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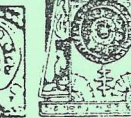
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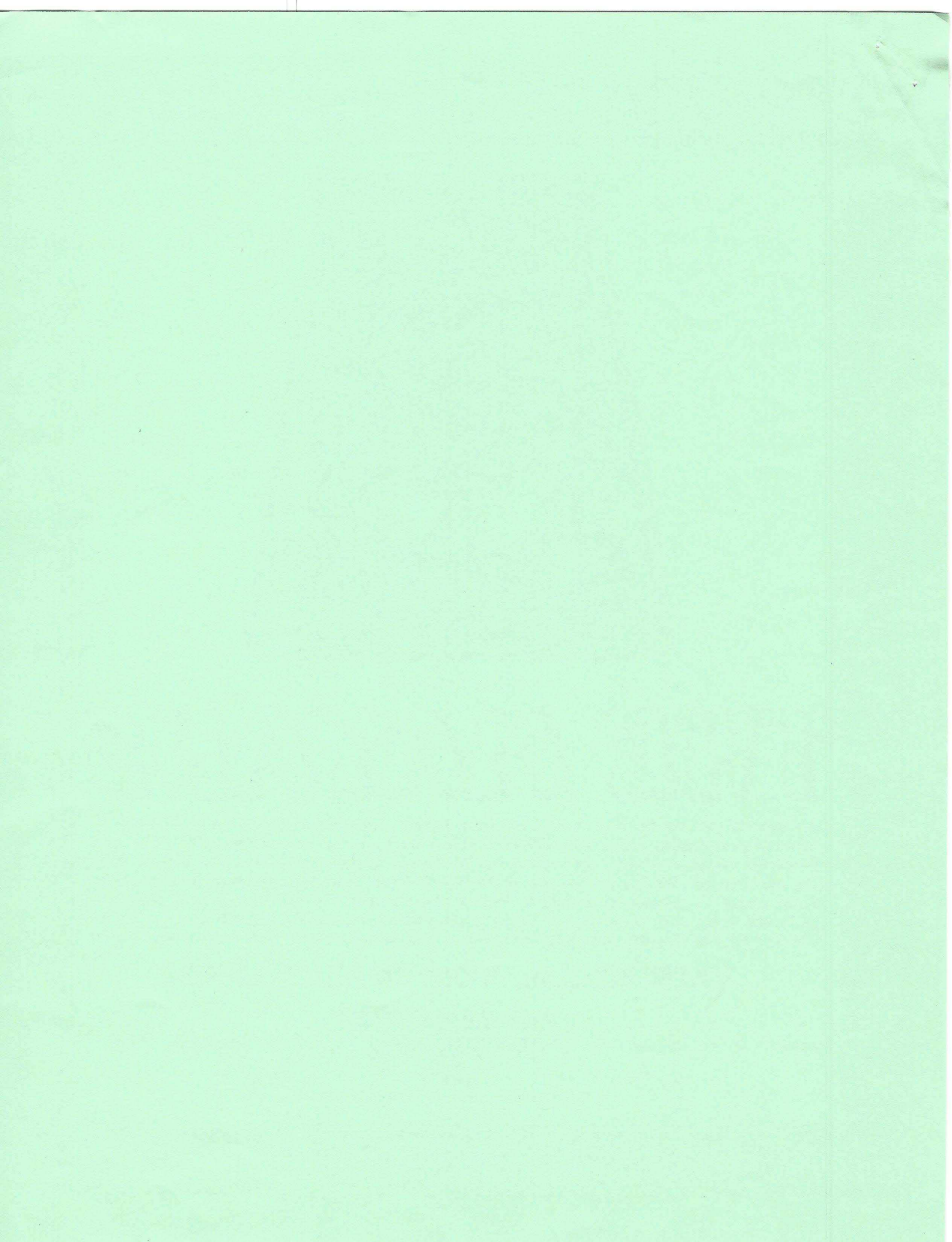
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# CONDUCT AND CHARACTER

MAYAN REVELATION NUMBER 212

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## THE CHOICE IS OURS

Beloved Centurion:

Let us pause for a moment in retrospect, and let your mind go back to when you first became a member of The Mayan Order - when you first decided to do something about your life. I would like you to think of one thing that has been greatly changed in your life since you became a Mayan. There are probably many more than just one thing, but only one would make your decision worthwhile, wouldn't it?

