

“Do All  
To The Glory  
Of God”

*A short treatise  
on standards  
for Christadelphians.*



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# “DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD”

## PREFACE

No Christadelphian would deny that we are living in “the last days”. The “signs of the times”, so anxiously awaited by past generations, are evident on every side and “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh”. The apostle Paul forewarned that these “last days” would be “perilous”. Nineteen centuries ago he wrote, by inspiration, an exact description of conditions now prevailing in this twentieth century:

*“For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.”*  
(2 Tim. 3:2-5 R.S.V.)

These remarkable words have been fulfilled in stark detail. There has been a moral collapse. Standards have rapidly declined in all stratas of society — whether political, religious, social, or relating to the family. If the Lord tarries and the rate of decline of recent years continues, the future of mankind will be grim. The Lord declared that men would “faint with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Luke 21:26 R.S.V.).

In the midst of such a world, we must continue our walk towards the Kingdom. Concerning his disciples, Jesus said, “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:15). We must therefore hold fast the standards set by Christ and his apostles — standards faithfully upheld by past generations of Christadelphians.

In this short publication, attention is drawn to a number of matters in which an evident decline has taken place in the Body of Christ and wherein peril lurks for the future of the ecclesia. The sole motive behind its production is that, when the Lord returns, he may find us as a group of believers who have kept themselves “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

## LET US EXAMINE OURSELVES

Sometimes we need to do some spiritual stocktaking in order to see where our lives are heading. Have we lost our first love? Do we joy in Christ as we did when we came forth from the waters of baptism? Do we take hold of the opportunities that come our way to promote the name of Christ to a perishing world? Do we find conversation about the Truth easy, or is our talk wholly on a mundane plane? Have we been beguiled by pride and become the victims of the flesh?

The will of the flesh, with all its subtleties, must not rule over us. Instead, we should delight to do the will of our Heavenly Father at all times. Jesus promised: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). If there is not found in us that conscious desire to "do all to the glory of God", then the Father and the Son will not dwell within us. This can only mean that we shall hear the most terrible words of all Scripture: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).

We need to examine ourselves to see if we be "in the Faith". If we find that we have slipped, we need to make firm resolutions for the future. Our good example and zeal will strengthen our fellow saints to do likewise.

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give unto every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

## IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT

While we are in the world, we must not be of the world. "Bad company ruins good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33 R.S.V.). Thus Paul's advice is: "from such turn away". It is inevitable that we should be influenced by the world, but if we are not alert to its dangers, eternal tragedy could be the result. The world exerts its pressure upon us to conform to its will and uses its media to do so — newspapers, magazines, radio, television and its education system. It is sad to say that the effects of these degrading influences are being seen more and more in the Brotherhood. Too few are aware of the perils and even less are prepared to speak out against them. Good shepherds care for the flock of God, watching over their souls as those who must give an account. Like Isaiah, they will "cry aloud, spare not . . . and show God's people their transgression" (Isaiah 58:1). To do this they must be "scribes instructed unto the kingdom", knowing accurately the Scriptures and the holy and sober living they enjoin.

The young are most affected by the tide of evil now prevalent in the world. They are more impressionable than older people, not having passed through the experiences of life which confirm

what is wholesome and profitable. But many older brethren too, whose example over past years has served to strengthen the weak, have yielded and let their own standards fall away. Perhaps they have not wanted to appear 'narrow-minded'. But in so doing they have failed to "strengthen the things which remain" and have given others licence to follow the "fashion of the world which passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:31).

As we await the glorious appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, we are to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12-13). We have not, therefore, the licence to imitate the world in its tastes and pleasures. "Pure religion" entails keeping oneself "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Friendship with the societies of this world, however congenial and harmless they might appear, is declared to be "enmity with God" (James 4:4). The true Christadelphian will feel strange in the company of the alien and will seek instead the company of those of "like precious faith". He will not be found at the world's entertainments, its sports, its cinemas etc. Rather he will lend his support to the activities of the ecclesia "which is the house of God . . . the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). He will find pleasure in the company of those who are likeminded and will not forsake the assembling of himself with his brethren, but will do so more earnestly as he sees the day approaching (Heb. 10:24-25).

