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Praying, Watching, Trusting

(Convention Address.)

THESE three things are very necessary requisites to a Christian life. While each may have a separate or distinct bearing, all three make up a complete whole, and the longer we run in the Christian way the more we realise that the richest experience we can know is to aim at the perfect blending of all three.

To make prayer to our Heavenly Father and then not watch thereunto is like a child making a request to an earthly parent for something to satisfy a passing whim, and then almost immediately forgetting all about it; while prayers that are uttered without any faith or trust in the One appealed to are useless. On the face of it one might say that it is insensible to think that anyone would pray at all while believing that their requests could not be granted, and yet when we analyse the position we find that we have all been guilty along this line to some extent—we were inclined to limit the holy one of Israel.

First, what is prayer? We would define it as holding conversation with our Heavenly Father. Another very good definition is the oft-quoted one —''Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." There are times in a Christian's life when words will not come to form a prayer, a maelstrom of difficulties and perplexities assail and, in knowledge of all the way we are called to follow Jesus, we know not what to pray for as we ought, or as it behoveth us (Rom. 8:26, Young's Con) , for we do not desire to ask amiss.

On one occasion we know of (possibly there were more) our Lord would have prayed for deliverance but for the knowledge that He had been called of God to face the situation He was enduring. (John 12:27.)

Then there is another kind of prayer with which we have difficulty and against which we must guard —habitual prayer that becomes a matter of form. Whilst it is good to form the habit of prayer at regular times, such as morning, noon and night (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10), let us beware that we do not become careless and indifferent in uttering such prayers. Sometimes the mind is crowded so full of little cares (earthly matters calling for decision) with body and mind weary and exhausted that when we fall upon our knees at the usual set time our mind wanders round in circles, first to this and then to that event of the day, instead of concentrating on what we are doing — holding conversation with our Heavenly Father in prayer. On such occasions a short prayer of thankfulness for mercies realised and a plea for succor and guidance might serve better than attempting a prayer of many words when body and mind hinder and forbid concentration. However, there are other times when simply to fall down and tell the Lord all about our troubles, even to details of our trials and perplexities, is a real means of unburdening our hearts and restoring reassuring calm.

Another kind of prayer, while not concerning God's true people so much but in which some of God's professing people do err, is that which is offered only when in trouble of some kind. A careful reading of Psalm 107 may be helpful to some here. In it we find reminders of the typical people's (Israel's) wanderings, as recorded in the Old Testament. The essence of the Psalm is that after mentioning the various backslidings of the people with disastrous results, then the people cried unto the Lord in their distresses and He delivered them out of their trouble. Several occasions are mentioned where this happened and afterwards each time the Psalmist says, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men," (that is, give thanks) . But no, each experience was soon forgotten and another severe reprimand in the form of some disaster became necessary to cause them to cry unto the Lord again.

One is reminded here of the passage in Luke 17:11-17 where the ten lepers were cleansed and made whole and only one returned to give thanks for deliverance. Jesus said, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?"

Evidently they went their way enjoying the blessings bestowed without any thought of offering thanks to their benefactor. Probably He would be quite forgotten unless leprosy overtook them again.

How important are prayers of thanksgiving. All our prayers are not, or should not be, in the form of petition. When we are able to render a kindness to someone, how pleasing it is to have it recognised with a few words of thanks from the one we befriended, especially when we know that they are spoken in genuine sincerity. Not that we did it to seek gratitude from men, but it is cheering to know when one appreciates our desire to do them good. And real appreciation is easily discernible in contradistinction to that almost nauseating "Thank you," or "Thank you so much" which is uttered as so much etiquette in the business world by so many and with little or no meaning to it. We are not counselling discourtesy, but sincerity, in our giving of thanks.

Perhaps we are too dilatory ourselves sometimes in showing appreciation of kindnesses rendered. In our own homes we are inclined to accept too much for granted from our husbands, wives and families, etc. For instance, how often plans for the day are changed in the early morning — the husband may rush in to say he won't be home for lunch, "I must take it with me." And the wife has to drop all she is doing in the midst of a busy round to get that lunch cut, and probably the husband grabs it forgetting any words of thanks and merely says as he goes off, "I'll be home at such and such a time for tea, Hooray!" And how often we receive the good gifts we ask of our Heavenly Father and forget to offer prayers of thankfulness.

