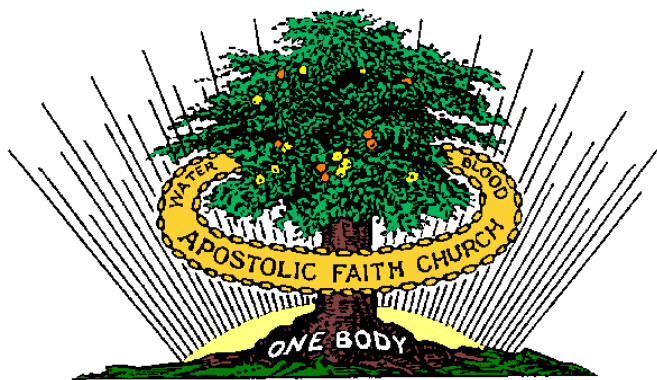


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Showers of Blessing

No. 5500 24/10/24

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God - Parent

Much depends on how we see God, since our attitudes are governed by this. Do we think of Him as a conscious God, one who possesses sensitivity, and who needs to be delicately adjusted to His creation; or whether He is a remote and unconscious power which automatically operates through our lives? Indeed, for all the notice the world takes and even the casualness of we who have been begotten again unto a lively hope, may all too easily slip in a manner which should shame us. The world who has never known Him has an excuse, but we who have been caressed and taken up into His arms and fondled ought not to forget our first love of Him who first loved us. Yet like a headstrong child, we do!

We grow in the Lord and in the process of time, because of familiarity, we tend to take our blessings for granted, because without fail everything appears to be provided. Yet that is only because of the diligent, quiet, unadvertised faithfulness of the One whom Abraham descriptively named Jehovah-Jireh - the Lord will provide. No one likes being taken for granted or discarded. Perhaps we do not realise it, but when we neglect off-handedly going to the House of God, without good reason, we are really passing-over God Himself.

What if God were to pass us over; it would mean His neglecting to watch over our goings out and our comings in. His inattention during one unguarded hour, might well result in a road accident, or some other calamity developing at home or at work. Appointments failing to be reached in time; travelling connections going wrong in the absence of the unseen vigilance of angels going before; would surely be the case were our Maker slovenly towards us. But with God there is no scamped work - no delay in keeping promises.

Similarly, we have witnessed over the past forty years a steady erosion of family ties. Though hoped for it was not always possible for all members of a family to sit down to meals together during the week, but on Sunday, dinner would be regarded as obligatory for all members to attend, dressed in their best attire, and punctually in their set places at the table before their parents. Sometimes a son or daughter might not present themselves without fair reason. Other attractions having won their hearts, for example, going out with friends at an inconvenient time or some personal preoccupation or sporting pursuit commanding greater respect in their affections.

A father, confronted by such circumstances, gradually becomes more and more deeply hurt. Despite his reproaches the practice is continued, and the ones who have laboured arduously and lovingly, foregoing much for themselves to bless their children, find a growing disregard for them as parents. Slackness in family relationships has gravely weakened the fabric of our society. God's basis for organising the human race is the family unit. As this becomes of less value, many evil works develop in its wake. There is no trace nor reference in scripture of recommendation for institutional forms of living. No authority is given in the Bible for artificial substitutions, such as, Chinese communes and our own boarding school systems. Mutual respect between parents and children provides the necessary natural love to nourish us into normal, healthy, and loving adults, as God has ordained.

The defiance of these natural laws leads to the indulgence of loose-living practices which disorganize society. The over-turning of moral values, and everyone doing that which is righteous in his own eyes, not submitting himself to the perfect pattern ordained by an all-wise God, leads to a wretched existence. The disregard for one's Creator and slackness in publically assembling before our Lord with those of like precious faith, thinking we have out-grown the need and can do better on our own, diminishes our contact with the Lord, which corporate worship enhances. Because of this attitude in the land, about 600 churches are closing their doors in a year. Where the desire for fellowship is present, but isolation and other circumstances prevent worship with those of like precious faith, the Lord will meet with them where they are.

Those who are able to attend should not shirk church worship. We have witnessed the evolvment of a very deceptive assumption that it is up to ourselves to do our own good pleasure as to whether we attend church or not; that we are free to please our passing whims. Such is in no wise the case, and we do not the truth. All who have become the children of God by adoption into His Household of Faith, have solemn obligations to meet, and not forsake the assembling of themselves together. Their heavenly Father honours them by giving them all things richly to enjoy, and though many are the afflictions of the righteous, the Lord delivers them out of them all, which is not always the case with the world of mankind. He works all things together for our good.

Does not such loving attention require an adequate response? It becomes saints to worship in the beauty of holiness, for He is in no way casual with us. It may be assumed that we get on best in private devotions at home. Of course, none of us should neglect private communion with God, for in so doing we gain a type of benefit we do not get in public worship. On the other hand, there is something obtained in public worship that is not found in private; and the two go hand-in-hand.

A sense that one has not obtained much out of a meeting or is not impressed with the minister, is irrelevant. The point we must bear in mind is that one goes to worship the Lord in the spirit of holiness, not looking at the flesh, or we shall fall. In singing hymns, we need to consciously exercise ourselves to express our thoughts to a listening Saviour, who is interested to hear the faintest whisper of our heart-felt love towards Himself. Surely we stand assembled on Mount Zion, striving to get as close to the Lamb as possible; as beholding Him who is invisible!

Glad was my heart to hear
My old companions say,
Come, in the house of God appear,
For 'tis a holy day.

Article by the late Pastor Raymond Pain. First published in Showers number 3430, 12/2/81.

