

is also a part of God's Word, to be reverently and attentively studied by God's people. Whenever we read of "the Scriptures" in the New Testament, it is of course the Old Testament Scriptures that are meant, as the different writings which form the New Testament were not collected together till about A.D. 400. (See on "The New Testament Canon" in the "Teacher's Bible.") There are many such references in the New Testament, but the teacher should draw special attention to St. John v. 39; 2 Tim. iii. 14-17; St. Luke xvi. 31.

We might sum up the great object of these two divisions of God's revelation in this way:—Why was the Old Testament written? Because Jesus Christ was coming. Why was the New Testament written? Because Jesus Christ had come. Or, to speak more fully, the Old Testament tells how man was created, and through disobedience forfeited the blessings he enjoyed at the first. And then [very dimly at the beginning (Gen. iii. 15)], the promise of restoration to God's favour was given; and the promise became more and more clear as the time of redemption drew nigh (Mal. iii. 1; iv. 2.) It is a good thing to know all about the birth, the life, the teachings, the death, &c., of the Lord Jesus; and these we learn in the New Testament. But no one can rightly understand the *whole* part of the Scriptures without knowing the other. The Old Testament may be called the alphabet of our religion—but if you would learn to read you must master the alphabet first of all.

Then think of all the holy men who served God faithfully before any part of the New Testament was written, (Moses, David, Ezra, Daniel, &c.) Are we to think that the Scriptures (which were so precious to them) are of no value to us, because we have now a clearer light to guide us? More than this, the Apostles of Christ, and others in the New Testament, were constant in the study of the Old Testament, and had only seen some few parts of the New Testament. Shall we neglect what they esteemed so highly?

But we must come back again to our chief reason for prizing the Old Testament. It gives us the history of God's people in the past; it puts before us holy examples; a great part of God's law, still binding on us, is contained in it. But—far more important than everything else—it tells us of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is also the chief reason that the Old Testament is read in the services of the Church.

Family Reading.

Second Sunday after Easter.

FOOTSTEPS.

Suppose a traveller were walking along a steep, tiring mountain path. How refreshing it would be to him to look *upward* sometimes, wouldn't it? To fix his eyes on the glorious mountain-tops, that seem to touch the sky!

Yes, he would love to do that! But still it might be as well to remind him that there is something else to be thought of as well. That is, not only to look *up*, but to look *down* too.

And why? Because there is something to be seen right in front of him, which he might miss if he only looks up. And he wants that something to show him the way.

Do you guess what I mean? *Footsteps.*

Yes, the footsteps or footmarks of somebody who has gone that way before him. There is no greater help in following a difficult track than in stepping where somebody else has stepped before you, putting your foot just where he put his.

Well, I believe we have been rather like that traveller lately. We have been looking *up*, and dwelling on grand, glorious events. Jesus conquering death—there is no grander mountain-top than that in all the world's story!

But to-day our Collect and Epistle seem to bid us look *down*. Look down for what? To see some steps. And whose steps? Why, the steps of Jesus.

"Leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps."

How can I do that? you ask. I will show you. It is very simple.

There are some words in the Collect that help to make it plain—Also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life.

People sometimes think they may be like Jesus in great things. So they may; only the great things, as I said lately, happen seldom, perhaps two or three times in a life.

But that word "daily" can't apply only to great things. Daily life, or every-day life, is made up of a great many common, small things—things that happen over and over again, and are not at all wonderful or exciting.

You know pretty much what you will be doing this time to-morrow, and the day after, and the day after that. And so it will go on for weeks to come.

Well, do you know that looking for these steps will help you very much along this humdrum road, and make it even seem beautiful?

Yes, each day, and each hour of the day, you may look for one of Christ's steps. And when you see it, you will be able to plant your foot in it.

Follow where He went; tread where He trod.

Let us see how it can be done.

Take quite a common day. You wake in the morning, and it darts into your mind at once that you will put off getting up until the last possible minute—because you are so tired. But isn't there now, at this very early hour of the morning, a chance of seeing a footstep of Christ's?

"Rising up a great while before day," comes into your mind. Why did Jesus do that?

To have time for prayer—a long quiet time. And you don't like giving up *two minutes*. For if you dress with a rush, just to save being late, you can't give even that.

But this morning you think to yourself—"I will try to follow Christ." . . . Why, it isn't so bad after all when you are up, and the quiet minutes you get for prayer make your soul feel strong.

Next comes breakfast. Things are not quite to your liking—it's a cold morning, and you feel inclined to grumble. But to-day you look for Christ's step.

He had only homely, common food day after day, and had to wait long sometimes even for that. One day His disciples had to go and buy bread, it wasn't all ready and laid out, and he had to wait, weary and hungry, a long time.