Then there is the prayer mentioned in Matt. 5:44 — praying for those that despitefully use us and persecute us.

Have you tried to do it? I'm afraid we hardly ever think about it. And yet there is nothing that will remove the sting of a hurt done to us more quickly than to pray to our Heavenly Father for that one. Instead of allowing thoughts of resentment, if we could only lift our eyes to God and say, "0 Father, help this one who has been my enemy; perhaps he has not understood aright," a calm will come to our soul immediately and we will not say those things for which we would afterward be sorry — railing for railing. Closely related to praying for enemies is that which our Lord taught us to pray—'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Sometimes wrongs, gross wrongs are committed against us, and if later repentance is shown how freely do we forgive? Do we have a battle not to harbour resentful thoughts? It is a help at such times to remember the things we have done that must have displeased the Lord and say to ourselves, How did I ask and desire Him to forgive—grudgingly? No, we wanted Him to forget it completely—forgive us freely and fully. Then let our forgiveness of others be as full and generous. "If ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Mark 11:26.) Such prayer and forgiveness is not for once only, but on every occasion when circumstances demand it — "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." (Matt. 18:21, 22.)

The Apostle says in Rom. 12:12 "continuing instant in prayer," and Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint," (Luke 18:1) , and again in 1 Thes. 5:17 we read "Pray without ceasing." It would be foolish to take these texts to mean that we should spend all our time upon our knees praying to God, but it seems right to assume that it means we should be continually in a prayerful attitude of mind. Without doubt, that prayer which comes from a saint upon his knees in secluded place, away from the gaze and company of all—the closed closet (Matt. 6:6)—is a means of tremendous strength to him or her, and is also as a sweet incense rising up to the Father above. But it is not always necessary to wait till such time is convenient, nor is it the only time that we can commune with the Father. In difficulties throughout the day, the moment we recognise them it is our privilege to lift our hearts to God in prayer, even though we may be in the midst of secular labours. Simply to say from our heart "Oh my Father here-is another difficulty to face, guide me through it" will be as surely heard as the closet prayer, and when on occasions throughout the day we perceive the blessings and deliverances in difficult places we say, "Thank thee, Father, I recognise Thy hand in this," it is as surely heard as prayers of many words. To be in such continual prayerful. attitude of mind would constitute a putting on of a portion of that armour which _ the Apostle Paul counselled the Ephesian Christians to put on that they might be able to stand against all the wiles of the devil. In that list of armour which all can read for themselves in Ephesians 6, from verse 11, the Apostle finishes with the words "praying always with all prayer (of petition, thanksgiving, etc.) and supplication in the spirit."

Those who believe in Jesus as their personal Saviour, His shed blood covering all their sins, are justified freely from all things—reckoned perfect in God's sight. By then consecrating their life to the service of God, through Christ, they are brought into God's family by begetting of His holy spirit as was Jesus at Jordan. These, then, are those who pray "in the spirit" and they are really the only ones who can pray to God intelligently.

Watching.

We notice how often in Scripture watching and praying are linked together. "Watch and pray." "Watching unto prayer." "Continue in prayer and watch in the same,- we read in Col. 4:2. It seems to be another way of saying, "Don't forget to do your part." If we have prayed to our Heavenly

Father aright we have thanked Him for His mercies and goodness, we have told Him of our difficulties and perplexities, and we have petitioned Him for grace, strength and wisdom to face them aright and for deliverance from all that can serve no good purpose in our spiritual interests. And if we have had to mention some great trial from which we are not sure if it would be the Lord's will to deliver us, we will have ended our prayer as did Jesus—''nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

Now we must watch to do our part, as well as to see what the Lord will answer, and sometimes answers may be delayed. Perhaps the Lord sees it is not just the right time to grant our requests, and if there has been no indication that our prayer is contrary to His will it is surely in order to repeat our request, "for men ought always to pray and not to faint," or become discouraged.

How many parents' prayers for children have ascended above without visible answer, and yet there are cases known where after the decease of the saintly parent the child so often prayed for was converted to the Lord. And who knows how efficacious were the prayers of the departed one in finally bringing about that result.

