



THE
SECULARIZING
OF THE
ECCLESIAS

A REPRINT OF THE LETTER
OF BRO. A. S. THOMPSON
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THE SECULARIZING OF THE ECCLESIAS

PART I

A Letter to the Brethren and Sisters of the
MORNINGTON HALL ECCLESIA

*“For the perfecting of the Saints — For the work of the
Ministry — For the edification of the body of Christ.”*

91, REGENT'S PARK ROAD,
N.W. 1.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS,

Years ago the Members who later on formed this (Mornington Hall) meeting were two Ecclesias, at variance with each other, and each section more or less distrusting and aggrieved with the other; but, gradually, by the application to these unhappy conditions of the instruction of the Word, and by the assistance of one or two kindly intermediaries, wiser counsels prevailed, and a union was effected.

It was recognized and agreed to, beforehand, by the leading brethren of each side, that such union would be a failure unless all past contentions and fleshy feelings could be suppressed, all bitterness and resentments buried, all wrongs, real or imaginary, freely forgiven, and unless each side could accept the other in sincerity and with a whole-hearted trust. This happy condition was attained to, and ever since has been loyally observed. Other Ecclesias may have passed through somewhat similar experiences, but I firmly believe that never has there been effected in recent times, a more perfect union between hitherto opposing leaders. Never, I think, has the flesh, in such a difficult case, been more perfectly subjected to the teaching of the Spirit. The result was a great lesson. It taught us, by actual demonstration, how, in harmony with the Word, the blessing of God was upon an attitude so in keeping with His will. The united meeting was in numbers, a surprise, but its character gave joy to all, we seemed to realize, by experience, the utterance of the Psalmist —

“Behold how good and how pleasant a thing
it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

“For there the Lord will command a blessing.”

Even then, as we found, with the further hope of the fulness of the blessing —

“life for evermore”

in the future.

The gladness, thankfulness and peace of union, after the experience previously passed through, seemed to arouse in the Brethren and Sisters a further response to the mind of the Spirit. They felt that they had, by the subjection of the flesh, been raised to the appreciation of a higher Spiritual Standard. This to many outside our meeting savoured of Pharisaism; but possibly this was because *they were outside* and could not understand it. The effect of this appreciation of a high standard in Christ is that it has led our presiding and arranging brethren from that time on (and almost without discussing the matter, but by tactly agreeing to the simple acceptance of the Spirit of Truth) to fend off from the meeting those secularizing influences which *so strongly and persistently assail the household of God*.

Success so far, has attended this attitude, and as a result our meeting is singularly free from those practices which, in imitation of the so called Religious Spirit of the age, so many others are adopting; but influences from without are strong, and many among us are being disturbed by them. And already the questions have been asked (in principle) — are we right in standing out against these influences? and shall we continue so to stand? Or are we wrong? and shall we cease to oppose the Spirit of the age? Shall we throw open the gate and let in the flood, to sweep away the simplicity we have contended (and suffered reproach) for, and which so many of us thought was verily of God, and well pleasing to Him? The Psalmist says

“ I hate every false way ”

and my object then, dear Brethren and Sisters, in addressing you is that we, as a meeting, may be led to see which is the “ false ” and which is the “ true ” way; and with a view to help you to decide with intelligence and conviction, I ask your attention to the following considerations: —

The Divine instruction has gone forth — and it has gone forth for all time — that the Spiritual aspect of the “ righteousness of Saints ” shall be typified by the physical aspect and character of “ fine linen, white and clean ” (something easily acquired by wealthy or poor, and equally admirable and comely for either). The figure is based upon the Divine principle, manifested in Divine Works, that the truly beautiful and useful is found in association with simplicity. The great cosmic mechanism (if we may so describe God’s wonderful handiwork) is stupendous in its simplicity. And even with the natural man, the principle finds its reflex in what are considered to be the best minds. A palace for a king, a monument to a hero, or even the dress of a people when they are the conception of trained intelligence follow the “ simple ” style, and are called “ chaste ” or “ pure.” The other style, “ ornate ” or “ decorative ” appeals to a lower taste. The first impresses itself upon the mind at a glance, and simultaneously appreciation springs into being! The second primarily confuses the mind

by its intricacy, and requires time for the mastering of its complex details. Whole races manifest these types — the barbarous, the love of colour, finery and display — the cultured, the adoption of simplicity of design, purity of outline, and chasteness of colour.

These characteristics are a faint reflection of principles emanating from a Divine Source where they are emphatically enunciated. In the domain of Religious methods the *correctly trained mind* follows the “chaste,” “pure,” or “simple” style; the *untrained (or incorrectly trained) mind* the “showy” or “florid.” This last has a very wide range, from the “Salvationist,” with his unfruitful organisations, his noisy band, and his coloured and much braided uniform, on to the Papist, with his almost innumerable religious (?) Societies, his elaborate and costly vestments, his ornate ritual and decorations.

Where has the Divine mind placed the Church of Christ? Is it not with the first type — the Simple Ecclesia — excluding all non essentials, giving earnest heed to “the One thing needful?” The types are separated by the Spirit of God. John was shown in vision two women, one arrayed “in purple and scarlet, and decked with precious stones and pearls” (Rev. 17: 4), and the other (Rev. 19: 7, 8) in “fine linen, white and clean” — figurative descriptions, as we know, the first of the “False” church, and the second of the “True.” Paul had the correctly trained mind when he desired to present the Church “as a chaste virgin” unto Christ.

The Gospel calls men and women (and it has called us) to this purity, and the Ecclesias which they (and we) collectively form must also necessarily manifest it. Many, however, who are called to this separate, chaste condition not being truly *converted* from the “vanities,” the “unfruitful works” of the current systems (and although called upon not even to “touch the unclean”) soon tire of the Spiritual regime, and cast their eyes back on the things they have left behind. Like the Israelites of old, delivered from a humiliating bondage, and given a holy and honourable liberty, and a prospect of unspeakable good, who, in sinful weakness, sighed for the things of Egypt, so these long to have again the display and show, the non essential activities which are so pleasing and satisfying to the flesh and *which constitute the veritable life of conventional Christianity*. They argue that the conditions of separateness and purity enjoined by the Spirit are unnecessarily severe, in fact, “impossible in these days.” And so, while professing to go forward — to progress — gradually introduce movements which are in the direction of their fleshly desires and retrograde. Finding no satisfaction in the simple, truly Spiritual life, they seek it in other directions, with the dreadful possibility that in so doing they may bring themselves under the condemnation of having “looked back.” Shall we, dear Brethren and Sisters, risk incurring this?

