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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 BE MORE WITH US THAN WITH HIM"**

Recent readings in Isaiah reveal God's help for King Hezekiah. This king began to reign over Judah shortly before the ten tribes of Israel were taken captive by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Hezekiah would be troubled over this judgment upon Samaria (the ten tribes), brought about by God as they rebelled against His word. Naturally Hezekiah would fear: Is Judah next? It was, as we read:

"...in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria . . . saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, . . .

At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria." II Kings 18:13-16.

This tribute did not stop Sennacherib from besieging Jerusalem. Assyrian messengers, sent to Jerusalem, sought to discourage Hezekiah and Judah's resistance to the siege, saying:

"... What confidence is this wherein thou trusteth?

Thou sayest (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?" II Kings 18:19-20.

Hezekiah obviously had ceased paying tribute, and had rebelled against Assyria — the greatest power in the earth at that time. He had confidence, the result of new-found counsel and strength. What was the source of that confidence - from whence came counsel and strength? The Almighty had sent His prophet, Isaiah, to encourage Hezekiah. This prophet's name is composed of two Hebrew words: (1) Yasha "to save" - and (2) Yah "Yahweh, the LORD." In that mercy and care, the LORD sent Isaiah to save His people from the oppression of Assyria. Through counsel and strength found in God's word, the king grew in trust, and thereby was encouraged to rebel against Assyria.

Let us look at Isaiah's words which turned Hezekiah from a

great fear of Assyria to a greater determination to resist him. Previously Hezekiah in his fear had considered turning to Egypt for help against Assyria's threat. But he was diverted by God who counseled against such an unholy alliance:

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!" Isaiah 30:1-2.

God's prophet further counseled:

"For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not."

Isaiah 30:15.

Isaiah continued promising:

"For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod." Isaiah 30:31.

Here was the counsel of God, as well as His strength granted to frustrate the vast power of Assyria. Would not this assurance give strength and firm trust to Hezekiah as he faced the threat of Sennacherib's siege? Perhaps Isaiah would have reminded Hezekiah of Solomon's counsel:

"A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Proverbs 24:5-6.

Hezekiah no doubt was aware of David's words, who had known God's help, and in response had written:

"I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD. I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works." Psalm 71:16-17.

God had indeed "taught" David as a youth to have confidence in Him, as he fought the lion and the bear, as well as Goliath.

Hezekiah, also strengthened and counseled by God through His prophet rested in quietness upon his Creator, and was saved (Yasha) by His power. He grew strong to resist the false claims, as Sennacherib's messengers asked:

"Am I now come up without the LORD against this place

to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it." II Kings 18:25.

But Isaiah, in wisdom, counseled the king:

"For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod." Isaiah 30:31.

The king, reminded and strengthened by Isaiah, made preparations to withstand this threatened destruction of Jerusalem:

"He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men . . . Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken." II Chronicles 32:3, 5.

Most important of all, he gathered the people:

" . . . and spake comfortably to them . . . "

II Chronicles 32:6.

This word "comfortably" is composed of two Hebrew words (1) "to" - and (2) "the heart". Thus the king spoke from the strength and confidence of his heart to the hearts of his people:

"Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:

With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and fight our battles . . . "

II Chronicles 32:7-8.

What was the result of Hezekiah's "heart-to-heart" appeal to his people?

" . . . the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah." Vs. 8.

How much this speaks of the king's total belief and dependence upon the prophet's words, causing them to rest or rely upon the Almighty God of Israel. When Sennacherib wrote a threatening letter to Hezekiah, the king read the letter (II Kings 19:10-13), and:

" . . . went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, . . . thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: . . .

LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib . . .

Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only."

II Kings 19:14-16, 19.

The Almighty, attentive to this appeal, answered the king's prayer:

"Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." II Kings 19:32-34.

God quickly did exactly that:

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: . . . they were all dead corpses.

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh." II Kings 19:35-36.

Thus Jerusalem was saved by the power of God without having to lift a hand against Sennacherib — utterly fulfilling His words to Hezekiah:

"For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with the rod." Isaiah 30:31.

Indeed, by counsel and strength, Hezekiah and Judah grew in faith and gratitude, being saved by the overwhelming power of God. What mercy, what grace the Almighty extended to save Hezekiah and his people from the threatened destruction by mighty Assyria! How the king and his people would rejoice and praise the LORD for His bountiful mercy poured forth upon His people as they gave heed to the prophet's words.