"The disciple is not greater than his master!" Yet what comforts you have compared with His!

Next comes work—the day's work.

Beginning work in the fresh morning is always rather jolly; but going on with it, when you are not so fresh, and tea-time yet a long way off, is a different thing. In fact, work is apt to get tiresome and irksome.

But didn't Jesus know what work was?

Just at your age He was in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. And there, sawing, and planing, and hammering went on all day long, and our Lord was in the midst of it all, taking his share of the work.

For in one place He is called "the Carpenter," not merely the carpenter's son, so He must have actually worked with tools Himself.

Do you think it was the sort of work He liked? Very likely he would far rather have been reading books and talking with learned people than using the chisel, saw, and plane in Joseph's workshop.

But all who work must be so glad Jesus worked. How close to you He seems; you can plainly see His footsteps, and the sight is ever so cheering and refreshing.

Then evening comes. This hour or two is your own, you have fairly earned it. Still you keep the footsteps in mind.

What did our Lord do in His leisure time? Think of Him sitting one day to rest by Jacob's well. That couldn't have been exactly a working time, could it? Yet when a woman, a stranger, came to draw water, what did the Lord do?

Did He say, "This time is my own, I want to rest?" Oh, no; He did His Father's work *when it came*, even in His leisure time.

Tired as He was, He spoke words of life to the stranger, words that seem to have pierced her heart.

You can read about it in the fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

So you, dear lad, won't think only of amusement in your leisure time. Look about, and see if there isn't a step of Christ's to be followed.

Perhaps there is an errand to be run, the garden to be tidied, a little reading aloud to mother, whose eyes are tired, all little trifling things.

But you do them because you want to tread in Christ's steps as nearly as you can, and each step makes you a little more like Him. And that is a beautiful and happy thought with which to lie down to rest.

The Art of Leaving.

When Mme. de Stael visited Weimar with the avowed intention of intellectually capturing the literary lions of the day—Goethe and Schiller—she made one fatal mistake; she stayed too long. Goethe wrote to Schiller: "Mme. de Stael is a bright person, but she ought to know when it is time to go."

The art of leaving is less understood by women than by men. The habits of business, the recognized fact that to a business man time is money, the throng and press and exactness of life, all tend to make men who live in cities the best possible example of the fine art of leaving quickly and neatly. A business man's social call is usually a model of good manners in this respect. When he has said what he has to say, and listened to what there is to hear, he takes his hat, says "Good-evening," and is out of your presence without giving any time or chance for the too-often tedious and embarrassing commonplaces of mutual invitations and promises to call again, which seem to be a kind of social formula with women. In striking contrast with this neat and skilful method of cutting short the parting word of an interview or call, is the too common social practice of visitors who, commencing to leave, seem temporarily to abandon their purpose, and then linger as though it was a kind of compliment to the visiting party to appear loath to part.

Who does not dread the visitor who starts, then thinks of something else to say; rises, and then thinks of another subject of conversation; nearly reaches the door, and most probably holding it open, is aroused to a degree of mental brilliancy that threatens his health and that of his host or hostess, by long detaining of both in the cold draught while he discourses? What a tax on the patience and politeness of the visitor, who vainly strives by assenting instantly to every proposition to end the interview and break the restraining bond of polite attention.

Every-Day Heroism.

It comes to very few of us to perform any great heroic deed, for lives, thank heaven, are in these days too delightfully prosaic to need Joans of Arc, Molly Starks, Grace Darlings or Florence Nightingales; but we can all meet the little jars and nagging worries that daily fret us with a cheerfulness and patience that, who knows, may be remembered by the recording angel longer than if on the impulse of the moment we fling ourselves into tempestuous wave or leaping flame to save a life.

To women, especially, I think, is it given to exercise this gentle courage in facing trial and disappointment and to help others to face it too; for it is oftener her task to keep the strength of another from falling than to summon fortitude for herself. It is so hard sometimes to conquer the gloom and sorrow that oppresses her own heart and smile and soothe away that which lies heavy on another's, but it is just here that heroism can be achieved, and it may be that the cheering word, the loving kiss given then, will live in cherished memory long, long years after the lips that gave it, trembling with hidden pain, have been stilled forever. Over a coffin I saw a man bend the other day and kiss the sweet face sleeping on the satin pillow, exclaiming:—

"In poverty and grief she never failed to have a kind and hopeful word for me. You know how poor, how squalidly poor, we were for years, and yet in all that time I never even saw her frown complainingly."

What a tribute! Had ever queen a nobler, or could there be a higher, to be sought by a wife?

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