

FEBRUARY 1988

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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 that ye be not deceived"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"CORRESPONDENCE"

"JOY"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

Other articles left over until next month.

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At the Table of the Lord

“... LOOK YE OUT ... MEN OF HONEST REPORT ...”

OUR consideration this morning of The Acts of the Apostles involves the circumstances after Stephen was killed. The impact of his death and general severe oppression was great, as we have seen:

“... And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad ... except the apostles.” Acts 8:1.

The apostles apparently remained in Jerusalem, but the majority of the disciples were forced to flee abroad. Perhaps this was allowed with a purpose — for:

“... they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” Verse 4.

In addition we are told:

“... they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them ... when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.” Acts 11:19-20.

How widespread was this “scattering abroad” involving Judea, Samaria, Cyprus, Antioch (in Syria), Phenice and Cyrene. To *scatter abroad* means to sow seed throughout. Was this then the purpose of God, to more widely spread the gospel so that there might be fruits brought forth in places other than Judea? We remember when Jesus’ brethren received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they were able to speak with tongues — a God-given power preparatory to this sowing of the seed.

Among those who fled Jerusalem was Philip who went to Samaria and preached Christ unto them (Acts 8:5). Who was this Philip? He was not the one chosen as one of the apostles (Matthew 10), but rather one of the seven, including Stephen, who were appointed to help in the work. Being of those seven, Philip would no doubt be close to Stephen and would be saddened by his death, but all the more determined to continue as a witness to the gospel. The qualifications upon which these seven men were chosen can help us know their minds. The apostles instructed:

THE REMNANT

“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom ...”
Acts 6:3.

Following this injunction:

“... they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas ...” Verse 5.

We know of Stephen, his faithful witness, his death for the name of Jesus Christ. We are reading of Philip this morning. Of the other five there is no further mention in the scriptures, but like Stephen and Philip, they, being men of “honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom”, no doubt faithfully carried out the work given to them. Let us look more closely at the qualities of these men, seeking help to follow their examples.

Those chosen were to be of “honest report.” What does this mean? In the Greek, this is one word often used for witness and occasionally for martyr as in referring to Stephen. Stephen certainly was one of “honest report,” dying as a martyr for his witness to Jesus. The same word is also used in Hebrews 11 in relation to those who by faith will be accounted worthy of the promises in time to come:

“And these all, having obtained a *good report* through faith, received not the promise (yet):” Hebrews 11:39.
Paul then continues, bringing their faithful witness down to our own lives:

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses (those of honest report), let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus ...”

Hebrews 12:1-2.

The witnesses, the example of our brethren of old, can help us today, Brethren and Sisters, in our desire to do the work faithfully and acceptably. To each of us a work is given, no matter what our situation, and help is provided to reveal in what spirit and in what precedence that work is to be done. In I Timothy 3, we find an example in those who “desire the office of a bishop”—the work of an elder, an “overseer”. Among the attributes which can make one suitable for such responsibility and privilege is:

THE REMNANT

“... he must have a *good report* of them that are without; lest he fall into reproach ...” Verse 7.

Even to those who observe from the world outside, the living of one seeking to be an overseer must be above reproach, a witness that here is one striving to submit to the word of God, to follow the example of Jesus Christ. Such were Stephen and Philip who though persecuted for their faith did not hold back in their testimony.

There is yet another aspect to a good report, found in Paul's instructions concerning widows who were to be cared for by the ecclesia. She must be:

“*Well reported* of for good works; ...” I Timothy 5:10.

She must be a witness because of good works which are the evidence of faith. What were the works which brought about this good report? “... if she have brought up children ... To bring up involves a nourishing, a feeding literally perhaps, but especially to be spiritually a mother in Israel.

“... if she have lodged strangers ...” Strangers are pilgrims or sojourners in this life. Jesus will say to those on His right hand at His judgment seat:

“... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you ...” Matthew 25:34.

These are gracious words indeed and Jesus makes it very clear why:

“... I was a stranger, and ye took me in:” Verse 35.

