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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

“Take heed that ye be not deceived”

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

CIRCUMCISED IN HEART

Today we are listening to the last words of Moses as he was about to die, prior to the children of Israel's entering the land.

“ . . . I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the Lord hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.”
Deuteronomy 31:2.

We are further told:

“ . . . Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his **natural force** abated.”
Deuteronomy 34:7.

Natural force we find means vigor. Moses was not weak nor infirm. He did not mean to say he was unable physically to go out and come in; but he knew Israel was about to enter the land, as forty years had passed since Kadesh-Barnea. He was not allowed to go in because of the failure to sanctify God at the rock. It was no doubt a sad time for Moses. He had prayed that God would relent and allow him to see the fulfilment of His promise. The Lord replied to Moses' prayer:

“ . . . Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.”
Deuteronomy 3:26.

And then further instruction was given:

“ . . . Charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before the people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land . . . ”
Verse 28.

Can we enter into Moses' mind as he stood before Israel and said:

“ . . . I am an hundred and twenty years old this day!”

Moses had lived a long and eventful life. During that life he was led by the Almighty, shown when to go out and when to come in. Forty years he was in the house of Pharaoh's daughter, brought up in the wisdom and teaching of Egypt, yet no doubt instructed in the way of the God of Israel by his mother who was his nurse. At the age of forty years, he scorned the riches of Egypt, choosing rather to go out and be identified with his people, Israel. This was evidenced

when he killed the Egyptian who was abusing one of his brethren. Paul tells us clearly of Moses' mind:

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he **had respect** unto the recompence of the reward."

Hebrews 11:26.

These words (**had respect**) convey a great deal to us, meaning to look away from everything else, having regard for a specific thing. Moses, whose whole being was directed to the recompence to come, looked and thought of the One who gives the ultimate reward. As a result, when in Egypt a test came, he sided with his Israelite brethren, with those alone whom he knew had the hope of receiving the reward — those to whom the promises were given. He went out, under God's hand, fleeing to Midian. He was forty years there, an outcast, fearing to return because of Pharaoh's wrath. These years in Midian were not empty, wasted years; but were given that he might learn patience, and to look to God for indication. "Should I go back to Egypt, back to my people?" Undoubtedly he often questioned — until finally at the burning bush God told him to go out, to return to Egypt, for there was a work for him and Aaron. "Come unto thy people, do my work" was God's message. He did. With Aaron, he by the power of God, faced down Pharaoh until again he and Israel were commanded of God to go out — an exodus from the grievous bondage of Egypt. Later at Kadesh-Barnea, God told Moses and Israel to go in and possess the land promised. Israel, except for faithful Joshua and Caleb, refused, and God caused them to turn again and wander forty years. These years were a time of testing, of tribulation for Moses, as he led his people at God's direction. Israel murmured against him, threatened to stone him, accused him, reviled him. At the rock, provoked to anger by his brethren, Moses failed to sanctify God, and so could not go in at the end of the forty years. Can we see why as Moses knew his days were coming to an end he said:

"I can no more go out and come in!"

Deuteronomy 31:2.

Looking over one hundred and twenty years, how clearly his every way had been under God's hand, led, and guided in whatever circumstances, and in whatever direction. He valued his Father's guiding hand, for he had grown in wisdom, in faith, in patience, and in submission. His desire as a result of these experiences was to strengthen and encourage his brethren who were soon to be allowed into the land. To do so, he reminded them:

“The Lord thy God, he will go over before thee . . . Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Deuteronomy 31:3-6.

How needful this encouragement! So much lay ahead. How often, Brethren and Sisters, we are just that: fearful, dismayed, needing strength and courage to do what we **know** God requires.

Moses spoke almost the same words to Joshua:

“ . . . Be strong and of a good courage: . . . the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not neither be dismayed.” Verses 7 and 8.

How selfless was Moses in concern for his brethren, and for Joshua who he well knew would face sore trials as the one who would lead Israel into their promised inheritance. Moses could easily have been consumed with grief and self-pity that he could not have the honour of leading Israel into the land — what a triumph he might have felt it to be! In love, he sought rather to encourage his people by the experience gained during his one hundred and twenty years of going out and coming in under God’s direction.

