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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

"THE LORD SHALL FIGHT FOR YOU . . ."

As the hand of God has been felt in our midst, working in His unlimited wisdom and power, how grateful we feel at His extended hope of deliverance from the bondage to the law of sin and death. How appropriate and helpful in this blessing are the words of Moses read in Exodus 15. This is the song of Moses and Israel, the song of those redeemed — words of rejoicing and thanksgiving as they were delivered out of the bondage of Egypt by the power and mercy of their God. Moses said, and we can join in his words:

"The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." Verse 2

Recognizing their wondrous deliverance, Moses and Israel yearned to glorify God, to acknowledge that He was indeed their strength, and desired above all to prepare Him an habitation. What would that habitation be? Let us think on this for a moment. We remember Israel was entering the wilderness, having no abiding place, no place to call "home", but dwelling in tents. They had not yet come to Sinai with all the help God gave there, so they had not yet built the divinely patterned tabernacle. Accordingly, we realize that this habitation of which Moses and his brethren sang and were determined in gratitude to build, was to be a preparation of their heart, that God might dwell there. In order for God to dwell in the hearts of His people, whether it be Moses, Israel, or a few even today, there first must be a putting out of that heart anything which would hinder or offend God. The flesh with all its lusts and desires must be cut off. This is painful, difficult to accomplish, for the flesh hates to be denied. Yet the Father has ordained; His desire is clear as we are reminded from Paul's word:

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

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

I Corinthians 6:19-20.

Was this not Moses' recognition as he spoke the words of this song, just having been miraculously redeemed along with all of Israel?

"Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which **thou hast redeemed**: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." Exodus 15:13.

We find that **redeemed** used here means in the Hebrew to purchase or to ransom — clear evidence of Moses' conviction that he and his people had indeed been bought with a price. What a great price! Their minds would go back those few days to the Passover, to the lamb whose blood saved from death their first-born; a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God whose life would be given to save all His brethren and sisters from the sentence of death. Here was their ransom, their means of redemption, the price paid. As our brethren contemplated God's provision, His deliverance, would they not perceive that they were valued by their Father; so, feeling humble gratitude and rejoicing in that redemption, would they not glorify God in their body and in their spirit? Can we, then, Brethren and Sisters, rejoice with Israel, sing praise unto God in our hearts, striving harder to prepare Him an habitation within us?

To help us more fully esteem that redemption, do we not need to look back over what the Almighty has done for us, even as did Moses and Israel as they stood on the shore, having just come out of the Red Sea? Prior to their deliverance from Egypt, God had promised:

" . . . I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God . . . " Exodus 6:6-7.

As our brethren stood upon those shores, having indeed been delivered, and having seen the might of Pharaoh destroyed, they would remember the words of this promise; and, they would unite in the heart-felt words of their song which we have read this morning. What power God had shown on their behalf, in bringing the plagues upon Egypt, then providing the Passover lamb to save! These things would be in their minds. Then as they went out of Egypt, He continued to work for them:

" . . . God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea; and the children of Israel went up **harnessed** out of the land of Egypt." Exodus 13:18

God led as He knew was best for them; not the easy way, not the shortest way, but the right one. As they travelled **His** way, we are told, they "went up **harnessed**."

What is meant by this? The word means **armed**. We recall that Israel was a captive people, virtually slaves in Egypt. They had no bow, arrows, swords, chariots, or armour. Although a great multitude of people, they were not an army. How, then, could they be so "harnessed"? Would it be that their God was their strength, their sword, their buckler? **How?** We are told:

" . . . The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night."

Exodus 13:21.

He was their strength. **He** was their guide. **His** light was always there to show the path. If any doubted, feared, they had only to look up and see either the cloud or the glowing fire — they **knew** He was there! Was this their **harnessing**?

However, being frail and still doubting, in spite of God's evident presence, when Pharaoh and his army were seen pursuing, Israel trembled. How natural, how like our own weaknesses which can make us doubt! Yet, if we can only keep in mind **Who** is leading, giving light; if we can remember to look up above present circumstances, what strength may be found in seeing and feeling the presence of the Almighty. In our weakness, we may say that today there is no cloud, no fire. But He "is" there, ready to help, to be a strong defense against the adversary, if we can learn to trust and look up to Him. Moses, knowing the weakness of the human mind, said, as Israel trembled:

" . . . Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today: . . . The **Lord shall fight for you**, and ye shall hold your peace."