And He goes on to reply to their question: “When saw we thee a stranger ...?”

“... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me:” Verse 40.

“... if she have washed the saints' feet ...” Again Jesus' words after He had washed His disciples' feet helped them to understand:

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.” John 13:14.

How can we wash one another's feet? Is it not by helping each other in our struggle to walk in the way of righteousness; lifting up when there may be a stumbling, encouraging when the way

THE REMNANT

is long and the flesh is weary, pointing out the right way when there is wandering from the path of righteousness—often a work which the flesh finds most painful to do?

Again Paul's words reveal who are "widows indeed":
"... if she have relieved the afflicted ..."

To *relieve* implies to ease, to comfort. How can this be done? First of all there needs to be an awareness that one *is* under affliction. Then a readiness to come alongside to do whatever may help relieve the anguish, being careful, however, to be balanced, for sometimes affliction is given to teach or humble as God knows best. All of us at one time have been heavily pressed. How needed, how binding to another is the well chosen help of one who is alert and standing by in concern.

Lastly, Paul speaks of a general attribute which contributes to a good report and with words that are searching indeed:

"... if she have diligently followed every good work."
In this regard we remember Jesus' words to His disciples:

"... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23.
The key to following Jesus is clearly to diligently follow every good work; it is a saying "no" to self, to our own wants, inclinations, ambitions, indeed thoughts of self. It means just one simple "first" — nothing of our own comes before our good works to His way and to His servants. Here at His Table this morning we have renewed our vow to do just this — take up our cross and follow Jesus. Let us keep that vow. Let us as we return to our homes and our routines allow nothing to put it out of mind. It is only in this way that we can hope to have a good report for good works, and so, like Stephen, like Philip, and so many others of faith, be helped in doing the life-long work which He has placed upon us.

Coming back now to Acts, to the spirits of those seven chosen brethren, we see that they were also full of wisdom. True wisdom is the aggregate of God's counsel. Being filled with this, they were able to give answer to all the foolish reasonings, both their own and that of others, and to react in a way that was justifying to God.

THE REMNANT

In addition, these seven chosen men of “honest report” were:
“... full of the Holy Spirit ...” Acts 6:3.

It was *after* they were chosen that the apostles prayed and “laid their hands on them” — enabling them to do:

“... great wonders and miracles among the people.”
Verse 8.

Before this bestowal of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the apostles’ hands, the record shows they were “full of the Holy Spirit”. How can this be? Assuredly, up to this time, they had shown that in them the Spirit was uppermost, ruling their activities and thinking, overcoming their natural inclinations, and so most evidently filling their lives.

This record in Acts has shown to us the faithful witness, the honest report of two of those seven chosen men. We have seen that Philip witnessed in Samaria, and as a result of his faithful work:

“... there was great joy in that city.” Acts 8:8.

No doubt there also would be great joy in heaven as some, in response, turned from their own sinful ways.

Further, Philip was able to help the Ethiopian eunuch who must have known of God’s truth as he:

“... had come to Jerusalem to worship.” Acts 8:27.

As Philip taught this man who was seeking to know God’s requirements, he took the scripture which the Ethiopian was reading and:

“... began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” Verse 35.

As a result, the Ethiopian was baptized into the saving name of Jesus and:

“... he went on his way rejoicing.” Verse 39.

What of Philip? We are told he was:

“... found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.” Verse 40.

He continued as a witness, one having “a good report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom”.

THE REMNANT

Are not these things a help to us, Brethren and Sisters, as we are struggling to be faithful servants and witnesses of the Almighty and His Son? As we perceive the spirits of Stephen, of Philip, and of all the disciples of the Lord Jesus as revealed for us in The Acts of the Apostles, can we not be lifted up in our firm desire and determination to “run with patience the race that is set before us”?

J.A.DeF.

THE REMNANT

Correspondence

(continued from December 1987)

FURTHER LETTER FROM E.R.H.