When Paul feared for the Early Church, lest it should be beguiled from the "simplicity" which was in Christ it was no idle fear. He spoke on several occasions of declensions which would come. We learn from Divine teaching (from the Acts of the Apostles and from the comments in the Epistles) and also from the historical accounts of the Early Church, that the methods and arrangements of those days were the simplest that could possibly be adopted to include the essentials of a properly constituted corporate system. All non essentials were non existent. How this condition became corrupted may be readily ascertained. Writers on Ecclesiastical History have dealt fully with the subject. Many extracts from these historians are given in the little work on "The Trinity," by Bro. Percy White (pages 14 to 28), showing the introduction into the Church of Christ of degenerate practices. The following are selected for use here as bearing particularly upon the attitude of the Early Church towards tendencies such as those we are now considering as threatening our own Ecclesial life. (For the authorities, please refer to the work mentioned. Some of the expressions I have put into italics, as especially pertinent to the testimony.)

Concerning the Early Church the writers say:—

"These Congregations were provided with only the most indispensable constitutional forms, neither stricter nor more numerous than were required by a religious bond resting on supernatural expectations, strict discipline and brotherly love. *This state of things passed away.*"

"Christian Societies were scarcely formed, and in a manner organized, when, at once, there were men everywhere, who, *little contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the Apostles taught, attempted innovations, and out of their own heads wanted to fashion a religion for themselves.*"

"*The noble simplicity and majestic dignity of the Christian religion was lost, or at least impaired, when these philosophers presumed to associate their dogmas with it, and to bring faith and piety under the dominion of human reason.*"

"The primitive system extends only to the commencement of the second century The void left in the Church by the death of the Apostles, and *the invasion of the house of God by the human element*, brought about a general alteration *in the spirit and organization of the Church.*"

"Eusebius describes the *leaders as stimulated by the desire for innovation.*"

History repeats itself. Here is an extract which shows that the danger was recognized then, even as now.

“ The writings of Tertullian afford the clearest demonstration that what is called ‘ Montanism ’ was a *reaction against Secularism in the Church*, and an effort to conserve the privileges of primitive Christianity.”

“ The question was asked: ‘ Should the Church take the decisive step into the world, consent to its arrangements and conform to its customs? or should it remain as at first? ’ It was natural that *warning voices* should be raised against *secular tendencies*, and that demands should be made for a return to Apostolic simplicity and purity. *The Church decided otherwise.*”

“ *Shall we repeat the decision of the Early Church?* ”

The historians, from whose writings these extracts are taken, intended to show how *in the past* the Church fell from its early state of purity. They are cited here, in conjunction with what will follow, to show how *in the present*, Ecclesias in many places are being overtaken by the same errors, and to help us, brethren and sisters, to shape our course aright.

There are evidences in history of “ protests,” and we read that occasionally there were movements, of more or less importance, organized against the abuses which had appeared and were appearing. But these movements were of a very partial character, even in their intention, and still more so in their success; and (as it is in the Truth to-day) while the introduction of so many practices from the outside was, *at first, deplored*, it was presently acceded to, then followed, and *eventually approved of*.

When, in the purpose of God, the Truth was revived by the ministrations of Dr. Thomas, the call of his teaching was the Scriptural one of purity of doctrine, and simplicity of practice in Ecclesial life. It was just the call of the Word of God and nothing else. It was a call to “ come out ” (and to keep out), to turn from “ vanities ” and from those things “ wherein there was no profit ” to the essentials of Truth and obedience. And communities were formed, and happily some still remain, whose constitution was, and is, based upon an endeavour, in all sincerity, as before the Judge of all men, to emulate that chaste and unworldly condition enjoined by the Spirit, and observed by the Apostles and their immediate followers.

I know, and you know, dear Brethren and Sisters, that almost unanimously the presiding and arranging brethren at Mornington Hall, for years past, have been endeavouring to maintain this correct attitude. You know that the spirit of the meeting has been a sound and not a corrupt or corrupting one. It is not self-righteousness to assert this. There has been no assumption of righteousness as some have been led, by superficial observation, to declare, but a sincere desire for, and endeavour to attain to it, as the least we can offer to God for His goodness towards us. But “ time and circumstance ” have always

endeavoured to sap the foundations of the Church of Christ; and where the foundation has not been truly laid and faithfully guarded, "time and circumstance" will succeed. For my particular purpose, in illustration, "time" may well be the last quarter of a century, and "circumstance" the many "accretions" which during that period have attached themselves to so many Ecclesias. Our attitude in opposing these "growths" has not always been understood or supported by some in the meeting. The strong fact I would like to impress upon such is that the Divine Way is an old and tried Way, and leads to the Kingdom. The "New" Ways (innovations, departures, etc.) are of the World, they are "secular," and hence lead away from God.

The Bride of Christ, — whenever and wherever she is found — will be *distinct* from the profligate woman of the Apostasy; and will manifest unmistakably a separateness, not only in the expression of a distinctive faith, but in the following of Divinely ordained practices only. To speak, no matter how impressively, and to pray, no matter how devoutly, about the necessity of "separateness" and "steadfastness" and then to join in a proposition to enquire how the false church conducts its affairs, with the view of adopting its methods, one after another, is either using the terms merely for platform effect, or utterly failing to appreciate their meaning.

"Be ye followers of that which is good,"

but the "good" must be that which is such in the sight of God, and not that which the World and the Flesh (viz., the devil) calls "good." The adoption of current religious practices *is not good*, but evil, *it may be pleasant* — for instance, the introduction of a short musical selection before and after (or during) the meeting, "like they had at the Chapel we used to belong to" — or "at the Church we came out from," might be "much appreciated by the brethren and sisters," nevertheless, both by reason of its source and of its object it would be (like a great number of other "departures"), a defiling element. Where appreciation of such exists it is by reason of the fact that the leaders have failed in their duty of *sufficiently impressing* upon the brethren and sisters the holy, chaste and pure character necessary to everything brought in worship or service to the Most High God.

Twenty to thirty years ago scarcely any of the activities (alluded to here and listed hereafter) were to be found attached to Christadelphian meetings, but they, or *similar practices*, were common to the *Apostasy*. Now they are condoned and even adopted by Ecclesias nearly everywhere. Why have "time and circumstance" worked this? Have they been introduced because the brethren and sisters are "growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ?" Have they been introduced because the Ecclesias now understand more fully and perfectly what "the acceptable will of God" is? or have they been brought in by the *influence of modern religious environment*? We Brethren and Sisters, in our meeting are at present free from

these "embellishments," and to that extent at least we are more in keeping with the Apostolic constitution; and it is with the desire that we may preserve this condition uncontaminated that I make this effort to encourage you to continue in that which I consider so good a path. God willing, in another letter I will deal more or less categorically with the various activities condoned or adopted in recent years by many Ecclesias, and show their secular or orthodox character.

