

DECEMBER 1989

A Monthly Magazine issued by

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"

"IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"MY HEART REJOICETH IN THE LORD"

How touching is the account of faithful Hannah. She was the wife of Elkanah, a Levite of the sons of Kohath. Her name means "favored" and comes from the Hebrew—to grant, to be merciful, to have pity—implying that in her was a humble and yearning spirit, and in mercy God was favorable to her. She was barren, longing for a man child, grieving at her lack, and we are told:

"...the LORD remembered her." I Samuel 1:19.

Had the Almighty forgotten her that He must remember? No! This word means to mark, to be mindful, and to think of. Because of her complete trust in Him, and her importunity, God was mindful of Hannah's special need, and did indeed greatly bless her. We recall Eli's words as the priest heard her prayer and perceived her spirit:

"... Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee they petition that thou hast asked of him. I Samuel 1:17.

And Hannah's response:

"... Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight..."
Verse 18.

And she did indeed receive grace, as her name reminds. In the appointed time God gave her a son whom she named Samuel—meaning heard of God. What remembrance and gratitude she showed! Indeed God did hear. This was the Almighty's gracious gift. How our sister would rejoice. How she would ever keep this in mind, as each time she spoke Samuel's name the joy would touch her heart. We keep in mind that in her prayer at Shiloh she had vowed:

"... O, LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." I Samuel 1:11

Under the law, the firstborn belonged to the Lord, but could be redeemed. Samuel was the firstborn of Hannah, but not of Elkanah, for Peninnah had born children of him. Hannah's mind therefore was to give her son to the Lord as a Nazarite, for she vowed that no razor should come upon his head. With unflinching determination she kept that vow at great cost to herself. As dearly as she cherished

their son, still when he was weaned, she:

“...took him up with her...and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh.”
I Samuel 1:24.

She said of Samuel:

“...I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD...”
Verse 28.

Lent in this context means to require, or request, and helps us to discern again Hannah’s spirit. I have a son as a result of the Almighty’s remembering me, and now I remember my vow and must do what is required of me. I will lend him unto the Lord. We can imagine what a struggle it would be. I it not known at what age this occurred, but “the child was young (verse 24). She, with a mother’s heart, would surely love him without measure, rejoice in having him, but always bear in mind his name was “heard of God”. So she would remember her vow. As she left Samuel at the house of God, we can imagine her sense of loss, her yearning to keep the young child close; yet she resolutely put her own feelings aside and freely gave him to the Lord, and returned with her husband to Ramah where they lived.

Hannah and Elkanah went up to Shiloh to offer their yearly sacrifice, and Hannah would bring to Samuel a little coat, each year adding a few inches as her son was growing up. As Eli perceived her diligence in keeping her vow from year to year, we are told he:

“...blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD... And the LORD visited Hannah so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters.”

I Samuel 2:20-21.

So Hannah was further favored of God. Her pleasing spirit is revealed in her words preserved for us and read this morning:

“...My heart rejoiceth in the LORD; mine horn is exalted...my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.”
I Samuel 2:1.

Knowing Yahweh’s blessing, her heart delighted in it. She truly rejoiced, not just because of the miracle of bearing children, but also in the salvation of the LORD. This word salvation is related to Joshua—salvation of Yahweh. Did she not perceive then God’s greater gift which is to be perfected in the latter-day Joshua—Jesus—which also means savior? Her mind was brought forward to contemplate the end of the Almighty’s purpose promised to His faithful children. Hannah’s faith further spoke:

THE REMNANT

“... the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.”
I Samuel 2:10.

At this time there was no king in Israel. It was not until Samuel, as a prophet of God, anointed Saul that Israel had their first king. So Hannah must have been looking forward to the time when the Lord would give strength to His king of promise, Jesus, and exalt the horn of His anointed, the Messiah. How real was her perception: “I rejoice in thy salvation.” She hoped in it, lived in it, and so was helped in her dedication of Samuel to the service of the Lord.

Can we, Brethren and Sisters, profit through the example of this woman’s spirit, grow in her trust and rejoice even in what was a heart-felt loss as Samuel was taken up to Shiloh? Beyond these two chapters, we read nothing more concerning Hannah, but what an impression she can make on our thinking and determination to seek the favor of the Almighty. Do we, having been heard, as indeed has been experienced, rejoice in this and in His salvation? In the beginning our sister was barren, in affliction, tormented by her adversary, Peninnah, who:

“...provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.”
I Samuel 1:6.

