

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## **The Letter Killeth -- the Spirit Giveth Life**

*"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." - 2 Cor. 3:6.*

THESE WORDS of the Lord's great Apostle have direct reference to the old Law Covenant of Mount Sinai, and to the New Covenant, of which he declares that God has made us "sufficient as ministers."

The former, which he refers to as "the letter," was an expression of God's law, hence as Paul declares in Romans 7, it was "holy and righteous and good." Nevertheless Paul, as a Jew, had found it to be "unto death," not through any fault in the law, but because of the weakness of the fallen nature of those who sought to keep it. "But now we [followers of Jesus] have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that now we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death . . . that the ordinances of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."

The Apostle's affirmation, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," has passed into the vernacular as a proverb of general usage, particularly in spiritual matters. However, the law that man applies to his fellows is his own idea of God's law, or of righteousness, interpreted necessarily in his own imperfect manner.

Moreover, the Christian in applying the letter of the law against his brother forgets that he has "been discharged" from that same law through God's mercy, and forgets too the Apostle's exhortation to "forgive one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Like the man in the parable who was forgiven a vast indebtedness by his lord, yet immediately laid hold upon a fellow-servant, and demanding payment of a trifling sum due him, began to beat the

debtor unmercifully, so the enforcement of the letter of the law by man against his brother, connotes narrowness, harshness, rigor, intolerance, mercilessness. Contrasted with these unlovely qualities are breadth of mind, kindness, helpfulness, mercy, tolerance, leniency. In our relations with our fellows the exercise of the former characteristics are indeed killing: they destroy fellowship, devastate friendship, and banish unity of spirit and liberty of action. On the contrary, kindness, tolerance, lenience, patience, are helpful, constructive, winning. They are among the virtues that build up the unity, the faith, and the love of the Body of Christ; and are indispensable in preparing it for its future work of judging and blessing. Thus these qualities are life-giving, through that "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

## Schisms in the Body

It is apparent that the schisms which have rent the professed Church of Jesus Christ throughout the Gospel Age are all manifestations of the deadly effectiveness of the letter of the law as applied by carnal men, in destroying Christian liberty and unity, and paralyzing progress in the "path that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "This law, the letter of which is so deadly, is the law of *doctrinal* unity, or uniformity.

"The Church of Christ is neither a sect nor an aggregation of sects: it is one and indivisible," wrote Pastor Russell. "It is Christ and all who are united to Him -- joined by a living faith in His redemptive work for them, and in a full consecration to Him, His will and His work, even unto death. This true Church is represented by our Lord Himself under the simile of a vine, of which and in which all truly His are, individually, branches."

"Webster's Dictionary defines the word 'sect' to mean: 'A part cut off, . . . hence a body of persons who have separated from others by virtue of some special doctrine, or set of doctrines, which they hold in common.'

"This description fits all the various denominations of Christendom. All *separate* themselves from other Christians; all do so by virtue of some doctrine or set of *doctrines* which they *hold in common*. But the members of the true Church are each individually united to Christ, and not to each other. As the spokes of a wheel are each separately fastened in the hub, so each member of the Body of Christ is, in his inner or spiritual life, bound only to Christ. And as the tire steadies and gives *unity of operation* to the spokes at their extremities, so love, the bond of perfectness, is the only bond that should be permitted between those whose wills are buried into Christ's."

Concerning this figure, which was a favorite one of our late Pastor's, it is pertinent to inquire, How long are the spokes likely to remain fastened in the hub if the tire is weak, broken or lacking? How efficient is the wheel in making progress over the road if there are breaks and gaps in various places in the tire between the spokes? A wheel revolving on such a rim will soon shake itself to pieces.

Continuing, we read: "Divisions were objected to in the one true Church, and all the Apostles taught that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There is one fold and one Shepherd. (1 Cor. 12:25.) Christians are a separated class-separate from the world, separate from sinners, separate from all others-in that they accept salvation through the redeeming blood of Christ. Their sympathy and cooperation are not of force, doctrinal or other, but merely of love and common interest, as fellow-pilgrims and fellow-heirs. The doctrine of the *ransom* serves to guard each one thus in Christ against all professing Christ's name but denying or ignoring this fundamental part of His work. Not collectively but *individually* the saints should have no fellowship with works of darkness." - Eph. 5:11. - Watch Tower, 1893, pp. 272-276.

## The Scandal of Christendom

Another writer in the old "Zion's Watch Tower" says: " 'Denomination' is a specious word invented by shame to conceal the nakedness of the fall of Christendom: that which erring and bewildered Christians call *denomination* is in the Scriptures *schism*, for so it is in the word, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we all speak the same thing,

that there be no schisms [see the Greek] among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment' (1 Cor. 1:10 and 12:15); for in the Scriptures believers are represented not only as being one body and one spirit, but as having a perfect unity of mind and judgment; so that whatever we may now hear concerning 'denominations' (that is, sects and schisms), and however these divisions may now be applauded and admired, and however much it may have become a fashionable virtue to speak well of them all; yet this is certain, that if there be any truth in the Word of God, every sect is a sin, and *every division a proof of disobedience*.

*"There is one body," is a truth in the Word of God. (Eph. 4:4.) The faith once delivered to the saints was mainly to establish this fact, the whole of the New Testament tends to confirm it, and visible Christianity utterly fails to represent the true Christian faith where this fact is not both in practice and in theory fully acknowledged." - Watch Tower, 1889, July, p. 7.*

### **Were the Reformers Schismatics?**

Some one may ask, Are divisions *never* justifiable? Were the great Christian leaders and Reformers such as Arius, Waldo, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Campbell, Miller and others, schismatics? They separated from their previous religious associates and organizations; were they justified? Were they not good men? Were they not servants of God?

We reply, There is one, and only one, condition in the Church which, when it arises, not only justifies but impels the faithful follower of Christ to withdraw from its fellowship. This condition was recognized by these Reformers in the Church of their times. Their duty under the circumstances was indicated by our Lord's command as recorded in Matt. 24:15 and Mark 13:14, and in other Scriptures.

"When therefore ye see the abomination that maketh desolate standing in a holy place"-*"Come out of her My people" - "flee to the mountains."* The absence of the Greek article before "holy place" indicates that *any* holy place is meant. Any truly holy place-consecrated mind or ecclesia-is desolated by anything that destroys faith in God, and in the all-sufficient ransom-sacrifice which He has provided. When it is desolated by substituting some other basis of salvation-such as the doctrine of the Mass in the Roman Church, or faith in good works, morality, evolution, etc., in the modern church-the true hub of the wheel (Church organization) is displaced, and with it should go all the "spokes" who are fixed in the true "hub."

### **What of their Successors?**

But what of the organizations that these great Christian leaders left when they died? Why have their names and teachings become sectarian labels that are being used as a means of separating Christ's flock, and creating the scandal of multiplied divisions and increased bigotry and intolerance, or scornful infidelity, where liberty and unity should prevail?