Exodus 14:13-14.

In a time of trial, of danger, of great fear, how difficult it is to stand still and wait for God to show His strength. We would prefer to take things into own hands in some way. How hard it is, Brethren and Sisters, to remember that **we are** going forth "harnessed"; not in our own power, but in the total certainty that "the Lord shall fight for you" — and, in that conviction, to stand still, hold our peace, and wait upon Him. At Moses' exhortation, Israel did just this, and were blessed in being allowed to experience the unbelievable deliverance:

“ . . . the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them (Egypt), but it gave light by night to these (Israel): so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

Exodus 14:19-20.

Here was protection, God's perfect care — the Father fighting for those who waited on Him. At a later time of deliverance for those who trusted in Him, the Father spoke through His prophet Isaiah:

“For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight (in fear): for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.”

Isaiah 52:12.

He is truly there as a wall — a barrier, both before and behind — a force to hedge in and protect His people. This was true in the time of Moses, of Isaiah, and can certainly be so today. Let us then be quick to lift up our eyes above the present trials, and believe that His Presence has seen all which is before us, and is preparing the way. Then let us in our minds look behind — look at our Father's past helps and deliverances — and take strength, aware of His armour, His Presence — our rereward. Indeed, let us stand still, waiting for His power to work, remembering that with Israel, we may know that wondrous “harnessing”.

“BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES . . .”

It has been seen how Moses lifted up his rod and the waters parted allowing Israel to cross:

“ . . . the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.”

Exodus 14:22.

Can we enter into the minds of our brethren in that time of dread — filled with awe, but grateful for God's power to deliver? Yet as they looked to the right and to the left, seeing the high walls of water, they no doubt were apprehensive. “What if those walls collapsed; we would be destroyed!” But they could look up and there was the cloud, reassuring that God was indeed right there. Then Pharaoh and his army followed them into the

sea. They, too, would look upon those walls of water with fear, but they had no cloud, no God who would fight for them; but, rather, they had only His enmity:

“ . . . it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.

And took off their chariot wheels . . . : so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; **for the Lord fighteth for them** against the Egyptians.” Exodus 14:24-25

Even in the eyes of Israel's enemies, it was recognized who fought for them, how they were indeed harnessed. As a consequence of God's power, Pharaoh and his army were destroyed as God caused the walls of water to collapse and be a means of wiping out the power of Egypt.

As Moses and Israel witnessed this horrendous destruction, as they realized that the Lord did so miraculously fight for them, how humbly and gratefully they would give thanks.

“But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; . . .

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day . . .

And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people **feared** . . . and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.” Exodus 14:29-31.

Along with the perception of how God fought for them, came godly fear and true belief, a conviction that they were going forth “harnessed,” that the Almighty was surely with them.

Perhaps we may feel not as close to His presence today — may not feel He is our armour. To help us be closer to the experiences of our brethren, Paul writes:

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

And were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

Corinthians 10:1-4

— — — and then he continues:

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:
and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the
ends of the world are come." Verse 11.

Do we not know, Brethren and Sister, the wondrous redemption
of baptism, being born of the water and the Spirit of which Jesus
said to Nicodemus:

" . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5.

Do we not eat each first day of the week of the bread of life?
Do we not seek to drink the water of which Jesus spoke:

" . . . whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give
him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him
shall be in him a well of water springing up into ever-
lasting life." John 4:14.

Are not these God's provisions for us, His help, His "harnessing"
in these days which are "the ends of the world"? Can we not
then heed Paul's admonition, and take courage from the examples
of our brethren of old? Let us discern that the Almighty is close
at hand, ready to strengthen in the trials we face in today's
world. He knows each of His children, knows what is required
to put down each one's particular weakness, and stands ready
to help as there is a turning to Him.

What a great deal is involved in preparing Him an habitation.
How few there are today, Brethren and Sisters, who are prepared
to put away all that can crowd Him out of their hearts and lives.
There are so many attractive activities which our flesh seeks
out. Are we ready to carefully fill our lives **first** with the works
of Him, our Father, and those of His house — a priority the
natural man avoids?