If we ask the Lord to make us spiritually strong would we expect Him to answer our prayer if we spend much of our time and energy in worldly things? No, of course not—we would be making it impossible for Him to grant our request. We remember a lady one time who had shown good interest and desire to know more of God's truth. Knowing that it would not be easy for her to get time for reading, we said as much when giving her a book to read. Her reply showed a wonderful spirit. She said, "I make time; if I did not I would seldom get the opportunity to read books like this." She went on to explain that sometimes when it seemed just impossible to get to some reading she wished to continue, she would lay the book open on the kitchen table and read as she washed up the dishes. She said, "Maybe I don't get much read at a time, but I am able to think over well what I read in snatches that way." Don't you think that one who watched unto prayer that way would be rewarded?

An incident recorded in Acts 27 comes to mind. Paul, as a, prisoner, was aboard a ship that was caught in a tempest. They

lightened the ship of all they dared and' still despaired that they could be saved alive. In verse 21 we read of Paul, after long abstinence during which no doubt he prayed much, telling the people that an angel of the Lord had appeared and told him they would all reach, land safely. But that was not the signal to sit down and do nothing. No, they continued to do the best they could (largely at Paul's instruction) even at last to tipping the cargo overboard.

The Lord had not promised to save the ship or the cargo, but only those aboard, and what He promised was fulfilled — with their co-operation; they all reached land, some on boards and broken pieces of the ship, etc. They had to do what they could to the last. And what urgent need there is today particularly for watching unto prayer if we are to be counted worthy to escape all the things that are coming to pass and recorded in Luke 21.

As Paul says in 1 Thes. 5:6 we must not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober. The end of all things (concerning this age) is at hand. Are we fully awake and watchful as to the appropriateness of these words now and is it prompting us to a more holy walk — holy conversation and godliness (2 Pet. 3:11) —or are we drowsy, tending to spiritual sleepiness? Have the global wars of the last generation lost their prophetical significance to us? Is there a tendency to accept the industrial upheavals, civil wars and revolutions resulting therefrom as just news of the day—history repeating itself—instead of the very signs and signals that herald the presence of our Lord and the near establishment of His Kingdom? Will we slip back to be numbered with those to whom the Lord came as a thief in the night because we did not watch and pray, or do we diligently, by the Lord's grace, keep ourselves in the class—"Ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." ? (1 Thes. 5:4.)

At the first advent when John was in prison (Luke 7:19-22) he evidently began to doubt if Jesus was really the Deliverer, even though he previously had felt so sure He was the one they looked for so much. Perceive the reply of Jesus to the messengers whom John sent to inquire "Art thou He that should come or look we for another?" They were told simply to return and tell John the sick were being healed, the dead were raised, etc.,—the signs that were to herald the presence of the Loid. So, now, in the days of our Lord's second presence things have not happened as quickly as expected and the faith of some is evidently being tried. Has He , really come; are we living in the days of the Son of Man, or are we to look forward still to some momentous event that heralds His coming? It would seem that our Lord would dispel our doubts with the same message—review the signs foretold, the crumbled thrones of earth in the last few decades, the deterioration of Babylon's condition and the imminence of her fall becoming apparent not only to the saints but to all, and the fainting of men's_ hearts with fear for the inevitable result—and ,be„ not faithless but believing. -If ye do not watch I may have come upon you as a thief." (Rev. 3:3, Diaglott.), Tr'

Recall to mind Peter's bold declaration in Matt. 26 that he would never deny or desert the Lord Even. after Jesus warned him that he would=deny Him three times Peter re-affirmed it would not be so. A short time later (before the actual denials) Jesus left three (Peter included) to keep watch while He went to pray and when He came back He found them asleep. And Jesus said "What! could ye not watch with me one hour? the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak—watch and pray."

What a lesson that should be for us all. The spirit or mind is willing when we consecrate all to the Lord, but the flesh is weak, and if we do not keep close to the Lord, watching unto prayer—renewing our mind toward spiritual things— we will succumb to that spiritual drowsiness that results in the light that is in us being turned to darkness again, for no man can serve two masters. (Matt. 6:23, 24.)

In Rom. 13:14 the Apostle says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." There is to be one Master, and as we beseech in prayer for the succor and guidance we need, let us rise from our knees ready to do our part—watching that we walk circumspectly, putting the flesh to death, making no provision for it to get the upper hand. "And what I say unto you, I say unto you all, Watch." (Mark 13:37.)

Trusting.

