

## Pastoral Letter November 2013

### Following Jesus

Christians can be described in various ways, as is the case in the Bible. One thing that can most certainly be said of them is that they follow Jesus – they are his ‘followers’. The word carries the sense of ‘going after’, but within that compass there is included loving him, trusting him, obeying him, honouring him, and much more besides. When the Lord Jesus Christ called Matthew to be his disciple, his charge to him was simply (yet profoundly), ‘Follow me’. Matthew’s response was immediate and total: ‘And he rose and followed him’ (Matthew 9:9). When speaking of the cost of discipleship, Jesus puts it this way: ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me’ (Luke 9:23). On another occasion Jesus spoke these precious words: ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’ (John 8:12).

What an amazing thing it is to be following Jesus! These lines by Sarah Doudney express most delightfully something of the richness involved, and I commend them to you for encouraging and challenging reflection. They are found in *Golden Bells* (318) and when sung are most suitably taken to the beautiful old melody, *The Ash Grove*.

The Master hath come, and He calls us to follow  
The track of His footprints He leaves on our way;  
Far over the mountain, and through the deep hollow,  
The path leads us on to the mansions of day.  
The Master hath called us, the children who fear Him,  
Who march ‘neath Christ’s banner, His own little band;  
We love Him, and seek Him, we long to be near Him,  
And rest in the light of His beautiful land.

The Master hath called us; the road may be dreary,  
And dangers and sorrows are strewn on the track;  
But God’s Holy Spirit shall comfort the weary –  
We follow the Saviour, and cannot turn back.  
The Master hath called us: though doubt and temptation  
May compass our journey, we cheerfully sing.  
‘Press onward, look upward’, through much tribulation  
The children of Zion must follow their King.

The Master hath called us: in life’s early morning  
With spirits as fresh as the dew on the sod;  
We turn from the world, with its smiles and its scorning,  
To cast in our lot with the people of God.  
The Master hath called us, His sons and His daughters,  
We plead for His blessing, and trust in His love;  
And through the green pastures, beside the still waters,  
He’ll lead us at last to His kingdom above.