

*The*  
**PRESENT TRUTH**  
 and  
**Herald of Christ's Epiphany**


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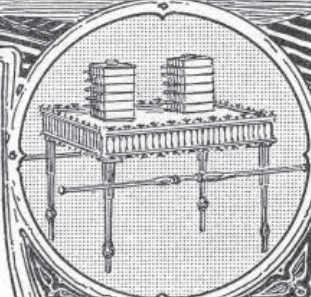
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*"The Lamb opened the seventh seal." "Ye have approached Mount Zion, and the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. . . See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh . . . saying . . . 'Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven' . . . Wherefore, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear." "Christ being come an High Priest . . . by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle . . . obtained eternal deliverance."—Rev. 8: 1; Heb. 12: 22, 25, 26, 28; 9: 11, 12.*





# WHO MAY KNOW GOD'S SECRETS

In heathen lands as well as throughout christendom secret societies include large proportions of the human family. Outsiders know something of their general motive and object, but their particular methods, hopes, endeavors and ambitions are kept secret. To effect this secrecy, to protect and conserve the interests of their association, obligations to profound secrecy are fastened and clinched with oaths, some of which are reputed to be most upsetting, the endeavor being to fetter liberty of expression on such matters, not only by the obligations of honor, but also by those of fear. It is no part of our mission to attack any of these orders or to inveigh against their procedures. We merely refer to them here, and call attention to the fact that this is a common method among men and evidently has the sanction of many, because we wish to draw to your notice the fact that the Almighty God Himself is the Founder of a Secret Society. Moreover,

*Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand*  
**Daniel 12:10**

while there are certain correspondences between the human secret orders and the one of Divine origin, we shall find as we should expect that the latter was in every way superior to all others. Its aim and object were wider than all, embracing the entire human family, promising good, blessing and assistance to every member of the race "in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6). Again, although its methods of operation were secret, this is not because they were in any measure or degree sinful, disreputable, injurious or underhanded, but merely because secrecy was to their advantage, not only of the members of the society, but especially because secrecy as respects to the work that was being accomplished would ultimately be beneficial to the masses of mankind. This is in full harmony with the Divine statement, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9).

As in some secret societies there are different steps or grades—for instance, all Masons are familiar with the secrets pertaining to the first degree, yet not all Masons are familiar with the secrets, etc., pertaining to the thirty-second degree, so in God's Secret Order there are first principles of the doctrines of Christ, which must be known to all who belong to the order, and there are also "deep things of God," which may be known only to those who have made advancement by growth in grace and knowledge and love (Heb. 6:1; 1 Cor. 2:10). To some unfamiliar with the facts but having a knowledge of earthly secret societies it may seem strange to say that the secrets of the Divine Order of the Sons of God are so abstract, so impenetrable, that they may be discussed freely in the presence of others and not be comprehended at all. Indeed, so far from laying restrictions upon the members of this Order not to communicate its secrets they are authorized, yea, urged to make these known to all who may be able to comprehend, understand them, with many assurances that only the right class will be able to comprehend. Our text is one of these assurances, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Another assurance is, "The natural [unconsecrated] man receives [understands] not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"; and again, "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence Him, and He will show them His covenant" (1 Cor. 2:14; Psa. 25:14). The only restrictions in respect to the telling of the secrets of this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood are, "Give



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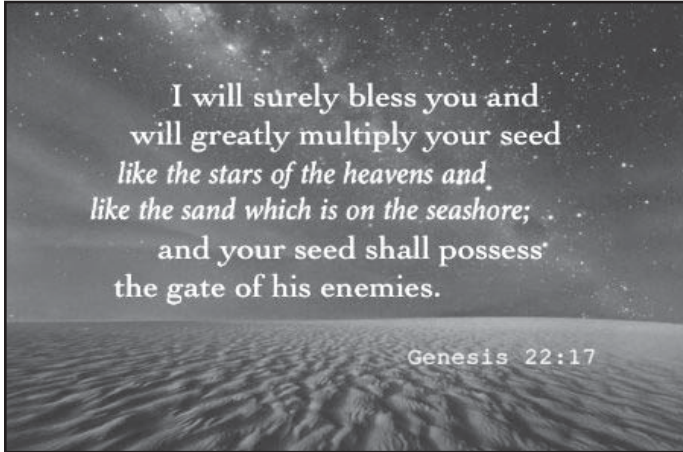
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Free from all sects, parties, organizations, and creeds of men, but bound to God as it understands His Word, this magazine stands for —

- The defense of the Parousia Truth, given by the Lord through "that Servant," as basic for all further development of the Truth;
- The defense of the arrangements, charter and will given by the Lord through "that Servant," as binding on controlling corporations and associations among Truth people; and for
- The exposition and defense of the unfolding Epiphany-Basileia Truth, as meat in due season for the Lord's people, as He is pleased to provide it.

not that which is holy to dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they . . . turn again and rend you” (symbolic—Matt. 7:6). These secrets would be injurious to them; and, misunderstanding them, the swinish, the groveling, in sin, might be incited to violence through disappointment, recognizing no value in pearls nor in anything else that would not please.

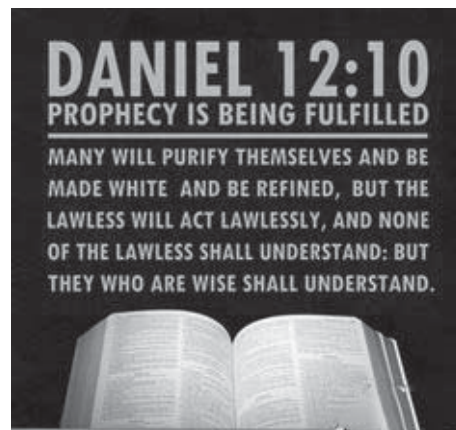


The Scriptures assure us that our Creator purposed the founding of this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood before the foundation of the world. In due time Melchizedek, a kingly priest, was set forth as constituting its type, in the days of Abraham—and then, too, a preparatory or Junior Order was inaugurated, Abraham being chosen of the Lord as its Grand Master. To him the whole secret of the Order was communicated in few words, saying, “In you and in your Seed shall all the families (nations) of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 28:14). The meaning of this was but partially grasped by Abraham himself and all of his posterity, the Jewish nation, who with him became members of that Junior Order during a period of two thousand years. They understood this to signify that at some time Messiah would come and establish a new order of things with the result that Abraham’s posterity in particular and the nations of mankind in general would receive through Him a great blessing. These hopes of the Junior Order proved very encouraging and helpful to those of them who properly entered into the spirit and designs of the Order and sought to appropriate the blessings and privileges of Divine relationship accorded them. In proportion as by faith they entered into this Order they took degrees of knowledge and of love and had more of the Divine approval. But as for the other nations of the world they were not admitted in any sense of the word to this Order. It was exclusively for Abraham and the Jews; and all others were strangers and aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel.

It was primarily at our Lord’s Baptism and secondarily

at Pentecost following His redemptive work and ascension to the presence of the Father, there to appear on their behalf as their Advocate, that the Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood was organized—“the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven” (Heb. 12:23). It is not an earthly organization, but a heavenly one, and properly it is not composed of those whose names have been written on earth, but those whose names have been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Earthly organizations, called by various names, represent many misunderstandings of the Divine arrangement and unintentionally do violence to principles of the Order; and, whereas these sectarian lines have separated some of the true members of the Melchizedek Priesthood, they also received as members many whose names were not written in heaven, many who had not the credentials of the true Order, who did not understand its secrets, because they were not properly initiated by the holy Spirit. You will understand, dear friends, that in our view of the matter the division of the Church of Christ into various bands and companies under various banners—Wesley’s, Calvin’s, Luther’s, the pope’s, etc.,—represents so many mistaken ideas, so much confusion, misunderstanding, bewilderment, contention and error. These organizations were not only not necessary but wrong, in that they tended to distract and divide the true members of the Divine Order, who should have known each other not by outward badges and names, but by their acquaintance with the Lord and with His secret, which was with the “Church of the first-born” those who feared, (reverenced) Him.