Let Pastor Russell answer. He says: "It is not remarkable that Satan should seek to divide and separate the sheep, and to put up fences, such as the denominational creeds prove to be, which would hinder some of the sheep from following the Shepherd into green pastures of fresh and living truth. This would be but wisdom on his part. But it is strange that he should be able to fetter the reason of so many, that they should think it a mark of spirituality to say, I am of Luther, a Lutheran; I of Calvin or Knox, a Presbyterian; T of Wesley, a Methodist, and so on. The Apostle

Paul, on the contrary, said to some of his day, who were in danger of this spirit of sectarianism: While one saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Peter, are ye not *carnal*? Is it not in direct opposition to the Spirit of Christ to think or act thus? "Is Christ divided?" Did Paul or Peter or Knox or Calvin or Wesley or *any one else* than Christ *die* for your sins and *redeem* you? They, as servants of Christ, and the Church, should be esteemed very highly for their works' sake, but to name the Bride after any other than the Bridegroom is manifestly improper.

"Oh, that all could see that in God's sight there is but one Church-whose names are written in heaven and that God cannot and does not sympathize with or recognize any split in the real Church." - Watch Tower, 1893, pp. 274-276.

### **Being Dead, They Cannot Disown It**

The servants of God of past days are not responsible for the schisms brought about in their names by their professed friends and followers after their deaths. Their very strength and influence as true ministers of Christ -their very *usefulness* to Christ and to the Church depended upon their insistence upon the *spirit* of the law, not upon its letter. They recognized, as well-taught scribes of the Kingdom, that they were forbidden to apply the letter of the law to their brethren, by the injunctions of the Scriptures: "Judge not that ye be not judged;" "Judge nothing before the time, until *the Lord* come . "; and "The Lord shall judge His people."

So the tendency of their teaching and leadership was invariably in the direction of the liberty and unity of the Lord's consecrated people. But after the death of each of these great leaders, Satan entered in and took advantage of certain fleshly, human, "carnal" characteristics of their followers-qualities not altogether bad-to create usually not one, but several new sects.

### **How Satan Beguiles**

Among the tendencies of which Satan takes advantage, are:

(1) The human desire for visible or established leadership and standards. This comes partly from man's gregarious nature-his group or tribal mind; and partly from his lack of self-confidence, particularly in matters spiritual. To supply this leadership in the direction he desires it to go, Satan plays upon

(2) The ambitious and emulative group of secondary leaders or would be leaders among them. A contest ensues for place and power, which each of these leaders seeks to grasp by inheriting the position and influence of the greater man who preceded him. Each rival leader claims his particular conception or views of his predecessor's work or doctrine is the one and only simon-pure representation of the deceased leader. Each appeals for support to one of the most beautiful of human virtues

(3) Loyalty -- loyalty to the memory of the dead leader and to his teachings. But here the Satanic distortion is seen; for the Christian's loyalty is *all* pledged to Christ. If wholly centered in Him, the Christian will adhere to the Spirit of Christ, which the Apostle declares is the spirit of liberty and unity. If he listens to carnally-minded leaders, he will choose among them the one who interprets best according to *his own fleshly judgment* the letter of the teachings of his dead leader,

and transfer his allegiance to *him*, in the names, of course, of Christ and of the deceased leader. The Persian poet philosopher Omar cries in derision at this process of doctrinal hairsplitting:

"Would you the span of your existence spend About *The Secret-quick* about it, Friend!

A Hair, perhaps, divides the False and True  
And upon what, prithee, may life depend?"

Thus each of the self seeking leaders gains some followers from among those who, lacking stability of character, look for visible leadership. Thus are the sheep scattered, and the work of the Reformer seemingly to a great extent nullified by Satan. Gradually several "communions" or "associations" or "connections" evolve, characterized by emphasis placed upon certain minor points of doctrine or of practice. These differences, it should be marked, never include any of the *seven things* set forth by Paul in Ephesians 4 as the framework upon which the unity of the Church is built; for each and all claim to believe and hold fast to these seven "*one*" things. And each group stands firmly for *complete Christian unity*-that is, of course, on the basis of its own particular beliefs, or creed, or plan! This seems to each schismatic group to be perfectly logical, for each is sure it alone is right. Each holds fast to the letter of the law as it sees it; so nullifying Christian liberty and unity in their broad and tolerant operation.

### **Do Angels Weep?**

Doubtless the angels smile pityingly upon the solemnity and earnestness with which each sectary and divider has excused his own schism and condemned every other; explaining why and how the peculiar circumstances of his own case are exceptional and justify his action and the actions of those who are invited to follow him in making one more division among the professors of Christianity.

The excuse usually given for rigid doctrinal requirements is that it is to "safeguard the flock." Those, however, who are familiar with and have regard for the *spirit* of Pastor Russell's teaching and leadership are protected against this fallacy; this spirit of the law is epitomized in his words which we have already quoted:

*"The doctrine of the ransom* serves to guard each one thus in Christ." "The members of the true Church are each individually united to Christ. . . . As the tire . . . gives *unity of operation* to the spokes . . . so love, the bond of perfectness, is the only bond that should be permitted between those whose wills are buried into Christ's." "All [who] *separate* themselves from other Christians . . . do so by virtue of some *doctrine* or set of doctrines which they hold in common." The letter of doctrine killeth unity; the spirit of love maketh it alive.

We note that Pastor Russell pictures Christian unity as a "*unity of operation*"; not as some have defined it, a kindly and mildly tolerant attitude maintained at a distance for all except those of his own particular group; a sort of "absent treatment" such as the denominations of the day practice, which is expressed in the catchword, "live and let live"; an attitude which tends to prevent bodily or verbal assault at sight, but impels no great intimacy. How pale and feeble a caricature is this of that love of Christ which constraineth (holds together) His footstep followers, and shall bind all the members into one Body in glory!

However more or less tolerant and "Christian" the attitude may be toward visitors, non-member attendants or even members who "do not fully agree" or "are not entirely in harmony" with the views of the majority, it is generally agreed among sectarian leaders that such speckled sheep should not be permitted to teach or be privileged to engage in any service among "their" flocks -- lest they should injure the sheep.

### **"The Sheep Know My Voice"**

But the Lord and the Apostles place the responsibility for judging their leaders upon the "sheep" themselves. The exercise of responsibility is good for them; it is educational, edifying; they learn by their mistakes, and by correcting them. Predigested food may be good for the sick or for babes, but not for mature men-or Christians.

Thus it is written (John 4:1): "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Note the Apostle refers to the *spirits* of their teachers; he does not say, Try the letter of their doctrine, by some particular standard. Paul's advice is: "Despise not prophesyings; prove all things, hold fast that which is good;" and his injunction is: "Remember them which are the guides over you, who have spoken unto you' the word of God: and considering the issue of their manner of life, imitate their faith." (1 Thess. 5:20, 21; Heb. 13:7.) Nothing here recommends a critical attitude toward opinions of Scriptural matters; the essential *seven things* are beyond dispute; judge rather the teacher by his spirit, his faith, the tendency, direction or outcome of his manner of life, say the Apostles. "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

Nor are these instructions for judging teachers directed to synods, or committees, or conferences, or even to the Church collectively. The individual is to judge for himself; though he doubtless may and will express his judgment in his vote in the ecclesia.

