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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"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"A STRANGER AND A SOJOURNER"

This week we have been considering the record and example of Abraham. He was the father of Israel, the one to whom God gave very special promises: a seed which should be as numerous as the sand of the sea; this seed would inherit and everlastingly possess the land of Canaan; and this same seed would unfailingly possess the gate of his enemies. These promises to Abraham were granted because of his faith in God, his total belief in His word and his complete obedience to it. James, nearly two thousand years after Abraham, testified of him:

"... the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." James 2:23.

This word for "Friend" is phileo, and concerns love. Abraham loved God and God loved him, as is the care between true friends. To have the witness that he was a "Friend of God" was a great honour as well as a tribute to his faithfulness, and we can imagine what joy and comfort this brought to Abraham. He showed more than faithfulness, as James further reveals:

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." James 2:24.

Faith, trust is necessary but we are reminded that in addition there must be works to please God. Works, implying toil and struggle, are the proof of faith and together bring the Father's approval and warmth as to His friend. Looking closely at Abraham's spirit may we not be increased in both qualities, faith and works? By this, may we love God the more, and may we hope it will endear us to Him.

This morning our portion in Genesis 23 helps us see Abraham's mind and how it influenced his works. He was approaching the end of his life, having received those promises early on when he left Ur in obedience to God. When Sarah was ninety, Isaac was miraculously born to them and they knew he was the seed of promise. Years passed and at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven Sarah died, having lived to see her son a grown man of thirty-seven years. She had lived to see Isaac being offered by faithful Abraham. Like her husband, she trusted in God and yet how relieved she

would be when he returned from Mount Moriah with Isaac and told her of all that had happened on that holy mountain. They would indeed give thanks together having come through this great trial.

We can see then how indeed Abraham would mourn for Sarah his wife. She had obeyed him and called him lord, exhibiting the meek and quiet spirit which Peter tells us is "of great price". So Abraham sought a place to bury Sarah. This was difficult indeed for he had no possession in the land promised to him. He was "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2) but possessed no land, not even a burying place for his wife. As he sought to buy land from the sons of Heth, Abraham's words give us insight to his faith and works which made him beloved of God:

"... I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."
Genesis 23:4.

He bought the field and cave of Machpelah for four hundred shekels of silver, and buried Sarah there in his only possession in the land promised to him. His words, "I am a stranger and a sojourner", reveal his subjection to God. He was content to be such although he had much silver and gold, and could have purchased land and built houses as permanent abodes. He also might have seized the land inasmuch as it was ultimately to be his. The fact that near the end of his life he remained still a stranger and a sojourner is evidence of his spirit. Paul makes clear this spirit:

"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:"
Hebrews 11:9.

That promise was the hope of his life, yet he died never having received it save this small field. Through all these years in that land, he occasionally may have been tempted to take it for himself, yielding to what would be a natural yearning. But no, his mind was - God has promised, I believe Him and will wait upon Him, content to dwell in tabernacles, for I have a hope.

Earlier on, this thinking also was evident in Abraham's dealing with the difficulty between his herdmen and those of Lot:

“... there was a strife between the herdman of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: ...”

Genesis 13:7.

Abraham’s gentle spirit caused him to say to Lot:

“... Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee ... for we be brethren.

Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.”

Genesis 13:8-9.

Here he recognized that as a stranger and sojourner, God would bless him wherever he might dwell. Lot chose the fertile plain of Jordan and there, still dwelling in tabernacles, he:

“... pitched his tent toward Sodom.”

Genesis 13:12.

However, as time went on, he must have left his tents and taken a house in that city, for when the two angels came to Sodom, Lot said to them:

“... Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant’s house, and tarry all night. . .”

Genesis 19:2.

In the course of time it would appear that Lot had lost his sense of being a stranger and a sojourner. Yet God in mercy pulled him out of Sodom before it was destroyed, as Peter reveals:

“And (God) delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation. . .”

II Peter 2:7,9.

Lot was a just or righteous man but fell into difficulty because he failed to remain, in spirit, a stranger and a sojourner, not involved and ready to move quickly as the Almighty directed. Indeed Lot was rescued from that wicked place by the angels:

“... while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.”

Genesis 19:16.