The following is an ordinary specimen of orthodox Church life just to hand from a local Chapel:—

JAN.—Date.	Meetings, &c.	FEB.—Date	Meetings, &c.
Th. 15	Vol. 2, No. 1 of 'The Women's Magazine' Published.	S. 1	Services at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Men's Meeting at 3 p.m.
F. 16	Women's Own at 8 p.m. Salvation Army Band. Savings Bank, Drapery, Boot and Excursion Clubs, 7.30 p.m.	M. 2	Women's Guild at 2.30 p.m. Men's Sick Club at 8 p.m.
S. 17	Prayer Meeting, 8 p.m.	T. 3	Women's Club at 7 p.m. Sick Benefit and Provident Clubs, 7 to 8 p.m. Choir Practice at 8.30 p.m.
S. 18	Service at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Men's Meeting at 3 p.m.	Th. 5	Evening Service at 8 p.m.
M. 19	Women's Guild at 2.30 p.m. Men's Sick Club at 8 p.m.	F. 6	Women's Own Musical Service at 8 p.m. Savings Bank, Drapery, Boot and Excursion Clubs at 7.30 p.m.
T. 20	Women's Club at 7 p.m. Sick Benefit and Provident Clubs, 7 to 8 p.m. Choir Practice at 8.30 p.m.	S. 7	Prayer Meeting at 8 p.m.
Th. 22	American Tea, 3.30 to 6.30 p.m. Service at 8 p.m.	S. 8	Services at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Men's Meeting at 3 p.m.
F. 23	Women's Own at 8 p.m. Clubs as usual.	M. 9	Women's Guild at 2.30 p.m. Men's Sick Club at 8 p.m.
S. 24	Prayer Meeting at 8 p.m.	T. 10	Women's Club from 7 p.m. Clubs as usual.
S. 25	Services at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Men's Meeting at 3 p.m.	Th. 12	Evening Service at 8 p.m.
M. 26	Women's Guild at 2.30 p.m. Men's Sick Club at 8 p.m.	F. 13	Women's Own at 8 p.m. Clubs as usual.
T. 27	Women's Club at 7 p.m. Clubs as usual. Choir Practice at 8.30 p.m.	S. 14	Prayer Meeting at 8 p.m.
Th. 29	Evening Service at 8 p.m.		
F. 30	Women's Own Social. Clubs as usual.		
S. 31	Prayer Meeting at 8 p.m.		

“ We have a meeting for Men on Sunday Afternoon at 3 o’clock, a meeting in its infancy at present, but we are trying to make it helpful. Soloists brighten the hour with song, and the Speaker endeavours to be up-to-date. We shall be glad to welcome any who do not attend elsewhere. Please bear this in mind.”

“ The lads have a Club on week evenings, including a Football Team, Games, Refreshments, Books, etc., and a really fine time is provided. Music and singing are the order, and all are keenly enjoyed. Some really hard work was put into their recent Concert, which was a great success, and an added means of interest to the Young Men of our Church and their friends.”

“ Their New Year Supper was an event to be remembered, and their Musical Talent on that occasion was much appreciated.”

“ It should be of interest to Men that we have started a Men’s Sick Benefit Club this year, which promises to be of much use, and is really another way of proving our Church’s Motto: “ The Open Door.” None are refused admission; our hopes and prayers all lead in the same direction — the saving of precious Souls for Him who is the Head of the Church, and through whom all things are possible.”

This is a sample of *orthodox* “ accretions,” and notice that these “ works are plausibly done in the same direction ” as their “ hopes and prayers,” namely, for “ the saving of precious Souls for Him who is the Head of the Church.” So they will well be able to say:—

“ In Thy name have we done many mighty works.”

The following are some of the “ Embellishments ” or “ Accretions ” referred to earlier, which in part, or wholly, are being condoned or adopted by many Ecclesias to-day, and which threaten ours. Their acceptance as Ecclesial “ works ” and their operations are constantly reported in “ The Christadelphian.”

1. The Auxiliary Lecturing Society.
 - A. South Wales Branch.
 - B. Yorkshire Branch.
 - C. Literature Department.
 - D. Cycling Corps.
 - E. Saturday Afternoon Excursion Scheme.
2. The Scottish Lecturing League.
3. Training Classes for Lecturing.
4. Lantern Lectures.
5. The Sunday School Union.
6. The Sisters’ Class.

7. The Young Men's Class.
8. The Young Women's Class.
9. The London Joint Advertizing Committee.
10. The London Advertizing Extension.
11. The Choral Societies.
 - A. Senior Advanced Singing Class.
 - B. Intermediate Singing Class.
 - C. Elementary Singing Class.
12. The Sewing Classes.
 - A. Senior Sewing.
 - B. Intermediate Sewing.
 - C. Elementary Sewing.
13. The Millinery Class (for Senior Girls).
14. The Embroidery Class.
15. Special Class for the Lady Mayoress' Fund, Birmingham.
16. The Photography Class.
17. The Carpentry Class.
18. The Painting Class.
19. The Woodwork Class.

And many other less distinguishable Classes, Societies, Associations, Committees, Leagues and Guilds, "Recreation," "Research," "Benefit," etc., etc., in fact, nearly everything that can be borrowed from orthodox Church and Chapel life, activities which, as perhaps you will remember, one of our presiding brethren recently summed up under the distinctive title of

"GENTILEISM."

I shall, God willing, in my second letter, show the unscripturalness of associating these "works" with the Church of Christ. Always desiring that the Bride of Christ may preserve her "chaste" character, that she may not forsake the "old paths" for practices "newly come up," but may be found truly making herself ready for the return of her Lord.

I am, your brother in the patient waiting for that day,

A. S. THOMPSON.

"And God said, ask what I shall give thee."

"I am but a little child, I do not know how to go out or to come in, give therefore thy servant an understanding heart . . . that I may discern between good and bad."