Having poured out our soul to the Lord in prayer and risen from our knees to diligently watch our conduct, that to the extent of our ability we enter not forbidden paths, and watching and waiting for the Lord's leading at the forked roads—the various ways where we know not clearly which path to take—it is our privilege now to be at rest through perfect trust or faith that all things will work together for our good. It should be a part of our daily lesson to cultivate trust in the Lord, and what a comforting text it is in Prov. 3:5, 6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart . . . In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." Also throughout the Psalms are numerous exhortations to put trust in the Lord.

Most wonderful trust of all revealed in the Old Testament was that displayed by Job who in his deepest affliction could say, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.) The Prophet Nahum 1:7 says, "The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble and He knoweth them that put their trust in Him." Yea, verily, though afflictions come similar to those endured by Job, the Lord knows those whose faith dies not, and like Job they shall be rewarded at the latter end.

Paul's words to Timothy in the New Testament would seem like a counterpart of Job's experience. In 2 Tim. 1:12 we read, "For the which cause I suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." At the time Paul wrote these words "all those in Asia were turned away from him," because of his faithful witness to the truth, but his faith and trust had not failed. He was making good use of another piece of the armour before-mentioned (Eph. 6) and was quenching the fiery darts of the wicked with the shield of faith. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.)

At the time of the storm when Jesus went to His disciples' aid by walking on the water and Peter asked if\ he might go to Him, the Lord said, "Come." Peter went, but when he took his eyes off Jesus to look at the turbulent waters he grew afraid and began to sink. "Oh, ye of little faith," said Jesus, "wherefore didst thou doubt." And how like it is today with all the turbulent waters caused by the storm throughout the earth. If we take our eyes off Jesus in beholding the storm, we will as surely begin to waver and fear.

And so, dear fellow brethren, let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Let us pray—not anxiously—but humbly, letting our requests be made known unto God, with thanksgiving for all past and present mercies; and let us watch unto prayer that we fail not to show our ready desire to co-operate to our fullest extent with the Lord's will and way. Having done this, let us rest in the Lord

and wait patiently for Him to fulfil His good designs in us and in all around.

How encouraging are the words of the Psalmist recorded in Psalm 37:5, 6. “Commit thy way unto the Lord (in prayer); trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light and thy judgment as the noonday,”—in due time. Yea, we shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father.

Prayer is appointed to convey,

The blessings God designs to give,

In every case should Christians pray, If near the fount of grace they’d live.

If pain afflict, or wrongs oppress,

If cares distract, or fears dismay ;

If want deject, if sin distress,

In every case, still watch and pray.

Depend on Him; thou canst not fail;
But ask according to His will ;

Then always shall thy prayer prevail,
And nothing shall to thee work ill.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

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Passover Memorial, 1947.

As announced last month, the date for the Memorial of Christ’s death this year is Thursday night, 3rd April. It is a means of great encouragement and blessing for all the Lord’s people to observe this Memorial, as our Lord said,

“In remembrance of me,” and also explained by St. Paul as indicating the participation of Christ’s followers in His sufferings, that they may also be glorified with Him.

The following services are announced at this advanced time for the benefit of those wishing to make arrangements to attend. All sincere believers in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ will be welcome.

Melbourne.—Thursday, 3rd April, at 8 p.m., at 19

Ermington Place, Kew, E.4. (Melbourne friends not acquainted with ‘this address should telephone Hawthorn 6251.)

Geelong, Vic.—Thursday, 3rd April, at 8 p.m., at Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street.

Sydney.—Thursday, 3rd April, at 7 p.m., at Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool Street (near George Street). (Fellowship is also held from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.)

Friends not able to procure the unleavened bread and wine will be gladly supplied from this office. Early application should be made wherever desired.

Easter Convention

Adelaide.—The usual Convention is being held again this year by the brethren in Adelaide, and they extend a hearty invitation to all friends able to gather with them for the four days, Good Friday, 4th April to Easter Monday, 7th April. The meetings are to be held in Druid’s Hall, Flinders Street, Adelaide, and further information is procurable from the Class secretary—Mrs. H. Bartel, 10 Winston Avenue, Clarence Gardens, Adelaide, South Australia.

Sydney.—A three-day Convention is being arranged by the Sydney brethren from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, to be held at Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool Street, Sydney. All friends able to attend these gatherings will be gladly welcomed, and additional information may be obtained from Mr. E. Beckman, 1 Samuel Street, Lidcanabea Sydney.

