

"I Know Not the Man!"

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me in this sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father"—Mark 8:38

RECENTLY our readings have taken us through Mark, and the record of that sorrowful event of the apostle Peter's denial of Christ. He had vowed vehemently that he would not forsake nor deny his Lord and Master—

"Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."

And again—

"If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise."

There is much we can learn from any portion of the Word of God, so let us examine more closely this small portion we have under consideration and endeavour to extract the lessons it holds for us and how they may apply to us.

After Peter told Christ that he would not deny him, Christ warned him that—

"Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice."

Christ knew the weakness of the flesh, for he was made like unto his brethren—

"In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

The weakness of the flesh soon became apparent in the events that transpired in Gethsemane. When Judas had betrayed Christ by his kiss to the multitude (who took him away to the high priest) then the disciples "all forsook him and fled."

Peter, who had protested that he would go with him even unto death, "followed afar off."

Truly the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. No doubt Peter was torn between his desire to be with Christ and console him, and the fear of being apprehended himself, so he "sat without in the palace." A damsel confronts him—

"Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth."

"But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand what thou sayest."

And another maid saw him and said to them that stood by—

"This is one of them."

Would we in word or deed deny our Saviour as Peter did the second time?—

"I do not know the man" (Matt 26:72).

Perhaps we would not say so in so many words, but the way we live and the way we act can certainly proclaim our denial as loudly as words—

"Ye are my friends—IF YE DO WHATEVER I COMMAND YOU."

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one "And after awhile came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee.

"Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man!

"And immediately the cock crew."

What a bitter moment for Peter! The crowing of the cock called to mind the words of Jesus a few hours previous. He failed as Christ said he would, and he went out and wept bitterly.

Have we not all had these moments of failure as did Peter? We start out with such good intentions to do what is right, but we find that in a little while we have failed completely, and we are in the depths of despair.

We realize that the Scriptures have plainly set forth a guide as to how we should act and what we should say and do that will cause our light to shine forth in the darkness. We know that doing the will of God sets us apart from the world, yet how prone we are to forget the commandments as we go out into the world to earn our daily bread, or to shop, or whatever the occasion may be.

It is so easy for our actions and speech to take on the colour of those around us.

Does our speech "betray" us? Does it betray us as being the friends of the world, or does it let others know that we are friends of Christ, because it is—

"Sound speech that cannot be condemned."

Let us heed the words of James in regard to the tongue, that little member of our body that can do so much harm. He exhorts us to keep our tongue under strict control, for he warns that misuse of it can defile the whole body.

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ALTHOUGH Matthew and Mark record Peter's denial of Christ, there is one detail that is added to the picture in Luke's narrative. After Peter had denied Christ the third time, Luke says—

"The Lord turned and looked upon Peter.

"And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice."

We can imagine how Peter must have felt when Christ's piercing gaze rested on him. The time is near at hand when Christ will look upon us . . . at the judgment seat. Will his glance bring joy and pleasure, because we are approved, or will it cause sorrow and shame as it did to Peter on this occasion?

Peter, as we know, later strengthened himself so that he was able to follow Christ faithfully. We will not have the opportunity to change once we stand before Christ and he has judged our works.

The time to be faithful is now. Let us not be among the defiled who profess that they know God, but in works deny him. We know that if we deny Christ he will also deny us. Let us rather **deny ourselves**, and take up our cross and follow Christ.

—J.P.
