

## **THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE**

**"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."  
– John 8:31,32.**

AT HIS FIRST Advent our Lord came to the Jewish nation, which was a House of Servants in covenant relationship with God. To these was to be granted the first privilege of becoming sons of God, and their blessing would be in proportion as they were faithful to the light that would come to them. Before they could become sons of God, however, it was necessary that Jesus should be their Redeemer, should make reconciliation for iniquity, and thus open up the way. This He had come to do, but He had not done it as yet. Whoever would come to understand the Divine purposes and arrangements, and act in harmony with them, should be made free, should be liberated from the condemnation resting upon them as Jews, from the results of the weaknesses of their flesh, and would be brought into full accord with God.

We can see that this great privilege also meant something more than all this. It meant something still higher – even joint-heirship with Messiah. But all these things were a hidden mystery as yet. They were known up to that time only by our Lord Himself; they were made clear to Him because He had been begotten of the Holy Spirit. There were many things hard to be understood. Jesus spoke in parables, in dark sayings, for the very purpose of making the Way of Life then opened up a "narrow way." And so we read in the Scriptures that some said of the Master's words: "This is a hard saying! Who can hear it?" Who could believe it?

The particularly hard saying referred to was that His "flesh was meat indeed, and His blood was drink indeed," and that by eating and drinking of these they might gain eternal life. And so

we read that after this many forsook Him and abandoned the thought of being His disciples, so blinded were they to their own interests. Instead of following on patiently, they said, This is all foolishness! We do not understand it!

Jesus was anticipating this condition of things when He spoke these words to them. He would put them on their guard. It was as though He would say, You have declared that "never man spake like this man!" Already you have heard words very different from the words of the Scribes and Pharisees. Now continue; hold on for a little while. If you will do this, you will grasp the situation in due time. Exercise faith – exercise patience. You have begun to have interest in these things, and as you fully become My disciples you will be granted a knowledge of the Truth. And this Truth will make you free; it will give you all the blessings and privileges that come to the children of God. Greatly blessed were the few who took heed to the Master's counsel!

### **BLESSINGS BEGUN AT PENTECOST**

These words of Jesus were not addressed especially to the twelve Apostles, but to the Jews in general who were sympathetically drawn. Nicodemus may have been one of these; he was inclined to stumble over the spiritual things; he could not see how one could be born again. The Holy Spirit was not yet given, we read, "because Jesus was not yet glorified." St. Paul tells us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." – 1 Corinthians 2:14.

But some saw enough in Jesus to attract them to Him. These, in honesty of heart, said, Surely His words are true, and His criticisms of our nation are true. We do **[R5507 : page 227]** not see how He is going to fulfil these prophecies; but He says to us, Hold on and you will understand later. And some did hold on –

"above five hundred brethren." As Jesus had promised, these were given the privilege of becoming disciples indeed.

When Pentecost came, the Heavenly Father received all who had continued in Jesus' Word, and they were begotten of the Holy Spirit into the Lord's family. Then they began to see spiritual things – they were illuminated. All the light did not come at once, but they progressed as the days and years went by. They were indeed Christ's true disciples – such followers of Jesus as the Father was pleased to recognize. They were not only made free from the condemnation of the Law Covenant, but made free from sin and death. They received a new *will*, a new *mind*, and the Holy Spirit showed "the deep things of God" unto them.

In His prayer to the Father, our Lord said, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth." By the word Truth Jesus was here referring to the Father's revelation of His Divine Plan through the Holy Spirit; and the sanctifying influence would come through the knowledge of that Truth, received into an honest heart. This sanctification, or setting apart, strictly speaking, began with the Pentecostal blessing, and still continues to operate. And this sanctification progresses as long as the individual allows the Truth to have its designed influence in his life. We see a difference between our text and the one just quoted. In the latter case it is the Word **[R5507 : page 228]** of Jehovah, and in the former it is the Word of Jesus. Jesus says, If you continue in *My* Word, you will become more and more acquainted with the Heavenly Father, and will know His will, His way, His method; thus you will know His Word. All things are working out His will – the will of the Father – and seeing and doing the will of the Father, the sanctifying process will follow. Jesus says to all, "I am the Way; I am the Truth; I am the Life." I am the only One through whom you can come to the Father and become His sons; and abiding in Me will bring you the grand consummation.