"Sincere greeting in the Hope of Israel. I would like to thank you for the copies of the "Remnant" magazines which arrived yesterday. Thankyou for publishing my letter which I had no objection to you doing. I tried to be fair out of the love of the Truth.

Re the article by Dr. Thomas, the piece you published does not apply. I wished you had published the parts underlined which are of the greatest importance. Those who went out in 1923 were what Bro. Roberts in the "Ecclesial Guide" (Page 30 item 38) labelled as the "Dissatisfied minority" who, when Bre. Davis and Pearce retracted what the trouble was about then the minority should not have "gone out".

However, after nearly 65 years I feel the matter ought to be reconsidered. Life in the Truth as far as I have been concerned has not been "a bed of roses"; however, I always valued the advice of the late Bro. H. P. Mansfield who passed away on October 16th last. He was a "father in Israel" to me and his advice was "STAY IN THE CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP AND CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE TRUTH". That is what he did and I feel that he was highly respected by those who value the Truth, for speaking up.

I would like to make it clear that the BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP still honours the BIRMINGHAM AMMENDED STATEMENT OF FAITH, therefore the part of Dr. Thomas's article which you published does not apply. Had we turned aside from those doctrines then you would have a case BUT WE HAVE NOT TURNED ASIDE. The Birmingham Temperence Hall Constitution is still available from the Christadelphian Office.

The best suggestion I can make in 1987 is what I have suggested to other fellowships: That is to draw up a statement to give the door keeper to hand to Visitors and I suggest it be worded as follows: "In order to allay any suspicion in the minds of the brethren and sisters meeting in the Ryecroft Hall Ecclesia at Manchester I wish to state that I wholeheartedly accept the

THE REMNANT

BIRMINGHAM AMMENDED STATEMENT OF FAITH and have no sympathy with erroneous doctrines or practises said to be affecting the Household of faith in these latter days." If any visitor is prepared to sign such a statement which I willingly would, to set the minds of the brethren and sisters of any ecclesia at rest, then the said visitor should be made welcome and partake of the emblems at his or her own responsibility. I feel that this is in harmony with the matter underlined in Dr. Thomas's article.

I appreciate that those who have "gone out from us" have a certain amount of pride, so issuing the doorkeeper of the ecclesia with a card worded as above should cause no embarrassment and it would enable the said ecclesias to carry on as at present but would not cause a rift by refusing genuine brethren and sisters of Christ from remembering their Lord and Master in the appointed way. Such would enable UNITY in the household of faith to be restored.

If the said visitor wished to JOIN the ecclesia meeting at Rycroft Hall, then the arranging brethren have every right to question the said brother or sister upon anything they might wish to make certain about. To refuse any the emblems who assure the ecclesia that they uphold the B.A.S.F. is a very serious matter. Baptists, Christendom and other members of the apostasy do not honour such a statement and they make it clear to us by their hostile reaction that they have no part with us. Once again dear brother thank you for your courtesy and because I honour the B.A.S.F. and endeavour to keep the Commandments of Christ I am, your sincere brother in Jesus Christ."



THE REMNANT

REPLY OF THE REMNANT

Our correspondent rightly calls attention again to what can be described as the dreadful event of 1923, and we could accept his statement that if a division is brought about by a section being dissatisfied and contentious, then such are in grave error, ignorant of their calling of what the Spirit requires.

If however this was not the case, then grave injustice is done to their memory and their subsequent position by calling them a "Dissatisfied minority." The way to resolve the matter of who was right and who was wrong can only be by careful examination of the facts, without bias. We endeavour to set out some of the salient points as follows:-

Extract from speech made by T. E. Pearce 25th October, 1917

"... don't you think it reasonable that although the line on non-retaliation be granted as a general rule of action towards enemies, especially individually, in affairs which concern ourselves alone, it may at times be justifiable to use force and not break the spirit of Christ's commands. The question is: Have we any grounds, scriptural or moral, to do so? If a child struck its parents or teacher, do you think the parent would be justified in turning the other cheek and not rather in inflicting punishment for the good of the child? Now a City or a State in essence is but an enlarged family with distributed duties and benefits. For the repression of crime and for the correction and good of the criminal, the police have been appointed. Morally, there is no difference between the Father's Rod and the Policeman's Baton. Both are equally good and necessary in the family and State. Does not the command to love our neighbour as ourselves imply that we are always to do that which will involve the greatest good to the greatest number? We are not commanded to so love the criminal as to injure the thousand peaceful neighbours. So long as we grasp all the benefits of co-operation, we ought not to shirk the unpleasant task of whipping the unruly children of the City for their good ...".