### **"Beware of False Prophets"**

The Lord Himself gave His people specific instructions for judging their teachers -- and it is a judgment to be based on the spirit, not on the letter of the law. These instructions are contained in two reports of the same discourse-respectively found in Matthew 7:15-23, and in Luke 6:39-45. Only by combining the two accounts can we obtain the Lord's complete thought. Accordingly we quote a synthesis of the two passages:

"And he spoke a parable unto them: Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit? The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected [i.e., his course of training completed] shall be as his teacher. . . ." (The pupil being made *like his teacher* by his training, it is important that the learner have the right kind of teacher.) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh."

The fruit spoken of here is "the fruit of lips which make confession unto His name!"-or otherwise. The Scriptures continually magnify the importance of human speech as the true index of the inward man. The great Judge of the Court of Last Resort lays down the rule that men shall be finally judged upon the basis of their verbal testimony. This may be a startling thought to some, but the Court's ruling is clearly stated:

"Man looketh upon the outward *appearance*, but God looketh upon the *heart*."

"Keep thy *heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of *life*."

"Out of the abundance of the heart the *mouth speaketh*."

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with *the mouth* confession is made unto *salvation*."

"I [Jesus] say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned." - 1 Sam. 16:7; Prov. 4:23; Romans 10:10; Luke 6:45; Matt. 12:36, 37.

It is said that actions speak louder than words; but words are a more final and conclusive criterion of character. The tongue, standing for speech, is, as the Apostle James declares, a particularly "unruly" member of the body, and therefore its complete subjugation represents the final victory of the spirit over the flesh. All its other desires, ambitions, appetites and passions are more easily controlled than the tongue. No wonder the Apostle writes: "If a man stumbleth not in *word*, the same is a perfect man [i.e., completely self-controlled], able to bridle the whole body also." (James 3:1-18.) If the heart is wholly devoted to righteousness, the testimony of the lips will inevitably manifest it.

### **All are Being Put to the Question**

In the Dark Ages-and today, in places where the ethics and practices of the Dark Ages Prevail -- men were and are searchingly questioned to the accompaniment of torture, to force from unwilling lips the inmost secrets of the heart. The experience of those who have taken upon themselves vows of consecration, and especially those in the position of teachers and leaders, is comparable to that of being tried by torture; although it is usually more prolonged, and less physical, it is none the less searching and revealing. Such are under tremendous pressure from the world, the flesh, and the devil. They are being put to the Extreme Question -- an examination by a process of searching trials, under which a man confesses his innermost self. The result is one of three things: he is strengthened in his convictions and determination to serve God, he "makes a good confession before many witnesses" and ultimately receives the Great Reward; or he is broken and shows his weakness and unreliability, though he does not deny his Lord, in which case he "shall suffer loss, but be saved, yet so as by fire;" or else he proves wholly recreant and unfaithful and suffers the second death in the end. "It is a fearful [or awesome] thing to fall into the hands of the living God."



## The Judgment of a Prophet

Under this pressure of spiritual forces, good and bad, with which he is dealing, the "prophet" will soon manifest his real self in the spirit of his teachings, to those who have their spiritual senses so developed and sharpened as to be "able to discern both good and evil." They judge the prophet as instructed by the Lord, by the flavor of his speech-its mental or spiritual taste, and its effect upon the spiritual lives of his hearers.

Hypocritical and "lying lips," lips with "the poison of asps" behind them; lips "drawing near" to Jehovah, but misrepresenting a "heart far from" Him, may deceive the sincere temporarily, and will deceive all except the "very elect"-those who, having the "mind of Christ," "examine all things, yet are examined of no man." The latter judge by the *spirit* of the testimony, not by its letter, and cannot be continuously deceived. The passage from James' Epistle referred to above closely parallels our Lord's instructions for judging teachers. Is the teaching like the fruit of the vine and the fig-tree, sweet, benign, refreshing, nourishing? Does it promote the liberty, the unity and the growth of the Body? (Eph. 4.) Does the teacher or elder or "prophet" gather and feed, like a shepherd? If so, he may be trusted; his teaching is good. He is of those of whom Jesus spoke, who "gathereth . . . with Me."

On the other hand, does the teaching tend to cause strife, factions, parties, divisions, in the Body? Is it like harsh, irritating, distressing, tearing thorns and thistles are to the human body? The wolf in sheep's clothing rends and scatters the flock; the goat-like sheep seeks to dominate others and to lead them in ways of his own-upon some plausible excuse. Says Jesus: "He that gathereth not with Me, *scattereth*." - *Luke 11:23*.

Of such, the Lord's Great Apostle writes-Rom. 16:17-20:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to, the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly [or desires]; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I rejoice therefore over you: but I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

## Christian Fellowship

THERE is a tendency among God's people to cement fellowships as well as to make divisions upon various unscriptural lines.

As illustrations: The various branches of the Presbyterian family have each its own system of theology and its own methods of worship. They are one family and have a special sympathy or fellowship upon the doctrine of Calvin-that everything that comes 'to pass was foreordained. Among Baptists, although there are many subdivisions of them, there is a common bond of fellowship in water immersion. No matter what else a man holds or does not hold, if he practice immersion there is at once a sympathetic fellowship. So also it is among Premillennialists: They feel that any other differences, almost, should 'be overlooked if their point of special interest is acknowledged.

We protest that none of these are true grounds for the fellowship taught in the Scriptures; and that the rejection of any or all of these is not the Scriptural ground for refusing fellowship in Christ.

The Scriptural basis of fellowship and disfellowship is both a much broader and a much more simple one. It is simply of two parts: (1) An acceptance of Christ **as the Redeemer**, and (2) A full consecration to **Him**. Whoever complies with 'this Scriptural formula is entitled to the love, respect, sympathy and care of every other such one; for such, and such only, constitute the Church which God recognizes-the Church "whose names are written in heaven."

And if the above proposition be true as indicating who are worthy of our fellowship, it must be true also that any one who cannot claim fellowship upon this basis has no claim to it at all.

All Christians should see that this rule is broad enough to unite all of **God's people**, and narrow enough to exclude all others, including those who would seek to "climb up some other way." (John 10:1.) And if this simple test-the only one recognized by the early Church-is sufficient, let us recognize it and none other.

But, says an objector, such a simple basis of faith would let in all sorts of false doctrines and and would divide the Church of Christ. No, we answer; the Church is already divided. It would tend to re-unite the true ones and to separate the worldly and the false. Upon so broad a platform all true Christians could come together for the study of God's Word. Methodists would find themselves studying the principles of **election, baptism**, etc., while Presbyterians and Baptists would find themselves studying free grace and free agency. The result to all (after sectarian considerations were gone) would soon be harmony-Bible harmony.

But, says another, so broad a platform would compel us to fellowship Unitarians and Christian Scientists and Spiritualists. Not at all, we answer.

None of these believe in Jesus **as their Redeemer**. It would exclude all such and all others who deny that man is a sinner under divine condemnation, and that "Christ died for our **sins**," "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." It would and should exclude all who do not recognize this essential base of Christianity. (Possibly a few believers in the **ransom** may call themselves by the above names, ignorantly-not appreciating the doctrines upon which they are built. We refer to the views of the leaders and the masses of these denominations.)

