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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

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(continued)"

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**"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"
"EXCEPT THE FATHER... DRAW HIM"**

In the course of the last several weeks, we have been considering the record of John as he wrote of Jesus Christ—His life, His works, and His spirit. John was the apostle especially close to Him, often spoken of as the "disciple whom Jesus loved", or as the one who leaned upon Jesus' breast at the last Passover. It is appropriate then that John should write about his Lord, for he probably knew Him better than most. When we think of the records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we might assume they were written shortly after Jesus' death and resurrection. This is true of Matthew's book, but Mark and Luke were written in the area of A.D. 57 to 68, while John's was done approximately A.D. 90 and near to the end of his life. The Revelation, also by John, was written in A.D. 96, while he was exiled upon the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). As he wrote of Jesus, he would look back over all those past experiences and would be able to faithfully write for all the following generations, even for our help today. These events, of which we are reading, were seen through the eyes of one who greatly loved the Lord Jesus. We can perceive how sincere and faithful was that love from Jesus' words even as He hung on the cross:

"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

John 19:26-27.

John stood by, loving Jesus, sharing His agony, ready to help Him endure what His Father required. Jesus, recognizing this devotion, placed His mother in John's care, with sure confidence. This is help and example for us, is it not? Jesus' supreme trust in John's sure love and "standing by" makes us ask ourselves, Could He feel so for us? Do we perhaps need to rise up to this willingness, this readiness, Brethren and Sisters?

John's looking back to Jesus' time was almost sixty years. Undoubtedly John would feel that becoming a follower of Jesus brought to him the greatest change in his life. It came about as Jesus traveled near the Sea of Galilee, watching and aware:

"... he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”
Matthew 4:21-22.

These brothers were engaged in their family business—fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus recognized something special about them and being suitable to become His disciples. What was it? One vital aspect we know from Jesus’ own words:

“No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”
John 6:44.

As He chose James and John, was there indeed sure indication from His Father, by way of the Spirit’s power so recently bestowed upon Him? Jesus “called them” singling them out, knowing their spirits. This calling takes our minds to an earlier time as the prophet Samuel chose David to be Israel’s king. He first selected Eliab, Jesse’s firstborn, but the Almighty warned him:

“... Look not on the countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” I Samuel 16:7.

The rest of Jesse’s sons God also refused. But when David, the youngest, was brought:

“... the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he:”
I Samuel 16:12.

In the same way, through God’s guidance, Jesus knew and called James and John. It is significant that these brothers “immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him”. At this time, they knew not where or to what they were going. But “something” caused them to hear and to heed. How wonderful for them! This was truly a turning point in John’s life, called to be an apostle, drawn of God, given the true hope of being raised up in the last day if he followed Jesus faithfully. Does not God draw every one of His people today, and has He not all through the centuries, Brethren and Sisters? A very few whose hearts He has known have been so called—not as dramatically, but just as surely, as Jesus revealed: “No man can come to me except the Father ... draw him.” Do we fully comprehend this impact upon our lives? Probably not, just as John could not possibly have foreseen what would be required of him; yet deeply moved by Jesus’ words, and without questioning, followed Him. What great events, trials, sadnesses, and yet withal joy John experienced as a result of this “drawing”. Within a few years, James his brother was executed by Herod because of his witness for Jesus:

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.
And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."
Acts 12:1-2.

This was a grief to our brother but it did not deter him, for he witnessed until at least A.D. 96 when in exile on Patmos he wrote the book of Revelation, having already written the book of John as well as I, II, and III John—letters of loving instruction to his brethren. Patmos was a barren island off the coast of Asia Minor measuring only ten by six miles. John was exiled and isolated on this barren spot to silence his witness. Yet the witness continued as there, faithful John wrote the book of Revelation, determined to serve while his life continued, and so his witness was preserved.

Others have been similarly drawn out by God's hand. There was Moses who as a baby was literally drawn out of the waters by Pharaoh's daughter:

"... And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."
Exodus 2:10.

God chose Moses, drew him to Himself, to deliver His people and lead them out of bondage in Egypt. Though at times fearful, Moses responded in willing obedience. He suffered much as Israel balked and murmured against him, sought at times to stone him, but he knew by Whom his calling had come and looked to the end, the salvation of God through His Messiah.

