

Walking

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MAY/JUNE 1969

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40: 31.

The pathway of a believer is marked by great variety; he is enjoined to rejoice and to weep; to sit still and to run; to be yielding and to strive; to be restful and to be active; to listen and to speak; to abide and to flee; to give and to take. The wonderful thing is that these features (and many others) so apparently opposed one to the other, may, under the control of the Holy Spirit of God, be so blended together as to produce the evenness which is characteristic of a true Christian walk. It is, of course, quite true that certain features are more pronounced in some believers than in others, but an assimilation of the truth, and occupation with the Person of Christ, would tend to balance.

It is interesting that running is put before walking in this verse in Isaiah. The same order is to be observed in Paul's letter to the Galatians 5. "Ye did *run* well; who did hinder you . . . ?" (v. 7) "This I say then, *walk* in the Spirit" (vv. 16 and 25). In the Scriptures both exercises are related to the believer, and are to have their rightful place in his journey through this world. Thus, whilst walking is referred to much more often than running, we must ever remember the exhortations — "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12: 1). "So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9: 24). Then too we have the precious encouragement of Proverbs 18: 10 — "The Name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

This feature of alacrity is seen in the history of men of God in the Old Testament and in the New.

In Genesis 18 Abraham "*sat* in the tent door," a position of restfulness; but in the presence of his heavenly visitors he becomes *active* in his readiness to serve them. "He ran;" he "hastened," and he alerted his household in the service of his guests.

The servant ran in his mission of securing a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24); David ran in the day of conflict with the Philistine (1 Samuel 17); Mary Magdalene, Simon, Peter and John ran on the resurrection morning (John 20); Philip ran to the eunuch (Acts 8). How much we might learn from these movements! Affection, devotion, self-sacrifice, anxiety, obedience, as the objective was pursued. Paul too could say "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly" (1 Corinthians 9: 26). The greatness of the "prize" was enshrined in the apostle's affections; and as "Looking steadfastly on Jesus" (New Trans.) we also shall be marked by definiteness in our pathway.

A few of the many references to the feature of *walking* is the purpose of this present paper.

Perhaps we might notice that the first mention of walking is when God (Jehovah Elohim) Himself walked in the garden of Eden "in the cool of the day," evidencing God's desire for the company of His creature man. Leviticus 26: 12 gives us the same thought, God saying to His earthly people if they would but keep the conditions He rightly insisted upon "I will walk among you." Scripture abounds with such references to the desire of the blessed God for the company of His people; how delighted He was when men responded to that desire, and *sought* His company. "Enoch walked with God." It would seem that this desire on Enoch's part was so pleasing to Divine Persons that the Holy Spirit delighted to *repeat* the words, "Enoch walked with God" (Genesis 5: 22 and 24). "Noah walked with God." That God appreciated these desires is expressed in the testimony to Enoch — "he pleased God" (Hebrews

11) — and that both he and Noah appear almost at the end of Holy Writ (2 Peter and Jude). Blessed indeed to be remembered by God as having desired His company in a world which has no appreciation of Him! David too, knew something of the blessedness of Divine company — "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; *for Thou art with me*; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Many of us, in our measure, can subscribe to the truth of such an experience. The rod and the staff have their place — but it is in the company of *our precious Lord Himself* that unspeakable joy is found.

How varied and inexpressibly delightful are the many references to the walk of Jesus here in His lovely Manhood! John Baptist looked upon Jesus *as He walked*, and said "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1: 36). This, and verse 29 of the same chapter, are the only references to the Lamb of God in the gospels, but His every step, in Galilee, in Judea, in the Garden, at the Judgment Hall, and supremely the *Via Dolorosa*, as the precious holy Lamb of God moved to the cross would express the hidden depth of this unique expression — the Lamb of God. With adoring hearts, and yet with unshod feet, we hear the words of He who is the "I AM" saying in wondrous grace as He gave Himself for us, "If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." In love He was led

To stand between us and the foe,

And willingly died in our stead.

As the "Lamb" He is mentioned but once in the Acts (Acts 8: 32), and as Philip identified the rejected Jesus in His precious movements of self-sacrificing love with Isaiah 53 the heart of the Eunuch was won, and his life surrendered to Christ. Peter alone of the Apostles mentions Christ as "the Lamb." One known from before the world's foundation, manifested at "the end of times," that the faith and hope of believers should be in God who has "raised Him from among the dead and given Him glory" (1 Peter 1: 19-21). Precious indeed to the lovers of this glorious Man is the fact that John refers so often in the Revelation (over 20 times) to Christ as "the Lamb." Striking too that another word should be used in this book (*arnion* — a lambkin). He, so meek and gentle, the once rejected and despised of men, is the One who, triumphant in His movements of majesty, will execute every vestige of judgment, remove all that is inconsistent with the will of God, and fill the whole world scene with undiminishing glory.

These are features of the walk of Christ which are peculiar to Himself, but there is also that which is to mark us in our walk as believers. Peter says "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example (or, model) that ye should follow His steps (1 Peter 2: 21). John also stresses the same point — "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2: 6). As, in the gospels, we contemplate the footsteps of our beloved Lord, we are face to face with a pathway of unbroken communion with the Father, of tenderest compassion to the sick and needy, of victory over Satan's power, and of absolute separation from every evil principle of the world. The light and love of God illumined that pathway from beginning to end.

These are the "steps" in which Peter says we also should walk! We too, as walking in the Spirit, may know the blessedness of sweet communion with the Father and be found walking "in the light, as He is in the light" enjoying fellowship with Him and with His people.

Blessed too, in a world of hatred and strife, to be found "walking in love" — the standard being "as Christ also has loved." As Paul opens up the choice eternal thoughts of God in his letter to the Ephesians, setting before us the glory and greatness of that to which, in wonderful grace, we have been called, he stresses over and over again the importance of our *walk* — *summarized* perhaps in chapter 4: 1, where we are exhorted to "walk worthy of the vocation" wherewith we are called.

Giving pleasure to the heart of God, honouring the Name of Christ, having victory over the lusts of the flesh and bearing a testimony in power to men are some of the precious present joys of the saints who, empowered by the Spirit and in responsive love to Christ, are found "walking in newness of life."

The "running" of the race is important — alerted in our affections to the Lord in the glory; but let us seek grace for the steady day by day "walk" which is freighted with so much for the glory of God and for the comfort and joy of His people.