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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

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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
"THERE WENT VIRTUE OUT OF HIM"

This morning we have had the benefit of sharing Jesus' experiences as He began witnessing to His Father's purpose. A part of that work was doing miracles which were to demonstrate that God was with Him and directing His work. That power was not of Himself but from the Almighty, given at the time Jesus was baptized when God pronounced:

"... Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."
Luke 3:22.

That Spirit power was a wondrous provision to impress in His teaching of the gospel. Yet at the same time would there not be in Jesus a natural and human inclination to use it for His own purposes? He was immediately brought to face that temptation as He was led into the wilderness for 40 long days. He overcame that temptation within Himself by calling to mind the word of God, as He responded: "It is written"—thereby honoring His Father. Following this struggle, He went on using that miraculous power to teach.

This morning we have read of Jesus' healing as He taught in the synagogue where there came to him a man with a withered hand. As He taught:

"... the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against him."

Luke 6:7.

Knowing their evil thoughts, He denounced them. Then He spoke to the crippled man:

"... Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so; and his hand was restored whole as the other."

Luke 6:10.

It took faith on the part of this crippled man to stretch forth to Jesus, knowing the elders' enmity; but he did so, desiring above all to be made whole. We can imagine his joy and awe as he watched his shrivelled and useless hand grow whole before his eyes. Other eyes were watching also who, when they perceived this miracle:

"... were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus."

Luke 6:11.

Two manner of men witnessed this work. The first stretched forth his hand and was healed. The others, hating Jesus, filled with madness, conspired how they might destroy Him. These were condemned by Jesus and His father. Let us, Brethren and Sisters,

profit from this example, in faith reaching out to Jesus, recognizing our great need for healing, then rejoicing and glorifying God as we may experience His mercy.

As word of Jesus' miracles and teaching spread through Judea and Jerusalem, and as far as Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude came:

"... to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed."

Luke 6:17-18.

As Jesus performed these wonders;

"... the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all."

Verse 19.

To touch Him, any of that multitude would have needed to come very close, reaching out their hands, believing and hoping in His ability to make them well again. Perhaps many knew of His healing of the withered hand and so were encouraged. As they touched, "There went virtue out of him, and healed them all." What is this "virtue" which resulted in their being made whole? The word is used as ability, might, power or strength. All this was vested in Jesus by His Father, which enabled Him to restore to health those who sought Him in hope. In an earlier time we remember the angel answered Mary, when she wondered at the promise of a son, and asked: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). The messenger from God answered:

"... with God nothing shall be impossible."

Luke 1:37.

It is striking that this word "impossible" is related to "virtue"—that which went out of Jesus as He healed. It is this power of God which alone makes all things possible. It was this vast power which enabled Jesus to heal all who came close enough to reach out in faith, "touching" Him. No doubt many in that multitude were impressed, for such healing was a marvel. Each one, as Jesus healed, would feel that miraculous change in himself and would rejoice at being made whole. Most may have gone their way exclaiming to their friends or family but allowing it to end there. A few, truly believing the "virtue" they had experienced, would follow Jesus, seeking spiritual strength as well as a curing of their infirmities. Have we not, Brethren and Sisters, on occasions of need, experienced a measure of that "virtue" as we have reached out in faith, praying for that healing, both physical and spiritual, which can come only from the Almighty? What is our response? Do we rejoice and then go our way; or do we in gratitude determine to follow

Him, now enabled more easily and effectively to reach out for His love and care? His words of help to His disciples are very clear as well as challenging:

“... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

Matthew 16:24.

As we seek His healing, a closeness to Him, we must first deny our own selves—in a figure “crucify” our fleshly tendencies, and thus strive to follow Him.

To encourage in this reaching out, we have the example of the woman who had suffered an issue of blood for twelve years and spent all her living upon physicians to no avail (Luke 8:43). She, in great need and simple faith:

“Came behind him (Jesus), and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.”

Luke 8:44.