A man may be honest and sober and in every way moral and be a Buddhist or a Mohammedan or an Infidel (an unbeliever as to the claims of Christ) of any other shade. Morality and general decency may be proper enough grounds for their recognition socially, as friends and acquaintances; but these constitute no claim whatever upon the sacred name of Christian, nor upon the close heart sympathy which should make truly **one** all who are trusting in the precious blood of Christ -- our ransom price from sin and death -- and who are fully consecrated to Him.

We are living in the time when past and present combinations and doctrines of men will be breaking to pieces; when many are, and many more will be, seeking **fresh grounds** for fellowship; when it is important that all true Christians should stand fast, and shoulder to shoulder defend the foundation principles upon which we stand -- the rock foundation; -- for "other [proper] foundation can no man lay."

How our great Adversary would like to get the soldiers of the cross confused and separated, following different affinities, rallying around different standards, and hence leaving the true standard -- "the cross of Christ," the "Ransom"-undefended. Let all who see the true standard assemble to it, and separate themselves in heart and Christian fellowship from all the unclean [those unjustified by faith in the redeeming blood, and clothed still, therefore, in the filthy garments of their own unrighteousness, instead of the wedding garment of Christ's imputed righteousness]. Let their efforts be for and with each other; to present each other blameless and unreprouvable, without spot or wrinkle, before the Heavenly Bridegroom. . . .

Let us assure ourselves, from the study of God's Word, that it is as much a part of our duty to **disfellowship** (as Christians) those who, either directly or indirectly, deny that Christ gave Himself a ransom [a corresponding price] for all, and who, hence, are the worst enemies of the cross of Christ, as it is our duty to fellowship any who confess Him -- thus as their Savior; and who, hence, are our "Brethren" in Him. We are to "have **no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but should rather reprove *them*." - *The Watch Tower* 1905.

## **The Father of the Faithful**

*"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." - Heb. 11:8.*

THE FIRST great character in the Bible that arrests our attention for any length of time is Abraham, known as the "friend of God." Abraham is one of the greatest characters of history; and the fact that brings him near to all of us, even the weakest, is that he was great through his faith. At first that faith was no stronger than that which trembles in the breast of the humblest child of God. Through adversity and trial, however, it was developed, so that he is known as the "father of the faithful."

Faith is that which links us with God-the channel that connects us with Almighty Power and Infinite Wisdom. Used in obedience to the commands and laws of God, it will grow. It grew in Abraham; and it will grow in us. It is important that we understand those laws that have to do with the growth of faith and its gradual increase; and with this thought in mind let us examine the life of this faithful man of God.

Going back 2000 years before the birth of Christ, we find the ancient city of Ur of the Chaldees, which was a "busy home of life when flocks browsed on the seven hills of Rome." Ur was once a large and flourishing city, situated in that luxurious Chaldean land where dwelt a shepherd-tribe which required extensive pasture lands for their herds and flocks. Here dwelt the sons of Ham, who were grossly idolatrous. It was here in the midst of these children of Ham that Terah, of the family of Shem, settled, in a rich pasture land outside Ur. They were a race of shepherds, living mostly in tents, and the walled cities had little attraction for them.

### **A Call to "Come Out"**

Here Abraham was 'born and grew to manhood. Tradition tells us that "as a young man Abraham offered an uncompromising opposition to the evil practices which were rife, not only in the land, but in his father's house. . . . He broke the helpless images to pieces. He refused to bow before the subtle element of fire at the bidding of the monarch, and under the penalty of martyrdom." The Scriptures give us nothing of this, but as we consider the mature character of the man, his faith and obedience when first we hear of him, we are convinced that there must have been long years of testing and trial previously. "The mushroom is the child of a single night; but the oak, which is a match for the tempest, is the result of long years of sun and air, of breeze and storm."

We read that "the God of glory appeared unto Abraham." In just what form of glory God appeared unto Abraham, or what angel represented Him, we may not surely know, but we may be sure that there was some manifestation that gave Abraham an unmistakable evidence on which to base his faith for all future time. We do know that whatever may have been the vision, it was accompanied by a call to "come out"-a call of separation: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." - Gen. 12:1.

God's choice seems never to be arbitrary, but there are certain requirements that' must be measured up to in those He calls for His special purpose. In Abraham He saw an honesty of heart, as well as the possibility of an obedient faith. It was to a path of loneliness Abraham was called, but

it was also a path of blessedness. "Look unto Abraham your father, . . . for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." (Isa. 51:2.) The path to which God calls His people although a lonely one has the assurance of divine companionship. While God does not appear to us as He did to Abraham; yet He does speak to us in no uncertain way to separate ourselves and we may be sure that when He says "come," He is going on before, and that if we would enjoy His companionship, we must follow.

Doubtless Abraham was attached to the home of his father. It was no small matter to break up his home and go out "not knowing whither he went." Each child of God must have this same experience, not only at the beginning of his Christian life, but each step of obedience and advance in the divine life will "involve an altar on which some dear fragment of the self-life has been offered." While the blessings which will be ours as a result of our obedient faith more than compensate for the sacrifice; and the glorious prospects of the future may well allure us on; yet there is always an anguish "as the last link is broken, the last farewell said, and the last look taken of the receding home of past happy years." Like the young man of the parable, many go away sorrowful.

### **Transplanted and Isolated**

Nothing is more strengthening to the Christian at times than to be transplanted and isolated. While we are in favorable surroundings and without trials, faith is undeveloped. As a germ, it merely sleeps. But when we are called to go forth "not knowing whither we go," with none but God to look to, then faith suddenly grows as an outstanding, vital principle of life. If Abraham had always lived in Ur, he could not have become the mighty example of faith that he was.

We may not be called to leave home and friends, but we shall have to withdraw our hearts from all earthly props and supports if we would learn to lean only on God and trust Him implicitly, making the eternal God our refuge. Sometimes God bids us stay where we are, but even then we must at heart separate from all that is earthly and know what it means to be independent of all creatures and dependent upon God alone. Let us find in Jesus the living water and like the woman of Samaria we will leave our water-pots.

"The key to Abraham's life is the word 'Separation.' He was from first to last a separated man. Separated from his fatherland and kinsfolk; separated from Lot; separated, as a pilgrim and stranger, from the people of the land; separated from his own methods of securing a fulfillment of the promises of God; separated from the rest of mankind by special sorrows, separated to high and lofty fellowship in thoughts and plans, which God could not hide from him." This is not the separation into a monastery, hoping to win salvation by the repeating of prayers and outward devotions, but it is the separation of faith-separation that comes because we have seen the vision of God and are reaching out for the eternal realities.

### **Tendency of the Human Heart to Unbelief**

But it is natural for the human heart to cling to things earthly, to have something visible and tangible in which to trust. The children of Israel afford many examples of this tendency -- the "sin of unbelief." In the very beginning of their experience when their leader, Moses, was delayed in the mount, their first cry was, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." What a disgrace! How quickly they must have been turned aside to make such a gross mistake! **Make us**

**gods!** They were leaving Jehovah and placing themselves under gods of their own making. They had grown weary of waiting for their visible leader and of trusting an unseen Arm, and they imagined that a graven calf which they could see was mightier than the invisible, Almighty God!