Perth.—The friends in Perth have decided to hold a Convention beginning on Good Friday, 4th April, and they ‘extend a cordial invitation to all desirous of attending with them. Further information respecting the location for the meetings and exact days, etc., may be received from the Class secretary — Mrs. N. Hiam, “Illawarra,” Karragullen, Western Australia.

The Lord is my Shepherd.

The story is told of a noted actor and an aged Christian who were at a social gathering. Someone suggested that the actor be asked to repeat the 23rd Psalm, the request being supported by the venerable man of God. Obligingly the actor consented, and with a voice thoroughly disciplined by the most perfect elocution, all the shades of tone, all the delicate accents and meaningful infections were goldenly evident as he repeated, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

Then, after the actor had finished, someone asked the old Christian if he would not also repeat the Psalm. Naturally timid under the spell of the actor’s elocution, the Christian hesitated for a time, but finally consented. And as he finished, the faces of the company were not aglow with admiration, but hushed and rapt and washed with something akin to tears. Taking the Christian’s hand in his, the magnanimous actor said to him: “I know the Psalm; you know the Shepherd.”

Many of our readers have appreciated the booklet “The Lord is My Shepherd” which took the place of January “Peoples Paper” and, like the story above, it is hoped this booklet may be used to reveal the Shepherd, as well as the Psalm, to others mindful of spiritual things. Further supplies are available in single copies at 4d. each, or 3/6 per dozen, post paid.

Bible Study Meetings.

Assemblies for undenominational Bible Study are to be found in the various States, and all earnest truth seekers will be very welcome.

Melbourne.—Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street)—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thursdays, 15 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4.-7.45 p.m.

Geelong, Vic.—Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street, Sundays, 3 p.m.

Adelaide.—Druids Hall, Flinders Street—Sunday, 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Sydney.-75 Liverpool Street (few doors from George Street)—Sunday, 3 p.m. and 5.15 p.m.

Perth.—Chancery House (First Floor) , 3 Howard Street. Sunday, 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The Three Ways.

“WIDE is the gate of destruction, and broad that way leading thither; and many are they who enter through it. How narrow is the gate of life! How difficult that way leading thither. and how few are they who find it.”—Matt. 7; 13, 14,

Diaglott translation.

“And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, nor be found there; but they that walk there shall be delivered.” Isa. 35:8, 9.

Three ways, the “broad road,” the “narrow way” and the “highway,” are thus brought to our attention in the Scriptures.

THE BROAD ROAD TO DESTRUCTION.

This road is thus named because it is most easy to the degenerate human race. Six thousand years ago, as a sinner condemned to destruction, Adam (and the race represented in him) started upon this road, and after nine hundred and thirty years he reached its end—destruction.

For six thousand years the race has steadily pursued the broad, downward way. Only a few, comparatively, have tried to change their course and retrace their steps. In fact, to retrace all the steps, and reach the original perfection, has been impossible, though the effort of some to do so has been commendable, and not without beneficial results.

For six thousand years sin and death have reigned relentlessly over mankind, and driven them upon this broad road to destruction. And not until the Gospel age was a way of escape brought to light.

The teachings of Jesus and the apostles bring to light life—a restitution or restoration to life, for all mankind, as based upon the merit and sacrifice of the Redeemer; and they show this to be the significance of many Old Testament types. They also bring to light immortality, the prize of the high calling of the Gospel Church.

THE NARROW WAY TO LIFE.

Our Master tells us that it is because of the narrowness of this way that the many prefer to remain on the broad road to destruction. “Strait [difficult] is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Recognizing the fact that only in the divine nature is life independent, unlimited, exhaustless, ever continuous and neither produced nor controlled by circumstances, we see that of necessity Jehovah is superior to those physical laws and supplies which He ordained for the sustenance of His creatures. It is this quality, which pertains only to the divine nature, that is

described by the term immortality. As shown in the preceding chapter, immortal signifies death-proof, consequently disease and pain-proof. In fact, immortality may be used as a synonym for divinity. From the divine, immortal fountain proceed all life and blessing, every good and perfect gift, as from the sun the earth receives her light and vigour.

Man has not inherent life: he is no more a fountain of life than a diamond is a fountain of light. And one of the very strongest evidences that we have not an exhaustless supply of lit, in ourselves, or, in other words, that we are not immortal, is that since sin entered, death has passed upon all our race.

