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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

"IN QUIETNESS AND IN CONFIDENCE SHALL BE YOUR STRENGTH"

What help and inspiration can be found in God's Word through His servant Isaiah, who prophesied to Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. This was a tumultuous time in the history of God's people, and He in love and mercy provided the needed guidance and strength in their trouble.

In our recent consideration in Isaiah 30, 31, and 32, we find from the chronology that these words of God were spoken around the year 713 B.C. Turning to II Kings and II Chronicles, it is shown that this was when Sennacherib, the powerful King of Assyria, came up against Judah and Jerusalem threatening to destroy the city. It was a time of danger and fear for our brethren under King Hezekiah, a time of turmoil when thinking of the flesh was frantic: "What shall we do?" "Where shall we turn?" "Who can save us in these devastating circumstances?" Sennacherib's envoys sought to strike fear into the hearts of those in Jerusalem as they said:

" . . . What confidence is this wherein thou trustest ?
Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel
and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust,
that thou rebellest against me ?"

II Kings 18:19-20.

Knowing that Judah might consider Egypt as a source of help, these ambassadors continued:

" . . . behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised
reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go
into his hand and pierce it . . ."

Verse 21

No help from this direction. Knowing, too, of Hezekiah's trust in God, they continued with cleverness and guile.

"But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God:
. . . The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and
to destroy it." Verses 22-25

Very plausible arguments to strike terror into the hearts of those in Jerusalem.

It was in this atmosphere that Isaiah spoke the words to encourage his brethren. First there was a warning from the Almighty — Isaiah 30:1-3

“Woe to the rebellious children, . . . that take counsel, but not of me; and that covering, but not of my spirit, . . . That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; . . . Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion”.

Can we enter into the minds of our brethren in Jerusalem, beset by fear on every side, with seemingly no help wherever they looked? Upon occasion, overseen by our Father, may we not find ourselves in a similar precarious position, beset not by an invading army, but by overwhelming circumstances which seem to threaten our very living? Where can we turn? What more can we do? How ever can we put down the turmoil and the fear within? As our brethren were shown, there is help available. God’s prophet, Isaiah, whose name would speak to his Hebrew brethren, meaning **God has saved**, was there. God gave the needed help, provided the necessary deliverance. Can we, Brethren and Sisters, grasp that this same mercy is ever extended? If we will but listen and seek, His Word is **the** means of deliverance from turmoil and enduring of trial. Whether it be an adversary seeking to pull us down, or whether it be agonizing and pressuring conditions, or simply our own flesh — really our most powerful enemy — there is an outworking and a deliverance. We shall not have more than we can bear — a **promise** from God.

“IN RETURNING AND REST SHALL YE BE SAVED . . .”

Let us then listen to this strength from Isaiah to those in dread of captivity.

“For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: . . .”

Isaiah 30:15

In the infinite wisdom of the Almighty, there is help for any faced with danger, who may be torn with uncertainty, perhaps helpless with despair. Return, rest — in these we are told, “shall ye be saved.” The word for **saved** is YASHA, making up a part of Isaiah’s name which would again speak to the children of Israel — Yahweh has saved. In quietness and in confidence is your **strength**, or might, power, force.

When we despair for deliverance, long for the power shown by His mighty work, can we not find it by taking hold of what God’s counsel reveals? **Returning, Rest, Quietness, Confidence.** In these we shall find the necessary help to put away fear and soothe inner tumult.

Let us look a little more closely at what is involved in this simple and healing counsel of the Spirit given to Jerusalem in their time of peril.

RETURNING

Returning, of course, means to turn back again. If there is such a need, there must have been a turning away. Is it not true that the mind of the flesh in times of trial seeks to turn away from the difficulty and find its own way of escape? This inclination is natural but fruitless. Let us then turn away from this fleshly reaction of frantically seeking escape, and come again to the only source of unailing help.

We think of Jeremiah as he faced persecution because of the witness against his people. His position **was** desperate, his faith shaken a bit, and his apprehension great. In chapter 15: 19-21, we find God's instruction to this greatly distressed prophet:

“ . . . If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: . . . I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, . . . I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.”

