

## October 23

*Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Matthew 20:27*

AMONGST the Gentiles the rulers are lords, who do no serving but are served, but among the followers of Jesus the rule is to

Mat 20:27-28 KJV And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: (28) Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

R5793 "Matthew 20:27 reads, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."...

The Lord had been pointing out to His disciples a certain weakness on their part—a desire to be the greatest—a desire that is general in the human family—an ambitious spirit. The context says that amongst the Gentiles there are some who exercise a lordship and have others to serve them in a menial way, but that this was not to be the case amongst the disciples of Jesus. They were to be actuated by a different spirit. With the followers of Christ there is not to be a spirit to dominate, to rule others, but a spirit of love, which seeks to serve others, to do for others, a spirit which is willing to sacrifice personal interest in the service of others...

### HAVE NO AMBITION FOR PERSONAL GLORY

...We should take the opposite track, and leave any honor of men out of the question entirely. We should leave God to attend to that matter as shall seem to Him best, and be content merely to be a servant to the brethren. Let the Lord see how willing you are to serve in any manner...

The person without any ambition never amounts to anything. We need to have ambition if we are sowing or plowing or whatever we are doing—we need ambition to spur us on to do whatever we do in a satisfactory manner. And so if we have the opportunity of serving the Truth, we should seek to serve it in the most capable manner possible. Otherwise we should not be capable servants of the Lord.

But we are to lay aside any desire to be chief so far as ambition for personal glory is concerned. We are to seek to serve *the Lord* the best we know how... This service should be prompted by love. Any service not prompted by love is not acceptable in the sight of the Lord."

R4502 "St. Paul wrote, "He that seeketh the office of a bishop (of a shepherd, of an overseer) seeketh a good service," and so we should recognize that whoever out of a pure heart seeks to serve the Lord's cause as an under-shepherd of the sheep, and as a co-laborer with the Redeemer, is engaging in a most noble service. If he approach this service from this standpoint of earnest desire to serve the flock, an earnest desire to be in full accord with the Great Shepherd, he should not be ashamed to rejoice that he has to this extent the Spirit of the Lord. But if he find in himself, in either great or small measure, a spirit of ambition, a spirit of pride, a spirit of boastfulness, the desire to lord it over the brethren of the household of faith, then let him fear. With trembling heart either let him resign the service, or at the throne of grace rid himself, purge himself, of the evil ambitions of his heart, and be filled with the Spirit of the Master. That holy Spirit is the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffer-

be reversed; he who would serve most was to be esteemed most highly. What a beauty there is in the divine order of things! How thoroughly all who are right minded can sympathize with the principles here laid down! How reasonable they are and how

ing, brotherly kindness, love; to desire simply and only the glory of God and the blessing of his people—the spirit that is ready to sacrifice self at any moment for the peace of the Body of Christ, or the assistance of the flock."

R5321 "THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE THE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLESHIP..."

We should notice wherever there is a service to be rendered which we *can* do. "Do with thy might what thy hands find to do."

The difficulty with many in the Church is that they desire to do what somebody else is doing... They have not the proper spirit of discipleship... I will do with my might what it is my duty to do—whether it is sweeping, or engaging a hall for a meeting. Whatever comes as an opportunity to me, that I will do."

R5956 Subtitle: "BE NOT MANY OF YOU TEACHERS"

Well did St. James write, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the severer trial." (James 3:1.) While, as we have pointed out, all of the Lord's people are specially susceptible along the line of spiritual pride, there seems to be a special danger surrounding all who become in any manner identified with the promulgation of His Truth.

It is a special privilege, indeed, to tell out the Message of God's grace to all who have a hearing ear. How thankful we are that it is not—as it was once supposed-- the exclusive privilege of the clergy, but that the Lord declares that all who are His consecrated people and who receive the begetting of the holy Spirit have, through it, the anointing to preach the Good Tidings to the meek and to bind up the broken-hearted! (Isaiah 61:1.) We are glad of this privilege, which includes our private conversations with neighbors and friends. But what a privilege to be God's ambassadors, and in His name to tell of the coming Kingdom, of the great provision God has already made through the death of Jesus, of the grand outcome, and of how the kings and priests of that Kingdom are now being called out of the world, experiencing a change of nature in preparation for their future work!