God had arranged that man in Eden should have access to life sustaining trees, and the paradise in which he was placed was abundantly supplied with numbers of 'every [kind of] tree" good for food or for adornment. (Gen. 2:

9, 16, 17.) Among the trees of life good for food was one forbidden. While for a time forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge, he was permitted to eat freely of trees which sustained life perfectly; and he was separated from them only after transgression, that thereby the death-penalty might go into effect.—Gen. 3:22.

Thus the glory and beauty of humanity are seen to be dependent on the continued supply of life, just as the beauty of the diamond is dependent on the continued supply of sunlight. When sin deprived humanity of the right to life, and the supply was withheld, immediately the jewel began to lose its brilliancy and beauty, and finally it is deprived of its last vestige in the tomb. His beauty consumes away like a moth. (Psa. 39:11.) As the diamond loses its beauty and brilliancy when the light is withdrawn, so man loses life when God withholds the supplies from him. "Yea, man giveth up the ghost [life] and where is he?" (Job 14:10.) "His sons, come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." (Verse 21.) "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Eccl. 9:10.) But since a ransom has been found, since the death penalty has been paid by the Redeemer, the jewel is to have its beauty restored, and is again to reflect perfectly the Creator's image when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. (Mal. 4:2.) It is because of the sin- offering, the sacrifice of Christ, that "All that are in their graves shall come forth." There shall be a restitution of all things; first an opportunity or offer of restitution to all, and ultimately the attainment of human perfection by all who will obey the Redeemer.

This, however, is not the reward to which Jesus refers as the end of the narrow way. From other Scriptures we learn that the reward promised to those who walk the narrow way is the "divine nature"—life inherent, life in that superlative degree which only the divine nature can possess—immortality. What a hope! Dare we aspire to such a height of glory? Surely not without positive and explicit invitation could any rightfully thus aspire.

We learn that Jehovah, who alone possessed immortality originally, has highly exalted His Son, our Lord Jesus, to the same divine, immortal nature; hence He is now the express image of the Father's person. (Heb. 1:3.) So we read, "As the Father bath LIFE IN HIMSELF [God's definition of "immortality"—life in Himself—not drawn from other sources, nor dependent on circumstances, but independent, inherent life] , so bath He given to the Son to have LIFE IN HIMSELF." (John 5:26.) Since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, then. two beings are immortal; and, amazing grace! the same offer is made to the Bride of the Lamb, being selected during the Gospel age. Yet not all of the great company who are nominally of the Church will receive this great prize, but only that "little flock" of overcomers who so run as to obtain it; who follow closely in the Masters footsteps: who, like Him, walk the narrow way of sacrifice, even unto death. These, when born from the dead in the resurrection, will have the divine nature and form. This immortality, the independent, self-existent, divine nature, is the life to which the narrow way leads.

This class is not to be raised from the tomb human beings; for we are assured by the Apostle that, though sown in the tomb natural bodies, they will be raised spiritual bodies. These all shall be "changed," and even as they once bore the image of the earthly, human nature, they shall bear the image of the heavenly. But "it doth not yet appear what we shall be"—what a spiritual body is; but "we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him," and share in "the glory to be revealed."-1 John 3:2; Col. 1:27; 2 Cor. 4:17; John 17:22; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Thes. 2:14.

Not only is this high calling to a change of nature confined exclusively to the Gospel age, but it is the only offer of this age. Hence our Lord's words, quoted at the beginning of this chapter include on the broad road to destruction all who are not on the way to the only prize now offered. All others are still on the broad road—these only have as yet escaped the condemnation that is on the world. This, the only way of life now open, because of its difficulty, finds few who care to walk in it. The masses of mankind in their weakness prefer the broad, easy way of self-gratification.

The narrow way, while it ends in life, in immortality, might be called a way of death, since its prize is gained through the sacrifice of the human nature even unto death. It is the narrow way of death to life. Being reckoned free from the Adamic guilt and the death penalty, the consecrated voluntarily surrender or sacrifice those human rights, reckoned theirs, which in due time they, with the world in general, would have actually received. As "the man Christ Jesus" laid down or sacrificed His life for the world, so these become joint-sacrificers with Him. Not that His sacrifice was insufficient and that others were needed; but while His is all-sufficient, these are permitted to serve and to suffer with Him in order to become His bride and joint-heir. So, then, while the world is under condemnation to death, and is dying with Adam, this "little flock," through the process of faith reckonings and sacrifice, already described, are said to die with Christ. They sacrifice and die with Him as human beings, in order to become partakers of the divine nature and glories with Him; for we believe that if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.—Rom. 8:17, and 2 Tim. 2:11, 12.

