

The Doctrine of Fellowship

What does God require?



Issued by
The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

FOREWORD

THE following Article on the "Doctrine of Fellowship" first appeared in the Magazine published by the Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia, under the heading of "Christendom — and others — Astray."

As the number of applications for copies of these Magazines far exceeded anticipation, these Articles have been reprinted with slight modifications.

The Reader is asked to consider carefully the "Doctrine of Fellowship," as it is no less than the protector of all sound doctrine. Fellowship with God and His Son, with the salvation which this promises is impossible unless there is a correct understanding and application of the Doctrine of Fellowship.

A community professing the Truth, who fails to apply the Doctrine soon becomes the "cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is what happened to the early Ecclesias, resulting in the great apostasy of Christendom.

Now this tragedy has been repeated. Those who were honoured by having the Truth in these latter days have disregarded the Doctrine of Fellowship and allowed heresy to rob them of the "pearl of great price."

The appeal of the Lord Jesus is:

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues."

Revelation 18 : 5.

On behalf of the Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia,
(Upholding the doctrines of the original Christadelphians.)

FORWARD TO THE SECOND EDITION

DEMAND for this article has exhausted the present supply, necessitating a further printing.

It is acknowledged that there is concern in the body which designates itself as "Brethren of Christ" while embracing doctrine and/or walk which is contrary to the scripture. Yet, sadly, the doctrine of fellowship, the protector of Truth, continues to be ignored or overlooked as some are actively involved in wrong, while others participate in it through condoning those who are.

In view of the nearness of Jesus Christ's return to judge those responsible through knowledge of God's word, the appeal of this article continues to be:

"Come out from among them and be ye separate."
II Corinthians 6:17

—January 1992

THIS article is being written in response to requests from Christadelphians in different parts of the world asking: "What is the difference between you and us? What is your belief on the doctrine of fellowship?" Much of what is contained in this article has been written before, but it is felt that good purpose will be served in collating the divine evidence on the doctrine of fellowship, although this involves repetition.

The Christadelphian view of fellowship is confused, because of their being divided into five major sects, which they call "fellowships"—"Central," "Dawn," "Advocate," "Old Paths," "Suffolk Street"—whereas the Word of God shows there is only **one** fellowship. The Spirit never speaks of fellowships as of many, but as one, as the "true fellowship with the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ."

Definition of the Doctrine.

It may be as well to define as briefly as possible the doctrine of fellowship and then go to the Scriptures and see how this doctrine is taught throughout the Word of God:

The doctrine of fellowship is the belief that to have God and His Son one must uphold all that is right according to the whole of the Word of God (not just those items included in a "Statement of Faith"), and condemn by separating from those who refuse to do so and will not repent.

We ask the reader to bear with us in respect of this definition which may seem all too legal, and wait until we review the two essentials of the definition—"upholding" and "condemning" as seen in the teaching and requirements of the Creator.

The Doctrine of Fellowship. Taught in the Beginning.

God is the perfect teacher, for His thoughts are higher than man's thoughts "even as the heavens are higher than the earth." The object lessons which He chooses for instruction are those of His creation, calculated to give all that is necessary to those of child-like minds. It should be remembered that unless we become as a "little child" (and remain so) that is teachable, there is no possibility of an entrance into the Kingdom of God. God does not attempt to instruct the "wise and prudent," the philosophers and learned in

this world's wisdom, but chooses to reveal His superb and superior wisdom to those who are by comparison but "babes."

Let us then go to the beginning with child-like faith. The first creation was light:

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." Genesis 1 : 3-5.

