



TOWARD THE MARK

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”
PHILIPPIANS 3:14***

*A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS
OF ALL AGES*

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Dear Reader,

“Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). **It is safe to say that there is nothing more ensnaring and that will ruin the Christian testimony than world-bordering.** Think of Lot (Gn. 13:10,11). The world is a system that has no place for God. It starts in Genesis 4. **It provides man with every thing from education to innovation, and from occupation to entertainment** It has its rules and regulations; it has its religions; it has its god (2 Co. 4:4) and prince (Jn. 12:31); it can not satisfy man’s needs or give him any satisfaction (Jn. 4:13); it is full of darkness; it is unprofitable (Mt.16:26); it is full of violence and corruption (Gn. 6); it hated the Lord Jesus (Jn. 7:7) and His followers, and causes them all kinds of trouble (Jn. 16:33); and it awaits God’s judgments as in the time of Noah and the days of Lot (2 Pe. 2:5-9). **Christians are in the world but not of the world (Jn. 17:11). So Christians are to be light in the world (Mt. 5:14); they should not love the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17); though they use the world they must not abuse it (1 Co. 7:31). They should not be governed by its principles, should resist its influence, and should not adopt its ways of thinking.** If we walk in the enjoyment of our privileges in Christ and closeness to Him every day, read His word, the Bible, and commune with Him in prayer, faith will give us present victory over the world, and we will overcome the world just as our blessed Lord overcame the world (Jn. 17:33). Then, as overcomers, we will eat from the tree of life and the hidden manna; will be pillars in the temple of God; and will sit with Him in His throne. **Christians, it is worth it to not love the world** (Rev. 2:3).

May the Lord use this issue of Toward the Mark to help you grow and be established as you read it. Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement. Please keep us in your prayers.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,
Emil S. Nashed

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I have the pleasure to inform you that a mailing list has been set up for Toward the Mark. If you want to get an electronic version of the magazine, simply send an e-mail to toward.the.mark@gmail.com or visit www.towardthemark.org to be added to the mailing list. If you also want a copy of older issues, please mention it in your e-mail.

Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or the J. N. Darby translation.

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

CALLED — OUT — ONES

EK-KLESIA

(THE CHURCH OR ASSEMBLY)

The word ek-klesia — nearly always translated ‘church’ in the Authorized Version of the Bible — was originally a word, that meant a lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those who possessed the right of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs. (See Trench, Greek Synonyms).

When Paul claimed to be a ‘Roman,’ he meant that he possessed this citizenship, and although he was a Jew, and a citizen of Tarsus, he was also a ‘Roman citizen’ and had the right to take part in any assembly (ek-klesia) of Roman citizens; as well as giving him other privileges. As far as we know Peter or John had not this citizenship, and the Chief Captain of the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem told Paul that he obtained this citizenship “with a great sum.” But Paul could reply, “But I was born free.” It was a very great privilege to have this citizenship.

When the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek, this word ek-klesia was used to translate the Hebrew word meaning the ‘congregation’ of Israel, and so in this way prepared the word for use in the things of God; and when the Lord Jesus began to tell His disciples about the Church that He was about to build, He Himself chose this word to describe it (Mt. 16:18, 18:17). These are the only places in the Gospels where we find this word, but it appears many times in Acts, and over and over again in the Epistles and Revelation.

The first time it is used in the New Testament (Mt. 18:18) is very striking: “Upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Many times have they sought to do so; but they have never succeeded. As we have seen, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself chose this word to describe it, so we should give the

more earnest heed to seek to learn the lessons that He would teach us through it.

You will notice that the word ek-klesia is made up of two words: the first is ek, which is like ‘ex’ in our word ‘exit,’ and means ‘from, out of, away from.’ The second part of the word is klesia, which is from the word kaleo, meaning, ‘I call.’ Indeed one may recognize the root of our English word ‘call’ in it. So the whole word means, “called-out-ones,” with the emphasis on ‘called.’ Paul wrote to the Assembly at Rome, “Ye also are the called of Jesus Christ” (Ro. 1:6), and he tells them they are “saints by calling.” See note in New Translation.

The one who called out the citizens in a Greek city to the assembly was the herald, ho kerux, and this is the very word that the Holy Spirit uses for the one who heralds, or proclaims, or preaches, the Good News, the Gospel, as we may see in 1 Ti. 2:7 and 2 Ti. 1:1, “I have been appointed a herald (kerux).” See New Translation. The one who preaches the Gospel is truly a Herald of Glad Tidings, sent out by the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit he calls people unto Christ, who makes them free, calls them out from this world, and makes them citizens of Heaven; and they become part of the Church, or Assembly of God.