The first principles of the doctrine of Christ was to enable any of those who were truly the Lord’s to make themselves known and well acquainted with

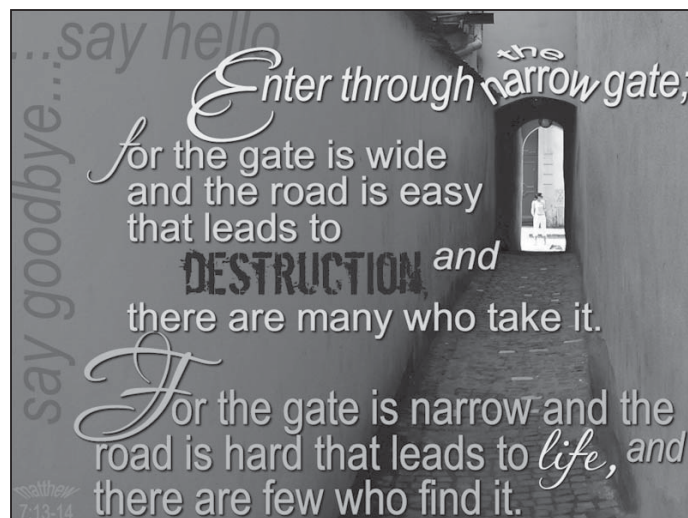


others, without any earthly introduction or distinguishing name. Indeed, all these did know each other when they met; but the Adversary’s effort was to keep them apart and if possible

to hinder the progress and growth of the Divine Order. But he did not really hinder it; instead, his methods merely assisted in making the Order the more secret and

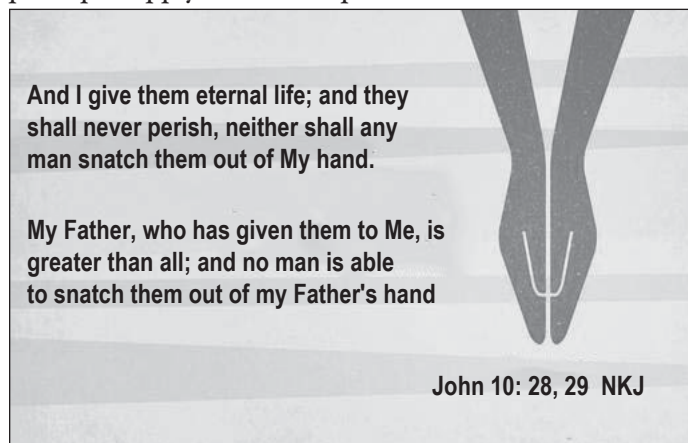


unknown to the world, including those merely so-called Christians, not spirit-begotten. So great has been the deception that the Lord Jesus, the grand and everlasting Head and Master of this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, was crucified by some who belonged to the Junior Order and who were in one sense earnestly waiting for the establishment of the new Order and for an opportunity to enter it! They were not permitted to enter because they were unworthy—except for the few of whom we read about in John 1:11, 12; “He came unto His own and His own received Him not; but to as many as received Him, to them gave He liberty to become the sons of God”—to join the Order of Spiritual Sons, the Melchizedek Order of the Priesthood. Similarly all down through the Gospel Age there was an outward Church of God and a true inward one. The world has seen the outward one, but not the inward. It has applauded and reprimanded the outward, but has uniformly disallowed the true inward one and considered its members to be merely foolish. So the Apostle Paul assures us that himself and others, zealous in the service of the Lord and doing the work of this higher Priesthood, were counted fools all the day long for Christ’s sake (1 Cor. 4:10); and St. John says, “. . . the world knows us not, even as it knew Him not” (1 John 3:1). Similarly all who lived godly in Christ Jesus have, as the Apostle stated, suffered more or less of persecution and ignominy because they were not recognized of the world—so impenetrable are the secrets of this Order and its message that others did not know them. Nevertheless, the Order had grown, increased, and its fixed or limited membership has been completed. No further additions can now be accepted. And we rejoice that this special Order are now at home with the Father preparing to establish His Kingdom here on earth. For this reason He is now selecting another class that will be assistants in His earthly Kingdom! This present class can benefit greatly from this study of the Order because these principles apply also to this present class.



Let it be understood clearly that membership in this Order does not mean injury to those who are not members of it, but contrariwise it means ultimately a blessing to come to them all through the Melchizedek Priesthood, as it is written of this spiritual Seed of Abraham, of which Christ Jesus is the Head and the Church the Body, “In your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 28:14). The selection of the members of the Order was accomplished under evil conditions because they all had to become overcomers, willing and able to count it all joy to be in tribulation and to suffer loss for the sake of the Order, its interests, its workings and membership and its future work. Whoever was not willing to suffer for the cause was counted unworthy to be a member—in a word, every member of the Melchizedek Priesthood had to sacrifice his life in the interest of the Order, in support of its glorious Lord and Head and His teachings and in serving in general the interests of the Order and its members—“We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.” It will then be seen that the gateway into this Order was a strait one and the pathway of membership in it was a very narrow one—“Strait is the gate and narrow [difficult] the way, that leads to life,” the special immortality and associated glory which God has provided as the eternal portion of this elect Melchizedek Priesthood (Matt. 7:14; 1 John 3:16).

Briefly we might say that in one sense every member of the Order was in bondage, and that in another sense every member was free. Let us explain this strange expression. Each was free to leave the Order, renounce it, denounce it and the blood that cleansed him and count the blood wherewith he was sanctified a common thing and do despite to the spirit of favor which initiated him into this Order. In doing so he incurred no threat of eternal torture. He merely brought himself under the death sentence, similar to the one under which he was before he



was reached with the grace of God through the precious blood, excepting that it meant the Second Death, from which there is no remedy, no ransom, no recovery by resurrection or otherwise—an eternal death similar to that experienced by the entire brute creation. While, therefore, each member of this Royal Priesthood was at liberty to go back to wallowing in the mire, like the sow that was washed, yet if he chose to remain, he was also at liberty to follow this righteous course—none shall be able to pluck him out of his Father’s hand nor to separate him from this grace (John 10:29; Rom. 8:38, 39).

