

Till the End Be

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“But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” (Dan. 12:13).

In these days we hear much about the subject of Christian consecration. All who belong to the Lord should, indeed, heed the exhortation: “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” “Walk before me, and be thou perfect”, was God’s command to Abraham. It is also a command which is addressed to all the people of God in every age. Truly none of us is consecrated to the Lord to the degree that we should. This is our grief — or it should be. Though they cannot attain to perfection in this life the Lord’s people, in the words of another, would be holy if they could. But one of their sorrows is that they are continually coming short of His glory.

Daniel, to whom these words were addressed by the Lord, was a man greatly devoted to His fear, His service and His glory. He enjoyed much of His secret. The Lord was also his Companion in the way. He therefore could say with the Psalmist: “Nevertheless I am continually with Thee.” God speaks of him as a man “greatly beloved”. The Lord loves all His people. They are all “greatly beloved”; but there are some who give clearer evidence in their lives that His love truly dwells in their hearts.

Although, as His prophet, the Lord revealed His mind to Daniel in so many things related to the future course of His Providence there were things which, in His infinite wisdom, He would not reveal. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.” The Bible is an infallible revelation of God’s mind and will: but His Providence is a great deep, the contents and unfoldings of which can only be understood with their fulfilment. “And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” And in commanding him to go his way, the Lord leaves with him a great promise of eternal rest in Heaven where, “at the end of the days” he would also possess an unfading inheritance with Himself. These words — the command and the promise — are also addressed, and belong to all who truly love and fear His name. Let us consider:

I. The Divine Command

“But go thou thy way till the end be.”

The implication of these words is that Daniel’s way was wholly approved by God. God’s way and that of His servant were identical. “The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them.”

When we look at this man’s life as it is before us in this Book we may see how he walked before God. To begin with he walked consistently in the way of Truth. Both in his outward conduct and in his inward spiritual desires he was ruled by God’s Word. God’s will was pre-eminently his own. The prayer of David was inscribed on his heart also by the Holy Spirit:

**“In Thy law’s path make me to go,
For I delight therein.”**

He also could say, “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.” When his enemies, for example, tried to ensnare him, the only fault they could find with him was that he refused to deviate from the law of his God. A higher testimonial than this was seldom given to any in this world. He would not grieve God’s Spirit or cast a shadow on his own conscience by any compromise with evil. He would not adapt himself to the ways of a pagan and godless nation. Rather than deny the Truth of God in his worship and conduct, or go out of the way into any by-path of sin, he was prepared to die. His love to God and his devotion to His Word brought him into the den of lions. But the Guardian of Israel preserved his life there and made his enemies to see that there is a reward for the righteous. An old friend of mine used to remark that the night Daniel spent in the lion’s den was the happiest he ever spent in this world. It passed all too quickly! In that lower cave God’s blissful Presence filled his soul, while He was also a wall of fire round about him. God spread His covering wings over him, and no enemy in hell or on earth could touch him. If the way of Truth leads many of God’s people into the way of suffering it is only that they might discover how great is His love, sympathy and faithfulness. To suffer for Christ is to be partaker of His own sufferings. And many of His people have discovered that in suffering for Him there is a joy no words can describe.

We notice also that the way of Truth is bound to **the way of holiness**, And in this way Daniel also walked. True holiness derives its power and complexion from the well of Truth. Our Lord in His great prayer of intercession emphasises this fact. “Sanctify them through the truth: Thy Word is Truth.” “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

The Word of God everywhere enforces the truth that true holiness involves, on the one hand a life of separation, and on the other what we might call a life of proclamation, or a life of witness for God. In other words, holiness, in its outward manifestation, is both negative and positive. The Book of Psalms begins, for example, with a description of the happy or blessed man. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners." When, in other days, Satan walked to and fro on the earth he saw one man who had no spiritual counterpart in his age. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil." Rather than defile their garments by following the evil course of this world, Daniel's young friends in the Lord chose to be cast into the furnace of fire. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Although we are in the world, we are not of the world. The so-called "good religious mixers" of this age who think they can serve God, while at the same time they crawl in the sewers of a sinful world, are far removed from this way. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" or dwell in His presence. Holiness is the very air which the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem breathe, "for there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination." True holiness is congenial only to the new man in Christ, while to the graceless man it is hateful and repugnant.

