

No.

16.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

" V E N G E A N C E "

An Address (revised) at

Forest Gate, E. 7.

18th January, 1915.

by

PERCY W. HEWARD.

Correspondence welcome:

Scriptural literature for Believers

Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1 – 74343 Sachsenheim – GERMANY

" V E N G E A N C E " .

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,

At 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate,

Monday, 18th January, 1915.

Luke 18. 1 - 8 read.

Our subject, beloved friends, is "Vengeance". I believe we shall find it solemn, heart-searching, and spiritually suggestive. Our difficulties are largely diminished because there is one special Hebrew word, and one special Greek root, which have this idea of Vengeance. May I read a number of verses of Scripture first, practically without comment, then we shall have material on which we can build, not our theories, but our belief.

Deut. 32. 35. To Me belongeth VENGEANCE and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. (41) If I whet My glittering sword, and Mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render VENGEANCE to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me. (42) I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood. and My sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. (43) Rejoice O ye nations, His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render VENGEANCE to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land, to His people.

Psalms 94. 1. O Lord God, to Whom VENGEANCE belongeth, O God, to Whom VENGEANCE belongeth, shew Thyself, lift up Thou Thyself, Thou Judge of the earth.

Psalms 149. Verse 2 dates this Psalm, - Let the children of Zion be joyful IN THEIR KING, when the Lord is King. Then God adds in verse 5, Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute VENGEANCE upon the heathen, punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them THE JUDGMENT WRITTEN: This honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord.

Isaiah 34. 8. For it is the DAY of the Lord's VENGEANCE, the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

Isaiah 35. 4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not, Behold your God will come WITH VENGEANCE, even God with a recompence, He will come and SAVE YOU.

I Isaiah 59. 17. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon His head, and He put on the garments of VENGEANCE for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, fury to His adversaries, recompence to His enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

Isaiah 61. 2. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of VENGEANCE of our God.

Isaiah. 63. 4. For the day of VENGEANCE is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.

Luke 18. 7. And shall not God AVENGE His own elect which cry day and night unto Him; and He is longsuffering over them. I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.

Rom. 12. 19. Dearly beloved, AVENGE not yourselves, but give place unto THE wrath (God's wrath) for it is written, VENGEANCE is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.

1 Thess. 4. 6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in a matter, because that the Lord is the AVENGER of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified.

2 Thess. 1. 8. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power when He shall come.

Heb. 10. 30. For we know Him That hath said, VENGEANCE belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord; and again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a Living God.

Rev. 6. 10. The saints under the altar cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and AVENGE our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season until--.

Rev. 19. 1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia, Salvation and glory and honour and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are His judgments, for He hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath AVENGED the blood of His servants at her hand.

Beloved friends, though I felt before-hand somewhat definite and clear as to the Scriptural teaching on this subject, I must say I have been impressed with the tremendous emphasis that Scripture gives to the points I want to bring in front of you. The first one is that VENGEANCE IS GOD'S WORK. It is surprising to find the REPEATED stress upon this. In the earlier Scriptures and in the Later Scriptures, God says, VENGEANCE is Mine. He is the God to Whom VENGEANCE belongs. This needs an emphasis for several reasons. First, if it be God's work we are brought face to face with the fact that God is not the weak indulgent Father He is sometimes portrayed to be. He is a Righteous Judge. True, He is the Father of His people, but He

is NOT a universal Father. Unless we are in Christ Jesus, we cannot truthfully call God "Father". He is the God to Whom vengeance belongs, and this has a closely related thought. There are some who would seek to put aside the idea of wrath; they would tell you that God has no wrath, and when you probe further their meaning, you would find that they regard it incompatible with God's love. Now Scripture makes evident by claiming vengeance as part of God's prerogative, that such vengeance is perfectly right and holy, and in no ways contradictory of His love. Thus we have brought before us the need for an emphasis upon God's holy HATRED OF SIN. We cannot estimate what sin is. We can see how God views it in that He gave His beloved Son to die for sinners, and that beloved Son, Whom He loved with an infinitely full love, was constrained thereby to go through amazing agony, and why? Because God hates sin so holily and so tremendously. We cannot estimate God's holy hatred of sin. It is well that Scripture keeps on bringing in front of us the solemn fact that vengeance belongs to God. Yet more, this stress on vengeance reminds us that vengeance is judicial, for with God there is nothing of passion, nothing of malice. Vengeance is not an impulsive excitement, it is a definite deliberate judicial act of dealing with sin. Unless at the outset we realise its judicial character, we shall fail to enter into the fulness of the Divine teaching. There are some people who regard vengeance and revenge as matters of personal spite, but inasmuch as these are linked with God there can be nothing of personal spite therein. If, therefore, in our subsequent study we find at any time vengeance forbidden it is not merely that personal spite is forbidden: - that was always forbidden, and was always unsatisfactory, and always will be; but if vengeance is forbidden, something more is forbidden. This subject is, therefore, of the greatest importance at the present time. May I, before leaving the thought that vengeance is the work of God, urge His blood-bought people to be intensely earnest in showing sinners across whose path they are brought how HE WILL PUNISH SIN. The Gospel of the Grace of God is largely despised to-day through (or at least, the despising is helped through) the fear of Christians, I cannot only say professing