In a later reference, we have listened to God's further help for His Israel:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably (to the heart) to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." Isaiah 40:1-2.

Indeed, their warfare (against Sennacherib) was accomplished, as God's purpose for Judah and Jerusalem was achieved — not through their own power, but by His mercifully granted might. Our God speaks further of His purpose to be accomplished:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye

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the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway
for our God." Isaiah 40:3.

This speaks of John the Baptist's work (Matthew 3:3), preparing the way for the coming of Jesus Christ as God's promised Messiah. Jesus, when He came, spoke to His disciples of this work from His Father:

"In my Father's house are many mansions (abiding places)
. . . I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2.

And He further added:

". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh
unto the Father, but by me." Vs. 6.

It is of Jesus Christ's coming — as "the way, the truth, and the life" — that Isaiah continued to speak to the hearts of Hezekiah and Judah:

"And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh
shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath
spoken it." Isaiah 40:5.

The prophet spoke of the gospel — the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ — as the way which leads to that promised kingdom. As he spoke to Hezekiah, he revealed God's purpose to be accomplished in that kingdom (Isaiah 35:1-7), and further states:

"an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called
The way of holiness; . . . the redeemed shall walk there:
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to
Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads:
they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing
shall flee away." Isaiah 35:8-10.

Brethren and Sisters, consider well, for this is our hope! Are we inspired to continually walk in that way as we contemplate the mercy and grace of God granted to Hezekiah and Judah through His faithful prophet? Does this increase the confidence we so need to hang on to — the counsel and strength of God and His Word? That Word can speak to our hearts, comforting and strengthening in our struggles to walk in that highway which is strait and narrow, but is indeed the path called "The way of holiness." This is the way Jesus gives us, which leads to "abiding places" for eternity. Are we not those who trust in God, believing that indeed "there be more with us than with (them)"? Let us also rest upon these words from God, which Hezekiah spoke heart to heart in love to his people.

J.A.DeF.

“CALL UNDERSTANDING THY KINSWOMAN”

Throughout the Proverbs we are given opportunity to contemplate the words of Solomon and reflect upon his wisdom. In Proverbs we often find each verse is a separate thought or lesson in itself, diverse one from the other within the chapter, although helpful and complete. However, in Proverbs 7 the entire chapter is devoted to one thought, as Solomon contrasts the wisdom of God, with the folly of the flesh’s thinking. In verse 1 he begins his appeal to those who desire to be sons of God:

“My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:” Proverbs 7:1-4.

God’s word must be kept near our heart — as we would a sister or kinswoman, those dear and near at hand. Solomon continues to explain why this is so important:

“That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.”

Proverbs 7:5.

Solomon could speak from experience, for the spiritual wisdom he once had, was compromised by his association with his strange wives who led him away from God:

“But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;

Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.”

I Kings 11:1-3.

We might wonder in reading Solomon’s history, how he could fail in this manner, after warning of these specific dangers? This is a perfect illustration of the strength and subtlety of our flesh nature and how easily it can deceive and seduce. Solomon was blessed by God with abundant spiritual wisdom, yet turned aside out of the

way, through the flesh's seduction. What a warning this is for us, that we too be not lured away from the path of understanding.

No doubt Solomon's departure from Truth was gradual, done with such subtlety that he barely noticed he had been carried away, until it was too late. It would begin with one or two strange wives, then ten, then one hundred until he was completely surrounded by strange and flattering counsel instead of truth, finally so enmeshed he could not recover himself from the snare he had set:

"With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life."

Proverbs 7:21, 23.

Solomon loved many strange women, causing his love for God to be slowly displaced by them. John's epistle gives help and instruction how this can be avoided:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

I John 2:15-17.

How does one accomplish God's will? Through God's mercy, we have been left an example in the life of the Lord Jesus, who overcame His flesh by conquering its attractions with love for God and His word — never allowing the flesh's desires to control His thinking. When He was tempted in the wilderness He answered with, "It is written" — and by keeping God's word close to his heart and mind (calling understanding His kinswoman), He was able to deflect the fleshly temptations which tried to seduce Him.

His perfect deportment reminds us of the "virtuous woman" of whom Solomon wrote, saying: "Who can find a virtuous woman?" (Prov. 31:10) intimating there may not be many. Her spiritual wisdom and understanding is left as an example of righteousness:

"Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates." Proverbs 31:25-26, 30-31.