And this has ever been the history of fallen man. The human heart loves that which it can see and hear; but this is not the way of faith. Hence in every age man has been busy with "graven tools," setting up and leaning upon "human imitations of the divine reality"-counterfeits of the true. "Make us gods." All these things were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Let us not be too sure that we are free from idol worship. Though we may not form and bow down to "a molten calf," we may be sure that this sin of Israel is a type of something in our day into which the people of God are in danger of falling. Let us look within and around us and see if there is not something for us in all this. Whenever we are turning our hearts from God or from leaning implicitly upon Him, whether in the matter of leadership or what not, in principle, we are saying, "Up make us gods." The human heart is ever the same and our only safeguard is to be much in the presence of God. Moses was in the mount with God and therefore was not tempted to idol worship. We are called to live by faith; nothing can be seen with the eye of sense. The trials of God's people are similar, and they have a tendency to make manifest to what extent the heart has found its all in God. "It is a difficult matter -- a rare attainment -- so to walk in sweet communion with God as to be rendered thereby entirely independent of things and people here."

### **"He Obeyed"**

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed." (Heb. 11:8.) These words are full of meaning. They meant blessing to Abraham's heart, blessing to his home, and blessing to his life; and they meant the fulfillment of wonderful promises to him. The narrow path of obedience is filled with opportunities of service. Had Abraham refused to obey the call of God, he would have remained in Ur and would have been buried there in an unknown grave; but because of his obedience, his name has come down through the ages as one of the great men of the earth-one who was pleasing to God.

"When his father was dead, he removed him into this land." Does there not seem to be a lesson to us in these words, and a solution as to why God's promises seem unfulfilled at times? The ties of nature have a tendency to hold us back from the "land of promise." We cannot take with us the attachments of the flesh, and not until these have been cut off, not until they are dead to us, are we in position to receive the blessing God has to bestow. These things dear to nature hinder our true development and not until there is a complete separation can we receive the promise.

Abraham journeyed on. Whither he went he knew not. It was sufficient for him to know that God had called him and had said, "Come." He "staggered not through unbelief." He passed through vast monotonous wastes as well as luxurious and attractive plains. None of these held Abraham. He had but one aim in life -- to do the will of God. "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." - Gen. 12:5.

## **A People Unknown to the World**

There has ever been a little company of men who have confessed that they were "pilgrims and strangers on the earth." They have been found in every walk of life-not many mighty or noble according to this world, but more often those who are unknown. Our Lord was a man unknown -- "He came into the world, the highest personage on the highest errand; and yet so humble in origin, so simple in appearance, so gentle in heart and manners, that the world could not comprehend Him." Those who follow Him, those whose eyes of faith have caught a vision of the Land "afar off" where their treasures are safely stored, are enabled to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible" -- no trial or disappointment of life can crush or weigh them down. None of these things can affect their real interests.

Abraham continued his journey until he reached Sichem, or Shechem, where our Lord in after years sat by the well to rest. Here "the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." (Gen. 12:7.) The altar and the tent speak to us of two outstanding features of Abraham's life: He had nothing on earth-"not so much as to set his foot upon"; but he had all in God.

## **The Tent**

Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran, and a hundred and seventy-five when he died. That intervening century was spent dwelling in a tent-an apt symbol of his life. He did not mingle with the people of the land in the sense of becoming one of them. He carefully guarded against intermarriage with their children, and sent to his own country for a bride for his son. He did not stay in any permanent locality, but was always on the move. Doubtless he was tempted to settle down and live as others, but he knew this was not the will of God for him. And it was from a tent that he was carried to lie beside Sarah in the cave of Machpelah. Thus, "Abraham dwelt in tents, because he looked for the city which bath foundations." (Heb. 11:9, 10, R. V.) Abraham's tent-life speaks to us of the detached life of all the children of God-all those to whom the promise applies: "I go to prepare a place for you . . . and I will come again to receive you unto Myself. Little does our hope mean to us if it does not wean us from devotion to the things around us. Let us have before us that glorious hope beyond, and nothing this world can offer will allure us. May our separateness of life and walk be a testimony that will impress others of the reality of our hope more than any sermon could do.

## **The Altar**

It seems that wherever Abraham pitched his tent he also built an altar. Long after Abraham left, the altar remained, telling of the man of God. If every Christian left behind him as effective and definite a testimony, would not their lives be a greater power for good? And let us not forget that the altar means not only worship, but it means sacrifice, self-denial. In this the tent-life and the altar are inseparable. One cannot live the detached life without sacrifice; hurt it is from such a life that the most fervent devotion, the sweetest fellowship, and the most sacred communion springs. If, we find a laxness in our private devotion, is it not often the result of not "living enough in the tent" -- living the life of real self-denial -- the life of sacrifice?

Abraham built his altar not for himself alone. God said, "I know Abraham that he will command his children and his household after him." (Gen. 18:19.) Abraham's religion had its influence upon his family and he sets a striking example to many Christians who have failed to "command their children and their household after them."

"Unto thy seed will I give this land." At first God promised only to "show the land," but when Abraham proved his loyalty by obedience to the command and separated himself, and came out, God promised to "**give** the land." Outwardly, there seemed little probability of that, promise being fulfilled. "The Canaanite was then in the land," but there the Lord was too-"And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land. The connection here between the statement and the promise is beautiful and touching. God had promised, and "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." - Psa. 33:11.

### **A Test of Faith**

Though Abraham had reached the promised land, his faith must yet be sorely tested, for w% read: "Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land" of Canaan. (Gen. 12:10.) The separated life is one that is possible only to faith. A famine in the land of promise! Surely this must have seemed strange to Abraham. Had he made a mistake? -No, God had just spoken to him, assuring him that He would give him the land. God knew the test that was just before Abraham, and this promise came not only as a reward for his faithful obedience, but a preparation for the future. Is it not often thus with the child of God? Does not God prepare us for our special trials and tests by previous assurances and blessings? Happy are we if we are so fortified by these blessings as to enable us to pass through the test of faith that would otherwise crush us. We should not be surprised when overtaken by an adverse experience; it is not necessarily a proof of our Father's displeasure, but merely a test of our faith for the purpose of rooting it deeper.

However, even though Abraham "staggered not at the promise," it seems that he did not follow the leadings of the Lord in "going down 'into Egypt." He saw the difficult situation-a famine in the land threatening the loss of all his possessions -- he realized something must be done, and without taking counsel with his heavenly Friend, he acted on his own judgment. How often have Christians done the same! In our moments of need, we act hastily and adopt methods of delivering ourselves which lead us into greater difficulties. Had Abraham waited upon God, and for His command to move, he would have been spared much anguish of soul. Let us not pass this lesson unheeded. Should we find ourselves in extreme difficulty through following the simple path of obedience, let us cast ourselves wholly upon God. "Wait patiently for Him." He will not fail those who put their trust in Him.