"We are to be separate from the evil of the world, but not from the good. 'As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye unto them.' We are 'pilgrims passing through' but pilgrims should not help themselves to goods or food without paying the price for them. Let us think hard how we should obey all Christ's commands in such a way as to do the utmost possible for the

community, thousands of whom are enduring unutterable privations and laying down their lives for us. Don't withdraw from those who wish to obey Christ and who, amidst conflicting duties do not think He would have them do just what you think. Now there is a first principle of jurisprudence which we have overlooked, viz., what a man does by another he does by himself. If any of us would blow a whistle if we heard a burglar in the house, in effect we use the policeman to capture the burglar for us. It is ludicrous that we should be asked to withdraw from a special constable at the same time that Sir Douglas Haig is sending our "love" wrapped up in high explosive shells and hand grenades to the Germans. Bro. Walker actually supported our view when he asked brethren to remove a brother from a meeting a few weeks ago. Last Thursday he defended his action, and I agree with his defence — that it is justifiable in the interests of the community to use coercive measures at times. Some of these times are against unruly children by parents and teachers — against disorderly brethren by the ecclesias, and against criminal members of the community, by aiding the police. You are resisting evil and using force just as much if you withdrew from a brother as if you ejected him from the meeting. We can do these things at the same time as we love the brethren of all classes. A criminal in many cases is much to be pitied, and the law is corrective in intention. The strangest part is that those who are the strongest opponents of doing any work in the army or police are advocates of munition making. Can you honestly think that a brother who is a private in R.A.M.C. is morally worse than a conscientious objector who makes hand grenades? If we are genuinely conscientious objectors, let us clear out of the whole business and be logical. If your conscience will allow you to make a bomb and hand it to a soldier to throw at your enemy, well I think you might just as well throw it yourself. The Germans would feel just the same about it. Do you not think that if you withdrew from a policeman whose duties are for the good of ourselves and our neighbours and the criminal you ought also to withdraw from munition makers who are smiting their enemies far harder than any constable's baton is likely to strike. Don't strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

THE REMNANT

Note on the above by Viner Hall

“The only part of the speech which bro. Pearce withdrew owing to a protest from bro. C. C. Walker during its delivery was a personal reference to C.C.W’s threat to have a brother forcibly ejected from a previous business meeting. Nevertheless this was perfectly true regarding C.C.W., and its withdrawal was not intended to be a denial of its truth.”

The Temperance Hall Arranging Brethren’s position.

They had quite rightly refuted the wrong views expressed by A. Davis and T. E. Pearce; they had confirmed and even strengthened their Basis of Faith—they had removed one of the brethren from his Ecclesial offices, because of his wrong views—but why did they not adopt the Scriptural attitude, and require the two brethren to renounce their false teaching as a condition to their remaining in fellowship?

Meeting of the Arranging Brethren, Monday, January 7th, 1918

Bro. A.D. has been interviewed as arranged. He still maintains his letter of resignation. Resolved that we accept his resignation as Assistant Treasurer. The report of the three brethren appointed to interview bro. T.E.P. was considered. Seeing that he was not in agreement with the ecclesia on the question of Police Constables, it was resolved — That we ask for bro. T.E.P. to resign his ecclesial appointments as ‘Server at the Table’ and Ecclesial Auditor.

Letter of the 23rd August, 1918 sent to the Birmingham Arranging Brethren by a minority.