This believer touched only the border of His garment. Why did she touch that particular part? Was it because it was closest to hand, or is there more to learn from her simple reaching out? Jesus, being an Israelite, kept the law faithfully and perfectly, the only One who did so. Part of that law, divinely given to Moses, instructed:

“... bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments . . . and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.”

Numbers 15: 38,40.

Blue is a symbol of the covenant between God and His people. Jesus no doubt wove the ribband or lace of blue in the border of His garments—a constant reminder of His vow to His father to keep all His commandments and so be holy unto Him. Today we have read of this woman whose life blood was ebbing away, and who in faith recognized Jesus’ power and goodness. In her earnest belief she touched the border of His garment with its blue ribbon lacing through it, and her issue of blood was immediately stanchèd. Here was a miracle, a mighty work brought about by that “virtue” from His Father which Jesus possessed. As this power worked, he questioned: “Who touched me?” (Luke 8:45) His disciples protested that with the multitude pressing and thronging Him, many could have done so. To this he spoke plainly:

“Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.”

Luke 8:46.

He knew the woman's touch was an act of faith in God and in His promises, and as a result received virtue from His Son. Virtue indeed had gone out!

Are we not able to find help for ourselves in this wondrous healing, Brethren and Sisters, as we seek in a measure that virtue which is available, but only through Jesus, the Messiah, the covenanted One? We may hope for it, but only as we remain close enough to stretch out our hands and our hearts to "touch" Him. Many in this world profess a closeness to Jesus and to God, just as we are told in the account we have just read that many were clustered about Jesus. However, only one was close in heart and spirit—she was healed! In this connection, the words of Paul come to mind as he warns in II Timothy 3:1-2 of the "last days" when "perilous times shall come" and many shall be "Lovers of their own selves." He continues, speaking of those who have:

"... a form of godliness, but denying the power (virtue) thereof: from such turn away."

II Timothy 3:5.

As we strive to be godly, let us be watchful that it does not become merely a "form", leaving us unprepared to deny self in order to follow Jesus. Let us remain close to Him, reaching out, especially in time of need, trusting in that power. Let us remember what the angel said to Mary:

"For with God nothing shall be impossible (without virtue)."

Luke 1:37.

J.A. DeF.

BE WATCHFUL AND PRAY

In our study of the apostles, we find them earnestly questioning the Lord Jesus, anxious to know the time of His return and of the world's end:

"... Tell us, when shall these things shall be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:3.

They, as well as we today, would like to know when that time will be, when the purpose of God begins to be accomplished through the return of His Son to establish a kingdom on earth. In answer to the apostles' question, Jesus gave them (and us today), signs to look for:

"... Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye shall be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

All these are the beginning of sorrow."

Matthew 24:4-8.

Today, through world-wide news reporting, we are aware of the constancy of national calamity, violence, wide spread diseases and earthquakes in various parts of the globe on a daily basis—sure indications of His near return. Yet even greater evidence is seen in the hundreds, if not thousands of varying sects who call themselves Christians throughout the world. All differing in belief and doctrine, they profess to be His followers, calling themselves after His name thereby saying, "I am Christ's," another of the sure signs which herald His near return. Even with such evidence, no one can predict the year, day or hour of His return as he explained to the twelve:

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

Mark 13:32.

Jesus included Himself in that category as well, emphasizing that only the Father knows the exact time when He will send Christ to fulfil His purpose.

The Lord Jesus' words recorded in Matthew and Luke illustrate many signs that will appear in the earth near the end—many which have already come to pass through the course of history. In addition, He also warned His disciples of the persecution and suffering they would experience because of their association with Him:

"But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them."

Mark 13:9.

Their witness is recorded "for a testimony" against those who persecuted them, but also as a testimony of encouragement to those who endeavour to walk in the same faith. Living in these latter days, we have been blessed to see many of those things of which the Lord Jesus spoke, take place—and can be assured in faith, that those yet to be fulfilled, will also come to pass. Along with this guidance and help, He left a warning:

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

Luke 21:36.

