

## THE WORD AND THE WAY

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.'" – Isaiah 30:21.

IN OUR DAY when the evil spirits seem to be trying very hard to get into close communication with humanity, we learn of what is called the "clairaudient power." Suggestions are made to the person having this power that he has a great favor from God in being able to hear what others cannot hear. Usually he becomes puffed up, thinking that he is in special favor with God and the angels. Then the fallen angels are very liable to take advantage of his wrong thought and to seek to obsess him. We have tried to guard people from this very condition of things; and from time to time we hear of those who are helped. Only a few days ago we had a letter from a lady who had thought that a godly influence was being exercised upon her, whereas later she found that it was a malevolent influence to bring her into slavery of mind. But the voice referred to in our text we understand to be the voice of God. The Scriptures, written in the past for our admonition, constitute this voice. This voice is behind us in the sense that the history of the centuries is behind us. So we are to hearken to the voice that comes through the Apostles and Prophets; and as we hearken, we recognize that it is the voice of the Lord, pointing the way in which we should go.

But as we hearken to the past we hear also the voices of false prophets; as, for instance, the voice of Satan, the great Adversary of the past. The voice of God said, "Ye shall *surely die*." The Adversary's voice said, "Ye shall *not* surely die." At one time all of us were dead. Some of us, however, were blessed as we obtained the true information and followed in the way God directed. Many of the so-called "Fathers" of the past, we find, do not give the same voice that Jesus and the Apostles and Prophets gave. We are to guard against all such voices and to listen for the Shepherd's voice; to look for the righteous

arrangements made for us. We are not to investigate anything which would not seem to be the voice of God, but which tends to deceive, to alienate the sheep from the Shepherd. [R4882 : page 360]

The child of the Lord has learned where to seek counsel; and the counsel of wisdom is always ready to come to his aid. The Prophet describes it as a word, a voice "*behind* thee." It is not a voice *before* thee, of some new theology – of Evolution or Spiritism or Christian Science or other human philosophy – but it is the old theology, with its blessed doctrine of hope through Christ our Redeemer and Lord, our Teacher, our Example and our Leader. It is the voice of the Lord through His inspired Apostles and Prophets, from two thousand to four thousand years ago. It is to this Word of Divine inspiration, then, that the Prophet would direct the attention of all those desiring wise counsel; and in that Word we hear the voice of God, saying, "This is the Way, *walk ye in it.*"

### **BIBLE TO BE OPENED UP TO THE WORLD SHORTLY**

While these words of the Prophet were addressed directly to *fleshly* Israel, their application to *spiritual* Israel is none the less forcible. As applied to fleshly Israel, the Prophet foretells the return of Divine favor to them when the long season of their chastisement and of their blindness shall be at an end. Then, under the Mediatorial Reign of Christ, the blind eyes shall be opened, the deaf ears shall be unstopped and the voice of the whole inspired Word, then made clear to their understanding, will direct them in the right ways of the Lord; for the books (the Law and the Prophets and the New Testament Scriptures) shall be opened, and they shall be judged according to their teaching. – Rev. 20:12.

The way then indicated to fleshly Israel and to all the world will be a grand highway of holiness; "and the ransomed of the Lord" shall go up thereon "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." (Isa. 35:10.) And the end of that way will be life and peace, salvation to the

uttermost from sin and death, and complete restoration to human perfection.

While the way of life will be made very clear to Israel and to the world, in the Age to come, it is made none the less clear now to the children of God who walk by faith and not by sight. It is shown to be, first, a way of faith; and those who now walk by faith are the true Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16,29), to whom pertain the Covenant and the exceeding great and precious promises, in their largest fulfilment. Second, It is a way of entire consecration to God, even unto death, which implies the burial of one's own will into the will of God – the presenting of self a living sacrifice.

### **LET US WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT**

In harmony with these two principles – faith and consecration – we are taught to walk in newness of life, not after the flesh, but after the spirit; not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, but circumspectly; "not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time"; not by sight, but by faith. – Rom. 6:4; 8:1; Eph. 4:17,18; 5:15,16; 2 Cor. 5:7.

By faith and consecration we have come into a new life as spiritual sons of God; and yet we have this treasure in earthen vessels and the new life is only in its embryo condition. Hence the necessity of walking after the spiritual instincts of the New Creature and keeping down the stronger impulses of the old creature. This is what it is to walk in newness of life, after the Spirit and not after the flesh. To "walk after the flesh" is to pursue its hopes, aims and ambitions; and since the flesh and the spirit are at war one with the other, it is impossible to maintain the life of both. Therefore, it is written, "If ye [spirit-begotten ones] live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live." – Rom. 8:13.

While the Word of the Lord speaks thus on general principles as to the way in which we should walk, we are also bidden to come with all the minor affairs of life to inquire of these Divine Oracles. If we

know not whether to turn to the right hand or to the left, we come and find the promise, "Commit thy way unto the Lord"; "He will direct thy steps." Or, if heavy laden, we find the promise, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Thus the voice *behind* brings comfort, peace and rest in the midst of all life's cares and trials, if we walk in obedience to all its principles and precepts. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God!" – Psa. 37:5; Prov. 3:6; Matt. 11:28; Gal. 6:16.

