

LIFE THROUGH DEATH.

He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. – Matt. 10:39.

Viewed only from a human standpoint, many of our Lord's utterances seem like "hard sayings," which none can accept.

The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14). Many such, however, have undertaken to interpret "the things of the Spirit of God" – and have thus become blind guides, leading multitudes into error, and filling their minds with gross darkness.

In this way those powerful organizations known as churches have been established, and by their opposition to the truth, and those who hold the truth, have become anti-Christ. (Adversaries of the true Church – the anointed body [R814 : page 6] of Christ.) The same spirit which in our day has become so formidable, manifested itself in Apostolic times (1 John 2:18), and has been alive during the entire history of the Gospel Church.

This accounts, in part at least, for the fact that the nominal church is so largely composed of the unrenewed, and that the many forms of worldliness which are so pleasing to the "natural man" are not only permitted, but declared to be in harmony with the Divine will. The renewed mind, however, readily distinguishes between the ways of "this present evil world" and the "path of life."

The one is a narrow way with a strait entrance, and requires the most assiduous effort to tread therein; the other is a broad way with a wide approach, and many who presumably desire the way of life, find themselves drifting with the multitude in its seductive paths.

None *need*, however, to remain long in doubt, for it is plainly enough marked out in God's Word; and though the ministers of darkness be vigilant in their endeavors to captivate, only the unwary will be led astray.

Prophecy declares, referring to the Anointed, Thou wilt show me the path of life (Psa. 16:11); and Paul teaches that Jesus, to whom the Father first revealed this way, has brought it to light through the Gospel. (2 Thess. 1:10.)

Now all believers have it plainly made known to them, both by the teaching and example of him who declared himself the *way*, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6.)

As this is a prize never until the Gospel Age placed within the reach of any, and as Scripture teaches that it is attainable only during this age; it is of the utmost importance that all who desire it should strive lawfully.

What then are the teachings of the Prince of Life regarding its attainment? What course did he pursue to reach his exalted condition, viz., partaker of the Divine nature?

Let him speak.

He that would be my disciple, let him *deny himself* and *take up his cross* and *follow me*. (Matt. 16:24.)

However contrary the desires of the flesh may be to "the law of the Spirit of life," this law must have supreme jurisdiction, and they that are Christ's must *crucify* the *flesh* with the *passions* and *desires*: (Gal. 5:24 – *Diaglott*), must present their *bodies a living sacrifice*, (Rom. 12:1.) Not the sinful propensities of the depraved nature alone must be subdued; the life to which we are justified by our faith in Jesus' ransom must be *laid down*, even as he *laid down* his life. (John 10:18.) We thus account that we are "crucified with Christ." While the Head only was

actually put to death on Calvary, all the members of his body reckon themselves crucified with him; and all drink of the cup of which he drank, and all are baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized.

Though eighteen centuries have elapsed since Jesus trod the path, his footsteps have not grown dim, but are as plainly visible to-day as when Paul and his fellow-disciples sought and found the way.

Jesus' self-denial meant the free surrender of all his natural rights and all his ambition as a man among men. It meant the relinquishment of all desires to accomplish his beneficent work by any methods that might glorify himself; and a complete surrender of his own will to that of the Father. His prayer was, Father, glorify thy name. (John 12:28.)

Need we wonder that he spent long nights in prayer and communion with the Father that he might receive strength to hold steady to a purpose on which hinged such momentous issues – to thus open and "consecrate a new and living way"? Can we wonder that Jesus declared, Few there be that find the way of life? That many that have followed blind guides will be doomed to bitter disappointment, we have conclusive evidence. (Matt. 7:23.)

Let none shrink or turn aside for a less rugged way, but exclaiming with the poet,

"His track I see, and I'll pursue

The narrow way till him I view," let each make new resolves and take fresh courage, knowing that the crown is almost in view.

"Tho' the night be dark and dreary,
Tho' the way be long and weary,
Morn shall bring the light and cheer;
Child, look up, the morn is near.

"Tho' thine eyes are sad with weeping,

Thro' the night thy vigils keeping,
God shall wipe thy tears away,
Turn thy darkness into day.

"Tho' thy Spirit faints with fasting
Thro' the hours so slowly wasting,
Morn shall bring a glorious feast,
Thou shalt sit an honored guest."

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