

## THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS.

*'Christ suffered. . . leaving you a copy so that you may follow in His footsteps'.—1 Pet. ii. 21, Diag.*

IF we follow in the exact footsteps of another we always arrive at the same destination. Our text informs us that the steps in which Jesus trod, and in which he calls upon us to follow, were steps of suffering. But why does he call upon us to endure suffering? Because of the great love wherewith he hath loved us, and because as he prayed (Jno. 17:22-24), he would have us with him that we may behold his glory, and be joint heirs with him to all that glory.

For the joy set before him he endured that suffering, despising the shame. What was that joy that nerved to such endurance our suffering Lord? Paul says because 'He was obedient unto death. God also hath HIGHLY EXALTED him and given him a name above every name, etc.' Phil. ii. 9. If he was *highly exalted* after and because of his obedience to death, he had more glory and honour *then* than that which he had with the Father before the world was. Was he immortal then? No, for the Scripture saith that the *King of kings* and *Lord of lords* who, in his times, Jesus will show to be the blessed and only Potentate, and to whom he will deliver up the kingdom of earth, after that he has subdued all things unto him, this one, the Father, Jehovah, is the *only one* who hath immortality: (1 Tim. vi. 16)—'life in himself'—independent of any support outside itself, subject to no conditions, incorruptible, exhaustless, unlimited, eternal. Now when Jesus was *highly exalted* he became partaker of the same Divine, immortal nature, for we read 'As the Father hath *life in himself*, [R234: page 5] SO hath he given to the Son that he should have *life in himself*. John v. 26.

This partaking of the Divine nature, becoming the Son of God, the 'only begotten Son' on this divine plane was a part, but only a part of the *joy set before our Lord*. He was also to redeem from death and restore to perfection a glorious race of beings, once created in the image of God, so that 'every creature which is in heaven and on earth will say, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth

upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever'.

O, what a joy that will be to his glorious benevolent nature. But that is not all. Having been found in fashion as a man (a perfect man) he loved humanity with all the devotion and tenderness of a perfect affection. And as some of the race come to realise and appreciate his great love and so much so as to forsake all and follow him, he longs to have these with him where he is that they may behold and share his glory. This joy was also set before him—the joy of bringing many sons (other Sons begotten of God) to glory—to the same Divine plane. O, what wonder that for such glory, and honour, and blessing, he should bear the cross, despising the shame.

And this same joy—this *exceeding* and ETERNAL WEIGHT of GLORY is set before you who are called to follow in his footsteps. Now weigh it if you can; measure it if you can—the breadth, the length, the height, the depth. Oh, can you? Eye hath not seen nor ear heard it, neither hath entered into the heart of (the natural) man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.

We are called to be joint heirs with Jesus, heirs of immortality, partakers of the divine nature, part of the divine family, far above men and angels. We as the bride of the Lamb are to have a name that is above every name, since we are the people for his name. The Bride shall bear her husband's name, and she shall be like unto his glorious body.

Wherefore holy brethren (reckoned holy since purchased from sin and death), partakers of the heavenly *calling*, consider Jesus. 'He was rich', (a glorious spiritual being before the world was) yet for our sakes he became poor (transferred his life from a spiritual to a human form, then sacrificed that) that we, through his poverty, might be made rich (partakers of his high exaltation).

Let us look for his footprints. We find that his first step was consecration. 'A body hast thou prepared me

(not prepared until it had reached its maturity—thirty years, according to Jewish law). Then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God'. Heb. x.5, 7. 'Not my (human) will but thine be done'. He then symbolised by his burial in, and resurrection from, the water, his entire consecration, his willingness to be immersed—swallowed up in death—and his faith in God's power to raise him to a new life. Have you followed him here? Immediately after, he was led into the wilderness, away from human sympathy, human society, and human pursuits. Are you there, or are you clinging to a worldly church for sympathy, society, and worldly ambition? There he was tempted and tried in all points; so must you be. He was armed with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, wherewith he was able to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. Are you thus armed?

His entire consecration separated him from all human sympathy and friendship. He was a man, with the same natural desires and necessities as other men; consequently, when these were all laid on the altar of sacrifice: 'He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'. The purity of his life and teaching condemned the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, (and brought upon him the anathema of the church of his day). He was counted a fanatic, an impostor, a teacher of false doctrine, as one possessed of a devil. The religious teachers to whom the people looked for guidance denounced him and finally stirred up the people to have him crucified. It separated him from his earthly relatives, 'for neither did his brethren believe on him'. They were doubtless ashamed of the stigma which his peculiar and unpopular course brought upon them as a family. It would seem that he was an outcast from his mother's home, for he said: 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head'. As a citizen he was despised by his fellow citizens, counted an enemy of Caesar's, and one who sought to usurp kingly authority. His conversation was in heaven, and earth understood it not.

Has your consecration so sanctified—set you apart from the world, the nominal church, your former worldly friendships, etc.? Have you followed Jesus here? Has your name been so cast out as evil? It will be if you follow Jesus closely. If they hated me, said Jesus, they will hate you also, and whatsoever they have done unto me, they will do unto you also. But if they do so cast you out, Jesus will hear of it, as he did of the blind man whose eyes he had opened, and as

then, he will find you and show himself to you, and talk with you and open the eyes of your understanding, causing your heart to burn within you while he opens up the Scriptures. Blessed communion: What a friend we find in Jesus!

This was the victory whereby he overcame—even his faith in God, for he looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen—eternal. Are you so doing? When he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth. Do you seek to imitate that uncomplaining, patient meekness in the everyday trials of your wilderness life, and will you by his grace do so until he says it is enough? Step cautiously, plant your feet just in his prints, and you cannot mistake the way. Don't think to reach the same end by avoiding some of the most difficult steps. You cannot do it; you will lose your footing and fall. Neither should you hesitate when you find the steps leading through a thorny and difficult way. O no: the time is too short. RUN with patience.

Ah, dear brother, sister, it is no easy road; but do you think the end justifies the means? Now look again at the prize; keep your eye of faith fixed on that. Give up your human will, your human ambition, etc., as Jesus did, and commit your new spiritual life to him who is able to keep it. *If you let Him, God will work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure*, and Jesus says: 'Fear not, little flock; it is the Father's *good pleasure* to give you the kingdom'.

—ZION'S WATCH TOWER, June, 1881.