

Christian Worker.

"WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TODAY."

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SCRIPTURAL ATTITUDE DURING PRAYER.

To say that all religious duties should be done according to divine teaching and example, will accord with the judgment of all enlightened minds. Religious services or acts, should be performed in a manner suitable to their purpose, and so as to be acceptable to the Lord. To sing the praises of the Lord in the assembly, in a trifling thoughtless manner would show a want of reverence, and tend to lead the mind away from the sentiment, and also from the dignity of the One to whom the praise is offered. So also should prayer be offered thoughtfully and reverently, and conform in matter and manner to the dignity of the Lord, so far as the supplicant is capable.

With this introduction the writer would call attention to the scriptural attitude in prayer, and as a reason for it would state, that there is a great want of uniformity in this matter among the congregations. Some congregations stand and some kneel. In some there is a want of order; some standing while others kneel or perhaps sit. We say to every reader, if the scriptures decide the point let them be followed. We venture the assertion that kneeling is the only attitude taught by precept and example in the bible. And would add, that all deviations from it rest only on human authority. Being well aware that many will dispute this position, be it remembered we rely only on bible authority. Any amount of special pleading about present customs and conveniences, may be made, but such are of no value, and we trust no dear brother will show a liking for such persons as loved to "stand praying at the corners of the streets," anciently. Scriptural teaching and example are alone admissible. All efforts to justify a lack of conformity to bible teaching and example, are but attempts to justify conformity to the world and excuse pride. Let it be well understood, we address those especially who understand the gospel, and claim to be following the Lord's example.

The reader's attention is now invited to the proof of our position. David says in Psalm 95:6, "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker." In 1st Kings 3, 54, we are told that when Solomon had finished his prayer, he "rose up from kneeling on his knees" and stood and blessed the people. Again in 2nd Chronicles 6, 13, we are informed that Solomon, "kneeling down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel." We learn from the book of Daniel 6, 10, he knelt upon his knees, "three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." These three illustrious persons, in kneeling were humble, reverential and consistent. We come now to the New Testament, and read in Luke 22, 41, "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and knelt down and prayed." It is said of Stephen, Acts 7, 60, "He knelt down and cried with a loud voice, Lord Jesus lay not this sin to

their charge." Acts 9, 40, tells us that Peter in the chamber of the dead, "kneeling down and prayed." Again it is said of Paul, Acts 20, 36, "He knelt down and prayed with them all." Also in Acts 21, 5, we are informed that a numerous company near Tyre who escorted Paul, all "kneeling down on the shore and prayed." Some reader may perhaps remember a verse in Mark 11, which reads, "when ye stand praying forgive," and he may conclude he has a warrant from it to stand during prayer. The publisher of the "Laying Oracles," omitted the word stand; no doubt for good reason. Might the writer modestly say on good authority, that the word rendered stand does not always indicate the position of the body, but may only imply "to stand firm," to be "constant or persevere." Hence we say, that verse in Mark gives no positive proof for standing. A writer whom we read lately when asked to explain this passage, says "the Lord taught them to stand." But read again and see if the Lord says stand up and pray? He is teaching them to forgive others when they ask for it for themselves, and there can be no proof gotten from it, that any one ever stood by divine authority in prayer. All positive teaching and examples are against standing.

Now dear reader if you have doubts learn by example. If you are standing before an audience in prayer, hear the venerable Psalmist say to you, "O come let us bow down," "let us kneel before the Lord our maker." Look now at Solomon on his knees, and Daniel too kneeling in prayer three times a day, and learn the lesson by example. Let those who lead in prayer standing, think of their responsibility.

Paul said, "be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." Now, dear brother, will you do so? Then behold Paul and the Ephesian elders at Miletus, all kneeling in prayer. Then again see Paul and the church of Tyro all kneeling on the sea shore and follow their example. Again, let those zealous brethren who invite the audience to address the Majesty of Heaven standing, contemplate the Saviour's last visit to Gethsemane. Behold the Heavenly Master kneeling on the ground, and shall man haughtily stand and address Him before whom the Saviour would in humble reverence bow!