Old as the Message is, it is so new and wonderful, if rightly presented, as to awaken astonishment in the honest-hearted who hear. They wonder, how did this ordinary man (or woman) ever come to understand and be able so beautifully to portray these wonderful things? Perhaps they give a hint of their surprise. Then comes a danger-moment for taking the disease of spiritual pride. Just a little swing of the mind; and you think that it *is* wonderful that even you should know about such things when the great mass of mankind have not the remotest conception of them, and that even some of the ablest and most talented ministers of the Word of God are ignorant respecting these things in the Bible.

If you are taking the disease of spiritual pride you will doubtless feel a straightening of your back. You are beginning to feel more important, and to look more dignified and to feel that, after all, you are somebody

contrary to the spirit of the world. Truly, the Lord's followers will in this sense of the word be a peculiar people in their zeal for good works --for serving one another and for doing good unto all men as they have opportunity. Z. '04-140 R3363:1

great. Your voice indicates this, too; and your hearer notices it. Then he begins to feel that it is not the Word of the Lord, but that, as you seem to admit, it is something that you made up--something that you are responsible for, and he thinks less of it on that account.

The proper attitude, as all will agree, is that the Lord's people should feel greatly *humbled* instead of greatly *exalted* and heady in respect to these opportunities for telling the Truth to others. We should feel our unworthiness. We should realize that the Plan is not ours; that we have merely heard of it ourselves; that it is really God's Plan; that we are honored as His servants to tell it out. But if we allow any impression to go out that it is by any wisdom on our part, or any skill, that the beauty is seen in the Message, then to that extent we are taking glory to ourselves which belongs to the Lord, and doing injury to ourselves proportionately by failing to demonstrate our worthiness to be used by the Lord in the present and in the future. The wonderful privilege of speaking as ambassadors for the Lord, to tell of His greatness and Plan should humble us with the thought that He has privileged *us*, whereas He has angels, who excel in strength and whom He might have used in communicating this most wonderful Message.

R5360 "This is the proper influence which we should seek to leave in every heart; not astonishment at our ability or oratory or other powers, but astonishment at the teaching of the Lord's Word. Indeed, there is no doubt that this is the secret of the progress of the Harvest message today. People are astonished at the *doctrine*. Our Pilgrim speakers are not beyond the average. Many would say, perhaps, not up to the average of denominational ministers, but they have *the* teaching. They have the Divine Plan of the Ages -- and this it is which impresses and astonishes those who hear."

(1 Cor 2:4-5 KJV) "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: {"of the Truth" R3200} (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

R5956 continued at subtitle: "SPECIAL TEST UPON ELDERS AND DEACONS

But the dear brethren chosen by the Classes to be their Elders and Deacons have a still further test to their humility. Apparently no one could occupy such a position without great danger of infection from the disease called spiritual pride. Sometimes the Lord's people seem entirely to forget the caution which St. Paul gave, saying that a novice, a beginner, one young in the Truth, no matter how bright, no matter how educated, should not be chosen to the service of Elder or Deacon because, as the Apostle remarked, he would be especially susceptible to this foe of the children of God--spiritual pride.--1 Timothy 3:6.

But not merely are the novices in danger. Everyone appointed to serve the Lord's

people is thereby put into the place of great temptation, which might mean a spiritual fall and ruin in the Second Death. Perhaps the Lord's people have not been sufficiently considerate of these things as respects those whom they elect to be their servants. Perhaps those accepting these positions of service under the votes of the brethren scarcely realize what danger they do run in accepting. If they realized, doubtless that realization would make them hesitate about accepting at all; and humility would certainly lead them not to attempt to serve unless they were most explicitly appointed to the service.

