

THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MASTER

AS SET FORTH IN
THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

“His Blood-red banner streams afar,
Who follows in His train?”

By
ARCH^D. PAYNE.



SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE.



THE ministry of the Word of God has a threefold purpose, aside from the work of evangelizing or preaching the Gospel. From the inexperience of the new born babe in Christ and the danger of Satan's snares for his feet, to the condition of those of God's people who have fallen into what may be termed "spiritual atrophy," is a long step, but it covers and includes the whole field of work into which God's servant must fling his every effort. The third need to be met is that of the faithful, loyal believer who conscientiously and purposefully seeks to serve his Lord.

Present day conditions, with their startling similarity to the time of our Saviour's earthly sojourn, should

Preface.

rather encourage the believer to look for the solution of earth's problems in following the path He trod, in dealing with the social, moral and religious world as He dealt. We are, however, so far removed from the actual sufferings of the early Christian martyrs that we are apt to think it unnecessary to submit to real privation, pain and heart-break for His Name's sake. But for the Christian, "The Pattern" stands out unmistakably along these lines. It is not only the safe way—it is the only way to Glory.

It was given to the pen of Peter to inscribe the milestones of that Road to Glory whose name is "Holiness." He places them in the divine order given him by the Spirit, and they are called 1. Separation, 2. Discipleship, 3. Service.

It is the earnest prayer of the writer

Preface.

that "The Footsteps of the Master" may appeal to all of His Own who read it, bringing light and encouragement to the young Christian; comfort and aid to the soldiers of Christ, and that it may be a means of renewed spiritual activity for those who have grown weary in the conflict.

In His Name, it comes to you, and for His Name's Sake, may it help you to see and to take the next step—thus to "follow in His train." A. P.

**“ For even hereunto were ye
CALLED :
because Christ also suffered for
us, leaving us
AN EXAMPLE
that ye should
FOLLOW HIS STEPS ”
(1 Peter II. 21).**

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The Call to Holiness.

**“But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye
holy in all manner of conversation” (1 Peter i. 15).**

The Call to Holiness.

1 Peter I.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you,

5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time:

6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

The Call to Holiness.

I Peter I.

9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ :

14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance :

15. But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ;

16. Because it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy.

17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear :

18. For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ;

19. But with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot :

20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21. Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God.

CHAPTER I.

The Call to Holiness.

“He which hath called you is holy”
(1 Peter i. 15).

1. GOD’S PURPOSE IN SALVATION.

STANDING upon the low level of a battlefield, noise and confusion are evidenced on every hand, and it would appear that every man was animated by his own ideas. But away on the hill-top, far from the conflicting noise of warring interests, stands the great Controller of all, watching and planning. And from His view-point is no confusion, for He has planned, and each man with his own special training is where He has placed him.

So we judge by puny sense and are often misled in spiritual matters by

The Call to Holiness.

things seen and handled, by the noise and confusion around us, whilst the Spirit would lead us to the mountain tops where we meet with the Lord and read from His own blessed lips the great plan He works out in our salvation.

Not Accidental, but Purposeful.

The Scriptures are full of the wonderful foreknowledge of God, and our Salvation is not in contradiction to the rest of God's Handiwork. We have not been saved by accident, but by and in the direct purpose of God. It is true that our Salvation brings us Eternal Deliverance from the Wrath to come, a deliverance which, in itself, brings us in adoring worship to the feet of the Lamb, "Who bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24). But that is only an episode in the great plan, and whilst absolutely necessary, is but a trifle compared with the Divine Glory revealed in the unfolding of the Eternal Purpose.

The Call to Holiness.

Like Must Produce Like.

The Fall of man has produced ungodliness, and on every hand one is faced with the inviolable law that "Like produces like." God created man in His own image, but fallen man could only produce a son like unto himself, fallen and rebellious. In every step of the Descent of man can be traced more clearly the loss of the first likeness and the gain of the second.

Necessary for Regeneration.

But in God's Salvation we have, at its very beginning, the necessity for Regeneration, and in that necessity we see God's purpose, that like should again produce like.

It is not in man to produce Godliness, nothing in his nature can override that great natural law, but, having been begotten again, we have become "a New Creation," subject to new laws, and of very necessity producing that moral likeness to the Holy One

The Call to Holiness.

who has "begotten us anew unto a living Hope."

It is along this line that the Purpose of God is clearly revealed throughout the Holy Scriptures. Not in formality or in Religious exercises, but that He might have a people like unto Himself, manifesting forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

It is as "Children of Obedience," "New-born Babes," "a chosen generation," that He speaks to us, and in every phrase He presses home to our hearts His desire that "As He which hath called us is holy, we should also be holy in all the habits of life."

2. WHAT IS HOLINESS?

It is here that we are brought face to face with clashing interests. Human thoughts of Holiness are never God's thoughts, and human standards are always found as variable quantities. The very thought of Holiness produces a sense of dread, of

The Call to Holiness.

fear. That God should express this as His purpose, in our Salvation, should cause us to stand and ponder carefully the meaning of the word. He has never commanded and never will command without enabling, so that we are safe in assuming that the condition of Holiness is not impossible.

Not Untried Innocence.

Our first thoughts of Holiness are almost always degraded by ideas of sinless perfection ; a return to the Edenic type of experience. But that is not Holiness, and never could be. They were innocent, not knowing good or evil. Such a condition can never recur. It is sinful men, redeemed by precious blood, who are described as " Holy Brethren." It is evident that something more than innocence is necessary, and that one thing is found in " temptation " or " trial."

Necessity of Temptation or Trial.

On the bosom of the mighty ocean

The Call to Holiness.

lies a ship, heaving gently with the slow moving swell, a thing of beauty in every line, but useless, making no progress toward a desired haven. Every sail is set, every rope in place, but no forward movement disturbs the picture. Across the waters, the waves are ruffled, grow white, and a mighty wind sweeps up in opposition to the set sails. Out of opposition comes progress. So out of "the trial of your faith" grows that which in after days is to be found "unto praise and glory and honour, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Holiness, which is essentially a thing of character, demands opposing forces in order that it may be developed. The Angelic Hosts were tried ; some failing, have progressed into deeper and deeper depths of shameful darkness ; others by virtue of resistance have become Holy Angels. And so through both cycles of creation, God has emphasized the principle of growth by temptation.

The Call to Holiness.

The Yielded Will.

In each, we all have Free Will as a definite possession. In the exercise of that freedom to will in direct line with the Will of God lies the very essence of Holiness, even as did Christ, who could say in the very fullest sense, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38), and that in direct opposition to all the contrary forces of the World and the Devil.

So that true holiness consists not in a negative spirit of innocence, but in a positive action of the will, governing and controlling the life, and so forming in us and expressing through us God-likeness—Holiness.

3. REASONABLENESS OF HOLINESS.

The Apostle Paul in concluding his statement of the Gospel (Rom. xii. 1, 2) makes emphatic claim, on God's behalf, on the bodies of those who have

The Call to Holiness.

been subjects of Divine Mercy, and in making the claim strongly urges it as a "Reasonable Service." Here again we need to climb to the mountain top, away from the turmoil of conflict, and listen to the Voice of the Great Commander and see facts from His view-point. He reminds us that we have been redeemed and that our redemption price was nothing less than "the precious Blood of Christ."

A man goes into a store and buys an article, paying the agreed price. But the storekeeper, after receiving the money refuses to hand over the goods. "Dishonesty" and "Theft" are the terms we immediately apply to such an action.

Let us enquire, is it not sadly possible, even in these days, really to rob God? You rejoice in the glorious fact of your Redemption and the eternal security it has brought to you. You sing of your Redeemer, but have you handed over the goods? That you are not your own, having been

The Call to Holiness.

bought with a price, is not a mystical statement of a spiritual truth, but a solid, everyday fact, which spelt in one word is Holiness, and brings with it the great "Therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit which are His."

Because of Regeneration.

Still further, the reasonableness of Holiness is found in the fact that we are children of God and therefore children of obedience. Like must produce like, and by sheer force of unbreakable divine law, the Life of God in us must produce God-likeness, unless we are indeed "Reprobate"—not of the truth. As Weymouth expresses it, "As obedient children we do not shape our lives according to the cravings of the old nature, which formerly were dominant, but in imitation of the Holy One in Whom we are and have our being, we seek to be Holy in all the manner of our living." His seed is in us, and must

The Call to Holiness.

of very necessity work out that blessed likeness to Himself.

Thus by the double right of Redemption and Regeneration is brought home to heart and conscience the divine call to Holiness.

Royal Route to Holiness.

The claim acknowledged, one is brought face to face with the big question "How?" Again it is necessary to get alone with the Master and learn His thoughts. We are reminded of our complex nature, and He alone, who can divide between Soul and Spirit, and knows what is in man, is a competent guide.

Mental Training.

One sees a splendid boat with all its complicated and powerful machinery. To preserve all that mass of power and energy from disaster, a steering wheel and a trained hand at the wheel are required. As the wheel to the boat, so is the mind to the body. The

The Call to Holiness.

one great and vital difference between man and beast lies in that mental power. In the training of the mental faculty, the placing it deliberately in the All-wise and All-kind hand of our Father God, lies the first great secret of the road to Holiness. Neglect of the mind is looked upon by some as a thing to be gloried in, but it is infinitely better to train and sharpen that mind, that it may be a keen and powerful weapon fit for the Master's use.

The prime necessity is that the mind be preserved for Him, for if once really under His control it will surely if slowly bring the whole body into blessed submission to His divine will. That this is His way is evident, for a controlled body is the next step.

Bodily Training.

As a horse held in by bit and bridle, so the body, with all its wondrous capacities and physical powers, is to be restrained, controlled by the mind, and so by Himself. It is not evil

The Call to Holiness.

things, but things in themselves good and pure, to be received with thankfulness, that oftentimes prove the greatest hindrances to realized Holiness. Continuous watchfulness with steady hand upon the rein, are the urgent necessities. He knows our weakness, and in wonderful grace adds, "Hope to the End."

Hopefulness.

The old nature is terribly strong especially in rebellion to that which He desires, and so a big conflict with varying fortune is the common experience of God's children. But He would remind us that it is "the end," "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," which alone brings victory. We are in the conflict and we need to remember always that the battle is not ours ; it is the Lord's, and He it is that is with us to fight our battles.