These attributes describe those who may become the bride of Christ — those who as the "virtuous woman", apply the wisdom of God in their living endeavoring to reflect His word in their every action. Only by receiving the reproofs that come our way to correct, and by keeping God's understanding near to hand, as a sister and kinswoman, can we hope to remain firmly rooted on the path which can lead to life, and be kept from the lure of the "strange woman", whose end is death.

M.C.S.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST (R. Roberts 1867)

"And now, little children, abide in him, that WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, we may have confidence, and NOT BE ASHAMED BEFORE HIM at His coming." (1 John 2:28). QUERY: Would John hold before the disciples a fictitious peril? Would he warn them so to act as not to be ashamed in the presence of Christ at His coming, IF IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE ASHAMED BEFORE HIM AT HIS COMING? Your theory makes such a thing impossible. You say that none but the accepted are raised at the appearing of Christ, and are immediately made incorruptible like Him. If this is the case, nobody appearing before Him at His coming will be put to shame; they will all be clothed with confidence, salvation, and joy, and in that case, where is John's exhortation? — "that we may not be ashamed before him at his coming." In John's view of the matter, there was a possibility of being "ashamed before him at his coming." Therefore your view is not John's view. John's view is sensible. What is more to the point, John's view is in accordance with what is testified in all the scriptures. Daniel says (or rather the angel who appeared to Daniel) "AT THAT TIME thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the books, and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT" (Daniel 12:2).

Jesus says "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall

come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29). Again, Jesus says "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed WHEN HE COMETH in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). John is, therefore, in harmony with the other writers of the word, in recognising the fact that there is a possibility of being ashamed and rejected at the appearing of Christ. It is true, the righteous will be accepted and made like Him; but does this prove there will be no judgment? How can it? It proves the very opposite, for acceptance implies a ceremony, or act by which the decision is arrived at and proclaimed. The fact can never be set aside that "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive in body according to that he hath done, whether good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10).

The Remnant's Comment

It is amazing that R. Roberts should have to contend so greatly with some who put forth the erroneous doctrine of the "immortal emergence" from the tomb of the acceptable of Christ.

The next step to such thinking is the erroneous view of "heaven going at death". Yet those who propound such a theory also admit to "the judgment seat of Christ at the Last Day". How foolish; for if such have gone to heaven they have already been approved! So the Judgment Seat is by-passed in theory in both instances; this is a dishonouring of the Truth.

LESSONS ON MARRIAGE

An important spokesman for the Anglican Church (Thomas Scott about the year 1860) had this to say:

"The Lord brought Eve to Adam, and gave her to him, and thus joined them together in marriage, previous to their connubial intercourse: AND SOME ESTABLISHED AND ATTESTED RECOGNITION, as well as the consent of parties, is absolutely needful to honourable marriage, AND TO DISTINGUISH THOSE WHO LIVE IN THAT STATE, from the "adulterers and fornicators whom God will judge". The pernicious effects, which the author has witnessed, of the licentious sentiments above stated, and the sanction which they have received from the names of

those who have supported them, and from their PLAUSIBLE reasonings, (which seem very convincing to a SENSUAL mind, when under POWERFUL TEMPTATION). - - - It may also be added, that they, who from erroneous, religious motives, either separate themselves from their wives or husbands, or counsel others to do so; whatever specious arguments they may use, most evidently act in direct violation of Christ's command."

Oh, how these words condemn the present state of things! The leader of the British Government recently made an appeal for a moral crusade, saying there was a need for a "new national moral purpose." He said he supported curfews on young people.

Amazingly the leader of the Anglican Church criticised. He issued "a friendly warning" not to try and force morals on people. "Morality cannot be imposed," said this Church spokesman, you cannot just say to people "this is what you must do." "We must not impose it, we cannot impose it." An opposition spokesman to the Government Party, backed the words of the Anglican Church leader, by saying it was "helpful intervention". "It is a further signal that they (the Government) should not go too far in trying to impose fixed guide lines on people."

The Education Secretary plans to give children compulsory lessons in the value of marriage. "It is essential children learned marriage is important" he said. He intends that children are taught the importance of marriage in family relationships, a feature in the teaching of 11 to 14 year olds, to be followed by teaching 14 to 16 year olds the value of marriage in bringing up children. But he has got into trouble from an opposition Party, which declared "it could send out a negative message to children whose parents are not wed." "Lessons which say marriage is the only way may encourage bullies to point the finger at the odd ones out." What dreadful negative criticism this is. An official of the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations scathingly remarked, "It is a quick fix solution which will not solve anything." But look at the situation. Men and women are living together unmarried. Families, as a result of separations, have multiple parents, as wives or husbands go from one partner to another. This failure of ratification of relationships between men and women makes for instability. No wonder many young people are badly behaved, frustrated, and violent.