Even after being warned of the impending destruction, Lot hesitated, being reluctant to leave, yet God delivered him and after witnessing the city burn, he was moved to dwell in a cave (Genesis 19:30), having been corrected and chastened by his loving and forgiving God.

Going back to Abraham, after Sarah's death he made provision to find a wife for Isaac, the seed of promise. He spoke to his trusted servant:

"... I will make thee swear by the LORD ... that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:" Genesis 24:3.

Abraham dwelt in the land of the Canaanites but was not a part of them, continuing as a stranger and a sojourner, for we are told:

"... he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11:10.

Abraham revealed this conviction and hope as he required Isaac to find a wife of his country and his kindred (nativity) and not a strange woman. Further, he refused to allow Isaac to go back to Ur, "his country" out of which God had called him. He said to his servant:

"Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred ... and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."

Genesis 24:6-7.

He recognized that if his son took a Canaanitish wife or returned to the land of Ur, Isaac could be pulled away and cease to be a stranger and a sojourner as the "seed of promise". Thus it came about under God's hand that Isaac married Rebekah of Abraham's family:

"And Isaac brought her unto his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: ..."

Genesis 24:67.

Thus Isaac continued in that special and holy calling, ordained by God and upheld by Abraham.

Shortly thereafter Abraham died, and Ishmael and Isaac buried him "in the cave of Machpelah. . . The field which Abraham purchased. . . : there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife" (Genesis 25:9-10). He was one hundred and seventy-five years old when he died, and for one hundred years had remained a stranger and a sojourner in that promised land. He obeyed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness and made him a "Friend of God".

Isaac followed in Abraham's footsteps. When there was a famine in the land Isaac considered moving to Egypt; but God spoke to him:

"... Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father."

Genesis 26:2-3.

Isaac thus remained a sojourner and a stranger. He:

"... pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there."

Genesis 26:17.

And when he moved further to Beersheba:

"... he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: . . ." Genesis 26:25.

After Isaac, his son Jacob also lived in the land, a stranger and a sojourner. Toward the end of his life he said unto Pharaoh, when Joseph brought him down to Egypt:

"The day of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years . . . of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

Genesis 47:9.

When Jacob was about to die, he blessed his twelve sons and charged them:

"... bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, . . . which Abraham bought . . . for a possession of a buryingplace.

There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah."
Genesis 49:29-31.

This field with its buryingplace was all that Abraham and his sons had as a sure possession in the land that was promised to them. Joseph as well required of his brethren:

"... I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. . . and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."
Genesis 50:24-25.

Many years later, when Joshua conquered the land of Canaan and divided it for an inheritance to the children of Israel, Joseph's bones were buried there in the same field of Machpelah. These righteous men:

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

Today, Brethren and Sisters, we look for these promises to be fulfilled at the coming of Jesus, Abraham's seed, who will possess the gate of His enemies and establish on this earth His kingdom, Israel restored in righteousness. In that hope, we too are striving to remain strangers and sojourners, passing through this life, in the world but not of it, kept and keeping from its evil through the covering of Jesus Christ. As we are given a glimpse into the minds and spirits of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, in this world but humble passers-through only, are we not inspired and encouraged to be ever watchful and grateful sojourners to God—and also "heirs according to the promise"?

J.A.DeF.

**"Light is sown for the righteous,
and gladness for the upright in heart." (Psalm 97:11)**

In this psalm David focuses our attention on the fact that God's eyes are always upon the righteous, and in gratitude for this exclaims:

"Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." Psalm 97:12.

Rejoicing in gladness for the privilege of knowing Him as a Father and exulting in His many mercies helps one be lifted up to the realization that:

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Psalm 97:11.

The Almighty's first act of creation was light, making it so through the pronouncement of His word alone. The light first and then every living thing to follow, plants, animals and mankind. The thought of sown is putting into the ground in order to bring forth fruit, making us think of the Parable of the Sower where the seed as God's word was cast into divers places, one being good soil, symbolic of the righteous:

"A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold." Luke 8:5,8.

Jesus explains the parable:

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God - that (seed) on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience". Luke 8:11,15.

After the planting, time is needed to bring forth as James confirms:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth night." James 5:7-8.

Isn't this the mind of God, that He looks upon His children

with patience for that seed to grow and accomplish its purpose, to eventually bring forth spiritual fruit?

