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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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD

Today we have listened to God's words directed to His people Israel to regulate their lives, helping them to dedicate that living to Him and be subject to His will. The human mind rebels against regulation because by nature it wants to do its own will. But if all men did just that, refusing to obey the laws, chaos would be the result. There were times in Israel's history when this occurred, as we read:

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges 21:25

In the time of Noah, all but eight people were destroyed because:

"...God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5

Left to his own imaginations and devices, man only deteriorates as we see so clearly in the world today. Corruption and lasciviousness, even pollution of the planet abound. How merciful then is God to regulate His people. How does He do this? He recognizes the weakness of all flesh and gives commands concerning these tendencies. He desires that His called-out people submit to His word because of love for their Father and because of a yearning to please Him through yielding. In reading Numbers today, we perceive how marvelously He oversaw and guided His people Israel:

"...on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning."

Numbers 9:15

As soon as the tabernacle was assembled by those privileged to do so, the presence of God, appeared over it. Moses, Aaron and those others appointed looked on in awe, for:

"... a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." Exodus 40:34

This wondrous event conveyed most surely to Israel that the Almighty was pleased with His people, with their offering, and with their work in faithfully building the tabernacle in accordance with His instructions to Moses. The Almighty could have had Moses, His messenger, convey His pleasure to Israel, but no—there was the wondrous and fearful evidence of His presence, towering over the tabernacle. It was a tangible, visible, ever-present witness that Yahweh was indeed in the midst of His people. During the day, Israel would be under the shadow of that cloud. By night, the appearance of fire gave light to them whether encamped or journeying. One had to but look and feel awed by His unfailing presence.

This morning we have read how the Almighty regulated the lives of His children through this cloud and fire.

“... when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.”
Numbers 9:17.

This word journey comes from the concept of “pulling up tent pegs”. It was these which were anchors of support for the tabernacle and for their own tents. When we think about tents, our minds go to the witness of Paul concerning Abraham:

“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob,...For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 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: 9-10,13.

Abraham and his family, dwelling in tabernacles or tents, owned no land, had no fixed dwelling place; often he pulled up his tent pegs as pilgrims and strangers must do. Now, after Egypt's bondage, more than four hundred years later, Israel, under Moses, again abode in tents. They may have longed for a city, a settled homestead, a protected place of their own, but it was not yet to be. The faithful in Israel would know that some day He would surely fulfill that promise to Abraham of a land to be theirs; in the meanwhile each would recognize: “I am cared for—Egypt's slavery is over. He

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is with us—there in the cloud and the fire—and I will trust in Him.”

For those first few days after the cloud appeared, Israel would be touched with wonder and gratitude at the kindness of their God. When the cloud went up, they would be quick to move. When it rested, they would be content to stop and abide in their tents as God directed. With the passing of time, many became accustomed to that remarkable evidence; quite possibly some were not so ready to journey when the cloud went up. “I’m tired—we’ve journeyed for days, and it was only yesterday that the cloud rested. Why must we move again?” How natural, how human! But it was God who regulated their lives—it was theirs only to obey as they had promised at Sinai.

Can we imagine how it was in the camp? Some may have been weak, ill or infirm when the cloud went up. What of them—would they remain behind? If at all able, they would feel, “He will help me to rise up and do it.” If any could not, their family, their brethren would help them—carry them if need be—making sure that none were left behind. Their spirit would be like that of which Jesus taught:

“...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40

To be left behind, outside the camp, away from the cloud and the fire, was unthinkable!