Here for those who have "eyes to see" is a most powerful lesson. God, who is light, created the light, the natural light. First that which is natural, affording under the guidance of God, a valuable spiritual lesson as stated by the Apostle Paul:

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

2 Corinthians 4 : 6.

The knowledge of God is light. All other knowledge is darkness. Those who would have the fellowship of God, the Apostle John says: must "walk in the light." The context of these words shows that a true child of God must always uphold the knowledge of God as being right even though it will involve the condemnation of himself when he transgresses. Those who "do not walk in the light" "walk in the darkness." These are not those who sin through weakness and seek forgiveness in the appointed way, but those who excuse wrong and refuse to repent. Such says the Apostle, cannot claim fellowship with God, and he says they "lie and do not the truth." What a warning!

How refreshing it is that as we go to the beginning, we see in the natural creation an object lesson showing that it was God's intention that the light should be separated from the darkness, and that in His kindness the whole world should be reminded of this divine principle every day of every year throughout all generations.

Separation from the darkness does not just mean a supine condemnation of the works of darkness, while joining hands with those who are guilty of "walking in the darkness," but a complete forsaking of these. Common sense tells us that if we fraternise with those who dishonour God we are condoning such dishonouring to our eternal peril.

In the beginning is seen the valuable privilege of being able "to walk in the light," and enjoy the fellowship of God providing that there is a literal separation from those who "walk in darkness."

Taught in the time of Noah.

The two essentials of the doctrine of fellowship are not hard to find as taught through Noah. The upholding of that which is right and the condemnation of those who were wrong.

Noah lived in a time very similar to our own when the world was given up to violence and wickedness of every kind. In obedience to the divine commands, it is said of him that he “was a preacher of righteousness.” This is clear testimony that Noah upheld all that was right respecting the knowledge of God as declared by him in the gospel of salvation which he was permitted to preach. But did he condemn those who were wrong and show his condemnation in a practical way? Most certainly he did, for as the Apostle says in writing to the Hebrews:

“Noah being warned of God . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he **condemned** the world.”

Hebrews 11 : 7.

It needs little imagination to see how the contemporaries of Noah would regard his message, and would mock at his preaching, showing resentment to his building the ark, which implied their destruction except they were prepared to be obedient to the Gospel message and enter the Ark.

There was only one Ark, just as now there is only one baptism into one fellowship. All outside the Ark perished as will all those who are not baptised into the “one baptism.”

Declared to Abraham.

It is not necessary to infer that the gospel of light was preached to Abraham because the Apostle Paul clearly says so. It is welcome confirmation showing that from the beginning the gospel of Christ could be fully understood by those called to the fellowship of God. The current view that there is such a thing as “progressive revelation” is a conceit of Christendom, violating the justice of God in that it suggests giving more help to one generation than to another.

Abraham dwelt in Ur, a word meaning “light.” This light must have been nigh extinguished because Abraham was commanded to leave Ur and go to a country that God would show him. Space does not allow us to follow the wanderings of this faithful Father, and the consummate obedience which he showed, proving his righteousness. In all his experiences and tribulations he obeyed God, “and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Doubtless Abraham would have some important and valuable connections in the city of Ur. These did not detract Abraham from obeying God. The doctrine of fellowship was shown in its first essential that Abraham upheld all that was right in the sight of God. In the next particular he was likewise faithful. By separating from those whom God must have condemned, Abraham declared the second essential of the doctrine of fellowship. He was the first "Hebrew," a word meaning "sojourner." This is the lot of all those separated to the fellowship of God, who with Abraham are to look:

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

The separation shown in the life of Abraham would never have allowed him to become the "father of a city," a Gentile city, which according to the principal organ of the 'others' is declared as an honour in respect of one of their members!

We see then clearly in the record concerning the "father of the faithful" the two essentials of the doctrine of fellowship: The complete upholding of all that is right and the literal separation from that which God condemns.

Preached to Israel.

The doctrine of fellowship is well illustrated in the case of God's dealings with His people Israel. In the case of Israel they were required to leave the darkness of Egypt. Just as now men and women called by God must leave the darkness of the world. This separation is not the act of a moment, but as we see in the case of the history of the children of Israel must be maintained throughout probation. A powerful lesson for those who would aspire to be of Israel at the present time.