How hard to bear—how easy to fret—which means to be violently agitated, even, as we find, to roar or to thunder. The adversary sought to make Hannah fret against what God had allowed, her womb being shut. Can we realize how difficult was her trial; what courage she mustered? What did Hannah learn from this? Patience, trust, importunity. Ultimately, as she submitted, she was able to say:

“... My heart rejoiceth in the LORD.”
I Samuel 2:1.

Further she realized:

“The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall be thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

I Samuel 2:10.

Let us think upon what help this is for us as we at times may feel beset by adversaries, the chief of whom is self; may be tempted to murmur or be over anxious; but God who knows, looks down with favor upon those who turn to Him, accepting his hand upon them, praying only that His will be done.

Further help is found in Isaiah:

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD."

Isaiah 54:1.

Sing, to cry out, be joyful, shout for joy, as did Hannah when she was favored by God! It is hard to rejoice when in the midst of affliction, but when we witness, as we have just done, the help which can be granted if our spirit is like that of our sister, like that of which Isaiah speaks, then we know indeed that God does hear and provides all that is needed. This can help us to rejoice. The prophet continues:

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."

Isaiah 54:2.

Prepare for the blessing of the Lord, enlarge your house, for "more are the children of the desolate..." How natural at times to feel desolate and barren, but if our hope is upon these sure promises, will we not be engaged in enlarging the tents, stretching the curtains, edifying His house? We will be doing all in our power to be prepared, to build by works and example, to grow in perception of His holiness, making ready for the day of His ultimate blessing. Isaiah's prophecy further encourages in this hope:

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities (times appointed, solemn feasts): thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams...For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us."

Isaiah 33:20-22.

Here is the hope of Israel, the sustaining of the desolate and afflicted as they look to the time of His "Joshua", savior of His people.

Now going back to Isaiah 54, the prophet continues:

"O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

Isaiah 54:11-13.

What untold blessing, what favor is in store for those who can in faith and hope call upon the Lord in a time of affliction and desolation, can put their trust in His word, keeping their vows, though often painful, with thanksgiving and praise. This hope reminds of the vision shown to John in the Revelation when he:

“... saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”
Revelation 21:2.

Those who have prepared, made themselves ready and “adorned” in their time of probation are no longer desolate, no longer barren, but are His new Jerusalem, the bride of His Son. As the messenger invited John:

“... Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”
Revelation 21:9.

Our brother saw the new Jerusalem glistening with precious stones, all reflecting the glory of God, a symbol of those perfected ones, His saints, united now with Christ, rejoicing, singing, shouting for joy, all crying “Alleluia”—Praise ye the Lord. These are able to enter in because they:

“... are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”
Revelation 21:27.

Surely here is fulfillment of the Almighty’s promise to the desolate and barren:

“...This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”
Isaiah 54:17.

As we struggle to know this special righteousness, let us take hold of Paul’s words as he, too, meditated upon those of Isaiah:

“For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.”
Galatians 4:27-28.

As we strive to be these children of promise, let us keep our vows, and join in the spirit of Hannah’s words:

“...My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, ...because I rejoice in thy salvation.”
I Samuel 2:1.

J. A. DeF

"IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY"

Not long ago we began reading the epistle of Paul to Timothy through which he endeavored to help and encourage his younger brother in the work of witnessing to God's word, not only to those established as brethren and sisters, but also to those who through this ministry might have been helped to receive the call to the Truth. Paul, writing to Timothy said:

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." I Timothy 4:14-15.

Timothy had apparently been given a special gift—the ability to teach others of God. How careful Paul was, encouraging him to use this talent to the best of his ability—meditating upon it—giving himself wholly to it, so that all who heard might profit in a spiritual way. He goes on in verse 16 of this same chapter to say:

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

This exhortation to Timothy conveyed the understanding that actions speak louder than words. Actions combined with doctrine, could save not only Timothy, but any whose ears might be opened by the Father to the gospel. We think of Paul's words and the responsibility of witnessing and are helped to gain in appreciation for the spirit in which this must be done.