What of the tabernacle itself? It was the responsibility of the priests. The Levites were given to the priesthood for its service. When the cloud went up, their work of taking down the tabernacle would begin. First Aaron and his sons would cover the holy things, and only then could the Levites approach to take them up, lest they die. The appointed Levites would wait for this. Then how carefully and fearfully their work would begin. The curtains would be taken down, detached and rolled up. Next the boards would be removed and the sockets gathered. It was a divine plan so that all these tasks could be done “decently and in order”. There would be no confusion. Each Levite, if perceptive and faithful, would be filled with awe at the privilege of having a part in so holy a work—a labor for the dwelling place of God. Those designated to carry the ark as well as the other furniture of the tabernacle would be aware of their grave responsibility, and would surely exercise every care, as this was for their God. How real, how helpful, how wise and merciful was God’s provision for our brethren. When we realize that there were over eight thousand Levites who were assigned “to do the

service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle" (Numbers 4:47—48), we can begin to see the magnitude of this work, far beyond the planning and care of human minds, precisely regulated by the Almighty's instruction.

The order of their journeying was also ordained: first six tribes, then the tabernacle carried by the Levites, with Aaron and his sons as well as Moses in the midst, and then the remaining six tribes bringing up the rear. Several million people were involved in every move; it would be a long column as they journeyed. How it would create wonder and dread to an onlooker, but most impressive would be the great cloudy pillar. One looking upon Israel would realize that these were no ordinary people, but rather a people greatly favored and protected. Their God was very special, different, fearsome, awesome, glorious! Those who knew how Israel was delivered from Egypt and brought through the Red Sea would exclaim: "Surely that is the cloud which covered Israel and caused Pharaoh's army to be destroyed. We have heard of it; it did not seem possible—but there it is!"

Let us think for a moment of when the cloud rested and Israel stopped. A suitable site for the tabernacle would be selected; the tabernacle would then be erected, first the sockets, then the boards with their bars, the curtains next, and then the ark, the mercy seat, the cherubim, and the rest of the furniture would be brought in. Each Levite would bring his burden in its proper order until the tabernacle was complete, the cloud resting upon it. The tribes would assemble around it in their appointed place. The camp of Israel would cover a very large area with its two to three million people, including over six hundred thousand fighting men. We could assume there would be several hundred thousand tents to accommodate such a large multitude. Each tent had its appointed place, all regulated by God, a sight to bring forth wonder and admiration. The enemies of Israel would be affected by it. We read that Balaam:

"... lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; ..." Numbers 24:2.

He was caused to exclaim with perception and possibly fear:

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! ... God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies,..." Numbers 24:5,8.

He knew that the Almighty's purpose with this nation would unfailingly be accomplished in His appointed time. We also know, Brethren and Sisters, but in it for us there is a sure hope.

Israel's protection and care was sure. Whatever hazards and sacrifices lay before them if they believed and obeyed "all that the Lord hath said", the encampment of God's people was secure against every foe. Later on, David expressed his faith and cognizance of this great blessing from the One who still guided Israel and gave laws to bless and govern their lives:

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Psalm 34:7.

And so it was with the people of God in the wilderness.

All these experiences of Israel as they lived, controlled under God's hand, can be of much help to us, Brethren and Sisters, as we, although Gentiles, strive to be the Israel of God after the Spirit. We seek His presence, seeing it with the eye of faith and rejoicing therein. He does, if one seeks and believes, go before us. He does undoubtedly regulate our lives, as long as we keep Him uppermost in our minds, our strength and-time, our interests, indeed in our entire lives. Must He not be to us as that cloud, that fire which stands high over His people, and where, we pray, He may be pleased to dwell? Each of us, as in Israel, has an appointed place, a given work, a living hope. Let us try to keep this real, alive and valued, by determining with love to be subject to His guiding hand.

J. A. DeF.

THE LESSON OF THE FIG TREE

Our portion in Mark recently has revealed the continued witness and help provided through the life of the Lord Jesus. As a fulfillment of prophecy, He entered into Jerusalem in the prescribed manner, riding on a colt to the shouts of praise from onlookers who said:

“... Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.”
Mark 11:9-10

It was undoubtedly a stirring emotional time for Him, yet one in which He sorrowed, for the people thought He would establish God’s kingdom then, not perceiving that this could not be accomplished until He had overcome His own flesh, and died, thus becoming the perfect sacrifice.

Because of a lack of perception also among His disciples, Jesus used these times to teach as He thought of His impending death. One such instance involves a fig tree where we are told in Mark 11:12-14

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:
And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.
And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.”