In the plagues of Egypt when darkness fell upon the land, light was sown for the righteous:

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.

And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.”

Exodus 10:21-23.

This light was given to righteous Israel because they were His children endeavoring to follow His light, but to the enemies of God, darkness so thick it could be felt.

The children of light are born of the spirit thus their eyes can perceive His light which is sown for them and provision is made for their every need as long as they keep their hearts and minds focused upon its divine source:

“The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.”

Luke 11:34-35.

If the eye is directed at the source of light, seeking it, the body is full of light but when the eye is evil or distracted by other desires, the body becomes full of darkness. Whatever we put our eyes or thoughts upon affects that which is within us and what comes forth.

Looking forward to the time when the Lord Jesus will reign with His saints in the Kingdom of God on earth, we know for those so blessed there will be no need of the sun, for the light of the spirit pervading will be all that is required.

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Revelation 22:5.

This city, new Jerusalem, will be the ultimate reflection of God through His children. Those who as spirit creatures will reign as kings and priests, judging those mortals so blessed to live in the tranquility brought about by that righteous illumination. This too

was David's hope, as speaking of the inhabitants of that holy city he says:

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doeth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Psalm 1:2-3.

For a tree to flourish and bring forth fruit there has to be both water and light, without which there can be no growth. Both are used in the Scriptures as symbols of God's life-giving gift and exactly what John saw in vision while on the Isle of Patmos:

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Revelation 22:1-2.

God is taking out a people whom he likens to that tree of life whose "leaves" or work with Christ, heal all nations - a soothing balm of justice and peace will flow because of their righteous judgment.

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm trees: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;"

Psalm 92:12-14.

God sows light for the righteous that they may bring forth fruit. As we endeavor to be children of that light our eyes must be always focused upon Him as we struggle to be like that seed which fell on good ground. Can we imagine the gladness to be felt by those found approved, those who will partake in all the comforts of Zion where:

"Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody".

M.C.S.

PARTIAL INSPIRATION—the trouble of 1885 (continued)

R. Roberts to the readers of "The Christadelphian"

(December 1st 1884)

"Circumstances Interfere"

"We had intended this month resuming Dr. Thomas's article on the Abrahamic covenant and its mystery. Circumstances interfere with the fulfilment of this intention, and also with the appearance of chapter three of the Life of Christ, "The necessity for Christ, in God's scheme of history."

These circumstances have become known to our readers since our last issue. An issue has been raised, in a very unexpected manner, as to whether the Scriptures are wholly or only partially inspired - involving the further problem whether, if they are only partially inspired, they are of any real value to us at all as a guide to eternal life. The circumstances are painful and the issue exciting, and both are such as most of us would have excluded from the category of possibilities.

But God rules in the ecclesias as well as in the kingdoms of men, and in His providence, He has arrested the startled attention of the whole brotherhood to a subject, the full apprehension of which may be necessary for the development of the right type of saintship in an unbelieving age like ours.

However much we may regret the situation, we cannot get rid of it. It is to be feared that many will be hurt by it: it is certain that others will be purified and brought to a greater degree of confidence and consecration. But whatever the results, there is only one course for faithful men, and that is to maintain, at the hazard of all consequences, the absolute divine authorship of the Bible throughout."

(to be continued)

MEATS AND BLOOD AND CONSCIENCE
 (quotations from past issues of "The Christadelphian")

(1898) There was a reason for Paul's latitude on the eating of things offered to idols ---. As he says "an idol is nothing", and the presentation of an animal before it, made the animal no less fit for food than before, and no less suitable to be eaten by a believer, so long as his eating was not an endorsement of the idol worship. The impropriety of eating arose from the probability of misconstruction, and not from divine interdiction. Idol worship was a human invention, and in so far as the use of flesh that had been employed in connection with the invention might be misunderstood as sympathy with it, it was expedient to abstain as from all other "appearance of evil".

(1899) Jesus laid down the principle that "there is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him." And Paul said: "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself." (Romans 14:14) And in 1 Cor. 8 he speaks of the eating of meats offered to idols as a matter of indifference EXCEPT as concerning the possibility of stumbling weak brethren. The time before us in Acts 15 was a period of transition in which the Mosaic economy was "waxing old and ready to vanish away", and from the reason given for the prohibition, in verse 21, ("For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him") it seems that it was in large degree a concession to the susceptibilities of "the circumcision". And if this be so it does not apply to our times.