Moreover, as already stated, those who abided in Christ, who abided in this Order of the Royal Priesthood, have its blessings and privileges fully with the most exacting terms and conditions; namely their full surrender to the

**GOD’S DEFINITION  
OF WHAT MATTERS  
IS PRETTY  
STRAIGHTFORWARD.  
HE MEASURES OUR  
LIVES BY HOW WE  
LOVE**

Law of the Order so far as their intentions were concerned. “Ah!” one might say, “the laws of that Order must have been voluminous. Doubtless many volumes of Divine statutes and regulations would need to be studied by the members of this Royal Priesthood.” We answer, No! The entire Law of the Order is briefly

comprehended in one word—Love. It was demanded and required of every member of the Order that love shall be the test, not only of his deeds, but also of his words—yea, of his thoughts. Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

True, those initiated into this Order were persons of like passions as the Apostles said in (Acts 14:15). Some of them naturally were more fallen than others, and had less of love and more of selfishness than others; but all who joined the Order were required to make resolution in their hearts as respects this law of Love; and all the internal workings of the Order were with a view to the perfecting of its members in love. They had to learn to love the great Founder of the Order supremely, and in turn to trust to His Love as well as to His Wisdom and Power, so that in obedience to His will they consecrated and spent time, talent and influence, yea, all that they possessed, in His service. Secondly, He admonished that to love those who loved them was not the test which He applied; but that they were expected pityingly to love all mankind, to do good to all men as they had opportunity, especially the Household of Faith (Gal. 6:10). It was required of

them that they should especially love the brethren, the members of the Order, and be ready and glad to lay down their lives for the brethren. Tests along this line were continually necessary to weed out of the Order all who had not approximating its standard of Love Divine, that all delinquents were cast into the outer darkness, in which the whole world was, and have a share with the world in its tribulations, and especially in those which came upon it in the closing of the Age and the inauguration of the new one, when the Melchizedek Order of Priests take possession of the empire of earth for its blessing and uplifting. It will be seen then, that the statement that love is the bond of perfectness with this Royal Priesthood, has a deep significance. The members of this Order were not constrained by oaths of allegiance one toward another, as they had a stronger bond by far, the bond of love; and if any man have not this spirit of Christ he is none of His (Rom. 8:9).

### WICKED CANNOT UNDERSTAND

**“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**

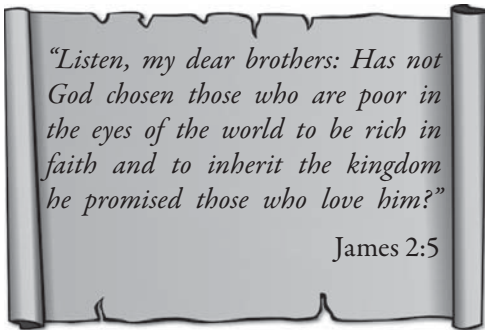


**1 Cor. 2:14 (NKJ)**

### THE WICKED SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND

It is at times really amazing to note how the unconsecrated mind, attempting to understand the Mystery of God, designed during the Gospel Age only for the members of this Order, falls into such egregious blunders and makes such peculiar misstatements respecting what we endeavor to set forth as plainly and as consistently as our abilities will permit. We need not think that the fault is ours, since we find that the words of our Lord Himself and of His inspired Apostles were similarly misunderstood, and that they have explained to us that God hides these things from others than His devoted ones. Mark our Lord Jesus’ words in His prayer, “I thank You Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Your sight” (Matt. 11:25, 26). But how absurd it would be to think that our Lord would thank the Father for hiding things from any, if we were to associate with that thought the one which the world and the non-

Christian associate with it; namely, that all from whom God hides these special things or secrets of the Lord are in consequence appointed to an eternity of torture! What a travesty it would be upon Divine Love and Justice and upon the character of the Father and our Redeemer! But this is not the thought. None of the wicked understand, because for them to understand would not only mean a greater measure of condemnation upon them but would also mean an endeavor on their part to oppose and circumvent the Divine arrangement.



As for the worldly-wise they may not understand; for not many great, not many wise, not many learned are chosen of the Lord as worthy

of membership in this secret Order of Melchizedek. He explains elsewhere the reason for this; namely, that He was seeking only the meek, the humble-minded, those who were willing to learn of Him, and to have their minds transformed and conformed to the pattern most pleasing to the Lord. This, under present conditions, is impossible to the worldly-wise, who feel their own superiority, etc., and seek not the wisdom that comes from above and the Divine approval. In a word, then, our Lord's testimony shows that the wise who will understand the things of God and initiated into the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Melchizedek Priesthood were not the worldly-wise or great—with few exceptions. They were chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, who became heirs of the Kingdom which God has promised and for which we still pray, "Your Kingdom come" (James 2:5 ; Luke 11:2). This is another reason why the world knew them not, even as it knew Him not. Had our Lord been one of the worldly great and bright, haughty and domineering, wealthy and influential, yet possessed of His talents and powers, no doubt the very ones who crucified Him would have hailed Him King. It was His humility, His poverty, etc., that led to His rejection and His crucifixion as a false prophet. Much the same was true of all of His followers who were members of this Royal Priesthood Order. And they had to be content with such a rejection by the world because of their realization of acceptance with the Father and with the Grand Master; content with the assurances granted in the Scriptures and confirmed by the holy Spirit

in their experience. They were to wait patiently under these conditions the fruits of the Spirit.

We are not hindered from telling the ultimate purposes of this grand Secret Order which our Lord organized, and of which, we trust, many of our readers understand through faith in and consecration to the Lord. We may tell of these mysteries, knowing that none of our readers will be able to appreciate or thoroughly to comprehend all of these mysteries except such of them as have consecrated themselves to the Lord, passing from grace to grace and from knowledge to knowledge. We remind you here of the Master's words when approached by the disciples who asked, "Lord, why speak You to these people in parables?" Jesus answered and said unto them, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to all outsiders these things are spoken in parables and in dark sayings, that hearing they might hear and not understand" (Luke 8:10). To our understanding the total number of members in this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood is 144,001 (Rev. 14:1), the one being our Grand Master and Lord and Redeemer, the others being those of whom He says, "All you are brethren," and of whom the Apostle declares they are members in particular of the Body of Christ, the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven (Heb. 12:23). Under another figure our Lord is spoken of as a Bridegroom, and these 144,000, now espoused to Him, covenanted to Him, are united to Him as His Bride, the Lamb's Wife and associates in His Throne and work of the future (Rev. 21:9).



This completed elect class were all shaped and polished as the Lord's Jewels, tested with trials and difficulties. The time will soon come for the inauguration of the work of this Royal Priesthood. The Kingdom class all in glory—Jesus their Head glorified over nineteen centuries ago, the Church, His Body glorified with Him by a share in His kind of resurrection. The time will soon come when the Law shall go forth and the Word of the Lord; Satan shall be bound and every evil thing shall be plucked up by the root! What a turmoil this will mean at the beginning—



it may be better imagined than described. But so far as the uprooting and overturning is concerned, the Lord has a peculiar way of accomplishing this: namely, by simply allowing present institutions and governments to “run out of control,” to overthrow themselves, to develop anarchy which will sweep the world as with a broom of destruction in a Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation! It will be at the conclusion of this period of awful anarchy toward which the world is now rapidly heading and from which it cannot be held back by human wisdom and prudence, because selfishness has blinded the minds of the masses. The Scriptures tell us that when that plowshare of trouble shall have passed through the world and finally the new order of things shall have developed, the poor world will begin to have ideas in respect to life, justice and righteousness; and we read that many nations shall then say, “Come let us go up to the Kingdom of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we shall walk in His paths” (Micah 4:2). And again, “The desire of all nations shall come.” All nations will be so thoroughly weary of the awful trouble that they will be glad to welcome the Reign of Righteousness then due to be inaugurated.

The reforms will be thoroughly established. Justice will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and

Let us  
**LOVE**  
*not in*  
*word or speech*  
*but in*  
*deed and truth.*  
*1 John 3:18*

the lies will all have been swept away, Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, his deceptions shall cease, and instead the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth (Isa. 28:17; Hab. 2:14). When the judgments of the Lord shall be abroad in the earth (rewards for well doing and stripes or punishment for evil doing) the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. Then the

willful, persistent evildoer shall be cut off in the Second Death. Ultimately the blessing of the Lord through this Melchizedek Priesthood shall accomplish all that its Divine Founder outlined in the first statement of the good news to Abraham, namely, “In your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” As a result we read that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the

glory of God, and that Christ shall reign until He shall have put down every opposition and evil, the last enemy that shall be destroyed being death (Isa. 45:23; 1 Cor. 15:25, 26). The whole world shall be uplifted from the power of sin and death, and be brought back to allegiance to the Heavenly Father. And then, say the Scriptures, The Christ, the Melchizedek Priesthood, shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, that He may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28). However, the Scriptures clearly indicate elsewhere that the great honor of God upon Christ, His beloved Son, and upon the Church, the Bride of Christ, will be an everlasting honor; but the details of the Father’s purposes for the Church are still held as an unrevealed mystery, even to those who have the secret of the Lord and to whom He has shown the significance of His Covenant made to Abraham on blessing all the families of the earth.