It was the time of year when fig trees were in leaf and usually then there were small unripe figs which could be eaten, just as olives are used either green or ripe. He would have anticipated this, yet said these words for His disciples instruction.

Soon after this incident, Jesus went into the temple and cast out those who had made it a den of thieves as verse 15-17 tells us:

“And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;
And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel

through the temple.

And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Who had allowed this to happen? The scribes, pharisees and priests—those teachers of the law who should have been preparing the people for the coming of the Messiah. There could be no true prayer affected there for this was no longer the dwelling place of the Spirit of God.

The morning after this stirring event, Jesus and His disciples left the city and passed by the same fig tree that He had earlier cursed.

"And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away."

Mark 11:20-21.

The sight of the fig tree reminded Peter of Jesus' words. His reply to Peter and the other disciples gives the answer to His earlier actions:

"And Jesus answering saith unto them,
Have faith in God.

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Mark 11:22-26.

What an important lesson is contained in Jesus's answer to His disciples — that in order for prayers to be effective, there must first be a searching of our hearts to see if there is any fleshly hindrance

barring a communion with God. Is there resentment or ill feeling against another which we have been harboring? If so Jesus says, "...if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father...forgive your trespasses". We know that looking into the heart of Judas, Jesus could see a lack of belief, so much so that he withstood the work of the Spirit and lost his hope of eternal life. He decreased in faith while the other eleven increased.

How much we too are within the midst of a faithless and perverse generation, and need to spiritually restrain our flesh—deny it, just as in the disciples' day they did so by prayer and fasting in order to bolster their faith. Jesus' parable of the two men who came to the temple to pray, one a pharisee and the other a publican is such an example of the need to examine our hearts. The publican looked within and was ashamed of his lacks and in humility asked God for mercy. The pharisee meanwhile saw nothing within himself worthy of repentance. The publican was able to remove the fleshly hindrance through humility and his prayer was heard by God.

As the Lord Jesus rebuked the fig tree for its unfruitfulness, He left a lesson to all His followers of the need to produce good works or fruit, and the example of the power of prayer when done in a spirit acceptable to God. How often the disciples would later think upon His words, perhaps every time they came upon a fig tree. We too must value this lesson to show forth more faith and believe without doubting, looking to the end of His purpose, longing for a complete communication with Him in the day that His house is established forever.

M. C. S.

FELLOWSHIP AND THE DOWIEITE CONTROVERSY
(continued)

Letter from Edinburgh, June 28th, 1867

My dear Brother, — “Before entering on the points in your letter which are a reply to the one sent by me from the brethren in Temperance Hall, it will be necessary for me to explain that my personal connection with this matter consists only in the fact that I am one of the community with whom you were in fellowship, and that my position as secretary to the brethren involves on me the discharge of all such duties as the present. Therefore, my knowledge of you as a brother extends no farther than the testimony of brethren in whose judgment and devotion I can place every confidence. These remarks are occasioned by what you say at the commencement of your note, and are designed simply to make clear that this correspondence is not between you and me as individuals, but between you as an individual and the brethren in Temperance Hall, as a community, and that I am simply an instrument of that communicaty.

In order to obtain a starting point, it might, perhaps be advisable to recur to the terms of the note I sent you. If you recollect, that note, in substance, stated that the brethren esteemed you as a brother in the faith, that they deplored your absence from their midst, that they imputed that absence to circumstances — “stumbling-blocks” — which had no connection with our faith in its doctrinal aspect; and that they desired to confer with you in order that these supposed obstacles might be removed, and complete union between us restored.

But, from your reply, it would seem that this is not the case. Your difficulty does not consist in inability to recognise us as brethren of the one faith, but in the fact that we do not recognise the meeting in Union Hall, South Bridge, who profess to be of the same faith, as faithful to its requirements.

