Grace and peace — is this the remedy to being cast down and disquieted? Such is the provision of God for His peculiar people, who are ready to be “strangers” — “dispersed” — and are struggling to give praises unto Him who has called them.

In our portions read today, we have several examples to help us — as strangers and pilgrims — to show forth His praise. Nehemiah was a stronger and pilgrim in Jerusalem — the city of God — but, in the possession of the king of Persia. Nehemiah was allowed to return to

Jerusalem through the kindness of the alien king; really, as God worked through the Persian ruler. In Jerusalem, as he went about the work of building the walls, Nehemiah was hounded, besieged on every side by his adversaries; yet, he trusted, waited upon God. The result?

“So the wall was finished . . . that when all our enemies heard thereof, . . . *they* were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.”

(Nehemiah 6:15-16)

How great the strength, the blessing, the help given to these strangers and pilgrims! Their enemies were cast down. This example helps us today, brethren and sisters, as we realize that many things are wrought of God, for our help and comfort. Well was Nehemiah named, “*Comforted of God*”.

### Jonah

Again we are reading of Jonah, called of God to be a messenger, to show forth His praise by taking His word to Nineveh. Instead, he fled, and we know the result; a storm, and when the lot fell upon Jonah, and the sailors questioned him, his reply was:

“. . . I am an Hebrew (passer-through); and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven. . . .” (Jonah 1:9)

Was he an Hebrew? Did he fear Yahweh — or was he fighting against being a pilgrim and a stranger? How easy it is to claim to be a passer-through, but how difficult we find it actually to be such! Yet what help and blessing is ours, if we are seeking to belong to that chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, His peculiar people.

Can we then, brethren and sisters, strive to be pilgrims and strangers with all the trials, corrections, and restraints such a position brings? Can we truly hear the words, “hope thou in God,” even when we may feel hopeless, cast down, disquieted, by such circumstances pressing upon us? To such, to us, although scattered abroad, there is the promise that His grace and His peace surely will be multiplied.

J. A. De F.



## Christadelphians then and now

**T**HE SECOND WORLD WAR brought new trials to the brotherhood. People generally could understand in the first World War, at least to some extent, why the brethren could not join the forces; to engage in battle, maiming and killing, by bayonet and shot; but could not comprehend in the second World War that conscientious objection should extend to Civil Defence. This was looked upon generally as a means of helping those who were victims of the enemy terror raids: caring for those rendered homeless, and the helping of those injured or bereaved by the falling bombs. In a private capacity brethren were prepared to help, and did help, but to join an organisation constituted as a direct part of the war effort, was felt to be a violation of the separation required by allegiance to Christ.

Christadelphians did engage in Civil Defence (which became compulsory). Those in the Truth refused although this stand incurred fines and imprisonment. Eventually it was seen that the stand against Civil Defence was the only possible one for those endeavouring to be loyal to Christ, for eventually as it was thought, Civil Defence came under military control. It was indeed no different in constitution from the non-combatant section of the armed forces: but there was no allowance made by the authorities for conscientious objection. In the official statement of the then Home Secretary, the Government were not prepared to grant conscientious objection, and so create "a privileged class". This decision meant brethren losing their positions, some valuable pensionable jobs. In spite of some charitable employers who did their best in appreciation of what to them seemed a genuine conscientious objection, they were powerless to help as the law of the land at the time required everyone to serve in some capacity in Civil Defence.

There were cases where the outlook was bleak indeed; but the benefits at the time showed that the Almighty was not unaware of His children's needs. Deliverance from the national net to take all into some form of war effort seemed impossible. It is in such circumstances that the hand of God is seen not to be shortened that it cannot save. Provision in certain instances was miraculous. To look forward at the time seemed to be only impenetrable darkness; looking back it fills the mind with wonder that deliverance could have been allowed. Brethren with families wondered how they could manage as they changed to working on the land, which was very poorly paid; and the earnings would not be sufficient to support a family with the commitments of previously better-paid work. So great was the gratitude felt by most that where there was something over in earnings or capital, it was gladly used to help those in need.