In chapter 2 of I Timothy, Paul explains what must be done to go about this work, verses 1 and 2:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

These words help us to grasp the bigger picture of witnessing. Why would Paul exhort Timothy to make prayer for kings and those of the world in authority? There are examples in the Scriptures of those in the Truth who endeavored to assist kings or rulers. In doing so, they witnessed effectively to the purpose of God. Daniel and his three friends for example come to mind as brethren who showed forth the power of God working within them to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He was so impressed that he made a decree as

recorded in Daniel 3:28-29:

"Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut into pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

By their confidence in God, these three brethren influenced the king to respect the name of Yahweh, Israel's God. Not that Nebuchadnezzar served Him, but he created a situation where God's people in captivity were able to live more peaceably in a strange land than they had previously been allowed.

We think of this event and of our own circumstances today in witnessing and realize how easy it is to overlook this aspect and not fully appreciate the impact of God's word upon those in authority.

One day, we know God's word will be in all the earth and that all will come to know the gospel and be responsible to it. It is not known when that will be, but by moving in His ways, we can show that a few are looking toward that hope in faith. As Timothy was about to begin that work, this overview kept in mind would help him and any hearers to know that:

"... there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." I Timothy 2:5.

Here is the essence of the gospel message of which Paul sought to further impress on Timothy, that he might better project the reasonableness of God to those who would hear him i.e. that through Jesus who paid the price, there is the hope of eternal life in due time. When is that due time? Only when God's purpose is finally accomplished and all have been called who, in His knowledge, can hear.

It is not known what our actions may ultimately accomplish, but we must be mindful of the sublimity of His purpose and seek that peaceable life now as possible, in hope of the full measure when His purpose is complete:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken

diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah 55:1-2.

Here was instruction to God's people teaching them of what was available without cost. The seeing of God can be entered into only through prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus, our mediator, remembering what the 8th verse of this 55th chapter tells us:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Verses 8-9.

The need is to open our minds and allow our thinking to see God's greater plan, to seek Him and find the higher spiritual thoughts which are of Him to guide us in His work that it may prosper. If we steadfastly do this, verses 12 and 13 promise:

"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

This peace which we must rise to know in a measure now, is that of mind and spirit that comes as there is a faithful stand made for God's Truth. We think of the brethren of old who witnesses so pleasingly to the Almighty—Joseph to the thousands in Egypt, also Daniel and his three brethren in Babylon, and it makes us realize how important is Paul's exhortation to keep the bigger picture in mind.

In Jeremiah 29:7 we are helped in another way to value how this work of witnessing can be accomplished to afford peace:

"...seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."

This is God's word through the prophet to those captive in Babylon—words to help them recognize that though in bondage, they were to pray for peace, that they might serve as a lightstand among their Gentile captors. Now powerful a witness, and indeed we must endeavor to do the same in our own way, though small, that we may be helped to attain a truly, "quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty".

M.C.S.

BIBLE CLASS

"...Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"

Galatians 3:13.

Paul in this third chapter of Galatians begins in the first verse with a sobering statement saying:

"O Foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

He calls them foolish because they who had embraced the Truth through the name of Jesus Christ, were now backsliding into keeping certain aspects of the law. With the death of Christ, the law had been fulfilled and the spirit of the law, which was always there, is what remained to be followed. He explains this to them in verse 13, our subject under consideration:

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:"

Here Paul is quoting directly from the law in Deuteronomy 21:22-23 where it is written:

"And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

In a practical sense, one hanged on a tree would be a sign to all Israel that the consequence of rebellious sin was death without hope. In addition, it was decreed in the very beginning when the first act of sin was committed:

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it:... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Genesis 3:17,19.

Here was the curse which God brought upon all mankind because of disobedience—death to him and to all his seed after him, but with a hope through a promised seed.

We know that the Lord Jesus was under that same curse because He was the son of Mary and shared Adam's nature. In God's

eyes all flesh is abhorrent, and so in His justice, even His son Jesus was sentenced to die because of His inherited nature, though He did not sin.

No man could keep the law perfectly, except Christ, and all men from the time of Adam have failed. Paul tried to impress upon the Galatians that the law itself could not save. Only as the spirit was seen in the word of God and the Lord Jesus recognized as the atonement for all who had fallen short, could salvation be possible. This is confirmed in Paul's words in Galatians 3:21-22:

"Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

The Galatians in going back to the law were turning away from salvation because the law could not save. Because faithful Abraham saw the spirit of Christ within God's requirements, the promises were confirmed to him and down through his sons.