Can we not profit, Brethren and Sisters, by his help and his example — to be less self-oriented, more concerned for the needs of our brethren and sisters; indeed for the Body of Christ?

“MY DOCTRINE SHALL DROP AS THE RAIN”

Going on to Deuteronomy 32, there is further help for us to be found in the Song of Moses:

“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew . . .” Verse 2.

Doctrine is instruction or teaching received, as the earth needs and receives the rain from heaven, and without it, inevitably experiences drought, famine, and death. Similarly, lacking the doctrine of God’s word, without the instruction of the Spirit, there will inevitably follow a spiritual drought, and ultimately a spiritual death. Isaiah spoke God’s word in relation to the rain which brings forth fruit:

“ . . . As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isaiah 55:10-11.

Like the rain, His word, His doctrine will accomplish His purpose, not ours. It is all powerful, not returning to Him empty, but working for our good, our growth, our fruitfulness, all to His glory. Let us allow it to fall upon us. Brethren and Sisters, let us drink it in, let it accomplish His work, His desire, let us be subject to it.

Moses in his song tells us more:

“ . . . My speech shall distil as the dew, . . . ”
Deuteronomy 32:2.

How does the dew distil? There are no clouds, no wind, no rain; it simply appears in the morning, having gently settled through the night, from no apparent source. We remember that the manna, the bread from heaven, appeared in connection with the dew: gently, surely, providing life in the wilderness. The speech of the Almighty through Moses was like that: quiet, soft, bringing life-giving water, and in the wilderness, the bread of life. How needful that our speech becomes like this, giving help and sustaining, not harsh, hard. Let it be spoken in love, not in haste or anger.

Previously Moses had spoken of the blessings and cursings which would come upon his people, dependent upon their obedience to God's commandments. He revealed how God, working with them in mercy, would bring his people back from captivity changing their cursing into blessing, if they would return to Him:

“ . . . The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”
Deuteronomy 30:6.

Circumcision — token of the covenant, was to give to Abraham

“ . . . Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.”
Genesis 17:11.

As a result of God's command:

“Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.”

Verse 23.

Abraham, valuing the covenant, was quick to obey the word of God. This token involved more than merely circumcising the natural flesh. As we have read in Deuteronomy 30:6 — it required a circumcision of the heart. It is interesting to realize that almost universally the Mohammedans (Arabs) are also circumcised. As we have read in Gen. 17:23 — Ishmael, the father of the Arab nations, was circumcised by Abraham, as no doubt was Esau by Isaac. Their Arab descendants to this day practice circumcision. Is their circumcision a token of a covenant with the God of Israel? NO! It is a form, having no connection with Israel's God. Can this be instruction, a warning to us, making us think of Paul's words:

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

But he is a Jew, which is one **inwardly**; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

Romans 2:28-29.

How telling is this word “**inwardly**”, coming from a root meaning to conceal, to hide self, to keep secret. It is that which is inside, in the heart and mind of a person where the motions of the flesh originate. These must be cut off if we are to be spiritual Jews, children of God.

We remember the instruction concerning the whole burnt offering, which speaks of the work of Christ and the joining to Him of the members of His Body. In Leviticus 1, we read how the head, the fat, the best parts of the bullock were laid upon the altar and consumed by the fire — speaking of the work of our Head who was the best. His flesh was consumed by the fire of the Spirit. Then the rest of the body:

“ . . . his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn **all** on the altar . . . a sweet savour unto the Lord.”

Leviticus 1:9.

The legs, symbolizing the walk, and the inwards — the hidden parts — had to be washed before they could be joined to the head. What a work we are called to, Brethren

and Sisters, in circumcising our hearts! This is a token of our covenant we seek to keep so that under His hand and with mercy we may be joined to our Head, to become "a sweet savour unto the Lord." In relation to the inward parts, we remember Paul's words:

" . . . the word of God . . . is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12.

How do we react when our intents and thoughts are revealed to us? Do we quickly act to cut off those which are offensive to Him, desiring to serve and obey Him?