The words of the Anglican of the last century, who pointed

out the true standard, showing when God brought Eve to Adam, He joined them together in marriage; are dismissed by present society. But this is a wise and essential principle. There is indeed a real need for an established and attested recognition, when men and women become united. The marriage vow is that recognition; but the modern way, in many instances, is to live together without ratification.

How lamentable it is, that when Government tries to do something about this failure in society, the Church and some politicians can only find fault. So failure in society increases.

A BIBLE CLASS
“ISRAEL WENT UP HARNESSSED”

Exodus 13:18

This subject has to do with Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Moses and Aaron were sent to Pharaoh to bring about this deliverance. It wasn't until the last plague — in which all the firstborn of Egypt were killed and the firstborn of Israel were kept alive through the blood of the Passover lamb — that Pharaoh finally yielded and let God's people go. As a reminder of his great deliverance, Israel was required to keep the feast of unleavened bread and to set apart as a sacrifice to the Lord all the firstborn of their beasts and to redeem their firstborn male children (Exodus 13:1-16).

As this was established, Israel began their journey toward the land promised to them by the Almighty:

“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnesssed out of the land of Egypt.”

Exodus 13:17-18.

What care and wisdom God revealed toward His people as He led them! How did He lead them?

“ . . . 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,

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to give them light, to go by day and night.”

Exodus 13:21.

Here was tangible evidence of God’s presence, not only to Israel but to all who looked upon them. How reassuring and uplifting to Israel as they raised their heads and recognized that the presence of God was with them to lead, whether by day or night. The word “led” in verse 18 gives us an understanding of how all-encompassing was God’s presence. It gives the thought of a nearness and protection, a surrounding on every side.

Samuel later reminded his people of the faithful judges whom:

“... the LORD sent ... and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.”

I Samuel 12:11.

David, too, knew God’s surrounding presence, as he wrote:

“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”

Psalm 34:7.

Israel as a people knew this all-surrounding safeguard from their God:

“... the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.”

Exodus 13:18.

This word is used only once as “harnessed” — but is also used as “armed” or “armed men” — giving the thought of soldiers ready for war. Moses required the two and one-half tribes, who had chosen the land on the east of Jordan, to help the rest of Israel conquer their land to the west of Jordan, before they could possess their own desired inheritance. Moses made this responsibility very clear:

“... The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed (harnessed) before your brethren ...

Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren ... then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.”

Deuteronomy 3:18-20.

The two and one-half tribes did join in their brethren’s battles to possess the land promised, as we read:

“... the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them.”

Joshua 4:12.

What was their armament? The army of Israel numbered over

600,000 armed men (Numbers 1:46). But this was not their only and true strength, for God Himself led them and fought for them. When Pharaoh and his army pursued Israel, the Almighty parted the Red Sea, and Israel escaped from Egypt's might. When the Egyptians followed Israel into the dried up sea:

“. . . it came to pass . . . 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.

And the waters returned, and covered . . . all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: . . .”

Exodus 14:24-25, 28.

It was not Israel's 600,000 armed men (harnessed) that saved their people, but God's presence and power, even as Moses declared:

“Thou in mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.”

Exodus 15:13.

The Almighty did indeed surround His people, delivering them in His mercy and grace, redeeming them from Egypt's bondage.

This same power can lead, can surround any who earnestly seek and labor to be His children, looking to Him for strength and guidance as they fight against their fleshly nature. Peter helps us as he writes to his brethren:

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.”

I Peter 4:1.

What was the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ as He suffered so often and so greatly? Did He not clearly express it as He agonized in the garden: “. . . nevertheless not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42)?

Paul also helps us, as he warned his brethren:

“. . . now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

. . . put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:11-14.

Can we not find example in David's arming himself? He went

forth against Goliath, not with the armor that Saul offered to him, which he discarded for he had not "proved" it (I Samuel 17:39). He went instead armed only with a staff, a sling and five stones, but with a strong trust in God's surrounding power, as he said to the scoffing Goliath:

"... Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied.

This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; . . . that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."

I Samuel 17:45-46.

This must be our spirit, our strength, and our armor, enabling us to overcome, but only by trusting in His strength, not our own. Let us remember the hymn we sing:

"Within Thy circling power we stand;
On every side we find Thy hand.
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
We are surrounded still with God."

