

F.B. Meyer:

Our walk is a synonym for our life. Life is a walk from the cradle to the grave. Our steps emerge from the jewelled gates of birth, traverse rock and sand, enamelled meadow and difficult mountain steep, and ultimately pass within the portal of death, which, though sombre enough when seen from afar, is often found to be irradiate with light from the world beyond.

In this sense the word occurs in all parts of Scripture. In the opening chapters of Genesis it is said of Enoch that he walked with God. And in one of the last Epistles, we are bidden to walk even as Jesus walked. And between these extreme points, the pages of Holy Writ are strewn with similar references. Indeed, the comparison of life to a pilgrimage is based on the same conception. The race of man goes afoot, as a vast host.

A walk is made up of steps. Though a man circle the globe, yet he must do it by one step at a time; and the character of the steps will determine the character of the walk. So life is made up, for the most part, of trifles, of commonplaces, of the reiteration of familiar and simple acts. And what we are in these, that will be the colour and value of our lives in the verdict of eternity. Life is not made by the rapturous but brief moments which we spend on the transfiguration mount; but by the steps we take to and fro along the pathway of daily duty, and of sometimes monotonous routine.

THE WALK OF THE OLD LIFE. (Ephesians 2:2)

The apostle does not scruple to unveil the past of those whom he addressed. "Look," he cries, "to the reck whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. Ye were once dead in trespasses and sins." But though in our unconverted state we were utterly dead to the claims of God and the life of the spiritual world, yet we were very much alive to the promptings of that malign trinity of evil, which is ever set upon the ruin of the souls of men. "Ye were dead . . . ye walked."

As the doctrine of the Divine Trinity is never expressly formulated in Scripture; though it may be derived from many an obvious inference, so there is no difficulty in showing that the world, the flesh, and the devil, are in essence one in their endeavour against the soul. Here, for instance, in successive sentences, the apostle speaks of "the course of this world"; of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience"; and of "the lusts of the flesh and of the mind."

Here are several points that deserve our earnest thought.

(1) Those who live a worldly life are as much under the influence of the devil, and as much children of wrath, as those who give way to the lusts of the flesh. This is a very solemn thought. We make distinctions which are not recognized by God. We classify sinners after a fashion which will not stand the test of eternity. We pity the child of fashion, whose one thought is dress, rank, and amusement; flitting like a butterfly from flower to flower, and squandering the priceless hours in vanity and gaiety. But in the sight of God, such a one stands in the same category, is the prey of the same evil spirit, and is menaced by the same doom as the libertine or the sot. It may even be that a frivolous worldly life is more offensive to God than that which is swept by violent storms of passion.

(2) Beneath the shows of this world--its pageantry and pomp, its fascinations and ambitions, its round of amusement and engagement--there lurks the disobedient spirit, who is set upon inducing disobedience to God, and whose seat is in the air.

It is difficult to understand precisely the meaning of these words. Is "the air" a different locality to the "heavenly places"? Has the seat of the devil's kingdom been shifted from the earth or the heavenlies to the air? Is the very atmosphere laden with the invisible microbes of Satanic influence? We cannot tell. But it is enough for us to know that, while Satan tempts some through their passions, he tempts others through the riches and baubles, the shows and lures, the cares and anxieties of worldliness, which is Godlessness. This explains why the apostle John said that the love of God was not compatible with that of the world.

(3) As the Spirit of God works in those who fear to grieve Him, so the spirit of the prince of the power of the air works in the unregenerate and unbelieving. There are secret passages to our souls by which influences, whether from heaven or from hell, may enter our most secret thoughts. By the one we are prompted to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, that we may live unto God; by the other to indulge the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and so to remain dead unto God, dead in trespasses and sins.

(4) It is as ruinous to the inner life to indulge the desires of the mind as those of the flesh. By the marvellous gift of imagination we may indulge unholy fancies, and throw the reins on the neck of the steeds of passion--always stopping short of the act. No human eye follows the soul when it goes forth to dance with satyrs or to thread the labyrinthine maze of the islands of desire. It goes and returns unsuspected by the nearest. Its credit for snow-white purity is not forfeited. It is still permitted to watch among the virgins for the Bridegroom's advent. But if this practice is unjudged and unconfessed, it marks the offender a son of disobedience and a child of wrath. It is thus that we walked once. But God loved us, and lifted us out of these dark and dangerous paths, putting us on the Ascension track; may He keep us from choosing or treading them again. Hedge up those ways with thorns, dear Lord, and make fences against us, that we may not find them.