But holiness has also its positive side. It is not mere separation. It is a witnessing by our life and conversation whose we are and whom we serve. "Ye," said our Lord, "are the light of the World. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men." Daniel was a man who, by his holy walk, shone like a lone star in the prevailing darkness.

There are two kinds of men and women within the visible Church in the world. There are those who take on the colour of the age in which they live. These walk with the times. And there are those whose path is "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." These are they who have the promise that in the world to come they "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" and "as the stars for ever and ever". The banner of truth and holiness has, therefore, its two sides. One is a spiritual and moral separation from all ungodliness and the other, personal witness that we are the children of the day.

We see that this man was also in the **way of prayer**. As holiness derives its power from the fountain of Truth there is, on the other hand, no spiritual growth or maturity without unceasing prayer. We read of this man that three times each day he kneeled in God's presence. He brought all his personal concerns to the Lord at the Throne of Grace. But the great theme of his prayers was the diminished state of God's cause. Israel — a people whom the Lord had loved and embraced as His own — were in a state of rebellion against Him. The nation was, therefore, under the rod of His chastisement and indignation. The land was desolate. Its lights were extinguished. The people were led into captivity. In such "a day of rebuke and blasphemy" Daniel did not, however, give

way to despair. He continued to plead God's covenant promises made to Abraham and to his seed.

It is good to know that as there is a continual intercession going on "within the veil" for the Church by our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, there has not been an hour since the beginning of time but the Lord had some on earth whose prayers "like the pillars of smoke" have been ascending to Heaven. God's people pray that Christ may prosper in His reign and kingdom and that the enemies of His glory might be restrained. Whatever discouragements and opposition they may meantime meet with they "ought always to pray and not to faint". The exceeding great and precious promises of God anticipate the coming day when the question shall be asked once more, "who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" The promises of God and the prayers of His people are joined on this glorious issue. They both anticipate the coming Day.

But is it not true that they are but few who are exercised in this way, and who wrestle with God for the uplifting and revival of His cause? Although, as in the days of Elisha, there might have been many in Babylon who were secretly loyal to God and His cause, they were not all like this man. May God give us the grace to continue instant in prayer till He again pluck His hand from His bosom and make known His saving power!

We notice also that although this man enjoyed such nearness to God, He did not reveal to him the content, trials and conflicts of his future life in this world. **The way of His Providence, as it stood related to His servant, He kept a secret.** Nowhere do we see the wisdom and the love of God so clearly as in this concealment. Were He to disclose to us beforehand the many sorrows which were to make up our cup in this life our hearts and lives would be crushed in apprehension and fear. He merely says, "Go thy way till the end be." And whatever may transpire in the way of His Providence He is ever beside His own to help and comfort them. "As thy days so shall thy strength be." This is His promise till the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts. In His hand we are as safe as the saints in glory — though, as yet, not so happy. Let us also look at:

II. God's Promise

"For thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

The promise is two-fold. There is the promise of rest and the promise of possession. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." This rest is going to be both perfect and eternal. Both our souls and bodies are to participate in this sweet repose within the bosom of the Eternal. Already, as heirs of salvation, we have the beginnings of it in our heart, mind and conscience. It is a rest which is derived from our relationship and union with Christ. "We who have believed do enter unto rest." But not till we pass out of time shall we enjoy this rest in all its perfection and fulness.