The separation of Israel from Egypt was to be radical and complete. There was not to be the slightest tenuous connection with Egypt. This was enjoined upon Israel in the manner in which they had to leave Egypt—in a desperate hurry. There was no time for their bread or dough to be leavened. Indeed this was forbidden, and in the feast commemorating the deliverance from Egypt, Israel were to eat unleavened bread for seven days. The dynamic power of such a simple object lesson would have to be experienced to be felt. Unleavened bread is not so tasty or appealing. The experience was to tell and remind Israel year by year of the complete severance that God required between them and the nation which they had left. Nothing pertaining to Egypt was to be allowed to be carried over.

God knew that if this were the case, then Israel would revert to the evil and idolatrous practices of Egypt. In spite of these divine precautions the record shows the weakness of Israel in this direction.

When Israel left Egypt they were baptised — baptised into the “body of Moses.” Here was a further pertinent reminder of a literal separation. By baptism Israel were sanctified unto God. The very cloud and waters which were used became the eternal grave of the powerful and boasting Egyptians. What a separation! What condemnation as the bodies of the drowned Egyptians were seen on the shore!

God was careful after taking Israel out of Egypt to lead them into the wilderness. Away from the company and possible corruption of other nations. The covenant which God made with Israel was based upon their confessing:

“All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.”

Exodus 24 : 7.

Now we see the other component in the doctrine of fellowship, the upholding of that which is right. Not according to a man-made “Statement of Faith,” but by faithful adherence to all that God had said. We shall have more to say later about the use and misuse of a “Statement of Faith.”

On the basis of this covenant being maintained God said to Israel:

“Now therefore, if ye obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine, as a treasure beyond all the people: for all the earth is mine.”

Exodus 19 : 5 (Emphasised Bible).

It is true Israel failed, and failed dreadfully. Current apologists for error will refer to this as giving licence to allow for similar present failure. Here an important divine warning should be observed by those who wish to have the fellowship of God. Israel was the Kingdom of God. God knew that individual brethren and sisters could not leave the Kingdom to separate from evil doers, and His method in that dispensation of dealing with evil was to bring a punishment upon the wicked ones there and then. It was only by this divine means that the essential separation could be maintained.

Israel were forbidden to join themselves to other nations. Look at what happened at Baal-Peor when Israel joined themselves to Moab. Twenty-four thousand brethren perished. You would think that this would be a sufficient salutary warning to those who misuse the history of Israel suggesting that wrong can be condoned.

Again, consider the events prior to the taking of the city Ai. Israel had been forbidden to take anything that had been in the city of Jericho. Achan disobeyed. The thoughtful reader anxious to please God will be immediately impressed with the divine record, that although it was Achan who sinned, the record states;

“Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing.” Joshua 7 : 11.

This cost the lives of some thirty-six brethren who went up against Ai, and caused Israel to turn their backs before the enemy. Joshua was stunned with the divine message:

“Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.” Joshua 7 : 12.

Israel would not need to be told one of the essentials of the doctrine of fellowship — “separation.” They learned this lesson to their sorrow. These things are written for our learning. So again we see the doctrine of fellowship was preached to Israel and through them to us in its two essentials: Upholding of that which is right, and the condemnation of those who oppose right.

Taught by Jesus. **“The light of the world.”**

With the death of Jesus came the end to the old covenant and the establishing of the new. The Kingdom of God upon earth was no more. In the new dispensation the purpose of God was to call out from the nations a people for His name. To constitute His “Ecclesia,” a word which all know means “called out.”

The teaching of Christ makes plain the doctrine of fellowship. First, separation by baptism into Christ in order to be joined unto Him, to be part of His Body, there to uphold His righteousness.

Jesus knew that God would not deal with His Ecclesia as He had with those in the Kingdom. Divine punishment for rebels was to be reserved until the return of His Son. It was needful, however, if the Truth were to be preserved that the two aspects of the doctrine of fellowship should be maintained by the children of God—separation from evil-doers, and upholding of all that is right. How was this to be accomplished? It was not left to speculation, but is the subject of carefully worded commands given by Jesus.