The whole purpose of the Truth Teachings of Mayanry, as you know, is to make of yourself a better person, thereby attracting the better things of life to yourself, for we attract to ourselves even the things about which we think - which is the reason your Instructor has so often admonished you to think only positive thoughts. Negative thoughts tear down and destroy and very often through negative thinking we attract to ourselves the very thing we are trying to shut out. And the more positive your thoughts become, the more you build your character, and your character is what makes you and your life a thing of beauty, or something that brings you sorrow.

As a matter of fact, character is the product of your actions every day. It is the product of words and thoughts, as I have already said. It is not always the big things that form character. They can be small things, such as forgiving someone for a little wrong. Your character causes you to be unselfish, kindly, sympathetic. It is your character that makes you do little sympathetic acts that are often the means of turning sadness into joy in the heart of another person.

It causes you to make sacrifices for the good of others and certainly character causes us to rise above temptations.

Oh, there are so many, many facets to character. It is our character that determines our conduct - and our conduct, if it is good, builds more character - and as we build more character, we build better conduct. So, you see, it is a circle that goes round and round.

How wonderful is a fine character! I so firmly believe in the sentiment once expressed by George Washington when he said:

"I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, 'the character of an honest man.'"

There are times when we stand on the threshold. A decision to be made - a bridge to be crossed - a loved one to be helped, somehow, somehow - a friend in need. And we find it difficult to make a decision we know we ought to make. The following pages of instruction are designed to help you in all walks of life.

It is the sincere prayer of your Instructor that the following lesson will be blessed unto you, my Student. With this thought uppermost in mind, let us repeat the following prayer:

#### PRAYER

As I look into some of the mysteries of the motivations of my life, my Heavenly Father, reveal to me clearly the laws by which I can express more deeply the divine image in my human life. Amen.

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#### CONDUCT AND CHARACTER

This lesson is to be an attempt to state, explain, and illustrate, a law and a process the understanding of which can be a very great help in the development and guidance of life in the various periods through which we pass. Many of us live from day to day without bothering our minds about what is happening in our deeper selves, or what the results are likely to be and why. We could direct our lives much better if, as a physician tests causes and reads symptoms, we knew what is happening within us and could judge by it how best to manage ourselves and in the wisest way.

The principle about which we are to think in this study is a fundamental one, an axiom of life. It helps to explain two of the most important things we have to do with and the relation between them, character and conduct. When one sees that they are geared together and the gears are enmeshed, or that they are like a motor and machine connected by a belt, he will understand that whenever

anything happens at either point the other is affected, so he knows what to expect. He can also see that when and how this takes place is something to control. That could be one of the most important considerations in his life.

It is not immediately so in the sense of quickly becoming rich or famous. It is much more fundamental than that. It deals with life quality rather than with rewards, advancements, and privileges. Yet, in the larger sense, it is life quality that determines these more material values, and does it in the best and most permanent way, because it tends to make us worthy of them. It is another phase of the working of the old sermon on the mount law of prosperity, seek first the kingdom of God and other things will be added to you. This will become increasingly plain as you proceed. Conduct and character are two expressions of the kingdom life, and either tends to make the other like itself.

What is this reaction between conduct and character which it is so important to know and take into account in our daily lives, as of now, not as in infancy when we were born endowed with certain potentialities of character and had not yet carried on any conduct to be related to them? As of now, and as it has been ever since we became free agents, had minds and consciences, and were active at anything of importance, this has been true. Here is the law. Character determines conduct. Then conduct builds more character to determine more conduct. That is the story of the unfolding and progressing life.

You see it is a cumulative affair which goes on and builds up indefinitely. It gives us growing lives, as lives should be; and if the growth is in the right direction, as it will be if conduct and character reach that way, we have wonderful futures to look forward to and to enjoy building.

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### CHARACTER DETERMINES CONDUCT

An artist does not choose his subjects by chance, nor does anyone who does creative work, which includes just about all of us. They spring from his inner life like a plant from a seed. An act or any combination of acts rises from the inner nature. Conduct is not accidental nor is it wholly chosen. It too grows from a hidden root, and that root is character. What you do rises from what you are.

You never wholly escape from this law. People sometimes attempt it, but the result is play-acting which only breaks down before they get it carried through. It cannot be very good because it is not natural, and even play-acting must be natural to be good. A really good actor must for the time become the character he portrays, and that is true if the acting is only the round of his daily life. Character and conduct are related. You cannot get them apart, nor can you keep what you are from showing in which you do. Emerson indicated that it shows in one's speech when he wrote, "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." Every visible piano key is attached to an invisible string, and every word and act is a response to a hidden control.