We present the above to all the dear brethren for their consideration, and especially to those beloved ones engaged in public labor. Look at the whole matter, dear reader, and if you think only one side is given, please give the other, if it has two sides. No challenge is intended, and only positive example or direct divine instruction is requested. We do not ask for a recommendation, or a plea for what may be supposed is not forbidden. We trust to no acrimonious criticisms, and no biting replies will be returned. Speak out, dear brethren, freely, candidly and kindly, and truth will prevail, and brotherly love continue.

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God. 'Tis too profound for human thought; the finite mind cannot grasp it,—truly "the world by wisdom knoweth not God." He was a stumbling block to the proud Jew, and to the Greek fooliness,—but to those who believe He was and still is both the power of God and the wisdom of God,—for in "Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"—and yet He made himself of no reputation,—wherefore God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Do you see that group of mourners standing by that grave yonder? They are in deep conversation. One says "Could not this man who opened the eyes of him that was born blind have caused that even this man should not have died." Look again,—there stands one very near the grave,—He is weeping and through His tears He says "Take away the stone"—He looks like a man, He weeps like a man—He speaks like a man, but tis the voice of God. "I am the resurrection and the life." "He that believeth on me though he were dead yet shall he live." "And when He had thus spoken He cried with a loud voice "Lazarus come forth!" will the dead obey His voice? Yes—"He that was dead came forth" Jesus says in the depths of His sympathizing humanity "Loose him and let him go." We have at the grave of Lazarus the most striking demonstrations both of the humanity and divinity of Jesus the Christ. In His tears we have His humanity, in His power to raise the dead we behold His Divinity. There are thousands of men to day who cannot be moved to tears—but Jesus had tears to shed He could weep with those who weep—He was touched with the feeling of our infirmity,—and by virtue of His humanity He had blood to shed, and by virtue of His divinity His blood avails for a guilty world, for "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" He hath not redeemed us with corruptible things but with His own most precious blood. It is worthy the contemplation and serious thought of the most profound philosopher, and yet it is quite within the grasp of the wayfaring man, that God commended His love toward us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. But let us notice further this child of Bethlehem, the "Father of an everlasting age"—this Prince of peace—and you will observe from His birth till His death, burial and glorious resurrection, upon every occasion where humanity (as an essential element in His nature) reminding us that "He took not on Him the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham," appears—there the mysterious blending of the divine, with His human nature also

marks this wonderful union. Truly "unto us a child is born," but look away out on yonder plains, gloriously illuminated with light celestial, and listen to the voice of the heavenly messengers "behold I bring you good tidings of great joy—unto you is born this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord," and suddenly there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host and they sang this beautiful song—"glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to men." And this wonderful star that guided the humble shepherds to "the place where the young child lay," and then forever disappeared, leaving behind this wonderful record and verification of the prophecy, "unto us a child is born," and that this is indeed the "wonderful counsellor," Christ the Lord; your Savior and mine. Look down yonder by the side of the Jordan, there are two men in close connection, one is John the Baptist, but who is that other in whose presence this great man John who is attracting so much attention, appears so embarrassed? 'Tis the Prince of the house of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. John looks at Him and says, "I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me." Jesus said, "suffer it to be so now." They go down into the water and John baptized Him and they came up out of the water, and so far have all the characteristics of two men in the observance of a solemn ceremony, but presently there appeared from the blue vault above, for the "heavens were opened unto Him," a voice is heard from beyond the parting clouds, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Like a man He was subject to temptation, but as a divine man angels minister unto Him. Out on yonder boisterous sea labors a vessel. 'Tis dark. Who is that sleeping in the forecastle there? Everybody seemed alarmed; one runs to him and exclaims, "master carest thou not that we perish?" He looks like a man. What is He going to do? Listen—"peace be still." Will the wild waves obey His voice? Yes, "there was a great calm." And the sailors were afraid and said, "what manner of man is this that the wind and the sea obey Him?" This is God manifest in the flesh. On the declivity of yonder mountain is seen three men ascending. Presently they reach the summit—they talk together like men. Can you point to me the man of sorrows? Look again; I said three—are there not five? Who are those two and whence came they? "And there appeared unto them Moses and Elias; and they were talking with Jesus." Peter and John had grown weary, but the place suddenly became interesting and particularly attractive to Peter, and he says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Jesus is transfigured before them and from the throne on high again a voice is heard—"This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." We might refer you to the garden and the ministering angels there, to the cross and its accompaniments. "He dies, the friend of sinners dies." He is laid in the tomb—the stone, the

angel descended and rolled back the stone, the keepers "become as dead men." "He is risen! He is risen!" now greets the ears of the disconsolate disciples and echoes through the heavenly plains and angels chant the solemn lay. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" is and ever shall be the theme of the redeemed.