Whoever says, "I love God,"  
but hates his brother is a  
liar. The one who does not  
love his brother whom he  
has seen cannot love the  
God whom he has not seen.  
1 John 4:20

In conclusion, dear friends, we exhort that those of us who are now of the household of faith but have consecrated too late to become members of this Secret Order of the Lord, should appreciate more and more fully the wonderful privileges that we have and gladly conform more and more to its requirements in our consecration, that we may make our election sure to the glorious fruition of our hopes in the earthly Kingdom of God, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” We shall best do this by studying our Manual, which our Lord has given us, His Word, and by developing the various fruits and graces of the Spirit, all of which are elements of the one general law, namely love to God and to our fellows. We remind you of St. Peter’s words, “If you do these things, you shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered to you abundantly to the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:10, 11; Psa. 119:97-104).

# COMING AFTER JESUS

*"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."*

**Matt. 16:24**

OUR text certainly furnishes us food for thought; for in this text Jesus is setting forth the terms of discipleship under the subject, coming after Jesus. According to the text this subject has three aspects, which will form the divisions of this article. Our companion text is "And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

## SELF-DENIAL

The first of these is self-denial, stated in the words, "Let him deny himself." Self-denial is not self-torture, as some think, which makes saintship consist of self-torture [self-indulgence]. The nature of Biblical self-denial is NOT self-torture; doing things repulsive to human nature is not the Biblically inculcated self-denial. What then does the Bible mean by self-denial? It means refusal on the part of the consecrated to gratify the proper natural human sentiments self-ward and world-ward whenever their indulgence interferes with devotion to the interests of God's cause.

"AND ANYONE WHO DOES NOT CARRY HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE."

Luke 14:27

The proper natural human sentiments are our proper selfish and social affections. The proper selfish affections are a proper love for a good opinion of self and others, for rest, safety, concealment of injurious things, for self-defense, aggressiveness, providence, food, drink, health and life. The proper social affections are love for the opposite sex, husband or wife, children, parents, brothers and sisters, friends, home and native land.

To sum up: Self-denial for the consecrated is saying "No" to the proper selfish and social affections whenever they cry out for indulgence at the expense of study, practice and spread of the Truth, of watchfulness and

The Christian life is not about self-promotion; it's about self-denial.

prayer and of the faithful endurance of the accompanying experiences.

## TAKING UP ONE'S CROSS

Our text's second exhortation is that one who wishes to come after Jesus "take up his cross." Of course, the word cross here is used figuratively.

The figure is based anticipatorily upon Jesus' crucifixion; for His slow, lingering death by crucifixion, with its nerve-racking physical pains and mental sufferings, fittingly portrays the experiences of the sacrificial death with its slow-dying, sensibilities' shocking, physical and mental sufferings. Furthermore, the cross illustrates such a death from others' standpoints: Piercing Jesus' hands by the nails fittingly portrays how sacrificial service is distorted by enemies inflicting sufferings on the sacrificing ones.

Piercing His feet shows how the faithfuls' conduct is distorted by enemies inflicting sufferings on the sacrificing ones. Piercing His side pictures forth how sorrows inflicted by enemies pierce the hearts of the faithful sacrificers. And the circumstances of His crucifixion furnish other relevant pictures. The publicity of His sufferings shadows forth the publicity of the sufferings of those who come after Him. His crucifixion without the gate types the faithfuls' undergoing rejection from the fellowship of God's nominal people. And the multitude's reviling and reproaching Jesus represents how the nominal people of God revile and reproach His followers. In these and other ways Jesus' crucifixion symbolizes the cross-bearing of Jesus' followers.

## WHAT THE CROSS SYMBOLIZES

The cross, therefore, as used in our text symbolizes the difficulties, troubles and sufferings that attend our narrow way, the way of consecration. Though we have particularized these already in these columns, it will not be out of place to repeat them here; because a reconsideration of them will emphasize them increasingly to our hearts and minds.

The main ones are losses, disappointments, delays, restraints, shelvings, ours and others' faults, lacks and weaknesses, chastisements, hardships, necessities, isolation, misunderstandings, differences, contradictions, controversies, divisions, siftings, alienations,

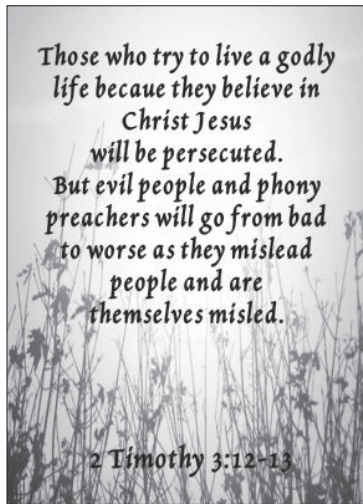


disfellowshipments, enmities, misrepresentations, slanders, revilings, reproaches, pains, sicknesses, sorrows, persecutions, temptations, dying, etc.

To take up the cross means, not self-sparingly to avoid or give up, but resolutely to grapple with and to endure the conjoined experiences as we go on in the sacrificial course of our narrow way.

### REASONS TO TAKE AND BEAR THE CROSS

There are good reasons why we should take up the cross and bear it faithfully to the end of our narrow way. The LORD'S Word is clear that this is a thing that the LORD'S faithful people should do.

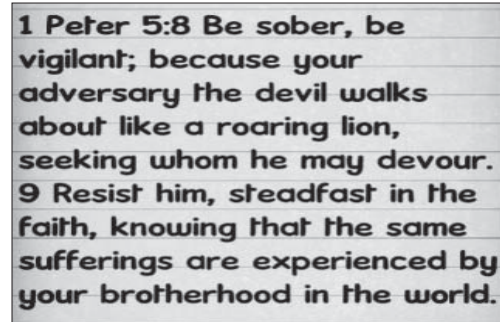


“We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). “All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). “When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). “Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me” (Psa.

32:4). “Many are the afflictions of the righteous” (Psa. 34:19). “All the waves and billows are gone over me” (Psa. 42:7). “We went through fire and through water; but you brought us out into a wealthy place” (Psa. 66:12). “I am so troubled that I cannot speak” (Psa. 77:4). “My enemies reproach me all the day” (Psa. 102:8). “I found trouble and sorrow” (Psa. 116:3). “I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction” (Isa. 48:10).

“Every branch that does not bear fruit, he takes away, and every branch that bears fruit he prunes, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2). “In the world you shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). “We are troubled on every side . . . perplexed . . . persecuted . . . cast down; always bearing about in the body the dying [literally, the putting to death] of Jesus . . . always delivered unto death . . . death working in us . . . though our outward man perish . . . our light affliction, which is but for a moment” (2 Cor. 4:8-12, 16, 17). “Approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults” (2 Cor. 6:4, 5). “The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren” (1 Pet. 5:9). “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3:19).

We see from these Scriptures, a few from among many, that afflictions are a portion that God's people in cross-bearing must receive; and the experiences of the faithful corroborate these Scriptures.



Many are the reasons that the Bible gives as to why Christians are to take up and bear the cross. Here we will stress only one

of them: Afflictions work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28).