But what do we find? Alas! in some a tendency to seek the eldership or deaconship. In some, even a tendency to "wire-pull" and bargain that they might be elected; in some a tendency to feel offended if they were not chosen; in some a tendency to feel angry with anybody who would vote against them in such an election. Alas! alas! if the dear brethren realized what was gnawing in their minds and urging them on to these

things-- oh, what a different course they would take! In all meekness and humility they should feel a timidity even about taking a position where there would be such a responsibility. The admonition on this is that although all of the Church should, according to their knowledge of the Truth, be qualified to be teachers, nevertheless the safer place is not to be a teacher, knowing that such shall have the severer trial. Only a sense of responsibility to the Lord and to the brethren should make one willing to serve in such capacity, much as all ought to love to be the Lord's representatives in the Church.

Everything in the nature of pride, fond desire to be Elders or to be great, is not only dangerous to the person himself, but dangerous to the entire Class with which he is associated. The spirit is catching, just as is every disease. Strife, vain-glory, ambition, all contrary to the spirit of the Lord, soon appear. Next come anger, malice, envy, hatred, evil-speaking, evil-surmising. These, St. Paul tells us, are "works of the flesh and of the Devil." All this harm, all this spirit of

the Adversary, is apt to be introduced into the class either by one or more of its Elders or Leaders, or by one or more who desire to be Elders or Leaders."

We are sorry that this is true, yet we know of a number of Classes containing many dear children of God, many of whom are otherwise exemplary, but who have gotten into this condition. Instead of the spirit of the Lord being fully in control, the evil spirit, or disposition, is frequently manifest in various ways in the meetings. The class fails to make progress, either numerically or spiritually. These are the bitter fruits of this noxious thing known as spiritual pride...

Be it noted that these dear ones who are becoming thus involved are often grand characters, truly spirit-begotten children of God. Of some of them we know that in the past they ran the race splendidly. How sorry we feel to see signs that their characters are being transformed in a wrong direction! Let us heed Him who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."--Matthew 7:16."

R3362 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## ONLY THE HUMBLE SHALL BE EXALTED

--MARK 10:35-45.--MAY 22.--

*Golden Text: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."*

SEVERAL weeks intervened between the incidents of the last lesson and the present one. In that time the Lord had crossed over Jordan in answer to the request of Mary and Martha that he should come and heal their brother Lazarus, who was sick. Jesus arrived intentionally too late for this, but awakened Lazarus from sleep, and thereby aroused a great storm of opposition, especially amongst the scribes and Pharisees, who sought to put him to death. Knowing that his time was not yet come, he retired into a mountain of northern Judea, but at the time of this lesson he with his twelve apostles was *en route* for Jerusalem. He had just explained to them more particularly the ignominy, shame and death which he would experience, and repeated his assurance of his resurrection. The rich young ruler had just visited him, and gone away sorrowful upon learning the terms of discipleship. Jesus had just said, How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the Kingdom; the apostles had inquired what they should have since they had left all, and Jesus assured them that they should have a hundred fold more in this present time, with persecution, and in the world to come everlasting life.

The context says that Jesus was walking in advance of the twelve, who were discussing matters amongst themselves, overawed by the stupendous things which the Lord had declared to be imminent. <sup>(1)</sup>The courage of our Lord in the narrow way fills us with admiration. What a strong character was his! He had no thought of turning back; he was intent upon accomplishing his Father's will--upon sacrificing himself in the interest of others. A noble pattern the apostles saw before them--greatness in humility, victory through service.

### A GOODLY HERITAGE DESIRED

It was at this time that James and John approached the Lord in a private manner. Matthew tells us that their mother Salome was with them and really made the request for them in their names. Salome is supposed to have been the sister of Mary, the aunt of Jesus, in which event James and John were his full cousins. Realizing that matters were drawing to a crisis they sought of the Lord an assurance that they two might be very close to him in the Kingdom, one on his right hand and one on his left, the two positions of chiefest favor.

