

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Tolerance

*"Love suffereth long, and is kind." - 1 Cor. 13:4*

THERE IS no quality of the Christian character more important than that of tolerance. The lack of it has been back of most of the terrible persecutions and martyrdoms that have come to followers of Christ since the introduction of Christianity into the world. Foxe's Book of Martyrs, and the many histories recording the dreadful persecutions and manifold sufferings and tortures of Christ's true followers, would never have been written but for the absence of this most important trait of character-likeness to our divine Lord and Master. Intolerance has existed in all ages, and has been that which more than anything else has misrepresented true Christianity. And sad and strange to say, it has not only been manifested on the part of apostate Christians, but it is found to exist in the lives of true Christians; indeed, it will hardly be an exaggeration to say that nearly all Christians have at some time been guilty of giving expression to intolerance, and have to a greater or less extent at some time in their Christian experience, exhibited it, even in their dealings with their fellow-Christians. It appears that but few people have a true and proper appreciation of *what* tolerance really is. Some learned, devout Christians have even questioned the correctness of our dictionaries in defining it. One of the reasons for this is, doubtless, because of the failure to see that tolerance is *an inner* disposition or state. In fact, all the various traits or manifestations of Christian character are based upon, and grow out of, the inward condition of the heart. Murder is defined generally as the commission of the act or deed in taking life. It is defined in the Scriptures as the *disposition* of hatred that is expressed in a desire or wish to commit the deed which has hatred back of it.

That we may appreciate the wrong views- held as to the meaning of tolerance, we will examine what some others have said. A learned and godly writer has quoted some utterances of eminent men in regard to this matter. One of these has said: "The only foundation for tolerance is a degree of skepticism." \*

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\* Charles James Fox.

"John Harvard, in the university that bears his name, declared of the Puritans by whom that college was created: 'They were intolerant, as all men the world over in all time have always been and will always be when they are in solemn earnest for the truth,' " How utterly unscriptural, how unchristlike are these statements which imply that this disposition is a proper one to possess. This godly man who quotes the above writer, has given: us a true definition of tolerance as exhibited in Christ Himself, the true model and example for His followers, and it is with a pleasurable feeling that we listen to *his words*: "*Tolerance is the willing consent that other men should hold and express opinions with which we disagree, until they are convinced by reason that those opinions are untrue.*"

### **TOLERANCE IS FORBEARANCE**

As we have said, tolerance is a disposition, an inner quality of character; *a willing*, not *a forced*, consent that others should hold and express 'opinions until they are convinced by reason and Scripture that they are wrong. Toleration is the behavior in which that disposition finds expression. It is possible to have the latter and not possess the former." "The consent is a *willing* one; it is not a mere yielding of compulsion." One has said:

"It might have all the power to put down the error by force which pope or parliament ever possessed, and *it would never for a moment dream of using it.* On the other hand, it is *simply* consent. *Tolerance is not called to champion the cause in which it disbelieves, nor to lend trumpets through which what it believes to be error may be blown;* for it is the very essence of tolerance that there should be a disagreement. . . And the error, which is not to be yielded until it is convinced of its untruth' by reason, must be attacked ' by reason; and so the right and duty of earnest discussion is included as a part of tolerance. And the tolerance which is patient toward what it counts *honest* error, is utterly impatient towards dishonesty, toward hypocrisy, toward self-conceit, toward cant, whether it be [exhibited] on the side of what the-honest man thinks to be error, or of that which he thinks to be true."

Another writer has said that "it is the *natural* feeling of all of us that charity [we would say tolerance] is founded upon the uncertainty of truth." "I believe," says this same writer, "it is founded upon the certainty of truth." Two very strong evidences, then, of the existence of true tolerance in a follower of Christ are, positive conviction, and sympathy with' other: men whose convictions differ with your own. It is only by the possession of these two qualities that. tolerance becomes "a clear, definable, respectable position for a man to stand in." Furthermore, true tolerance is exhibited toward our fellow-men just in "proportion to the earnestness with which we hold our well-proven truth." *Conviction* of truth is the first, and an absolutely necessary element to an exhibition of true tolerance. It is only when we are thoroughly convinced that what we hold is truth, that true tolerance has an opportunity to manifest itself. On the other hand, it is almost certain to be the case that when a Christian becomes the most thoroughly, convinced of truth and its importance, that then it is apt to become to him a terrible thing for another to differ with him. Before we see the truth and its importance, it is a matter of very little concern or consequence to us what another believes about the matter. It is just at the point when we become thoroughly convinced of truth that the exhibition of intolerant bigotry is manifested and the temptation to "lift the axe or kindle the fires of persecution" has to be resisted, and the cultivation of true tolerance inculcated. The professed Christian, however, who is indifferent in the matter, who has no real creed or belief of his own, and who has no strong conviction that his belief is correct, has no opportunity to manifest true tolerance. He may call himself tolerant toward his fellow-Christians because he is willing that they should believe what they please, but he lacks the first element of true tolerance, which is that of a strong conviction that what he holds is the truth:

## IMITATIONS OF TOLERANCE

Tolerance, being a disposition of, the heart, like other traits of character, has its imitations or counterfeits. We mention three. One of these may be properly termed the tolerance of indifference. If it is a matter of indifference to me whether a thing is truth or not, why should I not be perfectly willing to let my Christian brother believe what he chooses to believe. This is frequently defined as tolerance, but it is not Scriptural, Christlike tolerance. Then we have that which is akin to this, that may be denominated the tolerance of helplessness; for example, we allow another to hold error because we cannot help ourselves.

This is sometimes called the "tolerance of persecuted minorities." Neither is this true Christian tolerance, for the reason that the disposition of intolerance may be possessed, but because of a lack of authority or power to exercise that disposition,, it is suppressed. Then we have what might be called the tolerance of policy, which means simply that we allow another to hold what we believe is error because we think it might stir up strife and division if we attempted to stamp it out. These three kinds of what are sometimes called tolerance, are not real Christian tolerance. While there may be some -commendable qualities in them, they lack either a strong conviction of truth, as does the first, or the inner trait or disposition, as do the two last.

We will now endeavor to illustrate what calls for the exercise of tolerance; and this will help us to understand whether real, commendable tolerance is possessed First of all, we notice what may be termed the tolerance that is exhibited because of pure respect for a man because he is a man. We may entirely, disagree with a man's opinion or belief, and yet we may cordially acknowledge that if he is honest in his belief, he has as good a right, to his own opinion or convictions as we have to ours -- and this for the simple reason that he is a man and, as such, this is his right.

Next we have what is properly termed the tolerance that is exhibited as a result of Christian love and sympathy. We may feel sure that our Christian brother's opinions are wrong, but the fact that we know and recognize that he has the spirit of Christ and therefore is a true Christian, enables us, or should enable us, to willingly and cordially allow him to hold those opinions until either *by* our efforts or those of some one else, or by his own reasoning powers, he becomes convinced that he is wrong.

## THE PURPOSE OF TRUTH

Next we have the tolerance that is exhibited as the result of an enlarged view of truth. It should be much easier to exhibit true tolerance from this standpoint. Such an one, if he have learned the truth at the Master's feet, and if he have (as such always have) made, a proper use of the truth, will realize, possibly for the first time, that sacred truth is very much larger than' his own conception of it. Such Christians experience, or should experience, an enlargement of the heart as they come to realize how great, how wonderful, is God's love for His creatures; that all sacred truth comes from Him; and that He is the great Caretaker and Preserver of truth.. Such have come to know that the Bible, which contains His truth, is for man, and will eventually be known and understood by all. As God freely lets His truth be misunderstood, and waits in perfect patience for the time appointed by Him when it will be freed from misconceptions and shine out clear and bright, so *ought not we be patient*, knowing that this is His purpose?

While it is without question that truth is the most important of all the trusts committed to the servant of God, it should ever and always be kept before the mind that truth is not an end in itself, but is rather a means to accomplish an end. Therefore, truth is not committed to the servant of

God as a sacred trust, to be guarded and defended as a miser does his treasures, but rather as an instrument to be used for the great and all-important work of character development. While it is commendable that we dread a stain of error on the truth, *we should dread vastly more the losing sight of what the truth was given for.* We will not be called to account,' when we stand before our divine Lord and Master to render up our stewardship, as to how faithfully we have fenced in, or contended for, or safeguarded, or defended the truth; *it will rather be concerning what use we have made of the truth in allowing it to change, to transform our characters* into the likeness of our Lord and Master.. The larger our knowledge or view of truth becomes, the larger the measure of that character-likeness of our Lord and Master will be required on our part.

It is possible, indeed it is with sorrow that we say it, that the real purpose or object of the enlarged view of truth now so graciously given, is thwarted in the lives of many who have received it by *a kind of pride that we know so much,* as well as a spirit of intolerance manifested among us. One of the very purposes of the truth is to make us meek and humble, as well as charitable toward one another, and patient- and kind toward those who are blinded by the god of this world; and in the proportion that it fails to work this change in our own lives, in that proportion will we fail in recommending it to others and, in drawing them to become meek and humble followers of the divine Master.