But you will recall that in a Greek city not all had the rights and privileges of the ek-klesia, the Assembly, but those who were free citizens, and had not lost their citizenship; these only formed part of that Assembly. And so it is today in the Assembly of God. Only those who are citizens of Heaven (Ph. 3:20) belong to this Assembly; and these heavenly citizens are free, “Ye are called unto freedom” (Ga. 5:13).

But, sad to say, there are today, as in days of old, those who have lost their right to be part, openly, of that Assembly, as it is gathered unto Christ the Lord. Sin has come in, and like the man in 1 Corinthians 5, some have had to be put away from that Assembly.

How wondrously this word ek-klesia describes the true Church of God today — called out by the herald of the Gospel; called out from the world, for the one who answers this call is no longer of the world,

even as Christ their Lord is not of the world (Jn. 17.16); gathered together unto the One we love, our Lord Jesus Christ; and so we form part of the Assembly, or Church of God.

‘Assembly’ is a better translation of ek-klesia than ‘congregation,’ for congregation has in it the meaning of to congregate, or come together, of one’s own voluntary will; whereas ek-klesia emphasizes the call that brings them together; God’s own call, through the herald of Jesus Christ our Lord. In Acts 19, we find this word three times translated ‘assembly’ in our Authorized Version.

But notice further: there was but one Roman Empire, with the Emperor at its head, and you may see that Paul’s Roman citizenship was recognized without question, regardless of the place in which he claimed it: Philippi or Jerusalem, it made no difference. The one Roman Empire linked together into one every Roman citizen in the whole Roman Empire. (Acts 16:37; 22:25-28). Even so, there is but one true Church of God, with the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head, and every true believer in the Lord Jesus, every one who has heard the call of the herald, and obeyed, belongs to that Church, or Assembly of God, quite regardless of place and race and language: they all form one body with Christ the Head. As there was but one Roman Empire, so there is but one Church of God (compare Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; 5:23, and other Scriptures). And just as the Assembly of Roman citizens in any one city was recognized equally as representative of the whole Roman Empire — the Roman Empire in miniature, perhaps we might say — so the Assembly of true Christians in any one place represents the whole Assembly of God, the world over: and every true believer in the Lord Jesus in any one place, belongs to the Assembly of God in that place, even though he may not realize this, nor obey the call that calls him to that assembly.

The Scriptures speak of “the Church of God which is at Corinth,” or “the Church of the Thessalonians.” This does not mean there are many Churches of God, independent one of another, but each individual church is representative of the whole. In 1 Co. 15:9, Paul tells us, “I persecuted the church of God.” He persecuted the church (or assembly) at Jerusalem, but then he tells us, “I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:10,11). Here we may see that all the true Christians in Jerusalem and those in the strange cities, all together formed “the church of God.” It is but one ek-klesia, but one Church; and every blood-bought soul throughout the whole world is part of that one church.

GATHERING-TOGETHER-UNTO EPI-SUN-AGOGE

We read of great gatherings almost every day. People gather together to help some cause they love and admire. They gather together to a Cause, to a Doctrine, for a Purpose; but how different such a gathering is to those who are gathered together unto a living person in their midst, whom they love.

You will note that the word we propose to consider is really made up of three words; and the second and third together, sunagoge, make a very common English word: “Synagogue.” One is the Greek way, the other the English way of spelling the same word. As you may guess, it really means “A-Gathering-Together,” and in this way it is often used in the Greek Old Testament. In the New Testament it has generally come to mean the place where they gathered. And today the Jews gather together in the Synagogues to hear the Law and the Prophets and to pray. This is “A-Gathering-Together,” but not “A-Gathering-Together-Unto” any loved and living person. All over the world we hear of religious meetings of one kind or another, which for the most part are “Gatherings-Together,” but not “Gatherings-Together-Unto” one they love. It is the living Person we love, unto whom we gather, that makes the difference.

This word, epi-sun-agoge, a “Gathering-Together-Unto,” as a noun, is only used twice in the Greek New Testament; but the verb is used seven or eight times. We find it first in Matthew 23:37, in which verse it occurs twice: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem how often would I have gathered thy children together unto (Myself) even as a hen gathers together her chickens unto (herself) under her wings, and ye would not.”

This, the first time the word is used, beautifully illustrates its meaning. We have all heard the mother-hen give that special little cluck that calls the little chicks — calls them, where? Calls them unto herself. That is just the thought in this lovely word. You may look up

the other places where we find this verb, all of which, you will note, are in the Gospels, telling of our Lord down here on earth (Mt. 24:31; Mk. 1:33, 13:27; Lk. 12:1, 13:34, and perhaps 17:37; but the reading here is, I believe doubtful). If you examine these Scriptures, I think you will find that all, except the last, refer to gathering together unto our beloved Lord and Savior. CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, is the Object and Centre of our gathering. May the Lord help us to bear this in mind when we come together to remember our Lord's death; it is not only a "gathering together," (the synagogue was that), but a Gathering Together *Unto the Lord Jesus Christ Himself*.