David, too, clearly recognized God's mighty hand in drawing him to Himself. He never failed to acknowledge God's guiding hand and protection. In recognizing this, he wrote:

"A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul."
Title of Psalm 18.

and continued:

"I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.
I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.
He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. ... he delivered me, because he delighted in me."
Psalm 18: 1,3,16,19.

Can we see, Brethren and Sisters, why the Almighty had said earlier to Samuel: "Arise, anoint him: for this is he" (1 Samuel 16:12)?

Moses, David, John and all the Lord's drawn-out ones suffered much in witnessing to His purpose. John endured and became the disciple Jesus loved. Indeed, Jesus often included John along with Peter and James in His experiences, both uplifting and agonizing. At one very significant time it is recorded:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them. . ."

Matthew 17:1-2.

There they saw in vision, Jesus transformed as He would be in the kingdom, speaking with Moses and Elijah, a man of the law and a prophet sent by God. How strengthening to Peter, James and John such a vision would be, encouraging them in the hope of being raised up at the last day.

On a later and more agonizing occasion, when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane:

"... He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me."

Matthew 26:37-38.

He felt the need for these three close and understanding brethren, to support Him as He agonized to do his Father's will. In weariness, they fell asleep as they waited, and Jesus spoke sadly:

". . .What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Matthew 26:40.

Can we imagine the sorrow and shame these three felt as they realized how their flesh had failed them in standing by Jesus in His hour of need? Soon, betrayed by Judas, Jesus was taken to the high priest's palace. Peter and John followed - Peter, "afar off" (Luke 22:54). John, however, although known to the high priest as Jesus' disciple:

"... went in with Jesus into the place of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple . . . and brought in Peter."

John 18:15-16.

At this fearful time, John steadfastly stood by Jesus, as well as later, when He died on the cross, determined to do all possible to support his Master.

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension to His Father, John

“tarried” for many years as Jesus had told Peter (John 21:22), until he had written the Revelation, received from Jesus who appeared in a vision to him near the end of his life. He saw in this vision the complete purpose of God through His Son, and thus he witnessed to the name of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God until his death. About this time, he also wrote, as we have noted, those three epistles to his brethren (possibly from Patmos). In the first epistle, he explained that the whole purpose of his work was to write of:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

I John 1:1-4.

John knew that joy of fellowship, oneness of mind, heart and spirit, with Jesus Christ as he was joined to Him through the Almighty's calling. Brethren and Sisters, have we not been drawn also, called out to that same fellowship, where there is joy, hope, and strength? It is with trials now; yet in His body, and the promise of full and unblemished joy when Jesus returns to make His body truly one, perfect in immortality, as He promised to His drawn-out ones: “I will raise him up at the last day”. That day and His judgment may soon be here.

Let us then, with the help of our Brother John, hold fast, denying self, taking up His cross, and so follow Him who has made it possible for our joy indeed to be full in that eternal fellowship with Him and His Father.

J.A.DeF.

A BIBLE CLASS

"DO I SEEK TO PLEASE MEN?" (Galatians 1:10)

These words were written by Paul to his Galatian brethren about A.D.58, approximately twenty five years after his conversion. During this time much had taken place in the ecclesias. Galatia, a province in the Roman empire, contained the cities of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Laodicea and Antioch, all places in which Paul personally had brought many to the Truth, Jew and Gentile alike. While in Antioch, Paul preached in the synagogue, declaring Jesus as the Saviour foretold by the law and prophets, bringing many Jews to salvation through His name. Upon hearing these stirring words, the Gentiles beseeched Paul to speak to them as well:

"And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, 10, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."
Acts 13:44-49.

Paul was now moved to write to the Galatians, for news had come of their return to the law as taught by some who were perverting the gospel.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Galatians 1:6-7.

He appealed to them to remember the true gospel, which unlike the letter of the law, could save from eternal death through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16.

He spoke forcibly to the Galatian brethren, asserting that to go back to the law negated the sacrifice of Christ and the purpose of God:

“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

Galatians 2:19-21.