Christians, to proclaim the wrath of God. Grace is not appreciated unless on a wrath background. When a man sees himself a sinner he wants a Saviour, when he sees wrath he flees to the way of salvation. But till wrath is seen, some human contrivance will suit the sinner's mind instead, and he tries to turn God's plan of mercy into a theory more palatable to the flesh.

Secondly, the verses we have considered make clear that there is a TIME of vengeance. Are those verses in your memories, beloved friends? Do you recollect how that we had brought before us the Divine words, "The DAY of vengeance", "The YEAR of the recompences", "Vengeance WHEN HE SHALL COME", "SHALL not God avenge His own elect"? When Zion's King is stirred up from that waiting and silence which are part of a Divine plan, when Zion's King arises, He will come in flaming fire taking vengeance. Vengeance is thus linked with a special DAY. God has treasures, as we are told in Deut. 32, and those treasures are to be unsealed in connection with His vengeance, but that vengeance is still viewed as future at the time of the 5th unsealing in Rev. 6. In the ordinary way you cannot find vengeance until the redeemed are caught up to meet their Lord in the 6th unsealing. This is deeply important. There are not a few who would take the six unsealings as well as the seventh away from the present dispensation, and who would take the trumpets also away from the present dispensation. They have to face the tremendous fact that though the words "indignation" and "wrath" are both commonly used in Revelation, there is not one passage where they are used in connection with God's indignation till chronologically after the sixth seal, - till after the trumpet sounds and the redeemed are caught up. As soon as you have the vials you have a great stress upon wrath and indignation. Vengeance is still future at the fifth seal. Thus, beloved friends, we have it linked with a day and the day of vengeance of our God is shown to be the time when He rises up on Israel's behalf. Isa. 63 made that evident. Another fact has to be faced in Revelation. You never have Israel viewed as a nation in the Book of Revelation till after the sixth seal. Never are they viewed before as a nation with which God is working. Everything in Scripture confirms everything in Scripture,

if only we read with prayerful attentiveness. But vengeance is associated with a time when God rises up for Israel. Our beloved Lord in the synggogue made clear two dispensations. Quoting from Isa. 61 He said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the poor, He hath sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, and so forth. Then come the remarkable words, - To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; and He closed the book. The verse continues at once, And the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes. But He closed the book, for it was and is still the acceptable year of the Lord, and this goes on until the day of vengeance of our God begins. When the day of vengeance of our God begins He will comfort all that mourn, and appoint unto them that mourn IN ZION a wonderful blessing. Zech. 12.10 will come true. Thus we have this second point emphasized in front of us. There is an appointed time of vengeance.

Thirdly, God's people have no present share in vengeance. I take it the Scriptures we have read make this evident, but yet I do long that it might be impressed upon our hearts in a world that crucified our Lord. We have no rights, we are simply to represent Him Who was and is despised and rejected of men. Scripture is clear upon this point. Shall not GOD avenge His own elect which cry, that is all they do, - which cry night and day unto Him? So too we have this brought out in the striking Rom. 12 at which we looked. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to THE wrath, that is to say, Stand aside and make room for God's wrath in the appointed time. If I take wrath into my hand, I am not giving place for God's wrath, I am interfering with God's prerogative, and this is a serious thing for a child of God to do. The same aspect is brought out in Rev. 6. where we have the souls crying under the altar, they say, How long, O Lord, wilt Thou not judge. They had not judged themselves, they had not dared to take wrath into their own hands. And it is said unto them they should rest until their brethren who are slain as they were slain have been added to the complete number; and so in Babylon is found the blood of apostles, prophets, and martyrs, and of all that are slain on the earth. Thus their brethr