Those drawn by God to Jesus are in a figure members of the Body of Christ. It is a pity that so many Gentile institutions should

have purloined the word "body." There is only One Body—the Body of Christ.

With this figure in mind the discourse of Jesus in Matthew 18 will be appreciated.

"Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off."
Matthew 18 : 8.

It may seem hard to remove a rebel member from the Body by withdrawal, and sentimentality will do its best to prevent this. But with what result? Jesus tells us:

"It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire."

This is exactly what is to happen to all apostate bodies. Those bodies which make a profession of Christ, but because of disobedience to His teaching, and particularly to His doctrine of fellowship, have become one of the "names" on the beast. Jesus says the beast with all its names is to be cast into the "lake of fire." Destruction, eternal destruction awaits all apostate bodies. In the Kingdom there will be no room for those who fail to uphold true doctrine, and "teach for doctrine the commandments of men."

With these serious thoughts in mind of what is to happen to a body contaminated by the erring, great care will be taken to carry out the divine instructions for dealing with those who are wrong. Efforts must be made "to gain," but according to the commands of Jesus after three opportunities have been given to the erring, then, if there is a refusal "to hear," such must be withdrawn from by the Ecclesia and regarded as a "heathen man and publican," one belonging to the world to which withdrawal consigns him.

Judgment in such a case is not dependent upon the opinions of men but that of Christ, giving the seal of divine authority and importance to what is done, that the erring might realise the peril of his position, and that the Ecclesia might "hear and fear."

This makes clear that Jesus taught the essential of separation at the beginning of probation and throughout probation.

Jesus was "the light of the world." The whole of His teaching which is but a reflection of that which was contained in the Law and the Prophets was light. It is preserved for us as light. There is no other light. Now listen to what Jesus says:

"He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

John 3 : 21.

Departure from the light takes one away from God. Hence, Jesus says

“I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.” John 17 : 9.

Separation is further seen in what Jesus goes on to say:

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” John 17 : 16.

In this brief look at the teaching of Christ we see clearly how He enunciates the doctrine of fellowship in both its features: that of separation by baptism and maintaining of separation from the world and wrong-doers, and the upholding of His teaching.

Finally taught by the Apostles.

Only a brief reference can be made to the writings of the Apostles enjoining commands upon the Ecclesia for maintaining the doctrine of fellowship in both particulars of upholding that which is right and separating from those who are wrong.

The Apostle Paul says:

“I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such **an one no not to eat.**” 1 Corinthians 5 : 11.

“If any man obey not our word by this epistle, **have no company with him,** that he may be ashamed.

“Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” 2 Thessalonians 3 : 14 and 6.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to the wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing . . . from such withdraw thyself.”

1 Timothy 6 : 3-4.

Already we have considered the Apostle John's plain declaration on the doctrine of fellowship that in order to have the fellowship of God it is essential to “walk in the light.” To “walk in darkness” means a rebellious attitude to that which is right and deprives one of the fellowship of God.

A most important declaration is made by this Apostle showing that those who are not wrong in themselves become involved in evil if they continue with those who are wrong.

“ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” 2 John 10-11.

Having in mind the lesson to Israel when they came out of Egypt and their being forbidden to eat that which was leavened, it is wise to remember how the Apostle uses this as a lesson for the present time.

“ A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

“ I would they were even cut off which trouble you.”

Galatians 5 : 9 and 12.

No one can mistake the clear commands given by the Apostles to show that the doctrine of fellowship requires separation from those, however many, who oppose that which is right and will not repent.

Space will not permit to give quotations from the Epistles showing the emphasis which the Apostles placed upon the upholding of that which was right. Both components of the doctrine of fellowship were vigorously declared by them: The essential separation from rebels lest the Ecclesia should become corrupt, and the maintaining of that which was right.

