



# DISCIPLES INDEED;

“Will ye also be his disciples?”—JOHN IX. 27.

BEING

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

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# DISCIPLES INDEED.

MARK IV. 35-41 ; LUKE XIV. 25-33.

**I**T might be helpful if we look a little at the subject of christian discipleship. Discipleship is viewed in scripture in two aspects. It is looked at merely as a profession, and also as a great reality.

Have you ever marked in reading John's gospel, that there seemed to be a crowd round the Lord continually? In chapter vi. the throng leaves Him because He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." That was the point which tested them. But the Lord turns to the twelve and says, "Will ye also go away?" Then Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life." There you find two classes of disciples—the mere camp followers, who followed for the loaves and fishes, and those who followed for what they had found in Him, and though they might be, and surely were, searched and rebuked, still, they clung to Him.

What I want to bring before you is

REAL DISCIPLESHIP,

thorough going, out-and-out decision for Christ,

and whilst I am conscious of what a very poor exponent I am of it, still, beloved friends, we have to face the truth, and it is very wholesome to see things as they are in scripture. Never lower the standard because you are not up to it. Far better to confess your failure, own that you come short, but say at the same time, that is what I want to be.

The Lord Jesus Himself was a disciple. Now, I would not like to say that without a word of explanation. In Isaiah l. we read, "the Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary ; he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner."

The blessed Lord took the place of the disciple here on earth. That was how He got, as Man, the tongue of the learned. "He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner." He thus becomes the pattern of what a disciple should be. In other words, He followed in the path of the Father's appointment. As the Father gave Him commandment, so He spoke, and He could say, "I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

In John v. we read, "the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." There you have the whole life of Christ. He never spoke from Himself, and never acted

from Himself. His words were the Father's words, and His works were the Father's works. His ear was awakened to hear the Father's voice. He trod in that path, and therefore is the pattern of our discipleship.

Now turn to Mark iv. 35 again. "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side." Observe, it is "let *us* pass over." That is

#### DIVINE ASSOCIATION.

Christ has a company here in connection with Himself. Those walking in the path of the divine will form this company, and to them He says, "Let us pass over unto the other side." Unto what other side? Why to the glory-land, that is the other side. This is the world's, man's and Satan's side. We have heard that blessed One say, "let us pass over unto the *other* side." There is one thing that ought to comfort every Christian, expressed in these lines :—

"One sweetly solemn thought,  
Comes to me o'er and o'er;  
I am nearer the glory to-day,  
Than ever I was before."

We are in the boat so to speak, the oars are moving, we are being rowed over, we are travelling on to it, we were never so near it as we are now, and perhaps we shall get there to-day. The Lord Jesus has connected His

people with Him in this blessed path of discipleship. I hope there is no exception in this room. I hope that every one of us has been taken hold of by the Lord to be connected with Him in this way. It is not only to be in heaven when we die, but we are so linked with Him, that we are travelling under His leadership to the other side.

Now, what follows ?

“WHEN THEY HAD SENT AWAY THE MULTITUDE.”

This is the first thing to be done. Every one has his or her multitude. A person may be a Christian, yet not a disciple, a child of God, an old believer, and yet never have sent away the multitude.

I am speaking now of discipleship in its real character, as it is presented in Luke xiv. I repeat, beloved friends, you can be a true believer, and never have entered this path of identification with Christ. The *sine qua non*, the essential point for it is, that you *must* send away the multitude, and so break with things and hindrances here. It is no use saying things will drop off, they won't. I used to say that at one time, but I do not now. They do not drop off.

I remember once in Rochester, U. S., having to walk a considerable distance about the city with a number of silver dollars in my pocket, as heavy as five shilling pieces. I said to a friend, Can you change these into paper money for me? And I put my hand into my pocket,

and gave him the silver dollars, and took his paper ones. Those heavy dollars would not drop out of my pocket, I had to put my hand in, and take them out.

In Hebrews we read of weights. Weights are not always sins. Suppose I read the newspaper for an hour every morning. I should consider it a weight, but not necessarily a sin.

I remember once seeing a man outside Watford station. He was smoking. I noticed him look at his watch, and then he suddenly began to run. Directly he began to run, he took the pipe out of his mouth. We never find out what weights are till we begin to run. Let a thing become a weight, and it has to go.

You may say very pretty things in prayer, but are you laying aside the weights? It is no good asking for this and that, and yet when He points out the weights you do not send them away; it is practical hypocrisy.

Beloved friends, you have a multitude, a social, commercial, or domestic multitude. The first thing is, to send it away. Whatever the hindrance, and there is no one in this room who has not some kind of a block under the wheel, send it away. It is no use to ask for more power. For example, some one is trying to push a cart up a hill, and he cannot move it. He calls for more help, and a number of people come along, and all try to push it up, but still it will not move.