are to be slain in a manner parallel with their own death, suffering wrongfully, and suffering without standing up for their rights. Christ is the Example. When He was reviled He reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself unto Him That judgeth righteously. Here is plainly marked out the position of a believer. A believer has no present share in vengeance. Indeed the way in which God emphasizes that vengeance is His prerogative would make a believer at once draw back from it, even apart from the added words. Unless God has commanded His people to execute His judgment as representing the supreme court of heaven, how can they venture to act thus? In the one passage that I read which speaks of a future executing of Judgment by saints, we have this statement, "To execute upon them the judgment WRITTEN. This honour have all the saints". Only as God appoints an executive can there be the right carrying out of vengeance, and the Lord Jesus Christ said that His people were to love their enemies, to cry unto Him and leave their case in His hands. There is no judicial power with respect to the world entrusted to believers in the present time. The fact that vengeance belongs to God holds them back from any taking of the matter into their own hands. God has never put it into their hands. I need hardly say that this principle is far reaching. It separates a believer from anything of resistance by force, and from everything of self-defence. He can take no share to the glory of God in judicial, political, or governmental arrangements. He is simply a member of a heavenly state, one who is walking this earth as a stranger and pilgrim. The address on the mount, which, as we have seen, was not given to nations but given to the narrower circle of the disciples, - the address on the mount cuts away the child of God from any fellowship with human systems which have judicial powers wrapped up in them. In this connection we have to notice two passages where vengeance is mentioned with respect to believers in the present time. 2 Cor. 7.11. For behold this selfsame thing, your suffering grief in accord with God, what zeal, how great zeal it worked ~~in~~ for you, not only so, but defence; not of the action, but defence of God's truth; not only so but intense indignation; not only so, but fear; not only so, but vehement desire; not only so, but jealousy; not only so, but **RIGHTEOUS**

VENGEANCE; in all things ye have proved yourselves to be pure in that matter. ~~Here~~ Here we read how the Corinthian assembly was aroused through Paul's epistle, and there was a swift dealing with the one who had brought such dishonour on the church. There was jealousy for the truth, and there was righteous vengeance; and what was that righteous vengeance producing? There was the legal sentence of a church-court which delivered the offending one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of Jesus Christ. Nothing of carrying out penal judgment by themselves, nothing of punishment physically, - simply exclusion, that is the limit of penalty which believers can now carry out. The most tremendous punishment possible for a professing child of God is exclusion from an assembly of God. I know at the present day we have such a fearful travesty of what God appointed, so that people think if they are excluded in one case they can join somewhere else, but, beloved friends, let us remember that works of men are not arrangements of God, and only assemblies of God have any claim on us, and if there is a righteous removing from an assembly of God there is an outsideness as to any assembly of God, and any assembly contravening this, itself take the position of denying the true attitude which God has appointed to His people to represent heavenly arrangements. There can only be one discipline for churches of God. I would speak definitely and earnestly, for while at the present time there is a large measure of agreement, (and we praise God for this) while there is a large measure of agreement among believers as to the fact Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, Satan has produced a vast amount of utter ignorance as to the position of assemblies of God, but wilful ignorance must soon result, for God will surely be reviving His people and showing them His will in these matters, and the unwitting ignorance of to-day will then become wilful. May we be revived even now, and look at the things from HIS standpoint? Oh how intensely earnest, because of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, believers should be that they might be of ONE mind in the Lord. A vast amount of failure has been brought in through masterful assumptions and Pharisaic exaltations, but if there is a right bowing down before God and owning the ruin,

He will meet the need in the power of His Holy Spirit. We have never counted on God as we may count on Him. We have never trusted Him as we may trust Him. The other passage is 2 Cor. 10. 6. The apostle says, "And having in readiness to AVENGE all disobedience when your obedience has been fulfilled". I suppose the primary meaning is, "I do not want you to be excluded, I will therefore wait till you are brought to repentance, and then I, as an apostle, will come and use the power which God has given me for casting out and delivering to Satan when your obedience is fulfilled. That is, I suppose, the primary meaning of God's servant Paul, but, I believe there is a secondary aspect. Not till the obedience of the believers of the present dispensation is completed will there be the display of vengeance that will yet come.