Conclusion.

The failure by the ‘others’ to maintain the doctrine of fellowship.

Departure from the Truth leads to confusion and darkness. This is what has happened to the ‘others.’ Divided into many sects, each consents that the rest may be going by different ways to the Kingdom of God. So the ‘others’ have now assumed the position of a miniature Christendom. Division by withdrawal now means nothing more than a human opinion. None has the courage to declare that error requiring withdrawal merits Christ’s condemnation **now**, and unless there is restoration, will receive His condemnation when He returns.

Failure to “judge righteous judgment” reveals a progressive leavening process. This is exactly as the Spirit warns. Not only do some of the sects of the ‘others’ refuse to judge the rest as being without hope, but go so far as to say that the sects of Christendom may contain those who will be in the Kingdom. Thus, those who at one time stood out separate and distinct from all the darkness of Christendom have now become united to Christendom.

A common password to acceptance by the ‘others’ is a declaration of belief in the “Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith.”

“Statements of Faith” have served a useful purpose and from time to time have been extended to condemn errors which have been promulgated. With the great emphasis which the ‘others’ place upon the “Statement of Faith,” there has developed the idea that any questions which lie outside this “Statement” are “open questions,” and may be determined according to individual conscience.

There is no question that should be an “open question.” If it be believed that there can be fellowship with the great Creator through His Son then every question should be capable of being settled according to His Will. The lamentable result of such perfidious reasoning is the recent crop of leavening heresies. “Open questions” have now grown to include the heinous and undermining heresies that: Adam was not the first man; that the serpent was not literal; that the flood did not destroy all; that there may be upon the earth at the present time descendants of those who lived contemporary with Adam and survived the flood. Could there be greater proof of a departure from the faith in these latter times? (1 Tim. 4 : 1.)

It is not surprising that since the doctrine of fellowship has been lost, not only is there failure to uphold that which is right, but separation from rebels and the world is no longer required by the ‘others.’

The warning of the Lord Jesus is indeed true that failure to “cut off” a member imperils the whole Body. Whatever is said to the contrary there is no doubt that such a Body will be “cast into hell fire.” At least may some readers determine to leave the darkness of apostasy and be resolved to uphold the true doctrine of fellowship that they may not be without God and without hope in the world. In the quest for true fellowship it is imperative to realise the great honour that is extended to mortal man in being allowed to become a fellow of the great Eternal. Such a thought should instil fear and humility in considering the conditions of being allowed such fellowship. Amongst the ‘others’ “fellowship” is discussed as nothing more than a cold legality. When it is realised that it expresses the great condescension of the ever-living God, fellowship will be seen to light up with divine glory and beauty. It is the means by which a man may have peace now—peace with God, and in the near future a joy which will know no sorrow.

“Thou shalt put away evil from among you.”

Deuteronomy 17 : 2.

To the majority the Law seems harsh and severe. This is because they do not understand the purpose of the Law. Every item in

the Law was given to protect those in the Truth from their native weaknesses. Just as it may appear to a child irksome to be told not to touch a fire, the Law seems grievous to the uninstructed and unrighteous. The care seen in the Law is similar to that bestowed by parents for the safety and well-being of their offspring.

The manifold goodness of the Law is evident in that it enables the spirit of love to be shed on the relationship between brethren, and brings them to know the loving-kindness of God in a real and personal sense.

Many facets of the Law have already been considered. Now may we look at another aspect; how the Law contained the care of God to protect His people from being corrupted by evil. It was not sufficient merely to condemn evil, to preach against it while allowing it to remain in the Ecclesia, but the Law required those who were guilty of evil, and would not repent, to be removed:

“ If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant. . . .

And thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, . . .

Then thou shalt bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.

At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death. . . .

The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.” Deuteronomy 17 : 2-7.