Our Lord did not reprove them, for doubtless he read in their hearts a great love and loyalty toward himself; and the desire for the positions indicated not merely the desire for the honors and authority implied, but specially because this would bring them closer to himself. Had the Lord seen in their hearts an evil form of ambition, undoubtedly he would have reprov'd it on the spot. His answer, however, was so framed as to impress these brothers and all of his followers since with what is implied in joint-heirship with the Lord in the Kingdom. Very forceful is the expression, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The cup signifies experiences--as, for instance, when our Lord said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11.) Our Lord wished his disciples to see clearly that the Father had poured for him a special cup of experiences, and had required of him special baptism into death, as conditions precedent to his glory and Kingdom; and that whoever would become his associates in the Kingdom must become also his associates in the sufferings of this present time--in the ignominy and whatever experiences the Father might see best to permit as tests of faith and devotion and character. Our Lord did not refer to the Memorial Supper cup, but to the experiences which it symbolized, even as he did not refer to water baptism, but to the baptism into death which is symbolized by the water immersion.

How heart-searching was this question! It meant, Are ye willing? because it would be impossible for the disciples to have known their own ability except in the sense of having confidence in God that he would give the ability to those who had their wills thoroughly subjected to his. This is illustrated in the symbolical baptism, in which one no more buries himself than he raises himself. We merely surrender our wills, our all, to the Lord, and he by his Word and grace works in us to will and ultimately to do his good pleasure--expecting from us only the possibilities, and assisting us to these with grace sufficient for us, for every time of need.

"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU"

That these two noble apostles were not inspired by selfish ambitions in this request is evidenced by their prompt reply to the Lord's searching question and later on evidenced by their faithfulness even unto death. They said, "We are able"--that is, "We are willing. God helping us, we will sacrifice everything to follow in your footsteps; we will count nothing dear unto us; we will lay aside every weight and every sinful besetment; we will run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." This we may assume to be a larger statement of their devotion.

Our Lord's love and sympathy went out to them afresh as he answered them, guaranteeing that with such willingness of heart they should indeed have the experiences necessary to fit them for a place in the Kingdom. What a comfort this is to even the weakest of the Lord's followers who are sincere.

The Lord looketh at the heart, and if he sees there full devotion to himself, he is pleased to grant to such his blessing, his aid, saying, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee--my strength is made perfect in weakness." We, too, are desirous of sharing the Kingdom with our Lord, yet not from love of exaltation above others, but from a desire to have this evidence that we please our Father and our Lord Jesus-- to have this closeness of relationship to him, and to have the privilege of participation with our dear Redeemer in the great work of blessing all the families of

<sup>(1)</sup> ½ Oct. 22 Manna, Mat. 20:22

the earth in due time. <sup>(2)</sup>It is well that we should have the Lord's answer clearly before our minds, and know that unless we partake of his cup and are immersed into his death, we can have no share in his Kingdom of glory. Let us then count all things else as loss and as dross to obtain this necessary experience. As it comes to us let us not be fearful, nor think strange of the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. On the contrary, even hereunto were we called, that we might now suffer with the Lord and by and by be glorified together with him.

As for the particular place to be occupied in the Kingdom by the sons of Zebedee or by us, our Lord pointed out that the assigning of such positions was in the Father's hands--the choicest positions shall be given to those for whom they have been prepared by the Father. Not that we are to understand that the Father prepared the places in advance by any arbitrary divisions, but rather that the Father's pre-arranged plan is that each of the followers of Jesus shall have positions of honor in the Kingdom proportionate to the zeal of their faithfulness in the present time--for none shall have any part in the Kingdom who do not now prove faithful.

#### THE MEEKEST AND MOST ZEALOUS

It is not for us to decide the zeal and faithfulness of the apostles--to say which two would better fill these positions of chiefest honor. The Father will make no mistake. It will not surprise us, however, should we find the Apostle Paul in one of these two positions. His faithful, loving zeal and loyalty seem to shine out conspicuously even amongst those who were also faithful and loyal. It is not for us to have any ambitious feelings respecting this matter, except that we desire always to serve the Lord and be pleasing to him, and eventually to be as close to him as possible. When we remember that the closer we come to him in the present trials and experiences and suffering with faithfulness the closer we will be to him in the future, it explains to us the meaning of the Apostle's words when speaking of his severe trials: he called them light afflictions but for a moment, working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.--2 Cor. 4:17.