J.A.DeF

"USE THIS WORLD AS NOT ABUSING IT"

(I Corinthians 7:31)

This chapter from Paul to the Corinthians touches on many subjects of practical help, giving advice from the spirit's perspective that they might be helped to walk in the Truth's ways.

"And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." I Corinthians 7:31.

Paul was concerned that his brethren be aware of the many distractions in the world that the flesh naturally gravitates toward, and although there are many things which are given as blessings to be used and enjoyed, care must be exerted to keep them in balance. Time is short in light of man's time of probation. During that lifetime, a proper perspective must be attained, placing foremost the important spiritual matters of life which are pleasing to God. Our life's work must be directed towards the goal of eternal life, rather than spending time and strength on the attractions of the world that will not build towards this end, remembering that:

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide

with God.”

I Corinthians 7:23-24.

The many attractions and goods one may desire in the world, all a part of this life, will not endure — they will pass away, leaving no legacy of hope or life after them. Paul’s advice is to exercise moderation using what has been given of the world, howbeit tempered with spiritual wisdom:

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”

Philippians 4:5.

Awareness comes through God’s word, to help us focus attention upon the real nature of our flesh, for by recognizing its tendencies, we can be armed to combat it through the spirit’s help.

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

I Peter 4:1-2.

The familiar words found in John’s first epistle are also a help:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

I John 2:15-17.

Paul taught that there are many things in the world that can be used as a blessing and help, as long as care is taken not to overuse or abuse them. Solomon’s example comes to mind as one who was greatly blessed by God with an abundance of riches, power and wisdom. As long as he thought of himself as a little child and looked with gratitude and humility to God for these gifts, he maintained a proper spiritual perspective. However, in time he began to multiply chariots and horses, servants and wives in exorbitant number. This placed a grievous burden upon his people in order to maintain this lavish lifestyle. Eventually, this accumulation of possessions which his wealth made possible, began to erode his spiritual values, turning him from following the Lord to listening to the counsel of his strange wives, thereby becoming, “an old and foolish king who will no more be

admonished" (Eccl. 4:13).

Paul had certain rights and privileges in the world, being a Roman citizen, which he used for the benefit of the Truth. He was told by the spirit that he was to travel to Rome to preach and bear witness:

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou has testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

Acts 23:11.

He then used his citizenship as a means of extricating himself from the menacing mob of Scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem and the threat of prison there, in order to be sent to Rome:

"And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman."

Acts 22:25-26.

How can we use the world but not abuse it? By using any position, monetary gains, ability or influence we have been given in this world, in a manner that furthers the work of the Truth or helps our brethren and sisters. In this way we are not abusing the world's goods but using its benefits in a right way, being always mindful of the strong pull the world's attractions can exert, that we be not overcome and find ourselves serving self instead of God.

M.C.S.

VOLUNTEER CORPS MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONEERING (1872)

Question: Is it right to break bread with a brother who is a member of a volunteer corps and a partaker with them in all their worldly pursuits, or with a brother who canvasses for votes for a Member of Parliament?

Reply (by R. Roberts): Paul commands withdrawal from every brother obeying not the word he wrote in 2 Thess. His word in that epistle includes an exhortation to the Thessalonians, and, therefore, to all believers, to all time until the Lord changes it, that they "stand fast and hold to traditions which they had been taught, whether BY WORD OR BY PAUL'S EPISTLE" (2 verse 15). Hence the duty of withdrawal applies to every case involving the deliberate

and unrepentant disobedience of any of the apostolic precepts. Is a voluntary partnership with the world in the study of the art of war consistent with obedience to these precepts, which are indeed and in truth, the precepts of Christ? (for He said, "he that heareth you heareth me").

No one having knowledge of what these precepts are will answer in the affirmative. Those precepts require of us to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (James 1:27): to be not conformed to it, but transformed in the renewing in our minds (Romans 12:2), to mind not earthly things (Col. 3:2), to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). The world, we are told, lieth in wickedness (1 John 5:19), and that we cannot be friends of God and friends of the world too (James 4:4). How can a man obey these precepts and be a member of a volunteer corps? How can he obey the command which forbids us to take the sword? (Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10). It is impossible. The conclusion follows that a professor in such a position has put himself beyond the pale of the fellowship of his brethren. As to electioneering, it is only a shade less bad. It is the same business in another form. A brother without compromise, can supply paper, or printing, or locomotion to parties engaged in it, on the principle laid down last month, in answer to the book selling difficulty; (as he may supply clothing, food, implements, etc., at a price to soldiers): but to sell himself he has no power, and if faithful, less inclination. He must keep himself virgin to the Lord, "denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of our Great God, and Saviour Jesus Christ."

