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LaTAM

Substance of two Sermons preached by our Pastor

on Sunday, January 5. 1975.

Mr. J. W. Spurling-Tyler
at The Dickar

Morning Lesson. James 1.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.

James 1. 2.

As the congregation well know, all exercised souls before God, it is our exercise before Him in the first Lord's Day in the New Year that we may be favoured to receive from heaven a New Year's message. This may fall into two categories. Some prophesy concerning the unknown way that lies ahead: in any case the Scriptures tell us that we know not what a day may bring forth. So we believe, as the Spirit of God leads us ministerially, we shall behold in this New Year's message a prophecy concerning the future, what is way ahead of you.

The second category is, there is annexed to the revelation a divine promise of God to you as His adopted children, to be your rod and staff to comfort you, and a life-line to supply you, and a Rock to sustain you. You will readily admit that this is an exceedingly dark day, probably the darkest many have known: many are in a state of confusion, it may be because there is no guide-line. They cannot evaluate or diagnose or understand or know what to do. How we need a strong, gracious leadership! One is prepared to fully believe the majority of Britons would follow such a leadership. Under God I still have faith in Britain. I do not believe He will utterly forsake us. We need to be awakened from our malaise, and as I had it from the lips of one who travels for the Queen the whole of the globe, if only the British people could see Communism in action, and see what it is like to live under the iron regime of oppression and cruelty! One thing we need is for God to arouse us concerning our present state; to arouse us to a spirit of gratitude for what appears to be meagre: sufficient food and raiment so long as we are free people; that is worth more than the whole world. It stands under God, to the credit of this nation that we sacrificed our wealth and resources to preserve the freedom of the world in the war. Thank God for this! and our freedom is still preserved though we are vile and unworthy.

What I have for you this morning is a guide-line. You will say; "Let us have a lead." Here it is: obviously it has the quality of exclusiveness: it belongs to those who fear God. Let no poor sinner feel excluded if you are sorry for your sins; if you have godly repentance. After all, the gospel is for sinners. So what is the guide-line? Have you never come to a path that has nonplussed human sagacity and you have been left in a dilemma? You did not understand the way, the path, or God's dealings with you: you did not

know what the issue would be. It is all here. It is before you, if you belong to those named, members of a family, world-wide, God's family.

You will notice this great and good man of God, James, had a rather unusual role to fulfil, namely; to have a sense of pastorly responsibility for the Jews scattered abroad everywhere; not in one town. "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad,- everywhere, all round the world,- greeting." I give you in the Name of God that greeting this morning. How wonderful it is to know you have a shepherd! You may be scattered abroad, among the Church of the dispersion. "Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own." and though you are gathered in a local Church it is obvious that the people of God have a solitary path to tread. It is clear that in many ways you have to stand, walk, live alone, and I promise you an increase of the experience. There are many beautiful ties of family and relationships here below, but the people of God in all ages have walked a solitary path, and you will. Although this has been from its inception a Mother Church, whose sons and daughters have gone to all parts of Britain and the world, it is true for me to say, and it must be so, although there are families who are represented down the line of generations to come, it is also the experience of parents and the heads of families to come to a day when the birds fly from the nest, and they think of George, Tom, Edith and Mary, not in the parish of Hellingly; in far off parishes and counties and in other countries, scattered abroad.

Obviously this word belongs to the Jews of the dispersion, the scattered people of God. Think of the Jewish nation dispersed in all countries of the earth! We in Britain have derived great benefit from the Jews. Leading men in Parliament and in business have been and are Jews. Their energy and skill and expertise we thank God for. You see them in Russia persecuted, bludgeoned, murdered. God raised up James to minister to the twelve tribes scattered abroad in all parts of the earth. Although this may not be your lot,- you say; "We are Gentiles." yet think of the spiritual application of the word. In many ways you approximate to the language; lonely sparrows, solitary souls, walking the darkest paths alone, and so on. Distances that are merely geographical ~~and~~ or physical matter little. One may live a thousand miles away: if you are near in Christ it is wonderful. You can be under the same roof, and the distance of nature is eternity unless the Lord changes the heart. There is a gulf. If one is ten or twenty thousand miles away, and you meet them at the Throne of Grace it is no distance.

I think before I go to the second verse I will give the young friends a warning, and I am thinking of those who are younger in the way of God especially. It is this: you will find,- and you think it is nasty medicine,- you will find as the years pass you will be more lonely, and as to friends, (this is not derogatory.) those you really feel close to, (I do not like numerals concerning the things of the Spirit) when it comes to friends, you