Of that time and hour no man knows and so He exhorted the twelve to watch and pray. We too must be mindful of the signs given—warfare, earthquakes and great distress among the nations, for in the midst of all this turmoil, when least expected, He shall return:

“... for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Luke 21:26-27.

He warned against those who would say He has already come, by comparing His return to a brilliant and terrifying flash of lightning—seen and acknowledged by all. There will be no doubt of His arrival:

“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Matthew 24:26-27.

Should we be alive at His coming, we will know with certainty that time has run out. It will be too late for repentance of thought or action, as probation for all the living responsible will end. Will those warned from His word, be watching and praying in hope, intent on following after His example?

The Lord Jesus compared the time of the end with the days of Noah saying:

“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Matthew 24:38-39.

Noah preached for 120 years of the flood's coming destruction, therefore many must have heard and been warned. Yet his words fell upon deaf ears, save for eight people who because they heard and were obedient, were protected by the ark. To further illustrate the importance of watchful observance, he gave them a parable:

“Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know yet that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”

Luke 21:29-31.

All know when summer has arrived—the signs are obvious. As we see many of the signs of which the Lord Jesus spoke, now present in the earth today, it should spur us on to diligently pray and watch for His return.

The prophet Jeremiah was one who also warned of God’s fierce anger to come upon the earth:

“Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it should fall with pain upon the head of the wicked.

The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.”

Jeremiah 30:23-24.

God’s word came through the prophet for one purpose—to stir up those who would in humility hear and consider their ways. Of those who would repent turning to Him, will He prepare a people to give Him glory eternally.

Paul wrote to his brethren at Colosse exhorting them in the same spirit:

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving . . . Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

Colossians 4:2, 5-6.

Paul endeavouring to be a faithful witness to the Word, encouraged his brethren to exercise their faith in prayerful thanksgiving, grateful for God’s wisdom and care revealed to those who know of the destruction to come upon all who refuse Him.

Let us earnestly contemplate this help from His word and endeavor to watch and pray, asking for His guidance, correction and care during our sojourn, just as Jude exhorted his brethren in that same spirit, encouraging them to walk in faith and to:

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Jude vs 21.

Let us resolve to do likewise—looking for His mercy and guidance through a prayerful, watching for His return.

M.C.S.

"CANST THOU BY SEARCHING FIND OUT GOD?"

(Job 11:7.)

Zophar the Naamathite, having posed the above question, went on to say:

"Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?"

(Verses 8-10)

Though he was adversary to Job, he expressed truth. His friend Eliphaz the Temanite, also spoke in a similar vein:

"He taketh the wise in their own craftiness . . ."

(Job 5:13)

The Apostle Paul quotes this in writing to the Corinthian Ecclesia (1 Corinthians 3:19).

Isaiah also speaking about the greatness of God declared:

"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."

(Isaiah 40:27-28).

In the Hebrew original the word translated searching is CHEQER meaning to examine or enumerate.

There are some astronomers who declare they are non-believers. The writer has heard one astronomer of repute say emphatically that he cannot accept there is a Spirit who dwells in those vast heavens. Yet he, along with many others, examines the vault of heaven, endeavouring to enumerate what he sees. He, of course, will never find out. For God is in those heavens, and His Greatness none will ever comprehend.

Science recently has declared:

"The long search for missing matter (in the Universe) . . . may turn out to be nothing more than huge clouds of ordinary gas . . . If so, theories that the Universe is full of exotic but invisible particles . . . weakly-interacting massive particles—will have to be cast aside in favour of something altogether more mundane . . . The story so far is that the Universe behaves in a puzzling way . . . The visible matter, in the form of stars, is simply not there in sufficient

quantity to explain why objects are not spinning apart faster than they are. Spiral galaxies, for example, seem to hold together although the gravitational forces attributable to their components do not provide sufficient glue.