We feel glad, if there is to be a difference between us at all, that it should be one of doctrine; for personal differences are to us highly distasteful. They are the results, in all cases, on one side or the other, of a depreciation in the minds of brethren of the greatness of the truth, and of the responsibility of their position as stewards of that

truth, for the use of which, they will have to render account. We are glad therefore, we repeat, that your objection to us is so broad and so clearly defined, and that we can grapple with it in the assured conviction that there is only one ground upon which we can rest for an abiding foundation—and that ground is the basis of scripture principle and truth.

In your letter you make the remark that you regard all believers in the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, who have been immersed as brethren in the Lord; and you say that from the language I use (which represents the mind of the brethren for whom I write) you conclude that I am such a one; and you further remark, that from a little conversation you have had with some of the members of the Union Hall meeting, you think they believe the same things.

Now, in reference to this, we would say, that it by no means follows that the simple adhesion to such forms of words as the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, implies that any one has faith in these comprehensive terms in the sense in which God requires it in order to salvation; nor, to go further, does it follow that because one declares his belief, like Paul, in a resurrection from among the dead, or that life is in Christ, or that the wise shall shine in the kingdom of the God of heaven in the time of the end, that he thereby understands the meaning expressed in the terms made use of. These statements are positive truth, any one of which realised in its fulness, is the power of God unto salvation to all believing it. But, then, we have this fact to meet — that there are hundreds of sects of varied names and denominations, who profess to be Christians, or disciples of Christ, who, if you were to ask them if they believed these things, would unhesitatingly answer that they did. And why so? Simply because these words are mere quotations from a book which they regard as the Word of Deity. To what then, are we driven, in order to see whether a man who professes to believe the Word, really believes that Word or not?"

(to be continued)

A BIBLE CLASS

"HE THAT BLESSETH HIS FRIEND WITH A LOUD VOICE ..."

Proverbs 27:14

Our consideration has to do with friends. What are friends? The word comes from a root, to tend a flock, to feed sheep, giving the thought of being in close companionship, as sheep and a shepherd one toward another. The word is used as brother, companion, fellow or neighbor, confirming the thought of a closeness, a banding together. Examining this special association between friends, we think of the manner in which the Almighty regarded and spoke to Moses:

"... The LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" Exodus 33:11.

David, in a song of ascent of those going together up to Zion, wrote:

"For my brethren and companions' (friends') sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee." Psalm 122:8.

Between true friends, confidence, care, and love abound.

With this in mind, let us reflect further upon our subject:

"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him." Proverbs 27:14.

To bless, that is, to praise and to honor, a friend would not usually be counted as an evil. What then would make it such? If it is done with a loud voice, what is the motive? Would it be to draw attention to one's good deed in so blessing? Is it to be surely heard by all? How much better would be close, loving words between friends! David helps in this question:

"The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:" Psalm 12:3.

"Proud things" used by David here, is the same as "loud" in our verse. It reveals that pride is the chief motive, a desire to glorify self. Our verse tells us that the one speaking so blatantly also rose early

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in the morning to do so. Was there here also a wish to impress others with his zeal. to enhance his reputation? This brings to mind Jesus' words warning against the natural leaning of the flesh to exalt itself:

“... when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men”
Matthew 6:5

Does not our Father know all that is done? What need then for a loud voice or a rising early if the true aim is to sincerely encourage and praise a friend, thereby building him up? But if the motive is to impress those who may hear, is there genuine thought for the friend; is there pureness in that blessing? Does love for the friend really need such ostentatious action? Truly God looks upon the heart, and judges by what He discerns there. In this, we think of His words through Jeremiah:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” Jeremiah 17:9-10.

The Almighty does continually penetrate our hearts. He discerns what is there, and requires a cutting away of all those fleshly motives and schemes. David, who on occasion failed by allowing his own wishes to rule, and yet in sorrow and repentance found God's forgiveness, became keenly aware from these experiences:

“Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”
Psalm 32:2.

God, who recognizes every thought and intent of the heart, judges every action by what He sees there. The one who blesses his friend with “selfish” motives will not be blessed of the Almighty, but as the Spirit warns sharply, as our verse tells us:

“...it shall be counted a curse to him.”

