

THY GOD CARETH

"THY GOD CARETH...EVEN' UNTO THE END OF THE YEAR"; "HE THAT SHALL ENDURE UNTO THE END" (Deut.11: 12; Matt.24: 13)

As the year 2002 is closing upon us, let us continue to bless the Lord, in the words of the Psalmist (Psa.103) for His continuing benefits, through Christ Jesus our Lord -He forgiveth, He healeth, He redeemeth, He crowneth, He satisfieth, He reneweth, He executeth, He pitieth, He knoweth, and finally, to crown it all, He ruleth from His Throne in the heavens, -THRONE of the: unchanging King and Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7.24,25).

In Matthew 24:3,6, 12, 13, 14 and 21 as our Lord sat upon the Mt. of Olives, He held a private communication with His disciples, as they desired, with their questions, "What shall be the sign of thy coming...?" -a subject solemn and searching even for us, as the Church age is soon to close, and we should be found as those "ENDURING unto the END" -AND SUCH I BELIEVE, SHALL BE SAVED- "to obtain SALVATION with ETERNAL GLORY" in view of which Apostle Paul endured all things for the ELECT'S sakes as he writes in 2 Tim.2:10.

The Lord spoke of this ENDURING after mentioning about the conflict amongst nations, calamities or catastrophes that would befall this earth besides the hatred of nations against Him and His own, and the spirit of deception that would tend to permeate this globe. He added that "the love of many shall wax cold" as iniquity abounds. At such a time, the true Church, ready for rapture, should be found as ENDURING SAINTS, side by side with other spiritual features and virtues of Christ Himself, reproduced in them by the Holy Spirit, that in-fills them. They indeed ENDURE and 'embrace the Cross and are sustained by its liberating and livening power.

Heb.3: 6 exhorts us that if we HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope FIRM unto the END, we are His House over which He is the SON. This end, which the Lord has in view for us, is attained in the measure we hold fast and ENDURE now, year by year, and press on to perfection, through the span of years the Lord is pleased to keep us in our pilgrimage. Hence it will be beneficial for us to review our past months of the closing year, as to how far we have been enabled to ENDURE amidst the situations we had to face, and emerged victorious, or evaded the Cross to our own loss and sorrow. The degree of this ENDURING may vary with us, but let us not forget that the earnestness and intensity of it (this endurance) indeed constitutes the yardstick to measure our devotion and delight in the Lord Himself, and hence the desire for His return. For such, His comforting promise is more and more true, "...behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me..."(Rev.22: 12).

The word ENDURE has different shades of meaning, such as, "remain firm under", "bear with patience", "put up with", "withstand" and such. We may briefly consider four references in the New Testament to this word, as applicable to their particular context. It should equip us -our ability to ENDURE more and stability to SERVE more effectively.

Firstly, let us glance at James 1: 12-15. God does not want us to yield to temptation; yet, neither can He spare us from the experience of temptation. He uses them testings and temptations to make us mature in Christian life. The word lust means any kind of desire. Normal desires are given by God for right function in our body. But when we seek to satisfy them outside the will of God, we land into trouble. Eating is normal, but gluttony is sin. Sleep is normal, but slothfulness is sin. Sex and marriage are honorable, but outside the marriage bond, defiling and deserving judgment. So our desires must be controlled and channeled, lest we be carried away by their attraction, enticed and entangled. The law of the Spirit of life must set us free.

Secondly, in Heb.12:5 -12 we read about, "ENDURING" chastening as dealt by God, for we are His sons, and are made to grow into adulthood. So the Lord uses child -training, instruction and disciplining, lest we tend to become pampered' babies. This He does through rebuke from His Word, circumstances, and even sickness, that we may grow into the likeness of His Son and be trusted with the "Father's business". It may not seem joyous now, but never1theless it will after) ward yield its fruit.

Thirdly, in 1 Pet.2: 18, we are taught to be submissive to those who are above us, par1icularly as servants to masters or a young employee to the senior officer. As a true Christian worker the unbelieving employer wrongs you and you have to take it "patiently" as a dedicated believer (Matt.5: 10-12). This is thankwor1hy, -ENDURING GRIEF wrongfully, in the steps of our Lord (1Pet.2: 19-21). Let the Lord fight the battles for us, and not we ourselves. This must be true in the) fellowship of the Church.

Fourthly, Apostle Paul, writing from the military background of Rome where he is a prisoner himself, exhor1s young Timothy, in his last letter to him, to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus", and adds, "Thou therefore ENDURE hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ..." that he may please Him Who hath chosen him to be a soldier (2 Tim.2: 1-4). Ministry is not a soft job, confined to pulpit preaching. A disciplined, dedicated minister is in a battle that requires spiritual ENDURANCE (Eph.6: 10-12). He must be committed to the Commanding Officer, and trust Him wholly and avoid worldly entanglements. He must think of the whole army, "the ELECT", chosen by grace and called (2 The\$.2: 13,14). Suffer for the Lord as well as for His Church, the Body, as Paul exemplifies in Col.1: 24. A soldier who thinks only of himself and his immediate circle is disloyal and undependable. The Lord help us to ENDURE all things for the elect's sake and be found wor1hy to share His Kingdom and glory at His coming.