Astronomers conclude, therefore, that there must be a lot of "missing mass"—about ten times as much as the matter we can see . . . observations suggest that the gas in the central 2-6 million light-year region of the coma cluster may weigh as much as 100 trillion suns. That would make it about as heavy as the entire visible mass of the cluster. Astronomers already know that such clusters contain large amounts of hot gas . . . When the cold gas in Virgo was discovered, many astronomers were dubious. Couldn't it simply be hot gas that had cooled? (But it has been) shown that the amounts are simply too great for that to be a viable explanation. The story has just switched from 'the data are clearly wrong' to 'no, it's right, but unexplainable'. It's now up to the theorists to explain where this gas comes from and where it is going. True the amounts of gas are insufficient on their own to account for all the missing mass, but they point that way. Perhaps all the missing mass is there in the form of ordinary matter and we just haven't looked hard enough.

The gas poses two puzzles: where it comes from and why it is still hot enough to emit radiation in the ultraviolet. It ought to cool so fast that it would long ago have stopped emitting this radiation, so either it is being replenished or cool gas is being reheated. Why should gas hang around at this temperature? (asked one professor). Either it should heat up and become part of the x-ray emitting gas, or cool off, in which case why do we see it at all? We need to look at more clusters to gather statistics . . ."

Such comments, while appearing to be very knowledgeable, are in actual fact saying, "We do not know." And they never will know.

The Word of God declares:

"Ye are blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth. The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men."

(Psalm 115: 15-16.)

Men ought to realise how greatly they are blessed in this good and fruitful earth. They have probed the planets and found them devoid of life. The earth is unique. It is a jewel in the heavens and is

the obvious design and production of the Almighty Hand. To deny God, and discount the divine record is to betray ignorance and foolishness to a very great degree. The earth is what it is because it has been created, in all its infinitely varied forms of life, and creation means there is a Creator.

The uncertainties in the declarations of the studious astronomers fulfil the scriptural testimony:

“He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. . .”

(Job 5:13.)

A BIBLE CLASS

“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places”

Psalm 16:6

The core of David’s thinking is defined by the title of this Psalm: Michtam of David.” Michtam derives from a word meaning gold—a treasure. We may ponder what was the treasure which David so valued? What indeed provided him with hope, comfort, satisfaction and great joy? What was this man’s gold? The Apostle Peter reasons about life’s hardships among those who trust in God:

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”

I Peter 1:7.

The first verse of this Psalm—the “Michtam of David” is a simple expression of his golden faith:

“Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.”

Psalm 16:1.

In reading the entire Psalm, it becomes clear that David looked forward to the promised Messiah, the Son of God, foreshadowed in the law, taught by the prophets, the true Son promised to David. Of that hope he wrote;

“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (grave); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at the thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Psalm 16:9-11.

What a clear vision David had! God’s Holy One, Christ, did not see corruption, being raised the third day, and will return to

fulfil the promises made earlier to Abraham and David, promises which are the hope of God's people.

This was David's trust and treasure which sustained him in his desire to honor God. Rejoicing in this merciful provision he exclaimed:

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup;
thou maintainest my lot."

Psalm 16:5.

"Portion" implies a weighed lot. David knew the Almighty was the bestower of his inheritance and his cup. Both of these words (inheritance and cup) indicate something allotted or portioned out. Jesus when He agonized in the garden used the same word as he prayed:

"... O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:
nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Matthew 26:39.

He knew that the cup of which He must drink was His father's carefully weighed allotment; so in His great agony He prayed for strength to do what was required. He drank fully of that cup, fulfilled his Father's will and became the Redeemer of all who, like himself, determine to accept that which God places upon them, their lot. As David recognized the responsibility which the Almighty gave him, he continued to be subject, acknowledging:

"... thou maintainest my lot."

Psalm 16:5.

God sustained His greatly beloved servant, and David realized he must submit, looking to the inheritance promised to those who struggle to please the Almighty.

Daniel was an example of such loving submission and he was reassured by God's promise:

"... go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and
stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Daniel 12:13.

David looked to that same end as he wrote:

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have
a goodly heritage."

Psalm 16:6.