How dreadful to have a deed which could be a good one, corrupted

by a wrong and prideful motive. The end of such brings divine displeasure, and is greatly to be repented of.

As we discern the help of the Spirit in this study, let us take the instruction to heart, heeding the Apostle Paul's words:

"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory (self-conceit); but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Philippians 2:3.

J. A. DeF.



Extracts from correspondence with J.S. (continued)

"Thank you for sending me the copy of the magazine in which my reply to your previous letter is printed.

I do not wish to comment on the remarks upon the "Inspiration Division" on page 137. As I said in my letter, I do not consider myself competent to do so — other than to repeat the words of a wise and faithful Christadelphian. I will not give his name, as I am quoting from memory, but he expressed a truth I think all must recognise — "Only once in the course of history, in any cause, was all the right on one side, and all the wrong on the other." I have read with interest the extract from "The Ambassador" of 1867. By chance, a few days before I received your letter, I came across the enclosed reprint of a letter from Dr. Thomas. This presents a somewhat different emphasis on the subject of fellowship — not necessarily a contradictory one — which might equally be of interest to your readers."

Extract from reprint of a letter from Dr. Thomas.

“Dear Friends,—Yours, dated 6th Dec. 1848 has come to hand today. By it I am able now to comprehend that you have construed what you think I ought to do with my views on the truth, or the ground that you consider the principles stated, place persons holding the traditions quoted, into a non-fellowship of those you call your brethren (by eminence) in the United States. This, then, is your indictment — that I have constructively rejected the brethren of the Reformation in America, which you consider equivalent to an actual excision of myself from the churches there, or them from my fellowship, and consequently of myself from similar churches in England.

But I object to your constructions; first, because you have no right to put constructions upon anyone’s principles, save your own; and, secondly, because your constructions are not in harmony with facts.

(1) You have no right to construe for me, neither have you the ability till you are made intelligent upon the subject of my views of fellowship. I claim the sole right of construing my own sentiments, and when I shall have construed and published them to the world in their application, it will be high time for you to express your approval or rejection of them and their author. You have your views of fellowship; they may or may not be mine; I discuss them not. My duty is to state and advocate what I believe to be God’s truth according to the manner which appears to me (not to you) most Scriptural. It is for me to state, illustrate, and prove principles, and to interpret the word; and to leave men’s consciences to make the application—it is not for me to adjudge them to ecclesiastical pains and penalties. (Here a footnote quoting 1 Cor. 4:5) I have stated in my writings, ‘that the immortality of the soul’ as taught in dogmatic theology is the Hymenean and Philetan heresy: and I have shown from Paul’s words that it is in his estimation a ‘damnable heresy.’ The argument you have not seen; yet you judge. Is this wisdom? I have received the conclusion to which Paul leads me. Did he tell the orthodox Corinthians to cast their heterodox friends out of their synagogue, or to non-fellowship them? No; and further than this, he still fraternized with the church, although they gave him so much annoyance on this very subject. His object was to enlighten and reclaim; not to cut off and treat as enemies those whom this cancerating sentiment led to the denial of the resurrec-

tion of Jesus Himself, and the subversion of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. -----

(2) I object to your constructions because they are not according to fact. There are many in American Reform churches, in which I am well received, who believe in the Platonic dogma of the 'immortality of the soul.' We have learned however, the important lesson of bearing and forbearing with one another, in the hope that all will come to see the real truth on which side soever it may be before it becomes too late. But your dogma is, that I ought to reject them, and they me; we, however, do not think so. We regard such a spirit as the one actuating you as both intolerant and proscriptive, and well calculated to place the person who responds to it in the situation neither to advance the truth nor to benefit his contemporaries. It is the dark spirit of Popery, and characteristic of all sects, whose fear of God is taught by the precepts and commands of men. Trusting that whatever you may do may be to the glory of God, and the furtherance of the truth, and not to the gratification of personal pique; and leaving you henceforth to work out your own conclusions as you may deem most expedient, but declining any further correspondence in the case, — I subscribe myself, dear friends, yours respectfully,"