## THE CHANNEL OF ALL OUR BLESSINGS

We perceive, then, that Christ is the sufficiency which God has provided for us in all respects. "He of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness [Justification], and Sanctification, and Redemption [Deliverance]." (1 Corinthians 1:30.) We first receive, through learning of His sacrificial work on our behalf, necessary wisdom, instruction and guidance, by which we may through His merit come to the Father. And He is our Wisdom all along the way. The Heavenly Father had a glorious Plan before the foundation of the world; this was hinted in Eden, just after the fall. In due time He gave a further intimation of that Plan through Enoch and through Abraham, and still later through Moses and the Prophets. But how the world was to benefit from it was all hidden, all kept secret.

Not until Jesus came was the way of life opened up, made manifest. "He [Christ] hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." The essence of the Gospel was never even declared, much less known, before Jesus came. The Apostle Paul says that this salvation "at the first *began* to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews 2:3.) Our Lord *began* to speak it; but the secret of the Gospel, its *Mystery*, was not fully revealed until after Pentecost. It was not until after Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit that He Himself began to comprehend it clearly – not until then did He begin to set before us the way of life and immortality. And even then His words were parabolic, and it was not until His followers were begotten of the Holy Spirit that they were able to enter into "the deep things of God."

## JESUS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

In addition to His being our Wisdom, Jesus becomes our Righteousness. He covers our sins. He imputes to us His own righteousness, the merit of His own sacrifice. And this imputation

brings us to a condition of complete righteousness – not *actual*, but reckoned, which God is pleased to recognize in the way He has arranged.

Our Lord does not become the Righteousness of everybody – not even of those who give some heed to His Words – but to those alone who come to the point of full submission to the Father's will. And there is a good reason for this; for only those who offer themselves to become members of His Body during this Gospel Age, only the spirit-begotten, would be profited by a justification by faith. Others would be condemned to death by it now. In the next Age, others will come to Him. But only those who come to Him now, to walk in His steps, have a faith-justification.

### **JESUS OUR SANCTIFICATION**

The step of consecration on the part of those who become Jesus' disciples is in the Scriptures called *sanctification*. But it is not the same sanctification which comes to us through Him. God says, "Sanctify yourselves, and I will sanctify you" – that is, Set yourselves apart, and then I will set you apart; I will put you into this place where you desire to come. So, to all of us who come to the Father through Him, Jesus not only becomes our Justification, but through Him we also have Sanctification – the complete setting apart. We are accepted in Him, and His grace and Advocacy enable us to attain complete and final sanctification.

God sets us apart by begetting us of the Holy Spirit to the new nature and making us prospective members of the Royal Priesthood – prospective members of the Body of the Anointed One. This is Scripturally called a foretaste, or "earnest," of our inheritance, which will be experienced to the full when we are changed from the human to the spirit nature – "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." But this "earnest of our inheritance" is given us with the intention of our growing in the

process of sanctification already begun in us until its completion. We attain this through Christ.

## **JESUS OUR DELIVERANCE**

Those who make satisfactory progress will have in the resurrection full deliverance from sin, from all imperfections of the flesh, and from the flesh itself – full deliverance through the power of the First Resurrection. Christ thus becomes our Deliverance. We shall then attain the full completeness of sons of God on the Divine plane.

In all these things Christ is the Center; through Him alone can we obtain these blessings. While the Father gives them, they are given through His Son, who is the Father's Representative. Jesus received the Spirit of the Father and has shed it forth upon us. This is pictured in the type, in the anointing of the high priest. The holy anointing-oil was poured upon his head, and it ran down over his body. So we are anointed through our Head as members of the great High Priest.

