

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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Editorial

“MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE”

Exodus 33:14

HERE IS A LOVELY PROMISE as we begin a New Year. The promise is a benediction in itself and will be an encouragement at this particular time.

The promise was given to Moses in connection with a deplorable incident – the lapse of the Israelites into idolatry when his back was turned. Moses was a thoroughly disappointed man, heart broken, disillusioned and apprehensive for the future. It was to this man and at this time that this comforting word was given. If there is a dull ache in your heart because of your present circumstances, ask for the fulfilling of this promise.

Moses was a man bending beneath the weight of a great responsibility, he felt the burden was more than he could bear. He was leading a people who were not easy to govern, they had on numerous occasions displayed their stubbornness and unbelief. Is it any wonder that he longed for the assurance of the divine presence with him?

God graciously gave to Moses the assurance he needed. He would have the companionship of One who was sufficient to meet all his need.

The same gracious assurance is given to us. No matter how rough the path may be, or how many the trials and disappointments we encounter, the Lord is with us. We are ignorant of the burdens we shall be called upon to bear in the days ahead but we have the promise of the unfailing Presence.

May you know much of the Lord's presence throughout 1999.

Doxology

A Sermon by the Editor

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 24-25)

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE is a very grave Letter and it is full of painful warning and vehement denunciation, and Jude says in verse 3: “it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” He was urged on with this task of dealing with the situation as he found it. There was a sense of necessity with him – there is an urgency of tone. Read it through and you will see that moral corruption had crept into the Church. We ourselves sometimes see things in a wrong way – we imagine that the evils we see today are something unique to our own day and generation. When we go back to the very earliest days we find that most of the New Testament Letters were written in order to deal with situations that should not have been there, and when we come to this Epistle of Jude we are staggered when we find the prevailing situation. Moral corruption had crept into the Church, and Jude was not concerned so much with heretical belief as with evil doers in practice and so, having dealt with the situation, he turns with a great sigh and sense of relief as he draws his Letter to a conclusion and he tells his brethren who are still faithful how they are to comfort themselves in the midst of these prevailing corruptions.

Let us get our text into context. In verse 20 he says: “**But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.**” That is a safeguard against error and corruption, to be built up in the faith which was once delivered to the saints. When we look around on Churches today there are so many who are not built up; yes – they are believers, they have launched out on the Christian pathway, but progress has hardly ever been made. They are still babes in Christ; they are still feeding on the milk instead of on the strong meat of the Word. But here is the first thing that Jude would say to such: “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” You do not build without effort, and you do not build up in the Christian life without effort. It would be better if we took our Bibles more seriously than we have done before and more regularly attend on the public means of grace. So here is the first thing: “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”

Then next he says: “**Praying in the Holy Ghost.**” Prayer will keep us from the defilement of the world and often the cause of our failure is to be found in our lack of prayer.