An English General visiting the great Napoleon in his exile, asked him during the conversation if he

The Call to Holiness.

could give his reason for losing the battle of Waterloo. His reply was startling: "I never lost it; by all the rules of warfare, I won it over and over again, but those beggars never knew when they were beaten." Over and over again during that terrible day of bloodshed, the army was beaten to its knees, but as often regained its feet, "hoping to the end." Reinforcements had been promised; were on the way, and just at the crucial moment Blucher, with his promised help arrived, and with him victory.

We have every reason to hope perfectly, for the Coming Lord will make no error in time or circumstance, and He has pledged His word that victory, complete and perfect, shall crown those who have fought the good fight.

Failures may and should bring us to our knees, not in despair, but to stand with renewed vigour and hopefulness against the combined forces of the Evil One.

The Call to Holiness.

Obedience the Moulding Principle.

Then, as "Obedient Children," let us not fashion ourselves according to the former desires. Obedience is the great moulding principle of life. As unregenerate ones we obeyed sin, and produced likeness to the sinful nature which was ours, but now as children of the Holy One, we are again to be obedient, no longer to sin, but to Himself and His precious Word "which liveth and abideth for ever," which same Word sums up our whole life in that one brief sentence, "Be ye holy, for I am Holy."

The Call to Separation.

**“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,
an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should shew
forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of
darkness into His marvellous light ” (1 Peter ii. 9).**

The Call to Separation:

1 Peter I.

22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

1 Peter II.

WHEREFORE laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2. As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby:

3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

The Call to Separation.

1 Peter II.

6. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.

7. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:

10. Which in time past were not a people but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

CHAPTER II.

The Call to Separation.

“Who hath called you out of darkness”
(1 Peter ii. 9).

1. SEPARATION A DIVINE ORDINANCE.

AS a skilled architect realizes and plans the whole building before ever a stone is quarried, so God brings us into His councils and shows us the end before the beginning. He has planned, and He brings it to pass. But having opened our eyes to the purpose of our calling (Holiness), He now takes us step by step, giving detail after detail, that we may know how to attain, not only to the knowledge, but to the fulfilment of His divine will.

The Call to Separation.

Our ideas again are contrary to His ; for the first thought that occupies the natural mind is activity in service. But God places that as the last step, giving precedence to Separation and Discipleship. True Holiness always demands a full assent to His will. From the beginning, God has clearly laid down the necessity of Separation.

Light from Darkness.

When first God called the Light to cleave like a fiery sword the dense darkness of a ruined world, He "divided the Light from the Darkness" (Gen. i. 4), the first fruit of the brooding of the Holy Spirit.

Then, by that same Spirit, He separated the Godly seed of Seth from that of wicked Cain, and marked His abhorrence of the corruption that proceeded from the bridging of that gulf by the utter destruction of those who thus sinned against their own souls.

Again in Israel, God designed a

The Call to Separation.

people separated from all others ; a people for Himself ; and once more it was Israel's failure to realize that place of blessed separation that caused them the loss of wonderful privilege.

The fine essence of Holiness lies hidden in Separation, the attitude of mind which causes me to assent to that which God has planned, and so assenting, yield my whole being to the control of His will.

This does not, in itself, alter the nature of that which is sanctified. Many things were sanctified to God in the Old Dispensation, but nowhere is the nature of such things changed. Stones remain stones ; brass and gold remain of the same material ; and the Priests of Jehovah remained still in their nature—men. The essential difference lay in the fact of relationship to God—they were a possession of God, set apart for His service. God was their God, and they were His people.

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2. REASON OF SEPARATION.

In the creation of Man the manifold purpose of God was plainly seen. Adam was appointed by God as Viceroy, to act for Him. To him was deputed all authority, and all the works of God's hands were put under him.

The Godward Aspect.

He was God's Servant, created for that very purpose, and placed in a separated position from all the rest of creation. Upon his separation to God by obedience depended his whole authority. Upon his separation from God by disobedience hangs the dreadful consequence of the Fall.

Israel too was separated from Egypt, not that they might be eased from their burdens and agonies, but "that they may serve Me" (Ex. vii. 16), was the reiterated message of Jehovah. They were to be a separated people from all nations of the earth, and as

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such were to be a blessing to all people. They, too, failed by unbelief and disobedience, producing in their turn a crop of sin, shame, and sorrow for the whole world.

The Manward Aspect.

Facing these facts we can realize, in some measure, the necessity of separation from the view-point of service to our fellowman.

Archimedes, who discovered the laws of leverage, said once, that if one could give him a fulcrum on which to place his lever, he would lift the world. But the resting point of the lever must be apart from that which is to be lifted.

The Lord saved His people out of the world ; died for our sins " that He might deliver us from this present evil age " (Gal. i. 1-4), and yet we continually seek to recross the barrier of Gethsemane, Golgotha and the open grave ; and as excuse we speak of uplifting the world. He Himself came

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into the world to save sinners, ate with publicans and sinners, and yet it is equally true that He was "separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). His business was at all times to be the perfectly obedient One, working in all things His Father's will.

Our very business, as saved ones, must of necessity separate us, for we are to show forth the glories of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous Light. As Christ perfectly reflected the Eternal Glories of the Father, as a light shining in a dark place, so we are separated from all other people, that we may be reflectors of the virtues we have discovered in Him.

The principle of Separation primarily to God, but of necessity from evil, stands, therefore, at the very foundation of Holiness. We must get our light from the Sun of Righteousness if we would be as lights in a dark world ; and we must get our strength from the Mighty One, if we would be

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weight lifters in this scene of heavy-burdened ones.

3. THE WAY OF SEPARATION.

“ Out of darkness into His marvellous light ” is an enormous stride : all the way from Hell to Heaven may be mapped out between these two words. And between darkness and light, eternal enmity exists, and must continue to exist, as long as light is light, and darkness is darkness. Still, into that dense darkness comes, like the quiet, but mighty throbbing of magnetic force, that insistent, compelling word, “ Come unto Me.” It always is, and always must be, attraction to Christ that lifts us from the awful horror of the Kingdom of Darkness, and brings us under the sway of His blessed Kingdom of Light.

Separation by Generation.

We are a “ chosen generation ; ” a phrase that compels us to face the great fact of the Sovereign Will of the

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One who has called us. We are not only chosen ; we are " a generation," which tells of a birthright or position. As the Apostle John puts it, " ye are of God " (1 John iv. 4, 5), contrasting it with " they are of the World." We are children of the light, not children of the darkness and of the night. So in the very fact that we have been born again lies the germ thought of separation.

The change of nature brings with it necessity for change of environment. As fish cannot live in the air, and birds drown in the sea, so the natural mind cannot exist in the presence of God, and the spiritual cannot exist away from that Presence.

Separation by Position.

The next phrase enlarges the thought, and deepens the intensity of necessity for separation as a practical life-changing thing. " A Royal Priesthood " implies a double relationship to God on the part of those who

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have been the objects of His attractive power. "Royalty" implies positional authority resulting from direct relationship to the Kingly Head. We exercise that power in our relationship with the world, and in our service manward as a whole; and it is in direct proportion to our position with God that we exercise that authority.

As Kingly Priests we are placed in a sphere of peculiar blessing. Touching God with one hand, with the other we reach out to the world in all its need. Christ alone could bridge the awful gulf, becoming the "One Mediator between God and Men" (1 Tim. ii. 5), and now He has yoked us on to Himself as "Ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. v. 20). As the Father sent Him into the world, so He has sent us, with all the power and authority befitting the rank into which He has called us.

In the linked thought of "Royal Priest," one is brought peculiarly near to the person of our Lord Jesus

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Christ. 'The Levitical priesthood is completely dropped, and we are placed in the glorious line of the Melchizedek priesthood, the only Royal Priesthood of God's ordaining.

What a genealogy is yours and mine! On one side of the lineal tree, that man of mystery, separated in every point. By birth, of no earthly descent ; by position, King of Righteousness ; by practice, Priest of the Most High God. Then comes that glorious One, of whom Melchizedek was but a type ; and springing from that stem, we are brought into this place of wondrous privilege and blessing.

What a people ought we to be, and should be if we but recognized the beauty and glory of this Calling ! Unlike all others, " our life is hid with Christ in God " (Col. iii. 3), no longer children of Adam, but children of the living God, wielding a sceptre of righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world, and occupying that marvellous place of intimacy as

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priests of the Most High God. God has made this open ground for all His children to occupy, but, like Esau, how many of us have scorned our birthright, and sold, even as he did, our priestly office for a mess of pottage?

Practical separation, the deliberate act of our will to be separated unto God, is here the absolute requirement. And is it not here that the secret of the lack of ability to worship, lack of power in prayer, and failure in testimony is to be found? God will not be mocked, and if for the mess of pottage, whether of business success or worldly pleasure, your place of peculiar blessing — separation — is scorned, there can be no other than loss, eternal loss; as a resultant you may, and will, seek that place of blessing with bitter tears, only to find, like the great prototype, no place of repentance.

It is not Salvation that is at stake, it is Life—your life, my life.

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An Holy Nation.

Suddenly the thought is changed, and the national characteristic is expressed—"An Holy Nation." A nation stands in relation to other kingdoms. They have their rulers to whom they yield allegiance, and to whose laws they conform. And has God no Nation to-day, no people ruled by Himself, governed and controlled by His divine law?

Two thousand years have passed since the very earth shook at the rebellious cry, "Away with Him, we will not have this Man to rule over us." The King, they crowned with thorns in horrid mockery, and for a throne they gave Him a Cross of shame. The world still has no other place and no other gift for Him.

Yet there is a nation here on earth, despised even as their King was; foredoomed to a pathway of scorn and suffering; of hatred and reproach; a people set apart, Holy.

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Paul could speak of the glorious marks of this Citizenship, and who can help a feeling of deep admiration as one listens to his words, "God, whose I am, and Whom I serve?" (Acts xxvii. 23).

You long for the spiritual power of the apostolic days, and you wonder at times if God has not failed. But stop and ponder the way of your feet. Are your steps following where His led: a pathway utterly separated from all the world by the practical recognition of the Lordship of Christ, by His right to demand full surrender and utter obedience?

A Peculiar People.

Then comes the phrase that sums up the whole. "A people for a possession" is a close rendering of the text, and gives the exact meaning. "A possession"—the words simply written or spoken strike a chord.