This must have been a grievous task for Paul, to find those whom he loved and had taught slipping back into perdition, losing sight of God’s grace and mercy extended to them through the sacrifice of His Son. He had sought to persuade men of the gospel of Christ not to please men as he reminded them:

“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Galatians 1:10.

Christ’s life was dedicated to obedience to His Father in preaching of the gospel, and in no instance did He please men rather than God. It is recorded that upon His baptism a voice from heaven said, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11).

Another who did not seek to please men was Stephen, who testified of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, putting the responsibility for His death on the Jews, who listened without remorse but with anger at his words:

“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.” Acts 7:52-54.

They were not pleased by his witness but Stephen would not change his testimony though it cost him his life.

Paul too, would not change the testimony he knew to be Truth in order to please men. He was sorely grieved as he saw the gospel he had delivered to them now slipping away because of their faithlessness and laxity. He had been their teacher, leading them into the paths of Truth and the hope of salvation. Their faith had offered them an escape from the sentence of death bringing them into fellowship with God and His Son, but now their belief was ebbing and they were reverting back to circumcision and other old ways of the law which in itself had no power toward salvation. His concluding appeal was written in his own hand, no doubt with much difficulty, but an evidence of his strong and earnest care for their spiritual well being:

“Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Galatians 6:11-14.

There have been many recorded in the Scriptures who have suffered because they chose not to please men but rather God men such as Stephen and Paul who held fast their faith in the word of Truth and the abiding hope it offered. Their names have been kept as a memorial of steadfast determination leaving us today an example to follow. We live in a world of dedicated man pleasers, not from sincerity or selfless desire, but for the profit and satisfaction which may come to themselves. We too are flesh - ever susceptible - let us heed the pattern we have seen today in our study of His word.

M.C.S.



**Partial Inspiration—the trouble of 1885 (continued)
Summary**

“The argument may be brought to a focus thus:

1/- Christ rose from the dead: therefore, whatever view of the Old Testament Scriptures was entertained by him and the apostles must be correct.

2/- The view which Christ entertained and always expressed was that the Old Testament was of divine authority, and “could not be broken”.

3/- The same view was held by the apostles, and illustrated by them in all the uses they put the Old Testament to, and the allusions they made to it.

4/- The ground of this view was their conviction that these Scriptures were God-inspired - a conviction which they declared in terms without qualification.

5/- The inspired character of the Old Testament Scriptures is evident from their non-human style of composition, and from the nature of the topics which they select for presentation, whether in history, contemplation, or prophecy.

6/- This divine inspiration was a necessity for the objects divinely proposed in the writing of the Scriptures (whether in its historical, preceptive, or prophetic departments). A reliable exhibition of any of these elements would not have been possible without it.

7/- That the analogy of God's whole work with Israel requires that the writing of the Scriptures should be His own work.

8/- That they are, in fact, owned by Him as such.

9/- That His authorship of them is not interfered with by the fact that human writers were employed in their literary fabrication - His Spirit controlling and supervising their performance in a manner that secured the exhibition of His mind, and His mind alone, whether in the utterance of a prophecy, or the quotation of a blasphemer's document.

10/- That there are no insuperable difficulties in the way of this attested and inevitable view, apparent discrepancies are mostly susceptible of explanation: and where they are not, it is for want of the knowledge of some element of the case that would supply the solution."

(to be continued)



"HE PREPARED HIS WAYS BEFORE THE LORD HIS GOD"

It is a help to us this morning to consider the record of Jotham, who ascended to the throne of Judah when Uzziah, his father, ceased to reign, having become leprous by God's judgment because of his intrusion into the priest's office. In addition to this background, not very much about Jotham is recorded. There are only nine verses concerning this king in II Chronicles 27 and a few also in II Kings 15. Both records reveal, however, that "he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD." (See II Kings 15:34) There is also a clear indiction of His spirit in the Chronicles:

"So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God." II Chronicles 27:6.

He prepared, he worked to establish and fix his ways, doubtless altering some of the practices allowed by Uzziah. God was with him, and therefore he and his people knew certain blessings. Only this is revealed about Jotham's spirit, and he must have been helped in his determination to walk in the Almighty's ways. He reigned during the time of Isaiah's prophecy to Judah, and those of Hosea and Micah to the ten tribes, although they did have reference to Judah as well. Isaiah's prophecy, like those of the two others who witnessed, was of:

“The vision... which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”
Isaiah 1:1.