1 Kings 3: 5, 9.

THE SECULARIZING OF THE ECCLESIAS

PART II

A Letter to the Brethren and Sisters of the
ISLINGTON CENTRAL LIBRARY (formerly Mornington Hall)
ECCLESIA

*“For the perfecting of the Saints — For the work of the
Ministry — For the edification of the body of Christ.”*

91, REGENT'S PARK ROAD,
N.W. 1.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS,

In a letter on “The Secularizing of the Ecclesias,” which was addressed to you some time ago, a promise was made of a second part; and that part is here submitted, for your careful and spiritual consideration; — please do not regard it as an endeavour to lead you to decide anything (1) against your will, or (2) in ignorance of the matters dealt with, or (3) because you would merely follow (as a partisan only) someone's lead; but consider it as an appeal made to you with the sincere hope that it may receive your acquiescence if you are convinced of its correctness; that is, of its harmony with the Word of God. First remember the things which were contended against in the first part, and ask yourselves the question; are the Societies, Committees, Associations (whether Religious, Social, or of any kind), which are being introduced into the Church of Christ (the Ecclesias), of God's arrangements or of man's arrangements? Are they Divine or human? Are they Sacred or Secular? Then be prepared to apply to them, if necessary, the truth expressed by the Lord Jesus; “Every tree which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”

The attitude of our presiding and arranging brethren (for the most part), up to the time of writing, towards the various “Societies” and the so called “progressive” schemes, which from time to time are proposed for our adoption or support, possibly came as a surprise (perhaps even as a shock) to a few of our meeting; especially to those who have more recently come among us from other Ecclesias. This doubtless would be due to the generally accepted idea, that *modern religious practices and methods* are quite in harmony with the Divine Will; and therefore, not only *fully allowable*, but *praiseworthy*; and it would appear, to those who have this idea, that as an Ecclesia, we are

withholding our hands from many righteous and acceptable works. In consideration for this state of mind, which we may accept as quite sincere, it is intended to show, herein, *specifically*, that these schemes of Orthodoxy, which are becoming so common among the Ecclesias, are *not in accordance* with *the revealed mind* of God, and therefore neither praiseworthy nor allowable; that they belong exclusively to that false system which is known to us as "Babylon the Great"; and that the Church of Christ must avoid them, if it would remain *simple, faithful* and pure. It is hoped that by a fuller consideration of the matter we may, all of us, be strengthened in a steadfastness which carries with it *fidelity to God*, and *a strict allegiance to all that is good and true*, and also in the *Separateness* which we are called unto.

In the first part of this letter attention was directed to the very manifest difference (portrayed in Bible teaching) between that which is "holy" and that which is "profane"; — and when the principle of this difference is fully and sincerely admitted, there is actually no need to particularize, or to examine, in detail, *those actions*, which, because they are *similar to the "profane" and not different*, and further, because they have no Scriptural warrant, or precedent, *are objected to*; they are simply excluded "on principle." But when *that principle is not admitted*; when it is considered and contended (as it is to-day by so many) — that the call to separateness from the Religious world: — or the injunction "not to touch the unclean thing" does not carry with it the need for abstention from its humanly devised methods as well as from its humanly devised faith; *then* a closer examination and a more detailed testimony become necessary. So it is now proposed to make that further examination and to bring that detailed testimony, still however reserving much *specific teaching*, to meet, if occasion arises, those who may bring *specific objections*, or who may bring forward those plausible but fallacious arguments which never fail to accompany the advocacy of error. The position which we, Ecclesially, have up to the present maintained, is being, and will be, strongly assailed up and down the country, and to a smaller extent in our own meeting, and although the opposition may be sincere, and therefore merits our consideration yet we must still "try" it and find out if it "be of God" or man; and this letter, with its evidences and its appeal, is intended to strengthen and encourage all, (opposing us or not) in, or toward a *correct* attitude in the sight of God.

We all allow the authority of the Word of God as a guide in matters of practice in our Ecclesial life (as well as in our personal affairs); we have seen its use of the Symbol of a "Chaste Virgin" to represent the Church of Christ. * We readily understand the strength and beauty of the teaching underlying that symbol; — how that the Ecclesia must be free from all defilement; but seeing that it is contended, by many, that the matters objected to, generally, in the

* Part 1 of letter.

previous part of this letter, and in our Ecclesial attitude, — *do not constitute defilement, nor render the Church unchaste*, and as you may be met by that contention, your careful attention is directed to other types which teach the same lessons and are governed by the same principles, but which enlarge the scope of the teaching and make the contrast between right and wrong (particularly in respect to the matters under consideration) more obvious, and thus help all, who are sincere in their enquiry, in their endeavour to render a divinely enjoined and therefore acceptable service.

What are we expected to learn from the three following illustrations? given by the Divine teacher.

1. The Ecclesia as a Woman. Eph. 5: 23 to end.
2. The Ecclesia as a Household. Eph. 2: 19.
3. The Ecclesia as a Temple. Eph. 2: 21.

Are there any *conditions* which are proper to these illustrations? If so, may the Ecclesia, while professing to be represented by the type, consider itself as wholly free from the conditions which belong to it? We know perfectly well *that there are conditions* and that although we do not expect a required parallelism in every little detail, yet correspondence to the type requires that the Ecclesia should manifest a general correspondence to the conditions, and further that there should be nothing in the constitution of the Antitype (the Ecclesia in this case) which would be abnormal or incongruous in the type. Now let us first consider

THE ECCLESIA AS A WOMAN.

We notice that she, the Divinely chosen type, has no “Auxiliaries”; neither preaching, teaching, charitable, educational nor social; she is a perfect unit, “*one body*,” not several bodies; “there is one body” (Eph. 4: 4). “Christ is the head (without “auxiliary” heads) of the body (Eph. 5: 23) (without “auxiliary” bodies) and he is represented, prophetically, as saying,

“My dove, My *undefiled* is *but one*” (Song of S. 6: 9) and when he comes to take his bride, it will not be to present unto himself a composite and abnormal woman, having a number of attached “bodies”; but a beautiful chaste Virgin “having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor blemish, *nor any such thing*.”

“Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee” (Song of S. 4: 7). During his absence this “undefiled” woman has to make “herself” ready.

“And his wife (not wives) hath made *herself* ready” (Rev. 19: 7, 8) and also to fulfil *her* appointed task, which is to “preach the gospel” (Matth. 28: 19). This task is given to the “one body,” the Ecclesia, and *to her alone*.

Although "many members" are mentioned, as making up the "one body," it is readily seen that *they are normal members* of a *normal body* (not added members), "but now are there many members *yet but one body*" (1. Cor. 12: 20). "for as the *body is one*, and hath many members, and all the members of that *one body*, being many *are one body*, so also is Christ" (1. Cor. 12: 12); — "for by one spirit we are all baptized *into one body*" (verse 13); — not into a nondescript and highly complex association of "bodies," societies, "leagues" and "guilds," auxiliary or otherwise. The "many members" are such as the type (the woman) *must have* and without which it would be an incomplete — imperfect — body; "the foot," "the hand," "the ear," "the eye"; — and even those parts "which seem to be more feeble are necessary" (verse 22). If "auxiliary" bodies or limbs (societies for lecturing, singing, advertising, photography, etc.) were actually "members" of the body and necessary to make it complete, then we should have to confess and teach that until *their introduction*, the Church of God (the body of Christ) "the woman" was imperfect and wanting in many necessary and useful organs; but our knowledge of God's word teaches us differently — *we know* the church was complete before man began to tamper with it and we know that it is not man *who has formed it, and arranged it*; — but that "God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body as it pleased him" (verse 18) and if we are wise we shall fall in with His arrangements and rejoice in the privilege granted to us of so doing.