In every heart there is a deep desire to say "mine" about something, and

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how very rarely can we say it truthfully about the objects of our heart's desire. As we stretch out our hands to grasp them, they vanish as bubbles, and leave us empty handed and hungry hearted. "Earthly friends may fail and leave us," and the mouth is often filled with the ashes of bitter disappointment.

But here God's voice is heard and His desire is expressed "A people that are Mine." Our thoughts go back to the Garden and we trace as an echo, "Adam, where art thou?" All down the ages, from millennium to millennium, that cry echoed—the cry of a lost possession.

Then, at Jordan's bank, the Heavens are split with a crash of triumph, as God's own voice is heard once more, "Thou art My Son—My Well-Beloved." In Him we see the Man in Whom God fully found His possession. But what preceded that triumphal shout? He had gone down into all the horror of Jordan after all

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the people had preceded Him, confessing their Sin ; and in type He had already proved Himself " obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross " (Phil. ii. 8). " I come to do Thy Will " (Heb. x. 9) was no vain word upon His lips. And from Jordan to the Mount of Transfiguration, thence downward to the darkness of Gethsemane and horror of Calvary, the keynote was ever the same—" Thy Will, not Mine."

Does not this bring us to the very crowning point of separation? Positionally, it is true that, being saved, we are all children of God ; but in practice, all depends upon our heart attitude toward His claim.

How forcefully in this connection does the Holy Spirit speak to us through the Apostle Paul. Clean cut separation appears in every word—no unequal yoke with unbelievers ; no fellowship with unrighteousness ; no communion with darkness ; no concord with Belial—the world's God ;

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no partnership with an infidel or unbeliever ; and no agreement with idolatry. And to pile mountain upon mountain, the forceful " WHEREFORE " is used, " Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty " (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

There is God's road, the only one marked out by Him for your treading, and it bridges the whole of the mighty call, " out of darkness into His marvellous light."

Let us, therefore, before we leave this rung of the ladder, examine ourselves, our position, search and see whether His Divine call has met a response in our hearts. Let us close our eyes and let Him search us ; He who knows us so utterly, and then let us honestly face the facts revealed.

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“For even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (1 Peter ii. 21).

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1 Peter II.

11. Dearly beloved, I beseëch you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

14. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

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1 Peter II.

20. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:

22. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:

23. Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously:

24. Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

CHAPTER III.

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“Called that ye should follow His steps”
(1 Peter ii. 21).

1. THE DISCIPLE AND HIS MASTER.

A WAY from the mountain tops, and down by the quiet waves of Galilee, we go to learn our next lesson. Along those sandy shores are footprints, blessed and eternal. And every print carries its message, a word of infinite love and desire—infinite love to poor sin-stricken man, and burning desire for the companionship of those same “children of men.”

Two fishermen, knee deep in the water, are busily casting their nets.

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Others, close by, are bending over their task of net-mending. It is a picture, complete in every detail, of the busy activity of life. About the central facts of fishing their lives move in a regular circle.

Into this quiet existence comes the Man of the footprints—a disturbing element. One quiet sentence, “Come, follow Me” (Matt. xvi. 24), and the whole orbit of their life changes and becomes fixed in that eternal movement that has Christ and God for its centre.

Here lies the seed-thought of this step in the pathway of Holiness. Separation from evil and darkness of every kind is the first necessity, as we have seen, and this carries with it the next step of separation to God. But Discipleship means more than that—it is the actual changing of the centre of our life, and causes a complete disruption of the whole scheme of our being.

That this is inevitably so, we shall

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see as we trace the marks of those footprints, so carefully limned for us by the Holy Spirit.

Sacrifice the Foundation of Discipleship.

Much has been said and written of late years which tends to obscure the necessity for the Cross work of our Lord Jesus, and His wondrous Life is upheld as an example to be followed. But the Word of God safeguards us from such error, for in each case Discipleship is broad-based upon the acknowledged sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Only a few days before the group of fishermen heard the word of magnetic attraction they had stood with the multitude of Israel on the banks of Jordan ; had listened to the burning, soul-agonizing words of John Baptist. With others they had passed beneath those waters of judgment confessing their sins, and then had witnessed the strange appearing of that Man of Mystery, greeted by John as " the

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Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the World " (John i. 29). They had watched with bated breath and wondering eyes that Holy One as He passed beneath the sin-laden waters, and heard the triumph cry from a riven Heaven. Then in answer to their inquiry, " Master, where dwellest Thou ? " had come the answer " Come and see."

It was in the secret dwelling-place they learned the meaning of that wondrous title, " Lamb of God." We do not wonder at Andrew's zeal as he found his brother Peter, dragging him to the feet of the Lord with the words, " We have found the Christ." They saw Him first as the " Lamb of God " with all its inherent meaning of sacrifice, and then as " the Christ "—word of mighty authority.

Such was the foundation of Discipleship. And God's plan does not alter. For us, as for them, the Cross of Calvary with all its weight of agony and woe, that blessed Cross, where

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“ He bore our sins in His own body on the tree,” is the only meeting-point God has given ; the only place from which life can flow to the poor, dead sinner.

“ Christ died for our sins ” is the foundation stone of the Gospel, the starting-point in the pathway of Discipleship, and will be the crowning glory at the end of our pilgrimage.

The Acknowledged Lordship.

Here begins to develop a great cause of weakness. We gladly acknowledge the saving work of Christ. Like Peter, having known Him as the Lamb of God, we, too, departed satisfied. Unlike Andrew, his brother, who clearly saw there was more behind and rested not until he had found in “ the Lamb of God ” — “ the Christ.”

It is evidently to seal that process of thought that leads the Lord to make His way to the seashore with that sublime “ Come, follow Me.” He

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must be not only your Saviour, but your Lord. "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am" (John xiii. 13). Nothing less can satisfy His heart, nothing less can satisfy yours.

Have you ever stood surrounded by the surging waves of unrest and doubt, the cares of this world corroding your life? Then listen to the echoes of that same compelling voice, speaking directly to you to-day, "Come, follow Me." His blessed feet have left their mark, His finger points the way, and is not His company sufficient guarantee for all the rest? Then come, take His yoke upon you and learn of Him. You have called Him Master and Lord many times—why not let Him be? It is that which He asks and longs for; that which alone can satisfy the hunger of your heart.

He has redeemed you for Himself—the supreme purpose of your Salvation. And in the fulfilment of that purpose lies the great secret of rest and service.

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The Disciple's Exemplar.

Many are willing to point a good way, and eagerly press others to walk therein, but how different is the action of the Blessed One. He becomes in everything the living example, the great Pioneer Who marks every stage with His own footprints. Nowhere does He say as did the Pharisees, "Do as I say," but always "Do as I do," so "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." We do not need to ask, "What would Jesus do?"

We *know*, as we follow moment by moment, step by step, where He leads. He, the Good Shepherd, goes before, and His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him.

Just consciously follow Him, that is all, but what a blessed "ALL." What rest and comfort are ours in the assurance that He leads! Even the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow is lightened by the comfort of "Thou art with me."

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The great problems of our lives are all solved as we follow those blessed footprints, going only where He leads, and being utterly subjected to His glorious Will. How beautifully Tersteegen realizes that in his inimitable verse :—

“Upon God’s Will I lay me down,
As child upon his mother’s breast;
No silken couch, nor softest bed
Could ever give me such deep rest.”

Let us then come with hearts broken and contrite with the vision of of the Cross, and present ourselves to Him, even as Thomas, with eyes fixed upon the marks left by that awful Cross, and cry aloud, “The Lord of me—the God of me.”

2. THE DISCIPLE AND HIS STANDARD.

Following the footsteps of the Master, we come again to the lake shore. He has come to keep tryst with His people, but no one appears to

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meet Him. Upon the sands are many footprints, each one telling a story that can be read like a book by His all-seeing eye. Impatience, worry, and self-will most of all appear in every line, "I go a-fishing," had been the watchword of the night, and when "I" goes fishing self generally finds trouble. Tossed upon the restless waters, self-will returns empty-handed, and not only empty-handed, but blind to the person and presence of his Lord.

Is it not the condition of thousands of lives to-day, saved indeed by His boundless grace, and yet having no personal knowledge of the very One Who loved them unto Death?

Surrender of Self.

Hence we see that it is of no little importance that the very first step in the pathway of the disciple is "Let him deny himself" (Matt. xvi. 24, 25). There can be no thought of Cross-bearing or Christ-following until this

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lesson has been mastered. It is a complete abdication that is required.

By nature I sit enthroned upon my will, and what I will I do. Here lies one of man's greatest glories—the power to will. But to say “No” to myself is to dethrone myself, placing another upon that throne and declaring myself subject absolutely to His mind and will.

Everything that is of the flesh wars against this, for it is in the sphere of the will that Satan holds his mighty empire. He first it was who spoke the great rebellious “I will” to God, and the continual “I will” of human lips is but the echo of that first defiant shout. Yet in spite of all, God sits enthroned on high, and His “I will” is still supreme.

“Let him deny himself” is no mere statement, but an exact description of the Master's own footsteps. Listen as He makes an astonishing claim: “I do always those things that please Him.”

The very first recorded words from

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His lips give us the key to all : “ Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business? ” and as He yielded up that life, it was with the wonderful words, “ It is finished.” All that lay between ; the mountains and the valleys, the lights and the shadows, the Bethany and the Gethsemane, is embraced in that word, “ My Father’s business.”

In the scroll of the Book it was written of Him, “ I come to do Thy will, O God,” and it was not on the hill called Calvary alone that that will was done ; but throughout every step of the journey.

“ It is finished ” covers not only the crisis point of Calvary, but the whole business which the Father had sent Him to do.

One might well sit down to ponder those unique steps with great profit to oneself. Straight as an arrow in its flight they march, surrounded on all sides by the warring, confusion-making footsteps of man.

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As we ponder, the heart asks, " Was it always easy ; His way seems so simple and ours so complicated ? " Follow those steps back to the Wilderness, and as you watch Him there, hear these words, " He Himself hath suffered being tempted " (Heb. ii. 18). Have you in your experience of temptation ever fathomed that word " Suffered ? " And again to the other end of the journey—dare you follow Him into Gethsemane ; that place of highest glory and deepest mystery ?