If we have no desire for ecclesial associations apart from the memorial meeting, then we should subject our values to a very close scrutiny. If this is so, the love Christ enjoined as the sign of discipleship cannot be in us: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Repeated absence from the midweek Bible Class shows disinterest and apathy. If we say we have not sufficient time, what we really mean is that we are not sufficiently in love with the Lord's work! Have we ever read of Jesus saying, when asked to help, to heal, to explain, or to teach: "I have not time", or "I am too busy"?

### **MATERIALISM**

We put time, energy and interest into that which we esteem valuable. We have more leisure time today than any past generation ever did. The sad fact is that "the love of many has waxed cold" for the things of Christ, while zeal can still be found for activities outside service to Christ. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt and so should we. The possessions and glory of this life are temporal and soon to pass away for ever, "but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control)" (Gal. 5:22). If we spend our time cultivating these qualities, we shall receive an "inheritance incorruptible, and un-

defiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 1:4).

We need to sharpen our vision of the coming Kingdom; for “where there is no vision the people perish” (Prov. 29:18). How real is the Kingdom in our eyes? When this vision is blurred by “the things that are seen”, peril faces us.

We must not fret because of the prosperity of the wicked about us, for they shall soon be cut down (Psalm 37). Our hopes are fixed upon the future, not on the present, and are guaranteed by the Almighty, independent of human striving.

“A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). His most valued possession is life itself: “For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?” (Matt. 16:26 R.S.V.). Contrary to these principles, our neighbours in the world have made possessions their god and every effort is made to increase them. But the unprecedented riches of this age have not brought contentment. Instead, the possession of much has led to the desire for even more. Such is the avarice of the human heart.

The world’s advertising insidiously panders to man’s pride and prestige. We are encouraged to buy things which are “bigger”, “better” and “improved”, while discarding those which are generally adequate. Thus, almost unconsciously, men bow to the god of this world.

Our Heavenly Father has freely given that which can bring contentment: “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). This contentment centres in what Christ can give: “He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Faith, hope and love find their most perfect expression in the promises of an all-wise and merciful Creator.

Because we are flesh, we are liable to be caught up in the tangle of materialism. We need the eye of faith to avoid placing value upon “the things which are seen”.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

The Lord Jesus Christ had “not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). In professing to be his followers, we accept the wisdom of the exhortation: “Set your affection on things above, *NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH*” (Col. 3:2). The question remains — do we uphold this in our daily life?

We need to constantly assess our values. If we spend time, money and energy on this world’s goods to the neglect of Christ, then we need to change our ways. Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. We cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:19-34).

## PLEASURES

In an age of long annual holidays and short working days, brethren have more spare time on their hands than ever before. How that time is used is, in some ways, a test of our faith. With higher wages and modern technology, many objects of pleasure, once the preserve of the wealthy, are now within reach of the majority. Thus having the time to indulge and money to possess this world's goods, there is a danger that service for Christ will be set aside. Jesus said that the "cares of this life" would be the cause of many being found unprepared for his coming (Luke 21:34-35).

True brethren of Christ will consider carefully whether their service to Christ will be compromised by the purchase of items of pleasure. Things such as boats, caravans etc. may be harmless enough in themselves, but their use may initiate a decline in our service. All the things Jesus mentions as characteristic of the days of Noah were harmless and "lawful" in themselves: "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage" (Luke 17:27). Their sin lay in their pre-occupation with satisfying their own desires and pleasures, to the exclusion of God. Jesus warned that the "days of the Son of man" would be like the days of Noah. The apostle Paul also warned that, in the perilous last days, men would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4).

## TELEVISION

Television presents another avenue of danger to brethren and sisters in Christ, especially now with colour available. It is the most potent influence in society today. It is fast taking the place of family life, school, the church, and active sport in the lives of our contemporaries. Research has shown conclusively that it is the most persuasive means of advertising. It clearly is dominating and enslaving men.

We have pledged our lives to Christ. He has set us free and we are no more the slaves of Sin (John 8:32, 34-36). If we have television in our homes, we place temptation in our path and in the paths of our children. Jesus said we should pray: "Lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13). How can we consistently offer this prayer when we deliberately place objects of temptation before ourselves? If we consider ourselves strong enough to resist bad programmes, we ought to remember the lesson which Paul learned; that when he was aware of his weaknesses he was strong (2 Cor. 12:9-10). If we consider ourselves immune to temptation, we shall surely fall.