(1901) We can understand your compunctions on the subject of eating blood, in view of what is said in Acts 15. But, when taken with other apostolic sayings by the spirit, it becomes evident that the interdict had special reference to those times, when the Mosaic economy was waxing old and ready to vanish away. In fact, this reason appears in Acts 15:21: "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." Writing to the Corinthians Paul allowed the eating of "meats offered to idols", which was interdicted by Acts 15:29 (see 1 Cor. 8 & 10). But he advised great care in the use of this liberty, for fear of stumbling the weak. This shows that a brother could not be counted a sinner merely for eating of meats offered to idols, or of blood. Fornication is another thing. It is prohibited in many other places, and is no doubt mentioned in Acts 15 because it was a

feature of idolatrous worship. If you think we are "clearly under the disabilities of Acts 15," you must not eat blood. But you must not condemn a brother who thinks otherwise. Neither must any brother try to induce you to eat blood, and surely no one would. If you have access to the back volumes of the Christadelphian, you will find the subject dealt with at some little length. - - -.

(1915) - - - This perennial question - - -. But it must be remembered that the decree of Acts 15 was given in a time of transition from the Mosaic to the Christian dispensation. And the reason given: "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him" shows that the matter was somewhat in the nature of a concession to Jewish sentiment. We read that Paul circumcised Timothy "because of the Jews." (Acts 16:3), though he would not tolerate the imposition of circumcision upon the Gentiles. We also read that under certain conditions Paul permitted the eating of meat that might have been offered to idols (1 Cor. 8:10). "Whatever is sold in the shambles." The only care in the case was to be for the conscience of a "weak brother" who might feel contaminated. It ought not to be much hardship for anyone to abstain from "blood and things strangled," but no one should make his brother a sinner should he not so abstain. A more comprehensive grasp of the scriptures will relieve brother - - - scruples. The question has frequently been discussed in The Christadelphian.

Note: It would be necessary for the Brethren at the time of the Apostles, to take care, because what they preached at the time was based on the Old Testament (even as now), though in conflict with the preaching of the only other group using the Old Testament (the Jews).

A BIBLE CLASS

"THAT WHICH IS HIGHLY ESTEEMED AMONG MEN IS ABOMINATION IN THE SIGHT OF GOD" (Luke 16:15)

From the context of this sixteenth chapter, we see the Lord Jesus illustrating the great difference in the Spirit's eyes between the faithful and the unjust. He spoke specifically to the Pharisees warning of their hypocrisy:

"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:13-15.

The Pharisees were continual enemies of Christ because He knew their deceitful hearts and revealed their lacks in the hope that they and the people who followed them would respond to the truth. Instead, they derided or mocked Him, unwilling to change or give up positions of comfort and esteem before men:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." II Timothy 3:1-5.

Many of these characteristics describe the Pharisees, especially so the thought of "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." So steeped were they in the letter of the law and the traditions of men, that they failed to see the love and mercy it contained, as Jesus taught.

Feeling superior as part of the ruling class, these leaders derided or sneered while He spoke, trying to trip Him up with

twisted questions. Even while He hung suffering on the cross, they mockingly cried out:

“... He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.”
Luke 23:35.

To those who mock at God or His people, Paul himself, once a Pharisee, warns:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”
Galatians 6:7-8.

Again expressed is the thought of not serving two masters. Those who serve God will be blessed with the rewards of eternal life He has promised, while those serving the carnal man, will reap the hopeless corruption of the grave.

The Pharisees who valued the esteem of men sought to appear as righteous, openly giving their alms, not from a generous and loving heart to help the less fortunate, but to appear as godly before others. Because of this Jesus said:

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”

Matthew 6:1-4.

Those who profess to be godly but love the esteem of men are as the Lord Jesus says hypocrites - playing a part, and in the sight of God an abomination. The Pharisees may have felt they were righteous but were deceived in their own hearts and deceiving others by their seemingly pious actions.

“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 Lord Jesus spoke of dedicating one's life to God and cutting off the lusts of the flesh, for such sacrifice was considered by Him as a sweet smell. However, the lip service of a hypocrite results in no deprivation, and their false piety appears before God as an abomination, or as that word means, a stink - a far cry from the pleasure He derives from the sincere perseverance of those striving to obey Him.