Many today gather together unto a Doctrine, such as baptism; others gather together unto a great leader, as Luther or Wesley; others to a Form of Worship or Church Government; or to a National Church. Such gatherings have no right to claim they are gathered together unto Christ, and Christ alone.

* * * *

But let us look a little at the two Scriptures (and only two) where we find this word as a noun. The first is in 2 Th. 2:1, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled." Here this word tells us of that great gathering in the air, described in 1 Th. 4:13-18, and in 1 Co. 15:51-57, when all the true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, whether living or sleeping, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. What a gathering together that will be, and all unto Him! Not one saint, from the thief on the cross to the last one brought to the Savior before He comes again, will be missing then; all will be gathered together unto their Lord, and He will be the Centre, the only Centre and Object, of that vast throng. And, note, the One unto Whom we are gathered is not left to be understood, (as it is in some cases), but is plainly told us — "unto Him" — unto the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The archangel will be there, and will utter his voice: but he is not the Centre or Object, the One to whom that vast throng is gathered! No! It is unto the Lord Himself, the Lord alone, He is the Centre of all: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." The Lord Himself is our only Object and Centre then.

Who would be willing to miss that meeting in the air, with the Lord Himself in the midst? Who then, at that moment, will want any other centre, any other object, than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? Why any other centre, any other object, now?

The only other place where we find this word is in Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the gathering-together-unto (Him) of yourselves, as the manner is with some." This tells us of our gathering together unto Himself down here on this earth, in the present day; just as the other occasion on which this word was used, told us of that mighty gathering together unto Him in that coming day, that gathering together unto Him in the air. How amazingly sweet that the Spirit of God should choose exactly the same word for each of these gatherings! Thus the Lord tells us that this gathering together unto 'My Name', as we get in Mt. 18:20 (for almost the same words are used), is, in His sight, the same as that wondrous gathering together unto Him in the air.

And in both these gatherings He promises to be there. In the one, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout," and in the other, "There am I in the midst of them." It is the presence of the living Lord we love that makes all the difference — the one down here, the other in the air — but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself present in each case: His presence makes these meetings different to all other meetings that can be arranged by men.

Very likely today that meeting is held in some upper room, or down a back street, or in a private house, as in New Testament days. Adornments are not there. The organ and the choir of the world, or even the music of Old Testament days, are all missing. It may be there are only "two or three" present, but, dear Reader, do not scorn it, for in the sight of God, it is just as truly a gathering-together-unto the Lord Jesus as is that glorious meeting in the air, with countless myriads, from the grave and from the earth; and HE HIMSELF in all His glory, the visible Centre of that mighty throng. Then we shall see Him with our own eyes for the first time: and through that sight, we shall be changed to be "like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

It is amazing, is it not, that the Holy Spirit chooses exactly the same word for each of these gatherings? It tells us that the Lord Himself is just as truly present in that bare upper room with the despised two or

three, as He is visibly present in that glorious gathering to which we all look forward with hope and joy.

And just one word more. The Holy Spirit adds this admonition, “And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Beloved, do we not see “the Day approaching” now? Never was “the Day” so near as in our day! May you and I love that blessed place where Jesus Himself is in the midst, and love and treasure it the more as we see the Day approaching now. May other gatherings-together lose their attraction as we find an irresistible attraction in that “GATHERING-TOGETHER-UNTO HIM”!!

G.C.Willis

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. What prophet was summoned up from the dead by a witch?
2. What kinds of objects were around the hem of the priest's robe?
3. Where did the Lord Jesus have a fish meal with seven of his disciples after His Resurrection?

Meat

"Sanctify them by the truth"

BLOOD AND WATER

The apostle John was a personal eye-witness to the fact that a soldier walked up to the dead Christ hanging on the cross and pierced His side with a spear, and “immediately came there out blood and water” (Jn. 19:34-35). In 1 Jn. 5:6, John supplements his previous historical record with the truth of what that even meant spiritually. He says, “This is He who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only but by water and blood.” Then in v. 8, he speaks of the Holy Spirit, the water, and the blood as the three witnesses to the Son of God.

So we see that both blood and water are connected with the death of Christ and, although connected, they are sufficiently distinct to be used separately as witnesses. Therefore, we must distinguish them in our thoughts.

Cleansing is connected with both blood and water in Scripture, “The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7) and, “that He might sanctify and cleanse it (the true Church) with the washing of water by the Word” (Eph. 5:26).