The head of the body is *the directing power* and this "*head is Christ*" (Eph. 5: 23) and the woman, the Ecclesia, must acknowledge and respond to the direction of her head and refuse the control or even the lead of any who in an endeavour to "modernize" her — to bring her "up to date" would usurp His authority and decide what the Ecclesia of to-day is to be and what it is to do.

The Scriptural illustration, then, provides for a scriptural Ecclesia, "growing up *in him in all things*" (Eph. 4: 15) and necessarily *excludes* all ideas of crutches, props, supports, or *added* limbs. For illustrations of women with many extra limbs we must go to heathen systems; to India or China ("Kuan Shih Yin" with a thousand arms, all to bestow blessing upon those who are brought under her ministrations). The true Ecclesia, "the woman," is not a fleshly arranged body, but a Divinely ordained and appointed one, and *as such* is fully competent to successfully carry out its Divinely appointed Mission, if, "not walking as do other gentiles," it faithfully follows the directions of its "head".

An *auxiliary* is a *helper from outside!* not of the "*regular*" body of forces. Auxiliary Religious bodies (or societies) are man made schemes which while professing to improve upon God's plan, fatally interfere with it; they offer help which is neither Divinely appointed

nor asked for, and for which there is no Divine instruction or precedent. Some, in endeavouring to defend these purely human devices claim that they are *not outside the church*, and therefore not truly “auxiliary,” and that our objection to them is merely a verbal criticism, and that we are wrong in objecting to that which is “merely a term”; but terms, applied to Holy things, are objectionable, when they are *unscriptural, orthodox and worldly*; for example; if at the morning meeting someone referred to the presiding brother as “the very reverend Father in God” — or of the breaking of bread as “celebrating the blessed sacrament of the Holy Eucharist,” and then excused himself by explaining that these expressions were only “terms”; should we not object? *Should we not know that he was using these unscriptural and orthodox terms because of the unscriptural and orthodox condition of his mind*; so is it with these “auxiliaries” — the same mind which sees and admires them *outside* — which arranges for and *brings them in*, brings in, with them, all their connected and unscriptural phraseologies including the vulgar and flippant habit of branding them merely by their initials.

But in the matter we are considering, is it not more than the “term” which is unscriptural? are not the organizations themselves unscriptural? — *they are* “auxiliary,” they are constituted and arranged, — specifically and avowedly, as “additions” to the “regular” body; — to “help” the Ecclesias! The Church of God is the preacher of the Gospel; not some other body whom *she pays and supports to do the work for her*. She, the faithful, the undefiled one *wants no helper*, save God, through Christ and through the Word of His grace; she is the “one body,” the “woman,” and must *herself* fulfil her mission, faithfully carrying out her work with the powers which God has bestowed upon her, and in doing this she will be doing God’s will, and no more than that is required (or will be accepted) of her. Should it be felt that she, as an Ecclesia, as a corporate association, is failing in this, the cause of the weakness *should be sought out and dealt with, in the Divine Way*. “Is there no balm in Gilead?” “Is there no physician there?” “Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” Jer. 8: 24. Why, indeed!

The weak or unhealthy condition should be *strengthened and healed* — not a *new power or limb invented* — humanly devised — to make good the deficiency. Not a *substitute* called in, leaving the hurt unhealed (Isaiah 1: 6) the decrepid condition unattended to, to grow worse and worse *by apathy and lack of the sense of necessity for action*. Societies, whether they are considered as of the body, or as additions to it, are either “erosive” or “corrosive”; either “eating away” or “abnormally adding to” its true constitution and substance; they first sully its purity, then corrupt its soundness and ultimately destroy its (spiritual) vitality. Ecclesias adopting these activities may

outwardly appear to be very zealous if we merely "judge according to the sight of our eyes or the hearing of our ears"; they appear to have "a lot of go" and progression, and they have "a name that they live"; nevertheless they are (spiritually) "dead" if their works "are not found perfect" (Rev. 3: 1, 2).

The "one body," the true woman, depends entirely upon Christ, her head, for her initiative, her inspiration and her power, and rejects all the vain practices of apostate religious systems; her strength is the strength of her Lord and she is assured by the example of the faithful of old that she "can do all things through Christ" who strengthens her.

As already noted, another illustration, used by the Holy Spirit; in which for the same principle of the *holy isolation* of the true Ecclesia is manifested, is that of

THE ECCLESIA AS A HOUSEHOLD

Again let us carefully ponder the principle; Is this household of Man? or of God? If of man we will admit that man as the *head* of it, may do in it, and with it, just whatever he pleases; — anything that is right or pleasant in his own eyes; — but if it is God then *he is the head*, and, as such, *controls* it *We all know* that the *latter* is correct and I think we all know, that *to act as though the former* is correct, is not righteous.

The Ecclesia is the "household of God" (Eph. 2: 19) and he has not given *the Control* unto us, but *unto Christ*; "Christ as a son *over* his own house" (Heb. 3: 6). We, by mercy and favour, have been *brought into it*; once we were "*strangers*" and "*foreigners*"; but now are "of the household of God" (Eph. 2: 19). Our inclusion in that household was the result of a call from the *Lord of that house*, followed by a solemn and responsible act, on our part, which ratified our acceptance of the call; and now that we are in it; — in this highly privileged position, what must our attitude *towards it* and *its Lord*, be? Are we told that there are no rules of conduct, no laws to be obeyed, no honour to, or recognition of, its master? no observances at all? Are we told, or is it anywhere implied, that we have perfect liberty to do just whatever we think fit? that we may introduce into this house (into which, purely by the grace of its Master, we have been adopted), *any habit, or custom* which we have seen, and possibly admired, in the house or houses we have come away from? which habits or activities we ignorantly imagine would be an *improvement upon God's own arrangements of his own house!* May we, if we think fit, change and alter the order and characteristics of the house? making it *more and more like* those which God himself tells us are the "abominations of the earth" and from which we profess to be

thankful that we have been delivered? We *know that we may not* do such things; then, brethren and sisters, let us not be careless; — let us not be *indifferent*; neither let us be *weak* as some are; — easily beguiled by seductive reasoning into adopting, and bringing into the household of God this modern spirit of Religious Lawlessness, these “up to date” arrangements. It is plain enough that it is our duty, either before, or upon, our entrance into this household, as adopted sons and daughters, *to know* “the law of the house”; — *to know* “the acceptable Will of God,” its Master. The law of the house is that it is “holy” in all its associations — that there is no allowance made, or scope given, for rendering it unchaste by any merely human arrangements; the Word of God is sufficiently instructive, both directly and indirectly in these things, and the result of attention to that word is, among other advantages, “that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3: 15).