We recall that there had been, a little while before, some rivalry amongst the apostles as to which should be greatest in the Kingdom. At that time Jesus took a little child as an exemplification of candor and guilelessness, and assured them that unless they became as little children--simple-hearted, honest, candid, they could in no wise have any part in his Kingdom. Now, when the ten other disciples learned the special mission of Salome and the request made by and for James and John, they were indignant at them. Possibly some of them, Judas included, were very anxious for the authority and power and dignity of the throne, but without the very special love and longing to be near the Master himself which seem to have influenced James and John in their request. But Jesus set matters straight with them all, and turned their displeasure into an opportunity for another good lesson, by the assurance that the chief positions in the Kingdom would be given along the lines of meritorious service, and that thus each one of them would have his opportunity to strive for the chief position by striving to render service to the others.

<sup>(3)</sup>Amongst the Gentiles the rulers are lords, who do no serving but are served, but among the followers of Jesus the rule is to be reversed; he who would serve most was to be esteemed most highly. What a beauty there is in the divine order of things! how thoroughly all who are right minded can sympathize with the principles here laid down! How reasonable they are and how contrary to the spirit of the world. Truly, the Lord's followers will in this sense of the word be a peculiar people in their zeal for good works--for serving one another and for doing good unto all men as they have opportunity. The Apostle Peter emphasizes this point (I Pet. 5:6), "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may

exalt you in due time." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased."--Luke 14:11.

#### OUR LORD SERVANT OF ALL

The Lord did not have one standard for his followers and another standard for himself. Consequently, when they heard him say, Whosoever of you will be chief shall be servant of all, they could promptly recognize that this was the course that he had pursued--that he had been servant to them all; and it was on account of the services that he was continually rendering them that they delighted to serve him, to acknowledge him their Master and to walk in his steps. Indeed they had seen only a small fragment of the Lord's sacrificing and of its far-reaching influence as a service to others. We can see this as we recognize the fact that our Lord was about to die, not merely for his disciples, not merely for the Jews, but to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that the whole world eventually might have a blessing--a blessed opportunity for coming to life eternal through the merit of his service. Our Lord called this to their attention, saying, "For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [served] but to minister [serve], and to give his life a ransom for many." This is one of the very explicit statements of Scripture respecting the object of our Lord's death--that it was not for his own sins that he died, that on the contrary it was for ours, and that in thus dying he gave himself a ransom price--a corresponding price for the sins of the whole world.

No other lesson requires to be so carefully learned by the Lord's people as this lesson of humility. It has to do with the very humblest of the flock, as well as with those who are teachers and elders and pilgrims, etc.; but the degree of force that seems to come with the besetment or temptation seems to multiply in proportion to the position and attainments of the individual. Pride and ambition may be in those who have no official position in the Church, often asserted in fault-finding and criticism which, to the hearers, is intended to imply superior wisdom or ability on the part of the critic--that his wisdom and ability only wait for opportunity to manifest his greatness above his fellows. We are not objecting to a kindly brotherly word of criticism given privately and with a view to helpfulness, but merely to the kind which vaunteth itself and seeks to do injury to the reputation of another occupying a preferred position.

#### "BE NOT MANY OF YOU TEACHERS"

As the Apostle intimates, however, this besetment bears chiefly upon those who have some talent, some ability, and whom their fellows have to some extent honored as teachers. Little men, like little ships with broad sails, are in great danger of being capsized if too strong a wind of popularity play upon them. Not only so, but we believe that even the most humble, the most faithful, the most zealous to be servants of the cause, have continual need to be on their guard lest their good intentions should be used of the Adversary as a trap for their ensnarement. Let us remember the Apostle's words, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man [who is a teacher] shall receive greater condemnation"--he is exposed to greater trials and temptations as a result. This must not hinder any who have talents from using them, but it should make each one very careful that he does not think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly. If the judgment of the majority of the congregation does not recognize his adaptation to the service of a teacher, he should humbly accept its conclusion as correct, no matter how highly he had thought of himself previously. And even if the majority should conclude that he is worthy of a position as a teacher in Zion, he should tread very softly before the Lord, very humbly, realizing that those who in any degree attempt to impart instruction in spiritual things to others are to that extent acting as representatives and mouthpieces of the Lord himself, the Head of the body; and all should keep in mind the Lord's words in this Golden Text and his own exemplification of the matter--that he who serves most and not he who lords it most should have the chief respect of the Lord's people.