"He who raised up Jesus from the dead will raise us up also by Jesus"; that is to say, Jesus will be the active agent. But there are certain features of the Divine Plan which Jesus will accomplish *in His own name*; for instance, the world's blessing and uplifting. While the Father is the Author of the entire Plan, yet this blessing comes to the world exclusively through the sacrifice of the Son. Christ will do the work of the Millennial Age, and will then deliver mankind up to the Father.

But His work for the Church is different: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us." (1 Peter 1:3.) It is not the Son who has begotten us, though it is through the Son that we receive this Divine favor. The price, or cost, of obtaining this special Divine favor is the sacrifice of our lives. The particular thing which the Church receives more

directly from the Son is *justification*. Yet this justification is *of* the Father, and it is not an *actual* justification, but an imputed justification. It is a special arrangement on the Father's part for us that we may come into His favor now in advance of the world – the First-fruits unto God and the Lamb.

Ours is a wonderful God, and His great Plan of the Ages is marvelous beyond expression! Our hearts rejoice that our eyes have been anointed to see these glorious things hidden to the many during this Gospel Age, knowing that all the blind eyes shall yet be opened, and all the deaf ears be made to hear!

### **"THEY TURN THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH"**

The Lord's preaching always produced two opposite effects upon the promiscuous multitudes that heard Him: He attracted one class and repelled the other. Those who were full of pride and conceit, and who preferred darkness to light because their deeds were evil and because they realized that if they admitted the light of Truth they must of necessity conform their characters to it – all such were repelled by the teachings of Christ. And [R5507 : page 229] if the Lord had undertaken the work of the ministry according to the methods pursued today, depending for support on the good will and contribution of the people, that support would often have been very meager, or at least, very fluctuating.

On some occasions multitudes received His testimony, but later deserted Him, walking no more with Him as He continued to enforce the lessons of Divine Truth. (Luke 4:14-29.) Sometimes the multitudes hung upon His teachings, "wondering at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth"; yet again and again they forsook Him, only the merest handful remaining. – John 6:60-69.

What consternation would follow in the various churches of today, if the professed ministers of the Gospel should follow the



Master's example in similarly declaring the whole counsel of God! How quickly they would become unpopular and be charged with breaking up the churches! The congregations of the great temples of fashion ostensibly dedicated to the service of God and the teachings of Christ would not stand it. They go there to [R5508 : page 229] be entertained with pleasing and eloquent discourses from titled gentlemen who presumably know the tastes and ideas of the congregation, and will preach to please them. They are quite willing to pay their money for what they want, but they do not want the Truth.

Those who followed the Lord only for a little season and then forsook Him, of course then ceased to be His disciples and were no longer so recognized; nor did they presume longer to claim to be His disciples. A disciple is a pupil, a learner; and when a man ceases to be a student and pupil of Christ, the great Teacher, he is no longer His disciple. This was very manifest when the Lord was present, and when His name was one of reproach among men; but later, when His presence was withdrawn, and when His doctrines were unscrupulously mixed with human philosophies to such an extent as to divest them of reproach, and to make them really void, then men began to claim to be His disciples. This was long after His doctrines had been utterly repudiated.

### **THE REWARD OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP**

The Lord's expression, "Then are ye My disciples *indeed*," implies a distinction between real and merely nominal disciples. And since we desire to continue to be Jesus' sincere disciples, let us mark the expressed condition: "If ye continue in *My Word*, *then* are ye My disciples indeed." The hypocrisy of merely nominal discipleship is an abomination to the Lord.

It is a blessed thing to take the first step in the Christian life – that of acceptance of Christ as our Redeemer and Lord and yielding



ourselves fully to the Father through Him. But the reward of this step depends entirely upon our *continuance* in His Word, in the attitude of true disciples. The disposition of human pride is to wander away from the simplicity of Divine Truth and to seek out new theories and philosophies of our own, or to pry into those of others who desire to be considered wise and great according to this world's estimate.

The reward of continued discipleship is, "Ye shall *know* the Truth" – not, Ye shall be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth." (2 Timothy 3:7.) Here is the mistake many make; failing to continue in the Word of the Lord, they delve into various human philosophies, which ignore or pervert the Word of the Lord and set up opposing theories. To those who seek for Truth among these human theories, there is no promise that they shall ever find it, and they never do.