In Egypt Abraham found himself in further difficulty, and to overcome this difficulty he was led to further and greater sin. But how graciously the Lord delivered him! The experience was such as to teach Abraham that he was not in the place the Lord wanted him, and "he went out of Egypt," and was led back "unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first; and there Abraham called on the name of the Lord." How often it happens with the Christian that through some mistake he must return to the place where he had been at the beginning. If we like Abraham go down to Egypt for help, we still may have all our worldly possessions, but ah! the altar will not be there-no communion with God. Egypt is not the place of God's presence. Nothing can



make up for the loss of our communion with God. Only leanness and barrenness of soul will result. Let us watch against the tendency to turn aside from the narrow way, the path of simple and whole-hearted obedience. God requires implicit obedience -- entire surrender of those called to be saints, and when this requirement is met, He can accomplish His own purposes in us, making of us the true children and seed of Abraham.

## **The Cross of the Double Crucifixion**

***"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." - Gal. 6:14.***

THE WORDS of this text might be given a literal rendering, thus: As for me, however, far be it that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This form of expression will remind us of the frequent phrase found in the Psalms, "But as for me"-an expression calm, yet decided; simple, yet dignified and strong. Others there may be who will glory in the flesh and its possessions and accomplishments, or in forms, or rites religiously kept, "But as for me, the cross is my only boast, and all I rejoice in centers there; it alone is my gain and my glory, and it is my complete solace and my song." Assuredly this expresses the reactions of Paul to the cross of Christ. He lays great stress on this "I" or "me" found in our text. He means to say, that though the whole -world were uniting to glory in other things, he could not. He had too great a reason for rejecting every other form of boasting -- yes, in his own mind, more reasons than any other man could have, for was he not, in his own view of things, "the chief of sinners" redeemed by the cross of Christ?

In this text we have three important thoughts presented to us for consideration: the cross, the glorying in its purpose, and the double crucifixion it teaches. To, say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," requires that all three of these features of our text be made a part of our faith and practice. And since any of us may well dispute this one claim of Paul, that he is the "chief of sinners" saved by the grace of God in Christ, it will be a profitable thing to examine these three phases of the text in the order we have suggested; the cross, the glorying, and the double crucifixion.

It is of course apparent that Paul is not encouraging any kind of superstitious reverence for the literal cross of wood on which the Lord Jesus became sin for us. It is manifest that it is the essence of the cross he has in mind. In other words it is the great truths of redemption represented in the cross that he wants to have properly understood and appreciated. Salvation through a crucified Christ, and the justification God has designed shall come through that sacrifice to every one who accepts it for himself, is the great theme which thrills the heart of the Apostle. The greatness of the sacrifice made by the Son of God-a sacrifice of so great a cost, representing a love beyond all understanding, and whereby God could be revealed as just and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus, and so far reaching in its effects as to take in a "chief" among sinners-this it was that Paul meant when speaking of the cross of Christ There he saw the Lamb of God slain for us, and there he beheld connected with that cross, death out of which there is life; shame too, but out of which comes glory; poverty which produces riches: untold; and defeat out of which a triumph will spring, leading a "multitude of captives" out into everlasting life. The cross itself was a symbol like the desert pole with its brazen serpent. It was this embodiment of mighty truth which made the cross to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, and to the natural mind still a thing rejected, but which, to those who can comprehend its true significance, the gladdest and most glorious of all glad and glorious revelations from the loving heart of God to members of a fallen, undone race.

The careful student of Paul's very frequent references to the cross in all his epistles, cannot fail to note that his vision and appreciation of the cross was not limited to the fact that it stood as an assurance of deliverance from the penalty of sin—a conception which has no doubt been the highest viewpoint of many. To the Apostle, the cross very definitely stood to declare the unchanged and unchangeable verdict of God against all sin, that He cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance, nor by any means clear the guilty except through faith in the Substitute He Himself provided. Paul saw in the cross the clearest and the most impressive exhibition of God's righteousness, and before that very exhibition he saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin as it can be seen no where else. He likewise saw in the cross "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God" unfolded so marvelously, that ever afterward he was literally under the sense of indebtedness to Jew and Gentile to the degree which caused him to say, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

In the cross and its powers the Apostle also visualized "the fulness of the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:29) as it pertained to the "sanctified in Christ Jesus" in this present Age of grace. This first great result of the sacrifice of Calvary, the gathering of the "firstfruits unto God of His creatures," in which he himself rejoiced so greatly, was to Paul so wonderful a privilege that those words, "But as for me," so expressive of strong, unswerving decision, were habitually expressed in his life and character, just as we have him saying in another connection "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ." - Phil. 3:7, 8.

In all these things, then, we have in the Apostle an example of how the cross in its meaning to us should be reflected in our faith and practice. To us as to him, the cross and its willing Victim, suffering "the just for the unjust, that we might bring us to God," should, by our seeing there the awfulness of sin in the sight of a holy God, requiring a sacrifice so great to remove its hold upon us, ever after cause the prayer of our innermost heart to be:

"So wash me Thou, without, within,  
And purge with fire if that must be,  
If only sin die out in me."

To behold that cross "Towering o'er the wrecks of time," and like a beacon light shining over the turbulent waters of human sin and woe, is to feel something of the impulse that throbs with a recognized indebtedness and responsibility such as Paul felt within his own soul. How could it be otherwise in the experience of one who has really stood beside the cross of Jesus, and there remembered that leading up to it is a clearly marked pathway over which His feet had trod. "He was moved with compassion" as He beheld the multitudes wandering about "as sheep without a shepherd."

To Paul there were two distinct messages graven deeply upon the cross of Christ. He read with a joy unspeakable its message written in living letters, assuring him that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4), and therefore he was free from all the hopeless struggling after salvation by works, and free from the law of sin and death. O happy state! But he read another message no less clearly outlined on that cross of sacrifice. His own deep appreciation of the love of God made this message burn deeply into his grateful heart: "Go ye into all the world" to declare the fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto

Himself," and to make known to every receptive heart "the unsearchable riches of Christ. How large the sin-smitten world was to this Calvary centered man. To many it is a small field, that Jesus saw spread before His Church, when He said, "The field is the world." It is a pitifully small world, this field, to any who see in it a place only for their own little impress on its multiplied needs. Any one whose heart cannot thrill with gladness over the fact that countless cries ascending from a groaning creation, are finding a response and many are given strength to bear and faith to hold fast amidst the darkness and anguish of life, because some one cares, and ministers to these needs in ways perhaps somewhat different from their own any one thus unmoved has really never been close to the cross Paul embraced so fervently?

In the field for which Jesus "sold all that He had" to secure, Paul always saw "regions beyond" the territory served by others. And so it is still, to all who really appreciate the meaning of the cross on which Jesus tasted death for every man, there are always some regions beyond the boundaries of other laborers in the Master's vineyard. The very spirit of Calvary inculcates this lesson and stamps its character of all-embracing love and helpfulness on all who really rejoice in it. And so let it be with us today. Let us keep this unselfishness of the cross ever before our vision, and while we labor diligently in the corner of the great wide field of service in which we are placed, let us learn to rejoice in every other laborer's privilege also, and let one sow, another water, let one minister according to the measure of the Spirit given him, let another serve in his appointed way, until reapers and sowers come together in the glad Harvest Home. The spirit of the cross is not competitive, but cooperative. Thanks be unto God for all whose hands hold high the love, the freedom, the emancipation, and the power of the cross of Christ.