These two “cleansings” connect themselves with the two great effects of sin, its guilt and its defiling-power. The blood sets before us the death of Christ in atonement for our sins which cancels our guilt and brings us forgiveness. We are thereby cleansed judicially (legally). The water speaks of the same death but of its aspect whereby our sinful state has been judged and ended, to deliver us from the old conditions and associations for life in which we once lived. We are thus morally cleansed and the power of sin over us is broken. The hymn writer Toplady correctly put this thus:

*Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.*

Hebrews 9 and 10 show us the effectiveness, virtue, and power of the blood of Christ which:

1. Purges (cleanses) the sinner's conscience from dead works, to serve the living God (9:14).
2. Has removed the transgressions of the Old Testament saint which had been accumulating under the law (9:15).
3. Has ratified a new covenant (contract or testament) of grace (9:15-18).
4. Has removed the believer's sins and has laid the basis for the complete putting away of sin (9:22,26).
5. Has so removed the believer's sins for faith, that once-purged, the believer's conscience is forever cleared as to the judicial question of his sins (10:2).
6. Thus gives the believer boldness to enter into the presence of God (10:19).
7. Has forever sanctified (set apart) the believer for God (10:10, 29).

The great subject of Hebrews 9-10 is the believer's access to God as a result of the blood of Christ. The believer is judicially cleared to draw near to God by Christ's one offering and it never needs to be repeated. Hence, the thought of one or once is repeated seven times in these chapters so that we won't overlook the complete sufficiency and great glory connected with the once-spilt precious blood of Christ.

Although judicial (legal) cleansing-by-blood is the great theme in these chapters, moral cleansing is not forgotten. We draw near to God with both "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (10:22) — evidently an allusion to the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office (Ex. 29). They were washed with water (v. 4) and also sprinkled with blood (v. 20), all picturing the death of Christ. So, Christ's blood judicially cleanses us and gives us a perfect standing before God, while the water cleanses us morally by cutting us off

from the old life in which we once lived and bringing us into the new life.

The moral cleansing by water needs to be kept up. Aaron and his sons were bathed with water from head-to-toe at their consecration and that bathing was not to be repeated. However, a laver was provided (Ex. 30:17:17-21) where the priests were instructed to wash their hands and feet. "When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water that they die not."

Just before He instituted His supper, the Lord Jesus girded Himself, poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciple's feet (Jn. 13). Peter's reluctance to let Jesus do it was used by the Lord to bring forth the truth that such washing is necessary if communion with the Lord in His heavenly position was to be enjoyed. He told Peter, "If I wash you not, you have no part with Me" (v. 8). Peter's rapid change from reluctance to over-enthusiasm led the Lord to say, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet but is completely clean" (v. 10, R.V.).

This verse clearly distinguishes our two-fold cleansing-by-water. All we believers have been bathed (washed all over) once-for-all by the death of Christ: it has cleansed us from the old life. However, we also need the daily application of that death to our souls. We can not enjoy "part with Christ" without it.

Thus the coming of Jesus Christ, the son of God, was characterized by both water and blood. As we saw in 1 Jn. 5:6, the Holy Spirit specially guards this point by saying "not by water only but by water and blood." Why? Perhaps one reason is the tendency to forget the blood — to say that Christ came to simply cleanse man morally by setting him high ideals and then living out those ideals as an incentive for others to live a good life. Such people say that He thus makes "at-one-ment" — brought man and God together as one on the basis of good living. To counteract this false teaching, the Holy Spirit emphasizes both the moral cleansing and expiation (payment) for sin!

So the three witnesses (the Holy Spirit, water, and blood) to the Son of God remain. The Holy Spirit is the living, acting, and speaking Witness while the water and the blood are the two silent witnesses,

but all three testify that He who came in this manner is the Son of God, the Fountain of eternal life; and for us who believe, this eternal life is ours in Him (1 Jn. 5: 5-13). May we truly thank God that both blood and water flowed from that spear wound.

No blood and water flowed from Jesus during His life. Consequently, contrary to what some believe, Christ's life, as wonderful as it was, had no part in His payment for our sins. Sometimes Romans 5:19 is used to teach otherwise. It says, "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." However, a careful reading of the context (vv. 12-21) shows the opposite. The two heads, Adam and Christ, are being contrasted here, with the sin of one (Adam) with its subsequent disaster, and the righteousness and obedience of the Other (Christ) with its subsequent blessing. It is a question of the "one offense" and the "one righteousness" (v. 18). Christ's one righteousness was obedience "even unto death and that the death of the cross" (Ph. 2:8).

Since the blood cleanses us from all sin, why do we need the water? That question is best answered by another question: "Are you not conscious of as much need for cleansing from the love of sin as from the condemnation of sin?" Christians need to hate sin. That is the reason for the "water." We also need the daily cleansing of which the laver speaks. There is much concerning us personally as well as many subtle influences of this world that need to be removed.