The conditions upon which God invites men and women to become members of his family — of his household — have been the same in all ages; namely, strict obedience to, and faithful regard for, the things he has ordained; “Mark well what I say unto thee concerning the ordinances of the house,” neither diminishing therefrom, nor adding thereto; and so, as in the previous illustration, no analogy can be found in Scripture for the introduction of arrangements and activities borrowed from heathen systems.

The addition, *ever increasing* (as is easily seen) of auxiliary Societies and Social functions is out of harmony with, and contrary to, the principles to be observed in the Divinely arranged household of God. A very strong illustration, among the “*things written for our learning*,” is given in the history of Nadab and Abihu, where the *apparently slight matter* of offering different fire to that enjoined cost the disobedient ones their lives! “This is it which the Lord hath spoken; I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me,” Lev. 10: 1, 2, 3, — in *those days*, yes! — all have to agree to that, — but dare we say that *to-day it doesn't matter*?

The third illustration (“a threefold cord is not quickly broken”) is that of

THE ECCLESIA AS A TEMPLE

What are the lessons conveyed by this? And should the Ecclesia to-day in *any way* correspond to *this type*?

“Ye are the temple of the living God” (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17). Does the figure suggest *liberty of practices*? Does it give us the idea of a place where there is perfect freedom of action, — where we may behave just as, personally, we are disposed, — without any restraint? Where we may *introduce our own services* of our own devising and

of a different character to those for which the temple has been appointed? The illustration used can be understood by all — all know that a temple is pre-eminently “a holy place.” “Let them make me a sanctuary (a holy place) that *I may dwell among them*” (Exod. 25: 8), and therefore all can see that the teaching is suggestive, at least, of a place of *solemn service*; of *strict* religious rites; and of a pure worship, in harmony with the Will of the Deity who is worshipped therein, and of the Great High Priest of the profession pertaining to it. “*Let them make*” did not mean that they might build a temple of their own design, — it gave no liberty to the flesh, — the command which over-ruled every detail was “look that thou make them after the *pattern*” (Exod. 25: 40); and *the Spirit* supplied the pattern. And only in a temple thus raised would God dwell; — “God dwelleth not in temples made by hands” (Acts 17: 24. 7: 48), i.e. not in *humanly planned* temples (neither literal nor figurative); He will not even dwell in a *correctly raised* “Sanctuary” if it becomes defiled by unholy (orthodox or heathen) practices. Note the following sequence — the *cause* and the *effect*: —

- (Cause). “Thou hast defiled my Sanctuary with all thy detestable things” (Ezek. 5: 11).
- (Necessity). “Son of man seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, *that I should go far off from my Sanctuary*” (Ezek. 8: 6).
- (First result). “And the glory of the Lord *went up from the Cherub* (the mercy-seat?) — *to the threshold of the house* (Ezek. 9: 3)
- (Second result). “And the Cherubims mounted up *from the earth*,” “and the glory of the Lord *departed from off the threshold* of the house and stood over the Cherubims, and the glory of the Lord was over them above” (10: 18, 19).
- (Third result). “And the Glory of the Lord *went up from the midst of the city* and stood upon the mountain which is *on the east side of the city*” (11: 23).
- (Final result). “I have *forsaken my house*, I have left my heritage” (Jer. 12: 7).

It is a *very solemn fact* that the introduction of *unclean* things into the temple was a grave (sometimes an unpardonable) offence — in some religions even the shoes, which are considered as defiled by the way, have to be removed before entering the holy place, an illustration not wholly unknown in Divine requirements (Exod. 3: 5), and which we should apply, spiritually, to-day. Hence when the illustration of the Ecclesia as a “temple” is rightly considered, none can mistake the lesson of “sanctity” which is given.

The figure takes a slightly different aspect when the Ecclesia is regarded as the materials of which the building is composed; then Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone — “elect, precious”; He is also the “foundation” “and *no other* foundation can any man lay than that which has been laid.” This “foundation” has been laid during the centuries before Jesus was born, when the prophets “prophesied of the grace that should come” unto us, testifying beforehand “the sufferings of Christ and the *glory that should follow*” (1 Pet. 1: 10, 11). So that the true Ecclesia is built also “upon the foundation of the prophets” (*the auxiliaries are not so built*, but are discordant with both Old and New Testaments). The Saints are “living stones” “built up a spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2: 5). “*All the building fitly framed together*” (Eph. 2: 21). “The whole body” fitly joined together and compacted by that which *every joint* supplieth.” “According to the *effectual working* in the measure of *every part*” (Eph. 4: 16). “Groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord” (2: 21). Notice how complete and *all-inclusive* these illustrations are and how absolutely outside of them are all these fleshly arranged schemes. There is *beauty* and *order* in the Divine plan; no scrambling together of a lot of man-made activities and calling them the temple of God; there is no place found for such; no room for outside helps, whether lecturing, choral, publicity, millinery, touring, or any other. Are they the “parts” the Holy Spirit refers to? Are they the “joints” spoken of? Do they “fitly frame together” and “grow up into a holy temple”? if so, then (as was asked in reference to the type of the “woman”) what was the condition of the spiritual temple when Paul gave his inspired description ages before men, out of their own heads and hearts, had commenced the fabrication and introduction of their carnal materials and change of design?

We will allow — that “If any man defile the temple of God him will God destroy” (1 Cor. 3: 17) refers to the personality of individual saints; that they defile not their bodies, which are God’s temple, by association with that which is evil; — but we can surely see, with all the lessons before us, that the same principle must apply to the “one body,” “the church,” the bride of Christ; — that that must equally be preserved pure — inviolate. Let us then, brethren and sisters, *recognize and act up to*, the principle set forth, and see that all our ministrations in the Truth are according to God’s will; — that we humbly and reverently serve and worship with the necessary regard to the holiness of our calling, in humble gratitude for the privilege, the honour, of being permitted so to do. The “true tabernacle” is pitched by God, and not by man, and if we, by mercy and favour, are invited to be “co-workers together with God” let us remember that it is He who sets the work and *invites us to help; not we who set it and then call upon Him to help;* therefore in *carrying out His design*, let us see that we make all things “according to the pattern” and “mark well the ordinances.” As priests, the saints must

minister in "holy things" and not in the "profane" things which are offered in other temples and in worldly and apostate associations.