The connection proves that the good here meant is conformity to Christ's character likeness. In the earthly Kingdom, people will not have to bear the cross in order to fit them for eternal life; all that they will have to do is to obey from the heart amid comparatively easy conditions whatever trials and tests fall to their lot. But now there is a holy necessity for our accepting the cross—we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God. Christ's footstep followers, like Him, will need to have all the spiritual affections and all the graces, the higher and lower primary graces, the secondary and the tertiary graces, with the higher primary graces strong, balanced and crystallized, dominating all the other graces, suppressively when necessary, and subjectingly when needed for the service of truth, righteousness and holiness. These character attainments must prevail in them, not only in easy, pleasant, agreeable and toward circumstances, but also in hard, unpleasant, disagreeable and untoward circumstances.

If our Lord had to undergo sore experiences in order amid them to demonstrate a character that could be depended upon by God to do from the heart God's will in His Spirit and for His purposes, regardless of the involved difficulties, we may depend upon it that His footstep followers have to do the same for the same reason and in the same Spirit. If they would not have characters on which God could depend always, everywhere and under all circumstances to do His will heartily, regardless of how difficult it would be, they would not be fit for the Kingdom, and the God of perfect wisdom, power, justice and love would not entrust them with the responsibilities of sharing in the glories of the Kingdom with Christ.

By trials of the kinds mentioned above, testing them at every point of character, God requires of them the

demonstration of a character on which He can depend to take His side of all questions and requirements in His Spirit and for His purposes. Not to do this would result in injury to all concerned. To do it is a most reasonable requirement on God's part. And to have obtained such a demonstration from them will justify God in giving them the responsibilities of sharing in the glories of the Kingdom with Christ, for the furtherance of all of God's

**Father, today I choose to resist fear. I choose Your Word. I choose Your love. I believe that with You, all things are possible. I choose to obey quickly and boldly embrace the victory and blessing You have for me in Jesus' name.**

This is the holy necessity as to why we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God. Let us not count it strange when we fall into various trials, as though some strange unexpected thing has happened to us (1 Pet. 4:12) but rejoice therein because of what they imply.

#### **THINGS HELPFUL TO US IN TAKING UP AND FAITHFULLY BEARING THE CROSS**

Many things will help us willingly to take the cross and faithfully to bear it to the end: first of all, a consideration of the great favor that the LORD has bestowed upon us in giving us, even though it be through the cross, the opportunity of qualifying for sharing in the glories of the Kingdom with Christ; then, a consideration of the love and care that He exercises toward us while we are bearing the cross, of the mercy that He shows us in fitting the cross to our backs and our backs to the cross, of His not suffering us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but with each temptation, trial, finding a way of escape for us when it threatens to be too hard for us (1 Cor. 10:13), and of His making the cross one of the all things working together for our good. Then there are considerations as to our Lord that are helpful toward enabling us to take and bear the cross: One of these is looking unto Him in His bearing the cross all the way from Jordan to Calvary. Another is His acting as our Advocate and High Priest, taking care that our Adamic weaknesses are covered, and do not condemn us as we remain in Him. Third, is His teaching us every needed lesson while we are undergoing trial, enabling us to know what and how we should do, and what and how we should not do. A fourth is His helping us in every time of need, never leaving, failing nor

plans and purposes; for such a character can be developed only amid hard trials; and only such a character is fitted to administer the responsibilities of the Kingdom well and fruitfully.

forsaking us. A fifth is His leadership of us in our trials and battles from victory to victory as we prove loyal. A sixth is His longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, patience and sympathy in our every time of need. And a seventh is that He is dependable and will be on our side in all our trials.

Then, too, a consideration of our place in God's plan, present and future, of our past victories when faithful, of

**2 Peter 1:5-9**  
**For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness;**

our past failures when not faithful enough, of our partaking of the holy Spirit, of our privilege to bless our brethren by an example of steadfastness while bearing the cross, of the high honor of our being participants each

in our respective calling, of our desire to honor God and Christ by faithfulness, of blessing mankind by and by with restitution and of establishing everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness everywhere—all of these considerations will help us bear the cross.

And, finally, let us faithfully use the Spirit, Word and providences of God in our cross-bearing, as the three great means of our overcoming, and we will surely gain the reward after laying down the cross in death.

#### **FOLLOWING AFTER JESUS**

The third thing according to our text is following Him. This means to make Him our example and to imitate Him as such. The other two things that, according to our text, belong to coming after Jesus are preparatory to this third thing belonging to it; for self-denial and accepting the cross, or Christ's yoke, put us into the position to follow Him.

#### **MEDITATION ON GOD'S WORD**

Another thing that belongs to following Jesus is to think as He thought, on God, Himself, the Spirit, the Bible, creation, the Covenants, the fall, the curse, the ransom, justification, sanctification, deliverance, glorification, the Kingdom, restitution, the consummation, love to God and man and the historic and prophetic program of God's plan; for these are the subjects on which Jesus thought; and we are to follow Him in thought. This will give us His knowledge as ours; and we will find it to be what He found it to be: a light, a guide, an armor, a power, an inspiration, a defense, a fortress and a comfort, supplying most of our needs for the mind, heart and will. He will send us as due the proper understanding through His mouthpieces; and meditating on it with true faith, hope,



love and obedience, we will find it the power of God unto salvation.

### OBEYING GOD'S WORD

Then, too, we should follow Jesus in His obeying that Word as the will of His Heavenly Father for Him. In every circumstance of His life He obeyed the good Word of God and was thereby enabled to fulfill God's will in character construction. Especially did He thereby develop wisdom, power, justice and love in His holy Spirit amid His self-denials and cross-bearing! And in this we should follow Him, rendering willing, hearty obedience to every part of the Word applicable to us, endeavoring in motive, thought, word and act to imitate Him, do as He did, and do as the Word shows He would do, if in our place, in all expressions of character. Then will Christ live in us.

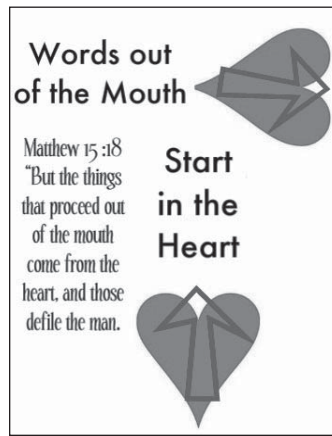
### WITNESSING TO GOD'S WORD

To follow Jesus also implies that we come not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give our lives on behalf of God's plan. This is what He did (Matt. 20: 28). He witnessed the Word of God at all times, in all opportunities, to every listening ear and to every hungry heart with which He came in contact. He did this when it was convenient or inconvenient to Him, easy or hard, by day and by night, through good report and evil report, to friend and foe, young and old, rich and poor, great and small.

In following Jesus we, too, are to bear witness to the Truth, seeking out hearing ears, seeing eyes and hungry hearts. Like Him we are to do it whether convenient or inconvenient to us, to friend and foe, to young and old, to rich and poor, to great and small, in good report and evil report, gladly heralding the good news of God's grace shining in the face of Christ Jesus. If others contradict, oppose, revile, misrepresent, reproach and otherwise persecute us as witnesses of the Truth, let us look to, and follow Him in the same conditions, and then we will derive strength to go on as messengers of the good Word of God.