The brotherhood experienced the blessing in the family of God of a wonderful divine provision:

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.”

We know how the basis of this fellowship of others' needs was seen in the wilderness. In the gathering of the divine provision of food, some were able, doubtless by strength, to gather more than their needs; others could not gather sufficient. However, when the collection of what was gathered (from God — be it remembered) was made, then it was seen that there was sufficient for each, so that there was an “equality” by which each had sufficient, and all were blessed. How grateful would those be who by their “gathering” still lacked: and how blessed would those who subscribed to their needs feel, remembering as Jesus said “it is more blessed to give than receive.”

How wonderful are the ways of God in showing the means whereby men and wome of different temperaments can be made *one*. By the “giving” and “receiving” there was and can be an “equality”, so that there is no pre-eminence for any one, no vaunting, no boasting, but all can feel humbled under the mighty hand of God. Although it is not generally realised *all* — that is everyone — come to an eventual equality when death takes place, and the grave becomes the home for all without distinction. For—

“There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.” (Job 3:17-19)

Pride is many times seen in the burial of the dead. Expensive memorials, grave-stones are sometimes raised above the buried dead. These make no difference whatever to the dead, “who all unconscious lie”. They only serve the emotions of the bereaved, or possibly their pride.

The worldly practice of showering the dead prior to burial with flowers has become the rule for those who once had the Truth. “Wreaths” are freely given. Perhaps it is not realised how inappropriate such emblems are. “Wreaths” are a token of victory; but only

God through His Son can and will declare in the day of the Resurrection who is worthy of, in God's mercy of having achieved the victory. No victory of any kind upon earth can compare with the attaining to the Resurrection in the ultimate sense as expressed by the Apostle Paul:

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;  
If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. 3:10-11)

“Resurrection” which means “standing again” is the expression of God's power to a superlative degree. Men can kill; but only God through His Son can make alive.

### The Resurrection of the Dead.

Concerning death men the world over have no doubts. They have their theories of what happens after death, but at least everyone recognises that death brings an absolute finality to life as now seen. Hence, the dead are buried with the specious promises of the clergy, if they attend to the committal, that the dead are alive, enjoying a perfect felicitous state in heaven. The question what happens to the wicked, the vile, the cruel tends to be hedged. “Hell”, “hell-fire”, is no longer referred to by the clerics.

Speaking to one of these recently, of how a generation or two ago, the clergy (notably followers of Spurgeon) preached at great length and vehemently on the dreadful terrors of hell-fire, his reply was that this was no longer popular. It was pointed out that the terrors of hell for sin and disobedience really made the parsons into ecclesiastical policemen. He smiled benignedly, perhaps compassionately, that we seemed so out of date; especially when we asked the question “When was it decided (by them) to close hell?” “The modern preaching was to spread the gospel of *love*.” None in their congregation could object to this for they were being told they are worthy, worthy of the love of the Most High and His Son. And few there are, if any amongst Church and Chapel goers who would realise that this is an empty promise.

*Christadelphians* have fallen into a similar error. The plea amongst their leaders is to preach “positives”. No longer is there any desire for the forthright language of Dr. Thomas. When this is pointed out, they say that times have changed, and the “truth” should be presented in a way that would appeal to the present generation. What they do not realise is that they have changed in not desiring to present *the* Truth in a definite and decisive manner that makes clear the light and does not hesitate to condemn the darkness. Preaching which

fails to do this is nothing more than a “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal”. Preaching “positives” is only a form of entertainment in which no one can be offended, but lacks the essence of *the* Truth to show *the* light as distinct from the darkness. Without some understanding of the hopelessness of the darkness, the imperishable value of the light will not be seen; and if not seen how can it be received?