Help has been found in this struggle from the experiences of
our brethren in the wilderness, sharing with them the hope Moses
expressed in his song of praise, and acknowledgment:

"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain
of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou
hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord,
which thy hands have established." Exodus 15:17.

His hands are working today, fighting for His people, preparing an habitation, an everlasting abiding place, in which He will dwell when Jesus returns. Signs in the earth reveal that this great event must be near at hand; let us heed Jesus' words:

“ . . . when these things begin to come to pass, then **look up**, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”
Luke 21:28.

J.A. DeF.



HOPE

We have recently been reading in the Psalms and have been privileged to learn from these pruned words of David the son of Jesse. As we study them, we can perhaps be helped as David was, to value the help found therein. For instance in Psalm 146:5 we read:

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,
whose hope is in the Lord, his God;”

David recognized how blessed a position he held as one having the God of Jacob for a helper and Father, and he was one who did hold great hope in the Lord.

The word **happy** we know from previous considerations means blessed — but as used in this reference also means straight, level, giving the thought of balanced, surrounding protection also to aid or succour. With these more precise meanings in mind we can see how valuable the help of God is, an aid to balance our living. We do all need God's help, yet are reminded by David that in order to have that blessing we must have the hope of God, the hope He holds out to us. This word **hope** means to expect with patience. This is what the Psalms in essence speak to us of — the hope He shows forth, and not only the hope, but also the great help to maintain that hope, the balance that is so necessary in order to live the life God looks for in His children. We are helped further in another Psalm, 46:7.

“The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge, Selah.”

Refuge immediately brings to mind a safe haven, but it also means a high retreat; and isn't this exactly what God provides, a higher plane where thoughts can escape the cares of this life, looking forward to the promises extended? David recognized the need to look on High in order to get a balance and direction in his life. This word Selah also mentioned in the above verse is associated with the hope held out meaning to value the hope that our Father extends. Why is that important? If we can hope and look to the end of God's purpose, how great a refuge it can be in our struggles to overcome our flesh and keep our minds directed on things above.

We can read in the Scriptures of the many circumstances in which David was helped and sustained through difficult and often dangerous situations, yet he knew there was a promise, a refuge held out if he could but overcome. In Psalm 20:1-2 entitled “To the one who overcomes — a Psalm of David” we read:

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;
Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion."

Here is the same message repeated by David phrased in different wording, yet looking to the end of the purpose of God. ". . . the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" . . . or as the margin reads "set thee up on high". This is what God promises to those who look on high and hope for His mercy, and as there is a calling on Him in the time of trouble, the God of Jacob will allow us to know His mercies.

So often in the Psalms we see David calling upon the name of God for assistance and succour, knowing that help and strength would be provided by a merciful Father for a heart who was trying to be right. Psalm 84 also speaks of this high plane of hope:

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them;" (verse 5)

"Ways of them" is another way of saying the "high ways to Zion" as the margin explains. So here again we see what is necessary to value the hope set before us.

Blessings granted if there is strength in God, allowing the heart to think about God, then the high ways to Zion are provided by God. This isn't easy as we all know, and we are tested daily to see if we are truly looking to those high ways.

"Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength everyone of them in Zion appeareth before God.
O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah." verses 6-8

Again we see the word "Selah", value it considering the end. Didn't David recognize here that the overcoming, the way of being made smooth as is the title of this Psalm, "to the sons of Korah", would be a difficult process? Yet, he knew God would be there beside him to help him go from strength to strength. David's singleness of purpose is also reflected in this Psalm. "Passing through the valley of weeping make it a spring; the rain also filleth the pools" or "the early rain covereth it with blessings."

David's desire was to be filled with that strength which comes from on high, just as were many other faithful brethren of old such as Isaiah. Turning to Isaiah 40:31-

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.”

How often the prophet Isaiah found himself to be weary and faint. Yet, if there was a waiting on God, and the mind placed on higher things, how well he knew that each day would bring a renewing of strength, the mounting up like eagles, the running and not being weary. Another who knew like help was Jeremiah and we read in Jeremiah 3:22-25

“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning:

great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.”

