

The Pathway

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" Hebrews 12: 2

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As we are permitted to enter another year in the history of this world we are solemnly reminded of the worsening character of conditions in all spheres. Covetousness and self-seeking, resulting in strife and lawlessness, abound; institutions which have the protection of right relationships in view are discredited and abased on every hand; every circle of humanity, domestic, commercial, national and international, has been weakened and corrupted by the disregard of authority and control. Saddest of all is the way in which Christendom has openly embraced features of apostasy and unbelief, resulting on the one hand in much that dishonours and even blasphemes the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the other hand opens the door to the activities of Satan in the introduction of spiritism and other evil cults which appeal to the darkened minds of men.

What is the position and attitude of the children of God in such circumstances? Stoicism and indifference are not the answer. It is recorded of John Baptist that he was conversant with "all the evils which Herod had done;" he *knew* the evil conditions which obtained, *but as walking in moral integrity and separation he had power to rebuke a monarch!*

Abraham dwelt in a land marked by paganism and idolatry (Joshua 24: 2, 3), until the voice of the God of glory called him out (Acts 7: 2). It is recorded in Hebrews 11: 8 that, "he went out, not knowing whither he went." He embarked upon a pathway of obedience and of faith. Failure marked his movements on more than one occasion — but in general his pathway was outstandingly one of faith the God who had called him and an alertness to obey His word (see Genesis 22: 3). His outlook was not constricted nor his vision dimmed by things obtaining in the world through which he passed — he rejoiced to see Christ's day, "he saw it, and was glad" (John 8: 56); "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11: 10). In his pathway Abraham was blessed of God "in all things;" he was "greatly" blessed (Genesis 24: 1-35); his dwelling was honoured by divine visitations; he was the recipient of divine communications; he knew God as his Shield and Exceeding Great Reward — indeed he "was called the friend of God" (James 2: 23) and that by God Himself, (Isaiah 41: 8). Beloved brethren what rays of glory illumine the pathway of faith and obedience! What present blessings attend the footsteps of those who walk *before God* (cf. Genesis 48: 15). The glories of Christ's day and the present favours of the blessed God are rich compensation for a walk of practical separation from the Christ rejecting and joyless world through which we are passing.

But however faithful and attractive the pathways of Abraham, and of other Old (and New) Testament saints may be, there has been seen in this world a pathway of infinite preciousness and charm, a pathway too, of love and faithfulness and of power; a pathway with which none other can compare — the movements here in holy Manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. These holy movements of divine compassion led Him "from Godhead's fullest glory down to Calvary's depth of woe," and at every step of that most precious journey eternal love in all its power and grace shone out. "He *went* through . . . doing good" (Acts 10: 38 N. Trans.). Did a broken-hearted father, walking through the "valley of the shadow of death" seek His help — "He *went* with him" (Mark 5: 24). Drawing near to disappointed, sorrowful disciples as they trod their weary way homeward it is recorded that Jesus . . . *went* with them" (Luke 24: 15). The erstwhile death darkened house of Jairus was brightened with the glory of the Son of God (Romans 1: 4); the despondent hearts of Cleopas and his companion were

illuminated with the glory of the risen Christ! Shall we not happily read our Lord's own *acts* into His own words in the parable of Luke 10? "He *journeyed*"; "He *saw*"; "He had *compassion*"; "He *went* to him." Precious blessed footsteps of infinite love! How different His holy movements from all others! "Every man *went* unto his own house. Jesus *went* unto the mount of Olives" (John 7: 53; John 8: 1). In perfect holy Manhood drawing from His Father all that was needed in a pathway wholly committed to His Father's business — the interests of One who is "the Father of compassions" (2 Corinthians 1: 3, N. Trans.).

With adoring hearts we hear the apostle John's testimony — "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21: 25).

With deeply affected hearts we contemplate our precious Saviour's pathway in this scene as it drew to its end — "And He bearing His cross *went* forth into a place . . . where they crucified Him" (John 19: 17). Amazing grace; incomparable love; that precious life laid down in love that a path of life and hope and glory might be opened to His own.

Death could not continue to halt the footsteps of that glorious One! In resurrection triumph He led His own "out as far as to Bethany" — to the place where He would lift the shadow of death from the spirits of His lovers — a sphere in which the fruits of His victory can be enjoyed.

Considering thus the movements of our Lord in His pathway here, we revert to our earlier question — what is to be our attitude in the existing conditions surrounding us? Peter supplies the answer, simply, yet with the most powerful challenge to our affections — "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2: 23).

Beloved brethren, the path open to us is one "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4: 18). It is a path of faith and obedience; of dependence and devotion; a path of communion and prayer giving the necessary power and wisdom needed in a path of testimony. As we await that day may we know something of the energy which marked the early disciples as, following the footsteps of their Lord, they "*went* everywhere preaching the word."