Let us go back to Moses' words:

" . . . The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart,
. . . to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and
with all thy soul . . . " Deuteronomy 30:6

If our heart is not circumcised, it is obviously not possible to love the Lord with **all** our heart, and **all** our soul, or living, as the word means. How vital then to the keeping of our covenant is a circumcised heart. Let us allow the doctrine the instruction given to drop as the rain upon our heart: let us seek his speech, his words which distil like the dew; softly, gently, yet surely working to foster the growth our Father has in mind — a heart which is truly circumcised, in the spirit, "whose praise is not of men, but of God."

J.A.DeF.



THE GATHERER

In our portions earlier this year, we read the first of twelve Psalms entitled "A Psalm of Asaph". Asaph we find was one of the Levites during the time of David. We read in I Chron. 6:31, 32 and 39 of Asaph:

"And these are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord, after that the ark had rest.

And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem: and then they waited on their office according to their order.

And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, even Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea."

Likewise, reference is made to Solomon's time when the temple was built in II Chron. 5:12, speaking again of Asaph and his descendants:

"Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with triumphs:"

These verses speak of the time when the temple of God was finished, under Solomon's reign, the ark was transferred to its proper resting place, and the cloud descended signifying God's presence there with His people.

The purpose of the Levites during that dedication was to give praise to God in song with all the varied instruments that were mentioned, being arrayed in white linen. Doesn't this remind us of the saints as spoken of in Rev. 19:6-8:

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying,

Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife

hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

As we study this 50th Psalm of Asaph, or as that word means “gatherer”, we can perhaps see that David’s mind was looking forward to that time of gathering when God’s purpose will be accomplished with this earth. A gathering together of all those who have overcome their flesh, to be arrayed in fine white linen, a symbol of their victory. The thought of gathering helps us to view this Psalm in the perspective of God’s purpose and how we are to conduct ourselves now if we hope to be among that congregation.

In this 50th Psalm we see the whole purpose of God for His people spoken of in verses 3 to 6:

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.” (value it considering the end)

This psalm is a great help to us as we selah, or consider the end, that God shall gather together those who have made a covenant through the sacrifice of their living, and desire to be a part of that perfection of beauty.

Peter also reassures of that day of gathering in II Peter chapter 3:

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

God’s judgment **will** be accomplished. David recognized this and so we too are helped through his words here in this 50th Psalm. How important it is also to examine ourselves carefully now if we hope to be part of that gathering.

David speaks of that sacrifice that is required starting at the 8th verse of Psalm 50:

“I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.

For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.”

Yes, sacrifice is required, but we must recognize that our own flesh is what is required, offered in a voluntary spirit to God. The flesh consumed is a pleasing sweet smell before Him, and the 14th verse goes on to say:

“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay the vows unto the most High:”

This is the kind of sacrifice God is looking for from us, but how can we do this? Psalm 56:12 tells us:

“Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

For thou has delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?”

David recognized that by his living he could render praise unto God. How? By calling upon God in the day of trouble as he says in verse 15 of that 50th Psalm:

“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”

Also Psalm 51:15

“O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

As we recognize our failures, we must call upon Him and ask for His mercy and help to deliver us from the clutches of our flesh. Only a broken and contrite heart can overcome the pride and willfulness of the flesh that balks in asking for help. If the flesh rules, we are like those that David speaks of in the 17th verse of Psalm 50:

“ . . . thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.
Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.”

This is David's exhortation to us to guard against the wiles of the flesh that hates to be corrected out of its own way. But how merciful God is towards us, how longsuffering He is that He allows us to see ourselves for what we are and yet if we turn to him in repentance, He will accept our praise and renew His covenant with us.

“Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that **ordereth his conversation aright** will I shew the salvation of God.”

Those words underlined in the above passage can be translated as, “course of life”. Those that can travel that course of life that denies the flesh will have the hope of God's salvation. This same wording can be found in II Peter 3:11:

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy **conversation** and godliness,”

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

This is the same message spoken of from the beginning, the same as we have been examining in this 50th Psalm of the Gatherer. This is actually the hope of all who in striving to overcome their flesh, call upon God for help and in doing so give praise to Him. Our hope is to be among those arraved in fine linen, called by the Gatherer to give praise to Him eternally.

M.C.S.



