

I Have Not Departed

"I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts"—Psa. 119:99

FOLLOWING the daily readings according to "The Bible Companion" we are frequently impressed with the coincidences appearing between one reading and another. Bro. Roberts wrote as an introduction to "The Companion"—

"A little read every day from various parts of the Word has been found experimentally to be practicable, attractive, and profitable. The Tables are arranged on this plan."

The composer of this powerful little pamphlet could not have realized, in the outset of compilation, how widespread would be its use, or what a unifying effect would accrue from a common daily reading among the ecclesias.

The arrangement of the chapters to be read, as we know, was designed for a systematic review of the Old Testament once a year and the New Testament twice a year, being the product of several years experimentation, as appears from the book, "Robert Roberts, an Autobiography."

But it could only be a Divine force behind the arrangement which could have made selection of chapters which have coincided as frequently as they do. Not that bro. Roberts was inspired. He above all would have denied such a thought. But if we believe we have been called according to the purpose of God to a knowledge of the salvation that is in His Son, Christ Jesus, then we must concede that *ALL things are working out according to God's will for the spiritual health of His chosen.*

This is a well authenticated view, borne out by abundant scriptural testimony. Christ's words as he was parted from his disciples and taken up to the right hand of the Father assure his continual watchful care (Matt. 28)—

"Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

Or as Paul told the Corinthian believers —

"All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:15).

The reason therefore behind the calling of the elect to God's service is that they may show forth the praises of Him Who hath called them to glory and virtue. Not for their own glory, but for His overall purpose of filling the earth with His glory.

The same purpose appears in these coincidences of which we speak. They illustrate the design and purpose of God in all our ways. The effect should be the sacrifice of our lips to the praise of our Heavenly Father. We come to the minuteness of detail in the plan of God, the complete harmony, the indescribable beauty of each word and phrase as they go to make up the complete Word of God.

It is like turning from the vast and starry universe to behold through a powerful glass the smallest creatures of creation, or the symmetry of the snow flakes, all different, yet all speaking of perfection, of unity and intelligent purpose.

Turning to one such coincidence, we open our Bibles to the daily portions for Mar. 11. In Psa. 119:97-100, we read—

"O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me.

"I have MORE UNDERSTANDING THAN ALL MY TEACHERS; for Thy testimonies are my meditation.

"I UNDERSTAND MORE THAN THE ANCIENTS, because I keep Thy precepts."

Is it not remarkable we read from the same day's portion: —

"And it came to pass, that after three days they (Joseph and Mary) found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:46-47).

Though we know that having the Spirit he was of quick understanding, this was before the Spirit came upon him at his baptism by John in Jordan. It was of his earlier years that Luke wrote when he said—

"The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him . . .

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:41, 52).

These conditions are only possible on the basis which we found in Psalm 119. *The keeping of God's commandments, meditation on the law of God all the day, make one wiser than is possible from a purely human basis.* Human wisdom is passing. It is but a small item of the vast store of Divine knowledge yet unrevealed, which shall be attainable in much fuller degree to God's servants in the coming age. Or as Solomon declared—

"That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

How utterly impotent are the men of each age who endeavour to build apart from God's purpose! Great edifices, monuments and once-mighty nations are but mute testimony to the shortness of human wisdom and knowledge.

Therefore to know God's testimonies is to know the purpose of God and to be able to confound the wisdom of human teachers. It was so in Christ's case at the early age of twelve years. He put his enemies to silence repeatedly by a reference to the testimony of the Scriptures—

"If they speak not according to this Word (God's precepts) it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8).

The wisdom of God is therefore seen in the words of Moses that Israel's fathers should *draw their children around the commandments of God and teach them daily of God's purpose.* When they were eating, when resting in the house or busily occupied, the conversation was to be centered around the basic purpose of the Heavenly Father. Or if they were in a journey the same points were to be instilled.

The children were to be assembled in the partaking of the Passover and when they asked what it all meant, they were to be told the origin, institution and lesson therein.

"Bring up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart therefrom."

Is the lesson not important to all parents and children?

Let us then draw our children around us when we do our daily readings, and let them read along and take part in the discussion. Their questions and their answers will be both developing and instructive. Lead the conversation at the table into profitable channels of Divine meditation. Dwell upon the word of God in travel or in singing the hymns to God's praise.

By all means permit, encourage and arrange for the children to assemble at our weekly memorial of the Passover. They will early ask, "*What mean ye by these things?*" These things will make them wiser than all their teachers of the present day, wiser than the proponents of evolution, wiser than exponents of theories and schemes of human betterment.

Be wise then, all ye fathers and mothers, heed the value of daily reading; notice the unity of purpose, an unchanging plan of ages. Realize that the message now calls unto us. Let us love God's precepts; they are a well-spring of life to all that find them. They will arm us to ward off all the fiery darts of the wicked.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"—Psa. 119:105 —F.H.