That is why so many new resolutions and new starts in life come to nothing. People get the idea that one can begin a new life merely by deciding to do differently. It takes more than a new suit of clothes or a course in conversation to change a personality. Charm schools should begin at the character level. Exterior applications may be attractive, but they do not change people. Shallowness and unreality will show through. Conduct will always respond to character.

The only way to make a new start in life is to start with a new self. Jesus made this plain in his illustration of the garment and the wineskin. A new patch on an old garment, he said, will only tear it worse, and new wine in an old wineskin will only ferment and burst the container. You cannot fit new conduct on an old character. A new car must also have a new motor. You cannot fit a new way of living on an old set of ideals. Conduct reflects character as a mirror reflects a face. It is an X-Ray of the spirit, and its diagnoses never mislead us.

For understanding eyes no one can wear a mask. Character may be hidden from the eyes like a root in the ground, but what grows from it reveals its true nature. With each of all the varieties of tree and plant life this law holds true. You cannot gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles, and a life like a tree produces according to its inner nature.

If a clock does not run properly you cannot repair it by merely resetting the hands. You must adjust, and possibly repair, the inner movement. When this is properly done the hands will stop going astray. By the same token, keep your life adjusted at the source, and all will be well, for character determines conduct. KNOW YOUR CHARACTER, for unless one does he does not know himself, but if he does, he has the secret of all his hopes and dreams.

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### CONDUCT BUILDS MORE CHARACTER

We have noted that even at the beginning of life some character tendencies are present, call them hereditary influences, natural endowments, or what you will; but remember that a tendency is only a beginning, an unfinished thing, a possibility. These tendencies do not develop into final form by themselves, but by use and exercise.

It is with them as it is with a muscle. A muscle or any power begins as a possibility, a rudimentary thing. Of itself it would never become strong and capable. You know by experience what happens. A muscle grows strong by use and exercise. Every movement it is called upon to make develops and enlarges it in some degree. In this way we all develop our bodies and adapt them for living, some to a very advanced degree.

That is the way possible character is built into actual character. Conduct rising from the character roots of childhood, act by act, has strengthened and enlarged these roots till they have become great impelling forces that control the continued building of our lives.

There are two ways in which we grow - in body and in personality. The body matures and stops growing, but the growth possibilities of personality are unlimited. Even after it has its growth, however, the body has to be maintained; but personality, which never gets its growth, must not only be maintained but given nourishment on which to continue to grow. The more people who realize this and act in accordance with it, the greater will be the progress of the race. The more completely you realize it and act upon it, the more adequate will be your life.

When one course of action out of two or more is to be determined upon is a serious and determining moment. One never knows what great things may depend on that decision. To many of us it would be a tragic thing to know how much we have missed at this point and in this way.

Since character, like the body, is a living thing, and has to be fed, its diet has to be considered. We feed the body proteins, carbohydrates, minerals, vitamins, catalysts, and the like; but we nourish character on decisions made and actions performed. As with the body, we can stunt it into an undeveloped, under-nourished thing, or we can keep it healthy and effective in times and conditions which demand that it must be.

One of the channels by which the reflex effects of conduct are fed into character is habit and its mechanism. The decisive thought that impels to action registers itself in the cells of a brain area designed to be a clearing house for exactly that kind of thing. Each repetition of it deepens that impression till after a while it has developed into a habit which no longer requires any decision but will carry itself along automatically. After awhile longer it would require quite an effort to make one's self do any other way, and finally to where he couldn't if he tried. The character stage has then been reached. What began as an act is now a part of one's self.

Know this, and remember and observe it, and you will be permanently the gainer. You are a sower who goes forth to sow, and if your heart is good ground the harvest will be one of rejoicing.

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#### TO DETERMINE MORE CONDUCT

We have said that character determines conduct, and conduct determines more character. What for? To determine more conduct. It is something like rotating crops, or passing a used chemical through a renewing process, or the endless changing of oxygen to carbon dioxide in the breathing of animals and carbon dioxide back to oxygen again in the breathing of plants with their leaf lungs, or the round of water through steam and vapor and back to water again. It goes on perpetually over and over. It is not a vicious circle, but a beneficent one, working for our increasing good if we will it so.

