

Remember

“Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you.”

Deuteronomy 15:15 (NIV)

In an autobiography of William Jay we read that on one occasion he called to see the famous Mr. John Newton, at Olney, and he observed that over the desk at which he was accustomed to compose his sermons, he had written up in very large letters the following words—“Remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.”

John Newton had been enslaved to sin in a most obvious and blatant manner. He was a converted slave trader whose blasphemous mouth was redeemed by the Lord so that he preached the Gospel he once despised.

In times of trouble we need to sharpen our memories of the Lord’s dealings with us in the past. Our faith for the present problem will be fed on our memories of the Lord’s help in times past. Courage will grow as we think of how we were afraid in the past and that in wonderful ways the Lord met with us and delivered us from the enemy.

Biblically literate Christians talk about their Ebenezers. They refer to the scene in 1 Samuel 7:12 (NIV) where it reads, “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us.’”

After the Lord had given Israel a great victory over the Philistines, Samuel—the prophet of God—took a stone and made a memorial to mark the victory. Ever after—when a Hebrew saw that marker—they would remember the wonderful occasion when God gave them the victory over their enemy.

Even in times of peace and prosperity we need to remember the times when the Lord came in powerfully—to grant us a triumph over some obstacle or another. It is good exercise to write a journal of some of our experiences and the way the Lord met with us. Perhaps it was a sermon preached that gave us hope and courage. Or it might have been some Christian who lifted us up when we had fallen into some great temptation. Whatever—however—the Lord blessed us we need to be thankful and remember. John Newton penned these words.

Begone unbelief,
my Savior is near,
And for my relief
will surely appear:
By prayer let me wrestle,
and He wilt perform,
With Christ in the vessel,
I smile at the storm.

Though dark be my way,
since He is my Guide
’Tis mine to obey,

’tis His to provide;
Though cisterns be broken,
and creatures all fail,
The Word He has spoken
shall surely prevail.

His love in time past
forbids me to think
He’ll leave me at last
in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer
I have in review,
Confirms His good pleasure
to help me quite through.

Determined to save,
He watched o’er my path,
When Satan’s blind slave,
I sported with death;
And can He have taught me
to trust in His Name,
And thus far have brought me, to
put me to shame?

Since all that I meet
shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet,
the medicine food;
Though painful at present,
will cease before long,
And then, O! how pleasant,
the conqueror’s song!

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