

TAKE UP THY CROSS AND FOLLOW CHRIST

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." – Matt. 16:24.

THIS is a very beautiful and significant text. The words "come after Me" have not been properly translated; "follow Me" is a better translation. It was the custom in ancient times for a teacher to have a company of his disciples following him; as Socrates did, for instance. So our Lord's disciples, pupils, followed Him. They traveled with Him that they might have the opportunity of continually getting instruction from His lips. It was so with all the teachers in the olden time. Sometimes, as in the case of Gamaliel, they had a school – the pupils sat "at the feet of Gamaliel." They would discuss questions much as we do at "Bethel" table today. Their custom was that the pupils would ask questions and get the views of the teacher.

Jesus said that any one whom He instructed might know from the beginning that he would have severe experiences; he would not receive great honor. On the contrary, those who would be His disciples must take up their cross and follow in His footsteps. There would be trials all along the journey, He told them. The Lord did not wish any to become disciples of His under a misapprehension. "Where I am, there shall also My disciple be." Those who follow Jesus in this vale of tears, witnessing for God and the Truth, will be blessed by Him and eventually share in His Messianic glory and honor and partake of immortality.

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