This is divine instruction. It is clear. No parleying with the presumptuous rebel who refused to obey the Law. No Gentile philosophy that it is right to continue with the evil ones and try and put them right. They were to be removed by the Ecclesia; they were to die at the hands of all the members of the city, the Ecclesia, to which they belonged.

When Israel failed to carry out these requirements they became corrupt, and God punished them with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence. God’s chastisement was to remove the evil ones from among the Ecclesia, which the Ecclesia had failed to do.

Although the ordinances finished at the death of Christ, the teaching of the Law remains. The principles of the Truth never

vary. The Law in this particular demonstrates the application of the doctrine of fellowship in the Ecclesia of old, and, which was to be carried out in a different way in the Ecclesias formed after the time of Christ.

In the early Ecclesias after Christ.

Jesus showed in His discourse in Matthew 18 how members of the Body who would not repent must be removed. There is a significant connection between His teaching in this chapter, and what has already been considered that when a transgression was referred to the Ecclesia, truth must be established in "the mouth of two or three witnesses."

Failure to heed the warnings in the Epistles given by the Apostles and in the Letters of the Lord Jesus in the Revelation resulted in those Ecclesias eventually losing the Truth. Present apologists for allowing evil ones to remain in the Ecclesia with the hope of eventually converting them, should bear in mind this indisputable and startling fact.

It was from the falling away of the early Ecclesias that the great apostasy which has come to be known as Christendom developed. Christendom has no idea of the need of the doctrine of fellowship. It is part of the world, and as such engages with the world in all the ambitions and strifes of the nations to the point of blessing the combatants in the wars between "Christian" nations. There is no doubt Christendom is astray, but is it realised that this is the result of their past and present failure to recognise the importance of the doctrine of fellowship?

In the 'Others' — those who once had the Truth.

Although the 'others' are divided into five major sects and many smaller ones, they are confederate on the same principle as Christendom in recognising each other as part of the "Brotherhood." It is because of this tenuous connection between them, constituting them as one, or as they themselves would say the "One Body," that the heresies arising in any one of the sects affects the whole. They all bear the same name. They all recognise each other as "brethren of Christ."

The 'others' have also failed to realise the importance of applying the doctrine of fellowship — to "put away evil from among them." Disobedient to these divine requirements, some of their leaders say that it is wrong to withdraw from them. What is so

incomprehensible is that while they seem to give a feeble assent to the need of withdrawal from an individual who is evil and will not repent, when the evil spreads to a number then withdrawal must not take place.

It has even been argued that to withdraw from a number is like the hireling who flees from protecting his flock when the wolf comes. A gross perversion of the divine figure. Safeguarding the flock certainly requires the shepherd to stay with it, but no true shepherd would stand idly by while wolves devoured his flock. He would have the wolves slain and removed. Those who are evil and will not repent may appear like sheep; may seem as part of the flock, but as the Apostle says they are really wolves in sheeps' clothing. How distressed the Lord Jesus must be that some claiming to belong to Him should use His teaching to keep wolves masquerading as sheep within the flock, destroying the flock.

“Grievous wolves . . . not sparing the flock.” Acts 20 : 29.

These are the words of the inspired Apostle Paul used to describe those who would “arise” speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

So important was this message to those in Ephesus that the Apostle said:

“Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

Amongst the ‘others’ many wolves have entered destroying what was once the flock of God. The leaders who should have been shepherds have failed to carry out the divine requirements to deliver the flock from the prey of the grievous wolves. The Spirit says concerning these:

“Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord;
As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherd search for my flock, . . .

Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord.
Behold I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand.” Ezekiel 34 : 7-10.

Let it be clearly understood that “grievous wolves entering the flock” are those who speak things contrary to the Word of God, and so destroy those who may be led away by them.

**The destruction of the 'others' resulting from evil ones not
being withdrawn from.**

With the plea amongst the 'others' that the evil ones should be allowed to remain, the Truth has been undermined; the flock has been destroyed. The fact that numbers may have increased is of no consequence. Numbers prove nothing as witness the few who entered the Ark in the days of Noah.