"JOHN THOMAS"

The Remnant's comments on the above

Our correspondent appears to have overlooked the date on the copy of Dr. Thomas's letter. He was only 43 years of age in 1848, and undoubtedly it was a preparatory time. The Doctor left Richmond, Virginia, in May of that year together with his twelve-year old daughter Eusebia for New York where he obtained letters of introduction to the Campbellites in England. Prior to leaving he placed a letter in the New York "Morning Star" explaining his intentions in making this journey and also expressing his beliefs. He also sent a letter with a copy of the New York "Morning Star" to the editor of the "British Millennial Harbinger." This editor in response, published a warning in his magazine advising the Campbellites to be careful in any contact with him, and that fellowship could only be extended upon recommendations from their fellows in the United States. On arrival in Britain he was refused fellowship at the Barker Gate Meeting. However a Millerite church at New Radford, Nottingham did receive him, and while at Nottingham he gave thirteen lectures in the Assembly Rooms in

Nottingham as requested by the Millerites, who also asked him to speak at Derby, Birmingham and Plymouth. Some Campbellites however did introduce him in Lincoln and Newark. This then was the circumstance that existed at the time the doctor received the letter dated Dec. 6th, 1848, to which he responded as quoted above. That his perception of the requirements of fellowship were brought into focus at a later time is evident. When the Dowieite trouble arose in Britain the Doctor wrote in 1866 from the United States that "Duncan, Dowie, Fordyce and Co. were blind leaders of the blind." To Robert Roberts the Doctor said, "You are right", a line must be drawn between faithful witnesses and pretenders, in Britain". Division was the result of that line being drawn.

It is a mistake to quote the words of the Pioneers, without taking into consideration that on occasion they did adjust their thinking as they progressed in the Truth.

Correspondence on aspects of divorce and the Truth

“Our stand really started before the last war when a number of us were in the Berean fellowship. There arose a divorce matter which caused the Clapham meeting to withdraw from the Bereans and set up their own Statement of Faith in relation to Clauses A to D which a minority refused to accept, and as a result were disfellowshipped. Some of this minority from Clapham contended that Christ taught the indissolubility of marriage and that there can be no exception to this whatsoever. The exceptive clause quoted by our Lord was a reiteration of the law of Moses which allowed divorce for the one cause only, but notice our Lord’s comment in Matt. 19:8, ‘but from the beginning it was not so,’ — the beginning referring back to Adam and Eve, before Moses’ law etc.

We believe, then, that God’s law of marriage started at the beginning i.e. Adam and Eve, our first parents, and is binding on all including those of the world even though they may contract marriages without God or, in ignorance, therefore any divorce or remarriage that has taken place is against God’s law and so anyone coming to a knowledge of the truth previously divorced and remarried, according to our understanding of God’s law would be required to forsake a second partner if the previous partner they had originally contracted a marriage together with was still alive. However, that does not mean they would have to go back to the first or previous partner (who might have possibly remarried in the meantime). To come out of the world, leaving behind all wickedness requires repentance, and an effort to obey God as we have been enlightened by the knowledge of the Truth. It is our understanding that the teaching of the scriptures is against any defilement of marriage such as for seeking for divorce for any cause whatsoever — Mark 10:11-12, Luke 16:18, Romans 7:1-3.

The world lies in wickedness, including that of committing adultery i.e. divorcing one’s partner and then re-marrying. That is against God’s law — see Malachi 2:16. If God hates putting away, then He would hate those who would put away their partners for someone else. I believe God’s law is on the nations and that there have been instances in the past when He punishes those who transgressed against him even though they were in ignorance of His law as in the days of Noah, Lot and also Jonah being sent to Nineveh. How much more upon enlightenment must we then forsake evil such as adulterous unions, that is not continue in sin.

This is our contention with the Dawn Fellowship."