In the beginning of the Millennial age, those who now walk the narrow way will have gained the great prize for which they ran, immortality; and being thus clothed with the divine nature and power, they will be prepared for the great work of restoring and blessing the world during that age. With the end of the Gospel age, the narrow way to immortality will close, because the select "little flock" that it was designed to test and prove will have been completed. "Now is the accepted [Greek, dektos, acceptable or receivable] time — the time in which sacrificers, coming in the merit of Jesus and becoming dead with Him, are acceptable to God—a sacrifice of sweet odour. Death, as the Adamic penalty, will not be permitted forever; it will be abolished during the Millennial age; as a sacrifice it will be acceptable and rewarded only during the Gospel age.

THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS.

While the special hope of the Gospel age is so surpassingly glorious, and the way to it is correspondingly difficult— narrow, hedged in by hardships and dangers at every step—so that few find it, and obtain the great prize at its end, the new order of things in the age to come is to be entirely different. As a different hope is held out, so also a different way leads to it. The way to immortality has been a way which required the sacrifice of the, otherwise lawful and proper hopes, ambitions and desires—the sacrifice forever of the human nature. But the way to human perfection, to restitution, the hope of the world, requires only the putting away of sin: not the sacrifice of human rights anti privileges, but their proper enjoyment. It will lead to personal purification and restoration to the image of God as enjoyed by Adam before sin entered the world.

The way back to actual human perfection is to be made very plain and easy; so plain that none may mistake the way; so plain that “the wayfaring man, and those unacquainted therewith, shall not go astray.” (Isa. 35:8.—Leeser)

; so plain that none will need to teach his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest. (Jer. 31:34.) Instead of being a narrow way that few can find, it is termed “a highway,” a public roadway—not a narrow, steep, rugged, difficult, hedged byway, but a way specially prepared for easy travel— specially arranged for the convenience and comfort of the travellers. Verses 8 and 9 show that it is a public road, open to all the redeemed—every man. Every man for whom Christ died, who will recognize and avail himself of the opportunities and blessings purchased by the precious blood, may go up on this Highway of Holiness to the grand goal of perfect restitution to human perfection and everlasting life.

Thus we have found a “Broad Road,” on which at present the masses of mankind travel, deluded by the “prince of this world,” and led by perverted tastes. We have found that it was opened up and that our race was started in its headlong course upon it by “one man’s disobedience.” We have found that the “Highway of Holiness” is to be opened up by our Lord, who gave Himself a ransom for all and redeemed all from the destruction to which the “Broad Road” leads, and that it will, in due time, be accessible and easy for all the redeemed ones whom He bought with His own precious blood. We have found, furthermore, that the present “Narrow Way,” opened up by the merit of the same precious blood, is a special way leading to a special prize, and is made specially narrow and difficult as a test and discipline for those now being selected to be made partakers of the divine nature and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus in the Kingdom of glory soon to be revealed for the blessing of all. Such as have this hope —who see this prize—may count all other hopes as but loss and dross in comparison.—Phil. 3:8-15.

The Incomparable Christ.

He came from the bosom of the Father and was born of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on Divinity. He became a man that we might become sons of God. He lived in obscurity, only once crossed the boundary of His land, in childhood. He had no wealth or influence. His relations were inconspicuous and uninfluential. In infancy He startled a King; in boyhood He puzzled the doctors; in manhood ruled the course of nature. He walked upon billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, yet not all the libraries of the country could hold the books that could be written about Him.

He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as are His. He never practised medicine and yet He healed more broken hearts than the doctors have broken bodies. He never marshalled an army, drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun, yet no leader had more volunteers, who have under His orders made rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot being fired. Great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill Him, Satan could not seduce Him, Death could not destroy Him, the grave could not hold Him.. He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant’s gown. He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor. How poor? Ask Mary; ask the wise men. He slept in another’s manger. He cruised the lake in an-other’s boat. He rode on another’s ass. He was buried in another’s tomb. All failed, but He never. The ever perfect One, He is the chief among ten thousand. He is altogether lovely. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

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