We know how deplorable were the circumstances in Israel during Jeremiahs time, yet how much help he derived from God, the same help available to us today if we wait and look to Him. We too can be renewed every day and keep alive the hope set before us as the message continues in verse 26:

“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.”

Isn't this very much the spirit of David — to wait patiently for the working out of God's purpose with him, knowing that he had the God of Jacob for his help. No matter what his circumstances, or how difficult the way, he could remember that God was his source of help and strength his only means of succour. Can we not also find strength from these thoughts, recognizing they are given as a means of life — a hope held out to us? Our hope must be that of David's — a lively hope that recognizes the balanced position and the help that can be provided if we are mindful of the things which are to come which God has promised. Can we now be happy and enjoy the blessings He provides — that we are surrounded and helped and sustained as we think on high, as we think of those things which come freely from a merciful Father's hand.

M.C.S.

JACOB

When men are in great distress they are often caused to reflect upon their misdemeanours and failures, especially if they think that the end of their life is near. Sober reflections and regrets pass at such a time before their mental gaze in rapid order. They feel wretched, afraid, and unprepared. Yet such an out look is better than the sheer ignorance of some who to the very end are too proud to admit failure in their own conscience, and therefore do not bend in any way. The world calls such individuals brave men because of their determined attitude. Brave they may have been, but they are not true even to themselves, therefore their pride is so great that acute adversity cannot break it.

Jacob was a man who experienced great fear and distress. There were times when he had really nothing to fear, but did not know this. On one occasion, Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Flashing before Jacob's mind was his deception of his Father Isaac in his younger times and particularly the outmanoeuvring of his brother in the birthright and the blessing.

Jacob was not so proud that he prepared for the situation with reckless bravery. Instead he became broken in his own self knowledge of past failure. Hence words preserved all these centuries, not only as a record, but also for our benefit:-

“And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me,
Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee.

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan;
and now I am become two bands.

Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”
(Genesis 32:9-12)

The attitude of Jacob, the appeal, the subjection and the broken spirit was that which the scripture implies as being the one which God can respond to. Let us note there was no expression, I shall be protected for God is with me and has told me to return to the land of Canaan and has promised that He will do me good.

It is undoubtedly good to have courage, through trust and faith in God, but if there is the thought with this courage, "that I am so right and favoured that it is bound to turn out all right" — then pride has entered and though things may still turn out alright, in the long term this will not be the case.

Jacob, when under what appeared to be a threat, realised his own unworthiness, hence his anxiety for God's help, wondering whether he was worthy of it. He was undoubtedly uncertain of his own position, though he was most certain that God could help him if he could only find favour with God. Yes, God had said return to the land and his kindred. God had showed mercy to him, as he had so often experienced. God had revealed all the Truth to him. God had indeed said that He would surely do him good. Moreover God had said that his offspring would be as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered. But on the other hand, Esau was coming with four hundred men! Esau, whom he had wronged, and how unworthy he had been.

So there was no false pride in the reflections of this man, whose life is recorded in its details for our instruction. Only a great desire that God would so forgive him, and be so merciful to him, as to preserve him from the fear of the evil which he thought was approaching. There was no hesitancy in Jacob's mind whether God could really help him, he knew God could, if only he could find forgiveness and favour.

As the sun sank low over the Mediterranean Sea, as the darkness fell upon Jacob, he found that he was not alone, for a man stood by him!

Who was this man? Surely an answer from God, to his appeal, and so he took hold upon what God had given. Here was only one man, and Esau had four hundred, but if this man was from God then here was hope, even though he knew he was so unworthy. I must have this help, though it be but one man; so he clung on; so desperate was he, in his fear and need.

But the man wanted to go. Why did he want to go? Why could he not stay? would be Jacob's mind. Why had he come if he was now going to go away again? Jacob was indeed desperate at the thought of the departure of one who had visited him in his jeopardy; and who was now to go, leaving him again on his own to face Esau and four hundred men. Surely if the man was determined to go, at least he, Jacob, could prevail upon him to give him a word of encouragement, a message, counsel, an assurance. "Bless me"; 'Bless me! 'I can't let you go unless you

do!!' I am so desperate and needy and feeling so weak and so low, that my very need is giving me such strength to hold on to you. Jacob's great feeling of weakness prevented him from loosening his grip. Assure me — "Bless Me".