“We, the undersigned, are anxious to receive an assurance from you that brethren A. Davis and T. E. Pearce (who are still in our fellowship) have definitely abandoned the admittedly unscriptural views which they publicly expressed at our adjourned annual meeting on October 25th and November 1st, 1917, in the discussion of the legitimacy of service in the Special Constabulary, etc. We desire to avoid a crisis if possible, and sufficient time to meet all the demands of forbearance having elapsed, we now formally appeal to you, in whose hands this matter was left, to give us the satisfaction we ask for. We may

THE REMNANT

say we cannot under any circumstances consent to fellowship brethren who are known to hold erroneous views on any vital principle of the doctrine of Christ, for the Scriptural reason hitherto well recognised among us that those who knowingly fellowship brethren holding erroneous views are themselves morally accountable for the erroneous views held."

No reply was received from the Arranging Brethren.

Extract from letter of the 24th February, 1919 sent to the Birmingham Arranging Brethren by the minority.

"We now make this our final appeal to you to remove the cause, which if not removed, will lead to our withdrawal from you. We appeal to you earnestly and in the fear of God."

The Birmingham Arranging Brethren replied on the 5th March, 1919 refusing to have the matter brought up again. They had in mind a resolution of November 1st, 1917, passed by the ecclesia:-

"That we agree now, as we have done for more than 30 years past, that the Commandments of Christ, cited as appended to our Constitution, prohibit the resistance of evil, the avenging of ourselves, and the doing of violence, and that therefore the duties of a Police Constable or a Soldier are incompatible with our position as Christadelphians.

That in Clause 35, under the heading 'Doctrines to be rejected', we insert, after the words 'In the Army', the words 'or as Police Constables'."

The Birmingham Arranging Brethren believed this closed the matter, and two months later on January 1st, 1918 three Brethren, on their behalf, on interviewing T. E. Pearce, found he was not in agreement with the Ecclesia on the question of Police Constabulary and so resolved to ask T. E. Pearce to resign his Ecclesial appointments (see previous note relating to January 7th, 1918).

The John Bright Street brethren

The minority withdrew ultimately from the Birmingham Temperance Hall Ecclesia, becoming known as the John Bright

THE REMNANT

Street Ecclesia. They declared that their intention was not of establishing a separate and rival meeting, but rather they stood aside from the Temperance Hall meeting, and broke bread privately, as a temporary measure hoping the Temperance Hall Brethren would reconsider their decision. They believed they were acting in conformity with Clause 32 of the Constitution:-

“That absence from the established assembly of the brethren for the breaking of bread, except from illness or other lawful reason, is an offence against the law of Christ; unless the said assembly shall tolerate the rejection of any element of the truth of the Gospel, or shall sanction doctrines or practices inconsistent with the Commandments of Christ.”

This withdrawal took place on the 5th April, 1919, after which some correspondence took place with the Temperance Hall Arranging Brethren. Then on the 10th July, 1919 the following recommendation was made by the Arranging Brethren to the Birmingham Meeting:-

“That as the brethren and sisters whose names follow still maintain their withdrawal from the fellowship of the Temperance Hall Ecclesia, and have established a separate meeting for the Breaking of Bread, thereby refusing to submit to the arrangements preferred by the greater number, we are reluctantly compelled to recommend the Ecclesia to withdraw from them.”

It is apparent that the only charge against this minority was that they had “established a separate meeting for the breaking of bread.” The Ecclesia were obviously uneasy at this recommendation, because at the Ecclesial Business Meeting the main body of the Meeting refused to pass the Arranging Brethren’s resolution. Later on the 15th September, 1919 the Birmingham Arranging Brethren made another attempt to gain Ecclesial support by the following resolutions:-

- 1/ “That we, the members of the Temperance Hall Ecclesia, in special meeting assembled, do accept the Statement of the Arranging Brethren, setting forth the constitutional line of action they have followed in dealing with the trouble and are satisfied from the explanations of brethren Davis and Pearce that they do not hold the views erroneously attributed to them by a certain number of the brethren and sisters.
- 2/ Having arrived at a decision on this matter, we now

THE REMNANT

ask the brethren and sisters who have tendered their resignations to withdraw the same and to resume fellowship. Failing compliance with this request the Ecclesia withdraws from them at the next quarterly meeting without further discussion."

