

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 71 A New Year Message

Reading: Hebrews 13. 1-21

- 1 Let brotherly love continue.
- 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
- 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.
- 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
- 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
- 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.
- 7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.
- 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.
- 9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.
- 10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.
- 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose

blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work
to do his will, working in you that which is
wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus

Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

Address

As we come to the end of another year and the beginning of a new year, we have so many things to be thankful for in our homes and lives and families and circumstances, in the church of God and personally. We have to say, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” But then also looking back, as Gadsby said,

“We view the year already past,
And see great cause to be abashed.”

O what need for humble confession!

But then we have the new year before us. We wonder what it holds. We feel our weakness and helplessness as we set out further on in our pilgrimage. Some have trials before them; some wonder whether next year will be their last; and then the unknown way. So these three things, I am sure, weigh heavily upon each of us as we come here this evening for prayer. I would say to our brethren, in prayer do pray for those thing that really rest upon your spirit, because that is real prayer. I know there is a kind of propriety – things we ought to say, or should say, or must say – but it is those things that lie on our hearts. *Thy burden* – “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.” *Thy way* – “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

Thinking of the unknown way before us, just two points I would make briefly. One is, whatever changes there may be, and there will be many, “God is the same to endless years.” “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” – the same in His love, the same in His mercy, the same in the value of His precious blood, the same almighty to save, the same in His everlasting priesthood.

The second thing. As we look forward to the new year, may we truly believe what we do believe. “The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot

save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.” We are praying to an almighty God.

Pondering this evening, I was thinking of a little event that took place in the 1700s. Towards the beginning of the 1700s, about three hundred years ago, a baby boy was born. That was a very sad time in the history of the church of God. It seemed that once again there would be dreadful persecution and imprisonment, but also the state of religion was extremely low, dreadfully low. Wickedness abounded. Christianity was mocked at. It was said the Archbishop of Canterbury was an atheist. When that baby boy was born, his godly grandfather looked at him and could not help weeping. He shed bitter tears. He said, “I wonder what those little eyes will live to see in this evil world.” Well, as the little boy grew up, he knew what his grandfather had said, and he himself became quite an eminent minister, and before he died, he referred to what his grandfather had said when he was born, those tears, “I wonder what those little eyes will see.” And the little boy, now an old man and a godly minister, said, “These little eyes have lived to see the most blessed days spiritually in the church of God that England has ever known” – the days of Whitefield and the Evangelical Revival when thousands were blessed and the churches and chapels filled.

Now looking forward to the unknown way, and it seems a dark day; it seems a gloomy day, but the Lord is able to do far more exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 30th December, 2013

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Upheld by Thy supporting hand,
We pass, O Lord, from year to year;
And still we meet, at Thy command,
To seek Thy gracious presence here.

Oft feed us, Lord, beneath this vine,
Through the new year with heavenly bread;
Oft clothe Thy Word with power divine,
To break the rocks and raise the dead.

Oft by a Saviour's dying love,
To many a wounded heart revealed,
Temptations, fears, and guilt remove,
And be our Sun, and Strength, and Shield.

J. Newton