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3:16.

Under the law, one in serious and sustained sin was first judged and then stoned by all the men of the city. After this, his body was hung on a tree, a witness that all Israel might hear and fear (Deut. 21:21-23). The One who was accused for us was in His death on the cross raised up, hanged on a tree, not for His own disobedience but as a witness to the sentence upon all of mankind of which He was a partaker through His mortal nature. By so doing He was, "made a curse for us". He said to all the world that God was right in condemning all mankind to die, beginning with Adam and including Jesus His Son, who never sinned. He conquered that sin nature in Himself. God because of this victory over His flesh, raised Jesus on the third day to life eternal. In His position at God's right hand He now mediates there for His people. He thereby became the door through which all must pass who would attain unto eternal life.

We know that no flesh can please Him. Only those who would follow the example of His Son the Lord Jesus and endeavor to crucify their flesh can hope to escape the curse of the grave, which is their natural and just end. Recognizing this requires one to foster that right spirit within, that same spirit of faith Paul sought to instill in his brethren as verse 26 testifies:

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

M.C.S.

FELLOWSHIP AND THE DOWIEITE CONTROVERSY

Letter from Edinburgh, June 28th 1867 (continued)

"But there is still an important question for us to ask, and it is this: Why all the anxious solicitude on the part of the apostles for the purity of the truth, manifesting itself in such denunciations of those who were introducing these heresies; John for instance, from whom we have already quoted, even saying (2 John v 10) "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine—of which he was speaking—receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." And again, the warnings of Paul, who by the spirit foresaw the end of these small beginnings. "For the time will come" he says to Timothy, "when they will not endure sound doctrine." Therefore, he in another place tells him to shun profane babblings and old wives' fables, and strive to be a workman in the scriptures, rightly dividing its contents. Why this we say, and much more which might be quoted, showing how the apostles looked on these things. Because of its tendency. As he says further to Timothy, "it would increase"—it would grow (mark the words) to more ungodliness—it would eat out the truth as a canker—bit by bit its edge would be blunted, its truth modified and pared down, and so adulterated with error, in order to please the lusts and desires of men, that it soon would merge itself into the commonly received sentiments of mankind, and exist as only one festering mass of corruption.

That it has happened thus is evident. And now that in the providence of God a few have been able to dig out the truth, does the history of the past not afford us a mighty lesson to hold fast to—to contend earnestly for what we have obtained, to shun with all our heart and soul the slightest defilement from the cup of the abominations of the Apostasy.

We have endeavoured to establish this clearly as a basis, in order to show the grounds on which, in the sight of God, we have taken up our position, against those in Union Hall and against all others of similar mind. Coming now closer to the point in hand, let us name a few of the prominent delusions existing among denominations generally:- The Immortality of the Soul—the Doctrine of Eternal Burnings—the Doctrine concerning the Devil—the Pre-existence of Jesus—the Burning of the World, etc.

Now in reference to the command given to the first christians, after that corruptions set in amongst them, to try the spirits, and

believe them not, if they were found teaching fabulous traditions of heresies of any kind, which command, from the circumstances now existing, is more binding than ever—we maintain that the Union Hall meeting is not faithful. Their attitude to everyone of the delusions named, is directly opposite to that inculcated by the apostles. Take the first, which for the magnitude of its delusive character, might be called the fountain of error. It was only a little earlier than this time last year, that it was warmly debated among them whether or not a man should renounce this doctrine before he embraced the doctrine of Christ, which resulted in several of their number leaving their fellowship. As to the second—eternal torments—it is also a fact that last year there was among them a person whom they had baptised, and whom they had fellowshipped for years, who before his baptism, could never have been questioned as to his views on this matter; and doubtless he would have been in their fellowship yet, had it not been that his position became so notorious by his engaging in public discussion with a Universalist, maintaining that the scriptures taught hell-fire torments—that their fair reputation became imperilled and it was only after considerable discussion that he was parted with. These are cases about which there cannot be the slightest doubt; and they have come to light, certainly not by their consent, but through the sheer force of circumstances, principally external to themselves. They, however, indicate a state of things behind—an attitude toward the vitality of the truth—which can only require a little time to manifest themselves into a worse state than is yet the case.

