

CROSS-BEARING THE WAY OF GROWTH

"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." – Luke 14:27.

ADISCIPLE is a pupil, one who follows a teacher or leader. The Lord has promised His disciples certain great blessings. If they are obedient, they shall be greatly blessed with everlasting life, shall sit with Him in His Throne, and be with Him where He is.

It becomes, therefore, an important question as to what is involved in discipleship. Is it an *easy* or a *difficult* matter? How can we enter the School of Christ? The Lord here and elsewhere tells us the terms. In another text He says, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." – Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:27.

There is, therefore, evidently a process in the matter. First of all, one must see what discipleship is and what the cross is. Some may perceive more or less distinctly than others. To some it might be a very severe ordeal to take up the cross. Some people judge the weight of a thing through *perception*; others through *experience*.

Our Lord said that it would be better not to take up the cross unless we have the determination to go on unto the end. He illustrates this in saying, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." – Luke 9:62.

The Lord very distinctly told what the cross would imply to those who become His disciples. He said that whosoever would be His disciple would suffer persecution. He warned us that carrying the cross would be a serious matter. If, therefore, you determine that you would like to be His disciple, sit down and count the cost. If you

take up the cross, it is to be not merely *lifted*, but *carried faithfully unto death*.

WHAT CONSTITUTES CROSS-BEARING?

The taking up of the cross, then, is done after we come to a knowledge of the Truth. The *world* are not bearing the cross at all; neither are those who are having their own wills crossed continually. Many a man will say, "Since I married, I have my cross with my wife"; and many a wife will say that she has her cross with her husband. But neither of these is the cross of Christ – the difficulty is that there was misjudgment in the marriage. The couples are mismatched.

Nevertheless such a thing might become cross-bearing. If, for instance, the opposition of husband or wife were engendered by faithfulness to the Lord, the bearing of this would be cross-bearing, because of being endured for Christ's sake, for the Truth's sake. Endurance of opposition by business competitors because of our faithfulness to Christ would be part of the cross-bearing. Probably it is good for us that we do not see all the time what the cross means.

"We know not what awaits us,
God kindly veils our eyes,
And o'er each step of our onward way
He makes new scenes to rise."

We cannot take up the cross until we have seen what the cross is, and have engaged to take up that cross and become Christ's disciple. After we have *taken up* that cross, it has to be *borne*, our Lord tells us. *Bearing* it does not mean our running away from it, or getting alarmed at it. *Bearing* the cross means *enduring* it. We are to follow our instructions along this line.

Our Lord says, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." Whosoever is faithful will suffer persecution. Therefore,

to be without opposition is proof, not that we are being favored of God, but that He is not dealing with us as sons. Only those whom He deals with as sons will become of the Royal Priesthood and participate in His glorious Kingdom. Whoever thinks to run away from the difficulties that come, makes a mistake.

THE PURPOSE ACCOMPLISHED BY TRIALS

What, then, would be the basis on which we could relieve ourselves from trials? We should not seek to release ourselves unless we realize that by endurance we are accomplishing no service for the Truth. Then we might seek to see whether the Lord would open some other door. If, for instance, one finds himself where he is simply suffering and doing no good, let him look about and ask the Lord in prayer to show him what to do. Perhaps the Lord may open a way of escape. We shall not get rid of our trials and imperfections, however, until we get rid of the mortal flesh; for the course of the world is out of line with righteousness. The whole world is out of the way through ignorance, superstition, blindness; and amidst them we are to strive to show forth the praises of Him who called us from darkness into marvelous light.

So, then, the following after the Lord is apparently the thing that is especially emphasized in our text. The bearing of the cross is the way of growth in character for the consecrated child of God. If no trials or difficulties come to us, if our appetites or desires are never interfered with in our service to the Lord and the Truth, we may be sure that we are making some mistake. We have not become His disciples.

But if we should have these trials, the Apostle says that we are to consider them only as light afflictions and but for a moment; and that these are working out "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We are looking at the present time, not for the things that are seen – the earthly applause and glory – but for the

Heavenly Glory – for the things that the Lord has promised to those that love Him. – 2 Corinthians 4:17,18.

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"WHAT SHALL I RENDER UNTO THE LORD?"

(Psalm 116:12-14)

What shall I render, Lord, to Thee
For all Thy benefits toward me?
For life and every earthly good,
For raiment, shelter, daily food;
For light and Truth, for peace and love,
For heavenly wisdom from above? –
How great Thy bounties unto me!
What have I that is not from Thee?

For all these benefits toward me,
What shall I render, Lord, to Thee?
The Cup Thy hand of Love hath poured,
I'll humbly take, most gracious Lord,
And call upon Thy holy name
To help me Thy great Plan proclaim;
I'll spend my days in ceaseless praise,
And tell abroad Thy wondrous ways!

"Salvation's Cup" – of *suffering*, too –
Of suffering with God's chosen few,
Dear Lord, I'll drink of this, *Thy* Cup,
And smiling through my tears, look up –
A mingled Cup of grief and joy,
Of blessedness without alloy,
Of Love and fellowship Divine,

A foretaste of the Kingdom-wine!

That all, dear Lord, may know and see
Thy countless benefits toward me,
Before Thy congregation, *now*,
I'll pay my consecration Vow;
And in Thy strength, supplied each day,
I'll strive to walk the narrow way
That leads to rest and God and Thee,
And blissful immortality!

GERTRUDE W. SEIBERT.

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