can count them on one hand. This may astonish you: you will walk it. A number of us will be gone presently; we are coming to those days. You will find this is your path, and you are so lonely: your companions are largely Biblical saints. If you find one on earth it will be a marvel. You will understand the meaning of the word,- 'scattered abroad', a sparrow on the house-top. You know the dilemma that is facing many these days,- business men and others. Who can you look to on the earth? is there any on earth? I have been foolish enough to think in the past that I could tap this or the other source, or find relief from them. I have thought surely if one has friends of thirty or forty years standing in the hour of trouble there will be help forthcoming. Nil! Don't try it. You will not find one on earth. If God constrains a poor tempest tossed soul to speak a word of relief it is God-inspired and God-given. No ear is open: you will find yourself alone; scattered abroad. You see, after all, take it on two levels. You say; "Here is a man, or people, and they are very pleasant, nice, courteous, and so on. They are fair weather people: not people of all seasons. When you are prosperous, oh yes! wonderful! Let things go in reverse and they do not want to know you. There is a change of attitude. Do you see? and you say to yourself; "I am a poor sinner alone on the earth." You may be saying; "I do not want to listen to this." You will walk it. It is excellent to be courteous, civil, friendly: how many adopt an attitude and cannot maintain it! It depends on money and various factors, and when they withdraw you find you are high and dry; a poor solitary soul. You thought you could have gone to a brother or a sister, and how did it work out? You are alone, my friend. You have only got God. It is good if there is a pastor who feels towards you as James to those who were scattered. So you are down and out. There is One who comes where you are and has compassion on you. It is a wonderful favour and a great blessing to know you have God. I am now promulgating truths that are as old as the Bible. All have walked it: all my old friends walked it; my friends now do.

Listen; this is very suitable for little tiny tots in the Sunday School. It has a coverage that will be very apposite for adults. "I am only a lonely sparrow: The dear Lord cares for me." True? I am a lonely sparrow: I have got a Friend; the dear Lord cares for me. This is sweet. You never know the wonder of it till you become a lonely sparrow. I feel free on this line of truth, so I will say to you, it is God's wisdom and purpose for His people that wherever their lot is cast and whatever their relationships, they will come to a sense of being alone, and if you ask for a prediction that is Biblical, you do not realise how many props you have now.

A prop is a simple term. After all, you see in the country-side a pile of pit props to hold up the ceiling while miners work. What is a prop? It is something that helps to hold you up. You will see all your props removed. One goes; another goes: your props are removed. There is One that is never

removed, that is, the Lord Jesus. How wonderful to have Christ to hold you up!

"How can I sink with such a prop

That bears the world and all things up?"

You go and look at the universe: think of this planet in space, and the solar system, and the prop that holds up heaven and earth! The heavens you cannot see: if He holds you up you are safe. All other props will go, - scattered abroad. How beautiful the subject is!

I will propose a question to you. Does this in any measure find you? Whatever your lot or state you will find you have an increasingly lonely path to tread. A child of God, (and I speak with the greatest propriety,) is brought to a place where he cannot appeal to his own flesh. No: you are also scattered abroad. This is a good word for you. "My brethren," Take the contrast: "scattered abroad...my brethren." Although you are scattered you belong to the Lord's family, members of His mystical body, a family. The best part of a realisation of a family, and the only realisation is in Christ. There you will get a sense of how wonderful and immense the family is. I can assure you a thought I have delivered to you before. Those in glory, all the saints who have gone Home, those on earth, all round the world; His people, and those in the womb of the everlasting Covenant, and you are members of the family; a warm, loving, perfect family in Christ. So you get a sense of being surrounded by all those who have got Home, those yet to be born, and those on earth. You only know a tiny fraction of them. It is a warm, sweet, comfortable feeling: one in Christ: no language barriers, no skin barriers; members of one immense family. It does you good to meet some of them: they are people who know communion together spiritually. Very wonderful this is! it is the best thing there is.

So "scattered abroad" but, "My brethren." This is a guide line. I cannot say much more this morning. I wish I could go on and take the two Services with no break between; nothing to spoil the continuity in our minds. "My brethren," What will your path be? You are going to fall into divers temptations, - fall into. It is like a man walking along a leafy lane, and he does not realise there are just a few fragile sticks and leaves covering a hole in the road, and down he goes into it. He says; "I never knew that hole was there." That is how it will be with you. Or like the fish in the sea, - shoals of fish. I do not know how great is their ~~ix~~ ~~xx~~ sense of perception, but this is a good illustration. They swim straight into the net: they are caught; and that is how you will be. You have spent a long time in your life regretting this, that, and the other, and you did this and that and Satan says you could have avoided all of it, You break a leg or a wrist: you fall into it, and you say; "I am a foolish person. I could have avoided it. I could have put on a different pair of boots." That is human reasoning. You will fall into those things. You say to yourself; "Another five minutes

would have made all the difference." Your reason has been pretty ^{busy!} you fall straight into it.

What is this falling into divers temptations? The word 'temptation' in the original is 'tribulation' and tribulation that has peculiar characteristics. There is much Satanic influence to distress you, - divers tribulations, After all, there would be little beauty surely if every thing was of the same colour. You look out on the landscape and see the glorious hues of the seasons, and you have an immense variety of colour. If we translate to the terms of life, I would suggest to you that the pattern of life is of many colours. You say; "Well, love, joy, - oh yes, it is all there." This is the background, and it is provided by divers tribulations; that is, they are various, mixed; there are no two alike. 'Divers tribulations.' If tribulation is sanctified, that is how the colours form a part of the background of the pattern of life, and superimposed on it are the glory, beauty, and highlight of Redemptive love to His people. Thanks be to God. Amen.