THE WALK OF GOOD WORKS. (Ephesians 2:10)

Before the vision of the evangelic prophet arose the conception of a highway that should intersect the desert. It was the way of holiness; the unclean should not pass over it. No lion or beast of prey would haunt it; none but the redeemed would tread it. As soon as they should touch it, gladness and joy would greet them like twin radiant angels; whilst sorrow and sighing, that had pursued them hitherto, would drop away disappointed, like dark angels of the pit.

That causeway was prepared for the ransomed before the foundation of the world; but it was fully opened and revealed by the work of Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit. Directly we yield ourselves to these blessed influences, we begin to tread it. We find that each step has been prepared for us, so that we have but to put down our feet. As long as we keep it we are safe from alarm and molestation. Our hearts beat out the glad marching music to which our feet answer blithely. And sorrow and sighing flee away.

WALK WORTHILY OF YOUR CALLING. (Ephesians 4:1)

The simplest words are the deepest. Take, for example, the word call. It is constantly on our lips. The shepherd's call to his sheep, the herdsman's on the hills, the mother's to her child. And God appropriates it in his dealings with men. He calls them. From the throne of his glory He speaks to every soul of man once, twice, many times; as when He said "Samuel, Samuel," or "Saul, Saul." In some solemn hour of decision, in a moment of awful crisis, by human voice or written word, or by the pleading and remonstrance of conscience, God's voice may be heard calling men to Himself, to Heaven, and to a saintly life. On that call the apostle bases his argument for holiness. Act worthily of the love which summoned you, and of the goal to which you have been called. Stand still and ask yourself before you speak, or act, or decide--Is this worthy of that great ideal which God has conceived for me, when He called me from the rest of men to be his priest, his saint, his son? If not, eschew it!

WALK IN THE LIGHT. (Ephesians 4:17, Ephesians 5:8)

God is light; and when we live in daily, hourly communion with Him, in such a frame of mind as that his name is frequently in our hearts, or murmured softly by our lips, or spoken as a talisman when temptation is near, we may be said to be walking in the light. And it is just in proportion as our steps tread the crystal pathway of light, that our understanding becomes enlightened. In God's light we see light. When the heart is pure, the eye is single.

The contrary to this is also true. When we are alienated from the life of God, our understanding is darkened to the truth of God. The seat of infidelity is in the heart. Once let a soul become shut out from the life of God through the hardening of the heart; once let it give itself up to lasciviousness, and to make a trade of uncleanness with greediness: then the light of the knowledge of the glory of God beats against a shuttered window, asking for admittance in vain.

If you would know God, you must resemble God. If you would learn God's secrets, you must walk with God. If you would know the doctrine, you must be willing to do his will.

But there is something even better than walking in the light; it is to become children of the light. What an exquisite conception! Dewdrops sparkling in the light of dawn; star-dust glittering on the vault of night; humming-birds flashing in the tropic sun; children dancing in light-hearted glee, none of these are so truly sons of light as they who have been begotten by the Father of Lights; who carry within them the Light that lights up hearts, and who, in goodness, righteousness, and truth, prove what is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Let us live as such.

WALK IN LOVE. (Ephesians 5:2)

We are to imitate God's love in Christ. The love that gives, that counts no cost too great, and, in sacrificing itself for others, offers all to God, and does all for his sake. Such was the love of Jesus--sweet to God, as the scent of

fields of new-mown grass in June; and this must be our model.

Not to those who love us, but who hate; not to those who are pleasant and agreeable, but who repel; not because our natural feelings are excited, but because we will to minister, even to the point of the cross, must our love go out. And every time we thus sacrifice ourselves to another for the sake of the love of God, we enter into some of the meaning of the sacrifice of Calvary, and there is wafted up to God the odour of a sweet smell.

WALK CAREFULLY. (Ephesians 5:15)

Pick your way amid the pitfalls of the world. Gird up your flowing robes with dainty care, lest they be soiled by the filth of the street. Beware of any side paths that would lead your steps away from the narrow track. Watch and pray. Especially be careful to turn every moment of time into an opportunity of making progress in the Divine life. Take heed to the moments, and the hours will take heed to themselves.

All these injunctions, however, will baffle us, and leave us stranded on the shore, when the impulse of their stimulus ebbs, unless we blend with them the thought that God is willing to walk with us--nay, in us; for He saith, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Abide in God, and God will abide in you, and walk in you, till you walk with Him in white, being found worthy.