Israel earlier was given a "pleasant place"—the land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey—their inheritance as promised to Abraham. David looked to the total fulfilment of God's promise to him of a kingdom, a throne, a house and a Son—all to last forever, when Jesus returns to give His people their lot, if accounted faithful. His trust in God's word is expressed as he wrote:

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Psalm 16:11.

It was in this hope he could say with grateful conviction:

“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

Psalm 16:6.

What a treasure indeed was David’s faith, fastened upon that “lot” which was promised by God’s sure word. This singleness of thought and heart helped him to be a man after God’s own heart. His spirit can help us in our struggles to keep our faith fastened upon the hope set before us, a reward in those “pleasant places” promised by the Almighty. David’s “michtam”—his gold—was his own total faith in God’s righteousness and His promised inheritance to himself, to Abraham, and to all the faithful as Paul reveals for those who are:

“... the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek... bond nor free... male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s (and David’s) seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Galatians 3:26-29.

Heirs are those who are to partake of a heritage, as the word means.

Let us fasten our minds upon God’s promises which are sure. Indeed, how “goodly” is that heritage, known only to a few who single-heartedly, as did David, put their faith (michtam) in the Almighty who holds out this hope to His Israel. May we not rejoice even now as we look to those “lines” which have fallen to us, those “pleasant places” in which we now trust and labor toward?

J A DeF.

JERICHO

This name is associated with the “walls falling down”. Much archaeology has taken place in this area. A British School of Archaeology expedition led by Kathleen M. Kenyon excavated at Jericho from 1952 to 1958. Over 500 tombs were discovered revealing grave goods of pottery and personal ornaments with skeletal remains.

Considerable speculation has occurred as to the date when Israel came out of the Wilderness and attacked Jericho, and some

have even doubted the biblical account; the following is an example of such a view:

“... analysis seemed to clearly show that there was no Late Bronze Age city of Jericho at all which the Israelites could have destroyed during their entry into the Promised Land. There was evidence for a small Late Bronze Age village but this had no defensive fortifications that could conceivably represent the walls which came ‘tumbling down.’ In the orthodox chronology most of the mound of Jericho had already been a desolate ruin (with occasional meagre settlement) for several centuries by the time Israelite tribes would have crossed the Jordan. In the late 1950s there was only one conclusion which could be drawn . . . the story of Joshua’s conquest of Jericho had to be a myth.”

This precipitate finding has been proved to be in error. From the Bible’s own proof, the Exodus of Israel from Egypt occurred 480 years before Solomon began building the temple (I Kings 6:1) and old Bibles conforming to the Bible’s own witness of dates have the date of Israel’s overthrow of Jericho as 1450 BC. Now the Bible has been vindicated and archaeology is proved in error. There WAS a Late Bronze Age city of Jericho, according to archaeological definition. While earlier excavation and examination of the Jericho site had wrongly made out certain findings to be the remains of Jericho at the time of Joshua, and later proved to be remains from many centuries earlier. It has now been revealed from careful examination of the pottery of the excavated Jericho tombs, that Jericho was flourishing in 1450 BC! This pottery has been shown to be of the group of earthenware design corresponding to the early part of the Middle Bronze Age (circa 1450BC). It has been noted that these objects and artifices are associated with the multiple burials made by the inhabitants just prior to the city of Jericho’s demise. They were therefore contemporary with the massive destruction of Middle Bronze Age Jericho. Oh yes, the remains of the fallen walls are there, mudbricks below a glacia plastered surface and revetment wall. So the witness of the Word of God is vindicated, proving that the message of scripture is completely to be relied upon.

“DRINK WATERS OUT OF THINE OWN CISTERN”

Proverbs 5:15

This Proverb begins:

“My Son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding.”

Proverbs 5:1.

Solomon wrote these words, but they are really God's instructions given through him. We remember how the Almighty appeared to Solomon, saying: "Ask what I shall give thee" (I Kings 3:5). The king replied in these touching words concerning his earnest wish:

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"
I Kings 3:9.

The Lord in mercy heard and answered him:

"Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee."

I Kings 3:12.