The remaining items mentioned as part of the fables existing in the apostacy are not only not discouraged, but are positively believed in more or less by them as scripture truth, which can be abundantly shown did the limits of this letter permit, but which we are quite prepared, if necessary, to prove in detail.

But looked at from another point of view, their position and ours differ at the very outset, that is, in the manner of interpreting scripture, or in other words, the right division of it.

In speaking upon the point of right interpretation, we would desire before closing this letter, which we sincerely trust may receive your earnest and unprejudiced attention, to mention one other great and important difference between us and Union Hall. We refer to the doctrine of resurrection and eternal judgment. Here I would quote from my first letter. Although you say, from the words of that epistle, that you recognise me as of one faith with yourself, and, as you think, with the Union Hall meeting, yet we are certain that they could not use such language as honestly express-

ing their minds. I remark, speaking of our relationship to Christ:—"We have made ourselves his servants now, and we cannot, if we would, break off that relationship until after we have appeared at his judgment-seat to receive the reward due to faithful or unfaithful servants." These words contain ideas to which they are thoroughly opposed, and which they denounce as unscriptural and speculative, and as "human supplements to the gospel." They believe and teach that the faithful and unfaithful servants of Jesus Christ do not require to appear together at his judgment-seat to reap that which they have sown, either of the spirit life everlasting, or of the flesh corruption, or as Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians 5, that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things in body according to that he hath done, whether good or bad." They hold that men are judged and rewarded in their graves, that they spring to life immortal and glorious, and that there is no judgment for the saints beyond the assignment of their degree of glory in the kingdom. Indeed, in this matter, one of their number, who is held in high estimation among them, in writing to one of the brethren, has gone so far as to say that we often speak of the absurdity of the popular idea of sending men to heaven and hell at death, and after a long period of time bringing them before the judge to see if they should be there or not; but, he says, is it not more absurd that a man who is elected, chosen, by God to the truth in Christ should after this election or choice on the part of the Deity, be tried to see whether he is God's elect or not. So is promulgated the doctrine that one in Christ, ever in Christ; and so we might go on enumerating, but we forbear for the present. We assure you that we are as ready to meet with any in Union Hall as we are to do with you, provided always that their faith is our faith, as we firmly believe that ours is the one faith and hope of the glad tidings. We trust however, that we will not have written in vain, and that you will be incited to investigate with diligence and with sincerity, not only to put yourself in a right relationship toward ourselves and toward Union Hall, but toward our Master who is in heaven. And we repeat our offer that several of the brethren might see you, in order that with the advantages of conversation these things may be analysed. For truly the issue is a great one: a thing for us to realise.

Waiting your reply, I shall subscribe myself on behalf of the ecclesia, Your most affectionate brother in the truth, Robert Paterson."

(to be continued)

TROUBLE IN CENTRAL

We recommend our readers to compare the position taken by the Brethren in 1867 with what can be described as a repetition of those earlier events in what is taking place in "Central" at the present time.

First of all may we quote the concern shown in the following circular.

GREETINGS IN THE ONE FAITH

This letter and the enclosed leaflet draws attention to the false doctrine being spread through the medium of the 'Endeavour' magazine and the Summer Schools organised by the 'Endeavour Council Ltd.'

These include the following ideas:

1. That certain doctrines which we regard as basic (such as the Unity of God, the mortality of man, the second coming of Christ, etc) are not essential beliefs and do not affect salvation.

2. That cooperation with other denominations is desirable, especially for preaching ;the gospel'.

3. That sisters may take a full speaking part in our assemblies, in reading, offering prayers, exhorting, presiding, etc.

Essential doctrines

The enclosed leaflet mentions some of the false ideas and reminds us of the Scriptural basis of the Truth. It also lists some of the relevant sections in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASF) dealing with these items. More copies of the leaflet are available on request.

An Appeal to all Ecclesias

An appeal was sent to all 309 ecclesias in the United Kingdom last year (dated Oct.29) by six ecclesias concerned about current trends. The 'Endeavour' magazine was not named in that appeal, as the problem was seen as being a wider one, of which the 'Endeavour' was only one example.