Why, you say, they are all blind. You see

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in a moment what the hindrance is, there is a block under the wheel. What do you do? You just remove the block, and the thing goes along smoothly.

I am quite certain that there are hindrances in the Christian's history, things that hinder our getting on in the things of God. There is a multitude that you have never sent away, but be sure of it, if you are to be out-and-out for Christ, you must take it into the Lord's presence, wrap it up into a bundle, and write across it "*dismissed*."

God said to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." He did not do it. You notice it is, "the Lord *had* said unto Abram." It is in the past. Not till some time after did he send away his multitude. What was it? His relatives. Lot was a hanger-on. We see afterwards what he was, he was looking for the well-watered plains of Sodom. Abraham subsequently sent Lot away, and then the Lord said unto him, "Lift up now thine eyes . . . northward and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Then he was to walk through the land, to possess it. He was losing blessing, because he had not carried out the three-fold commandment, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house."

Beloved friends, I beseech you to let His

blessed eye pass over you. In secret let Him point out what that multitude is, and have done with it. If ever there was a day when we needed to be for Christ, it is now. Our time is brief. The great delay, the great hindrance to souls getting on, is that God puts His finger on certain things, and we do not refuse them.

Now there is a negative and a positive action here. First, they dismiss the multitude, and then

“THEY TOOK HIM EVEN AS HE WAS IN  
THE SHIP.”

How was He in this world? Born in Bethlehem's manger, a homeless wanderer, rejected from the very outset. They identify themselves with Christ, “they took him even as he was.”

Israel did not take the manna as it was in Numbers xi. They “ground it in mills or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it.” It is an awful chapter, a chapter of apostasy, in which they say, “make us a captain.” They did not take the manna as it was. If we look around Christendom to-day, is it a rejected, crucified Christ that meets our eye in those who profess His name? I know He is the eternal God, but I am speaking now of His blessed path of discipleship. He went through this world, and He is my pattern. He was wholly for God.

Well, they are crossing over to the other side,

and they meet with a twofold opposition, wind and waves. Wind is an emblem of Satan's power. Oh! you say, you told us the other day it was a type of the Spirit. So it is, my friends, and of Satan too. There are two hidden powers at work in this world, the Holy Ghost, and Satan—the prince of the power of the air. The wind is a type of them both. If there were no wind there would be no waves. The waves are people. It is the wind that puts the waves in motion, the devil behind the scenes, who sets up human opposition to that company, who are travelling to the other side.

Depend upon it, if we want to go on smoothly and easily the devil will let us alone. If you want a kid-glove easy-going Christianity, it is there for you to have. But if you are to be *with Christ*, you will meet with wind and waves. What do we know of waves and storms and clouds?

There were other little ships. You can go in them if you like, but we never hear of them again. The storm comes and they are gone. Very likely they made for the shore. You may be in one of them if you please. If you travel with Christ you must expect opposition. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It will not be the inquisition or the rack, but it will be the go-by, and the opposition of even worldly believers.

I ask you, is it your desire and mine to be in

that ship where Christ is? There is a beautiful touch just here,

“HE WAS ASLEEP ON A PILLOW.”

This is the only gospel that mentions it. Mark is the gospel of the Servant. Did He push that pillow away? No. There was no monasticism, no asceticism in Him, He accepts the Father's provision, and goes to sleep in the storm. “Carest thou not that we perish?” they say. Oh! that miserable “*we*.” His “us” took them in, their “we” left *Him* out. Perish with Christ on board! It only wants to be thought of for a minute. What ought Peter to have done? To have put his head on His bosom, and gone to sleep too. He did afterwards go to sleep in a storm. He slept between four quaternions of soldiers. He had learnt his lesson then, he could sleep in the storm at last. But now the end is reached, they get to the other side. And so shall we presently:—

“Safe to the land, safe to the land,  
The end is this;  
And then with Him go hand in hand  
Far into bliss.”

But, if there is one thing we shall regret, it will be that we did not go through the storms better. “He rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” He is the only One who can meet the power of Satan.

First we get the path itself—Christ's—then

the opposition and the resources. The opposition is the wind and waves—the resources, “what manner of man is this?” Oh! how brief our moment here! Shall we trifle with it? May God give certainty and definiteness to our very desires, and may they be—*Christ*.

Now we will turn to Luke xiv. 26. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Now, if the Lord had put in, cannot be a Christian, or cannot be a believer, or cannot be saved, beloved friends, who *would* get the blessing? But no. In Luke xiv. there are two “F’s,” *feasting* and *following*. “A certain man made a great supper and bade many.” He brings them there to feast. They feed till they are satisfied. Now, they come out to follow. We go in to feast, and come out to follow. In the feast, He meets all the cost. He provides everything. They have only to come, and partake of what He provides. But, what now? “There went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

There are seven things here, ending with “His own life also.” That is the last thing that we bid good-bye to. Unless we hate these seven things, hate their influence, “he

cannot be my disciple." That is, we do not suffer them to hinder discipleship.