The Remnant's reply to the above

"We do agree that the divine design in the beginning showed God's teaching on marriage. There was the man and his wife. God could have designed it differently, but the fact that He did not shows clearly what He purposed for the future.

However though the philosophers have reasoned away His requirements in these late times with their worldly wisdom. Those in the Truth can be faced with practical difficulties when strangers come along and it is found where a man and his wife are concerned one or other, or both, have been married before but have divorced and remarried.

Take the case of a man (previously married and divorced) now married to a woman previously single, and with whom he has lived for very many years. The man undoubtedly has a great responsibility to his second wife. Suppose he comes to the Truth, but she hesitates, and then he is told that he must leave her because he was a divorced man when he married her. The woman is greatly injured as a result. Do you think this would be in keeping with the merciful spirit of the Lord Jesus? The account concerning how Jesus dealt with the situation of a woman taken in adultery is a help to us. If the man left his second wife on the technical assumption that he was never married to her; technically that would make out that she had never been married. In that case though she had been his wife for many years, would she now be regarded as a single woman, and if she eventually came to the Truth, to be allowed to marry someone in the Truth? The situation ending up with the man living a single life, and his wife of many years now being married to another in the Meeting. Could the Truth bear such a situation?

Can we then see the wisdom of the Apostle's words, Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." (1 Cor. 7:20) — "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed - - - ." (verse 27)

As to those who are in the Truth, and therefore responsible to the knowledge of the Truth, divorce of course, is prohibited by Christ. No one in the Truth should divorce; this is clear."

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast - - -." (Rev.13:4)

The above scripture had a fulfilment in history, but the scripture shows clearly that there is a fulfilment yet to come, for it is declared that the beast is to be cast into a lake of fire and the dragon is to be bound.

When one aspect of world systems gives its power to another aspect this in essence means political alliance, though the differing features of the power blocks remain.

The last twelve months has seen remarkable political events. At one time it would have been inconceivable that a Soviet leader would address a meeting where prominent members of the Western alliance were assembled. But this year has seen such an event. To the Council of Europe, gathered together at Strasbourg, France, he had this to say:-

"Now that the 20th century is entering a concluding phase and both the post-war period and the Cold War are becoming a thing of the past, the Europeans have a truly unique chance to play a role in building a new world - - -. Victor Hugo said that the day would come when you, France, You Russia, you Italy, you England, you Germany, all of you, all the nations of the continent will, without losing your distinguishing features and your splendid distinctiveness, merge inseparably into some high society and form a European brotherhood - - -. I know that many people in the West perceive the main difficulty in the existence of two social systems. Yet the difficulty lies elsewhere; it lies in the rather widespread belief that what is meant by overcoming the division of Europe is actually "overcoming socialism". But this is a course for confrontation - - -. There will be no European unity along these lines - - -. The fact that the states of Europe belong to different social systems is a reality - - -. The Helsinki process has already commenced (to improve international affairs). Our idea of a common European home serves the same purpose - - -. What we have in mind is a restructuring of the international order existing in Europe that would put the European common values in the forefront and make it possible to replace the traditional balance of forces with a balance of interests - - -. If security is the foundation of the common European home, then all-round co-operation is its bearing frame."

So one great world confederacy is offering to align itself to another.

THE REMNANT

But the scripture foretells the outcome of such a great political event.

"These both were cast alive into a lake of fire - - -"

(Rev. 19:20).

"And he laid hold on the dragon - - - and bound him a thousand years."

(Rev. 20:2).



NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEWYORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. & Pleasant Ave.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.

Sunday School 1.45 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Hamburg

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

It is hoped to significantly expand the distribution of the booklet addressed to Christadelphians. We pray for His guidance and help in this work.

Gratitude is felt for the provision to counsel with brethren as a means of assuring the necessary unity of mind as we strive to faithfully serve our Father.

J. A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.

Thursday: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

Our Autumn Fraternal subject had the general heading:

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father."

Followed by two considerations as follows:

"I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.
(2 John v 4)

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."
(1 John 5: 9-10).

The message received from those across the seas was a great encouragement.