AT A FRATERNAL GATHERING (Part 2)

“Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn,
my beloved, — — —.” (Songs 2:17)

In considering this verse we have to determine who is the beloved. The beloved is referred to in other verses of this chapter. Verses 8-10 and 16.

“The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.
My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.”

The beloved in all these verses is in the masculine context. Therefore the beloved of our subject is the Lord Jesus Christ and it is His ‘spiritual bride’ who so addresses Him:

“Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn,
my beloved, — — —.”

This is the heartfelt desire of ‘the bride’ for the beloved Messiah to turn. To turn from what? It is still night, for the verse says so. Is this not the tone of supplication, desiring Christ to turn towards His bride, i.e. towards His people? No feeling of being absolutely sure that He is bound to be with them. Hence the supplication for His face to be turned toward His people (His bride).

Such words as these are the essence of exhortation. It is one thing feeling assured by the Truth. It is another thing feeling assured of our own standing in it. The self confident is the fool. It is the wise man who says “turn, my beloved” and goes on saying it, knowing he needs such favour. “Turn my beloved” displays the desire for Christ to be towards. This is how the members of His bride should be in their attitude, inclinations and prayers, knowing they **need** Christ’s love. Knowing also how unworthy they are of His love. Also realising how great is their need, with darkness all around, and with deep shadows in the way which are unavoidable in the night of probation.

Of course the realisation is that the night will not be forever. The day will come, and shadows will be no more. This is the abiding hope to know at the end the day will dawn. Oh, that Christ might continually turn towards His people until

that glorious morning. This is the desire in the appeal? "Until the day break, and the shadows flee — — — turn my beloved." If He turns His face away, while it is yet night, what chance is there of ever seeing the day? But if Christ be with us, how do we want Him to be with us?

" — — — be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

"Bether" means the mountains of division (see the Bible margin explanation). Ah, how difficult to be amongst the mountains in the dark. How much more difficult if surrounded by mountains of division. Great, imponderables, hidden by darkness, and one false step could plunge into the abyss. So sudden that we might almost be unaware for **ever** of the irretrievable disaster which overtakes, as in a moment, the unwary mountaineer. Can we be of certainty as surefooted as the roe or the young hart? No, we cannot! Be thou, O Lord (the beloved) like a roe or a young hart — (for us) upon all these separating mountains.

Where the Lord Jesus is, it will be sure ground; where He stands; if we can keep close; if we can follow near to Him; we **won't** fall into the abyss! The ground will be safe, for He never stands on unsure ground; He never points the way to disaster. Oh, turn towards us, and be our sure guide. Let us see you so that we can tread the safe path in this dark time. Let us follow you as a following of a roe or a young hart who we can distinguish ahead of us as we tread these difficult places; these mountains of division!

If we lose His guidance we are lost. We will fall, and the darkness will engulf us for ever, for we shall not see the morning. Yes, we do tread our way in difficult times; there are precipices and it is a dark time, for only in the morning will everything be revealed clearly. But we are not left to ourselves as this Song of Songs shows. We can ask for help, and in being shown in this way **how** to ask, and how to incline our thoughts and hearts. we are in effect being shown that we **can** be helped. When the day breaks the peril will have passed; the mountains of Bether will no more threaten; everything will be clear and safe.

Oh, what encouragement that while we wait for that day, we are not left abandoned in the dark.

"Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

D.L.

AT A FRATERNAL GATHERING (Part 3)

“The fig tree putteth forth her green figs — — —
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

(Songs 2:13)

To travel through the wilderness seeing a fig tree giving shade with tender figs, and a vine near to it, must be a most welcome and refreshing sight. Israel was represented by the fig tree when brought into covenant relationship with God. A holy people delivered from Egyptian bondage to be guided by divine laws and to receive the divine blessings of God. But when their hearts and minds were given over to apostasy resulting in a departure from God and in failing to bring forth fruits of righteousness and peace they became like the barren fig tree yielding no fruit.

The Jews were typically so condemned by Christ on one occasion, who after resting for the night and then returning to Jerusalem, found, in the morning a barren fig tree. There is a night time of probation and then a morning light without clouds when God's glory will be manifested in judgment.