You remember the man who said, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." The Lord said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead : but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." As much as to say, If you are a disciple, *He* must be first. "Suffer me *first* to go and bury my father." No, that cannot be, for though we know that God has instituted all these relationships, and blessed relationships they are, yet the moment you enter into the path of following Christ, He says, *I* must be first. There are two things that make up discipleship,

#### BUILDING AND FIGHTING,

the sword and the trowel, only He puts the trowel first. "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?" Building the tower, I believe, is that secret work of God that goes on in your own soul, by which you are built up. You see, he sits down to count the cost. He estimated it. In the case of salvation, it cost Christ everything and me nothing, but to be a disciple, I have to sit down and count the cost.

It is the first of all necessities to be alone with God. We began to build when we were first saved. How much time do we spend in prayer and over the word, and do we tell Him everything? "This man began to build."

We were not occupied with the building, but people looked on, and they saw the earnestness and bent of our souls. "This man began to build." Is it so to-day? Is there the same earnestness, the same searching of the scriptures as when we first knew Him? We have to build ourselves up in our most holy faith. It is what goes on between God and our souls in secret, that enables us to resist the devil.

If you are busy outside and slothful inside you will make shipwreck. You keep a feast without for other people, but you are starving within. Do not live on public meetings and addresses and fail to get alone with God, or you will become inflated and think you have things, that you have never really made your own before God. Some have more time than others I know, but depend upon it, we have all the time we want. If we want to do a thing, we do it. Perhaps it is 25 years ago since you began, perhaps more, well, *go on*. Barnabas had a bright start, he gave up everything for Christ, did he sustain it, was he able to finish? "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Time tests us as Christians. It is not the first blush. We get to know things, we acquire a knowledge of Christianity, we receive certain truths, but unless they are made good in the secret of our souls, that tower will stop building, and all who look on will mock, saying, "this man began to build and was not able to finish."

Barnabas appears to have made shipwreck, not of Christianity but of discipleship. He and Mark sailed to Cyprus. That was where Barnabas came from. It is most important that we should seek God in secret. These are shallow days. It is there you get fed, there you get help, there you have to do with God.

I thank God for public ministry, but if you are living on it, sooner or later you will be an ignoble shipwreck. "This man began to build." Every Christian ought to sit down and count the cost, and beloved friends, when you thus sit down do not leave out all the blessing and the infinite resources God has for you. I believe it is far easier to be out-and-out than to be half-hearted, because you find all His resources at your disposal. Christ satisfies your heart. You may, and you will find difficulties, it is impossible to get on without them, but if you get into the "counting" house and deliberate, saying, I shall have to break with this and that, and you begin to put down the expenses, remember on the other side you have the Father's love, the presence of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, and that will keep you going on, and you "will grow up unto him in all things." Well, that is the inside. The next thing is,

#### A KING GOING TO MAKE WAR.

This is active, not passive. We are all supposed to fight. Depend upon it, we are all

expected to be doing two things—building and fighting. Nehemiah and his companions held the sword in one hand, and the trowel in the other. They fought, and built the wall. They did not take their clothes off. They went on building, and they were ready for the enemy when he came. Do not suppose you are not to fight. Each one has to face the enemy.

“See the mighty host advancing,  
Satan leading on !”

If you are to go against that mighty host, just lift your eyes to the glory and say, Can I? Yes. “I can do all things through Christ who gives me power.” Never surrender your position. Never. “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Shew me a person who feeds in secret, and I will shew you a person who fights in this great battle against the powers of darkness. But here is one who having fought, after a time holds out a flag of truce. There is a compromise with the devil. He started well, but the battle was too long and too strong, and he gives in and desires conditions of peace. Oh! may this never be said of you and me. You will get to heaven? Oh! yes, you cannot get anywhere else, if you are a Christian. It is not a question of getting to heaven, it is a question of this little brief interval when we have to build and fight. I urge you to use the opportunities. It is a most wonderful moment,

to seek to be here for Him, to be disciples. The Lord enable us to keep up the building with God, the secret communion, that hidden life within, and then to start to do battle with the foe. God will shew us what we have to do. It is a fight. It may be long, longer perhaps than we expected, but victory is bound to crown the effort of the soul that goes on with God.

The Lord help us to be disciples. Not one of us would like to say, I am one. But is that what you are set for? Is that your object, that as He is for you in the Father's glory, you want to be for Him here? Then get to Him, get on your knees before Him, and then come out to be for Him here against all the power of the devil. The Lord grant that each one of us may do so, for His name's sake. Amen.