Consider the following exhortations:

★ “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *MAKE NOT PROVISION FOR THE FLESH*, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

★ “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).

★ “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

The “strong” ought also to consider the “weak”. “Weak” brethren, seeing those stronger in faith purchase television, have followed suit and have become addicted to its worldly influences. Ought not restraint and self-denial be exercised in this matter, lest some perish “for whom Christ died”? (1 Cor. 8:9-13).

One brother, on receiving delivery of a television set, noticed that the advertising slogan on the carton read: “Bring the world into your home”. He promptly cancelled the order. Another brother, on hearing an exhortation about the spiritual perils of television, promptly advertised his set and sold it the next day. He confessed afterwards that he felt as though a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. May other brethren so act and the Father’s blessing will surely come their way.

Brethren of Christ cannot afford to jeopardise the sanctity of their homes with television. Evil reigns everywhere else; let God reign in our homes.

### FAMILY LIFE

Family life is weakened by the intrusion of television in the home. Communication, so necessary between the members of a family, is replaced and the bonds which hold the family together are broken one by one.

In an age where our children are being taken from our arms and indoctrinated with the “wisdom of this world”, faithful parents must take positive steps to ensure that their children are “nourished in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4 R.S.V.(cp. Roth.)). The world condemns parents who implant in the minds of their children, the Bible’s principles as absolute truth. We are being told that children belong to “the future” and we should not therefore influence them, but allow them to make up their own minds! We need to be on our guard against such pernicious ideas. Rather we should shoulder the responsibilities of parenthood and devote time and energy to the spiritual well-being of our little ones. Early impressions and instruction are deep and enduring.

All too often these duties are neglected. Then parents wonder why their children are uncontrollable when the time of adolescence comes. Parents must *SPEND TIME SPEAKING TO THEIR CHILDREN*. In this way they will find out their thoughts and opinions on the various happenings of life. They should

endeavour to teach them God's standards, so that the children can view the world as if through His eyes.

Our children are not our own but God's. They are the "heritage of the LORD", given to us as a sacred trust to bring up in His ways (Psa. 127:3; Ezek. 16:20). Israel was commanded by law to teach their children the ways of God (Deut. 6:7-9; Psa. 78:3-7), and so are we. But, alas, too often this responsibility is neglected and left to others, with disastrous results.

There are certain measures which can be taken to ensure the best results. It is not possible to guarantee success every time, but it is always right to try.

Families should be guided by the father who should take his rightful place as spiritual head of the house. He must instruct, both by word and example. There is no more convincing proof of profession than faithful example. Children are quick to seize on inconsistencies in order to justify themselves. Parents must practise what they preach.

The family should eat **together** whenever possible and certainly at the evening meal. There the day's happenings can be aired and the judgment of the parents made known for the edification of the young. In this way, day by day and year by year, Christ's values will become their values. So they will be prepared, in due course, for the responsibilities of baptism.

The daily readings should be done. This is not always easy in a busy household or where the children are young, but the advantages vastly outweigh the disadvantages. Reverence for the teaching of the Word and for its faithful examples from the past, can be carefully impressed upon our children as the daily reading chart brings them before our attention. The central position given in our families to the Word of God and the daily respect for its laws are perhaps the best way of nurturing our children in the "discipline and instruction of the Lord". Often we can relate items in the daily readings to the events of the day. The teachings of Scripture can be used to answer decisively the moral questions which prompt themselves in the minds of our children — questions which frequently are given an incorrect answer at school.

## **PRAYER**

We should not neglect to pray as a family. There is much truth in the saying: "the family that prays together, stays together". Prayer should ever be in our hearts and upon our lips. We should take hold of the opportunities to submit to God in prayer as a family. Our giving thanks to the Father for His goodness, our humble requests for His merciful forgiveness in Christ, our yearnings for His kingdom and power, should be constantly and audibly expressed in family worship.

“Wisdom is justified of her children”. So said our Lord (Matt. 11:19). Let us see that our children receive the attention and care which is our responsibility to give. The greatest blessing we can give them is a belief in God, His Son and His purpose — not material things as some falsely imagine. Without this, all the joys of parenthood will end in remorse and sorrow.