We are to enjoy rest from sin and Satan. As in the case of Paul there is, in this life, a cry and a restlessness in the heart of all who know the Lord. Indwelling sin is tireless in its enmity to God's law which the new creature in Christ loves and which he would obey. David's cry was, "There is no rest in my bones because of my sin." And if sin is active in their members they are a people who also wage a constant warfare with Satan. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Sin and Satan are one in their opposition to all who would serve the Lord and obey His Word. Not until we cross the last river, and reach the end of our pilgrimage here, shall our warfare cease. The evil thoughts which so often terrify us, and the subtle temptations which so often cast their shadow over our spirits, shall one day be for ever removed. In eternity there shall be no room in our soul for sin or fear. God's presence and love shall wholly possess our beings. As the sun banishes the night so shall God's eternal day, with the unclouded dawn of the Sun of Righteousness, for ever remove every shadow of fear and sin. In heaven our souls shall be wholly possessed of God's love. Life's storms shall be changed into an everlasting calm.

We shall also rest from sorrow and sufferings. These shall for ever flee away. This promise is also given to those who labour for Christ — whether they labour for Him in secret or in public. "**They shall rest from their labours and their works do follow them.**" And, however much the Lord's people may be discouraged in this life, in all their labours for Christ they shall know, in that day, that their labour in the Lord was not in vain. This rest shall be extended not only to the soul but to the body as well. It may be that your strength is now, through labour, age and infirmity, abated in the way. The once alert step is now reduced to a slow, uncertain pace. "The grasshopper" is becoming a burden. Signs are present with some of us that the earthly tabernacle is soon to be dissolved, and that we must soon lie down not to arise till the earth be no more. The rest of the body in the grave coincides with the rest of the soul in the mansions above. The two separate to meet again on the resurrection morning when the Lord shall come to awake His loved ones out of sleep. Sometimes we fear the approach of the last enemy, but Christ by His own death has rendered death harmless to His own people. And the Lord, who rested in the grave, has warmed this bed for His loved ones. Our bodies are united to Him in the grave and when, at the sound of His voice, we awake we shall be satisfied with His likeness.

**I will both lay me down in peace
And quiet sleep will take;
Because Thou only me to dwell
In safety, Lord, dost make.**

But there is also the **Promise of Possession**. "Thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Before He ascended into Heaven our Lord comforted His people by assuring them that He was going away to prepare a place for them in a better world. "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations", and "I go to prepare a kingdom for you" — a kingdom "which is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away". Beyond what is revealed it would be presumptuous on our part to seek to describe what heaven

is like. There are, indeed, no words in our earthly vocabulary which could do justice to this theme. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of men the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." But the glory and the happiness of Heaven are derived from Christ but the Lamb is the light thereof." He is the Tree of Life. The wellsprings of the redeemed are wholly in Him. It is the fulness of His love, enjoyed by all His people, that shall move their lips to praise Him. The supreme joy of Heaven, therefore, is not the place but the Person of our full enjoyment of God. Only God can justify the renewed soul. He is the inheritance and lot of all His people. How well does the Psalmist express this:

**"God is of mine inheritance,
and cup the portion:
The lot that fallen is to me
Thou dost maintain alone.**

**Unto me happily the lines
in pleasant places fell;
Yea, the inheritance I got
in beauty doth excel."**

John Duncan used to say in his latter years that his very soul was woven, in an ever deepening desire, into the words — "to enjoy Him for ever". Many a sad day the believer has in this life: but O, the promise of the Beloved which shall have its fulfilment when our nights of weeping shall be no more. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

And think of how they are to stand before God in their inheritance. All their happiness, all their possessions, are eternally secure through the righteousness of their unchangeable Redeemer in which they stand before God. "He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor. His righteousness remaineth for ever."

We come into this, our lot, "at the end of the days". Our days and nights here pass as a tale that is told, but the end of these shall mark the dawn of our eternal day when our sun shall no more go down. "For there shall be no night there."

Meantime let us pray for the needed grace that shall enable us to go from strength to strength until we appear before God in Zion.

There may be those among us who move, without concern, in the broad way which leads to destruction. To all such God speaks, "Turn ye. turn ye . . . why will ye die?" The way of life begins with our reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ. The way out of the kingdom of darkness into the path of life begins with the blood of sprinkling, through beholding and receiving the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." "Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein!" O! may we all meet at His right hand where there are

pleasures for evermore. Pray, dear soul, that yours may not be an eternal night. but an eternal day, with Christ The Day Star in your heart. May the Lord bless His own Word.

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