

"He pleased God."

F. B. Hole.

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All that we know of Enoch is compressed into eight verses of Scripture: four in Genesis 5, two in Hebrews 11, and two in Jude. These few verses, however, suffice to give us an accurate insight to the character and life of this remarkable man.

He was the seventh from Adam, as Jude informs us, and this we can easily verify from Genesis 5. He was number seven, counting from Adam through the line of Seth, which was the line in which faith was preserved in the days before the flood. When Eve bore Seth she said, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." These words were doubtless prophetic. Cain the carnal man had slain Abel the man of faith, and God had now appointed another godly seed by which faith should not' perish from the earth. The seventh man on that line of faith was the outstanding man of the line. In him faith shone out with peculiar brightness.

The four verses in Genesis 5 are occupied with one great feature that characterized him. We are told that at the end of 365 years, "he was not, for God took him," but the exact significance of that is hardly clear until we come to the explicit statement of Hebrews 11, that he was "translated." The one feature that is made abundantly plain is that "Enoch walked with God", and that this walk with God continued over the immense space of three centuries, and endured in spite of Enoch having all the usual family responsibilities in the midst of a generation that was wholly departing from God. We may get some idea of that departure if we notice that the infamous Lamech of which Genesis 4 speaks, was number seven from Adam on the line of Cain. He was therefore perhaps about a century ahead of Enoch, and an outstanding instigator of violence and corruption in the earth.

What led to Enoch's walk with God is revealed to us in Hebrews 11: 6. He could never have walked with God had he not been one of those "that cometh to God," and he would never have come to God had he not believed "that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And of course he never would have believed *that*, apart from faith.

So this is where faith begins, whether for Enoch or for ourselves. It leads us to the knowledge that GOD IS, and this is something very different from the belief that there is a God. Even in these days of scepticism there are to be found multitudes who cannot satisfy their minds, in trying to account for the existence of all things, without postulating the existence of a God, of some sort and somewhere; but this is reason and not faith. Faith it is, and faith only, which puts us into the presence of the LIVING GOD, who knows, and sees, and acts, and makes Himself known, and even rewards those who diligently seek Him. In days when all thought of the living God was fading from the minds of men, Enoch by faith had the living God before him. He diligently sought Him, and consequently he found Him, and there began that remarkable walk with Him which continued for three hundred years.

In the New Testament epistles we very frequently find the "**walk**" of the believer referred to. The word is used in a figurative sense, and appears to cover all the activities of the believer's life. We are to "walk in the Spirit," for instance; that is, all our activities are to be in the energy of the Spirit of God. Now Enoch is the first believer whose walk is referred to, and it is said to have been, "with God." In Genesis 3, the Lord God is said to have been "walking in the Garden," but Adam was then a fallen creature, so there is no word of his walking with God.

Walking with God, the activities of Enoch came under the Divine control. It was Enoch's happy

privilege and responsibility to keep in touch with God, so that he might know His thoughts and understand His ways: then God ordered his life and path, for it was His to indicate the direction and to set the pace. God led the way and Enoch was by His side, as intelligently led by Him. His walk was not like that of a dog who so devotedly follows the steps of his master, since he was endowed with a wonderful understanding of God's mind and purpose, as is made plain in the Epistle of Jude.

If this characterized the seventh from Adam, who lived more than three millenniums before Christ appeared, what should mark such as ourselves? Faith puts us in touch with God as He has been revealed in Christ — revealed in the fulness of His love, and in the breadth and length and depth--and height of His purposes which centre in Christ — and the Holy Spirit has been given with a full capacity to take in the revelation. It is possible therefore for us to have a much fuller understanding of God's mind and purpose. We only need the faith that makes God a living reality to us, which leads us to diligently seek Him, and finding Him to walk with Him; all our activities governed by communion with Him. Alas! so often with us the flame of faith is burning low. There are times when there should come with great force to us the Master's question to His disciples, when "He said unto them, Where is your faith?"

Nor can we excuse ourselves by pleading the complexities of modern life with the multiplicity of its distracting interests, for most of those distractions are self-made. And as to the fundamental claims of life, which are by no means to be avoided but rather taken up in such a way that God may be served in them, these were known by Enoch as by ourselves. Indeed, in those days of greatly extended human life and large families the difficulty involved in the begetting and rearing of sons and daughters was probably greater than it is with us. Yet Enoch walked with God, and that walk continued for three hundred years.

From Enoch's *walk* we pass to his *witness*, as from *cause* to *effect*; and we have to travel to the last epistle of the New Testament to know that he bore any witness at all. We discover that he was a prophet, that he foresaw the day of the Lord, when He would come with ten thousands of His saints, and that he bore the most uncompromising witness against the ungodly of his day, foretelling their ultimate doom. The tremendous way in which he emphasized the ungodliness of the ungodly is very striking.

That which Scripture speaks of as "the world" came into being as the fruit of man having turned away from God, hence there **never has** been any harmony between God and it. The breach came most clearly to light and was irrevocably fixed when the world cast out and crucified the Son of God, yet it was there from the beginning, and Enoch knew it right well. Walking with God, he was on God's side of the breach, so of course the breach itself could not be hid from him. Walking with God, he knew God's holiness, and this made the ungodliness of men the more apparent to him. Let us take note of this; for it means that if we have but a feeble sense of the evil of the world, we have but a feeble walk with God. The more we know God the more we are alive to what the world is and dissociate ourselves from it.