How needful the warning, "no servant can serve two masters". As we endeavour to put down the inner man, denying our fleshly tendencies, serving Him in sincerity and truth, let us keep our hearts and minds focused upon the joys that await those who will belong to that holy city, New Jerusalem remembering that:

". . . there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
Revelation 21:27.

If God looks upon one's deeds as hypocritical, that man is an abomination to Him and will be unable to enter into that holy place.

Only those who in singleness of mind, heart and spirit, humble themselves under His hand can hope to be exalted when His Son returns.

M.C.S.



"DAWN" AND A DIVORCE ISSUE

Extract from correspondence of "Dawn" member
with the Editor of the "Dawn" magazine

"Since the problem which has faced the former West Norwood Ecclesia has become general knowledge, discussions around the brotherhood have made it apparent that there are many who until recently were not fully aware of the position of the "Dawn" Fellowship on the subject of marriage and divorce, nor the reasons why that stand was necessary. For example, some had not realised that what is usually referred to as the four clause resolution is

incorporated in the Statement of Faith and that it forms an essential part of our stand on the marriage question.

Possibly this situation is due to the fact that when some came to the knowledge of the Truth, they were not given details of the discussions within the brotherhood which have led to the position held by the "Dawn" Fellowship today on this and other important matters - - -."

The Remnant's comment on the above

We find it rather surprising that there are members of the "Dawn" Christadelphian who are unaware of their doctrinal position on the subject of marriage and divorce. The "Dawn" magazine specifically says that it recognises:-

"- - - in fellowship only those who resist the errors of partial inspiration, non-resurrectional responsibility, immortal emergence of the dead, "clean flesh" nature of Christ; who deny that we are at liberty to serve in State Forces, sue at law, OR SEEK DIVORCE; and who are prepared to withdraw themselves from any who join a community where these errors exist."

Further extract from correspondence of another "Dawn" member with the Editor of the "Dawn" magazine.

"Whilst appreciating that your statement in the January issue concerning the West Norwood Ecclesia's problem was intended to be impartial, we feel there is an implied criticism of the section of the ecclesia which has sent out the recent communication to Recording Brethren, so an explanation seems to be necessary.

We consider that we were under an obligation to circulate such a communication. The matter which has been troubling the West Norwood Ecclesia obviously involves fellowship. The issue involved whether it was scriptural to fellowship and break bread with a divorced brother AND sister when there was no legal impediment to their remarriage.

As we do not accept the theory of "ecclesial autonomy" advocated in certain other fellowships, all ecclesias in our fellowship must eventually be involved.

We accept that it would not have been appropriate for the Magazine to become involved whilst the West Norwood Ecclesia was still debating this question and before an ecclesial decision was reached; obviously this was an internal problem for that ecclesia.

We therefore feel that it is less than just for you to state that "one side has chosen to involve the whole Fellowship in what was the problem of one ecclesia". Far too many have chosen to be involved of their own volition - - -. A referendum was taken upon a statement drawn up by those not in favour of having a divorced couple in fellowship, which revealed that the Ecclesia was fairly evenly divided. Obviously therefore a communication from the Ecclesia (ie. the West Norwood) as a whole was not possible, so those voting in favour of the statement decided to send out their own letter and document. Those opposing the statement have now, quite rightly, sent out their own communications, so the whole Fellowship can now consider both sides of the question.

Therefore, although we have no objection whatsoever to your recommending that ecclesias and individuals should look carefully at the reasoning of the other side, we do object to the concluding words of your statement that there can be no obligation on any ecclesia or individual to respond to our letter unless they so desire, which gives the impression that the matter is unimportant - - -."

"Dawn" Editorial comments on the above

"We do not countenance the error of encouraging ecclesial autonomy in regard to questions affecting fellowship. Our concern is rather that many of our community throughout the world will quite unnecessarily have been made to feel perplexed and distressed by a difficult question which is being not merely brought to their notice (that would be reasonable enough), but which is being linked with the possibility of an eventual exclusion from fellowship of all who are unable to support such a call. Whatever opinions may be held upon the problem that gave rise to this controversy, the fact is that there is at present NO CASE REQUIRING A DECISION - - -. Withdrawal is not an ultimate sanction to be imposed necessarily when agreement on a difficult issue proves to be unattainable.

