

## "Am I My Brother's Keeper?"

*"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not, doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it?"—Prov. 24:11-12*

THESE verses teach our responsibility for one another—the care and concern we should have for our fellowman. They place the matter on a higher level than just something done for another that may give us a good inward feeling. It becomes an absolute command and necessity that we do all things unto the glory of God.

All men have descended from Adam, and all come under the dominion of sin (1 Cor. 15:22)—

"In Adam all die"

In this sense therefore all men are being "drawn unto death," they are "ready to be slain" by sin; for—

"The wages of sin is death."

All men have sinned and come short of manifesting the glory of God.

Sin hath reigned unto death; we have been bound by sin; and in consequence we are being slowly and surely drawn unto death. This is the condition of all men unacquainted with the hope of salvation, as it is in Christ Jesus.

To offset this condition, brought about by Adamic transgression and confirmed by our repeated failures to completely obey the will of God, He has provided a means of escape that we should not be drawn down to perpetual death (Rom. 7:11)—

"For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me."

But the apostle continues and sums up the argument—

"O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24).

### *Through Jesus Christ our Lord*

This is the means which has been provided. God is calling men and women among the earth's teeming millions to a knowledge of this way, acquainting them with His intentions of filling this earth with His glory.

Those who have been called become associated with the Creator's purpose and work as He has expressed. They are the means or mediums through which a multitude shall be revealed as bearers of the glory of God, not by their works but by His abundant mercy (2 Cor. 6:1)—

"We then are workers together with God."

Or again—

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

"For He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

**"Ambassadors for Christ"**— we think of ambassadors as being sent from one country to another, from the court of one ruler to another. Strictly speaking, it comes from the Greek,

"presbuteros," meaning an elder or senior. They are seniors or elders of a nation selected because of certain qualifications and characteristics. It is on this basis we have been called to be ambassadors from the court of God.

We have been called to stand in the Holy Place of God's Tabernacle. Being sent forth from there we must display the characteristics for which we were selected; we must carry forth the message which our ruler has committed to us, and declare it unto the court of the Gentiles or those who have ears to hear. **We must declare it**, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.

The calling of the Apostle Paul is an illustration of this summons and apostleship, as he declared unto Festus and King Agrippa. Christ appeared unto him (Acts 26:16-18)—

"To make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen.

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

The words of Christ unto his disciples, just before he was taken up from them into heaven, and which gave them title unto the name "apostle," were—

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 15-16).

This then becomes our responsibility. We have a duty to proclaim the Gospel of liberation from death to everlasting life unto all people. We dare not forbear to proclaim this glorious message. If we do so we are not delivering them that are drawn unto death and those that are ready to be slain by the shafts of sin.

**This is not only done by the proclamation of the Word by preaching.** It is done by our actions, by our thoughts and the way we act toward the trials and tribulations which come upon us, from moment to moment. In short, **it is our whole life**, presented as a living sacrifice unto God which is our reasonable service. Or as God intended Israel to typify the righteous (Deut. 28:10)—

"And all people of the earth shall see thou art called by the Name of the Lord."

Ezekiel speaks of the responsibility resting upon those who have a knowledge of God's will and purpose to declare it unto their fellowman (3:17-19)—

"I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity but **his blood will I require at thine hand.**

"Yet if thou warn the wicked and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but **thou hast delivered thy soul.**"

The people of God are referred to as the light of the world; as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid; as a candle bought to be set on a candlestick that all that are in the house may see; and as talents to be put to use, rather than being wrapped up in a napkin.

Paul refers to the knowledge given unto him as a "dispensation of the Gospel" being committed unto him, and it was woe unto him if he did not proclaim the glorious message.

Therefore whatever we do must be done with the object of drawing others away from the pit of destruction, that they may be drawn toward the glory and beauty of God. This can only be done by our studiously attending to the little details of life which others see in us.

Now in view of the fact that God knows our hearts, understands our motives and our thoughts, the reasons why we do things or leave them undone, we can see why it is imperative for us to attend always unto the work of assisting mankind wherever possible.

God arranges the circumstances—the affairs in the lives of His called out ones. He wants us, as His ministers, to develop concern for our fellowmen, even as He cares for us. He weighs the events in our lives, knowing each heart and in consequence will reward all men in accord with their works.

It will be a just and righteous judgment and it will be based on the way we have responded unto the little everyday details of life, how we have declared the praises of Him who has invited us to become His sons and daughters—

"Lord, Thou has searched and seen us through,  
Thine eye commands with piercing view,  
Our rising and our resting hours,  
Our hearts and minds with all their powers.

"Our thoughts before they are our own,  
Are all to Thee distinctly known;  
Thou know'st the words we mean to speak,  
Ere from our opening lips they break."

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THE details of the law of Moses and of the law of Christ all teach care for our brethren and sisters. All the evil circumstances which man is heir to are in some way the effect of sin in the beginning. God had said to Israel that if they were obedient none of these things would come upon them. The evidence of sickness among the people speaks of their failure to remain in the way of truth. Yet when Christ healed the blind man (John 9) he said—

"Neither hath this man sinned; nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

Again when Lazarus was sick and died, the disciples said,

"Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick."

When Jesus heard this, he said—

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

So it remains in all our affairs, if we refrain from bringing a cup of cold water unto the least of God's children with the purpose of glory to God, we shall be weighed by God and found wanting. Let us then heed the apostle James' words (5:20)—

*"He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."*

—F.H.