### WORKING MOTHERS

It has become commonplace for women of the world to go back to work when their children are of school age. Even more tragic is the spectacle of toddlers being “dumped” at day nurseries, so that the family income can be swollen to provide for sophisticated and often unnecessary commodities. It is sad to note that this practice is creeping into the ecclesia of God. The proper place for mothers is in the home. There they can best serve their families and care for their children. Children who return from school to an empty home can hardly be blamed for mischief and waywardness.

Motherhood and family care and guidance are the divinely appointed roles for women. These are most honourable vocations, despite the perverted values of the world. If we shun such wise appointments we will surely suffer in one way or another.

Read carefully these sound words:

“Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behaviour . . . they are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, DOMESTIC (A.V. “keepers at home”), kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited” (Titus 2:3-5 R.S.V.).

Some mothers with small families may feel that with modern facilities and good organisation, they have time on their hands which could best be spent in outside employment. They may feel a lack of challenge and achievement in staying at home. But there are many challenging and valuable activities which can be undertaken in the service of Christ, such as visiting the sick and aged, sewing for the needy, attending to the children’s spiritual education, studying the Scriptures, reading the Truth’s literature, and providing hospitality.

If a sister abounds in these labours, her time will be fully occupied and rewarding. Moreover she shall “lay up in store for herself a good foundation against the time to come”.

One further case may require comment. Young married couples are today faced with harsh realities in the purchasing of their home. It may well be reasoned that their special circumstances require them both to work, prior to beginning their family, in order to meet the high repayments on their home loan. Nevertheless, when necessities have been met, it is not good to see wives

continue working merely to provide for further comforts in the house. Let us encourage our young couples to comply, as much as they are able, with the Divine ideal established in the above quotation of the Apostle Paul. Those not in their special circumstances can help by setting the correct example.

## SMOKING

Smoking is making inroads among Christ's brethren. Apart from being a hazard to health and a drain on finances, smoking is a habit which enslaves a person. "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" or "become a slave" (2 Pet. 2:19). Those who belong to Christ have already covenanted their allegiance to him; they have been bought by his precious blood and they cannot please themselves. It is incumbent upon those so privileged to put aside such unclean and unwholesome practices: "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified (made holy), but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). The new man is "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). Why then should brethren of Christ allow themselves to come within the grip of this habit?

It might be argued that nothing is said in Scripture expressly about smoking. It is hard to imagine, however, that it does not fall within the scope of the following: "Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice *every kind of uncleanness*" (Eph. 4:17-19 R.S.V.).

Brethren should also consider the effect of their example upon the young. It takes only one brother's poor example to provide others with an excuse to indulge. "None of us liveth to himself". Through our indulgence, we can destroy those "for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:7, 15).

## DRINKING

Drinking is another practice which has become accepted in some circles of Christadelphia today. It is not uncommon for liquor to be served at weddings, or for brethren to drink openly and socially with each other — something which was not done even a generation ago.

Jesus issued a specific warning to saints of the last days when he spoke of the dangers they would face: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (gluttony), and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares . . . watch ye therefore and pray always" (Lk. 21:34-36). 'Wining and dining' is wide-

spread and, in its present proportions, a peculiarity of our age.

Drinking reduces one's power of thinking. How can one "watch" with a dull mind? Business can take a brother to luncheons where drink is served. There is the temptation to partake in order to be sociable. In such circumstances, a brother should firmly, but politely, make his position known from the outset.

Habitual drinking can lead to one becoming an alcoholic and even brethren have been caught in the stranglehold of alcohol. This fact should be a warning to us to refrain. We might think that we are strong and have this matter under control, but the day could come when it controls us. No alcoholic would ever have believed, when he took his first drink, that he would become addicted. Consider Paul's warnings: "Be not deceived; neither fornicators . . . nor drunkards . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9, 10); and again: "Let us walk honestly ("decently" — margin), as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness" (Rom. 13:13).

### FASHION AND DRESS

Vulgar and immodest clothing has become commonplace in the world and, unfortunately, ecclesias have not been untouched. As a community, we have not been sufficiently aware that such clothing is unacceptable. Too few voices have been raised in protest and this has caused the problem to deepen.