To the Apostle Paul the cross was like a treasure-house full of riches-riches beyond computation, "unsearchable riches." To him it was the repository of all grace and blessing, the place of light and peace. As he beheld in the cross of Christ "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; . . . that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Eph. 1:7, 8, 12), the Apostle's heart overflowed with joy in contemplating these purposes of the cross of Christ. In none of his epistles does this enthusiastic spirit of joy and gratitude appear so pronounced as in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The first chapter abounds with reference to the exceptional nature of our inheritance in Christ through grace alone, and it ends with one of his sublime prayers. The remaining chapters reiterate in varied ways this same jubilant reaction of spirit, leading at last to the closing words of the Epistle as we find them in our opening text: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

### **Glorying in the Purpose of the Cross**

How apparent it is that the special aspect of the purposes of the cross of Christ, as constantly meditated on by Paul, was the standing its efficacious sacrifice gave the believer in Christ. "In Christ" is the predominating theme of this Epistle -- chosen in Christ, complete in Christ, quickened together with Christ, one body in Christ, loved by Christ, and over all the benediction is spread, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." With such a concentration of thought on this aspect of the believer's present inheritance through grace, no marvel that Paul prays as he does in the last of the two beautiful prayers of this Epistle, "That Christ may **dwell** in your hearts by faith." It was the indwelling of Christ in the dedicated heart that more than anything else bore testimony to nearness to the cross on which He opened up a new and living way to life and peace. And this purpose of the cross must likewise be the hub

and center of our own life and practice. To overlook this purpose now is to fail utterly in letting the Christ of the cross be the altar of our worship and service.

It is not written, "You in Christ, the hope of glory," but the more vital fact is emphasized "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is Paul's habit of thought, and it must be ours also; for as it has been remarked: "Many Christians fail to see these blessings as they are centered in Him. They want to get the blessing of salvation, but that is not the Christ. They want to get the blessing of His grace to help, but that is not Him. They want to get answered prayer from Him to work for Him. You might have all that and not have the blessing of Christ Himself. A great many people are attached rather to a system of doctrine. They say, 'Yes, I have got the truth; I am orthodox.' That is not Christ. It may be the cold statue in the fountain with the water passing from the cold hands and lips, but no life there. A great many people want to get the blessing of joy, but it is not the blessing of Christ personally. A great many people are attached to their church and pastor, or to dear Christian friends, but that is not the Christ. The blessing that will alone fill your heart when all else fails is the loving heart of Jesus united to you, the fountain of all your blessings and the unailing one when they all wither and are exhausted-Jesus Christ Himself."

This, then, is the great purpose of the cross to all who in this day of grace desire to avoid receiving the grace of God in vain. Just as the cross stands in the very center of God's plan of redemption, and its place the center of the outworking of His purposes, so it must be with us. When our faith, our love, our gratitude, and our devotion keeps that cross in the very center of all our present aims and our future hopes, and all the possibilities of its power to bring us into Christ, and complete Christ in us, fully formed within our hearts, then, and only then have we practically comprehended its place in the purposes of God for us. How encouraging it is to know of a surety that this purpose need not fail of accomplishment in any truly receptive and responsive heart.

### **The Double Crucifixion**

We come now to the last of the three features of Christian life suggested in our text, that of the double crucifixion which Paul has declared as true in his own life. May we find it equally true in ours. With Paul the cross that crucified him, also crucified the world to him. The prevailing thought of his day was that death by crucifixion was death in shame, in the deepest degradation, and this thought he emphasizes in a reference to the crucifixion of Jesus: "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, **even the death of the cross.**" (Phil. 2:8.) To be nailed to a cross was to be a dead, cursed, shameful object. And now it is the cross of Christ that has brought about this reciprocal attitude of separation and abhorrence as between Paul and the world. Thus it was indeed a double crucifixion, and that kind of crucifixion was the key to the entire outlook and deportment of the Apostle.

That crucifixion set the death of Christ between him and everything that was not of Christ. It fixed a great gulf between him and his former self-life, and abolished all confidence in the flesh. It meant to him so complete a break from the world and all it had to offer him that he could say truthfully, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." And this crucifixion meant to him an inheritance of fellowship with Christ, a new life flowing into him from Christ, and being risen with Christ so that old things did indeed pass away, and all things became new. Being thus crucified, dead to the world and all that is evil in it, he could spurn its hatred and all its oppositions to those who can say, "As He was in this world, such am I also." Thus as our beloved Brother Paul faced the inevitable persecutions and sufferings associated with his faithful ministry, we have him saying, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so

that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." - Acts 20:24.

Being then, crucified to the world, abhorring it as a thing to be despised, Paul was saved from all compromise with its ways and spirit. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15.) If the love of the Father abides within, then only those things His love embraces will be loved by us. There can be no compromise here. To be pulled by the attractions of the world is to be otherwise than crucified to it. We cannot accept the cross as a way of escape from the consequences of our sins, and of full acceptance with God, and at the same time, fail to make the cross the ground of a complete separation from the world. The Christian has nothing in common with "this present evil world," when he enters into the spirit of the cross of Christ. That cross must dislodge him from all here below, and make him a pilgrim and a stranger in this world. Such was Paul, and such must every Christian be, not merely in sentiment or theory, but in downright fact and reality. How blessed is the realization that the cross and all it stands to represent to us, has indeed separated us from all desire to share in the pleasures and frivolities of this world, to have all of these as crucified things to be despised, crucified unto us, and we to them.

This double crucifixion meant to Paul an utter rejection of the flesh and all its own works. The Epistle from which our text is taken is the very one in which Paul presents his strongest argument against any confidence in the flesh. He asserts repeatedly that the one great indispensable thing is, not that of being circumcised, but that of being created new in Christ Jesus. Everything which in any degree would tend to make the cross of Christ secondary, Paul abhorred. Everything that would tend to lead believers to glory in rites, rather than in the death of Christ, he repudiated. Everything that would encourage the exalting of any object or thing above that faith that worketh by love, and insist on something as essential to salvation, other than faith in a crucified Christ, he would withstand as something utterly foreign to the cross in which he gloried. That the truth and liberty of the Gospel may be preserved, he would give way to such innovations, no not for an hour. The flesh profiteth nothing was his uncompromising attitude, and its every appearance in the Church of Christ he viewed as that degraded, shameful thing of the world crucified to him. Thus it should ever be with us, "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh," and faithful we should be in our determination to in all things crucify the flesh, and let our walk be always in the Spirit.

### **The Dead Impervious to Persecution**

Perhaps we can say we are indeed dead to the world, hating its ways and its spirit, and being hated by it because we walk contrary to it. And it may be we can say that we, too, no longer live subject to the flesh in its cravings, or in exaltations of it in any carnal way. But can we affirm that we are as dead toward its persecutions and its multiplied forms of attack against us? If we can affirm that in this matter as in the other two things just mentioned, we are dead indeed, then we are truly crucified to all that is of earth. There is much of truth in words spoken by a brother beloved for his rich possession of the spirit of Christ: "When I am neglected or forgotten or purposely set at naught, and I smile inwardly, glorying in the insult, that is Victory! When I can stand face to face with folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, contradiction of sinners, persecutions, and endure it as Jesus endured it, that is Victory!" True enough, such trials are not joyous, but grievous as viewed from any other standpoint than that of faith in God. Nevertheless it is possible to live so wholly crucified with Christ, that none of these things can disturb the calmness of the soul. Let us seek to be so impervious to these inevitable experiences in respect to their being disturbers of our peace, that we too can say with Paul "Being reviled, we bless, being

persecuted we stiffer it, being defamed we entreat," and so shall we be found dead in our crucified self-will, knowing nothing but the permissive will of God.