These two resolutions were passed, and because there appeared to be assurance that the brethren Davis and Pearce had modified their views since 1917, the minority group took up the matter with a view to cancelling their withdrawals. They wrote on September 25th, 1919, "On the assurance given at the special meeting held on September 15th, 1919, that brethren A. Davis and T. E. Pearce have now changed their views advocated in October and November 1917, ... we are willing to accept on these grounds the Ecclesial invitation to cancel our letters of withdrawal, dated April 4th, 1919." The Temperance Hall Arranging Brethren however refused the John Bright Street brethren to cancel their withdrawals, hence at the Business Meeting on the 9th October, 1919 the John Bright Street brethren were withdrawn from by Temperance Hall.

On the 4th January, 1920, the minority again approached Temperance Hall Arranging Brethren for reconciliation. They wrote:-

"Having further considered the matter with a sincere desire to righteously heal the present breach, we are prepared to accept the assurances given that brethren A. Davis and T. E. Pearce do not now hold the erroneous views which caused our severance; we therefore apply for re-fellowship."

The Birmingham Arranging Brethren replied 6th January, 1920:-

"As regards the resolution you send, we are anxious to accept this, and to enable us to do this we suggest that you delete the word 'now' or place it after the words 'we are'. This may seem a small thing, but the effect would be to bring your resolution into line with the resolution of the Ecclesia, by which we are bound."

Fellowship was therefore refused by reason of the position of the word "now" in the John Bright Street letter. The minority replied stating that they felt they could not alter their letter. Amazingly two whose names were Woodward had just previously cancelled their own withdrawing in the same terms:-

THE REMNANT

“Being satisfied that brethren Davis and Pearce have made statements that they do not now hold the views which were the cause of our separation etc.”

This was approved, and these two returned to Temperance Hall fellowship.

On the 11th November, 1920, the minority again wrote cancelling their withdrawals and also referring to the terms of the Woodward's letter which had been accepted. They were however again rejected, the Birmingham Brethren saying they regretted the minority writing in the terms of the Woodward's letter.

The trouble began to spread from Birmingham when other Ecclesias became dismayed at what was taking place. The Ecclesia at Clapham (London) taking the lead. Their judgment of the matter was expressed as follows:-

“If the Temperance Hall Ecclesia persists in retaining in fellowship brethren who have — 1/ Expressed the views contained in speeches;

2/ Who have failed to withdraw the speeches;

3/ Who are unable to unreservedly accept their Ecclesial Basis of Faith;

and at the same time persists in excluding from fellowship those who are sound in the faith—both in doctrine and practice, then we submit we have no alternative but to withhold fellowship from the Temperance Hall Ecclesia, until it shows a change of mind and attitude in this matter. No other course is consistent with faithfulness to the Truth.”

A Clapham spokesman commented that wrong doctrine must not be condoned; neither must lax or unscriptural fellowship. The trouble started in Birmingham, and ... the Clapham Presiding and Managing Brethren have striven hard, in patience and kindness to end it. Three years they have spent in trying to bring about a righteous reconciliation. Their efforts have failed. To allow the affair to go on, instead of taking drastic steps to end it, would be ... a serious dereliction of duty.

Extract from Temperance Hall Final Statement (1923)

On what ground was the minority withdrawn from on October 9th, 1919? Because they had already disfellowshipped us,

THE REMNANT

and declined to comply with the ecclesial resolution. A statement had been made by brethren Davis and Pearce categorically denying all the salient points of the John Bright Street brethren's charges. The Ecclesia accepted this explanation of their position. At the following Special Meeting the ecclesia expressed its satisfaction with this explanation and called upon the John Bright Street brethren to withdraw their resignations; failing which they themselves would be withdrawn from without further discussion.