There is an understandable desire on the part of many brethren and sisters to maintain A POSITION OF NEUTRALITY on the problem - - -.

Each side should respect the views of the others, and remember that differences of opinion are not in every instance a sufficient reason for a division of the Fellowship - - -. The purpose of the Truth is not to compel us, in the name of purity of fellowship, to become finely analytical legalists in matters where the Spirit in the inspired Word has not chosen to be as specific and definitive as some would

wish. --- Let us remember that the Scriptures do not speak with approval of "them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned --- such as withdraw on insufficient grounds."

The Remnant's comments on the above

It seems to us that the Editorial overlooks that division already exists in the "Dawn" Fellowship over this matter. For example the West Norwood Ecclesia was split down the middle on this divorce question. Following this the South London (West Norwood) Ecclesia has been replaced by two ecclesias in Norbury and Norwood. It is not sufficient for Dawn to expostulate that West Norwood lost the tenancy of their hall, and two meetings resulted in Norbury and Norwood. This in itself shows the seriousness of the division. Dawn appears to take the position that it is withdrawal of fellowship proceedings which divides a community and should be avoided. The Spirit does not look at a situation in this way, but asks the pertinent question:-

"Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:13)

This was asked of the Corinthian ecclesia before any formal withdrawal of fellowship, because that ecclesia WAS in disunity. The "Dawn" Editorial fails, in saying, that agreement on a difficult issue can be unattainable; that there can be matters on which the inspired Word has not chosen to be as specific and definitive as some would wish. Surely there is clear scriptural guidance about divorce?

"--- Let not the wife depart from her husband ---, let not the husband put away his wife." (1 Cor. 7:11)

"--- the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth ---."

(Romans 7:2)

Ought not the members of the ecclesia to uphold this principle? To have division over it only means that some are trying to get round the command, sometimes by quite specious reasoning. "Dawn" are failing in not supporting those who are endeavouring to uphold the doctrine. It is evident there is a serious lack over the doctrine of fellowship.

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World

"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee - - -" (Ezekiel 38:7)

Let it not be assumed that Russia is now a second rate entity amongst the nations. The West, following the disappearance of the Soviet Union, feels it is in a dominant position. Perhaps it is not so dominant as it thinks it is. Yes, the western powers did have a remarkable success against Iraq; undoubtedly that war worked out for them beyond their dreams, so crushing a defeat was inflicted upon Iraq, with virtually no losses to the U.S.A. and Britain. But what the world leaders fail to recognise, is that the hand of God is evident in such matters. Iraq was a grave threat to Israel, therefore God required that Iraq be diminished.

But now, the West takes the view that Russia is diminished. The word of God, on the other hand, says that Russia is not diminished. It is therefore interesting to note at the time of writing that Russia "is to take control of all former Soviet forces in eastern Europe, the Baltic states and Transcaucasia." It will form its own army and navy of one and a half million men. The formidable Black Sea fleet has also come under Russian jurisdiction by decree of the Russian President. To say the least, this is a powerful position for Russia; its President it seems, is not going to allow a continual erosion of the military machine for he has announced a commission to oversee that the Russian forces are "to become fully professional." So the scripture takes on a significant meaning in the words, "Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself - - -" A professional force has an edge which a conscripted army does not have. The West tends to rely upon a small professional force, with an increase in army numbers by conscription in time of need.

The potential success of a Russian advance is already being prepared while the world, particularly the West, is allowing itself to be lulled into complacency, by the thought of Capitalism triumphing over Communism. The world thinks it is peace, perhaps Russia does too, but the scripture shows otherwise.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, 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

Interest appears serious in connection with the Christadelphian history. We have had many requests for this booklet and feel grateful for the opportunity to witness to that body. Only God knows how these contacts may stir up concerned minds.

All have special reasons to be thankful these recent weeks due to His help granted in our daily lives, our work, with our families and especially in the ongoing work of His house.

J.A.Def.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

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

Further enquiries are being received from Ireland asking for our booklet concerning prophecies fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled. Such interest does encourage.

Applications also continue from Christadelphians for our book on the Doctrine of Fellowship.