This helps us to discern how Jotham was moved to prepare his ways before the Lord. No doubt Isaiah, who had witnessed Uzziah’s evil work, and perhaps the prophets Hosea and Micah at times, had an influence on Jotham’s thinking and resolve. Also, he had seen the suddenness and severity of God’s judgment upon his Father Uzziah, striking him with leprosy, forcing him to give over the rule to his son. Jotham would fear God’s hand upon any who, like Uzziah, did not prepare their ways before Him. He was on the throne for some years while Uzziah still lived, being deposed because of his leprosy. No doubt his plight would be a fearsome warning to Jotham, helping him to move more faithfully in service to God. A further impressive memory to him would be the great earthquake sent by God in the days of Uzziah, bringing fear, suffering and loss of lives and homes, causing many to flee (Amos 1:1 and Zechariah 14:5). Having witnessed God’s work close at hand, Jotham, awed by His terrible power, turned to God for help and so “prepared his ways before the LORD”.

How few of Judah’s kings were prepared to follow God’s ways! David was one, Hezekiah another; and from what we are told of Jotham, if he maintained these ways, he could be among those who pleased God. It is not an easy course for mere men to serve God acceptably, as we are so aware. It means, as David and Hezekiah learned, putting His ways above their own, making them first in their hearts. These faithful men at times failed, forgetting His ways; but as hearts incline to Him and His commandments, awareness comes, sorrow is quickly felt, repentance fully manifested, and there is a turning back to the only right way - God’s own. As a result, men such as David and Hezekiah were greatly blessed and helped, and it appears that Jotham was also.

Thinking about these lives, there was another king of Judah about whom we have recently read:

“And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim. But sought the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments. . . .

Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand;... and he had riches and honour in abundance.

And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD. . . .”

II Chronicles 17:3-6.

Jehoshapat did fail as he joined himself with Ahab, the evil

king of the ten tribes, to fight the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead. For this he was rebuked by God through Jehu, His seer:

“... Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.

Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.” II Chronicles 19:2-3.

In accordance with this ready mind and heart, Jehoshaphat sent judges through the land and instructed them with these wise and perceptive words, which reveal his spirit:

“... Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment.

Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you: take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.”

II Chronicles 19:6-7.

Further, the king sent priests and Levites throughout Judah to help his people in their judging of all controversies and he charged them:

“... Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart . . . ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD.

. . . Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good.” II Chronicles 19:9-11.

Trials came upon Jehoshaphat and his people to prove their trust in the Almighty. Moab and Ammon, ancient enemies even to this day, came against them:

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD And said ... O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.”

II Chronicles 20:3,5,6,12.

The Almighty was pleased with Jehoshaphat's spirit and responded through His servant Jahaziel, a Levite of the sons of Asaph:

"... Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you,... fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you. II Chronicles 20:15,17.

How difficult it is in times of acute trouble and anxiety to stand still, not relying upon one's own resources - just waiting upon God! It requires an unfailing trust in His provision with a conviction that the battle is in His hands, and that He will provide. Jehoshaphat and Judah did stand still and they did see and rejoice in the salvation of the Lord as Moab and Ammon fought between themselves, and "every one helped to destroy another" (Verse 23). How the king and his people would rejoice, overwhelmed with thankfulness.

Later, it is sad to read that Jehoshaphat again took up with a king of Israel, Ahaziah, in a joint venture which came to nought, as the Lord caused the ships to be broken, frustrating their plans. Jehoshaphat manifestly desired to seek the Lord and walk in His ways, knowing His blessing and care; yet twice he unwisely made allegiance with a king of Israel and came to grief. A great lesson for us, Brethren and Sisters, if we are to please God. We do not know whether Jehoshaphat will be accounted among those whose names are written in heaven. However, his example as he stood still, waiting for God's salvation, encourages and inspires us to be like that, increasing our faith and determination to more steadfastly and consistently wait upon Him - a vital part of preparing our ways before our Father. As we observe how few of Judah's kings were prepared to do this, it causes us to be fearful lest we too fail in our contacts with worldly associates and thereby fail to honor our Creator. Later the Almighty through His prophet Hosea warned Israel, and warns us as well, of the need to stay prepared, ready and attentive before the Lord:

"For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: . . .