Divine Truth is found only in the Divinely appointed channel – our Lord, the Apostles and the Prophets. To continue in the doctrines set forth in the inspired writings of the Prophets and the Apostles, to study and meditate upon them, to trust implicitly in them, and to faithfully conform our characters to them, is what is implied in "continuing in the Word" of the Lord. And this is entirely compatible with the heeding of all the helps which the Lord raises up from among our brethren in the Body of Christ, as enumerated by the Apostle Paul. (Ephesians 4:11-15; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14.) The Lord always has raised up, and will to the end raise up, such helps for the edification of the Body of Christ; but it is the duty of every member carefully to prove their teaching by the infallible Word.

If we thus continue in the Word of the Lord as earnest and sincere disciples, we shall indeed "know the Truth," be "established in the Present Truth" [the Truth due], and "be rooted and grounded in the Truth"; we shall be "firm in the faith," and

"able to give a reason for the hope that is in us"; to "earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the saints"; to "war a good warfare"; to "witness a good confession" and to firmly "endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," even unto the end of our conflict.

We do not come into the knowledge of the Truth at a single bound; but gradually, step by step, we are led into the Truth. Every step is one of sure and certain progress leading to a higher vantage ground for further attainments both in knowledge and in established character.

The Truth thus acquired, step by step, becomes a sanctifying power, bringing forth in our lives its blessed fruits of righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit, love, meekness, faith, patience and every virtue and every grace, which time and cultivation ripen to a glorious maturity.

Not only shall the true disciple thus know the Truth and be sanctified by it, but the Lord also said, "The Truth shall make you free." Those who have received the Truth know by blessed experience something of its liberating power. As soon as any measure of it is received into a good and honest heart, it begins to strike off the fetters of sin, of ignorance, superstition and fear. Its health-restoring beams penetrate the darkest recesses of our hearts and minds, and thus invigorate the whole being; it quickens our mortal bodies.

### **"THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORDS GIVETH LIGHT"**

Sin cannot endure the light of Truth; and those who continue to live in sin when a sufficiency of light has been received to manifest its deformity must inevitably lose the Light, because they are unworthy of it. Ignorance and superstition must vanish before this Light. And what a blessed realization it is to be thus liberated! Millions, however, are still under the blinding influence of error.

Under its delusions they fear and reverence some of the basest tools of Satan for their oppression and degradation, because they hypocritically claim Divine appointment; and they have been made to fear God as a vengeful Tyrant, consigning the vast majority of His creatures to an eternity of torment. Thank God! We who have received the Truth have awakened from that horrible nightmare, and the bondage of Satan over us is broken. The Light has scattered our darkness.

We are made free, too, from the fear that we now see coming upon the whole world as the great civil and ecclesiastical systems that have so long ruled the world are being terribly shaken. All thinking people are in dread of the possible outcome of anarchy and terror; the alarm of all is increasing as we near the awful crisis toward **[R5508 : page 230]** which we are rapidly hastening, and as the danger becomes more and more apparent. Yet, in the midst of it all, and with the fullest assurance of the infallible Word of God as to the terrors of the conflict through which the world will soon have to pass, the true disciples of Christ who abide in His Word are not afraid, but rejoice; for they know that God's object in permitting this mighty storm is to clear the moral atmosphere of the world, and that after the storm, there shall come, by His providence, an *abiding peace*. Instructed in the Truth, they realize the necessities of the situation, and have confidence in the Divine providence that can make even the wrath of man to praise Him, make all things work together for good.

Blessed promise! – "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." Dearly beloved, having received this wondrous favor from the Lord, shall we not continue in it, giving no heed to seducing doctrines but bringing forth its blessed fruitage in our lives? And shall we not be faithful to it under all circumstances, defending it against every assault, and bearing its reproach? Let us prove our appreciation of the glorious Light by

our loyalty and faithfulness, working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