<sup>(2)</sup> ½ Oct. 22 Manna

<sup>(3)</sup> Oct. 23 Manna, Mat. 20:27

F273 "Each separate *Ecclesia*...is to consider the Lord as *its* Head, and to consider the twelve apostles as the twelve stars, bright ones, teachers, whom the Lord specially held in his hand and controlled--using them as his mouthpieces for the instruction of his Church in every place, in every gathering, throughout the entire age.

Each congregation or *Ecclesia* -- even if composed of only two or three -- is to seek to recognize the will of the Head in respect to all of its affairs...

Looking thus to the Lord and recognizing the character of the servants he would

use--humble, zealous, well reported of, clear in the Truth, giving evidence of having the anointing and the unction of the Spirit -- they would be prepared to expect such general ministries to the needs of the whole Church, and to seek a share in the general blessing and dispensation of the "meat in due season" promised us by the Master...

All the members of the body united to the Head are to have confidence and to look for the fulfilment of his promises; but, nevertheless, are to "try the spirits"--to test the doctrines from whomsoever they emanate... They are not listening for the voice of man,

but for the voice of the Chief Shepherd; that they feast upon his words and love them-- love to masticate them and to digest them. Such members of the body grow stronger and more rapidly in the Lord and in the power of his might than do others, because more attentive to the Lord's leading and instruction."

#### THE LORD ONLY SPOKE

#### FATHER'S WORDS

(John 8:28 KJV) "Then said Jesus unto them... I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

(John 12:50 KJV) "And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

#### SERVANTS LIKEWISE RESPONSIBLE

(Jas 3:1 ASV) "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment."

F258 "It is a responsible thing to undertake to any extent to be the mouthpiece of God-- to make sure that not a word is uttered which would misrepresent the divine character and plan, and thus dishonor God as well as do injury to those who might hear."

(2 Tim 4:3-4 KJV) "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; {4} And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

R1475 "It is an increasingly popular idea among religious journalists that such a journal should be a medium merely for the expression of all shades of human opinion upon all matters of divine revelation, and that each individual should abstract from them all what he conceives to be true, and reject the rest. But this is precisely what the readers, and often the editors, too, of such journals are unable to do, and the general confusion is only increased unto greater blindness and denser darkness, and thus the purpose of the adversary is accomplished.

There is a deep responsibility to God which every man assumes, whether he realizes it or not, when he becomes a public teacher. "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall *teach* men so, he shall be called *the least* in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever *shall do* and *teach* them, the same shall be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven."-- Matt. 5:19

No table is fit for the household of faith to be summoned to that has not been spread by careful hands, fully submitted and obedient to the great Head of the house, whose directions are found in his Word."

(1 Pet 4:10-11 KJV) "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. {11} If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

R1188 "Let every member of the body be solicitous for his influence over every other member, taking heed that he place no stumbling block in his brother's way, but that in all things his course shall prove helpful to the saints. 'If any man speak,' says the Apostle, 'let him speak as the oracles of God.' If we would teach the truth, let us first prove it and make sure that it is truth, and not present crude ideas and human imaginations to stumble the weaker brother. And likewise in dispensing religious reading matter, we should be similarly careful to speak by this agency also as the oracles of God. No tract or book or paper should be handed to another, which we cannot endorse. Thus we may speak as

the oracles of God and minister of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever."

#### R5070 "FAITHFUL BARKING COMMENDED -- Dearly Beloved Pastor:

When first reading the article in a past TOWER illustrating our "Old Creature," by a dog, it seemed a little amusing; but recently circumstances here in the Philadelphia ecclesia brought forth the need of studying the parable of the "Sheep."

We learn that all shepherds keep a good "sheep dog," which is gentle, kind, never vicious, but does considerable barking when the sheep are inclined to stray; and all sheep belonging to the dog's owner are *very dear* to the dog. Its sense of smell is *very acute*; if a sheep had been near a wolf the dog would detect it and bark at the wayward one.