The natural processes we have mentioned all leave a distinct gain each round they make, like crops of grain and even the maintenance of the breath of life. All the increase of value in the world comes from one and another of them. The round of conduct and character in their unceasing cycle, assuming that they are good conduct and character, is always making life stronger and more useful as each adds to the other. Character is always governing conduct, and conduct is always strengthening and building character, so that each interaction leaves a distinct gain, not in the material field but in that of the integrity and worth of life itself. It is a way we can hoard character as some hoard worldly goods, in which we can grow as rich in personality as some do in money and property.

What a pity it would be to let this cycle go on and on every day and not be conscious of it or let it strengthen and enrich us as it is designed to do! If you ever wish, as surely most of us do, to be stronger in good purposes and more abundant in motivation for good works, the way is to build a stronger and better character. How? BY FEEDING IT MORE GOOD CONDUCT TO NOURISH IT TO GREATER STRENGTH. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT, AND AS COMPLETELY UNDER YOUR CONTROL.

Philip James Bailey has indicated the process exactly in a great poem. He says, "He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best." That is the process. Right thinking makes one feel nobler, feeling nobly makes one act better, and acting better makes him live the most, because it builds the character on which to base a finer and more abundant life.

Man has worked for centuries to produce perpetual motion, to build some self renewing thing that would go on till it wears out. He has not succeeded and will not without introducing some outside power. But here God has ordained a process in which motion is continually renewed by its own reaction. Conduct and character can go on forever building and renewing each other.

When first character determines conduct to build more character to determine more conduct, the wheel has only begun to turn. There is no stopping place. Those who pay no attention to it derive fitful, uncertain loss or gain, according to their motives, but those who use it consciously and rightly travel the way of ever-renewing youth, power, and happiness.

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### LIFE CULTURE

Agriculture, with its principles and methods, is suggestive of something of more immediate concern to every serious mind. We will call it life culture. It is like agriculture in that both deal with the laws of vitality and growth. Both produce necessities of life and both require planting and tending to produce their contributions to our welfare and happiness. Looking at these two interests comparatively should make still plainer the significance of this lesson.

One who wishes to make his life fruitful and productive of true values, and that certainly should include each and every one of us, realizes from the



beginning that he has a crop to raise. If he takes his responsibility seriously he wants it to be a good crop of something worthwhile. Our lives are the acreage, and our characters are the natures of the fields just as land may be sand, loam, clay, gumbo, or what not, each of them being good for producing a certain kind of crop.

Conduct is the plant growing out of the soil of character, appropriate to it in kind, determined by it in nature, and reseeding and enriching it for new harvests. Agriculture requires understanding, skill, and effort; and life culture requires them no less. Understand your character, then. Grow from it sturdy conduct and reseed it with the results of good action. Keep this up through the years, and your bin of first-rate and satisfying living will always be full.

We have said that character is the field in which we grow this conduct which must be the source of the fruits of good living and their seeds. We have indicated that, like fields, characters come varied like soils, and like them suited to the production of varied kinds of conduct. Now let us realize that soil, no matter what its variety, has to be kept rich enough to produce. Soil tends to wear out, and its productiveness has to be renewed by rest, by growing crops that replace the lost elements of fertility, or by applying these elements or combinations of them artificially. In agriculture we call this fertilizing.

Character has to be kept fertile too, for constant use without a source of renewal wears it out too, just as it does land. What it takes to maintain or restore the productive power to worn-down character is different, but still definite. What are some of these vital enrichments?

One important character enrichment element is that of good thoughts emanating from a wholesome, constructive, understanding thought life. Thoughts, like prayers, radiate strong forces. In fact, some thoughts are prayers. Our thoughts affect us physically, spiritually, and practically. They also reach out from us and actually affect and determine external conditions affecting other people.

Another is good associations and relationships. The importance of the friends we choose, the associates we accept, and the influences we allow them to exert on our lives, is very great for they are very determining. If they are good enough so to affect our conduct and through it our character the reward is infinite. We are not only known by the company we keep, but we are partly made what we are by it.

Another is the influence of good books, music, pictures, and diversions, - the things we hear, see, and take part in, which is the reason we try to secure good books for our members in order that we may grow. They affect our inner lives just as a restorer affects soil. A good farmer is careful what he uses for that purpose. We may well emulate his care.

DO NOT BE MISLED

Before we close this discussion of conduct and character it seems well to add a few words of caution. Do not be misled about anything so important as either conduct or character. There are always deceptive voices raised and false teachings abroad so appealing that they may deceive even the most careful.