We don't go back to the blood for daily cleansing. The believer is not to continually, so to speak, go through the cleansing and justifying process as to eternal salvation from sin, of which the blood speaks. "By one offering, He has perfected forever those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). However, some have felt that 1 Jn. 1:7, "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin," instructs us to go to the blood for daily cleansing. The word "cleanses" in this verse simply points out the inherent property of Christ's precious blood — that it will always cleanse every sinner who comes by faith to Christ for salvation. We often use the present tense in this way. We say that "fire burns wood." We don't mean that the fire will burn the wood a little bit almost every day (the wood can be burned up only once) but that an inherent, well-known property of fire is that it burns wood. Thus 1 John 1:7 does not support daily cleansing by blood.

Since Scripture does speak of our daily washing or cleansing by water, how do we get washed? It is by the Word of God, our Bibles. The water

and the Word of God are clearly connected by Ephesians 5:25, "that He might sanctify and cleanse (the Church) with the washing of water by the Word." The Word alone shows us the wonderful death of Christ. Sin is thereby also clearly revealed. Our affections are thus cleansed. In Psalm 119:9, the question is asked as to how shall a young man cleanse his ways. The answer is, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."

We often overlook this cleansing-effect of God's Word even when we are anxious to study our Bibles. A young believer once told of the problem she had of remembering the teaching which she had heard. An older believer told her to go and bring him a sieve full of water but each time she tried, all the water ran through the sieve. When she finally told him that he had asked her to do an impossible thing, he pointed out that even if one drop of water hadn't been retained, the sieve was much cleaner than before. Let us dwell often upon God's Word. Even if we don't become great Bible scholars, our lives will be cleansed thereby.

In John 3:5 we read about being born of water. By the water of the Word applied in the power of the Holy Spirit we are born again — made to possess a new life and a new nature which includes the condemnation of the old life and nature. As we have seen, this is pictured by the bathing of the priests from head to foot (Ex. 29:4, Jn. 13:10). John 3:5 does not speak of baptism! The Lord only speaks of one new birth which is by water and the Holy Spirit — the water being the instrument and the Holy Spirit being the power. This new birth is declared by the Lord to be indefinable and not controlled by man (3:8). Water baptism is both definable and completely controlled by man, so John 3:5 obviously does not speak of it.

In summary, we need the water both when we sin and (apart from actual sins) while we are in this world of defilement if we would worship, have communion (fellowship) with, or serve God. In Numbers 19, water is pictured as that which purifies from sin. In Exodus 30:17-21, water is pictured as removing every earthly defilement (without reference to any actual sins) so that we can draw near to God. We have also looked at this last aspect in the feet-washing in John 13. We also need the blood given once for all.

F.B. Hole

Exercise

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

IN HIS STEPS

"Follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pe. 2:21-23).

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt. 11:29, 30).

While the Lord Jesus Christ is the great theme of all Scripture, yet every several portion presents some special aspect of His Person or work. The above passages bring before us, very blessedly, the lowly grace that marked His pathway of suffering as the perfectly subject Man.

In one passage we are exhorted by the Apostle Peter to follow His steps: in the other, believers are invited by the Lord Himself, to learn of Him. Good for each one to heed the exhortation and to respond to the gracious invitation. To do so, however, we need to reverently enquire: What are His steps that we are exhorted to follow? and, What is it that the Lord would have us to learn of Him?

"HIS STEPS"

1 Peter 2:21-23

First, let us listen to the exhortation of the Apostle. There came a day in the history of Peter when the Lord had said to His restored disciple, "Follow Me" (Jn. 21:19). Now the Apostle passes on these words to each one of us, as he says, "Follow His Steps." In Christendom, and even by true believers, the words "Follow His Steps" are often used in a vague and loose way. Even unconverted people will seize upon these words, misusing them to convey the false

thought that if men carry out the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount they will be very good Christians, and thereby secure the salvation of their souls. Probably those who speak thus lightly about following His steps, would be at a loss to turn to the Scripture where the exhortation is found, and even so prefer their own interpretation of the words rather than enquire the meaning with which they are used by the Holy Spirit.

Turning to the passage in which the exhortation occurs, we at once learn from the context that these words are addressed to believers — those of whom the Apostle can say that they have received the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls (1 Pe. 1:9). It is evident then that in this Scripture there is no exhortation to a sinner to follow His steps in order to obtain salvation. Apart from the sacrificial death of Christ, and faith in His precious blood, there can be no salvation for the helpless sinner. In Scripture God never uses "His steps" to set aside His work.