The suggestion was made that, in order to strengthen our defences against the inroads of 'liberal' thinking, ecclesias should approve a 5-point Statement which was included in the Appeal.

A further explanatory letter was sent to all ecclesias on Dec. 17/88 and the Appeal was renewed in a third letter, dated Jan. 24 this year.

Response so far

To date 114 ecclesias have replied. Of these 62 have expressed

approval of the 5-point Statement. Another 42 have said that they support the BASF but do not see the need for the 5-point Statement. A further 10 ecclesias are non-committal.

However, there are still 195 ecclesias who have not replied to any of the 3 letters sent, though it is hoped they will eventually do so.

The importance of the above matters was felt to be such that this letter and leaflet should be sent to as many brethren as possible. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to write or telephone.

Sincerely your brother.

COMMENTS IN THE CHRISTADELPHIAN

Letter to the Editor

"As you know, a photocopy of the December 1987 issue of the Endeavour Magazine and other material relating to the Endeavour summer school was sent last year to every recording brother in the U.K. This was under cover of a letter from two brethren who urged that action be taken against its editor and his associates who were held to be undermining the B.A.S.F. and accepted Christadelphian practice.

During subsequent months ecclesias and individual brethren have been receiving many circulars and other letters reinforcing this demand and sometimes seeking additions to the B.A.S.F. "to safeguard the Truth". Some Christadelphian journals from within and outside the United Kingdom have added their voice to demands of this kind.

We, the undersigned, are greatly troubled by these developments which seem to us to have got quite out of proportion. We do not, of course, endorse all Endeavour's activities, some of which have caused much concern, however small the scale of those activities. Nor do we approve the manner in which those who strongly oppose them express their opposition. Reasoned discussion, not outraged denunciation, is the way to make progress. So we urge all concerned to give renewed attention to the article under the above heading—in The Christadelphian for last January. In his article—appealed for a united, not a separated, Brotherhood, as we prepare for the Lord Jesus' return. He was addressing himself

primarily to the need to bring the existing separate fellowships together; but what he argues applies no less to the schisms being caused unthinkingly in our Central Fellowship by the extremes of utterance of some of our number. We urgently appeal for moderation and restraint in dealings between brethren, and certainly endorse your own efforts with this aim—: (115 signatures to this letter)

Extracts from the Editorial in reply

“The letter published on pages 310-311 contains a welcome appeal for a re-examination of our dealings as brethren in Christ — it has always been a facet of the practical ourworking of the commandments of Christ in ecclesial life that failure to adhere to the Christ-like way of resolving difficulties is itself treated as an offence against the law of Christ. That “reasoned discussion” and “moderation and restraint” are not to be used as excuses for (or suggested to be the equivalent of) slackness in upholding the fundamentals of the faith is equally of paramount importance, and it is good to see wholehearted support by all the signatories of the letter for our foundational teachings.

Recent circulars have arisen because of evidence that some distinctive Christadelphian beliefs have been treated as of little importance by a very small number of brethren. The seriousness of this situation must be the concern of us all. All Christadelphians have unreservedly professed a belief in the doctrines that provide the basis of our faith. They have been baptised on this confession and effectively confirm it whenever they subsequently meet to break bread and drink wine. Anyone professing a belief in teachings not in accordance with those in the Statement of Faith, or who cannot accept any of the first principles of the faith is denying the basis on which they were baptised, and could be “eating and drinking condemnation — not discerning the Lord’s body.” —

Equally welcome is the recognition that problems of faith and practice should be dealt with ecclesially, and that to adopt other means is potentially schismatic. The ecclesia is the best place both to understand difficulties, and to discuss them with the individual concerned in an atmosphere of care and compassion, and also of confidentiality if the situation demands this. But it is not sufficient just to give lip-service to the responsibilities ecclesias have in these matters. Responsibilities must be accepted, and if there are causes for concern (whether they have been identified from within, or from outside the ecclesia), ecclesias have no option but to investigate and

act to deal with them —.

But what of the unity of the Brotherhood? Eventually those who do not believe the doctrines of truth find that they have to leave, because they are not of us (1 John 2:9). For the rest, there is an urgency to return in thought, word and action to Christ-like living. The strength of our fellowship is such that it can withstand attempts to divide it, or to dilute its basis of truth, and brethren and sisters should be encouraged to work positively to ensure that their labour in showing forth the gospel they have embraced "is not in vain in the Lord" —."