“*For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*” (Matt. 7:29)

In these few words the clerics of Christendom are condemned; shown to be utterly lacking in conveying in their preaching what is right and what is wrong. In fact, this they dare not do, for the effect would be to empty their already sparsely filled churches and chapels. Their preaching now lacks guidance; how can it be otherwise when there is studious avoidance in declaring what is wrong? Everyone is made to feel he is right, and will receive the blessing of the righteous. However, death takes place, and only by the specious promise of the clerics can have some effect in dulling the mind to the justice of God in sentencing all to die. They deny this truth by saying what is palpably not true: that the dead are not dead! Small comfort to the mourners, to whom words can never make up the loss of a loved one.

The beauty of *the* Truth is its power, its divine authority. The message it contains defines clearly the path to be followed that the blessing of God might be received: and so the Psalmist helps our finite minds to see the wisdom and power of the great God:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1)

No reasonable person can fail to be impressed as on a clear night he looks at the heavens, bejewelled with countless gems — the stars. He is made to feel small and insignificant, which he really is; his mind overwhelmed by the eternal glory seen above. In the prospect he can see an order, and magnificence transcending any earthly glory. “Their rule or direction (margin)” is infallible; truly a clock that is never fast never slow. Such a consideration conditions the mind for the spirit-words which follow:

“The *law of the Lord is perfect*” — seen to an exquisite degree in the heavens, similarly in His Truth — continuing the Psalmist declares:

“(It can) restore (margin) the soul: the *testimony* of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The *statutes* of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the *commandment* of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; The *fear* of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the *judgments* of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

(Psalm 19:7-9)

A contemplation of the heavens will help the mind appreciate the wonder and glory of those things which constitute the Truth —

The Law.  
 The Testimony.  
 The Statutes.  
 The Commandments.  
 The Fear of the Lord.  
 The Judgments.

Each of these is like a great shining light “making wise the simple”. This word “simple” must be understood in its old English sense: a mind free from “folds” in which some darkness may hide, causing a rejection of the light of the Truth in its fullness.

The glory of *the* Truth seen in its manifold beauty as declared in the items by the Psalmist exalts the heart and mind to an appreciation of the words:

“More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
 Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them is great reward.” (Psalm 19:10-11)

The noble heights to which *the* Truth calls is beyond expression. Looking at the heaven — their glory, their order, their wonder, and their magnificence makes *the* Truth with all its intrinsic qualities seem — as indeed it is — higher than ourselves, even as the heaven is higher than the earth.

### “Judgment.”

Only by the Word can true judgment be achieved. Without God’s Word “every man does that which is right in his own eyes”. And what a parlous condition is the result. The present state of society, with its interminable strife and bloodshed results from faulty human judgment. Were there true judgment, that is judgment according to the will of God, there would be no strife, no bloodshed, no war. Only peace, which is the fruit of righteousness. Those who have left *the* Truth, although still claiming the name — *Christadelphian* — are loud in their declaration: “We must not judge”, and quote in support of this the words of Jesus:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matt. 7:1-2)

Without judgment there can be no discerning right from wrong. It is true that judgment must not be according to the flesh: “accusing and excusing” as seems right to the speakers motives and intentions.

There is to be judgment in all matters, free from bias or partiality. Jesus did say:

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement.”

This was according to the Law of Moses (which Jesus upheld in His teaching)

“Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons . . .

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, *that thou mayest live*, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” (Deut. 16:19-20)

It seems that the weakness of human nature (our nature) is ever the same. The brethren and sisters in the days of the Law were reduced to abject apostacy because of failure to judge. The divine estimate is alarming: “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” The correctness of this judgment is seen in the state and suffering of God’s nation which followed: expulsion from His land, and brought into captivity of a powerful and tyrannical ruler for no less than *seventy years*: their King’s eyes put out, and their princes and rulers subjected to the ignominious fate of becoming slaves in a foreign land. Bitter was the divine condemnation that then, and only then, would the land “enjoy her sabbaths”. With the people in the land, although claiming to be God’s people, because of their disobedience and rebellion against God’s law, the holy sabbaths — with the blessed rest which those gave were denied. It is perhaps difficult for us to realise what this meant.

“Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth.

Seek him . . . The Lord is his name.” (Amos 5:7-8)

Those who have left the Truth, but as a group still claim the name often excuse their admitted apostasy by referring to the disobedience of God’s people in the past. A terrible state for minds supposed to be filled with the Spirit. God has shown what eventually happened to these because of departure from the Truth. These events should be a powerful warning. It shows there is no excuse for disobedience, for the toleration of error. Error, as we know, is likened to leaven. Unless it is purged out the leaven will spread, unseen which should alert minds anxious for the Truth, and the preservation of God’s people. It is too late to save any when the whole has become leavened.

How important then is judgment to have the senses exercised to discern good and evil.

W.V.B.

## Temptation

**H**AVE WE NOT FOUND as children of God that we are tested? In reflecting upon testing, we often find our trials involve temptation. What is temptation? Temptation is defined as "that which lures or entices, a state of being prompted to do wrong". Temptation in relation to our Father's commands is the circumstance of being enticed to go against God's word. It is knowing what God requires, but failing to follow it because of other enticements which for the moment seem more attractive to our flesh. Temptation of itself is not harmful. It is only as we allow ourselves to be drawn into the lure it presents that evil is performed.

It is important to distinguish that it is not God who tempts, but our flesh. We are reminded in James chapter 1 verse 13:

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

Here we have revealed the acute danger of temptation, the acute danger of our flesh unrestrained. We know how death came into the world through temptation. "Thou shalt not die," but the serpent's temptation was too great. The result of that sin was death, and the flesh has continued seeking to satisfy itself rather than God ever since.

The attempt to control the flesh is difficult, but James tells us in chapter 1 verse 2:

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations;"

Joy when we fall into temptation? It is true that we do become sore as we attempt to control the flesh, but the Spirit rejoices in this control over our impulses. To endure temptation helps us to grow more perfectly towards the hope that God holds out to us. James 1 verse 12 tells us,

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

This happiness is spiritual joy felt as we move in regard to that crown of life.

### Jesus' Example

As we look at temptation, we have the example of one who perfectly withstood all temptation, the Lord Jesus. He was tempted as are we each step of the way, and in every point, yet He did not succumb. We know the circumstances of Jesus' temptation after

His baptism and after the Spirit alighted upon Him. We read in Luke 4 verse 2,

“Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.”

This was the start of a severe trial for Jesus. We read in verse 3:

“And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.”

This was the first trial of his flesh to see if after 40 days fasting He would take the power which He had to turn a stone into bread. It could easily have been done; who would have seen Him? If we were there in similar circumstances can we see how tempting it would have been? Jesus did not succumb. Even though He must have craved food. He withdrew from the lure of temptation. We know how He did this, and how in each instance Jesus overcame. His response was “It is written”. Jesus was helped by the words He knew, by that which He had read in the law. We can look in Deuteronomy 8 verse 3 where we read the words that came to Jesus’ mind,

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.”

Not by the flesh does man live, but by the word of God. A simple answer but how difficult to conform to it and to rely on that word as Jesus did. Do we rely on that word in times of temptation? Do we seek it as Jesus sought that help?

The second temptation of Jesus was no easier, as we read in Luke chapter 4 verse 5:

“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.”

Jesus’ mind was allowed to perceive all these kingdoms; and, the temptation was to take them now, for this power now lay in His hands. Jesus did not fall to temptation. By using again the words, “It is written” we read His reply in the 8th verse:

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

Can we imagine how pleased God was as He watched His Son rightly applying the word of Truth? Jesus had taken to heart God’s word. No doubt Deut. 6 verse 13 would have come to mind:

“Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.”

Jesus recalled to mind these words to counteract the wiles of the flesh. Jesus was able to recognize that one cannot serve God and mammon. One cannot live by the flesh and expect to have God's hand upon him to work and to bless. Do we worship God as we should, giving our service to Him first, unhampered by the flesh's impatience that wants to take matters into its own hands? Only as Jesus did in putting away temptation, can we hope to wear the crown of life.