Mini skirts, together with other extremes of fashion, should be shunned by sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their choice of clothing should be modest, sensible and seemly (1 Tim. 2:9 R.S.V.). Those who flout such standards degrade the holiness and sanctity of our worship. God has said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16), and this commandment relates to our dress as well as to our manner of living. Baptism involves the crucifixion of the flesh, but the mini skirt and other such brief attire reverse this principle.

There is also the "unisex" trend in which it is often difficult to distinguish between sexes on account of similarity of hair style and dress. We cannot but think that this is displeasing to God. When God made man and woman He gave them each distinctive and separate duties and His laws have sought to maintain the difference.

The wearing of slacks and pant-suits runs counter to this principle of distinction. The Law of Moses specifically forbade such confusion: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Deut. 22:5).

Whatever particular evil practices may have been in vogue in the day that Moses penned these words, the principle still applies

today. The practice of women wearing slacks has greatly increased, but only during the last twenty years. Is it good to follow the trend of a generation that has forsaken the ways of the Lord and rejected concepts of modesty? A previous generation of Christadelphians would have been deeply disturbed by this modern practice. Surely the example of the world is not good and, if followed, will lead to further decline, both in modesty and distinction.

Sisters of Christ must remember that the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" is of great price in the sight of God (1 Pet. 3:4). Thus, the sister who is poorest in this world's goods may be exceedingly rich in the sight of God.

The following voices from the past speak timely counsel to the ecclesia of today:

(1) **'The Virtuous Woman' by Sis. Jane Roberts — page 45.**

'The matter of hairdressing will also receive her attention — for this finds special mention in the writings of the Apostles. "If a woman have long hair it is a glory to her." There is a right and a wrong way to apply the underlying principles of this divine utterance. Extremes of style in the dressing of the hair must be avoided. Much time, effort and money can be dissipated in unwise attempts to follow the fashions and follies of worldly women. No sister must allow these insidious influences to encroach on the profitable use of her time. She will be circumspect and constant and will ever remember that "plaiting the hair," or its counterpart in the elaborate "coiffeur" of today, is disparaged, rather than encouraged, in the Spirit Word.

'A spiritual sister will not resort to the extravagant use of cosmetics. Painted lips and pencilled eyebrows are a form of attraction and self-advertisement which she can well afford to forego. Her beauty will not depend upon the artificial make-up which can be bought at a chemist's shop. The real secret of charm is not purchased with money, nor contained in external embellishments.

"Beauty of mind is beauty of face,  
And inward sweetness makes outward grace".

'The cheerful countenance, the noble brow, the sunny smile, the compassionate eye — who is not attracted by these powerful charms? A happy face may be a very plain face, but who, with discerning judgement of these matters, would exchange it for the soul-less artificial beauty, so-called, of the vain daughters of men? "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:30).'

(2) **'For Christ's Sake' by Bro. C. P. Wauchope — pages 9-10.**

'The fashion of the world is ever changing, but that does not

permit us the liberty of setting our affections on the changing world and its fashions. Nor is it to be denied that in recent years the pendulum of dress and style swung toward the borderland of vulgarity, bringing blushes to the cheeks of the prudent. There is an attempt to cheat truth by dressing so as to disguise age, and mothers have externally spurned their matronage and bedecked themselves as their daughters! There is an excess of time and thought devoted to personal adornment, making it apparent that many opportunities are bestowed on that which is "pleasant to the eyes". If senior sisters take advantage of the world's goddess, what can be expected of the younger members? They promptly annex the licence exhibited by the elder sisters. And, again, how much observation and no small amount of comment is sometimes expressed regarding the new attire of sisters present at the breaking of bread meeting. The memorial feast tells that these are the days of our fasting in the Master's absence, and we need to remember that Israel was rebuked by God for finding pleasure when they professed to be fasting. All these things were written for our admonition and learning, on whom the ends of the ages are come. Often and often the prophets were directed to condemn the excess of external beauty which the women of Israel indulged in, and the Apostles declared how the holy women were to adorn themselves. Sisters have great powers for good, and in view of the Lord's approach, we believe it would be acceptable to him if they abandoned the world to its own follies and studied that separateness of holiness without which none shall see the Lord.