Disciple—if you will be such—you must know somewhat of Gethsemane. He led them thither, straight from the Upper Room of Communion. And where else should our feet go but where He leads ? But no one dare venture nearer than " the stone's cast "—no mortal ever can, or will. Then Listen ! and an answer to our heart's question comes sobbing across the still night air ; an answer and yet a mystery : " Prayers and supplica-

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tions with strong crying and tears ”
(Heb. v. 7, 8).

Again, can you fathom that awful mystery of agony and blood-like sweat? Heart and flesh alike fail at the very thought of that dark night. Yet there it is we learn the cost of that plain straight path. He said “ No ” to Himself, and yet in a wonderfully sweet way He said “ Yes ” to Himself, for His words are, “ I delight to do Thy Will, O My God.” And so, crowning glory of those glorious footsteps, comes the triumphant cry, “ Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.” Not puny resignation, but glad surrender to that divine, omniscient, omnipotent Will.

Beloved, that is what He wants, earnestly seeks and desires at our hands. Driven, not by fear or force, but compelled by mighty love and overwhelming desire, we gladly dethrone the great “ I ” from our hearts and rejoice to know the grip of His hand upon our Will.

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Then and only then does our pathway become like unto His own—simple and direct. We need not ask how to go, or where. He leads—we follow.

Cross Bearing.

From Gethsemane to Calvary is but a step, and the judgment of the world (Pilate's Hall) lies between. Wonderfully significant are the next words of our Master: "Let him take up his cross"—not Calvary's Cross—that place is His alone. Not the Cross of Christ, but "his cross;" an individual cross for an individual disciple.

Whether judged by the religious-worldly circles of Herod's Hall, or by the frankly worldly court of Pilate, the result was the same. Death was the logical and the only end of such a pathway. "Of whom the world was not worthy" was literally true of that Blessed One. From Pilate's Hall He comes forth in token of that very fact, "bearing His Cross."

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To stand well with the world is considered a thing of high value. Peter realized that, as he sat afar off warming himself at the enemy's fire, but what a bitter crop of poisonous weed sprang from that very action! He who had been to Gethsemane now denied with oaths and curses the very Lord he loved—for he did love Him with a deep, true love. But—the cost! The spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak.

The uncompromising words, however, are spoken and stand for ever true. "If any will be My disciple, let him take up his cross." Nothing short of that will suffice. What will the world say? What will even Christians say? These are questions to be faced, and it is well to face the crude fact that the sentence of the Cross is that which must be, and should be expected; leading us "to go forth therefore unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13, 14). The disciple, with

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eye eagerly following the pathway of his Master, has no ear for the strictures of the world. Sufficient for him to know that it is his Master's way. The Scribe and the Pharisee, the Sadducee and the Lawyer, are still with us, and he who dares to walk with Christ must literally "bear his cross."

Spiritual, social and business laws, and ethics of to-day have the same binding, cramping effect as did those ruthlessly rent asunder by the Lord. They made of none effect the Word of God by their traditions, but He calmly and surely followed no other guide than the Word of God, and knew no other incentive than in all things to "please Him."

To please the world, to walk in accordance with its rules and ordinances, is indeed the easy way, but have we not heard the Master's voice bidding us to take up our cross and follow Him? Will you shirk that cross?

Whilst you hesitate, He asks you

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a quiet question : “ What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ” (Mark viii. 36). Here is no question of salvation for the sinner, but the salvation of your soul, or life. No cross bearing, no reproach for His Name’s sake, no suffering for righteousness’ sake—the Pullman route to Heaven—but beware, for that way lies the Path to No Glory.

The pathway to His Eternal Glory lay, for the Master, through a land of shame and scorning. He truly bore His Cross from day to day until He reached the hill called Calvary, and He has left behind for His disciples no alternative but this : No cross—no crown ; no reproach—no overshadowing Spirit ; no suffering—no glory ; for “ if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.”

Let us not dread, then, this blest gift of His, our cross uniting us in deepest fellowship with Himself in the judgment of the world ; but taking up our cross, go, following Him.

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Progression.

Here is reached the highest state of Discipleship—following. But we dare not forget for a moment that following necessitates the surrender of our Will to Him—our Master and Lord—and also fellowship with Him in His rejection by the world. To follow implies progress; a steady, upward climb; a continual leaving behind of things which are past; and a strengthened and deepened capacity to grasp things which are before, things unseen, but eternal.

It is, perhaps, here that the great test of Discipleship comes. Under the stress of a deep emotion, one may easily surrender one's will, and take up a cross very readily, but impulse in its very nature is spasmodic, and re-action sets in. How many of us trace back to that source the backsliding of many weary years?

The act of a moment is not enough. The impulse, like an electric current,

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needs to be continuous, or as the word used by our Lord implies, step by step. How many a soul ekes out a dreary useless existence, based upon the experience of a conversion fifteen or twenty or even more years ago. But what is the Lord to you to-day? Has there been a fresh access of joy in your Salvation to-day? The day in which you were saved you received an impulse from the eternal life of God, and that impulse is, from its very nature, eternal: always progressing. One may well question the verity of a Salvation that has no other foundation than an experience of months or years ago.

Paul could speak of a past Salvation and a future one. But he emphatically speaks of a present tense Salvation, "*being* saved," which, in other words, means spiritual progress, or following in His steps. And yet, blessed fact to those who know, it is infinitely beyond His steps we look—it is Himself, a known and beloved Lord, whom we follow.

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What communion and sweet fellowship there is along that way no one has ever found words to express. Shadows of it are seen in the sunlit faces of those who walk with God, echoes of it are heard in the Pilgrim Songs of the Homeland. Secrets there are, many of them, but they are sacred to that communion, and cannot be shared by others.

Well might one sweet singer call them, "Oh, happy band of pilgrims"—for joy eternal and full of glory is their portion even though they bear a cross and follow a blood-marked way.

3. THE DISCIPLE'S PATHWAY.

There is a strong tendency to develop away the practical side of the teaching of the Word of God, and the excuse of spirituality is often used to cover up such deadly work. But the call to Discipleship is essentially practical: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John xx. 21).

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Every step is marked out for this world, and not the world to come.

The only place in which the privilege of Discipleship is allowed is in this short space of time allotted to us, and in the circumstances through which God in His infinite wisdom has called us to pass. The marks of His footprints are left behind, and declare a message of no uncertain sound.

The finger of God indicates the steps; names them one by one ; and by the voice of the Spirit emphatically declares that they have been left, pattern-steps, to be followed by those who would be His disciples.

Sinlessness.

To what a mountain height does the first step reach—"Who did no sin." Is it possible that we may climb and plant our feet upon such dizzy heights of experience? The whole scope of Scripture and observation unite in teaching us that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing. Yet the glad Day is

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speedily approaching when, changed into His glorious likeness at His appearing, we shall reach even that height. But here the pattern is set in all its perfection, and the call is to copy or follow. "Excelsior" is the motto for the Pilgrim, and each day should record a steady approach to that character.

A quaint story is told of two men who went out to shoot with bow and arrow. One, a worldly-wise man, shot his arrow at a house, and hit it. The other, aimed at a star, and missed it. The world applauded the successful man, as it always does, but the arrow of the idealist went far nearer Heaven than that of the successful one.

Will you not shoot your arrows at the star ; aim high in spite of constant failure ; keep the ideal of sinlessness—Christlikeness—always pure and unbroken before your gaze? So you shall indeed grow in His blessed likeness.

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Guilelessness.

From the topmost heights we trace the steps back, and each step gives us a sure standing place in that upward way. The language of a country expresses the character of its people more clearly, perhaps, than any other of its possessions. As a nation becomes degraded, its language is polluted by slang and questionable phrases. This also holds good with the individual. Language is the expression of the thought, and "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7). So the spotless beauty and sincerity of our Lord Jesus shine out in His every word : no guile was found in His mouth. His every word was pure, free from deceit or double meaning, and expressed in absolute simplicity, exactly the thought of His heart.

For us this needs continual effort, watchfulness, and even education, that our very use of words may show forth

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a likeness to our Master, whose words were ever “Yea—yea,” and full of power because of their innate honesty.

Meekness.

Into what a field of marvellous beauty does the next step introduce us! “When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.” Here mental and physical sufferings are contrasted. How the casting of filth by men must have stung Him, who was purity incarnate. His very good was evil spoken of, but never once is He found using the spirit of retaliation. Even when suffering the untold agony of the Cross, the wonderful words were heard, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” So, whether in the physical or mental conflict, we have His blessed example of forbearance, and committal of all things into the hands of “Him that judgeth righteously.”

Discipleship is indeed a hard path-

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way ; warring continually against that which is of the flesh ; and in continual opposition to that which is of the world. But against that lies the other fact—that we walk with Himself, like Enoch of old, having such sweet fellowship as is unknown to those who have not graduated through the school of Discipleship.

May we remind each other in closing of the words which fitly describe the life of the Disciple. “ Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, . . . desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.” May the Lord Himself help us to grow daily in the knowledge of Himself, that we may be indeed fitted to be the honoured servants of the Most High God.—Amen.

The Call to Service.

**“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing :
but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are
thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing”
(1 Peter iii. 9).**

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1 Peter III.

LIKEWISE, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2. While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

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1 Peter III.

9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

CHAPTER IV.

The Call to Service.

“Called, that ye should inherit a blessing”
(1 Peter iii. 9).

1. SERVICE AND THE SERVANT.

WE have now reached a stage in the journey which deepens and broadens until it merges into the Eternal Glory of the Presence of God, where “His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face” (Rev. xxii. 3, 4). Service, that word of lowly sound; to what a height of dignity has it been raised by Him Who rejoiced in the name of “Servant of Jehovah.”

In His person, how beautifully the thoughts are linked of Service and Blessing; blessing that has reached to

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us, " Sinners of the Gentiles," even as Isaiah foretold, " It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my Salvation unto the end of the earth " (Isa. xlix. 6).

We do well, indeed, never to forget that the blessing into which we have entered is the immediate result of that faithful service of Him Who was " obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross " (Phil. ii. 8).

Blessing the Result of Service.

The word " Service " is not mentioned in this section by Peter ; instead, he tells us that we are to dispense " Blessing ; " that we are, for that reason, called that we should inherit a blessing ; and between the blessing dispensed and the blessing received, lies the hidden but powerful word " Service."