The exhortation to "follow His steps" is then addressed to believers, and moreover, is used with a very distinct meaning. What this meaning is we learn from the four distinct steps that are set before us. It is evident that a great deal that the Lord did in His marvelous life we cannot, and are not asked to, do. He did mighty works, even to raising the dead; He spake as never man spake. In these ways we are not exhorted to follow His steps. The four steps we are exhorted to follow are possible for all believers, from the youngest to the oldest.

First, we are reminded He "did no sin." We know that He went about doing good; and, in this same Epistle we are exhorted, again and again to "good works" and to "do well." Here, however, the exhortation takes a negative form; we are to follow His steps in the respect that He did no sin. Whatever happens, whatever circumstances may arise, whatever rebuffs we may have to meet, whoever wrongs we may have to suffer, whatever insults we may have to endure, we are to do no sin. It is comparatively easy to do good as a benefactor, meeting the needs of others; but, seeing we have the flesh in us, it is at times difficult to do no sin. It is greater thing to do no sin in trying circumstances than to do good in easy ones. The Lord was perfect in all circumstances, and, whatever the circumstances we have to meet, our first care should be to follow His

steps, and maintain His character, in this respect: that we do no sin. It is better to suffer wrong than sin; better to lose your coat than let go the character of Christ.

Secondly, we read, “neither was guile found in His mouth.” However sorely tried by wicked men, no question that He asked, no answer that He gave, no word that fell from His lips, was ever marred by any trace of guile. Alas! With us, at times, malice and envy may lurk behind words that are “smoother than butter” and “softer than oil.” With Him no evil motive was ever hidden under fair speech. Guile lurked behind the apparently innocent question of the relief us Pharisees when they asked “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?” for we read they were seeking to “entangle Him in His talk” (Mt. 22: 15-18). With the flesh in us it is all too possible to seek to entangle one another with smooth speech and innocent looking questions. Alas! We can even covertly attack on another in the very words we address to God in public prayer. How good then, and necessary the exhortation to follow in His steps of the One in whom no guile was found in His mouth.

Thirdly, we are reminded that the Lord was One, “who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not. In the presence of insults, false accusations, and malicious charges, He remained silent. When falsely accused before the Jewish Council, He “held His peace.” To the accusations of the Jews, in the presence of Pilate, “he answered nothing.” To Pilate, himself, “he answered never a word.” The mocking Herod may question Him in many words, “but He answered him nothing” (Mt. 26:63; 27:12,14; Lk. 23:9). How good for us to follow in His steps and, in the presence of the malicious words of men, come from what quarter they may, to keep silence. From other Scriptures it is clear that the Christian may “entreat,” “exhort,” and even “rebuke,” but never is he to revile or threaten.

Fourthly, He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” To do no sin, to speak no guile, to keep silence in the presence of malicious words, have a negative character. This last step is positive. If we keep silence in the presence of insults, it is not that there is no answer to evil and malice, but rather that the answer is left with God.

We are never to attempt to take vengeance upon the wrongdoer. God retains all vengeance in His own hands. He has said, “Vengeance belongs unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people” (He. 10:30). Our part then is to follow in the steps of the Lord Jesus, and in the presence of insults to commit ourselves unto Him that judgeth righteously, remembering that word which says, “Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay saith the Lord” (Ro. 12:19). Again we may recall the words of the prophet, “Jehovah is good unto them that wait from Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that one should both wait, and that in silence, for the salvation of Jehovah” (La. 3:24-26).

Here then we have four steps, taken in perfection by the Lord, that we are exhorted to follow. In all these steps there is no word as to ministry, or any form of service, that would make any show in this world, or bring us into prominence amongst the people of God. This being so, we might thoughtlessly say, as we read these exhortations, that to do no evil, speak no guile, to keep silence in the presence of insults, and commit oneself to God, does not seem after all very much, and is a little disappointing. If, however, we put these things into practice, and follow His steps it will assuredly be found that our brethren will not be disappointed in us. Could we but take these steps others would see in us the most wonderful sight that can be seen in this world — they would see A CHRIST-LIKE MAN.

Hamilton Smith

REMOVE THE "GRAVE CLOTHES"!

"...put off...the old man, which is corrupt..." Ephesians 4:22

The raising of Lazarus from the dead is most striking portrayal of what occurs when one who is lost and dead in sin is given life everlasting through faith in Christ. We are told that when Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," he who was dead emerged from the tomb "bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin" (John 11:44). Here was a wonderful miracle, and yet he who was raised had his hands and feet bound like a mummy, and his face wrapped about with a cloth. What a picture of many who indeed have been brought to life through faith in Christ, but who still are not fit for service because of certain hindering remnants of the old life must first be removed.