So coming down the ages we hear of another blessing which Jacob obtained in what could be termed an unorthodox way as he obtained the previous blessings of the birthright, and his father Isaac's blessing.

"And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there."

(Gen. 32:27-39).

Jacob felt comforted now, he felt a quiet assurance coming back into his very soul. His desperation evaporated for he now knew what he had been striving to come to terms with, and he reflected that it was a marvellous thing that he was still alive!

"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel:
for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

(verse 30)

And it was not a dream. No! He was limping, his thigh was out of joint. How marvellous and wonderful that he had endured through that night and lived to see another day!

But as he advanced to meet his brother, knowing he had been given the title of "a prince with God", his head was not held high, his figure was not held erect, there was no external show, he was a limping, humbled figure. But there was no longer a storm in his soul, he had calmed. After surviving such a night as that he knew he would now grapple with something far less though appearing more formidable.

So we see Jacob bowing as he approached Esau, bowing and approaching and bowing again (seven times) And we hear those words:-

"And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? and he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my Lord.

And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

And Jacob said, Nay I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it."

(Gen. 33:8-11)

So here was Jacob's amends, and we note those words "I have enough" (margin Heb. because I have ALL THINGS)

Yes, Esau had been wronged, but did not care about God. Jacob knew his unworthiness. But he **did** care and this in God's mercy was acceptable.

A comfort and a message of hope for these last days preserved from so long ago.



The Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World.

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety — — —."

(1 Thess. 5:3).

In these days of disturbance, gloom, violence and threat, much effort, though at times obscured by more sensational news, is taking place for the purpose of achieving peace and safety. Certainly this is something the world is in dire need of.

The Pope has again visited his native land Poland. At the mountain village of Czestochowa a huge crowd of a million people were gathered outside the Jasna Gora Monastery. The Pope said the State should serve the common good of society, he appealed to his audience to keep an open mind on the possibility of reconciliation, saying, "I am the nation's son and feel all its pains, its wish to live in truth, freedom, justice and social solidarity.

The road of reconciliation through God is also the road to peace. Hatred is a destructive force. We must not let it destroy ourselves."

In Warsaw previously the Pope had been most outspoken: He expressed his sympathy with compatriots "who are most acutely tasting the bitterness of disappointment, humiliation, suffering, of being deprived of their freedom, of having their dignity trampled on." This theme was in connection with dissidents who are still in detention despite the partial relaxation of martial law in Poland at the end of last year.

At Katowice a congregation of nearly two million people heard the Pope say — — "a people's right to free association is not a right conceded by someone, since it is a properly innate right. Hence this right is not given to us by the State. The State has the obligation only to protect and guard it so that it not violated. This right is given by the Creator, who made man as a social being. From the Creator comes the social character of human aspirations, the need to join together and to unite with one another."

Meanwhile Russia had a special meeting in Moscow for East European Communist leaders. In an official statement in Pravda, Russia called on the United States, Britain, France and China to join in a freeze on nuclear arsenals, but at the same time consideration was being given to what the Soviet Union would do once the first American medium-range missiles are installed in Britain and West Germany, due to be positioned in December.

About the same time a "World Peace Assembly" met in Prague. Amongst those assembled were officials representing the British organisers of the "Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament". The World Peace Council is funded by national movements across the world in one hundred and thirty seven countries.

At the conference the Czechoslovakian President strongly criticised the American decision to deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe, saying that the Western world was now being led by the "most reactionary Imperialist forces". Dentente was "disappearing before our eyes", he said. "Even the most thunderous propaganda cannot conceal the fact that this dangerous course is being directed against the Socialist countries which are standing firmly and consistently on the side of peace."

So there is much talk about "Peace and safety". Much is being said about the need for unity. But what really matters is what the scriptures has to say about the coming "day of the Lord". It speaks most clearly and definitely:-

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them — — —."