In the previous steps of the pathway,

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we have seen how wonderfully the Lord has gone before, clearly marking out for us the perfect way of Holiness, of Separation and of Discipleship. So now again we may turn confidently to Him, and trace in Him the marks of the perfect Servant, with blessing springing full blossomed and fruitful from every step He takes.

Service First Godward.

The first great fact to face is that He was Jehovah's Servant. Morning by morning His ear was opened, and He took the place of a learner. In entire dependence upon Jehovah He moved, obedient to Him in every word and deed. His responsibility was not to the men amongst whom He moved, but always to Jehovah, Whom He served. In this lay the secret of the authority and power which He exerted ; and from it, as fruit from a tree, depends the blessing which has been the portion of all who have believed.

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By nature we are always prone to centre our thoughts upon the sphere of service, or the results of service, as seen by the eye, instead of looking behind that which is visible, to the unseen Master. As servants, we serve a Master, Who Himself remains invisible, but Who acts and expresses Himself visibly through those who are His Servants, governed and controlled by His spirit.

The Controlling Hand.

With the Master lies the exercise of direction and control. He not only knows the work to be done in all its fine intricacies, but also the special fitness of the individual servant for that work : a Moses to be a leader ; a Bezaleel for the fine art work of worship ; a Paul to unveil the deep mysteries of the church ; and the mother heart of a Eunice to nurse and train a Timothy.

We are commanded to lift up our eyes on high and behold ; and as we

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gaze upon those myriads of worlds, each throbbing its message of light across the darkness of night, we are asked, " Who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number : not one faileth " (Isa. xl. 26). What a compelling object-lesson God gives us here of His power of control. He not only has created those mighty worlds, but regiment by regiment He calls them out, sending them upon their immense orbits, and so perfectly do they move that " not one faileth." Never a fraction of a second do they vary, each world in its appointed place at its appointed time, a mighty army absolutely moving at the silent will of Him Who created by His Own Word.

We take our microscope and search into the hidden things, little worlds of marvellous beauty, throbbing with life energy ; and again we see that same silent control working through every detail of His great creation.

The very vaults of Heaven ring with

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the song of worship, " 'Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power : for 'Thou hast created all things, and for 'Thy pleasure they are and were created " (Rev. iv. 11).

In response to the " good pleasure of His will," do the myriads of infinitely small created things live out their tiny orbits, in no single case uselessly or to waste.

Dare we then say that we alone, of all the creative work of God, His Masterpiece—" the new creation in Christ Jesus "—will not recognize the complete control of Him, Who, by creation, by redemption and lastly in the power of His mighty love, has made us His own ? The very thought is checked by the words, " It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure " (Phil. ii. 13).

Again we are reminded that God has placed every member in the Body " as it hath pleased Him." He holds at all times, in His own wise hand, the

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power of direction and control. He is our Lord, and our place is to worship Him with the full surrender of a whole being. He, the Head of the Body, will remain unseen ; but it will be blessedly seen that Service is, in one short sentence, " God working in you." Abiding in Him, fruitlessness must vanish and " more fruit " and " much fruit " will be the inevitable result.

Powerlessness must disappear when, " Not I, but Christ liveth in me " (Gal. ii. 20), becomes the experience of the child of God. Then our service will be the natural outcome of our lives, and our sphere of service will be at all times just where we are : in the home-circle, the assembly or amongst the unsaved that surround us on every hand.

He fits us as tools for His workshop ; He designs the work to fit the tool ; and then He plans the sphere in which that tool shall work, not according to the good pleasure of our will, but according to His own.

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2. THE SPHERE OF SERVICE.

Wonder has often been expressed at the scarcity of detail given us in the early life of the Lord Jesus. In the biographies of men, early days are described at length, shewing interesting growth from the child to the man. But the Divine Record pictures His youth in barest outlines ; a line here, a suggestion there, and almost no detail until He appears as the accredited Servant of Jehovah, the Son, in Whom He was well pleased. And yet those few lines are of infinite importance, and because of their scarcity should be carefully pondered.

We have already seen how in those early days His " Father's business " was paramount with Him. The incident of His intercourse with the law-doctors in the temple, shows us clearly that even in His boyhood, His delight was in the Law of the Lord, and in His law He meditated day and night.

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Then comes one of those lines, short but powerful, that shows the hand of the Master-artist. With the words, "My Father's business" (Luke ii. 49), still echoing in our hearts, we read, "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." Eighteen long, silent years are spanned by those wonderfully simple words, "subject unto them." Not in the public service of the temple, nor in debate with the lawyers, lie the foundations of His service, but away in the hidden, lowly home-circle of Nazareth.

Service in the Home.

In this very fact lies a divine principle governing service. It begins not in the blaze of publicity, but in the quiet of the home-circle. In the intimate relationships of life—husbands and wives, parents and children, are given as the first fields of service. Behind the closed door and the drawn blinds of many a home lies

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the secret of a blasted testimony and years of unanswered prayers. In the home-life God has clearly ordained a living testimony to Himself, and to the relationship into which He has so graciously brought us.

In the subjection of the wife lies the great object lesson of the attitude of the Church to Christ, and in the love of the husband, we have the attitude of Christ to the Church—a love which robs subjection of all humiliation and converts it into a crowning glory.

As we gather around the Lord's Table and break the bread, we shew forth His death, a blessed service indeed. But as we gather around the table of the Home, do we realize that there again we have a blessed service, a showing forth of His love to me, and my love to Him?

Again it is a fact that the first ideas of children are based upon their observation of parents. Their ideas of God will be largely formed by what they see in the father. And we should

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never forget that early impressions are formative and give the bias to the whole life. Children are commanded to honour their father and mother, but one cannot compel honour toward that which is dishonourable. So this "commandment with promise" is distinctly linked to the first four commandments which are all entirely Godward, producing that moral likeness to God, which in turn induces loving obedience and honour from the children.

This sphere of service may be small, but it is dynamic in its force and provides scope for endless energy for every one of God's children. There character is formed, growth is made, and service that begins on the Hearthstone of Home, goes out to the greater fields anointed with the words, "The grace of God was upon Him" (Luke ii. 40).

All force and power radiate from a centre, as water-waves spread when a stone is dropped into a pool. So the

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first results of Salvation are seen in your own intimate life, working out your own Salvation ; then in your home relationships ; and so outward in never-ending impulses of blessing.

You may close your door and curtain your windows, and successfully hide your failure in these matters from all eyes, but you cannot prevent results. Character, whether of husband, wife or children, is warped ; prayer is hindered, and oftentimes lost ; and service becomes, not a matter of testimony, but of words without power.

Then let us not sacrifice home-life in our zeal for service, but remember that, " My Father's business " leads me directly there, to be a blessing.

Service in the Church.

From the quiet of the home-circle, we merge into the larger, more public sphere of Church relationships, and once more we are urgently reminded that service is being, not preaching.

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In exactly the same way in which God has placed you in the home, as husband or wife, parent or child, in each relationship to glorify Him, and shew forth His virtues, so now He places each one in the assembly, "as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. xii. 18). Here is no place for independence or self-will.

As servants, we are at the disposal of the Master, and it is His pleasure which governs and controls the position we hold in that sphere. It is He who sets in their place the Apostle, the Prophet, the Teacher, the Evangelist. Down to the tiniest detail of need, He it is who meets that need by some gifted, fitted member of the Body. Each one has an appointed office, and it is not for us to measure the greatness or smallness of that work which He has given us to do.

The realized Lordship of Christ, the consciousness that He is indeed our Master, will always safeguard against pride or false humility, and lead us into that place where it is possible to

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be, " all of one mind," a body in which every joint works without fret or fever, a machine in which every wheel and crank does its work without noise or friction.

Peter's thoughts must have often gone back to those closing days of companionship with his Lord ; and of those days and nights, none would have made deeper impression than that night, " the night in which He was betrayed " (1 Cor. xi. 23).

Picture after picture would flash across his mind : the Passover scene with all its intense meaning, followed by the wonderful object lesson of service, when Peter saw Him Whom he knew to be " the Christ, the Son of God," voluntarily taking the place of the slave, washing his (Peter's) feet. And on to the climax of that meeting, when his Lord prayed for him, for the others, and for those who afterward should trust in Him through their teaching. And as he looks back upon the events of that night, like a strong

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motive stand out the words, "That they all may be one" (John xvii. 21).

Everything led up to those words ; every action tended to make them significant ; and now, Peter, in the very forefront of assembly service, rings out the challenge left by the prayer of his Lord and ours, "Finally, be ye all of one mind." There is nothing further to be said. It is the Omega of service, the answer to that wonderful prayer. And upon this unity is laid the foundation of service in the world ; for upon that desire for oneness follow the words, "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John xvii. 23).

In the light of so much utter failure in gospel testimony, how these words should search our hearts ! Failure rightly to serve God in home relationships hinders prayer, and, in turn, produces a feebler service in Church relationships, and a constantly endangered gospel testimony. How

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often we seek to obtain results by urgent efforts, by much outward striving, when the cause of all lies in the fact that we are not " Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace " (Eph. iv. 3).

The Apostle Paul uses that phrase to describe the vocation or sphere of service into which we have been called, and if we compare the descriptions given by both Paul and Peter of the road by which this unity is attained, we cannot help but see that they have learned from the same blessed Master.

An eager sympathy, realizing one's own weakness and need ; a love based upon a common relationship to the Father Whose very name is Love ; a tender heart, full of pity ; and the old-fashioned sweet grace of courtesy, a bouquet of sweet smelling flowers worthy of the King's garden ; a pathway of blessed Christ-like service awaiting each one of us who desires to follow where He leads.

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Service in the World.

“That the world may know.” Knowledge is the proudest boast of the world, but with all its knowledge it knows not God, because it knows not Jesus Christ Whom God hath sent ; and it is that the world may know Him, that God has ordained our path of service in the world. The path of the Evangelist is clearly marked out, and the clear ringing story of the Cross with all its wealth of love and anguish, glory and shame, has pierced like a ray of Heaven’s own light the darkness of multitudes who knew not God.

But the wisdom of the Master has not chosen that path as the way of service for all. The knowledge that lifts the world radiates like a glory from the individual life. Behind the false glitter and garish display of a Godless world, lies hidden an awful horror of unspeakable dread, and beneath the light dancing music, can often be heard the heart-cry of hopelessness.