'It is a hard and somewhat unpleasant duty to break in upon the apparently harmless enjoyment of the sisters in Christ, but "for His sake" they will not object to a rebuke which will not hinder them in securing His approval. Realizing that the motive of this appeal is not an attack upon the individual, but an effort to keep the body up to the standard of holiness, both brethren and sisters will endeavour to adorn themselves with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price." The fashion of that spirit remains unchanged and abideth for ever.'

Brethren too, are not immune from the problems of dress. The world has adopted a second-class standard — casualness for almost every occasion has replaced the care given to appearance by former generations. Laxity in dress is normally related to a laxity in moral conduct.

In every avenue of life the present evil society is consciously plotting the overthrow of every decent standard of their forebears. Discerning this decline, it is wise to resist the rapid changes of the world.

It is not good therefore to see deterioration in the standard of

formality of our brethren and young men at ecclesial meetings. Loud colours, floral patterns and casual styles are not desirable and will almost surely be followed by further laxity in those who behold our example.

We are the servants of a King. Whether we are attending a formal meeting or an ecclesial outing, we should dress in a way which would be appropriate were the King himself actually present.

### **LONG HAIR AND HATS**

Another cause for concern is the tendency for some brethren, especially the young, to conform to the world's fashion in wearing their hair shoulder length. Some might regard it as a trivial matter, but it is the subject of specific comment by the apostle Paul. He points out that as it is dishonouring for a woman to have her hair shorn, even so it is degrading for a man to have his hair long. The long hair of a sister, which is her glory, should be covered during worship. This is a symbol of subjection to her husband, who is the head of his wife even as Christ is head of the ecclesia. These principles, upheld by Paul, are destroyed by brethren who wear their hair as long as women.

“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? . . . But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom (“we recognise no other practice” R.S.V.) neither the ecclesias of God” (1 Cor. 11:14, 16).

In the same epistle Paul warned that the “effeminate” would not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9).

How much better is it to see brethren standing aside from such worldly trends. Brethren who wear their hair long draw unseemly attention to themselves. By their example they give licence to others to go a step further and conform to even worse aberrations of the wholesome conduct of Christ. Rather, heed the following:

“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2).

“Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12 R.S.V.).

(For further comments, refer to the Booklet ‘The Hair Length of Christadelphian Brethren’ by Brother Ron Abel).

Mention has already been made of the need for sisters to have their heads covered during periods of worship as a sign of their subjection, being “the glory of the man”. The following words of the inspired apostle to the Gentiles, however unpalatable to the generation among whom we live, we will be observed carefully by every true sister of Christ:

“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a



woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered" (1 Cor. 11:5, 6).

## MARRIAGE

We live in an age in which the value of marriage is questioned. It is even spurned as the "cage of convention", from which all would do well to be free. While this might be the view of those "who know not God", it conflicts with Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Marriage is a divine ordinance and the oaths undertaken are for the whole period of our life (Gen. 2:24). Therefore marriage should not be entered into hastily or unadvisedly. Few things can influence one's life as much as one's partner in marriage. A successful and happy pilgrimage is largely bound up with a wise choice of husband or wife.

The basic requisite is that one's partner be a brother or sister of Christ — marriage must be "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). But here care needs to be exercised, for even among the professing sons of Abraham and daughters of Sarah there are those whose hearts have a greater affinity with the world than with the Lord.

The following paragraph sounds a solemn warning:

'There remains to be considered another growing evil. This is the violation of direct example and command which has brought disappointment, unhappiness and despair into the lives of many. This is companionship, betrothal, and marriage by believers with unbelievers. Many good brethren and sisters have wrecked their course to the kingdom upon this shoal, and, like the rich man in Hades, would have it testified lest their brethren should fall into the same error and terror. Strict regard to the requirements of God will prevent both. Too much confidence in promises made by the unbelieving companion; too much hope in the assurance of later acceptance of the truth, have caused many to become unequally yoked in marriage. The result, instead of joy, has been abiding regret that the experience of other brethren, and the examples of Israel, did not serve as a loud warning against the intention to enter life's union under unequal and unholy conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to raise the alarm to those who are in this manner consorting with unbelievers. Necessary too, that brethren who have been entrusted with the care of the ecclesias, like faithful stewards, should "cry aloud and spare not" in exhibiting this violation of Divine requirement. "Only in the Lord" is the essential condition for companionship and marriage of those in the Divine family. From this condition there is no escape, and although violation of it may bring, and has brought, its penalties, it behoves those "who watch for their souls as those who shall give account" to make it clear by precept and example that God has declared our duty even in this matter.'