The final temptation was perhaps the hardest, as recorded in Luke 4 verses 9 and 10;

“And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:”

Here we find the words “It is written”, but in this case the flesh was using them to subtly tempt in a very rational way. To rationalize is to justify one's thoughts in terms of human reasoning. This human process of mind is constantly going on in all of us, just as it did in Jesus.

Jesus may have rationalised as He knew God's word in Psalm 91 verses 11 and 12:

“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

He was able to fully control such reasoning however, by remembering God's words and rightly applying that word. Jesus said:

“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” (Luke 4:12)

The flesh was brought up short by Jesus' calling upon that word which helped Him in this circumstance. Do we perceive in our living, that word, calling upon it in temptation as Jesus' example has shown?

It is difficult to overcome temptation, and we are constantly in extreme danger. Yet if we can call upon Jesus' example, and these words in James to help us, we can truly rejoice when we are tempted. We must, then, during this time given to us, call upon God through His word, and thereby be helped to overcome such temptations. The Revelation further helps us, in chapter 3 verse 10:

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

These words summarise our need to patiently endure temptation. Indeed, we are to endure temptation, and find joy in the Spirit as we are allowed to perceive that we can overcome through Christ, and that He will come with that crown of life, and bestow it upon those who have truly endeavoured to keep God's word in all their living.

M.C.S.

## The Sheepfold

**T**HE SHEEPFOLD. — The place where the sheep are collected and defended — principally required at night. Paul says, “The night is far spent: the day is at hand.” We are at no loss to recognise the night. It is now, while darkness prevails over all the earth in consequence of the hiding of the face of God (the glorious Sun of the universe). During such a time, a fold for the sheep is necessary. If none had been provided, the sheep must have remained scattered, and exposed to depredation and death. Literally speaking, if God had made no arrangement for the spiritual development and nurture of men and women, barbarism must have prevailed for ever, as in the dark places of the African earth at the present day. The provision of sons and daughters must have remained an impossibility. But He has not left the earth in so hapless a state, His purpose being to fill the earth with His glory, in the sense of ultimately populating it with a race which should ascribe to Him the glory of His own works. He arranged for their development in the due measure required by that purpose at various times. This arrangement, taking different forms at different times, according as His wisdom saw fit, took, in the days of Christ, the form of creating a community — founding a church or ecclesia — establishing a fold.

This community, by another figure, is considered as a house or temple — “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” By another figure, it is spoken of as a body of which Christ is the head. “There is one body,” says Paul, “composed of many members.” We are unfavourably placed in these times for judging of the character and the beauty of this institution and its adaptation to realize the object of its appointment. We are living at the end of a disastrous history. As the Israelitish nation departed from divine ways after the death of Joshua, and the elders who overlived Joshua, so the community founded by the apostles changed, when the apostles and their co-labourers had passed away, from being “the House of God, the pillar and ground of the truth” into “the synagogue of Satan,” whose constituents “turned away their ears from the truth, and turned unto fables,” as Paul had foretold (Acts 20:30; 2 Tim. 4:4). Ecclesiastical history is a history of the corruptions and bickerings that ensued upon this change — the effect of which has been to blight and destroy, instead of conserving and invigorating the work of the Gospel.

What was once the fold for the sheep has become a well-fortified enclosure of fat wolves and other noxious creatures, from whose association the sheep of the flock have fled in panic long ago.

Whether we look at the Church of Rome, or the Church of England, or other kindred communions, we see systems which suffocate, suppress, and destroy the truth instead of nourishing and cherishing it. We see a different spectacle from what was presented to view in the first century, when the friends of Christ were organised into loving and enlightened communities, under the fostering care and guidance of shepherdly men, "feeding the flock of God, over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers" (Acts 20:28). It is a day of devastation and downtreading for divine affairs, both in the national fold and the individual fold. It would be a beautiful and a glorious thing if God were to permit a clearing out and renovation and revival of the fold in which real and healthy sheep might multiply and dwell in safety.