Were there time it would be possible to show how in the last thirty or forty years grievous wolves have entered the flock of the 'others' causing their destruction, but in order that some may be awakened to the seriousness of the present position attention will only be called to what has recently happened.

As Gentile learning has driven out the Spirit of truth, doubt has been expressed on the creation record as given in Genesis. It has been propounded in the leading journal of the 'others' that Adam was not the first man, but one selected from a race of men termed by the scientists "homo sapiens" who inhabited the earth contemporary with Adam. Since the record of the flood is also denied saying this did not destroy all "in whose nostrils was the breath of life," it is argued that there must be upon the earth men and women not directly descended from Adam. At once the whole foundation of Truth is destroyed. The divine purpose is denied as expressed in the words of the Apostle Paul, "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." In addition it has also been stated that the serpent was not a "beast of the field," but only the private thoughts of Eve. This, as would be expected, has convulsed the 'others' and destroyed the once distinctive name they still bear.

Failure to understand the need for the doctrine of fellowship and the need of withdrawal from the evil ones, the author of this heresy after being given ample opportunity to publish his views in the leading journal, and so destroy many, was later expelled from the Management Committee of the Central Body. At the time, however, it was stated by the Management Committee:

"We wish to make it plain beyond all doubt that our action has nothing whatever to do with Bro—'s fellowship in the Brotherhood. This is an honest effort to better the interests of the relationship between the Committee and the Brotherhood it is desired to serve."

Here was no forthright application of the doctrine of fellowship. Instead of the author of the heresy being branded as evil and

expelled, he was given a testimonial and allowed to remain to continue his ravaging work amongst the 'others.' The removal of the author of the heresy from the Management Committee was only political. No divine principle was quoted for the action. Indeed no divine requirement was carried out either due to fear or ignorance.

The result is that the leaven of the heretical views so completely denying the Word of God has rapidly spread. This, in spite of the fact that under pressure the "Ecclesia" to which the author of the heresy belonged has since **withdrawn from him**, but what does this mean? (See Ecces. 8, v. 11.) According to the author's own statement thirty-eight per cent voted against his withdrawal. Over a third of the "Ecclesia" to which he belonged showed agreement with the heresy, and therefore these and a similar proportion of the 'others' throughout the country are in the same position as the one propounding the dreadful contradictions to the Word of God.

If the withdrawal from the author of the heresy meant anything, then there would have to be withdrawal from all those who agreed with him. This, however, is too much to expect from a community who are ignorant of the doctrine of fellowship. Withdrawal conducted on the basis of the 'others' is no more than political; to give an impression to those whose minds have been disturbed that the heresy is under control. Heresy will never be controlled unless the divine requirements are followed, and the doctrine of fellowship applied, contained in the words of the Spirit of Christ in the Law — "Thou shalt put away evil from among you."

Apostasy Completed.

These are dreadful words. They have only been written after the most careful thought. By them is meant that the 'others' have been joined to Christendom. Proof for such a drastic statement is needed. Proof will be given.

Some, who belong to the Central Body publish their own magazine, and show their connection with the main Body by having their "Ecclesial News" published in the leading Journal. The latest publication of these makes its own confession of joining Christendom absolutely and completely. Under the heading of, "A New Outlook" (and what a new outlook it is!), we read the following:

"Some of us, as Christadelphians, have firmly believed that we, a very special people, are the only people who have

arrived at correct conclusions. What special talent have we which makes us able to have all the truth and nothing but the truth, while others, equally earnest and searching with equal zest, fail to reach such an attainment?

We have inclined to think of all those who claim to be Christians but, who are not Christadelphians as belonging to 'the world.' They are the 'Gentiles' and only we are 'Israel.' We have often called them 'strangers' and described them even less becomingly. Is this not too presumptuous? . . . We see the world with all its atheism and disregard for the Word of God and the power of God.. And distinct from the world we see the Christians—those men and women who are striving to understand and to do His will."

