

P R E F A C E .

ANOTHER year of fellowship with his READERS, through the pages of this venerable Publication, has been granted to its consciously needy, but grace-enabled EDITOR. This fellowship in the precious things of God has been associated with a deep sense of personal unworthiness on his part, and a painful realization of manifold shortcomings in his discharge of the pastoral office of feeding the sheep and lambs of CHRIST'S flock "in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel." He thankfully takes the present opportunity to make this acknowledgment both before his Heavenly FATHER and His dear people.

It is now almost ten years, since, in the Divine Providence, "necessity was laid upon" him to editorially minister the glorious Gospel of the free grace of God through the medium of this CHRIST-exalting Periodical—a time-honoured publication, fragrant with the names of such Christian worthies and witnesses as TOPLADY, BERRIDGE, ROMAINE, MASON, HERVEY, HAWKER, DOUDNEY, COWELL, and many more. Amid varied experiences of cheer and trial, the labours of those years have been in no small measure sustained under a knowledge that the effectual, fervent prayers of the righteous were ascending that grace, guidance, wisdom, and strength might be granted from on High, and that the testimony borne to the truth of God in the MAGAZINE might continue to be distinctive and discriminating as to doctrine, and practical and helpful as to experience. On his part, the prayer went up as each monthly number was published throughout the year, that the contents—so far as agreeable to the inspired Word—might be steeped in the dews of the SPIRIT'S blessing. Welcome and sweet assurances have been communicated from many dear READERS—at home and abroad—that their souls have received edification and comfort from the "things new and old" set forth by the beloved writers who have felt constrained to assist us in our work. It is, we feel, very gracious in our heavenly MASTER thus to allow us and our fellow-labourers to know that we have not spent our strength for nought.

Great has been the refreshment of soul experienced by us in the generous co-operation afforded during the year in our effort to place the GOSPEL MAGAZINE in Trust, for the future. The LORD, we believe, has heard prayer in granting four faithful servants of His to share with us the responsible charge of the MAGAZINE—its Editorial conduct remaining unchanged, and its standard of free and sovereign grace teaching being jealously maintained. The first number issued by the Trustees will contain a record of the generous offerings of the Donors to the "Purchase and Maintenance Fund," together with the names of the Trustees. The personal relief which the new arrangement secures for the EDITOR will serve as a grateful stimulus to him in his spiritual

work, while the fact that so many of his beloved READERS have contributed to give effect to the scheme—for the Truth's sake—will tend to draw into closer fellowship all to whom the sacred objects for which the GOSPEL MAGAZINE was established in 1766 are unspeakably precious. Among the older READERS of our free-grace Publication it has long been familiarly called “Our *Family Magazine*.” And for our own part we do indeed desire, above all things, that it may increasingly become “a means of grace” to the family and household of faith, a bond of holy union to the children of God scattered abroad—to all who know the blessedness of being partakers of a Covenant Salvation in CHRIST JESUS.

The times in which we live are extremely “perilous,” and the superficial faith of some is being overthrown by “the oppositions of science, falsely so-called,” while that of many others is yielding to the priestly delusions of ANTICHRIST. The Scriptural foundation on which the faith of God's elect is built cannot, however, be destroyed. “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.” God's believing people shall never be put to confusion, shall never be moved, shall never perish. But they must, in loyalty and fidelity to their REDEEMER and LORD, “earnestly contend for the Faith which was once (for all) delivered to the saints”; “hold fast the form of sound words”; and prove themselves witnesses for the whole counsel of God, even—if necessary—“unto death.” Never, perhaps, was “the way of the truth” more openly attacked and evilly spoken of by religious professors than in our own day. The most opprobrious names are applied by popular “religious” writers, Ritualistic divines, and Sacerdotal leaders to the little band who still dare to display the banner of sovereign grace truth, and to stand immovable in the “old paths.” Nevertheless, the counsel of Jehovah cannot be frustrated—“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.” That banner will never be furled till the final shout of victory is raised by the glorified army of the redeemed. The united forces of hell and “the princes of this world” are divinely destined to fall before the eternal truth of the MOST HIGH. In the triumphant name of JESUS every knee shall presently be compelled to bow, and every tongue that has uttered “hard speeches” against the precious truths of the Gospel of GOD's sovereign grace shall, however, unwillingly, “confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

Let the “little flock,” therefore, be of good cheer, and not be afraid. Greater is He who—as the Captain of their Salvation and the Surety of the Everlasting Covenant—is *for them*, than all that can ever be *against them*. Let them cleave believingly to the inviolable promises of Him Who cannot lie, and be assured that the love of Him Who redeemed and called them will also keep them unto life everlasting.

THE EDITOR.

Clifton, Bristol, December 1st, 1904.