The prophetic word does not justify any hope of this sort till the Great Shepherd of the sheep himself arrives, for, to the last, it speaks of darkness prevailing till the coming of Christ, and the prosperous ascendancy of ante-diluvian indifference till the very hour of his manifestation. The most to be done with present agency is for believers, in the spirit of loving co-operation, to approximate, as nearly as they can, to the primitive assemblies, doing all things decently and in order, and all things for the edification of all, in the spirit of mutual and affectionate submission in the fear of the Lord. By this co-operation, the one fold in little sections may be planted here and there, in which a little may be done in this evil day for the keeping alive of the testimony in the earth, and the development and preservation of a people controlled by the knowledge, love, and obedience of the truth. All such, in all time, are in the one fold in the highest sense; they are constituents of the one community that God is forming for Himself out of the mixed material of the passing generations, and every one of them will, at the appointed time, be gathered from the accomplished ages of probation, and set in his appointed place in the happy day when "there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

R.R.



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

**“Hear ye now what the Lord saith, Arise, contend thou before  
the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.**

**Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord’s controversy, and ye strong  
foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with  
his people, and he will plead with Israel.”** (Micah 6:1-2)

**T**HE “MOUNTAINS” OF THE EARTH think that they can form their policies as they think befitting to their self interests and ambitions. The “hills” join themselves to one “mountain” or another, or alternatively form a “chain of their own” in the endeavour to bring more weight to bear upon the international scene.

China presses upon Vietnam; Vietnam presses upon Cambodia; Russia presses upon China. The United States takes a middle course, hoping that Russia will eventually curb or modify its ambitions, but at the same time the U.S. regards China as a power which is most useful for its purpose of balancing one sphere of power against another.

*Controversy is rife throughout the nations. Great debates are held on the international situation. Instability of Government is such a usual circumstance that sudden downfalls of seats of power do not shock world opinion as in times past.*

At the time of writing further controversy is about to take place in Britain. The British Government having fallen on a motion of no confidence, a general election moves into gear for the verdict of its people. There will be much recrimination, with charge and counter charge. Devious slants will be brought to bear upon the records of the political opponents, for the purpose of holding each other in the worst possible light; and unattainable promises for the future will be made. Out of all this falsity will emerge a government which will act no differently in the international sphere. There will be no justice, no real justice, nationally or internationally, and just as promises are broken nationally, so also will they be broken internationally. In none of this furore will there be the slightest consideration for “the Lord’s . . . controversy with His people.” Very little thought if any has ever been given by the nations to God’s purposes for His people, and for His witnesses the nation of Israel.

But the powers of men disregard at their peril. God has given them the opportunity to take note through the cry of His messenger:-

“Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills  
hear thy voice.

Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people. . . ." (Micah 6:1-2)

At the time of writing the Prime Minister of Israel, following the signing of a peace treaty with Egypt, has been visiting Cairo. But what an anti-climax! Peace normally is a sign of great joy. But Israel's chief of government found a subdued welcome awaiting him. Crowds were discouraged. There was no welcoming posters or banners, no Israeli flags in Cairo itself. Even at the airport of arrival there were only two Israeli flags, and one of them was upon the plane in which he had arrived. As soon as Israel's Prime Minister left en route for his place of stay the flag was taken down from the airport lounge, and in the drive to the airport terminal, the Israeli flags which had been placed in pairs on the lamp posts were taken down by workmen immediately his car had passed by.

Was not this a mere, shallow, outward show? Yet the Egyptian television service which had featured his arrival commented "We have closed the page of hatred for good."

What had dictated such lack of enthusiasm? Why was there reserve which showed an obvious falsity? Political considerations and self-interest were still holding sway! Only a day or so before, there had been a conference in Baghdad of leaders of the Arab world. Foreign and economic ministers were present. It was soon revealed that there was a deep division, which revolved upon the merits or otherwise of the Egyptian/Israeli treaty.