These are often very cleverly framed by quite capable camouflage, but remember that even clever people can be mistaken. They may have the charm of newness, but remember that truth is not new, nor are the principles that distinguish good from evil. New discoveries of truth and right may be made, but they too are more ancient than the stars. Grow, but remember that you must do so from the same old roots.

When St. Paul visited Athens he found it under the influence of philosophers who were always seeking for some "new thing". A clever man, he presented a new phase of the Christian Gospel, but that did not mean that the Gospel itself was anything different than before. Little, if any, of the new things the Athenians trusted in has survived. The novelties of any age are mostly repetitions of things long before tried and discarded. Learn truth and do right, for they are immortal.

What is good or not good in conduct and character? How may we distinguish them? There are certain rules by which that may be done. What has been said by the wise, proved in human experience, accepted by individual and collective conscience, especially if it harmonizes with revealed faith, should be acceptable. If a plant grows lilies, it is a lily plant. If a belief or ideal produces good, it must be good. For what is good there should be no substitution unless it has proved better. There are no styles in truth and right. Like sunshine, love, and happiness, they are just what they have always been.

Do not be blown about by every change of fancy. Do not determine truth by whether you like the one who expresses it. Do not believe what you want to think and reject what you do not. Do not mistake wishful thinking for truth. Do not accept or reject things on a basis of age or popularity. Do not accept fragments of error because they are sandwiched in between apparent facts. Use St. Paul's method - prove all things and hold fast to what is good.

Using care will help you not to harm your character when trying to benefit it. This much is sure - good character produces good conduct, and good conduct builds good character. Two more things remain to be done, however. First, be sure what good character is and feed it with appropriate conduct. Second, do not expect good from evil, right from wrong, or truth from error. The principles are so simple and plain that you need not be in the least confused in dealing with them. Find the right road, stay in it, and keep going. It is as simple as that.

## THE CHOICE IS OURS

The Creator has arranged things so all the processes which only He can ordain go on beyond our power to change or disarrange, while all those that have to do with the shaping of our personal lives are under our control. He determined the rates and distances of the stars and the response of the ground to the seasons; but leaves us to choose which way we will go and in what direction. The train is on the track and we are on the train, but we can speed it up, slow it down, divert it onto the wrong track, save it, or wreck it.

A young medical graduate went to the University of Edinburgh to become an ear, nose, and throat specialist. He supposed he would sit in classes and enter laboratories and be told what to do, but he wasn't. He was assigned a booth where patients were sent to him to treat, then his success with them was noted, and suggestions were made accordingly. God has done something very much like that with each of us. We are on our own as long as we are doing well, and no one is going to force us to do well. If we fail we simply find that we have counted ourselves out. But any measure of help will be given us to keep us from failing - if we want it.

All this spells responsibility, and that is a great word. Each human being is made to develop into a responsible person. Let one have integrity, responsibility, and a sense of obligation, and you can depend on that person's living at about the top level of human worth. Even freedom must be responsible. If it is not, it becomes license and like a wild engine runs off the track and is wrecked. If it is it claims the liberty to carry its load straight to the appointed destination. When will people learn that liberty is freedom to do right, while freedom to do wrong is slavery?

Each of us knows from the beginning that his hands are on the controls of his physical life and that by his own good management he can keep well and strong. But our personal lives which are related to but not identical with our physical lives, need control even more. We need to understand their motivations as well as we know the actions and reactions of the life of the body so we may do whatever keeps them in harmony and effective for the greatest value and good.

This law of the interaction between conduct and character is one of those things it is worthwhile to know, so the relationship can be so managed as to yield the greatest value in living. It is a key to one's future. Barring unexpected conditions and factors, when we know a cause we know what the effect is going to be, and if an effect is not good we know the cure is a readjustment of the cause. If we want certain kinds of agricultural products we know we must have the right kinds of soil, fertilizer, seeds, and cultivation. That is only for a given season, but the results of doing the same thing in the productiveness of living are forever.

This answers once and for all the claim that it matters little what one does or thinks. It matters everything, if he cares. It is of supreme importance, if he wants his life to make a good impact on his times.

A certain man wanted to meet Destiny. An appointment was made for a certain time and place. He found himself standing before a cloaked and masked figure. Eagerly he waited to see what the features of Destiny were like. The mask was torn away, and he stood looking into his own face. This law of life makes it so.

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AFFIRMATION

Knowing that what I am determines what I do, and what I do determines what I shall become, I seek worthy character through worthy conduct, and worthy conduct from worthy character.

Blessings,

Your Instructor.