In connection with the vines and the tender grape giving a good smell; nothing is more pleasing than a sweet smell. Vines of course have to be pruned to bring forth good fruit. Typically, where there is failure to prune, wild growth results, bearing no fruit and so there is spiritual death. But service to God ascends as a sweet smelling savour. Christ said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches.”

There is another spiritual picture of a garden enclosed (by a hedge) from the intruder. But (v 15) there are the little foxes that spoil the vines. Hedges had to be so laid as to give no gaps for the young foxes, otherwise the vines would be spoiled. Little foxes are typical of small deviations which can lead to larger violations, they are the start of apostasy. “Young foxes” work in subtle ways during the night for typically when the morning light appears they take refuge in the lower parts of the earth.

Israel were negligent of God's ways in failing to close the gaps in the hedge thus allowing those exercising subtle ways (like the fox) to destroy them, the hedge of protection thus neglected resulted in peace and safety being lost.

There is the invitation to arise and come away. **ARISE** — is, to stand, to endure, to continue. A literal arising means to accomplish a certain task, and take a journey with a

certain object in view. Thus the Truth is likened to an ascent.

Worship is to be a sweet smelling savour, a securing of the hedge and a keeping out of that which destroys the protection to the Truth. The parable of the fig tree clearly indicates what God intends to be the end result, for those who do not bring forth fruit to God's glory are with out hope and so will be lost.

Yes, leaving Jerusalem Christ with His disciples walked to Bethany and there rested for the night. Then in the morning as they returned to Jerusalem, Jesus being hungry approached the fig tree, in the hope of finding figs thereon, but only leaves were to be seen, so because of its barrenness the tree was condemned. It quickly withered and died so there was no more opportunity for fruit. The fig tree, to repeat, was found in this condition in the morning, after the night before. Can we heed the warning that the night is representative of the time of probation, and is a time of testing when the people of God are to bring forth those peaceable fruits of righteousness, in implicit faith and obedience to God's ways which will bring about blessing now and greater blessing in **the** morning (the morning without clouds), in life for evermore. The latter part of the verse continues with the words "and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell." In order that any vine shall bring forth fruit, it has to be kept irrigated and pruned. This is how (like Christ) we can learn to overcome the flesh and to keep separate from that which defiles. So when this aspect of the Song of Solomon is considered one is able to see the truth as a garden enclosed by a hedge, where the vine has regular attention, as well as protection. Care is to be taken with this hedge, to make sure that the disrupter and destroyer is kept out. One of the greatest dangers as forementioned are the foxes, the little foxes which force their way through the hedge, taking advantage of any means of access there may be. The fox obviously is a very cunning, sly animal, appearing harmless in some aspects yet, in the dark, they do their destructive work: but what will happen when the morning light appears; will they not be hid in the lower parts of the earth?

The foolish prophets of Israel were indeed likened to foxes of the desert which spoil the vineyard of the Lord. They had broken the hedge of protection and no one was found to make up the gap.

How many times were Israel exhorted to keep themselves away from the defiling influence of those who persisted in idol worship. There is no doubt that unless an individual or body of people, perceive the wrong of false doctrine all hope of salvation is lost. There is only one way with God, which is the right way "He that hath not this (God's) doctrine hath not God." Those who fellowship, any other doctrine, other than that which is laid down in the word of God are astray and therefore without hope.

The day is coming when the foxes as aforementioned, will be taken away and their work of destruction will come to an end. Meanwhile until that day is realised, every care must be exercised to protect from gaps in the hedge so that those who constitute God's vineyard may receive the blessing of God in the morning, when Christ returns.

W.G.B.



WHAT SEEST THOU? (Zechariah 4:2)

What a privilege and blessing it is to be able to leave the mundane things of the world outside as it were to consider happenings of so many years ago which have so direct a bearing on our lives today. This is the beauty of the Word of God — always something old yet something new for our benefit, we who are living in the time of the end.

“And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? — — —.”

(v 1-2)

On a reading of this chapter 4 a wonderful insight is given to the prophet to help to sustain him in his work to see the whole purpose of God — the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints in glory. Then in chapter 5 the scene changes:-

Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll.