Note that Lazarus' face was bound, implying that his mouth was covered! This is symbolic of those who, although spiritually alive, still have their mouths gagged by the "grave clothes" of worldly habits. In many ways they may be eloquent, but in spiritual things they are silent. Lazarus' hands and feet were also bound. This speaks of restricted service. Many believers do very little for the Lord because they are still inhibited by selfish attitudes and the distracting cares of this life. They are hampered in their Christian walk by those things which characterized their "former conversation." How important it is to get rid of those bindings of the world with their "deceitful lusts" (Ephesians 4:22).

Removing the grave clothes means putting off the hindrances to spiritual power such as "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, (and) filthy communication out of (out) mouth" (Colossians 3:8). Only after we have thus "put off...the old man" of sin and carnality will we be "meet for the Master's use" (2 Timothy 2:21).

REST

"Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"

OUR JOY IN HEAVEN

Luke 9:28-36

Let us look a little at this scripture, as showing what our joy in the glory will consist of. We have the warrant of 2 Peter 1:16 for saying that the scene represents to us the power of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what we wait for. Our souls are not in a healthy state unless we are waiting for God's Son from heaven. The church is not regulated in its hopes by the word and Spirit of God, unless it is looking for Him as a Saviour from heaven (Phil. 3) And this passage, as disclosing to us specially what will be our portion when He comes, is important to us in this respect. There are many other things in the passage, such as the mutual relations of the earthly and the heavenly people in the kingdom. These it may be very instructive to consider; but this is not our present purpose, which is to consider what light is here afforded on the nature of that joy which we shall inherit at and from the coming of the Lord. Other scriptures, such as the promises to those who overcome in Revelation 2-3, and the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21-22, give us instructions on the same subject; but let us now particularly look at the scene on the holy mount.

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." It was when Jesus was in the acknowledgement of dependence, "as he prayed" that this change took place. **This, then, is the first thing we have here, a change such as will pass upon the living saints when Jesus comes.**

"And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias." **They were with Him. And this will be our joy; we shall be with Jesus.** In 1 Thessalonians 4, after stating the order in which the resurrection of the sleeping, and the change of the living, saints will take place, and that we shall both be caught up together to meet the

Lord in the air, all that the apostle says as to what shall ensue is, “and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

But in this passage there is not only the being with Christ, but there is also familiar intercourse with Him. “There talked with him two men.” It is not that He talked with them, though this was no doubt true; but this might have been, and they be at a distance. But **when we read that they talked with Him we get the idea of the most free and familiar intercourse.** Peter and the others knew what it was to have such intercourse with Jesus in humiliation; and what joy must it have been to have the proof that such intercourse with Him would be enjoyed in glory!

And then it is said by Luke that “they appeared in glory.” But this is secondary to what we have been considering. **We are told that they were with Him, and then that they appeared in glory. They share in the same glory as that in which He manifests. And so as to us: “When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.** The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, an though in me, that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as though hast loved me.”

But there is another thing still. We are not only told that they were with Him, they talked with Him, and appeared in glory with Him, but we are also privileged to know the subject of their conversation.

They “spake of his decease which he should accomplish in Jerusalem.” **It was the cross which was the theme of their conversation in the glory, the suffering of Christ which He had to accomplish in Jerusalem. And surely this will be our joy through eternity, when in glory with Christ, to dwell upon this theme, His decease accomplished at Jerusalem.**

We next read that Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep. It shews us what the flesh is in the presence of the glory of God. Peter made a great mistake; but I pass on.

“While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice

out of the loud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear him.” Peter tells us that this voice came from the excellent glory. “For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” **Now Peter and the others had entered into the cloud; and thus we get the wonderful fact that in the glory, from which the voice comes, saints are privileged to stand, and there, in that glory, share the delight of the Father in His beloved Son. Not only are we called to the fellowship of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, we are called to have fellowship with the Father. We are admitted of God the Father to partake of His satisfaction in His beloved Son.**

“And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.” The vision all gone, the cloud, the voice, the glory, Moses and Elias; but Jesus was left, and they were left to go on their way with Jesus, knowing Him now in the light of those scenes of glory which they had beheld. And this is the use to us of those vivid apprehensions of spiritual things which we may sometimes realize. **It is not that we can be always enjoying them and nothing else. But when for the season they have passed away, like this vision on the holy mount, they leave us alone with Jesus, to pursue the path of our pilgrimage with Him in spirit now, and with Him in the light and power of that deepened acquaintance with Him, and fellowship of the Father’s joy in Him, that we have got on the mount; and thus to wait for the moment of His return, when all this, and more than our hearts can think of, shall be fulfilled to us for ever.**

J.N. Darby

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. Samuel (1 Sa. 28:7-20)
2. Bells and Pomegranates (Ex. 28:33-34)
3. By the lake Tiberias(Jn. 21:1-13)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. Why did the Lord Jesus say to Mary at the resurrection, “Touch me not” (Jn 20:17), while He said to Thomas “reach here thy finger and behold my hand” (Jn. 20:27)? C.W

A. Dear saint,

I would like to present two thoughts as to why particularly in the Gospel of John the Lord uttered those words.