Here, surely is enough leaven to destroy any Body. To rob those who once had the Truth of this precious possession, and to make them part of Christendom. Need further comment be made? Is there not sufficient proof of what we have declared — that the 'others' have completely apostatized?

The process of leavening, although unseen, is very virulent. The rush of some of the 'others' to make themselves part of Christendom does not stay at the above remarks. Continuing, the authors of this complete apostasy go on to say:

"Most of our speakers and writers do, of course, make use of commentaries, books, hymns, etc., which are produced without our community, but sometimes still with the idea that those who wrote them are not only without our community but also without the love of God(!).

Yet we are told by other brethren and sisters how pleasantly surprised they have been when attending a Bible discussion class held by some group other than our own, to see the zeal, the knowledge and faith of those joining in the exercise. We are, happily, losing that self-satisfying notion that the Bible is our private preserve only to be revealed to others by ourselves."

Now comes the most outstanding declaration ever heard from those professing to be "brethren of Christ"—

"We may not agree with much of what the Bishop of Woolwich has to say; religion-less Christianity may hold no appeal for us; the report on Sex and Morality may not insist on the standard we would set—but all these attempted solutions are the product of men struggling to snatch from disaster a generation which is on the brink of it, and to present God to men and women who refuse to know Him."

However, can it be imagined that some of the 'others' can possibly say that the Bishop of Woolwich in his book "Honest to God" is trying to present God to the people? The book shocked "Christians." It propounded a godless Christianity. The statement made concerning this Bishop is neither true in fact nor in purpose.

Perhaps the least said on the report of the Church Council on "Sex and Morality" is best. To claim that this was an attempt to "present God to men and women who refuse to know Him," is absurd. Again this report shocked many "Christians." The report, from what has been read in the National Press, seemed to be more conducive to producing a state similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, than the Kingdom of God.

These "forward" or "progressive" thinkers and writers of the 'others' have succeeded in sinking the ship of Truth. They have become submerged "in a sea of unbelief." Note what is said at the conclusion of the Article under review:

"We must listen to the voice of others who are battling against the same force as ourselves in the sea of unbelief; we must be ever ready to re-assess our beliefs and our ways, our interpretations and our methods so that they may match up to the challenge of the age in which we live." (Endeavour, Winter, 1966.)

Such teaching is the teaching of "grievous wolves." Failure to understand the doctrine of fellowship and its application allows such to remain in what was the flock of God. Their destructive teaching has ravaged the flock. Those claiming to be like the "Good Shepherd" and not the "hirelings" have stayed and seen all this happen. Their sin and failure before the Almighty is without excuse. Their plea is that "flight to another so-called 'fellowship' is no answer to our problem." It is good to know that they realise they have a problem. A problem as large as a mill-stone, which has dragged them to the bottom of the sea of unbelief.

For those desirous of belonging to the "few" when Jesus returns, action, urgent action, is obviously necessary. Staying with a Body that has a name that it lives, but is dead, offers no hope. One might as well remain in the churches and chapels.

The call of the Almighty to those who have "ears to hear," is to—

"Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant." Malachi 4 : 4. The remarkable context of these words is the prophecy foretelling the coming of the "Sun of righteousness," and the destruction of the wicked who are to be trodden down as ashes under the soles of the feet of the righteous in that day.

What does God require?

Neglect of the Spirit of Christ in the Law has robbed the 'others' of essential guidance, and allowed them to follow a downward course which has plunged them into the body of Christendom. There is only one course for deliverance. The same as required of those who, belonging to the world are required to:—

“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6 :17-18.

This article may bring to mind questions or provoke comments.
Your inquiry is welcome.

The following articles are available at no cost to any who are interested:

The Lord's Table and Fellowship
A Few Names Even in Sardis
A Timely Question (Divorce)
The Remnant Monthly Magazine
Are Christadelphians Astray?