And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

Then he said unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it.”

(ch. 5:1-3)

Being turned he was shown a very different state of affairs — the curse going forth through all the earth, or in other words he was shown the state of things of the future. The curse is represented by a roll — a flying roll — the length thereof being twenty cubits and the breadth ten cubits — rather a strange or enigmatic description to say the least, but what a wealth of instruction is hidden in this statement. What is the Spirit wishing to convey to us in this figuration? which is devastating in its effect in that on entering the house of the thief and he that sweareth falsely in it consumes it with the timber and stone thereof — i.e. total destruction. Perhaps the prophet Jeremiah helps us to identify who is referred to. In Jeremiah 23:30-32 we read:-

Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

THE REMNANT

Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not — — — .”

Here we have identified for us the thief and false swearers spoken of by the prophet Zechariah and so he continues in ch. 5:4:-

“I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.”

Yes, God will not be mocked, for we remember that the nation of Israel were instructed by Moses that the Lord would send the curse upon every man who turned aside from the commandments of God to worship idols and serve other gods. They were warned to take heed in Deut. 29:18 and 20:-

“Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.”

How can we then avoid this ever present danger of the curse? It is perhaps here where we need to consider — why the flying roll? i.e. the curse that was twenty cubits by ten cubits. Let us turn to 1 Kings 6 concerning the house of the Lord which Solomon built.

“And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.”

(v 3).

This was the true entrance to God's house, the porch — twenty cubits by ten cubits, which was filled with glory no doubt as Zechariah saw in vision, but when he **turned** what did he see then but the entrance to the house of the wicked — the false entrance which is cursed.

Is not this the situation at every division; there is the true house and there is the counterfeit or false house in which God sends the curse as the Apostle makes abundantly clear in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and 11-12:-

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:
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.”

It is because of wickedness and departure from the Truth that the curse has gone forth upon the whole earth, but soon the Lord Jesus is to return, the curse is to be removed and the glory of God is to be seen as shown to the prophet Zechariah. The right to be associated with that glory depends on our ability to discern (“what seest thou?”) at all times between the true entrance to God's house and the false.

The Lord Jesus says, I am the door — the true entrance — there is no other.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”

(John 10:1)



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

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.”

(2 Timothy 3:1-3)

How truly these words have been fulfilled. In Britain for example, it has had to be admitted that there is an increasing desertion of children and cruelty in family life. Television with its violent scenes has been described as the root cause of the rising delinquency in children, but there are other factors which indicate that the shameful conditions now prevailing have a very deleterious effect on the young. One hundred thousand children are “in care” in Britain. Two million children live in families whose incomes only allow a bare existence. One and a half million children are in one-parent families. Furthermore twenty five thousand families with children are homeless. One in six children born in England and Wales has but one legal parent. Every year one hundred and fifty nine thousand couples are divorced, many before their fourth wedding anniversary. Nine thousand children have gone “into care” because of desertion, eighteen thousand because of neglect or ill treatment.

Is it not inevitable, then, that in the last ten years magistrates’ court proceedings against young people aged between ten years and seventeen years have considerably increased? Drunkenness, also, among under eighteens has gone up threefold during this same period.

This is a picture of frightening instability leading to violence and vandalism. The public at large have been appealed to, to look at a report which reveals such a gloomy trend, and, as was said, “mirrors society”. The desire in certain quarters of the nation is to press the politicians to “do something”. But things have really been left to get out of hand for far too long. Yes, the “perilous times” predicted are here, a sign of “the last days”, for which the only real solution is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

All were grateful and touched by the words of greeting from the Manchester Gathering, expressing that love and unity which is known in His Body.

In this time of testing, the last days, thanksgiving is felt for the counsel and prayers of brethren and sisters as we strive together to hold fast until He comes.

J.A.DeF.

“PENTRIP” Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.

Bible Study: Midweek:

The winter now approaches which is a time of quietness here, but we have happy memories of the visits of brethren and sisters this last summer, and have been grateful for the strength given to participate in the work.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, M/cr.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 10.30 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.30 p.m.

We have been grateful for having been enabled to meet in peace which is surely His provision in these difficult times. We must have faith that this blessing will continue.