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“ Without Christ, . . . having no hope, and without God in the world ” (Eph. ii. 12), is the divine description of the field of service into which we are being sent. The cry of Job in his darkest hour, “ Oh, that I knew where I might find Him ! ” (Job xxiii. 3), might well be used to describe the groan of a sin-blinded generation. Their only hope is Christ, for it is only as He is presented, that the Father becomes known, and eternal life possessed. And that is just our business, yours and mine, young and old, male and female ; there is no exception made in this business. The world’s need is Christ, and we who know Him must present Him as the Bread of Life to the starving, perishing multitudes ; as the Light of Life to those poor sin-blinded ones who stumble and perish in an awful darkness at our very doors.

Again, it is our bounden duty, for has not our blessed Master spoken of us to His Father in His prayer, “ As

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Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world " (John xvii. 18) ; and to make it doubly sure, in resurrection power He breathes upon His people, bestowing the Holy Spirit and repeats, " As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you " (John xx. 21). So the blessed link is again revealed, and it is in our Master's footsteps that we still follow. He was at all times the Sent One, and His office was to reveal the Father.

But it is not His preaching that stands out so vividly, although none other man spake as He. It is the intrinsic beauty of His spotless life, in the tiniest detail always glorifying His Father, and of very necessity exhibiting that God-likeness, which enabled Him to say, " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father " (John xiv. 9).

The Apostle Paul realized the urgency of this ministry. By precept and example, he continually pressed the necessity of individual presentation of Christ, by the life, as well as the

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lips of the Blood-bought One. Christ living in him was the very keystone of his existence, and the passion of his life was to be, at all costs, a living example of the virtues which are in Christ Jesus. His mind was indeed the mind which was in Christ Jesus. The driving power of his life was the love of Christ, and how the deep swelling compassion of Christ forces itself upon us as we note his unselfish, never-ceasing efforts to bring Christ to those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death. To him circumstance, whether toward or untoward, was but an instrument to be used. Prison, shipwreck or a palace, all alike were but God-given occasions through which to live and preach Christ Jesus. And the secret of it all lies in that magnificent phrase, "God, Whose I am, and Whom I serve" (Acts xxvii. 23). He recognized that he was not his own, and acting upon that recognition, his service was indeed the natural outcome and the very apex

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of a life of holiness. The Apostle may well say to us to-day, " Follow me as I followed Christ ! "

Oh, that God would enable us honestly to face the facts of our position as servants ! On every hand a cry of spiritual weakness is heard. The preachers, the prayer meeting, the buildings, have all in turn been blamed, but does it not seem highly probable that the cause lies nearer home, even in our own hearts and lives ?

God has sent you to live Christ, to publicly expose Him before the gaze of friend, neighbour and enemy, and there is no detail in that life of yours too small but that you can use it to show forth His virtues.

Dare you stand to-day and openly state, " It is no longer I that live, but Christ Who liveth in me ? " Have you ever even attempted to reach that level, letting Christ speak in you, act through you ; even as Christ Himself whilst on earth, was always mouth and

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action for His Father? If not, let us not blame others, but humbly confess before our Master, that we have indeed been unprofitable servants, and even more than that, unfaithful.

The time is very short, and like a steady stream, there goes flowing by our feet a countless throng of souls for whom Christ died. To your hand has been entrusted the Light which alone can warn those perishing ones; to your lips have been given the wonderful words of life which alone can bring life to the dying ones; and it is your heart that Christ claims as His dwelling place, His throne, the place from which He sheds abroad, like a Shekinah Glory, the mighty power of saving love, the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

As one for whom Christ died, remember the end of your service is rapidly drawing near; already one feels the steady approach of that Day when we must all appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ. How will

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you stand in that great Day? Will the Righteous Judge hold you blameless in regard to these matters? He cannot give a "Well Done" for work neglected or undone. Will He hold you guiltless of the blood of husband, wife, children; of friend and neighbour; of the regions beyond, where fields are white unto harvest?

The Master has stood in His workshop, apportioning the work, and the worker for the work. Your position in home, business and the world is of His planning, that you should do a definite work for Him, your work which He sent you to do. Soon the tools must be laid aside and we shall meet Him face to face, to render up an account of stewardship.

What a joy indeed if our service proves to have steadily merged into Glory, a foretaste of the Eternal Glory to which we have been called! How beautifully the closing words of the Master sum up our thoughts: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I

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have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine Own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the World was" (John xvii. 4-5).

A glorified Father, a finished work, an eternal glory !

May the Lord help us to follow closely the way He leads, realizing in very deed that service is but the concrete evidence of a life of Holiness in Separation and Discipleship. Amen.

The Call to Glory.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you " (1 Peter v. 10).

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1 Peter IV.

12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14. If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.

15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.

16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?

18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19. Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

1 Peter V.

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

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1 Peter V.

2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:

7. Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.

8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9. Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

The Call to Glory.

**“Called unto His Eternal Glory, by Christ Jesus”
(1 Peter v. 10).**

1. FORESHADOWS OF GLORY.

UP the grassy slopes of a small mountain, three men and. Another might have been seen slowly climbing. They had left a scene of busy service amongst a great multitude behind, and their faces were set towards the stillness of the mountain-top. The clamour of the crowd, the surging sea of faces, each with its special need, the yearning hearts, burdened with secret sins and hidden tears, had been daily draining away the strength and courage of these faithful three. They had given freely

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of their services to the wondrous Master, their Leader ; with Him had steadily shouldered the burden of human woe.

Oftentimes after the rushing, roaring hours of an inflowing tide are spent, the atmosphere becomes tense with dread of a coming change. Then slowly and sadly the outpoured waters are withdrawn into the mother-heart of the great ocean. So, after periods of whole-hearted, outflowing service, the soul quivers with vague forebodings of failure and death.

To the three who had so closely followed the footsteps of the Master, the journey had seemed a continual march of triumph. Even the dreaded demons were subject to Him, and the multitude had flocked to cheer their onward way. To them it must have seemed but a step to the throne of David with all its attendant glories. Had not the multitudes, but a few days before, desired to take Him by force and crown Him King ?

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The Ebbtide.

Already the sensitive soul of the Master had felt the chill breath of the ebbing tide, and in silence He led Peter, James and John from the pathway of service up the gentle slopes to the mountain-top. And there He was transfigured before them, and they " beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth " (John i. 14). It was the crisis-point in His earthly ministry, and, in a lesser degree, of their lives also. From that mountain-top they followed Him down, and ever as they followed, the shadow of that awful Cross grew deeper about them until, oppressed beneath its burden of mystery and woe, they sank into the heavy slumber of Gethsemane. Ever along that pathway of the ebbing tide, the memory of that Glory unspeakable was present ; a memory dimmed by terrible sorrow, eclipsed by the hopelessness of death, only to burst

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forth anew in the Eternal Glory of Him to Whom death bowed in utter defeat.

They had witnessed that glory, their ears had listened to that voice which spoke from Heaven of a Father's eternal love and good pleasure, but with the passing of the cloud, they were left in the presence of none other but the Man Christ Jesus. That glory was not the Eternal Glory ; it was but the foreshadowing of it. The drinking of that bitter cup, the agony of the Cross, the finishing of the work God had given Him to do, all lay between.

At the end of the journey the mountain peaks of Heaven are seen, and He, "the King of Glory" (Psa. xxiv. 8-10). acclaimed by all the angelic hosts, receives the answer to His prayer, "glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5).

There we see Him to-day as John saw Him, the centre of all Heaven's

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worship ; the very embodiment of the Eternal Glory. For us this is no passing vision as it was to the three upon the mount, but an eternal possession—the Lord of Glory, seated in the Heavenlies for us, His redeemed ones.. Seeing Him there, our hearts are steadied and comforted ; for His presence and His glory are guarantees that we, too, shall be there, shall be sharers of that eternal glory which was His alone by right, and is ours by right of His divine grace. Well might Peter write “ The God of all grace, Who hath called us.” No other title but that could explain our presence in that wondrous possession.

The Threefold Link.

As Peter leaves the scene of glory behind, two words are fixed upon his mind to bear fruit in the light of after days. He had listened to the talk of Heaven as it fell from the lips of Moses and Elias, and “ suffering ” coupled to “ glory ” had been the subject of that

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wonderful conference. But yet another word was needed before Peter could understand the real significance of those two, and in after days we find him linking the three words as a jewelled setting: "Sufferings of Christ," "Grace unto you," "Glory to follow." Blessed trinity of words that illumine with radiant glory the pathway of the pilgrim and stranger through a perilous and hostile country.

Surely here we reach the Delectable Mountains of which John Bunyan writes, from whence we are able to gaze backward to the place where the awful shadow of judgment still rests upon the City of Destruction, from which we have been saved by His grace; whence also we slowly trace the way by which He has led us, cheered and strengthened by that same wondrous grace. How often has He healed our backslidings, restored our souls, spread a table for us in the midst of our enemies, and comforted us in deepest distress !

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From the heights of these Delectable Mountains, the Shepherd bids us raise our eyes and behold the glory of Beulah Land, the borderland of Heaven, outlined against a glorious horizon, its hills all tipped with golden light. But for us, like Jacob as he beheld his vision, only one Object holds our gaze—the One Who stands at the end of the way, “the God of all grace.” To us in very deed, “the Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel’s land.”

Between us and that hill-top may lie many heavy heartaches, some darksome Valleys of the Shadow and weary Hills of Difficulty, for that Eternal Glory can only be reached, “After that ye have suffered awhile,” when sin and death have been for ever put away. But we have seen His face, have heard His voice, and we may safely follow where He has led, even through suffering, with perfect confidence and happy assurance, for that must be the Glory Road.

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The Glory Road.

Having directed our eyes to the end of the journey, bright shining with its attendant Glory, the Spirit would bring us face to face with the character of the pathway leading upward to those realms of joy unspeakable.

At first thought it may seem a strange contradiction that the road to glory carries none other name than that of "Suffering." But in unmistakable words, with continual repetition, the lesson is brought home that fellowship with our Lord in His glory must of necessity follow upon fellowship in His sufferings in the scene of His rejection here. Without a doubt it is this very fact which leads the Apostle Paul to express his ardent desire not only to know Christ, but to have fellowship in His sufferings. The cost was counted; he was willing to suffer the loss of all things, to pay the utmost demanded of him, provided only that he might be privileged to follow closely those

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blessed footprints. Blessed footprints, indeed, clearly marking out for us in each stage of the Pilgrim way, the path He Himself has trodden in the loneliness of Separation, the endurance of Discipleship, the weariness of Service.