### SELF-EXAMINATION AND WATCHFULNESS

We should follow Jesus in self-examination and watchfulness. As He scrutinized His disposition, motives, thoughts, words, acts, surroundings and the



influences operating out of and upon Him, so let us examine our dispositions, motives, thoughts, words, acts, surroundings and the influences operating out of and upon us. As He guarded Himself to keep Himself from evil and to direct Himself into good in disposition, motive, thought, word and act, so let

us guard ourselves to keep ourselves from evil and to direct ourselves to do good in disposition, motive, thought, word and act. If we do this faithfully we will be kept from falling from our steadfastness, as those certainly fall from their steadfastness who fail to scrutinize themselves and to guard themselves from the attacks of the Devil, world and flesh. We will do such self-examining and watchfulness, if we are alive to our consecration vows and live closely to the LORD.

### THE PRAYER LIFE

We should follow our Lord in the prayer life. Perfect though He was, Jesus felt the need of going frequently to, and remaining long at the Throne of Grace. We see this done by Him when contemplating the unbelief of the nominal Jewish people and the spirit of the Israelites indeed (Matt. 11:25, 26), in His frequently spending all night in prayer, also at Lazarus' tomb, in the upper room just before His betrayal, in Gethsemane, and on the cross. Doubtless, daily and hourly He sought the Throne of Grace, where He found love, sympathy, wisdom and strength. If He who was perfect needed to seek the Father's grace, how much more do we, who are encompassed with infirmity, need it. Yes, we need it to obtain mercy for our sins and weaknesses and to find grace to help for every time of need. To encourage us to use this privilege we have the Father's ability, invitation and promise. And His answers to our proper petitions offered up in Jesus' name and merit are a constant incentive for us to seek anew His grace, mercy and Truth.

And if, like Jesus, we fulfill the conditions of prevailing prayer—letting God's Word control our petitions and remaining faithful to our consecration (John 15:7)—we will be favored with answers to our prayers. Let us, therefore, go confidently, in the full assurance of faith and with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6), to our gracious Heavenly Father, and we will obtain the answers to our properly made prayers. And in this we will be following Jesus.

Such following of Jesus in meditation on the good Word, in witnessing to that Word, in living out its principles for our development in the holy Spirit, in self-scrutiny, watchfulness and prayer must be faithfully accompanied by appropriate self-denial and world-denial and be expressed amid self-denial and world denial. It must also be kept up amid our cross-bearing; for while the Millennial world will study, practice and spread the Word, as well as exercise self-examination, watchfulness and prayer while under the easier conditions of the Highway of Holiness (2 Cor. 13:5) we, until restitution

begins, have to do these things amid and in spite of the trialsome experiences, enumerated above, experiences that constitute the cross-bearing in our narrow way. And if we are faithful therein our present will be lighted with God's favor, and our future will be as bright as His promises to us. "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

Onward, then, let us go in "coming after Jesus," in self-denial, in taking up our cross, and in following Him, sustained by God's grace, Jesus' help and the participation of the holy Spirit!

## SELF-CONTROL

*"Add to your knowledge self-control" (2 Pet. 1:6, Diaglott).*

Self control is one of the higher primary graces. St. Peter mentions it as such in his famous addition problem (2 Pet. 1:5-7). In the KJV the word for self-control is in this passage rendered "temperance"; in the Diaglott and the ARV, however, it is properly rendered "self-control." Temperance was at one time used to mean self-control; but in our times its meaning has somewhat changed. It will be well for us to consider what is meant by self-control.

While treating this phase of the subject, it may be well to correct a misapprehension as to the meaning of this word. Most people seem to think that self-control means longsuffering. This is a mistake; for these are two distinct qualities; self-control is a higher primary grace, while longsuffering is a secondary grace. Longsuffering is a quiet, unresentful behavior of one's self amid exasperating circumstances. While self-control is related to longsuffering, especially in operating through the secondary and tertiary graces many people confound self-control with longsuffering; but when we understand the work that self-control has to do, we see that it works not only through longsuffering, but also through the other graces. We exercise it in connection with all the other secondary graces—humility, modesty, bravery, activity, restfulness, self-sacrificing, forbearance, candor, liberality and temperance—as well as with all our other graces.

Those who think the particular function of self-control is to enable us to keep our temper, labor under a mistaken idea. Longsuffering has that function to exercise amid exasperating circumstances. Self-control dominates longsuffering, therefore is not the same as longsuffering.

Self-control is the strength of character whereby through firmness we rule ourselves in well-doing. This definition will be found to be very definitive. It points out the heart of the quality in the word *strength*; for it is defined as *strength of character*, which certainly is the heart of self-control. Self-control will come to its assistance, bringing will-power that

is able to say "no" when "no" ought to be said, and "yes" when "yes" ought to be said; and this, reinforced by patience, will develop strength of character.

Self-control is not a firmness exercising rulership in evil doing; for that would be a perversion of firmness, and would develop stubbornness. The firmness of self-control may be better understood if we recognize it in contrast with its perversion. The difference between the firmness of self-control and of stubbornness is this: Self-control is firm, determined in its ability to rule self along the lines of good; stubbornness rules one along the lines of evil, particularly in sin, error, selfishness and worldliness. Stubbornness will not listen to reason, argument or proper principles, being fixed in its wrong way, therefore developed toward the worldly and selfish sentiments. It is a decided perversion of firmness that constitutes stubbornness. When firmness is developed in the direction of evil it makes one stubborn; but when developed in the direction of good it gives us self-control.

The final exhortation of 1 Cor. 16:13 (be strong) operates through, supports and makes active the things implied in its three other exhortations, as well as in other hardship features of the Christian warfare. Power is a universal grace, and especially in its ingredient of patience, with faithfulness, the final overcoming grace. Satan's cunning, his perseverance and versatility in his efforts to overthrow us as Christian soldiers and to bring us back into his captivity, make it necessary for us to be strong; for how without the strength of self-control and patience in ourselves and in their working in and through our other graces, could we stand fast against his hard and persistent attacks on our faithfulness? Satan would be more than a match for us, if success in this warfare depended on our unaided strength. We surely would fall beneath his blows, if our Lord Jesus, as the Captain of our salvation, did not stand on our side to relieve and deliver us; but even with Him on our side, unless we put forth our full strength of endurance we are sure to be defeated in this fight, which is not one of



victory for cowards, but is one that enlists all the courage and strength that we can marshal for the fray, if we would come off more than conquerors. Accordingly, the character and ability of Satan, our arch-foe, makes it necessary for us to be strong for the LORD. We, as children of the Heavenly King, are to put away the spirit of the world and the Adversary, by coming to the LORD in sincere prayer.

In so doing we shall be preparing ourselves to look for the evidences of the holy Spirit in our lives. We shall be enabled to see whether we have more meekness than we once had, or whether we still lack in meekness. We shall perceive whether we are more gentle, more patient, whether we have more self-control, and in what respects we especially need to develop more in spiritual fruitage. Undoubtedly all of these qualities are lacking to a greater or less extent; but as we watch and pray, we shall learn to find the answer to our prayers; and as we grow in knowledge, in love, in Christlikeness, we grow in likeness also to our Father in Heaven.