If the three illustrations given do not teach the Simplicity of worship which we as an Ecclesia are striving to uphold and from which the Apostasy has long since departed, then in what way do they teach the complexity of modern religious systems, and what is the correspondence between type and antitype?

"Societies" are impersonal and mechanical, and when called "Religious" profess to manufacture the fruits of the Word, the products of the Gospel and the wellbeing of the Saints, by the Machinery of "organisations," requiring only *the means* which will keep the Machinery going; as one brother has described them, "you put your money in the slot and the machine produces the converts," a very popular method with those who like to be rid of the *responsibility laid upon them*.

Even in secular life all personal workers deplore the introduction of machinery; knowing that their slow but reliable work, will presently drop out of use and will give place to that which, although of a low grade can be more rapidly produced; so with "religious" organizations; the individual worker loses caste and is eventually lost to the work, or has to merge into the machinery section; in this he works "for the organization" *which takes the praise* for his labours. As the system becomes widespread a deficiency of "hands," for carrying-on, soon becomes evident, to meet which a fresh "organisation" is started, to technically train, and mechanically supply, the needs of the system. (If the Lord will I shall deal with the unscriptural character of "Lecturers training societies" in a further letter). As the revenues of the Societies increase (money is the force which makes them work) so admittedly will their activities until, as in the Apostate Church, they will far exceed the work of "the Ecclesias," and as they progress, their purely technical and impersonal character must also increase and become more and more evident and importunate. On the other hand the beauty and righteousness of faithful individual service, and the work and influence of simple Ecclesial life will grow less and less; interest in its efforts become more and more lacking, and its light appear more and more dim; all the (man-given) glory will gather round the "Societies" and praise and approbation be forthcoming; — not for the power of the Church of Christ, not for the simply sown seed of the kingdom but for the wonderfully successful *work of the organisations*.

Read the annual reports of the Auxiliary Societies and notice the claims made; — note moreover the special function of the "report," and ask yourselves, how long will it be before "*Experts*" will be called in to "*write up*" these reports to make them *potent to draw funds* to keep the machinery running and to introduce all the other schemes which will in due course be their progeny.

Again ask yourselves, brethren and sisters, are these things, "the planting of the Lord?" that "He may be glorified?" or viewing their (supposed) success do not the originators say, at heart, "My idol (their scheme) hath done it" — and are they not asking that their humanly invented "Society" system may be glorified?

Already, as the reports show, they (although only of men's arrangements and altogether without any authority from God) claim to have "formed Ecclesias"; to "watch over Ecclesias" to "nurture" them, and proceed to exaggerate the *helplessness* of the Ecclesias! (who, remember, are the constituted bride of Christ; His espoused — but who, according to their description, must be generally a very poor, effete kind of creature and quite forsaken by her Lord and master!); and as before expressed all their claims for success of work or help are based not on the power of God through His Word, but upon the peculiar efficiency of their organisations, without which they would have us believe that the preaching of the gospel would accomplish very little of that which, *in their minds*, should be accomplished.

According to the "reports" millions are perishing for lack of knowledge, and apostolic methods (God's methods) fail to meet the requirements (whose requirements) of to-day, so they step in with the *wisdom and the working of the flesh* to do that which *the wisdom and the working of God* (as they surmise) is failing to do!

Such phrases as "we have again to thank the Lecturing Society" etc., are already resounding throughout the country; — the Ecclesias — the bride of Christ need only supply the money to have the work done for her, and so be relieved of all the work of all the responsibility *laid upon her by her master*. Already, further following the lead and example of the Apostasy a "Foreign Missionary" effort has been inaugurated and this is ignorantly regarded as fulfilling (very belated it must be confessed) a command made nearly two thousand years ago (but evidently only just recognised) to go and "make disciples of all nations."

Those who support this "Society" craze tell us that they are doing much good, and most likely (not having *properly* considered the matter) they sincerely think so; but *that is for God to say*. What we do know is, that every work will be "weighed in the balance"; — will be "tried by fire," and we further know, on principle, that *no result* will be counted to us as "good" if it is acquired in a disobedient way; and I would impress that truth upon you for it is for our eternal good that we rightly understand it; the "weapons of our warfare" must not be "carnal"; and the whole propaganda of the truth by these methods is "carnal"; they are the methods of the World and have no precedent in scripture, hence they are "secular" and not "sacred." They attempt, in total disregard to all authority, to do in a wrong way that which *the Ecclesias themselves* should do in the Divinely appointed (hence the right) way.

The way of the "Societies" is a *well trodden way*; a few years ago it was *new to Christadelphians*; but for a long time multitudes have trodden it and are still treading it; those of our Ecclesias who enter it find themselves in the company of all the religious sects of the day—they are no longer in this respect "peculiar" or "separate." The pioneers have smoothed out the early difficulties and made it easy of passage and satisfactory to the natural man. The company found frequenting it should be a warning to those who know God's way, but this is ignored; — possibly not even noticed — a divine principle, which we cannot deny, being that if there is "pleasure in unrighteousness" there may be also "delusion" in reference to it.

The Multitude treading this way, and whom we are asked to join — that is to follow their example and lead — are a class of apostate propagandists belonging to the conventional religious systems, who having found that their Churches, for some reason or other, had "*failed to reach the Masses*," devised Auxiliary "schemes" to remedy the defect; — hence arose such organizations as "the Society for the propagation of the Gospel"; "the Society for promoting Christian knowledge" by which they (the apostacy) acknowledge that their "Church" is *not such a society*; that it is neither "propagating" the Gospel, nor "promoting christian knowledge," and that these societies were originated and introduced to make good *its defects*; and if we, as an Ecclesia, were to favour the objects and methods of "auxiliary" efforts, and admit them into our Ecclesial life we should be confessing the same thing; — a thing which *can never be true of the scriptural woman — the bride of Christ*; — it can never be that Christ's Church is unable to carry out its Mission; — it is ordained by God that "by the church" (Eph. 3: 16) his truth shall be made known and it is one phase of His *eternal purpose* and it will not fail. If we were to think it would fail — that He *has said and cannot do*, then we could not be "*faithful*" stewards of the grace of God, but only fit for such unprofitable work as man's wisdom and man's money can accomplish.

A writer on "The English Church in the 19th Century" quotes a certain Bishop Jebb, who in 1824 wrote: "I am not over friendly to the *strong excitations of this age of Societies*" (history repeats itself; nearly a hundred years have passed and now these "strong excitations" are being indulged in by the brethren); and then, commenting on this quotation says "It was not so much, the "excitations" which were at fault; after the long torpor of the 18th century the *age required excitations*; on the whole it must be hailed as a hopeful sign of *reviving energy* that the age could, justly, be termed "the age of societies."

