

Rev. Lydia Jenkins in the Pulpit—Walking in Newness of Life

Mrs. Lydia A. Jenkins occupied the pulpit of the Fourth street church, Williamsburgh, at the morning and evening services of Sunday. She was licensed as a preacher some weeks since, it will be remembered, by an ecclesiastical association in Western New York, of which her husband is also a member. She employs manuscript. Her manner is pleasing, and her voice musical. After the introductory ode, the speaker advanced to the desk and repeated the Lord's prayer, following it with an invocation for the Divine assistance, and concluding with an acknowledgment of the faith of the resurrection, which she prefaced by that mistranslated text in Job, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

The text was from Romans 6:4—"Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The resurrection, she said, was no mere mechanical lifting up of the body, but the exaltation of the whole being. Christ had borne the cross to Calvary, and afterward ascended up to God. While he walked with them on earth, his disciples experienced a sense of familiarity with them, but afterward they were struck with their own inferiority; they were amazed, and worshipped him.

The old standards, observed Mrs. Jenkins, do not come up to the high idealities of modern times. They permitted glaring vices and deficiencies, whereas Christianity requires that we be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing;" that our affections should be educated to greater tenderness; that we should live like him.

"Walking" is constant advancing—going step by step onward, each step surely bringing us farther from the past, and nearer to the source of all perfection. These steps are not to be retraced with remorse. We are to "walk in newness of life" in every relation—as child, brother, sister, consort [spouse], parent, neighbor, citizen, and perhaps on the public relations of teacher, prophet, evangelist, reformer. We are to imitate Him who never sinned, who did no violence, who prayed forgiveness for those who nailed Him to the cross; causing Pilate to testify that he "found in him no fault at all; Judas that he [Judas] had "betrayed innocent blood," and the centurion that "this was indeed a righteous man."

Christ has never yet been comprehended in the world. The inspired evangelists wrote better than they knew. The primitive churches comprehended him but imperfectly. Paul, with all his power of logic, did not comprehend that spirit of Love, and John felt that he knew him not. The idea of Christ is progressive. Like the glorious sunset on the prairie, his perfection seems nearer to us, but as we advance toward it, it still appears just as distant as at the first. The attainment of knowledge from teachers is not difficult, and we may often surpass our instructors. But here is One whom it is not so easy to exceed. Thus we see the goodness and wisdom of God in affording this perfect pattern. We must love this new life for its own sake; giving up everything of the old life, the right hand, the right eye, and everything pertaining to sinfulness. Holiness is more desirable for its own sake, than sin with all its attractiveness. We are bound and obligated to walk in this newness of life by Humanity, to which we are inseparably connected, by Christ, whose debtors we are; and God, by whom we are eternally beloved.

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