We don't think of Jeremiah as one having to return to realization of God's presence, but here was clear instruction for him. It is recalled how he had found the word of God to be “the joy and rejoicing of mine heart . . .” Yet he also cried out:

“Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?”

Jeremiah 15:18

The mind of the flesh finds it very hard to submit to tribulation, uncertainty, and great fear. It is remembered that Jesus cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” in His time of agonizing — a measure of His immense struggle which no doubt brought these words of David to His mind.

What is the remedy to our fleshly thinking which can undermine the desire and ability to serve God? He has said, “Return unto me” — turn back to the thinking of the Spirit, put away the frightened voice of the flesh — fear not, I will save. Are we not appalled at how often our minds must be forced to return to the counsel of our Father, to prevent the natural inclination which leads us down paths away from Him?

REST

This is more counsel from our merciful Father through His servant Isaiah. **Rest** is also used as quiet, quietness. How difficult to be at rest when our minds are agitated by fear or the many other emotions to which we are all subject.

This word comes from a root meaning to lay, to remain, to cause to be at rest, implying a quiet waiting for the hand of the Almighty to be revealed. If there is not this quiet waiting, but rather a going in every direction at once, looking for our own solution, then God's help, His guidance, His Fatherly care and comfort can be lost, and therefore, the hoped for deliverance not received.

Let us give heed to His wisdom:

"The words of wise men are heard in **quiet** more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools."

Ecclesiastes 9:17

Because God's voice is often a still small voice, as Elijah found on Mount Horeb, if we are not quiet in spirit, relying, resting upon His promise that He will never forsake us, we may not hear His voice, and so will miss His deliverance. How very valuable, then, is the counsel of our Father through this man of God whose name is, **Yahweh has saved**, revealing so clearly that in returning our minds to Him, and in resting on His Word is the sure way of salvation.

QUIETNESS

Further the wisdom of the Almighty tells us " . . . in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: . . ."

Quietness, a different word from that used for rest, implies a settling, and in repose, giving the idea of peace or tranquility in the midst of chaos. In the time of Gideon we are told:

"Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more.

And the country was in **quietness** forty years in the days of Gideon."

Judges 8:28

Through God's hand working with Gideon, Israel's enemies were subdued, the tumult of warfare and oppression was brought to an end. Can we imagine the rejoicing in Israel as quietness pervaded their land and endured, perhaps making some more hopeful of the perfect and eternal quietness when the promised Messiah would come ?

It is of this time that Isaiah spoke:

“The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon saying, . . . no feller is come up against us.”

Isaiah 14:7-8

This hope and realization may have vanished from many minds in Jerusalem when Sennacherib came up threatening to destroy it. How difficult to know quietness in these circumstances; yet, if the mind is fixed upon God’s promise, it can be at peace, trusting in His Word. As our brethren listened to Isaiah, their spirits would revive, they could look forward even as they remembered their Father’s unfailing promise. This was to be their strength to take away fear and apprehension. Isaiah took their minds even further ahead into this longed for time of rejoicing:

“ . . . The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness **quietness** and assurance for ever.”

Isaiah 32:17

How could this be? By the hand of the Almighty accomplishing all that He has promised. Let us get hold of this and hang on!

CONFIDENCE

An essential need, if we are to find and keep the strength, the mighty power which is available from our merciful God, is **confidence**. This comes from a word meaning refuge, safety, hope, assurance. How vital for strength is hope and assurance in the Almighty, for He **is** our strength. Jesus had that certainty to sustain Him in His agonizing to obey. We read of His mind expressed in Psalm 16:8-10.

“I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, . . . my flesh also shall rest in hope (confidence). For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (the grave); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

No doubt this hope was Jesus’ strength all through His time of probation, helping Him to be subject to what God required. If only we, Brethren and Sisters, could grasp and hold this same confidence strong in our hearts, how much more pleasing we could be to the One who has so graciously called us to Himself.

Perhaps we can turn now with greater insight to Isaiah’s words,

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance (confidence) for ever."

Isaiah 32:17.

" . . . A KING SHALL REIGN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS "

When is this promised blessing to come about? When this evil world has turned from its evil ways and is subject to the righteousness of God. This will come as we are told by Isaiah:

"A king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement. And a man (Christ) shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Isaiah 32:1-2.

What a wonderful, uplifting promise!