Now He would remind us of the further fact that, "He also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." It will be good for a few moments once more to turn and ponder the lessons of those footprints, for in learning the reason of "Sufferings unto Christ" we shall surely discover why we have been called to "follow His steps."

2. SUFFERING THE ROAD TO PERFECTION.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have a wonderful presentation of the Person and Work of Christ as it relates to both God and ourselves (Heb. ii. 6-14). From that wonderful portrait we may draw out at least

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three distinct stages in the Suffering-way which He so steadily walked.

Man in all his primal glory is shown us in the opening verses, but only to fall into the depths of utter failure so graphically described in the words, "but now we see not yet all things put under him"—a striking picture, indeed, of the universal revolt against the control of man who had first rebelled against his Creator, God. But instantly the eye is caught and turned by the phrase, "but we see Jesus," and it is in all the glory of His enthronement that we behold Him—the Perfect One—exercising all His kingly authority and power. Here we perceive another touch of that wonderful Master-pen. As the Spirit bids us gaze upon Him, all glorious, He reminds us of the fact that the God Who has crowned Him, also made Him to be "perfect through sufferings."

Surely we have a mystery here which is infinitely deep, far beyond

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all mortal measure. How could He, the Eternally Perfect One, be perfected? The answer may surely be discovered in the following verse in the fact of His perfect oneness with those whom, in His divine grace, He is not ashamed to call His Brethren.

In that wonderful, eagle-like stoop, leaving far behind all the riches and glories of Heaven, He not only took upon Himself the form of man, but, as they "were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." Then, for Him, the only road back to that perfection of Eternal Glory, lay by the way of suffering.

He had stooped alone, but as he soars aloft in the triumph of His love and power, He is no longer alone, but for ever the centre of the many sons whom He brings into Glory. As the price of that oneness, He must be partaker of their sufferings in His life as well as when in Death "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

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The introduction of Sin brought not only death into the world, but also a complete change of environment for man, in which the combined weight of the world, the flesh and the Devil is opposed to any upward growth or perfection Godward. So it is by very real experience of suffering, in conflict with opposing forces, that any growth toward perfection can be made. The Kingdom of Heaven must be taken by violence—a laying of violent hands upon all that opposes the onward, upward course of the Pilgrim.

Every progressive step of Bunyan's Pilgrim was the scene of renewed attempts to hinder his journey, a crisis being reached in the City of Vanity Fair, where all the malignant power of the world is pictured in opposition to the quiet determination of the two Strangers who spake another language. There the fiery death had to be dared and met by Faithful, because he would be no citizen of that country and kept his

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hope clearly fixed upon the Eternal City of his God.

Peter reminds us that the " trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ " (1 Peter i. 7). Here is suffering indeed, trying us at every stage of experience ; and the pivot point of the whole trial is to be our confidence in and dependence upon God ; not our ability to be or do big things.

The suffering of the cruel pangs of hunger, and the physical faintness experienced by our Lord and Master in the Wilderness might have been instantly relieved, but only at the cost of utter failure in His pathway of dependence upon God. For Him, life was in very deed a living dependence upon the Word of God. For us it is so fatally easy to get relief and help from surrounding circumstances.

The world and its God has a remedy

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for every ill and trouble ; a remedy that dulls the senses and depresses the spiritual life. It would seem that the trial of our faith was the one thing to be avoided at any cost. But in God's sight, that tried faith of yours, with its attendant and necessary suffering, is of great price—is the one thing to be found unto praise and honour and glory (mark that last word !) when Jesus comes ; the one precious gift, it would seem, that we may bring to Him.

Still further we may see in this very trial of our faith the means by which character is formed, which for us must always mean Christ likeness—Holiness. The hot fire of suffering, made hotter by the deadly blast of reproach for His Name's sake, must heat the crucible in which the likeness to our Blessed Master is being formed ; and only so can the dross of earth and carnality be removed, leaving the bright mirror-like gold that reflects the great Refiner's face.

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With what a beautiful touch Peter is led to place that closing thought in the words, "The God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His Eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, MAKE YOU PERFECT" (1 Peter v. 10).

3. SUFFERING THE SCHOOL OF SYMPATHY.

We have seen the Lord as a Man perfected through suffering. Now the necessity of suffering is pressed upon us as a preparation for the work of the Priesthood. He, the great High Priest, needed to be not only "faithful in things pertaining to God," on the one hand, but "merciful" in His dealings with those whom He represents before God.

Isaiah tells us that "in all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isa. lxxiii. 9), and again, "surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. liii. 4). Apart from sin, He "was

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in all points tempted (tried) like as we are" (Heb. iv. 15), so that no possible combination of circumstances or trial of our faith can be met by us which He has not measured and weighed. Oh, the boundless sympathy and compassion of this High Priest Saviour and Lord of ours! Who can measure the capacity of His love toward us? Surely only such an one can fathom the untold and untellable sufferings that He endured in order that with intelligent sympathy He might "succour them that are tried," again "leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter ii. 21).

Necessity of Sympathy.

As redeemed ones we are ordained Priests, and as such, faithfulness to God is first required of us also. But faithfulness to God will never clash with that mercifulness—the outcome of perfect sympathy—which can only be found in those who, like Christ, have "suffered, being tempted."

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How often the commandment, "Be pitiful" has been given us with the stronger note still of "Having compassion." Yet how quickly we jump to evil conclusions about our fellow pilgrims, oftentimes without any knowledge of their circumstances, and entirely without the feeling of one who has himself suffered. Only those who have passed that way and have felt the smarting wound, who know the depths of their own heart's need, can ever feel the aching pang of sympathy.

We do well to praise God for the priestly work of those who have suffered; for the deft touch with which they bind up the broken hearted, often healing wounds that others in thoughtlessness and ignorance have made! The training school where such spiritual surgery is learned demands and secures a heavy price, oftentimes taking all that the heart holds dear, the loss of all earthly treasure. Even so, one only follows

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afar off the Feet that have left us such blessed prints.

The Understanding Heart.

One's heart just aches at the unspoken cry for sympathy, for an understanding heart—a cry heard on every side. Suffering, sorrow and heart-break are the common portion of the Pilgrim here, but how slowly we learn the lesson that it takes one heart-break to heal another.

Whilst visiting a dear soul in deep distress a few weeks ago she spoke of a visit that had helped her wonderfully. Said she, "He didn't say anything, but he just understood." Sympathy will not need words. The kiss of comfort, the strong arm to support through hours of weakness, and above all that assurance of understanding, go deeper far than any words.

Surely if there is one sphere of service which draws us near to the heart of the Master it is this very work,

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a work so beautifully shown out in Himself, the Good Samaritan. When Priest and Levite failed, He passed that way, and in grace came down to the place of deep need. He, the High Priest, in perfect sympathy stooped to a work which the Priests in lofty self-righteousness disdained.

What a precious gift then is suffering ! Not a curse to be assuaged by the anodyne of the world or met by the hardening spirit of the Stoic, but accepted as the perfect will of the Father, in order that we may in some measure attain to the holy office and work of the Heavenly Priesthood ! Well may our hearts cry aloud if only touched by our own sore need which has come or surely will come, " Lord give me sympathy—a heart to feel and know ! " Then, our sufferings will indeed prove to be, even as His were, the training ground in which we learn to be " merciful " and " faithful " in our dual relationship to God and one another.

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4. SUFFERING THE SCHOOL OF OBEDIENCE.

As the Man, as the Priest, and now as the Son, the Lord is presented to us ; the ever ascending relationship emphasizing the importance of the training which was and still is necessary wherever the Divine Calling is recognized (Heb. v. 7-9). It would also seem that the higher the relationship, the greater the necessity for suffering as a preparation for it. As the Son, He learns " obedience by the things which He suffered "—a statement which again should challenge our thought. He, the Eternally Obedient One, needing to learn obedience ! The fact that He was never once in thought, word or deed disobedient, will keep our minds clear from any false thought. It was not that, as a naturally disobedient one, He had to learn to be obedient, but rather that by means of suffering, He put into practice His obedience to the

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Will of His Father, and so became, by cumulative effect of such practice, the One Who proved His Sonship by His perfect obedience, even in the midst of the furnace of fiery affliction, with mental and spiritual agony such as no mortal has ever tasted.

Obedience the Test of Sonship.

But we are taught that in this very particular lies one great proof of His Sonship. The spiritual hall-mark of Sonship is obedience. Paul emphatically states that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14)—not children or bairns, but sons, full grown and in recognized fellowship with the purposes of the Father. We are, as born-again ones, all children of God, but it is surely the will of the Father that we should increase by spiritual growth until we attain to the high honour of manifested Sonship—a mountain peak to which there is but one path marked in Scripture ; obedience, absolute and implicit.

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5. SUFFERING THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE.

Very little thought will prove to us that such a pathway must bring us into a sphere of at least spiritual and mental suffering. Obedience demands submission to the Father's will—a will that is in direct contradiction to the will of our flesh, and is absolutely opposed by all the world-power headed up in its Prince and god—Satan.

To "suffer as a Christian" was a very real expression in the days of the first love of the Church. Faithfulness to the Name and obedience to the Word of Christ brought unspeakable torments and fiery deaths, but in these days fresh weapons have been forged by the enemy. No longer does he threaten with sword and fire; but with glittering promises and beguiling words he seeks to ensnare the feet of the Pilgrim. As an Angel of Light he appeared to seduce our first parents from their pathway of dependence and

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obedience, and as an Angel of Light he appears in these closing days in order that he may deceive, if possible, the very elect of God. The only safeguard against all his wily attacks lies in our implicit obedience to the Word of God, even though it must mean suffering and reproach. Only so can we be approved as Sons of God.

We do well to consider Him "the first born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29), lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. The Apostle goes on to say, "ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Heb. xii. 4). What a battlefield is spread before our eyes! Not only sin in all its varied forms, arrayed against us in serried ranks led by spiritual Goliaths from the Pit, but the awful treachery of indwelling sin, so difficult to meet, sometimes so heart-rending to destroy.