Further comments taken from letters to the Christadelphian Editor

"—If we want to build successfully then you don't keep digging at the foundations once you have established them. Allow them to be eroded and the building is in danger of collapse. While the words, therefore, (Statement of Faith) are not of paramount importance, the doctrines they describe are, and consequently we are justified in requiring all brethren and sisters to endorse every doctrine it contains. This, after all, is the agreed basis on which we meet. Clauses 1 and 2 of the Final Statement for the co-operation between the Central and Suffolk Street Fellowships affirm:

General Beliefs

1. We agree that the doctrines to be believed and taught by us, without reservation, are the First Principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures of which the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (with positive and negative clauses and the Commandments of Christ) give a true definition—.

Fellowship

2. —Should any depart from any element of the One Faith, withdrawal shall take place after the procedure required by Titus 3:10-11 has been followed. If an ecclesia is known to persist in teaching false doctrine it is the duty of other ecclesias to dissociate themselves from such an ecclesia.

To this U.K. ecclesias gave their assent in 1956, so as to implement reunion the following year. Nothing has changed and it remains the basis of our association together."

The Remnant's comments on the above evidence

The expression of "the need to bring the existing separate fellowships together", is one that causes sadness. If separate fellowships were brought together under the Central banner would they have greater unity or less in the light of the continuing trouble and

schism in that Body? The re-union of 1957 has not really been effective, has it? Just as in Australia at the present time there is continuing controversy, though Shield was supposed to have re-unioned with the representatives of Central in that country.

We are constrained to ask the following question; is it wise to say the fellowship can withstand attempts to divide or dilute its truth? The whole tenor of scriptural warning is that the people of God are to beware they be not beguiled from the simplicity of the Truth. The Truth was at the first strong in the days of the Apostles, but look what happened. On the basis of scriptural principle is it right to wait until they "find that they have to leave, because they are not of us"?

You are invited to write to the Remnant for the booklet, "The Doctrines of Fellowship".

From the Remnant December 1956

"The evidence is overwhelming that this "Christadelphian" and many of his Suffolk Street members uphold those who fell away from the Truth, as "pioneers", and the one who defended the truth at the time is branded as a trouble maker and the cause of division, who according to Scripture should be avoided.

Now that "Temperance Hall Christadelphians" have decided by majority to join "Suffolk St." where do they stand on this vital issue? For truth or against truth? For Christ, or against Christ?

In November 1956 issue of "The Christadelphian" appears an article entitled "One Hundred Years Ago." Reference is made to a visit to Edinburgh and the discovery of certain manuscripts which throw light on the early work of Doctor Thomas. Then there is an appreciation of one of the early members of the Edinburgh Ecclesia, a Bro. John Forman who died in 1858. Concluding the article are these words:-

"The Edinburgh Church was rent in twain in later years. Humanly speaking, much of the trouble might have been saved had he (John Forman) lived, but we can at least say he was relieved of much worry."

Perhaps the writer of these words is ignorant of the facts, that division came to Edinburgh to deliver the truth from pernicious and subversive errors; and so is not to be regretted. Ar the "Temperance Hall Christadelphians" now being led to those, who, in these matters of truth and error, uphold the wicked and condemn the righteous?"

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

“—they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” (Daniel 2:43).

It is striking that though Britain is in financial difficulty over its balance of payments and the rise in inflation, its government still resists the suggestion from many quarters that it should join the European Monetary Scheme which would help to stabilise the currency.

Indeed there are other evidences of Britain standing out against international agreements, such as South African Sanctions which many nations want making more effective.

But of course all such matters are overruled, and undoubtedly the dissension is in accordance with divine prophecy:

“—they shall not cleave one to another.”

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.

As 1989 draws to a close, gratitude is felt for our Father's manifest care both in our ecclesial and personal lives and for the love which unites to our brethren across the sea.

May we continue and increase in faithful obedience and patient waiting for His promised deliverance.

J. A. DeF

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.
Thursday: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

As the year comes to its end, indicating "the end" is ever drawing nearer, it is with sadness we receive news of the continuing trouble and decline of those we are trying to help.