Learning the above facts partly answered a puzzle in my mind, namely, whenever any "sheep" in our ecclesia strays from any of the *doctrinal points*, he or she is usually very composed about it, but those watching for such danger-places make a *big fuss* over it. It is talked and talked about. They seem very restless, disturbed, even to loud words.

Questioning the different "barkers" I find each ready to suffer anything if only the wanderer may return--have his eyes opened. So I have concluded that it belongs to the faithful "dog" to bark and bark at even the smell of a wolf, and that to err in the "dog" nature is nothing to compare to erring in doctrine. In other words, dogs would better *bark too much* than not to be watchers and warners of the approach of the wolf."

F247 "It seems less remarkable that "goats" and goat-like sheep in the Lord's flock should aspire to leadership, than that the true sheep who recognize the Master's voice, who know his Spirit and who are seeking to do his will, should with docility permit such goats or goat-like sheep to take the leadership amongst them. It is well that we follow peace with all men; but where we disregard the Word and Spirit of the Lord for the sake of peace it will be sure to result injuriously to a greater or less extent. It is well that all should have the docile, sheep-like nature; but it is necessary also that the sheep have *character*, else they cannot be overcomers; and if they have character they should remember the Chief Shepherd's words, "My sheep hear my voice [obey it]...and they follow me," "a *stranger* will they not follow...for they know not the voice of strangers." (John 10:5,27) It is the duty, therefore, of every sheep to take special notice of the message and the manner of every brother before they aid in putting him forward as an overseer, either local or general."

R5968 "THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST... "Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, ministered [written] by us; written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart."--2 Cor. 3:3...

Wherever there is a true Christian--not merely spirit-begotten, but spirit-developed in the character-likeness of the Savior in meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love--we

have the evidence of the power of God at work in him to will and to do His good-pleasure...

#### WHY ELDERS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CHOSEN

Let us not forget that we shall not know how to write in the hearts of others what we have not already had written in our own hearts. Hence the propriety of great caution in the choosing of Elders -- to find those who already have the writing of the Lord in their hearts, and who therefore will be competent assistants, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, for the writing of the Lord's character-likeness in the hearts of the younger brethren."

(1 Tim 5:22 KJV) "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."

R4360 "As the priests laid their hands upon the animals which were to represent them in sacrifice, so the Church laid their hands upon those who were to represent them in the service of the Truth."

(Act 14:23 Weymouth 1912) "And in every Church, after prayer and fasting, they selected Elders by show of hands, and commended them to the Lord on whom their faith rested."

R4503 "In the selection of Elders the consecrated should remember that the responsibility rests upon them; and no vote should be cast without studious consideration of the Divine will, and prayer for Divine guidance. In seeking to determine the Lord's will in such a matter, we should remember the characteristics of the teacher as set forth in the Scriptures: (1) Of course, a teacher should be apt to teach; he should have the natural faculty or ability to make plain matters which he understands. (2) Still more important is it that if he have the ability to teach, he shall be clear in the Truth, so the Truth and not error may be set forth with clearness. (3) Humility and piety should be considered paramount and primary qualifications for eldership. However able a teacher, however doctrinally clear, no one is properly fitted for this position except he have humility and piety, and unless his words and deeds have manifested his love for the brethren. For, as the Scriptures set forth, these are qualities of great value in God's sight. Now as ever it is true that great opportunities for doing good means even greater opportunities for doing harm. This is because, under present conditions, spiritual sickness and contagions like earthly ailments spread and "catch" much more readily than spiritual health."

R1895 "We beseech you, brethren," says the Apostle, "to *acknowledge* them which labor among you, presiding over you in the Lord, and admonishing you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."-- 1Thes. 5:12,13.

Again he says, "Have confidence in your leaders, and submit yourselves [i.e., if you, according to the Lord's methods, have chosen the right kind, or rather if you have permitted the Lord to choose them for you in the way he has indicated, as shown above]; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief."--Heb. 13:17." {See also Act 20:26-27}