In contrast, how far removed these words and this promise must have seemed to those in Jerusalem, threatened by destruction through the might of Assyria.

Rab-shakeh, the envoy from Assyria, taunted them —

" . . . What **confidence** is this wherein thou trustest?"

II Kings 18:19

— despising the power of the God of Israel. Yet because of God's words through Isaiah, those in Jerusalem were able to **return, to rest**, to be in **quietness**, and to move in **confidence**, and so found the deliverance and strength needed. God became, once again, their assurance, confounding the mightiest power in the earth.

As we are called upon to face difficulties, trials, the terrors and doubts of the flesh, let us turn to the source of all help, remembering Jesus' words,

"Let not your heart be troubled: (roiled or stirred up) ye believe in God, believe also in me."

John 14:1

Let us look with hope that He will soon come, and with assurance that His works of righteousness will indeed bring peace, and the result of His work will be quietness and assurance for ever.

J.A.DeF

“GIVE GLORY TO THE LORD, YOUR GOD . . .”

We have been helped many times as we come to the Lord's Table to be reminded of our place in the sight of God, and the relationship of the Lord Jesus to His Father, the One who paid the price in order to keep alive the hope of redemption. To consider our position as being called, and give the opportunity to glorify God is truly a blessed position, one which shows God's mercies, His grace, and our response should be one of giving glory to Him:

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called;

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are,

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;

That, according as it is written He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.”

1 Cor. 1:26-31

This is our calling, and the need is to recognize what we are called out to do. Does the above scripture not tell us clearly what our calling is, what God looks for in our endeavor to please Him? “That, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.” The thinking of the flesh cannot do anything pleasing or glorifying to God. It is only as the Spirit is allowed to control the fleshly thinking that glory can be given to God and that we can truly honour Him as it mentions in verse 31.

We read in the record of Jeremiah where these words are taken from, and perhaps are helped there to see this glory which we are to emulate:

“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord”.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Here God defines what delights Him and shows us what He is really like — that He shows “loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth”. The fact that God is like this speaks to us of how we must be. “. . . let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me . . .” If we know and understand what God requires we will be helped to glorify and give honour to Him.

Part of the root word of “**glory**” is “**to think**” and at first this perhaps does not seem to tie in with what God looks for in us. But, if we recognize the need of the spirit to exercise thought and restraint on the flesh, we can see that only one who exercises clear, purposeful thinking can dominate his flesh. We only have to think of our daily circumstances when we have failed. In many instances we can say, “If only I’d thought about this, I would not have moved in that direction!” Having every thought in subjection — wasn’t this what Jesus did, as well as depending upon God’s thoughts and directions, allowing the Spirit to control His living? Jeremiah spoke in the same vein in chapter 13:10 —

“This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be like this girdle, which is good for nothing”.

Also verses 15-16:

“Hear, and give ear; be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord, your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.”

In these verses Jeremiah tells us how important it is to give glory to God and to recognize our flesh for what it is, proud, corrupt, “good for nothing”, but rather let us hear the voice of the Spirit which leads us to light. Our flesh can cause us to stumble, we can lose the light which He has shown to us if we fail to give glory to God. The prophet Malachi also spoke in a similar way in chapter 2:1-2:

“And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give

glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart."

Here was a message coming to the priests, those who should have known and understood what God was like, in order to help the people know God more completely. But here we see that even in the priesthood there was no desire to "lay it to heart". Just as God's message to His priests pointed out, blessings can be removed if we do not follow in the appointed way to glorify His name.

One who did not take the blessings of God lightly and who battled daily with His flesh to glorify God was the Lord Jesus, let us listen to His words:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven."

Matt. 5:14-16

Jesus' words here perhaps take on a different meaning when we consider our lights are to shine forth — to work in our living to show our good works, which stem from God and so glorify Him. How do our good works glorify God? Because our good actions are based upon thinking and moving, allowing the Spirit to overrule our flesh so that all who come to know us recognize a greater power, a righteous power rules our living. Jesus was a perfect example of One whose good works shone forth to glorify God. His works glorified God even in the face of adversity and the sore temptation of His Flesh.