And what will it profit a believer to be thus crucified with Christ? What flame will burn most vehemently in his deeper inner being? As to profit, the Master's reply would be "An hundred-fold now in this time. . . and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10:30.) Nothing pays so large dividends as whole-hearted faithfulness to God and His peerless Word. And as to the flame sure to burn with the greatest of force and illumination in a Christ-centered heart, the answer is written all over the ministry of the Apostle Paul. As he meditated on the cross of Christ and saw spreading out from it, on and on into wider and still wider areas the immeasurable inheritance the sacrifice of Christ purchased or made possible to believers of all ages, and particularly for the Church, he knew of nothing with which to compare its preciousness and its value. To him it was indeed, "The glorious Gospel of the blessed God," and in its every feature so perfect, so deeply rooted in the pure "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," that any attempt to add to it, or any thought that it could be made clearer and better by embellishments contributed to it, even by "an angel from heaven," aroused within him a godly jealousy. The best possible argument that might be used to prove that such complete dedication to the Christ of the cross, such deadness to all that is not of Him, brings rich returns of divine blessing in the present life, is to point out the results of such a fixed determination and viewpoint as we find revealed in Paul's own 'life and experience. He surely reaped in a "hundred-fold" measure, joys, growth in grace and knowledge, unparalleled results in service, and an outstanding impress of the character of Christ on his own soul. Priceless reward for making Christ and His cross the center of his own personal salvation, and the unvarying pivot of his message to the Church. He recognized clearly that aside from the shed blood of Christ, there is no salvation, and aside from the cross of Christ as a basis for that salvation, "other foundation can no man lay." If then we covet Paul's rich experience, let us note well his course in life.

### **Paul Jealous for the Pure Gospel of Christ**

If "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance" by the very weight of that goodness pressing in upon the heart, on the same principle is it not true, that "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He were rich, for our sakes became poor," will, when properly thought upon, and faithfully preached, lead to the kind of crucifixion Paul lived and preached, more than any other message we might habitually emphasize? And since the whole tenor of the Gospel of grace which produced these results in his life, is also calculated to emancipate and enrich us if we hold to the cross of Christ, should not these facts engage our most earnest attention today? Surely so! Any other foundation or point of emphasis, must inevitably fail to bring the individual believer, or the collective assembly of brethren into the "fulness of the Gospel of Christ."

There is but one Gospel, and Paul's Gospel and Christ's Gospel are one. Jesus said, "He that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Paul said, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Jesus said, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Paul said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The parallelism is perfect throughout. Both stress the same great truth first uttered by the lips of Jesus, "And I, **if I be lifted up**, will draw all unto Me." And both show that to be really drawn to Christ is to know the cleansing power of the truth, to be sanctified, renewed, crucified as to the old nature, and dead with Christ in the pursuit of "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." - Heb. 7:25; John 4:14; 2 Cor. 5:17; John 12:32.

The Apostle saw great danger in even a small addition to this simple Gospel of Christ. He realized how easy it is to consider the cross too bare and obscured to really attract and hold the natural heart: He knew that even a renewed heart may, unless constantly vigilant, be found adding "tests" of various kinds unauthorized in the Word of God. This is no doubt true for the reason that the Gospel of grace does not take into account human righteousness, which at best is but "filthy rags." The pure Gospel makes so much of God, and so very little of man. The Galatian brethren by no means thought to deny Christ. They would admit all Paul said about Him. They merely wished to add a little to that Gospel. Believe in Christ, they would say, but 'add to this some little feature of Mosaic ordinances and this will the better serve to distinguish those who are really sound in faith. But how well "Paul knew that the introduction of any such thing, must in the end "make Christ of none effect." Oh! that this same attitude of mind were more generally found today among professing Christians. In what a multitude of ways Christ can be made "of none effect" in lives which should be living testimonies of the regenerating, self-crucifying, and Christ forming within effects of the pure doctrine of the cross of Christ. No wonder that the faithful Apostle who wrote these Galatian Christians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," was so exercised in mind over their tendency to drift into "observing days, and (months, and times, and years." He positively knew that with such tendencies followed, Christ would never be formed in them, and the very same principle holds good today. Therefore the lesson is clear, the Gospel in its simple purity, the cross in its unchangeable place in the Plan of God, and in the faith of the believer, must be recognized, loved, and zealously adhered to if we would know its purposes wrought out in us and for us.

Let us receive the Gospel of Christ in all its simplicity. Let us meditate on the grace of God in all its wideness, and then as it constantly points to the redemption from death, and to the completeness in life we have through Christ Jesus, and Him alone, then with Paul we can say, "We preach Christ crucified," and "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then indeed we may hope to really be an epistle of Christ, showing forth in life and conduct the death to self, the newness of life, and the glorious Gospel of the blessed God that the cross of Calvary will make effective in a devoted heart.

- *Contributed.*

## Messages of Encouragement

Dear Brethren:

I very much appreciate your kindness in still supplying the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom." Owing to unforeseen circumstances over which I have no control I have not been able to renew my subscription; and here, dear brethren, I must make a confession.. I was one of the brethren who did not look very favorably upon the change that took place, but was willing to leave it to the Lord's directing, and I now believe it has the Lord's favor. Well, brethren, I wish you Godspeed in your labor of love for the Lord's brethren. We are living in momentous times, and it behooves each one of us to watch and pray in a humble, sober manner. My wish is, God be with you all, till we meet at that great Convention, the other side the veil.

Your fellow-laborer in the Master's service,  
F. H. W. - Eng.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Greetings to yourselves and to those of like precious faith.

I am writing to thank you for sending the "Herald" although my subscription has expired. I have been out of employment for some time and therefore have not been able to afford the amount. I would be pleased if you could continue sending it, and if I should be in a position to pay for it later, I will be glad to do so.

I am delighted to note that the spiritual tone of the "Herald" has not changed. Many of us were in fear that when the management changed there might also be a change of doctrinal teaching. It is good to note that our fears were not substantiated, and that the articles appearing therein are as beautiful as ever.

Assuring you of our continued prayers on your behalf,  
Yours in the One Hope of our Calling, E. F. S. - Aus.

Dear Brethren:

In order to subscribe anew to the "Herald," I am sending you enclosed \$1.00. I was without the "Herald" for about half a year, but I felt it a great loss.

Thank you for sending me a few sample copies; they were a help to awaken the longing for the old friend that the "Herald" has been to me in bygone years. May we all be blessed by its ministry and the fruits thereof.

With much Christian love,  
Your brother in Christ,  
G. V. H. - Holland.