(*'For Christ's Sake'* by Bro. C. P. Wauchope — pages 10-11).

## AN IMMORAL SOCIETY

In recent years there has been a casting aside of almost every moral standard. The only laws which exist seek to curtail infringements of the rights of man! God is set aside and the Bible is looked upon as outmoded and the invention of fantasy. Those who take its words seriously are viewed as naive. This approach has led to the acceptance of fornication and adultery as normal social behaviour, and to the legalizing of sodomy. The gross perversions of the unenlightened Roman world have re-emerged and benighted the Christian era, hastening its destruction (Rom. 1:24-32).

The wake of such a torrent of licentiousness leaves very real hazards for those striving to fashion their lives after the pattern of Christ. It is important to avoid the numerous worldly influences which parade and shamelessly advocate these ungodly practices. Books, films, television programmes, and modern "pop" songs are often slanted so as to arouse unlawful passions. They will be studiously avoided by those who are sincere in their endeavours to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Only the unwise will allow their thoughts to indulge in such evil, forgetting that Christ is everywhere present and "searches mind and heart" (Rev. 2:23 R.S.V.). We must shun these evils.

"But immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints" (Eph. 5:3 R.S.V.).

Thoughts lead to actions, so we should be very circumspect about what we permit our eyes to see and our ears to behold. Paul considered even the mentioning of the immoral ways of the world defiling, and so forbade it among saints (Eph. 5:12). There is a lesson here for us. We should avoid any occasion or influence which might contaminate our minds. Let our thoughts instead revolve around God, His Son, His purpose, our brethren, and the work and needs of the ecclesia. Thereby our minds will be filled with good and no room will be left for the evil.

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; *IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE, AND IF THERE BE ANY PRAISE, THINK ON THESE THINGS*" (Phil. 4:8).

Herein we have the prescription for success; *good thoughts lead to good deeds.*

## SOUND DOCTRINE

The Truth stands distinct from all the major doctrines of Christendom. We are privileged in having been given a knowledge of this saving Truth by faithful forebears. Though excellent writings by Brother John Thomas and Brother Robert Roberts are available to us, they seem to be neglected in many circles today. Sometimes they are even denigrated. Our need, however, is to consider their works, catch their fervour and conviction and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints".

An air of complacency appears to have sapped our zeal as it did the ecclesia of Laodicea. That ecclesia was rebuked by the Lord for being "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). In some cases among the ecclesias today, little interest is shown for the Truth of God, so hard won by the pioneers. There is an ignorance about the Statement of Faith. Often brethren are apathetic about its value and need, yet the fellowship of the ecclesial world is founded upon it.

Confronting the Brotherhood today are a number of new ideas and teachings which threaten the harmony of inter-ecclesial activities. Two of these will be mentioned.

### 1. **The Holy Spirit**

In the first century, the Holy Spirit drew attention to and confirmed the message of the apostles. Also it brought to mind the teachings of Christ and it inspired the New Testament writers (John 14:16-17; Heb. 2:3, 4).

With the death of the apostles, who alone could pass on the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-18), they soon ceased to function as a tangible power in the ecclesias. That situation has continued from then until now. This has been the belief of the Christadelphian Brotherhood since its inception.

But, in recent years, a wave of "Pentecostalism" has swept through the churches of Christendom and false claims are being made about the Holy Spirit's current activity. Claims of "speaking in tongues" and "faith healing" are commonplace. The churches of Christendom have been divided and confused in their attempts to answer this problem in their midst. Many of their members have left and joined Penetecostal churches.

It is disappointing to note that the ecclesias have not been immune from the problem. Brethren of unstable mind have propounded that the Holy Spirit gifts are available and that the miracles of the first century are being performed today, if not within the Body, then in the churches of Christendom. Others have given heed to their words, so widening the problem.

Something short of possession of miraculous gifts is put forth by some who claim the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Our faith has been derived from "hearing the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). This Word was written when holy men were "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). There is then a sense in which the Holy Spirit works today, but this is very different to the personal, active way in which it came upon first century believers. Brethren cannot claim that the Holy Spirit comes or moves them in the tangible way it did the apostles. Such ideas are fraught with peril. But there is much glib talk among the ecclesias today and often it is inferred that such things are open questions.