Peter speaks of the sore trials in store for those who wish to glorify God in I Peter 4:12-14.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

Isn't this what Jesus faced during His time of witnessing? He was evil spoken of, in fact with such vehemence that many desired to kill Him and put Him out of their midst. We find perhaps in a lesser extent the same reproach, what is our response to it? As Peter exhorts us, we are to rejoice in those afflictions knowing that the "spirit of glory and of God resteth upon (us)". Further, God does know and allows those circumstances to come upon us. Why? To help us value more fully what we have been given, the knowledge of the Kingdom of God and His Son Jesus Christ, through whom redemption is possible.

As we strive to glorify God in our living what a witness this can be to any who may be observing:

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshy lusts which war against the soul, Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

I Peter 2:11-12

We can see from Peter's words just how important it is to allow the light that we have been given to shine forth, that we might through our actions, stimulate in the day of visitation some to glorify God.

The words of David also give us help in Psalm 50:23

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that **ordereth his conversation** aright will I show the salvation of God."

To those who can order their thinking are promised a revelation of His salvation.

We are told in I Cor. 6:20:

"For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

There is no room for self here. Self isn't mentioned; but rather, that we **cannot** be our own, cannot live unto ourselves. Living unto self gives no glory to God, but instead worships the flesh, pandering to its wants and desires. If we can attune our spirit, having our "conversation" or living, honest before God and man, then we can by our good works give glory to God, giving witness of that blessed light he has allowed us to know.

M.C.S.

The Fight against the Flesh
From the readings of the day.

The second chapter of the book of Judges which we have in our readings for today commences:-

“And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this ?”

(Judges 2:1-2)

Yes, the angel of the Lord; the one who had God's message came from Gilgal! The place where there was a commencement of a new life for the people of God. So we read:-

“Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt them they had not circumcised.

For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: unto whom the Lord swore that he would not shew them the land, which the Lord swore unto their fathers that he would give us a land that floweth with milk and honey.

And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by he way.

And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.”

(Joshua 5:5-7 and 9)

The angel, or messenger, came from this place Gilgal to Bochim (Bochim means the place of the weepers). Why did they weep? Because of the impact of the message from God. That message we see as follows:-

“Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the Lord."

(Judges 2:3-5)

In the margin of the Bible Bochim is rendered "weepers".

Yes, Israel were smitten in conscience and dismayed at the news. They knew what the messengers had said was true. They **had** joined themselves with the alien in making leagues with them; they had not obeyed the voice, the good counsel of God. The result would be suffering. "They shall be as thorns in your sides." As they looked to the future they could see it was going to be harder for them, because they were going to be constantly pricked and hurt by the alien for they had allowed them to encroach upon themselves as briars and thorns encroach and tear in the field.

Here is a lesson. Overlook the good counsel of God. Reject what He has advised and commanded, and we pay for it by suffering.

But even as they wept, we see that Israel sacrificed unto the Lord, accepting their affliction. Agreeing it was just, and what they deserved. And we can see from this chapter, that though they would suffer at that time, it would not be such suffering that it would be too great for them to be able to endure it. No, for the people in the difficulties, which they need not have had, were still helped to serve God; helped to turn to Him. And so there are the words recorded which give assurance that God will not allow what is greater than can be borne.

"And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel."

(Judges 2:6-7)

Coming now to the second reading for today, we see the voice of God in protest against the people of God who turn to the world for help.

“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.”
(Isaiah 31:1-2)

Perhaps we ought to focus on that last phrase “He — — — will arise — — — against the help of them that work iniquity.” Because of His work with His people, God will be against any help that the alien might offer to the faltering people of God, that is if the so called help is of that type to cause them to stumble even more. Why is this? Because God desires His people to turn to Him. Hence the exhortation from God:-

“Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.”
(Isaiah 31:6)

Significantly therefore the next chapter takes the mind of the faltering people of God forward.

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment.

And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall harken.

The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.”

(Isaiah 32:1-4)

Why are these words so near to the other words in the message we are considering? Surely to help the faltering ones; failing by seeking for the wrong help, to turn to Him who only can give them righteousness, judgment, a hiding place, protection as a “covert”, with eyes to see, ears to hear, and help to turn from rashness, hastiness, to that which is the knowledge (the knowing how) to control such a tendency. The appeal, the exhortation of God, to hear and be saved comes with great force of impact:-

“Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.

Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.”

(Isaiah 32:9-10)

Why does God say to the careless, “give ear to my speech?” Surely for one purpose only; that thy may be saved.

Coming now to our third reading we have the beseeching words, not to allow trouble to shake the mind.

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that day of Christ is at hand.”

(2 Thess. 2:1-2)

These words are so recorded because the Spirit knows that human nature in the Truth can be easily shaken (i.e. soon shaken). The beseeching of the Apostle was for such who were troubled, to recall “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”, and as a consequence “our gathering together unto him”.

To remember (and these words seem to be particularly appropriate for these last days) “that the day of Christ is at hand.”

So, says the Spirit through the Apostle, do not be “soon shaken” or “be troubled”. And there is that meaningful phrase to consider “nor (not even) by letter (message) as from us”.

Why this exhortation? Is it that there is a danger even, of being shaken by wholesome words of truth? What help there is for us, in the living message of God. Satan (the adversary) is at work. It's power is described in some very searching words:-

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

(2 Thess. 2:10-12)

Satan offers a shallow pleasure, in the unrighteousness of its ways.

We are called upon to fight against being so drawn away from the Truth, and of being cut off.

So in conclusion there is that verse which is so apt for our consideration:-

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word, or our epistle.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”

(2 Thess. 2:15-17)

Yes, if we “stand fast”, *comfort will come, and an establishing*, for that is the Spirit’s desire as shown here, for all who respond even though in affliction.



“ . . . Thy Gentleness Hath Made Me Great . . . ”

As we have followed the progress of the Lord Jesus and His disciples in the record of Mark, we are given to understand more fully how we must combat our flesh and look to the Lord Jesus as our example.

As the disciples journeyed together to Jerusalem, Jesus gave an example to instruct them concerning the Kingdom of God. We read of the disputing among the disciples as they went on their way, and Jesus asked: “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way ?”-

“But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.”

Mark 9:33-35

The disputing was obviously one of the flesh — one in which there was a questioning among the followers of Jesus who should be the greatest. Jesus' response however, certainly caused them to look within themselves with humiliation.

To illustrate His teaching, Jesus took a little child into their midst in verses 36-37:

“And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them; and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.”

Here Jesus was teaching His disciples to perceive what was necessary in order to be received by God. Using that child, He sat him in the midst, and as they looked on the child, their perception of themselves was perhaps brought to shame. They too would realize how unwise and unlearned it was to question as they did.

In the same circumstance as mentioned above and recorded in Matthew, we are given more insight into what Jesus would have them learn:

“At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven ?

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. 18:1-3

Here perhaps is a perception that is important for us to consider. Jesus told the disciples there could be no entrance into the Kingdom of God until they were **converted**.

This word converted means to twist, to turn around or to reverse. This speaks in a spiritual sense of turning around our thinking from the flesh's viewpoint to the thinking of a little child. “Except ye be converted, and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Certainly this example was a help to the disciples and can be for us as well, as we struggle to attain the spirit of a little child. Verses 4 and 5 help in this regard:

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me."

Here Jesus points out clearly how there might be an entering into the kingdom promised.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child . . ." In humility is there a view toward greatness? Jesus, whose flesh could have aspired to be great, instead submitted to the Spirit, humbling Himself in the sight of God. Through His humility he learned to value the instruction sent from His Father, through all the trials and tribulations that He suffered.

Isn't it very much like the flesh to raise up and make itself proud in the sight of others? Pride or confidence in oneself does not allow any room for trust in God or in our brethren and sisters, or trust in the things which happen to us to help teach of the value of God's instruction.

Humility is a trait which God has required from the beginning. God has been longsuffering from the days of Adam in order to show to His children the child-like faith He looks for. In the Psalms there is the example of David as he receives the Word and allows it to work within him:

"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:
and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness
hath made me great."

Psalm 18:35

David said God's gentleness had made him great. This is what Jesus perceived, that His Father's help and ability to lead Him would aspire to this greatness, to salvation in the end. "Thy right hand hath holden **(or supported)** me up." If one feels he is great and needs no help, there is no need to seek support. This perhaps is what the disciples failed to see and what we at times also fail to perceive. If we cannot be humbled and perceive God's gentleness, we have missed a valuable lesson which God desires we have, in order to strive towards salvation.