"Resist" is the word given us—a steel-like defence, and not only that, but a determined conflict or forward movement against sin. War against

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that which we love is unthinkable, impossible ; so that sin must be viewed as God views it and as it is—a horrid, hateful thing.

6. SUBMISSION AN UPWARD MOVEMENT.

He Who was co-equal with the Father takes the place of the utterly submissive One ; and in no grudging spirit, but intensity of rejoicing He exclaims, “ I delight to do Thy Will,” even though that Will was to take Him into the conflict of the Wilderness and to the bloody sweat of Gethsemane. His descent to the lowest depths in obedience to the Father’s Will, was in very deed the pathway to Heaven’s highest heights.

For us there are no heights of glory from which to stoop. Up from the darksome pit we have been brought. Submission to the good and perfect will of God is for us an upward movement in continual and happy fellowship with the Blessed One Who came

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down to where we were, then lifting us upon His mighty wings of Love, He bore us up, and will bear us until we reach the Eternal Glory at the Father's right hand. Well may Peter exclaim, " Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy " (1 Peter iv. 13). Again, " if ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you."

The city dwellers of Egypt and surrounding countries might hurl the reproachful name of " Hebrews " at the tent-dwelling pilgrims of their day; but those same pilgrims alone, amongst all the nations, could point to the overshadowing cloud of Glory and of God that gave continual promise of Divine protection and guidance. Their pathway was to be a time of testing and suffering, and though they failed sadly, yet He never failed.

We also are called upon to be the

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tent-dwellers, passing through a strange land, tested and tried on every hand. But down-cast pilgrim, wearied and tempest tossed, look up ! Like a heavenly canopy, separating you eternally unto God Himself, preserving you from all harm, and ensuring you an abundant entrance into the Eternal Glory, is the Spirit of Glory and of God, resting upon you.

The End of the Journey.

How often at the end of a weary day of toil and conflict, has the song of the Homeland brought comfort and strength to our hearts. In visions of the mind, the lighted windows, the flicker of the firelight and the faces of loved ones who make the sweetness of the word " Home," are seen, and the heart beats high with anticipation of the joys of the journey's end. Then we can look back upon the past scenes of battle and loss, and value them aright as the necessary steps which have led us to that place of comfort.

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So our guide has led our thoughts from mountain-top to valley depths of suffering and reproach, and now would direct our eyes to that blest Homeland of the Pilgrim, the City of our God, where we shall indeed sit down "under His shadow with great delight" (S. of S. ii. 3).

The Daybreak.

It is indeed good to realize that God's ultimate call is not to suffering alone, although the suffering must be included, but to His eternal glory. Like a sleepless night of weary tossing, the time of our testing may seem endless and hopelessly dark ; but the morning does come, and though "weeping may endure for a night, . . . joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. xxx. 5). The night is already far spent, the daybreak is at hand, and soon the Pilgrim will be at home where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. xxi. 4). Yet it is with no selfish conception of glory

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that we have been called, but a Glory that consists of and exists only in full and perfect fellowship with the God of all Grace. It is to His Glory that we are hastening, and it is as those who are one in Him that we not only behold but become sharers of that wondrous Eternal Glory which He had with His Father before the world was. Here we have shared His sufferings, His rejection and humiliation ; there we share His consolation, His acceptance and Glory. And our hearts would surely go leaping forward to that glorious day when we shall see Him, with the last glad cry of the Book, " Even so, come, Lord Jesus " (Rev. xxii. 20).

Not to the quiet stillness of Death, or the peace of the grave, or even in a resurrection from them are we taught to look for deliverance from the conflict, but to that fulness of life as we are changed into His likeness, at His coming again. He has said, " Surely I come quickly," and our hearts throb out an eager " Amen "

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as we listen with nerves astrain for the Voice and the Trump, quick rending the sky. They will summon us to that glorious meeting in the air, with that Blessed One Who for our sakes bore the name "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. liii. 3). Then for ever with Him, onward and upward we cleave the Heavens until we reach the Father's House, the place of many mansions, the Home Eternal, beautiful and fair, the place of the Eternal Glory.

He has said, "Surely I come quickly," and the voices of the watchers have been heard crying with strange insistence these past few years, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." Soon the awful clock of destiny will strike its dread midnight hour of terrible awakening for the unready sleeping professors, calling them, not to Eternal Glory, but to everlasting shame ; and gathering His own from every land, even from the dark chambers of the Grave and the deeper

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depths of ocean caves, that they may be for ever with Himself.

The Shut Door.

The door will be shut ! Terrible word for those outside, wide wakened, but only to a deepening sense of eternal gloom, as the stern words fall upon their ears, " I never knew you." But that closed door speaks sweetly and comfortably to the Home-gathered ones. He says they " shall go no more out " (Rev. iii. 12), and we may well use the words of the Psalmist in reply, " I will dwell in the House of the Lord for ever " (Ps. xxiii. 6). What a sound of Home there is in these words ! No more journeyings and weary toilings ; never more the din and crash of battle ; heartbreak and bitter tears gone for ever—now fulness of satisfaction in the very presence of Him " Whom having not seen, ye love." Then we shall see Him face to face and " rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

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Can you imagine that blood-bought throng, yourself amongst them, standing so ravished with the joy of His Presence? No one able to speak for very joy, and He the centre and cause of it all! Home! how the very word thrills us! With that word energizing our souls, how our feet will spurn the ruggedness of the road of sorrow, only caring that we are hastening Home. And who can speak of His joy as He gathers His loved ones around Himself—His Bride whom He has won from between the very joys of death—the Pearl of great price indeed to Him?

7. THE ETERNAL GLORY.

In spite of all its intensity of joy, this is but the prelude to the Eternal Glory. He will present us as spotless, blameless ones before His Father, bringing us without dread or fear into that intimate Presence into which He alone has ever entered. Cherubim and Seraphim veil their faces as they

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stand at the gateway of the Infinite Majesty ; but in blessed relationship with Himself, the Eternal Son presents us unto His Father and our Father as one with Himself—" I in them, and Thou in Me " (Jno. xvii. 23).

Here words must fail us. No stretch of imagination can help us to grasp what we shall then behold. There we shall see His Glory, " the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth "—a Glory never to fade away as it did before the eyes of the three upon the Mount, but Eternal Glory, expanding and extending in cycle upon cycle throughout the ages of the ages.

The Result of the Glory.

Well may we anticipate that great and wondrous day and bow our hearts even now in worship as we say, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing " (Rev. v. 12).

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And shall we not anticipate that scene in some measure as we yield up to Him, compelled by His mighty love, all of ourselves of which that seven-fold ascription speaks. It will leave nothing out—body, soul and spirit “a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God” (Rom. xii. 1). In that day you will do it ; and the sweetness and blessedness of that gift and its value to Himself must surely depend upon the cost of the gift.

Will you not give Him your heart-love now, break your alabaster box at His feet, make Him the recipient to-day of the power and riches, the wisdom and strength, the honour and glory ; and will you not prove in very deed that to the very highest heights He shares with you “the blessing ? ”

From the lower levels we looked up, and each step was marked by the word “Holiness ; ” and now as we gaze down from the high level, we realize that glory was also radiant upon each step. Holiness is glory, for He, the

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All Glorious One, is the Holy One.
Let us not fear then the shadows of the
Foosteps, dark and perilous as they
may appear from beneath. Climb
them, and it will be seen that upon
them and above them, always shines
with heavenly radiance, the enjoyed
presence of the God of all Grace and
Glory, Who in loving invitation bids
us

“ BE YE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”

“GOD’S LONELY MAN.”

I.

“He was with the wild beasts”

(Mark i. 13).

He stood alone!

Dread loneliness with desert stretched around,
A well-planned spot for such a battle-ground.

Abode of all that’s wild, untamed;
Outcast of earth, of Heaven unclaimed.

God’s Lonely Man

To this dread spot now speeds Him forth,
And meets in conflict dire the hosts of Hell.
No human power, nor angel might or worth
Can intervene. The victory fell

To God’s Lone Man.

Lord Jesus, we Thy people, too, must fight;
On every hand we meet the tempter’s wily snare.
Stand Thou near by, in darkness be our light,
And in the dust of conflict hear our prayer!

So grant us victory, Lord!

II.

“He went up into a mountain apart to pray”

(Matt. xiv. 22, 23).

He bows alone!

The mountain-top, with far-flung starry sky,
Seems far removed from earth, where sinners cry
As sheep that have no shepherd care,
Dwelling in dread of death’s grim snare.

God’s Lonely Man,

With heart o’ercharged with human grief,
Wearied with shepherd toil and service sweet,
Now finds His rest, sweet calm and heart relief,
In God alone. Thus strength returned

To God’s Lone Man.

O Lord, as servants Thou hast sent us out;
Like Thee, we’ve heard the multitude distressful cry;
Wearied with toil, our hearts oppressed with doubt,
We need Thee, Lord. O hear our deep-breathed sigh!

So grant us comfort, Lord!

III.

“He was withdrawn from them a stone’s cast”

(Luke xlii. 39, 48).

He walks alone,
Whilst shadows slowly creep o’er Olive’s brow,
And darkness deepens ‘neath the low-swung bough.
Soon the “stone’s cast” is measured out,
That place of horror, gloom, and doubt.

God’s Lonely Man
Now takes this place with heart depressed,
And, self denied, receives that bitter cup
Straight from His Father’s hand, love’s greatest test.
Sin’s cup He drains. God’s will is done
By God’s Lone Man.

O Lord, with Thee we’ve sat and broken bread,
And drunk, with deep-souled joy, the cup with blessing stored;
Yet if, from such sweet bliss, our feet must tread
The Garden of the Olives, teach us then
To love Thy will, O Lord!

IV.

“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

(Matt. xxvii. 45-50).

He dies alone!
From Pilate’s hall to Calvary’s rugged mound
His Cross of shame He bears, His brow thorn crowned.
A Man accursed they crucify,
By God well-loved, yet left to die.

O Lonely Man!
Lover and friend afar off paused,
And then upon that death-doomed One the shade
Of midnight falls; whilst God upon Him caused
My sin to meet. So peace was made
By God’s Lone Man.

With contrite hearts, Lord, we would sadly kneel
Before Thy blessed feet, nail-pierced, and tell Thee all
Our soul’s deep pain. Then would we gladly feel
A deeper joy. Thou’rt now in glory crowned,
And not alone, O Lord!

A. P.

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