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Hosea 5:14-15.

THE REMNANT

God does turn His face from those whose ways are contrary, yet in mercy brings affliction to turn back to His ways any who will, as did Jehoshaphat. His condemnation of those who fail to respond to His mercy is clear:

“Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.” Hosea 10:13.

Trusting in one's own way and in the strength of men means there is failure to stand still to see God's salvation. It is hardest to wait upon Him in times of great turmoil, yet this affliction is for our testing. Will we stand still Brethren and Sisters, looking to Him, staying close to Him who is the source of all strength, mercy and help?

Our portion in John bears out these thoughts as Jesus, thinking of His imminent departure, warned His brethren of the grave affliction which would come upon them:

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.” John 16:1-3.

This tribulation came upon the disciples at the hands of those who professed to walk in the ways of God, but failed to know Him and His son - trusting rather in their own knowledge and power. Encouraging His brethren, Jesus spoke (and speaks to us today):

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

John 16:33.

Let us take hold and hear these words with joy and confidence, keeping our ways prepared before Him.

J.A.DeF.

Extract from letter of E.R.H.

“The Laodicean phase affects ALL groups of “Christadelphians” —christadelphians or those just in name. Those who bear that name have been examined to make sure they accept what the BIRMINGHAM CONSTITUTION demands. Those who do not live accordingly will suffer punishment. That includes those who, when they are commanded to have no company with evil doers, refuse to withdraw from such. The responsibility is on the arranging brethren not on those who can’t help themselves. If we do not like what the ABs set forth by majority vote then we have to submit. If we get up and walk off then we cause the body of Christ to be divided and as the body of Christ is NOT DIVIDED it means to say that those who follow the course of Diatrepes and others of that persuasion will receive the judgment of 1 John 4. Those of whom Peter and Jude complained of were IN THE ECCLESIAS but when John wrote his epistle they had gone out from us. The Laodicean phase then embraces ALL who name the name of Christ whether they show the spirit of Christ or not - whether Central, Berean, Amended or unamended, Master’s Household, Ecclesia of Christ, or Remnant, or those who now call themselves the Apostolic fellowship.

If they ARE Christ’s they will follow out the words of verse 4 of Hymn 161 in Bro. Robert’s book (“Brethren, let us walk together IN THE BONDS OF LOVE AND PEACE. Can it be a question whether brethren should from conflict cease? ‘TIS IN UNION, ‘TIS IN UNION HOPE JOY & LOVE INCREASE”)

No doubt MANY sit quietly in the ecclesias with little or nothing to say but striving to upbuild those who they can in their humble way. These are they whose names are all engraven on the heart of the Master, “Nor shall the meanest (humblest) saint complain that he hath lost his part.” NOW is the time to put things right. There is no clue as to what will happen. The next phase is the TRUTH as it will be in the Kingdom - on a NATIONAL BASIS AND ISRAELITISH CONSTITUTION as per Revelation chap.4. Study Rev.3 verses 18-19.

We have been called to WORK in the Master’s vineyard. Where will we be WHEN He returns to examine the work? Will He

say "Well done thou good and FAITHFUL SERVANT"? or will He find us amongst groups who are standing wrangling among themselves having no fellowship and HINDERING THE WORK? The choice is ours. With love in the Truth I remain your sincere and faithful brother in Christ Jesus."

The Remant's Comments

Our kindly correspondent has written in a desire that people who have known the Truth should strive to keep together. With this we heartily agree. He also rightly points out the necessary duty "to have no company with evil doers." Where we are puzzled, is in his remark about a refusing to withdraw from evil doers, which he admits is wrong, but suggests "the responsibility is on the arranging brethren" (which we also agree is correct) but he also goes on to say "- - - not on those who can't help themselves. If we don't like what the ABs set forth by majority vote then we have to submit. If we get up and walk off then we cause the body of Christ to be divided and as the body of Christ is NOT DIVIDED it means to say that those who follow the course of Diotrephes and others of that persuasion will receive the judgment of 1 John 4."