How nicely this exhortation to be strong fits into this study of self-control in both of its ingredients, wisdom and power. Wisdom hands the plan that it devises, for power to execute. Power lays hold on that plan to carry it out. But before attempting to do this, it summons justice in its duty love toward God [piety] and toward man [brotherly kindness] and charity as disinterested love, as motives to impel it to execute the plan that wisdom devised. Then, amid conditions that have no special obstacles, power in its ingredient of self-control puts its strength back of justice and love, pushing them on to carry out this plan of wisdom, motivated now by justice and love. As a rule, this will be all that is needed to execute the pertinent plan; but if obstacles arise which are too formidable for self-control to manage, patience is summoned to its aid, and the latter puts its strength back of self-control; and the united strength of these two, pushing justice and love as motives to carry out the plan to a successful issue. No plan, consciously or unconsciously formed, is executed apart from power. That is the great need of our having strength of character—self-control and patience. We cite some Scriptures on self-control, [Saul] 1 Sam. 10:27 But certain worthless fellows said, “How, will this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.” [Jesus] Matt. 26:62 “And the high priest stood up, and said to him, answer you nothing? What is it that these witnesses have against you?” In v. 63 “But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said unto him, I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

### NECESSITY OF SELF-CONTROL

Prov. 25:28 reads: “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls.” In Bible times cities were often places of refuge, where the inhabitants

of the country congregated for protection. When the earth was less populated and the necessity for government was less appreciated than now, the marauding bands of misfits were likely to take possession of whatever was open to their attack. So the cities of ancient times had strong walls. This was true, we remember, of Jerusalem and Jericho. It was true of ancient Troy, and also true of cities in Europe. In Vienna, the old wall of the city still stands; and so with other walled cities. But as improved forms of government were adopted, cities no longer needed protecting walls. The police nowadays constitute a wall of protection. However, Prov. 25:28 is referring to a wall such as was formerly used, and to a city which had become dilapidated and the wall broken down. King Solomon gives this as a picture of a human being who has no rule over his own spirit. He is unable to protect himself against evil influences from within or without, as a result of having suffered his will to be broken down by various influences.

All mankind are born with more or less of determination. Some have this in a very marked degree; others in a lesser degree; no one, we believe, is wholly without this quality of will, purpose. But we find that whether our wills are strong or weak they need direction. Lessons in the directing of our wills come from various quarters; for instance, we have the laws of the city, laws of the state, laws of the country, which direct the individual as to what he may do and may not do—particularly what he may not do. As one looks into the source and history of these laws, he finds that they represent the accumulated will of a long period. Mankind now has much better laws. We have often thought it strange that fallen men have been able to produce laws as just as we find on the statute books today. But although very good laws may be made, yet people may ignore the law. A jury may set aside all law. A judge may pervert the law. Things that are unlawful often become a practice of an individual or a town or a city. To cultivate in one's self a lawless disposition is to cultivate the spirit of anarchy; yes, a spirit of indifference to the rights and interests of others. There are some who manifest reasonable respect for the laws of man because of necessity or public opinion makes it impossible or inadvisable to do otherwise. There are some who may at heart be anarchists as regards the Law of God, the great Law-giver of the Universe, who is blessed forever.

Disaster is sure to result when we yield ourselves over to passion, to allow it to sweep over us and master us, whether we are weak-minded or strong-minded. The weak-minded have their limitations; the strong-minded have the excess of power, and are more potent for evil. We hear a great many say, when they have lost control of their temper, or have been cranky or despondent or ill-natured or discourteous, well, that's how it is; I do not mean any harm. They acknowledge the matter, and seek to justify themselves by saying that it is natural to them! But no human being should live according

to what is natural to his or her fallen nature. A being created in the image of God and still retaining some traces of his original Godlikeness, should live above the plane of the lower animals, which follow merely their natural instincts and passions. Some seem to glory in what they are pleased to term their high spirit, which will always stand up for their “rights.” They are not as weak and childish as to let anybody run over them! When they do not like what others do or say, they say just what they think of the others. They have some force of character! Oh, how the Adversary and his hosts, together with the perverse fallen nature, can deceive and mislead and blind the judgment that is not guided and instructed by the only true guide—the Word of God! How they can make that which is noble, and truly strong and Godlike appear weak, childish—and make that which is weak, selfish and animal appear strong, manly, and noble!

All should recognize that the inclinations, the impulses and the preferences of the fallen nature of man are often contrary to that which is right, noble, truly desirable. All should be regulated by some standard, either the civil standard by which the world is governed, or the standard of God. But one might live up to the letter of a law and yet be violating its spirit. The Law of God is the very highest standard of law. And the spirit of God’s Law is embodied in the Golden Rule. This standard the whole world recognizes as right; and surely the LORD’s people should measure all their conduct and their words, yes, their very thoughts, by this standard. They will be rulers over their own spirit. The word *spirit* in Prov. 25:28 represents the mind, the impulses of one’s nature. We are to rule our mind, our natural impulses. This means that if a thought presents itself to the mind, or if we feel a certain impulse, we should be quick to perceive the nature of the thought or impulse; and if it is not in harmony with the principles of righteousness or with our covenant as children of God, we should at once resist it. If we are unable to do this successfully of ourselves, as is often the case, the heart should be promptly lifted to the LORD for His promised grace to help in time of need. If we feel an impulse toward a certain action or course, we should carefully weigh the matter, and decide as to its righteousness or propriety in the circumstances, looking to our unfailing source of help for guidance.

The world would say that this is too exacting—that they would have more pleasure in doing their own will. But we know that in doing their own will they frequently get into difficulty. We as Christians have covenanted not to follow our own will; we have given up our own will and have taken the will of God instead. The more advanced the Christian, the more we should expect that he would be able to rule his spirit—“casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought” (2 Cor. 10:5) to the will of God in

Christ. And if we rule our mind, our thoughts, we shall rule our tongue. If the thought were not in the mind, the tongue would not utter it. There is a grave danger of saying things, or of doing things, under a momentary impulse, that our heart, our consecrated judgment, would not approve; the necessity of bringing our thoughts and impulses into subjection (Luke 6:45). We must ask: What will be the effect of my words or my action upon another? Would it bring harm? Would it be an injury? Would it cause needless pain or would it do good? By scrutinizing himself and ruling his spirit, the child of God is showing the earnest desire of his heart to be pleasing to the LORD and true to his covenant. And those who learn to rule their own spirit according to the will of the Father are the ones whom He will be pleased to say; “Well done good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matt. 25:23).

### HOW CAN SELF-CONTROL ATTAIN STRENGTH OF CHARACTER?

We must ask, as a Christian, can I cultivate this control of my own spirit? At first the Christian does not have the power to control himself in everything; but as he learns to exercise self-control in the little things, more and more doing what he can in thought and word and deed, he will gain in strength of character. Building our character can be likened to the building of our body’s muscles; this requires the daily exercising of these muscles, the proper feeding day by day until we grow them to our advantage!

And so it is with the Christian in his character development. If we daily practice self-control, we shall gradually attain a strong character along this line, which will be of inestimable advantage to us in our Christian warfare. The cultivation of self-control should properly begin in one before birth, yes, at the time of conception. The mother should practice self-control, that this disposition might be impressed upon the mind of her unborn child, that it might enter the world in a much more favorable condition and this spirit of self-control will grow in the child after birth, under the proper training of the parent, so that the child, approaching adulthood’s estate, will be able to exercise more natural self-control. If this treasured one becomes a child of God, they will make a very noble Christian indeed; they will be strong in the LORD and be helpful to others. However all have not had this natural advantage, and must battle the more determinedly for this reason.

There is no place where the proof of our ability to rule our spirit is better shown than in our own home. Self-control between husband and wife, with parent and child, with brother and sister, is an important matter. The battle with self is the greatest battle we have to fight; and the Word of God declares that “he that rules his own spirit is greater than



he that takes a city” (Prov. 16:32). This Christian is greater because he has learned to exercise the will and determination of a true character in the direction of self-control. Moral strength is infinitely nobler and more to be desired than the greatest degree of physical strength or the keenest of strategy. And it is only after we have conquered ourselves, only after we have become master of our own flesh, only after we have cast out the beam from our own eyes, after we have subdued anger, malice, hatred and strife in our own hearts, that we are able, to assist the brethren, to assist our neighbors, to aid them—by our example—in overcoming their besetments and infirmities.