This divinely given wisdom and understanding is evident in our chapter under consideration as God, in words given to Solomon, encouraged:

"My Son, attend unto my wisdom, . . .
That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge."

Proverbs 5:1-2.

To this end, the Preacher warned concerning the danger of a "strange woman"—(Verses 3-13). We might ask: Who is this "strange woman" spoken of throughout the Proverbs? The word "strange" implies foreign, and is used also as "another." Such a "strange woman" was an alien, not of Israel, nor in covenant relationship with Israel's God. The words of the Almighty warn;

". . . the lips of a strange woman, drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:
But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two edged sword.

Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell."

Proverbs 5: 3-5.

Foreigners, alien to the hope of Israel, are those not governed by the word of Israel's God. Many may have the name of God on their lips, but not the only true God who is of Israel. David knew the evil which alien mouths speak, and tells us:

"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

Psalms 55:21.

The warning of the Spirit is very clear concerning the influence of this "strange woman":

"Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house."

Proverbs 5:7-8.

This brings us to the subject of our study:

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well."

Proverbs 5:15.

A cistern or a well is a source of stored up water. The cistern is a pit dug to catch and retain water, while a well is dug to tap into the underground water table. Water was a precious commodity in the land of Israel. We perhaps do not realize and truly value this, for it is almost always available to us at the turn of a tap. On occasion, when it fails, we find its loss very inconvenient, and if the shortage continues, it can become life threatening. Even today in the Middle East, an adequate water supply is a source of trouble between nations. Turkey's damming of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers causes water shortages in Iran, Iraq and Syria. The waters of the Jordan River as well are a matter of controversy between Jews and Arabs. Jesus spoke of the water's importance which symbolizes God's provision of the Spiritual "water of life" as he spoke at Jacob's well:

"... Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water, that I give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

John 4:13-14.

The Almighty through Solomon enlarges on the great consequences of sufficient good water, both physical and spiritual, to instruct us in wisdom and understanding. Thus we are taught to:

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well."

Proverbs 5:15.

Our own well, our own cistern, provided by our Father to His children, are sources of the living water from above for the health of our spiritual life. His instruction is to drink of His given well, His provided cistern, recognizing they will surely sustain. Do not turn to the "strange woman", to strange gods; for their water leads only to death.

Solomon in himself is an outstanding warning, for in the latter part of his life he turned from God to false gods, led away by the strange (alien) women he married, contrary to God's word:

“. . . he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: . . .

For it to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.”

I Kings 11:3-4.

Here was a blessed and powerful king, given special wisdom, understanding, and in addition, riches and honor by the Almighty. Yet even so, he became estranged from his merciful Provider by turning to false gods, thereby knowingly drinking of the waters which, like wormwood, were leading only to the loss of eternal life. His own words, as he too late considered, giving us warning:

“Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.”

Ecclesiastes 4:13.

God helps us to seek those living waters which in His kindness are “our own cisterns.” He spoke through His prophet:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; . . .

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

Isaiah 55:1-3.

Yet it was not a great length of time when their God once again spoke but in sorrow and condemnation:

“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

Jeremiah 2:13.

Let us heed these words of wisdom and understanding, addressed by the Almighty to “My Son.” Let us turn our backs upon the beguiling words of the “strange woman”, the world's pleasurable and distracting influences, and gratefully drink only of the living waters of “thine own cistern.”

J.A. DeF.

**SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE
END OF THE WORLD**

“... 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.”

2 Thessalonians 2:10-11.

One of the greatest attempts to undermine the word of God in these last days has been the “theory of evolution”, which basically means that all the infinitely varied forms of life in this good earth, have designed themselves. When one studies the flora and fauna it is incredible that the world should think it to be so.

