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Walking with God

by F. S. Parnham

Enoch "walked with God", says the Hebrew text of Gen. 5: 22, 24; the Septuagint version (followed by Heb. 11: 5) turns this statement into Greek by saying that he "pleased God". Mr. Parnham combines the Hebrew and Greek wording to serve as the theme of another of his short meditations.

ENOCH "had this testimony that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11: 5) and walked with Him 300 years (Genesis 5: 22). So impressive a record provides the best of epitaphs to commemorate the life and exodus of a saintly man of God, whose example, shining across the centuries, is an encouragement for us to-day to walk as he walked. It is not that Enoch found it easy to be so devoted. Nay, rather he would be deeply grieved by the increasing sinfulness of his fellow-men as set forth in Genesis 6: 5: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". For all the difference in timing the inspired writer might well have been describing the twentieth century of evil men. Indeed the cryptic remark of our Lord on His way to the cross might also apply to the present godless generation: "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23: 31). Meanwhile the world hastens on to the predicted climax of lawlessness and will ultimately suffer the judgment of a righteous Creator. "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6: 7). That is heaven's inexorable verdict.

To walk with God is to share His counsels, to know His will and to love His ways, as Enoch did. "Can two walk together *except they be agreed?*" (Amos 3: 3). The evidence of such agreement and the extent of Enoch's knowledge of divine truth are both clearly seen in his prophecy concerning our Lord's Second Advent (Jude 14, 15). How could the patriarch possibly know of that great event except by personal communication from the God in whose company he spent so much time? Enoch's prophecy was uttered some thousand years ago and the Lord is still waiting, in grace and long-suffering, for its glorious fulfilment. Come He will; of that there can be no question; His return may be nearer than we think.

In ordinary human relationships the growing affinity between two tried and trusty friends is a joy and a virtue all too rare in these degenerate days. Between such friends there is genuine pleasure in their companionship, qualified, perhaps, by mutual

consideration for differing personalities. In practice good sense prevails and promotes identity of interests, together with unanimity in their outlook. On vital occasions they can and do speak with one voice. It is an ideal well worth cultivating.

Enoch's testimony was consistent and well-pleasing to God. Hence he was able to walk with Him in a holy fellowship maintained over a long period in a sinful world. To *please* the Lord and to *walk* with Him are inseparable factors. We cannot have the one without the other. Moreover, we may add this further quality viz. Enoch was a man of faith as the context of Hebrews 11: 5 implies, for without faith it is impossible to *please* God. Finally, as a crowning mercy of divine approval the patriarch was translated to heaven without tasting death. Men searched for him but he was not found. God had taken him to share an even closer fellowship with Himself in heaven. These amazing facts are recorded for our learning and edification, yes, for us upon whom the end of this present age draws near.

Where are the Enochs of to-day? Their numbers are sadly depleted and truly faithful souls few and far between. It is easy to be censorious but as we survey the ranks of the Christian community with a critical eye it seems that the blandishments of this age exert a stronger influence among them than does a close and holy walk with the Lord outside the camp bearing His reproach (Hebrews 13: 13). Popularity counts for nothing in spiritual values. It is blessedly true, even in this time of mounting confusion, that "the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2: 19) and that includes every isolated soul humbly seeking to serve Him with holy zeal in some obscure corner of the earth. The admonition of 1 John 2: 15, "Love not the word neither the things that are in the world", goes unheeded once the Christian is caught up in the snare of worldliness, when his principal pre-occupation seems to be with the material advantages of the affluent society. What blessings he misses!

Yet, as Biblical history tells us, the Lord never leaves Himself without a faithful remnant among men. All who cultivate a closer walk with the Lord and spend much time in His presence will benefit by the conforming ministry of the Holy Spirit as He impresses upon them the image and superscription of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3: 18). So it may come about that when we issue forth in our service our faces may shine with the glory of the sanctuary, like Moses after his long sojourn with God in the holy mount. May our hearts be warmed and our faces glow with the glory of God's grace, as we shed it on those around us, for it will *please* the Lord and fortify our witness in this present evil world.

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