

## A CALL TO GILGAL (JND)

Being a Word in Season.

Proverbs 25:11. See Judges 2:1-5; 1 Sam. 7:16; 1 Sam. 10:8; 1 Sam. 11:14.

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Beloved Brethren:

I am thankful a resting place has been reached after the struggle against evil and the assaults of the enemy. What I would seek now is, that as we cannot expect a peace of long duration, we may individually test ourselves as to the part we have taken in the matter, as to how far we have been using carnal weapons in our warfare - although our object has rightly been to clear away evil from a holy place, and which was of such a character as clearly to manifest that the enemy was making a serious assault upon Christ, through the assembly, scattering his blinding influences broadcast, obstructing in various ways the vision of saints in such a manner as to hinder their seeing eye to eye.

Through God's grace there was a decision to stand against the evil, and then the enemy sought to turn the attention from the real point, to the manner and ways of those who were acting. As in the old question as to the Person of Christ some thirty years ago, so it is now; so much was made of the way the thing was dealt with, those who made that a prominent point, seeming to forget that in such struggles it is not surprising that the weakness of the flesh should be seen; but what does it prove? Why, how incapable we were to meet such an attack, and that during the interval, between the former one and the present, there had not been "a redeeming the time," a "gathering up of strength so as to be ready," a "being clad with the whole armour of God." Has there been the attention to that part of the armour, "the breastplate of righteousness," and have "the loins been girt about with truth"? Has there been that attitude of dependence which is shewn by "praying always" and "watching thereunto"? Do not these circumstances exhibit failure in these respects? No real profit can accrue to us by dwelling on this or that failure, we get insensibly assimilated to it by so doing - the spiritual eye discerns evil and failure by progressing in the knowledge of that which is holy and true; as in spirit John: the untrue is made apparent by the true: what is of darkness is understood in the light, and what is of Satan by what is of God.

I do not desire to show error by dissecting writings, etc. I believe and trust that God will in His grace enable all to do that for themselves in quiet converse with Himself. We never get into a struggle with the enemy in which all who have been professedly on the Lord's side are found of exactly the same mind. Again, there is a greater energy of faith in some than in others; and this will be, if some have been unmindful of that word in 2 Peter 1:5; and if in that struggle brethren come into collision and quarrelling begins, whoever is finally victorious, is also vanquished to a certain extent, as a conflict among brethren is injurious to both, if the flesh is aroused, which is too frequently the case. Of all this the enemy takes advantage.

In the book of Judges when it was deemed right to go against Benjamin for sin which that tribe had linked itself with by refusing to deliver up to judgment the sinners, they are both smitten in turn, and when those who had completely vanquished their brethren had settled down, they found that victory had sorrow for its accompaniment. There was one tribe lacking in Israel, and they had in their zeal "sworn in Mizpeh" about it. Now they get into God's presence, and humble themselves for Benjamin their brother. When there is real love to the brethren, this must ever be - that however we may have had to oppose a course, and God may have given us the victory, yet He repents Himself when He sees their trouble, and to have fellowship with Him, we must take the place of

intercession - in love for our brethren, for whatever mistakes we may make - and we do make them - we are not to be as the Gentile rulers, exercising lordship and dominion, but as brethren, knowing that what delighted His heart, is to have us in a right path and in the enjoyment of it, and for this He has laboured; and even if He chastens it is for the same purpose. How readily He accepted confessions, though estimating fully its worth (Ps. 78:34-39).

How His ways are shewn out in Hosea 14. How He lets them know where alone they will grow, namely, in His presence; they confess their sin and their weakness - He says, "I will be as the dew to Israel" - then "he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive, and his smell as Lebanon." May we be among the wise to understand these things and know them.

God has in His grace given a rest in the conflict, the enemy is not vanquished, but we have learned how powerless we were to cope with the difficulty - how the flesh sought to enter into it, and how much it had to be restrained. May we be humbled about it all, yet thankful to our God that He has not allowed the enemy to crush us, weak though we are (Ps. 124:6).

And now leaving details of heated discussions, harsh, unkind, or unholy expressions whether real or imaginary, let us look to our armour, so as to be prepared for the next onslaught of Satan, for come it surely will. Was there not pride and haughtiness of spirit? or our God would not have allowed this. When He brought Israel out of Egypt, He led them not through the land of the Philistines, that they should not see war, but He led them another way. How different is Exodus 14:14, 15; they were then haughty in spirit, and He allowed them to learn their weakness in a struggle with His enemies. Abraham too - after his great victory, doing with his handful what the five kings could not do - had to learn who it was that enabled him to accomplish so much, only he learned it in a more blessed way. Melchizedec comes forth with refreshment, strength, and joy from the Most High God who had delivered his enemies into his hands - Abraham owns it and worships. Then when the moment came that the enemy would puff him up and heap the rewards of nature upon him, he would answer as he had learned in secret, "I have lifted up my hands to the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth." "No flesh shall glory in His presence," and if this present conflict has taught us weakness in any way, or that we have been exalted with the idea that we are Philadelphia, or have set up anything as an "organization" here, as the true thing, however sad the way we have learned it, we can still bless God who has not failed us, but who will always allow us to learn our need of Himself and invariably for our own blessing and His glory. Let us not spend the time in foolish recrimination, but with desires for blessing and mutual growth in the things of God.

Where sin is manifested there must be no compromise with it, but in these days individuals have to bear in mind that if the assembly is unable to clear itself from evil, through fleshly hindrances and to act upon the word for it (1 Cor. 5:13), the same voice that speaks to the assembly, addresses the individual saint in 2 Timothy 2:19: "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." If the flesh in an assembly is such that evil cannot be put out, each individual is responsible to God for himself - the question of majorities or minorities will not come in there. I do not think God will allow His faithful to be long alone; others will be found equally faithful and true.

Romans 16:17 is individual; verse 20 shows the character of God I'm to manifest in my separation or withdrawal, namely, "peace," and He sees the root of the mischief and says He will "bruise Satan under our feet shortly," and immediately follows with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." In quarrelling I do not manifest the God of peace. If I can help others, well; I certainly can help no one by remaining in association with evil. My coming out may exercise souls, and so I go on in peace: to remain with sin I must not. The difficulty is to keep the motives clear; if we get into debates which as 2 Corinthians 12:20 shows, we may end in tumult. To be with God in all these

matters, the sole desire should be, the keeping each other in a right path, and bring back into it any who may have erred from it (James 5:19, 20).

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Lightly Revised.

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