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## **TRUE DISCIPLESHIP DEFINED**

***- MATTHEW 7:13-29. - FEBRUARY 27. -***

**Golden Text: – "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." – V. 21.**

THE ADVANCE of the world in civilization, coupled with a general lowering of Christian standards in neglect of the Bible, has drawn the civilized world and the nominal Church very close together. Never more necessary than now are the Master's words of this Bible Study, "Enter ye in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that enter thereby; for narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leads unto life and few there be that find it."

The teaching of the dark ages handed down to us was that the many walking on the broad road are being swept by millions into eternal torture. The general revulsion from this interpretation of the Bible has shaken confidence in the Bible itself and turned many completely away from it to a mild form of Universalism – to the hope that nearly everybody at death goes immediately to glory, regardless of whether he walks in the narrow way of discipleship or in the broad, easy way of worldliness. In every sense of the word the effect of this misinterpretation has been injurious.

Now we perceive that the Master said not that the broad, easy road leads to eternal torture, but to destruction – death. Now we see that father Adam by disobedience was cut off from fellowship with his Creator under death sentence and that his children were all born in a sinful and alienated condition and that their perverted appetites and the influences bearing upon

them constitute a broad road of self-gratification down which they are speeding to the tomb.

Our Lord came as the *world's* Redeemer, but before dealing with the race as a whole he selects the ***Church*** class – disciples. The love and loyalty of these is tested by their call to walk contrary to the general tendencies of the world – upward along the narrow way, at the end of which they are promised eternal life – glory, honor, and immortality and association with the Redeemer in his great work of the Millennial Kingdom. Then he will deal with humanity now going down on the broad road to death – recovering them and giving them glorious opportunities secured by his sacrifice.

The present call to discipleship is through the narrow gate of full consecration, even unto death, in the footsteps of the Master, and few there be who find and willingly walk this way. Thank God that the masses of humanity on the broad road were redeemed and will yet be blessed, though they will miss the great "prize" now offered to the "elect," who walk the narrow way. Eventually only the wilfully wicked will be destroyed in the Second Death.

The Lord's disciples are to beware of false teachers who pretend to be shepherds and wear the cloth, but really they are unlike the Great Shepherd. They are self-seekers, ravenous, wolfish. They do not lay down their lives for the sheep, but feed upon the sheep.

It is forbidden us to judge the heart. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." (Matt. 7:1.) The Master here illustrates that we shall judge those professing to be his disciples by the general fruits of their lives. Are they sharp, thorny, injurious, poisonous, in their influence upon others, or are they helpful, strengthening, uplifting? As a tree may be known and graded by its fruitage, so also may a man be known – and especially such as profess

discipleship, such as profess to be followers of Christ and taught of him.

Nor will it do to make professions and offer prayers, saying, "Lord, Lord." Not all such will enter the Kingdom and become joint-heirs with Christ. Only such will be acceptable as will do the will of the Father. Not, however, that any can live up to the height of the Divine [R4568 : page 75] standard in every word and act. But the heart, the will, must be right, sincere, true, pure, loyal to God and to the principles of his Government. And this being the case every shortcoming will be a cause of regret and the whole life will gradually become changed, "transformed."

When at the close of this age the Heavenly King shall return, before establishing his Millennial Kingdom to deal with the world, he will reckon with his Church that he may first reward the faithful with a share in his Kingdom. Then, he declares, it will be seen that not a few, but many who prophesied or taught in his name and did many wonderful works, and even cast out devils, will be found unworthy of the Kingdom, because of not having developed characters in harmony with the Father's Law – the Golden Rule. The King will say to such, I do not recognize you and cannot receive you as my Elect Bride. Your work on the whole is unacceptable, iniquitous, out of harmony with the principles of my teaching. Such, instead of entering the glories of the Kingdom, will be obliged to pass through tribulations with the world, losing their share of the great prize of this Gospel Age.

Whoever is now blessed with the hearing ear, whoever now hears the call of discipleship, whoever now accepts the call and becomes by consecration a follower of Christ, has the opportunity of erecting a faith structure which will stand all the storms of life, because built upon the Rock. Christ is this Rock

of Ages. He is not only the great Redeemer, but to those now called, he is the great Exemplar, in whose footsteps all shall follow who desire to become joint-heirs with him in his Heavenly Kingdom. Those who essay to become his disciples and who, nevertheless, neglect a careful following of his instructions are building false hopes, building upon a foundation which will not stand the storms and trials of life, which are specially permitted as tests of character upon those favored with the call of this Gospel Age.

The Apostle, describing the testing of the Church and the proving of our discipleship, likens the testing to a fire, saying (not of the world, but of the Church), "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day [R4569 : page 75] shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (I Cor. 3:13-15.) The Apostle here describes the testings of those who build upon the Rock. Those who build upon the sand will suffer the loss of everything and at the beginning of the Millennium will be no better off than the world in general.

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