One "camp" felt that Egypt should be made to suffer; the other "camp" desired considerable modification of such a show down. The leader of the hard-liners was the extremist controller of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. It is amazing what an extremist can impose upon others. He has no "office" by right of being part of a government of a territory, but carried with him leaders of nations who have! The hard-line approach was that it was necessary to boycott all relations with Egypt, political, diplomatic and economic because of their deal with Israel.

He was opposed by Saudi Arabia, which finances Egypt to a considerable extent from its vast oil revenues. Saudi Arabia suggested that it was sufficient to remove Arab League head-quarters from Cairo, and temporarily suspend that nation from membership; and concerning any financial imposition, that this should only be exercised against Egyptian firms and individuals dealing with Israel. This suggestion of such a mild policy reaction incensed the Palestinian leader, who stormed out of the conference. This was hot controversy; but no inkling of consideration shown for "The Lord's . . . controversy." !

But they ignore God's purpose and His declared programme at their peril! In context with the cry of the Spirit's message "contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice", God has declared:

"And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the nations, such as they have not heard." (Micah 5:15)

Forces continue to gather in what is undoubtedly an international controversy of the great powers. Russian warships range far and wide. They are now using facilities at Cam Ranh Bay, the one-time American base on the south-east Vietnamese coast. Cam Ranh is considered to be one of the world's finest natural harbours and the Russian presence there will undoubtedly activate the U.S. naval planners into formulating some means of counter-plan. The base in Vietnam is a valuable location for the servicing of a Russian Indian Ocean fleet; far more convenient than the far-eastern Russian port of Vladivostok. Furthermore it has an airport, no doubt engineered and built by the Americans when they fought in Vietnam; and this is said to have a capacity for any size of military aircraft.

There is now the largest concentration of Russian warships off the south-east Asian coast than has been seen in that area for twenty years. An American move in the area is bound to follow. It is now reported that the present United States Administration is making plans for a special super-carrier force for an Indian Ocean Fleet, to fill the gap between the American naval forces in the Mediterranean and the Western Pacific. The main object of this would seem to be to show the American flag in the vicinity of the Arabian peninsula, and to guard the shipping lanes emanating from the oilfields of that region. The intended base for such a task force appears to be the British island of Diego Garcia, a thousand miles south of Sri Lanka. Strategically far better than the United States base at Subic Bay, in the Philippines. Hitherto the only warships America had on service, for the Indian Ocean, were three ships based at Bahrain. But in all this "the Lord's controversy" is not considered. Nevertheless the day will come, when it will have to be considered!

So the prophet's cry goes forth:-

"The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf.

They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee. . . .

Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou has sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." (Micah 7:16-17 and 20)

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, and Orchard Park. Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Ecclesially, work continues on a steady basis both within and without the House.

We are grateful to be included by letters, cables, and phone calls in the work of our brethren across the sea. How valuable is the counselling together, helping to bind closely in these last and perilous days.

Supplications continue on behalf of those in trial or illness.

J.A.DeF.

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

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

We are appreciating a spell of warmer weather following the exceptional cold of winter, and are thankful for health and strength granted hitherto.

As we behold the shooting forth of plants and see the young new lambs we realise these things are part of His wonders.

At the time of writing we are hoping to attend the Fraternal Gathering on 16th April.

per D.L.

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

Sundays: Breaking of Bread: 11.30 a.m.  
Bible Class: 7.30 p.m. in the ante room to large hall, Wednesday evening.

On Monday 16th April the Brethren and Sisters here and from Wales enjoyed meeting together in Fraternal Gathering.

The sublime subject:

“God is Love”

lifted our minds from the present worldly lack of understanding what true love is.

As the subject was dealt with by the brethren our minds felt dwarfed by the wonder of His condescension. A feeling of unworthiness seemed to fill our minds accompanied by profound joy at the extent of His mercy seen in His love. Indeed God is love.

W.V.B.