Again we agree that to walk off as a Diotrephes is very wrong, he (Diotrephes) did it because he 'loved to have the preeminence among them.' But to return to a consideration of arranging brethren's duty, if such fail in their godly duty, have others in the ecclesia who perceive their failure, to refrain from remonstrance firstly, and action secondarily, if the arranging brethren fail to hear?

Dr. Thomas was most pertinent about the duty laid upon every Brother and Sister in the ecclesia to point out wrong as follows:-

"The greatest and most dangerous enemies to Christ are those who pretend to be his friends but are not faithful to his doctrine; and they are unfaithful who, from any motives of personal interest, would weaken the point of doctrine, or soften it for the gratification of their natural feelings, or for fear of hurting the feelings of the enemy, and so affecting their popularity with him."

Going back to earlier days of the Truth we find an apt comment under the heading:-

Sitting on the Fence

"A seat on the fence is no place for a leader in Israel, and that is what every speaking or writing brother should be, not to say every Christadelphian magazine. Want of conviction and perverted views of Hebrews 12 v 14 are more often than not at the root of what Brother Roberts aptly terms 'masterly inactivity'.

Bro F.W. Turner truly writes: "There is need in these days for a clear lead on questions of difficulty in both doctrine and practice", and such has not been found where the brethren expected to find it; consequently, upon more than one occasion they have had to lament the deficiency and look elsewhere for guidance- -."

The looking elsewhere, was not towards the leaders. Obviously others at the time rose to the occasion and the need. If it could be done then, why should it be thought not possible now? Surely if the arranging brethren fail, it is the duty of others to take their place, even to the point of division if former leaders are in error, and refuse to hear. This does not divide the Body, for if a section persists in wrong, division already exists.

It is when "those who pretend to be Christ's friends but are not faithful to His doctrine" are left to their own devices that the Laodicean state of things arises. Christ's call from outside the door surely still applies:-

"- - - if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
(Rev.3:20)

Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World

“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, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.” (2 Timothy 3:1-3)

Now, it may be said, that in all ages there have been vicious and wicked individuals who have preyed upon their fellows. It must have been so when the above words were first written. But the Spirit’s prophecy through the Apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy indicates a particular decline into a perilous and evil state of affairs as the times of the gentiles run to their close.

Not without very profound import did Jesus declare:-

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:37).

The first book of the Bible speaking of the situation in the earth at the time of Noah is most specific:-

“And 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).

The condition of things is further elaborated as follows:-

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me. for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” (Genesis 6:11-13).

God, in those days long ago, intervened to bring an end to a situation for which there was no other remedy than the total

elimination of a population that "had corrupted his way upon the earth."

Looking at the present situation in the earth in these "last days" we see a similarity with that of Noah's day. God's way has been corrupted. The break up of families on a very large scale, through divorce, is to corrupt away from what God intended and required to be upheld, in His institution of marriage in the divine design. The children bred in their formative years in such break up situations are undoubtedly marred; they lack the benefit which divine wisdom intended that they should have from security of their parent's marriage. Each generation of such laxity becomes more lax and insubordinate; for what they did not receive, they cannot pass on to their own offspring.

The cry goes forth now that it is urgent that something must be done; that things are out of hand. The national press (in Britain) has described the scene as:-

"Britain, a land where crime flourishes and punishment has too long been out of fashion . . ."

The press advocates what it describes as a growing consensus among thoughtful members of both Government and Opposition:-

"- - - that persistent offenders must be taken off the streets and placed in custody."

The difficulty for Government is that there are so many of them. One newspaper comment has been particularly apt:-

"Crime grows amid the crumbling ruins of authority and breeds from the breakdown of the family."

A solution is being called for and demanded; but it is too late. The evil has been left to grow too long. Violence fills the earth in fact, and in fiction as the television screens pour out their violent depictions. The scripture shows that the only solution is divine intervention once more, and the signs of these times indicate that this is very near.

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

Thoughts are with those in illness or sorrow seeking God's help and comfort as He knows best.

The witnessing continues with interest and response from a few, which provides encouragement, yet knowing that the work is in our Father's hand.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

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

Requests for the booklet on the Doctrine of Fellowship continue to be received.

Also interest in the book about Bible Prophecy is shown in the applications for the same.

The opportunity to witness world wide gives encouragement to us.