Jesus utilized this opportunity to teach His disciples of humility and to consider which should be most important, themselves? — or the work appointed to them? The disciples were undoubtedly left with the desire to be helped and strengthened through His example. Jesus' words in Mark 10 perhaps tie into this lesson He was teaching:

“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's.

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”

Mark 10:28-31

Jesus made it clear there would be gain in this life but with persecutions. Yet, through the persecutions there could be eternal life and the promise of the Kingdom of God to come.

How can we then attain to the Kingdom and seek the humbleness of a little child ?

Perhaps we are helped as we consider I Peter 5:10

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour;

Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

How much we must value our trials for they are as Peter says to “stablish, strengthen and settle (us)”. As we struggle with our adversary, the flesh, we must remember to show forth a spirit which is humble, as was displayed by the Lord Jesus during His overcoming.

We must also perceive what God is like, in order to have His gentleness work in us, that which ultimately can make us great:

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of punishment.”

I Peter 2:9

God knows our heart and knows how to deliver us, if we will receive His help, guidance and direction. The disciples must have received the Lord Jesus' instruction for He delivered them from the temptation of pride as they disputed amongst themselves. We too will be helped to overcome our temptations by putting on the meekness and gentleness only God can provide. If we strive to attain the humility of a little child, we can be His servants, His children and truly will be great in the eyes of God our Father.

M.C.S.

“The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the World”

“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people — — —”. (Zechariah 12:3)

As recent events in the Middle East have shown, Jerusalem and the surrounding area continues to be a burden for all people. American, French and Italian troops who left Beirut in the summer following their peace keeping role at the time of the departure of the Palestinians are at the time of writing now wending their way back to keep the peace again, following the assassination of the new Lebanese President and the massacre in West Beirut.

The United States President has a plan for the Palestinian problem as part of a policy for Middle East peace. This denies Israel's claim to sovereignty over the Jordan West Bank, captured by Israel in 1967. Instead proposes full autonomy for the territory in association with Jordan.

Israel's news media has said that condemnation of Israel by the United States and other nations over the massacres in West Beirut, making Israel appear to be at blame (though it was Lebanese soldiers who did the killing) is an attempt to weaken Israel's resistance to the American plan. America has now been warned not to treat Israel like South Vietnam, for “Jerusalem is not Saigon”.

Meanwhile the P.L.O. leader has been to Rome to see the Pope, and blamed the United States and Israel for the Lebanese President's assassination which he said was a pretext for the Israeli army's renewed push into West Beirut.

Israel criticised the Pope for meeting the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. The Vatican hit back by accusing Jerusalem of “disrespectful language” towards the spiritual leader of the world's seven hundred and fifty million Roman Catholics. This harsh rejoinder has stunned diplomats and brought relations between the Vatican and Israel to one of their lowest points since the Jewish State was proclaimed in 1948.

Yes, what a situation it all is, "a burdensome stone for all people".

But the prophecy also records that "in that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem". (verse 8)

D.L.

News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK: Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Sunday School 1.30 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Orchard Park and Buffalo Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

The message received from the Manchester fraternal gathering brought to our minds a greater awareness of how close indeed is the bond of unity and love found only on His House.

We rejoice at the continued sincere interest of one seeking the only way of salvation and pray for His guidance in this work.

Supplications continue for those in illness, in trial and for those who are heavily laden, that His hand may work to heal and to support. **J. A. D_eF.**

"PENTRIP" Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek:

It has been our privilege to meet with Sister Heason, Brother and Sister W. G. Butterfield here on Sundays 5th and 12th September.

The exhortations being very helpful at this time, and we realise the effort that was made also for our mutual help. As we hear the news each day, we feel blessed in all we are receiving, the companionship and the efforts on the part of the brethren to build up. **per D.L.**

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: 7.30 p.m. in the ante room to large hall, Wednesday evening.

The world is being shaken with many disastrous events as perhaps never before in history.

Ecclesial life, whilst experiencing the hope which gives comfort and peace, is not without some corresponding difficulties, which are a test of faith enabling the people of Christ to endure through the wonderful mercy God most surely bestows.