To rule one’s own spirit, mind, disposition, implies a conflict similar in some respects to that of taking a city; for no matter where we begin, we find entrenched within us many armed and opposing powers. They have possession over us by heredity—they are there as the result of the fall. And if we have passed the days of youth they are even more strongly entrenched, and it requires the greater skill and self-control to rout them out. But whether one has begun early or late, he that would succeed in ruling his own spirit must “war a good warfare.” He must “fight the good fight of faith,” down to the very end of the present existence. If the child of God is to gain victory in this fight, he must not only storm all the fortresses of inherited evils, which seem to be a part of his very nature, but having gained possession and taken his seat upon the throne of this symbolic city [his will] he must thereafter be continually on the defensive; for the old enemies are constantly on the alert, and ever seeking to regain possession, so that he who continues to rule his own spirit is one who has not only routed the enemy from the throne of his being, but is continuing to keep him at bay.

This ruling of one’s spirit is by no means an easy task; and, as in the illustration, it cannot be done single-handed and alone. Consequently, the wise “general” will invoke all the assistance at his command, remembering the words of the Apostle—“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places” (Eph. 6:12). These powers of the world, the flesh and the Devil are closely allied, and therefore he who seeks for conquest and an established reign thereafter, must seek alliance with another and a stronger power. This power is tendered to all who earnestly undertake this great work. Yes, it is the power of the Almighty Arm of our God, who says to those who accept His strength, “greater is He that is with you—that is for you—than all they that be against you”; gird yourselves like men, “be strong, fear not” (1 John 4:4; Isa. 35:4). The ruling of this symbolic city—one’s own spirit—will never be accomplished until first the “commanding general,” the Will, has positively decided to change his allegiance from Sin to God, and to put out the rebels who resist the change. But,

in the words of a trite saying, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way”—for good or for evil. God will assist, through various agencies, toward good; Satan, through various agencies, toward evil. If the Will says, “It must be done,” it calls in the needed, available help; and immediately sets all the other faculties of the mind at work, first to overcome, and then to rule and regulate the entire being. Conscience is commanded to keep a vigilant watch over all the mental operations and Judgment, under the influence of Conscience, must decide what to do and report to the Will its decision; to be righteous or unrighteous.

We have three departments of government established—the legislative, which should always be the Conscience; the judicial, the Judgment; and the executive, the Will. In every well-regulated and righteously-ruled mind, all the other faculties must make their appeal to this Congress and, as the Will insists, in due and proper order. Their appeal to the Will to execute their desires before submitting them first to Conscience, and then to Judgment, should never be tolerated; but under self-control, they may freely urge their claims upon the executive power, the Will. Without self-control the government will be slack, and the appetites, passions and unholy ambitions will take advantage of the situation. Without self-control Sin will overbalance Judgment and silence Conscience, and loudly clamor to the Will to have their own wild way. If the Will be weak—lacking self-control—it will be fitful and irregular in its rulings; and the government will be unstable and ultimately wholly at the mercy of the fallen appetites, passions and ambitions. The condition of such a soul is one of anarchy.

It is all-important, therefore, that the Will be entirely consecrated to God and righteousness; and that it strengthen itself in the LORD’S firm hand, cultivating as its assistants Conscience and Judgment, in determining the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, as expressed in His Word (Rom. 12:2). The Will has the most difficult office to fill; and the LORD’S commendation will be to the man of resolute Will, instructed by an enlightened Conscience and Judgment. Blessed is the Christian who sets his house in order, and who maintains that order to the end of his days. The thorns and thistles of his old nature have been exterminated; the beautiful flowers of peace, righteousness and love have been cultivated; and now they flourish and adorn his character. The warring elements of his old nature have been brought into subjection to his new Will. As the poet Whittier has beautifully expressed it:

“All the jarring notes of life  
Seem blending in a psalm;  
And all the angles of the strife  
Now rounding into calm.”



HAVE YOU MOVED OR  
ARE YOU GOING TO BE MOVING?  
RENEW TODAY!

TO:

## BIBLE QUESTION

Repeatedly Bible students write us that their elders try to hinder them from the use of the Watch Tower Society's publications as textbooks in Bible study. Some of these elders go so far as to tell the classes that they are out of harmony with many of the things in these textbooks. Sometimes, as rulers, they forbid the use of these in the classes. What should be done under such circumstances?

(Answer given by Bro. Russell in R5982.)

We reply, Let those who wish to follow such leaders do so—that is their right. We shall wish them well. But let us not follow with them nor submit for a moment to such arrangements. It is the height of impertinence for such a leader to intrude himself in such a manner, and attempt to tell the church what they shall and what they shall not do. As the power of election is in the hands of the church, so the power of dismissal is in their hands. We recommend that such classes vote to dismiss such an elder from his position of service, telling him kindly that his services are no longer desired. Perhaps with a back seat for a while, and an opportunity for thinking over the matter, he may be benefited himself, and the class also be greatly helped forward by taking such a stand—no matter whether there be no other person in the class able to address a public meeting or accustomed to leading classes. Far better would it be to appoint any one of your number to act as chairman, or to take turns in the matter of opening and closing meetings—anything to preserve your liberty and to continue the work of worship and study along proper lines.

Let us make a discrimination between the positive teachings of the Bible—the doctrines of Christ—and the slightly variant ways of expressing those doctrines. We are not to expect any two persons to use exactly the same words; but there are certain doctrines which are fast and immovable from the viewpoint of the majority of Bible students. Any one not in good harmony with those presentations should not be encouraged in the slightest degree, but, on the contrary, should be discouraged. If he has different views, do not persecute him—do not follow the style of the Dark Ages, but follow the proper course of letting him “flock to himself,” or with as many as prefer to view matters as he views them.

We have not given such strong advice heretofore; but we

perceive that many of the dear sheep are being troubled, hindered of development and imposed upon. We see that proportionately such elders and deacons are growing more bold, and hence the need is the greater that all who do have the right spirit, and who realize that, under the Lord's guidance in our study of the Divine Plan of the Ages, we have not been following “cunningly devised fables,” should now take a positive stand for the good of themselves, for the good of the leaders who manifest a wrong spirit, and for the good of the public, who are inquiring for the way of the Lord as never before.

While we are encouraging positiveness and courage, we are not wishing to encourage a spirit of strife, or of nagging and fault-finding amongst the faithful servants of the Lord who do manifest the humble spirit and who do accord the class its rights and liberties and who seek to “serve well.” Again we repeat, “Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but all to the glory of God,” and with the sole object in view of purging the church of the influence of those who never should have been chosen, or having been chosen in proper condition, have since manifested a perverted and ambitious spirit. Again we counsel for these positiveness, but kindness and, if they repent, mercy—with a view possibly to restoring them to confidence later on. The Apostle wrote, “I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” (1 Corinthians 11:18, 19.) Here the division evidently must come; and evidently the sooner it comes, the better it will be for the Truth and for all who love it.

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### Tulsa, Oklahoma Convention

September 11, 12, 13

**Site:** Wyndam Hotel; 10918 East 41st Street, Tulsa, OK, 74146; Phone: 1-918-627-5000.

**Reservation Deadline:** August 28, 2015. You must mention the Bible Standard Ministries Convention to get the special room rate of \$82.00 plus tax.

**Meals:** Luncheons are planned for Friday and Saturday noon at the hotel. Please call Sr. Donna Welker at 918-272-8404 or Bro. Richard Piquene 918-224-7547 if you have any questions. Sr. Donna can easily be reached by email at [lawrencewelker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lawrencewelker@sbcglobal.net)