Recently science has been excited in finding rock in Antarctica which it is claimed shows some trace of what has been microscopic forms of life, the significance being that this rock has come from the planet Mars, thus the earth is not unique in having life. Science expects the world to believe this proposition without any real proof, that in some way pieces of rock have left the Martian surface to find their way across the great gulf of space to land upon this earth. Yet the world believes science. How significant is scriptural testimony warning of the coming of “strong delusion”. Evolution is such a lie, which has been almost universally believed. It explains that the species did not originate each by a separate act of creation; and Darwin went on to say in his book “Descent of Man” that Adam was not fashioned by God out of the dust of the earth but was descended from a progenitor not remote in nature from the ape. Charles Darwin’s argument was that the principle of evolution has been the struggle for existence, resulting in the “survival of the fittest”. Those most capable of adapting to their environment and able to eliminate rivals resulted in what we see around us. To combat this Henry Drummond, a Scottish professor of natural science, wrote “The Ascent of Man”, claiming that the great determinative principle in biological evolution is not the survival of the fit by the elimination of the unfit but the principle of sacrificial mother love. Another intellectual, Herbert Spencer, propounded that the principle of progress is written in the very structure of creation, therefore man is bound to move to a nobler state. This is not a very convincing explanation, is it? The devices of men have cleverly improved, but the morals of mankind and their destructiveness has not.

Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) though accepting scientific findings told a meeting of the Papal Academy of Sciences at Rome:

"In the beginning, which means the beginning of things in time. The figures of the scientists give to these words of scripture a concrete and at the same time a mathematical expression.

"With the same sense of responsibility and a like freedom in the pursuit of knowledge scholars have considered the other and certainly more difficult question: the question about the nature and properties of the original material.

"Anyone examining these problems seriously from the point of view of modern scientific knowledge, must give up the idea of wholly independent and autochthonous material, uncreated or self created, and must reach the conception of a Creative Mind. With the same clear and critical eye, with which he judges facts, he will recognise the work of a creative omnipotence, whose power, set in motion by a great 'fiat' of the creative Spirit thousands of millions of years ago, distributes itself throughout the whole cosmos and by an act of love has brought into being the material universe with its bursting energy."

It was surprising recently, therefore, to read the following news report from Rome:

"Pope John Paul II, in his most comprehensive statement yet on the question of evolution, insisted that faith and science are capable of co-existing. Charles Darwin's theories are sound as long as they take into account the human soul as the work of God." (Said in a message to the Pontifical Academy of Science, meeting in Rome.) The Pope explained his belief that physical evolution is "more than just a theory." But he had the qualification that "the human soul is divinely created anew in each person and not subject to the evolutionary process". Any other teaching, he said, is "incompatible with the truth about man." Here then is another step along the road to belief in the teaching of "natural selection and adaptation of the species". So the lie prevails and delusion takes over, even as the scripture declares.

How untenable it all is. Linking man organically to the animal kingdom raises the question of the immortal soul, which is the important fallacious doctrine of the churches. If man is descended from the animals, and the animals are mortal, when did man become immortal? Henry Drummond philosophised on this by propagating that only those attuned to the life of the spirit can survive when the body is no more, thus excluding some men. Newman Smyth, a New England cleric, trained in biology, declared that in the doctrine of evolution there is support for belief in

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immortality, because the emergence of loftier forms is the law of life. Physical evolution having now reached its limit, further development will dispense with the body, and the evolutionary process will reach its consummation beyond the grave.

So the world tries by all kinds of devious explanation to describe life and its development, while at the same time discarding the logical, consistent, testimony of divine truth. The day however is coming when all this verbiage will be no more. As the scripture testifies:

“ . . . he will destroy in this mountain (Jerusalem) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.”

Isaiah 25:7.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. and Pleasant Ave.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.
Sunday Afternoon Class 1.45 p.m.
Midweek: Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg and Fredonia
Every Third Week: Revelation Study

The witnessing to the general public continues through mailing invitations to write for our booklets.

Response is small in these evil times in the world, but does encourage us to continue this work of His house.

Our informal winter get together is scheduled, God willing, for February 15th.

J.A. DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.
Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

Requests, particularly from Ireland, for our booklets on doctrine or prophecy does seem to indicate a religious interest in that country that exceeds the other areas of the United Kingdom. It is sad that much of the religious thought there is channelled in the direction of violent disagreement.