P.S. --- please accept the foregoing remarks in answer to (the) enquiry on the subject of fellowship with drunkards.

A Remnant comment

If the brethren (in 1923) had been more mindful of the above comments and tradition, perhaps the division over allowing a brother to be a policeman could have been avoided.

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:

I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." (Isaiah 46:12-13).

The leaders of the world are not really dismayed about the moral deterioration. They know there is a problem, and do take measures to curb the undoubted spread of evil. But they "are far from righteousness."

As the campaign to elect the next United States President gets under way the candidates, Democrat and Republican, are taking a religious stance. One, now in office, has voiced himself as "a child of The Kingdom" believing that "the purpose of life is to glorify God." He has promised to run a "spiritual administration" if elected. His opponents have charged him with blurring the divide between Church and State. However one of the chief contenders for nomination on the other side has himself professed that he has "recommitted my life to Jesus Christ and a God who counts our tears and lifts our heads". A Democratic rival to the main Democrat contender has even described religious organisations as the bedrock of "civil society".

There are, however, some very questionable religious organisations. One sect, known as the Unification Church, is attracting people from the United States to a remote area in Brazil. The organisation is hoping to develop swamplands in South Western Pantanal. This is in the Mato Grosso do Sul, a mosquito-infested place. The scheme has the name of the "New Hope Ranch". Already a conference hall to seat 3000 people has been built. There are also dormitory buildings, a school, and other constructions, with plans to build hotels, with an aircraft landing area. And for what purpose? To inculcate people to reverence the 80 year old leader of this sect who is being put forward as one who is greater than Jesus; who propogates a religion which mixes "Christianity" with Buddhism and Confucianism. No doubt the enterprise will flourish in agriculture and ostrich farming, which has been set up, because of the cheap exploitation of the adherents of this sect.

But look at the real situation in the world, which deteriorates in morals, irrespective of the religious expressions of those professing a capability for changing things for the better. Drug taking is on the increase. A recent investigation in Britain reveals an increase in the

taking of cocaine among young people in their early twenties. But what is even more alarming is the report that more than a quarter of schoolchildren aged 13 have tried drugs, and that by the age of 15 there is an even greater percentage indulging on occasion, in prohibited substances. A full-scale national survey of schools is being prepared in Britain to try to find out the full extent of this terrible situation. Obviously these young people are able to obtain funds to enable the satisfying of their drug cravings.

In the United States it is the same. What is called the underclass in the inner-cities, such as the Bronx, New York, or Anacostia, Washington D.C. or South Central Los Angeles; for all the so-called deprivation of those living in these places; there is an enormous consumption of drug substances. A political comment has been made that though it is terrible to live in such places, it is not because of material poverty that causes city society to be an under class area. Rather, it is because of the moral depravities of some residents which make normal life difficult. It is family stability, respect for the law, education and a real desire to be employed that would transform these depressed areas. But the depraved and destructive behaviour of such people, described as an under class, obstructs improvement. And so the inner-city areas are places of nasty, brutish behaviour and life is often short-lived. Disputes are settled by firing a gun, and drugs can be bought on the street corners. As the quality of life depreciates, decent people do their best to flee away to other areas to find some peace.

It is a depressing, black picture of things, and it is getting worse. A promise to set up a "spiritual administration" will not cure this very great ill that is at the heart of the nation. The only answer is what is promised by the word of God:-

"I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation SHALL NOT TARRY: And I will place salvation in Zion - - - ."
(Isaiah 46:13).

THE REMNANT

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 world has been wracked by devastating earthquakes in "diverse places" — Turkey, Greece and Taiwan. Hurricanes and related floods have devastated parts of the U.S., while drought has caused notable losses in other areas.

All this comes under the hand of God, illustrating His awesome power. As the new millennium draws to hand, these disasters are warnings of Jesus Christ's approaching return to conquer and change this world as we now know it. The exact time is not revealed, but with true hope and yet with certain fear we await that day.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

As we consider the frailties of our human life, we are caused to reflect upon those things which are eternal.

For the present we are bound by mortality, but the sure promise of the holy word in Christ to those who know His Truth, is that "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). What comforting assurance for these days of trial and weakness.