Enoch not only spoke with the utmost plainness of the ungodliness characterizing the people of the antediluvian world, but he prophesied of their terrible end. He did not speak — so far as is recorded in Jude — of the more immediate judgment of the flood, but looked on to the ultimate judgment when the Lord would come with ten thousands of His saints. Clearly then, it must have been revealed to him that this ungodly evil would persist until the end, however far distant it might prove to be, and that no one could finally deal with it but the Lord Himself. In the Lord's own time it would be effectually dealt with, and the story of evil men closed up, in His holy and unsparing judgment. He spoke of ungodly

men, of their ungodly deeds which had been done in a most ungodly way, and of their hard and ungodly words. The men, their deeds, their motives and their words, all are to come into judgment.

It strikes us as extraordinary and sad that, if Enoch knew and **proclaimed all this, Christian people today** should cherish the illusion that the gospel is sent forth into the earth to produce a converted world, an earth fit for Christ to return to, and take up His kingdom, without the necessity for judgment falling upon living men. Here is Jude telling Christians towards the end of the first century that evil men, of the sort Enoch alluded to, had crept into the bosom of the church, and that they were to meet their doom at the coming of the Lord. How then shall this church, burdened with these men, make the world fit for Christ's presence? No: the coming of the Lord in His glory is necessary for the final removal of the evil, that even in the days of Enoch had prominently raised its head: and that means judgment for the world. Nothing short of that can put everything right. Enoch knew this, and so should we.

At the end of the 365 years Enoch was translated without seeing death but before that, "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Before Abel died at the hands of Cain he obtained the testimony, "that he was righteous." Enoch doubtless had this, but he also had the assurance that he was pleasurable to God, which was a decided step in advance. He still speaks to us, and it is to the effect that the faith that lays hold of the living God, that diligently seeks Him, that consistently walks with Him, and that witnesses for Him against the evil of the world, is very pleasing to Him. These are fundamental things, which remain valid for us today. The brighter revelation of God in Christ, into which we have been brought, has in no way diminished their value, but rather increased it.

We may be quite certain that if Enoch pleased God, he displeased **the men of the world. This is not** stated in so many words, but we think it is inferred in two statements made in Hebrews 11. First, it is stated that he was translated, "that he should not see death." Had we not been given such full details in Genesis 5, as to the ages of the patriarchs at their death, we might have been disposed to picture Enoch at 365 years of age as a decrepit old man peeping for his grave. We can hardly do so however. Human life then was about ten times the length it is now, so Methuselah's life is comparable to that of the old man of today who misses being a centenarian by a few years. and Enoch's becomes equivalent to 36.5 years, when a man is in the prime of his strength. Death evidently threatened him while he was young, and he was snatched away that it should not take him for a prey.

But there is the second statement, he "was not found," and this infers that he was sought. This, of course, might only mean that people were curious as to what had become of him, as they were curious about Elijah and sought him when he was translated. Reading it however in connection with the first statement, we venture to think that it means that men were seeking him that they might slay him. Days of unbridled violence upon the earth had set in.

From Genesis 4 we know that Lamech had set an example of evil by ruthlessly slaying a poor young man that had done him some injury; and then making his boast about it, as though it were a fine thing to have done. Genesis 6 tells us not only that the earth "was corrupt before God," but also that, "the earth was filled with violence." No government had been instituted by God, and men gave full rein to their lawless lusts and were wreaking vengeance on one another without restraint. Were they likely to hear a man denouncing their terrible ungodliness and predicting the coming of the Lord to judge them, without their anger rising to murderous heights?

So, in reading that fifth verse of Hebrews 11, we cannot help feeling that we are to understand that Enoch's three hundred years of walk with God and his bold witness for God was just about to be ended by his violent death at the hand of the antediluvian sinners, when God intervened and translated

him. They were after him, but just before the blow could be struck, "he was not; for God took him." God did not intervene in Abel's case: that man had testimony that he was righteous, and then died a martyr's death. He did intervene in Enoch's; this man profoundly displeased the men of his age, but he pleased God so much that He took him into His presence beyond the reach of his foes. We may sum up his story by saying that he *walked with God*, he *witnessed for God*, and he *went to God*.

Lastly, it strikes us as remarkable that though Enoch was without a doubt the one outstanding figure amongst the men of faith who lived before the flood, he yet lived by far the shortest life. If we had had the arrangement: of affairs, should we not have ordered otherwise? Not infrequently we see saints of godliness and gift removed comparatively early in life. This one who was so very useful and helpful to his fellow-believers is cut down when one might have anticipated for him another twenty years of useful service for the Lord! Conversely, another, who has never been conspicuous for piety or service, but who is rather a drag on his brethren, is left to an over-ripe old age! We are all disposed to consider this kind of thing as extraordinary, and feel like questioning the wisdom of God's ways.

But it is our wisdom to be silent before Him. The two men of faith, who were outstanding in the antediluvian days, both were removed in comparative youth. One went by death: one went by translation. But they both went. It is more striking in the case of Enoch because, though we know nothing of any word that Abel spoke, we do know that he was a prophet and bore wonderful testimony to man's evil, and to God's rights and ultimate appearance for judgment.

Evidently his witness was finished so his walk terminated in the glorious presence of God.

The church has been called out from a world that is far from God, that it may walk in communion with Him, and bear witness to its absent Lord. It has sadly failed to do this in any corporate or collective sense; yet it is still open to individuals — any number of them — who are included in the church, to do this according to their measure. Let us earnestly seek grace from our God that we may be enabled to do so.

Enoch was translated as one who pleased God in days long before "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17). Grace having fully arrived, the church is going to be translated on the ground of the grace of God. After our translation we shall have to pass before the judgment seat of Christ, and there learn the measure in which we have pleased Him.

In the light of these two things — God's grace, and our responsibility — let us be keenly desirous of having before the judgment seat the verdict, that we have pleased our Lord.