It scarcely needs pointing out that the "reviving energy" referred to was not that of the Church, but of excitement at the *novelty of fresh activities* when *interest in the old had ceased*! See how the orthodox Societies have grown and flourished; but what have they

done, even from their own standpoint? What increased allegiance is there to-day to "the Church" over that of a hundred years ago. What increase of the religious sense, or of regard for the Bible among the masses? Since the "craze" started in the Apostacy innumerable Societies have sprung into being; — to mention *one set* only; beginning at 1760 — "A Society for the distribution of Bibles to Soldiers," then (1799) "The Religious Tract Society," out of which sprung (1804), "The British and Foreign Bible Society" to help which came (1809), "The Auxiliary Bible Society," further assisted (1812) by "The Ladies Auxiliary Bible Society," then in the same year "The Juvenile Bible Society," and the more pretentious "Trinitarian Bible Society," leaving unenumerated scores of *local* Societies (Diocesan, etc.), and those of the Papacy, where as the *origin of the whole system*, they flourish as corrupt growths on a corrupt soil; all formed, in total disregard of the Will of God, with their many "religious" names and "religious" objects, upon the plea of *helping the Church*, and as they would say "of saving souls for Christ." What kind of a Church is it which requires all this propping up? all this auxiliary help? It certainly is not one which corresponds to the type of the one "woman," nor to the "household of God"; nor to the "temple of God"; nor is it "the tabernacle which God has pitched." The true Church is "all glorious *within*" not all powerful without, and is an association infinitely more simple, and more chaste; it possesses the "beauty of holiness" and is strong in the confidence of its call, and loyal to the ways of its Lord and Master, and will not be led astray into the ways, or the "spirit of modernism," of "up to date" methods; but keeping stedfastly to the "old paths," will be known by so doing, as a community of "peculiar people."

There are brethren and sisters who, possibly with undiscerning sincerity, start, or support, these conventional movements; they may form Societies, Guilds, Leagues, and variously named associations, with various objects; they may devise Working Societies with the annual and usual "Bazaar," (or "Sale of Work"), as reported for instance in the "Christadelphian" for Feb., 1918, pge. 80, they may split up their work into "literary" sections, "publicity" sections, "light-bearers" sections, "Touring" sections, etc., they may formulate "Rules," appoint Secretaries, Presidents, Treasurers, Committees, and Delegates; rent offices, employ clerks, and arrange all the ever-increasing paraphernalia necessary for these unscriptural operations, including, in the approved orthodox fashion "Social Evenings," "The Annual Conference," the cleverly prepared "Annual Report," the "Urgent Appeal for Funds," the old and popular plan of "a penny a week" for this "fund" or that "fund," and the "collecting card" for the Sunday School children to beg with, and they may, no doubt, sincerely, consider that all these schemes are "good"; but if they would only allow the Word of God to raise them above the level of the current religious spirit, they would see at once

that instead of being "good" in the Bible sense, they are merely "smart" and "clever," and "going with the times" adopting inventions of the fleshly mind and so adding strange and unholy practices to the simple arrangement of Apostolic Worship and Service.

It may be remembered that, at one of our recent Fraternal gatherings, a brother said "let us teach the truth by living it"; and happy shall we be, brethren and sisters, if we, Ecclesially and individually, recognise the precious character of that admonition. We may rest assured that God will bless that spirit of service rather than the one which spends a hundred pounds on advertising in the press, or upon a public hoarding (I hope — if the Lord wills — to deal with the introduction of "Advertising Committees" in the work of the Church of Christ later on). At the same meeting a brother speaking on "Victory," pointed out, that Israel, sent by God to subdue the Canaanites, learnt and practised their ways, and so were themselves vanquished, and failed of the Victory. The early Christian Church did just the same; they sought *by their own ways* to make the Gospel successful; first assimilated with paganism, became paganised themselves and so, they also, lost the victor's crown. To-day, brethren and sisters, in their desire and eagerness to bring the World to Christ, have over-shot the mark, and, as is evident on every hand, are being overcome by the flesh-pleasing methods of the World, and can have little hope, in their present spirit, of true victory. Let us ponder over these things; and being at present Ecclesially free from these evils let us be quite sure as to which way our duty and our safety lies, when proposals for their adoption or support come along.

The teaching of the Word is, that when there is laxity and indifference, to the holiness which God requires to be observed in His house, He will bring trouble; —

"Shall I not visit for these things? Saith the Lord" (Jer. 5: 9).

And so one need not be a prophet to point out that if the Ecclesias are *getting degenerate*, there will presently be, in some way or other, affliction and unrest, throughout the body.

I have rough notes on the other matters, mentioned in my former letter, but current work, and some special studies have their call; and so rapid is the degeneration which is objected to, that every month or so, some fresh "departure" or "excrecence" is adopted, which requires to be carefully considered before it is seriously combated, hence there is delay. Whether or not I shall ever arrange my notes, and present them to you, will be decided by our Heavenly Father; my times are in His hands, but meanwhile, I assure you, that if it can be shown that these new "Activities" are Divinely enjoined and not mere human devices, I shall be prepared to ask you to join me in wholeheartedly accepting them. If God's Word, rightly examined, requires that for the time that remains the Truth is to be given over

to the domination of "forces" of the same spirit as those in the "Mother Church," then let us be prepared to accede to those requirements; — there are schemes which we might adopt, which with enthusiasm and zeal would quite eclipse the present somewhat insignificant and circumscribed ones; if the true note is "Modernism" then let us be "modern," *thoroughly, and throughout all the Ecclesias.*

But if it cannot be so shown, do not let us be diverted from a correct course because of hearing from some "leading brother," here or there, a *general condemnation*, especially of such a character as is usually adopted by those who, wishing to write slightly of things they do not approve of, would say that "the whole argument is too erroneous, too foolish, for *any one of discernment* to accept or even to trouble about," a superior sort of judgment, which however does not decide the issue. My repeated appeal to you, brethren and sisters, is to "hold fast to the things we have learned and *been assured of*, knowing of *whom we have received them*," and to make the necessary scriptural comparisons of these other things, so that we, who come together, who pray and praise together, who remember our absent Lord together, may also stand, firm and steadfast, together; and when, as in the World, and in the Ecclesias in many places, all order and obedience is being ignored by the current spirit of lawlessness and selfwill, we may, truly and affectionately be united in the observance and advocacy of "the simplicity which is in Christ."

Praying that our knowledge, our love and our decisions may be scripturally sound and that our faces may be firmly, and always, set in the right direction.

I am, your brother in Christ,

A. S. THOMPSON.

"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you-ward. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; And I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end." (2 Cor. 1: 12, 13).