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PATIENTLY ENDURING.

The apostle, speaking to those very dear to him, prays that after they have suffered a while they may be established, strengthened and settled. Peter himself had suffered, and had still to suffer even a violent death, and he knew that many of those he was addressing would lose their lives; all in those times who took upon them the name of Christ were exposed to fearful persecution. The thing to be most desired in Peter's estimation was, not to enjoy immunity from suffering, but to pass through it in such a way that it might finally result in perfection of character. Silver is not considered to be perfectly refined until the image of the refiner is reflected in it, and until the fiery trials of the christian have moulded him to a resemblance of the Master the process is not complete. This thought should encourage us to a patient endurance of our comparatively light trials.

We read of Abraham, "after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise." Further on in the twelfth chapter the Hebrews were commanded "to run with patience" the race set before them. We can accomplish nothing either for this life or the next without patience. Solomons very seldom are the results of our labors instantaneous and much as patience is necessary in the affairs of this world, still more is it necessary in the affairs of the kingdom. "It is mentioned among the fruits of the Spirit. James says, "let patience have her perfect work," from which we infer that the exercise of patience was a powerful agent in the development of the other graces of the christian character. I think neither hope nor patience will be needed in the future life. When the present contains all satisfying joy when sorrow has become a thing forever past we need no more the lamp of hope to light us through the gloom. When we have received the promises, no more need to patiently wait for them. When pain is done away we shall not be "patiently enduring." When in the clear light of Heaven's eternal day, what were myriads during the dark days have been made plain to us, we need no longer wait patiently for the explanation of all. When the unerring Judge of the Universe has set right all the wrongs of earth there will be no longer need of bearing these wrongs patiently.

Seeing, then, that it is only during our probationary years that we are to cultivate patience should

we not use all diligence for we do most certainly and continually need it now, "for," says Paul, "ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise." To those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor and immortality is promised eternal life. A harvest is promised in due season to those who neither weary in well-doing nor faint at the magnitude of the task.

It was want of patience that caused the patriarch Jacob to set out on the thorny path, the first step on which he took when he deceived his father Isaac and obtained by fraud that blessing, that birthright which was promised by God to him, and which would therefore have been bestowed upon him in due season without those fraudulent measures if he had only patiently waited God's time and way instead of impatiently and presumptuously taking the matter into his own hands. For this want of trust in God he suffered long and bitterly. His treacherous conduct placed his life in jeopardy; he had to flee from the wrath of his injured brother, and after years spent in serving a tyrannical and unjust master he at length returned. The children of Israel, journeying from Egypt to Canaan, were not patient; they did not like to wait for the blessings promised them, they murmured many times and were punished; and finally all but two were condemned to perish in the wilderness. From the beginning until the present time thickly strewn all along the way are examples of the power of patience and of the evils resulting from the want of it; and so, doubtless, it will be until sin and its attendant train of evils have been forever destroyed and the "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" has succeeded this sin-stained abode of fallen man.

Heirs of an inheritance, pure and undefiled, shall we not patiently wait for it, though here we may have literally "no continuing city." Sure that the Judge of all the earth will do right can we not bear with any injustice we have to bear during this "little while," knowing that in the world to which we go there is no death, nothing to cause parting of friends, can we not patiently endure the pangs of separation from loved ones here, if God sees fit to lay this burden upon us? In short, should we not, with patience, bear the trials of earth in view of the bliss of Heaven? And should not our chief desire be so to live our life here that it may form a fitting prelude to the life eternal.

I will here quote a verse I heard sung by a dear friend not many weeks ago which made a deep impression: "Is it true, as many say, life is but a passing day? But that Heaven is lost or won ere its fleeting days be done? Yes, it's true! Oh, it is true!"

And, being true, let us labor with all diligence to make the most of this passing day last the night of death overtake us, and instead of the Master's "well done," we hear "O, thou wicked and slothful servant, thou hast been unfaithful in little, and therefore the opportunity to be faithful in much will never be given thee."

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