Were they allowed an opportunity to speak in their own defence on that occasion? If so, who spoke? and for how long? No, for the reason that the ecclesial resolution precluded further discussion.

Concluding thoughts by the Remnant

This summary of the vexed issue of 1923 which resulted in the Temperance Hall being divided from the Bereans needs a careful weighing over. But may our correspondent and our readers please consider that when Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you" this was in connection with the question, "... what shall be the sign of thy coming ...?" Those who are in

the wrong do try to make it appear that they are in the right, hence the need to weigh evidence carefully in such troubles. When a division occurs undoubtedly both sides cannot be in the right. The warning of the Spirit to the Ecclesias is very meaningful for such a situation "... repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick ...". The Spirit gives space to repent, but if not repented in that space of time then those who take action (which it is their duty to do) have the banner of the truth. If the others do ultimately repent it is they who should apply to come back to those who made the righteous stand. Alas, pride prevents some from doing this, particularly if those in the wrong are in a majority.

Invitation

Our readers are invited to write to us for our free booklet:-
The Doctrine of Fellowship.
What does God require?

Joy

IN JESUS' prayer that we have read in John chapter 17, we are helped to perceive how truly blessed we are, that we should have an opportunity to know God's Truth and the Lord Jesus' part in His purpose. We read in verse 20 of that chapter:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”
also verse 13:

“And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

These words of the Lord Jesus reach out across the years, helping us to know His mind and spirit.

That joy referred to above, was often spoken of by the Lord Jesus, as He said in John 16 verses 22, 24 and 33:

“And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

“These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

In these words to His disciples and to us likewise, Jesus was attempting to instill in us the need to recognize that joy in order to emulate it, and so find help in time of testing during our probation. This prayer was one of His last, as He prepared Himself to overcome in His final test on the cross. He looked beyond the trials of the present to the greater hope held out by God — this was His joy. In John 15:9-11 we read:

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

THE REMNANT

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

The basis of that joy is the keeping of the command to, “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). As Jesus sought to overcome, He valued the love of God first and foremost. The degree of this joy is tested in us and our determination to love amongst the temptations and tribulations that we face in the world. This joy can help us to overcome, but it must be thought upon and incorporated in our living. David says in Psalm 126:5:

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

We can perceive the spirit of the Lord Jesus in these words to his followers, that they too will know these tears and sorrows that come because of the need to destroy the flesh. The Lord Jesus’ life was an example of this sorrow from the beginning to the end, yet He did so with joy.

In Hebrews 12:2-4 we read Paul’s words as he speaks of this joy:

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

How much we can be helped as we look unto Jesus and see the depth of joy He possessed in the midst of His agony. We are required to have that same joy and can be helped to grow in it. In I Peter 1:6 there is comfort as we are told:

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”

We know that the fiery trials which do try us are given to put down our flesh and consume it. They are difficult to endure, yet as we do there is revealed a glorifying of God. Can we perceive

THE REMNANT

that this is how that joy of the Lord Jesus might be fulfilled in those who are His? How grateful we should be that the Lord Jesus' prayer in the 17th chapter of John has been preserved to comfort and sustain us as we struggle to know that joy in our living.

M.C.S.

THE REMNANT

News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK, *Grange Hall, Church Street.*

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.

Sunday School 1.45 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Hamburg.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

The continued counselling together provides guidance in our walk and a binding even more closely together in that unity of mind and heart which God requires.

Ongoing response to advertising and literature is encouraging. Greater than anticipated requests for the booklet, "Are Christadelphians Astray?" indicates considerable concern and makes necessary a second printing. Gratitude is felt for this opportunity to witness to the "falling away" of these last days.

J.A.DeF.

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MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.

Thursday: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

The history of the Truth has been one largely of sadness from the very beginning of time, but the Most High had been infinite in His great kindness to leave on record the joy of His hope, in that future when sadness and loss will be no more. This is a continuing comfort in these sombre times.