But, beloved friends, this leads us on to a fourth point. What is the NATIONAL position as to vengeance? In Rom. 13. 4 we have a striking statement in a governmental chapter. In Rom. 12 you have believers and they are marked off from those who are before us in ch. 13. Let every soul be subjected to authorities having a position over, for there is not an authority unless from God. But the authorities that exist by God have been appointed, so that the one who places his position and refuses to be subject to the authority has taken his stand against the appointment of God, but those who have taken their stand against, to themselves will receive judgment, for the rulers are not a cause of fear to good works, but of bad (works). But thou wishest not to be fearing the authority? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise out from it, for he is God's minister to thee with a view to good. But if thou art doing the bad, fear? for not aimlessly does he bear the sword, for he is God's minister of righteous vengeance unto wrath, for the one practising evil. Thus we see that governmental authority HAS vengeance attached to it. Rulers are God's ministers for this purpose. Believers are in a higher plane, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and they are to act in character, as those who have the Gospel of Peace. God is not now governing the world through believers, but he has not entirely left the whole world. The heavens do rule, is the testimony of the book of Daniel, with respect to the times of the Gentiles. Yes, beloved friends, the heavens do rule

and the powers that be are ordained of God. The believer therefore recognises that God has appointed those who are over him, he sees that kingship and government are by Divine right, The believer is the reverse of a socialist, the reverse of a leveller, the reverse of an agitator. The believer is to be quiet and submissive with respect to authority. He cannot however SHARE in authority, and if government demands that he should share authority and share in acts of judgment, and of penal working and judicial position, he must rather suffer than break his conscience. The believer cannot rightly share in GOVERNMENT. Government has various forms. Vengeance is displayed in various ways. It may be in a lawcourt, it may be in a battle-field, and the faithful child of God is held back, if he would simply please His Lord, from sharing in governmental actions in either sphere. It is his to live as a stranger and a pilgrim. Do let us be clear upon this point. Vengeance belongs in its measure to a government, but not to the child of God. On the other hand, a child of God, while recognising the right of government to punish, and the position of government with respect to national existence and wars, - the child of God while acknowledging all this, and while avoiding wordy arguments with the ungodly upon this point, fully recognising that government must carry out its arrangements, the child of God cannot but be grieved when, whether through newspapers or conversations, a revengeful mode of speech is encouraged. The word "vengeance" has a twofold meaning to-day. We see in Rom. 13 government's position, but there are many who link therewith a certain spitefulness and desire for revenge. Very sorrowful should children of God be with respect to this. The present day delight (I use the word advisedly) delight in some method of "enticing" whereby numbers of an enemy are slain, is deeply solemn; for the death of the worst man is a terrible thing, and if those who speak lightly of death paint their enemies as utterly villainous, they only emphasize yet more the awful future for such. Death, wherever it be, is deeply solemn, and the child of God must be pained by the revengeful language which is so often heard at ~~the~~ a time of international war. He realises on the one hand that God is working out His purpose, and that

governments are beneath God's control, and that these things are leading on to that Day when He shall come Whose right it is to reign as Prince of Peace. But there are many indications that the heart of man is not seeking to fulfil God's purpose. Just as proud Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant but He meant not so, so the nations are His, in a war that will lead up to God's working out His plan, yet they mean not so. Looking on from an outside standpoint we can only pray that God will glorify His Name and use the sad reminders that sin has brought death into the world, to awaken some from the lethargy of sin, and to make His blood-bought people more earnest.

NOTE:- There is only one other passage I should like to mention, as a postscript. In Luke 21 we have an extraordinary case of the word "Vengeance". The Lord Jesus says in verse 22, These are days of vengeance that all the things that have been written may have been fulfilled. Apparently the context is speaking of Jerusalem surrounded by armies, just before the terrible destruction 40 years after Christ died. This LOOKS LIKE vengeance in the present dispensation, but the case was exceptional. God arranged at the siege of Jerusalem a type of the future vengeance. John distinctly says of the period somewhat near that time, "It is A last hour" a type of THE last hour, and we cannot understand the Gospels unless we recognise that the destruction of Jerusalem afforded one of the most remarkable anticipations of the coming back of the Lord Jesus Christ in vengeance, hence the special use of the word in such a context.

Further literature, concerning the Lord, gladly sent (international) to exercised believers for personal perusal, and **passing on** to God's glory, some also in German, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Czech, Romanian:

- "To Testify the Gospel of the Grace of God." -

COPIES FREE (as the Lord enables) on application to:
Scriptural literature for Believers

Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1 – 74343 Sachsenheim – GERMANY