- In Mathew, we see His glory as the king, and so we read “they took him by the feet, and did homage” (Mt. 28:9). He was approached in a way that was suitable to His kingship.
- In Mark, we see His glory as a servant and so we read “he appeared first to Mary of Magdala” (Mk 16:9); the greatest servant never sought His own praise, rather God’s.
- In Luke, we see His glory as a man, and so the highlight was not the record with Mary, but the two disciples from Emmaus, “for the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost” (Lk. 19:10). He was restoring two disciples that had lost the right place of fellowship.
- In John, we behold His glory as the blessed Son of God who dwells in the bosom of the Father, and so cannot be touched nor handled. Also, Christ wanted to introduce Mary to a new relationship apart from the way He was previously known to her (2 Co. 5:16).

As to Thomas, I believe the Lord wanted to exercise his faith instead of his sight and touch. The Lord was touching his conscience when he told Thomas to “reach here,” but we never read that Thomas reached his finger, but faith took over and he said, “my lord and my God.”

Much love in Christ,

J.A.

THE CALL

Part 2

My happiness, O Lord, with Thee is long laid up in store,
For that bless’d day when Thee I’d see, and conflict all be o’er.
Yes, love divine in Thee I know; the Father’s glories soon
Shall burst upon my ravished view thyself my eternal crown!

Thou mak’st me brighter hopes to prove, because Thou nearer art;
With secrets of eternal love thou fill’st my longing heart.
How shall I leave Thee, Lord? This joy is from thyself; it is
My brightest hope without alloy, my pure, eternal bliss.

With Thee, O Lord, I all things have; unclouded joy divine
In Thee, who first these “all things” gave for ever to be mine.
Yet I will wait, in labor still in thy blest service here;
What Thou hast given me to fulfill; thy will to me is dear.

I well can wait! Thou waitest yet the word of that dread hour,
Which shall thy foes for ever set as footstool of Thy power.
Yet, Lord, were once Thy will fulfilled, how better far with Thee,
With Thee, my joy, my strength, my shield, in cloudless light to be.

O endless joy! How shall my heart thy riches all unfold,
Or tell the grace that gave me part in bliss no tongue hath told?
Lord, let me wait for Thee alone; my life by only this:
To serve Thee here on earth, unknown; then share Thy heavenly bliss.

Lord, be it soon! Thou know’st our heart, in this sad world, no rest
Can find nor wish but where Thou art that rest itself possessed!
Soon shall we see Thee as Thou art, O hope for ever blessed!
Thou’lt call us, in our heavenly part the Father’s house to rest.

O rest ineffable, divine, the rest of God above,
Where Thou for ever shalt be mine; my joy, eternal love!
His counsels, all, fulfilled in Thee; His work of love complete;
And heavenly hosts shall rest, to see earth blest beneath Thy feet!

J. N. Darby

I'LL TELL YOUR FORTUNE

A Christian young man was returning home one evening, when he was accosted by a Gypsy, with the words, "I'll tell your fortune."

Our friend was so taken-a-back that for the moment he did not reply, and the man explained, "I am a fortune teller; I can tell you what will happen in the future."

"But how am I to know that you tell the truth?" "Oh, I have books; I tell by astrology." "Well, I would like to ask you a question first, so as to test whether you can really tell the truth or not. If you can tell my fortune truly, you can certainly tell your own. "Where will you be in a hundred years?"

The Gypsy looked greatly annoyed, and replied, "Oh, I don't know that; but you let me look at your hand, and I will tell your fortune for you." "But," replied the Christian, "I also am somewhat of a fortune teller. I also use books, and if you will tell me one thing, I will tell your fortune for you." "What do you want me to tell you?" "Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son?" "No, He was not God's Son."

"Now," replied our friend, taking a New Testament from his bag, "I will tell your fortune. My book tells me, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." This is your fortune. Now you have the wrath of the Living, True God ever abiding on you, and in a hundred years you will be in hell, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, unless you believe on the Son of God."

A long talk ensued on the side of the street and the fortune teller asked, "May I have one of your books?" a request that was gladly granted. What the result may be, God alone knows. But let me ask you, reader, have you ever thought about your fortune, your eternal fortune? You need not remain in doubt as to that.

Thank God we have a Book that leaves no room for uncertainty in these matters. Where will you be in a hundred years? Where will you be tomorrow? What could be more brief, more pointed, more precious, and yet more awful, than those solemn words: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on Him." John 3:36

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be **SAVED**" (Romans 10:9).