The New Testament was written at a time when the Holy Spirit was actively manifest, guiding and building up the ecclesias. Hence there are many references to its activity in the epistles (e.g. Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; etc.). But it is a travesty of context and circumstances to apply these passages to our days. To do this is to bring confusion where once there was clarity.

If the Holy Spirit was available today, it would be plainly and indisputably manifest, as it was at Pentecost in the hands of the Apostles. Its working was always clear and unmistakable. We believe that God used Brother John Thomas to bring to light the Gospel in these last days. He believed that the Holy Spirit was not available today. Neither have faithful and devout brethren of the last 100 years made claims to possess the Holy Spirit. We believe that those who claim to have the Holy Spirit today are deceivers and have been deceived (2 Tim. 3:13).

It is appreciated that God uses whatever power He chooses to bring about His will. We pray for guidance, we seek for protection, and, when in need, we ask for health and strength. We believe that God does answer these prayers today, though we know not how or by what means. But to claim personal possession of His special powers today is untenable.

## **2. The Apocalypse**

For over one hundred years the Brotherhood has followed the continuous-historical interpretation of the Apocalypse. Sound brethren were convinced of the reasonableness of the exposition set forth in Eureka by the founding father of the faith in the last days.

But men's minds are not stable and new thoughts have crept in. Now a chorus of interpretations cry out for attention. The result is confusion and little zest for coming to grips with the last great message of the Lord. The Apocalypse is now neglected in many areas of the Brotherhood.

Such teachers have divorced the Apocalypse from the times of the Gentiles and limited its application in large measure to a period of 3½ years prior to the coming of the Lord. Thus the concept of the seals, trumpets and vials presenting the picture of

God's successive judgments upon the ungodly over the ages is set aside.

The consequences of such a view are profound. No longer is the Roman Catholic Church seen to be the mother of harlots persecuting the ecclesia over the centuries. The seals, it is said, relate to unknown events yet in the future. The coming of the Master is said to be subsequent to 3½ literal years of persecution of the ecclesia, etc. We believe that a view which leads to these ideas is illogical and unscriptural. It defies the clear historical interpretation common to the prophecy of Daniel and the Apocalypse.

We therefore sound a warning and counsel brethren to pick up again Eureka, Thirteen Lectures, and other like publications and imbibe the teaching they contain.

'The prophecies of Daniel and the things which were shortly to come to pass as given in the Royal Communication from the Court of Heaven — the Apocalypse — are almost entirely fulfilled. It is now difficult to find one verse indicating events which must take place before Jesus comes.' ('The Courts of the Women' — page 48).

## IN CONCLUSION

Some might hasten to say that much of what has been written is negative or "pin-pricking", and that true religion consists of positive things. While the latter is true and we are exhorted often by the Word to do what is positive, we are frequently warned of the dangers too. If we were sufficiently positive we should have no time for the negative.

We believe that brethren of sincerity will be in sympathy with our motive for the publication of this booklet. They will grant it a hearing, even though it might judge the thoughts and intents of their own hearts. Our desire is to raise the standards of the Household in this the hour of our Lord's appearing. God has forewarned us that His household will be slumbering at such a time, with some prepared, but with others unprepared and sound asleep and thus unable to enter into the marriage feast.

As children of light, we must separate from the darkness of the world about us, allowing no influence to "take our crown" away. The signs of the times speak plainly of the Lord's imminent return. Much that our fathers looked for has been fulfilled in a wonderful way. What a tragedy it would be to miss out on the glories of the Age to Come because of a desire to indulge in the fleeting pleasures of this transitory world. At all times and in all places we must ask ourselves the searching question: Will my attitude, my conduct, my conversation, my visit to this place, please God?

Finally, beloved brethren:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:  
For what fellowship hath righteousness, with unrighteousness?  
And what communion hath light with darkness?  
And what concord hath Christ with Belial?  
Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?  
And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?  
For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said,  
I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their  
God, and they shall be my people’.  
Wherefore 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.  
Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse  
ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting  
holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

**“DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD” (1 Cor. 10:31)**