(1 Thess. 5:3)



FAITHFUL WOUNDS OF A FRIEND

(Proverbs 27:6)

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Can a friend wound and yet be a friend? Yes, if he be a true friend he can, for this scripture says so! Because he **is** faithful and **shows** himself to be faithful to the **one** so wounded. He does not wound to destroy. He is most careful how he treats his friend. But sometimes a wound is necessary to **help** his friend; and because he does it skilfully and with obvious concern, the friend will be bound to realise this, if that friend values the friendship. It will be obvious that what is being done and said is because the welfare of such is in the heart of the one who acts in such a way.

The context of this Proverb may help us. Certain things are mentioned:-

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” (Prov. 27:6)

Yes, wrath is cruel and wounding; anger is outrageous, how greatly that can wound and inflict! Envy, yes, it will bring down and wound if it can. Those who act in this way to others cannot be their friends. But lest we become victims of form and platitude another verse is inserted:-

“Open rebuke is better than secret love.” (verse 5)

Plain and faithful speaking prudently given, is not in the category of wrath, anger or envy. A friend who can speak freely to a friend and vice-versa are friends indeed. This betters their friendship because there is not an excessive tenderness and respect which connives at a man's faults for fear of paining or offending him. So then, open rebuke, or plain speaking is not only preferable to secret enmity, but even to secret love, which in this respect is of no real service to the beloved one.

So, faithful are the wounds of a friend! Ugly attacks are not of this category; blunt and gaping wounds do not help at all. The skilful, faithful surgeon wounds for good, to preserve or recover the one in his care. He never cuts wider or deeper than is necessary; what he does may cause pain, but because of his care the wound not only quickly heals, but great help and welfare is obtained.

And such is the conduct of the faithful, affectionate and discreet reprover. But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. The flatterer and false friend cloaks his malice under a veneer, with language and demeanour of excessive love, but this is aimed to deceive, and at times to ruin.

Expressions of courtesy which appear kind, and can be excessive, seem so agreeable to the human mind generally that most prefer such speech and are attracted by it. So the fulsome flatterer is generally caressed as a friend and the faithful plain speaker and reprover can become to be regarded as an enemy, which is very detrimental.

Yes, faithful indeed are the wounds of a friend. It will become patently obvious by the demeanour and care of the friend that it is welfare that is desired, and healing that is wanted. There will be no blunt weapon here in such a case; Why the cut will hardly be felt, even though the speaking might be plain. There will be an edge to the treatment, a demeanour that will cause the friend to have absolute confidence that here is someone that really has ones' welfare at heart.

In conclusion let us look at the care which was exercised by David's friend:-

“And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

And he shall restore the lamb four fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

(2 Sam. 12:1-6)

And Nathan said to David (verse 7) 'Thou art the man'. Here is an example of the Faithful wound of a friend. But this in no wise allows us to feel that we can freely wound another; there is no care in a situation of biting and devouring one another, which can only mean the consuming of one another.

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, Orchard Park and Buffalo

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Our thoughts will be with our brethren and sisters in Manchester on the occasion of the August Fraternal Gathering.

As help and blessings are granted, as guidance is felt, we rejoice at the mercy of the Almighty extended towards those seeking to honour Him.

The brethren and sisters in this ecclesia feel gratitude for the generous sharing of experiences and conclusions made by the Manchester brethren and sisters in regard to the ongoing work there — a great encouragement and also an evidence of the unity and true fellowship within the Body.

J.A.DeF.

“PENTRIP” Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek:

We have been glad to have had a visit from Brother and Sister D. Lancaster on June 26th and July 3rd when Sister N. Francis and Sister E. Francis and Sister Stanley were also present.

During the following week the class subject was “The four living ones”.

How grateful we were for the good weather on these occasions; and of the privilege of meeting to rejoice in the pure words of the truth, and to also have the benefit of the Sunday School addresses.

(per D.L.)

MANCHESTER, Rycroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Young People’s Class: Sundays 2.00 p.m.

Bible Class: Thursdays 7.30 p.m.

We are glad to report of the continuing interest in our literature which indicates a seeking by some desiring to know more of the History of the truth in these days.

This encourages us in the work of the magazine indicating that this is a necessary part of the witness required of us.