### **SATAN OPPOSED TO BIBLE STUDY**

Again, this feeling of pride exhibits itself in causing some of us to think that we possess all the truth; that we are no longer to be Bible students, truth seekers, in the true and proper sense of those terms. The moment we cease to search the Scriptures, that moment we cease to be either "Truth people" or "Bible students." Satan's efforts have ever been to hinder the progress of the Truth, for the success of his-empire of darkness depends upon holding the people in darkness and ignorance. Consequently, varied have been his tactics by which he has sought to hold in check or throttle those, who would press on in the path of light and truth. One of his most successful methods has been to arrest the attention of the truth seeker upon some visible instrumentality that the Lord has used in a special way to blaze and prepare the way for the onward march of others. How often in the past, *multitudes have made the very grave mistake* of supposing and concluding that their leader had received all the truth, had been made the complete custodian over all the volume of divine revelation, and that there was nothing more to be learned, and accordingly have set about to make a little fence around their leader and the measure of truth they possessed, thus narrowing down their opportunities and preventing any further progress. It is amongst such as make this serious error that we so frequently discern the most radical intolerance and the largest measure of bigotry. Nor is the Christian leader to whom many may have been led to look, always to blame for the error his followers thus make. In fact, history clearly reveals that the real reformers, the true and worthy leaders, have never claimed to have mastered all the truth; have never taught their, followers to believe that there was nothing more to be learned by those who came after them. To the contrary, we find that all true reformers and teachers of divine truth have humbly acknowledged the fact that what they have succeeded in bringing forth was only *a part of* the Truth -- their quota, or such as it seemed good to divine Providence to impart to each in his day -- and that there was more to follow. Such leaders have encouraged those who received their messages to continue to be truth seekers and to continue to progress in the path of light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The Bible, of all books, stands for liberty and progress, and bids the humble believer throw off all human fetters and bondages, and to walk in the light as Christ is in the light.

### **THE LIGHT IS MARCHING ON**

No language is fraught with more significance and solemn meaning to God's people today than that of Pastor Russell on this very-point, and his illustrious words should stand out as a warning' against the tendency at the present time to fence in the truth that we have and to halt in the path of light. We quote his message:

"Over 1800 years ago, when the Apostles 'fell asleep,' the enemy Satan, got a free hand in the Church, the Lord's wheat-field; and as our Lord's parable prophesied, he sowed the tares of error unstfntingly. (Matt. 13:24, 36-43.) Those errors more or less twisted and distorted every truth of the divine revelation, with the result that, before the fourth century had dawned, the Lord's wheat field had practically become a tare-field with only a proportionately small minority of true wheat in it. The darkness of error more and more settled down upon the Church, and for ten centuries the 'Mystery of Iniquity' prevailed, and gross darkness covered the people. Those ten centuries are today, denominated the 'dark ages' by a large proportion of the most intelligent people, of the 'Christian world,' and we are to

remember that it was in the midst of this gross darkness that the, Reformation Movement had its start. The light of the Reformers began to shine amidst the darkness, and, thank God; it has been. growing brighter and brighter ever since! We cannot wonder, however, that the Reformers themselves, educated in that gross darkness, were more or less contaminated with it, and that they did not instantly, succeed in purging themselves of its defiling errors: rather we would have considered it nothing short of a miracle had they slipped from the gross darkness into the full, clear light of the divine character and plan.

"The difficulty amongst the followers of the Re formers in the past three centuries has been that the have considered it meritorious to accept the creed formulated in that reformation period, and have glorified in them, and have considered unorthodox an further progress toward the light. On the contrary they and we, while honoring the Reformers and rejoicing in their fidelity, should remember that they were not the lights of the Church, that they- were not given to the Church to be her guides, and were but helpers at the very most. The divinely appointed guides were, first of all, our Lord; and, secondly, His inspired and kept and guided Apostles; and, thirdly God's holy men of old, who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, for *our* admonition It was because the Reformers were granted by the Lord a glimpse of true light that they were enabled to discern partially how gross was the darkness which surrounded them, and to make the heroic effort which they did make to escape from it and to get again into the light of the knowledge of God, which shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, and which, through His words and the words of the Apostles, is given us to be *a* lamp to our feet and a lantern to our footsteps, causing the path of the just to shine 'more and more unto the perfect day.' Whoever now would be a follower of the Lord and a follower of the light, should take heed that, while not ignoring human instrumentalities and their ministries, orally' and through the printed page, they should accept from these only such assistance as will aid ahem in appreciating the inspired message recorded in the Scriptures: 'If they speak not according to this Word, it is because they have no light in them.'" - *Scripture Studies, Vol. VI, p. F60.*

Surely God's people in these days have much for which to be thankful along the line of the unfolding of truth, but we do well to remember that neither ourselves *nor* those who have gone before us have mastered all the truth of divine revelation; *that there is much in the Bible not yet revealed*, and therefore we should continue to search our Bibles for more truth, keeping in mind always the great end to be accomplished in the obtainment of truth. The character is the end to be accomplished; *the truth is simply the means to accomplish that end.*

### **A FITTING ILLUSTRATION**

One has forcefully expressed to what a wide extent this end has been lost sight of, and the means lifted out of its true place. "It is not strange in this world, says this writer, "to see ends sacrificed to means; but it is no less sad because in history it has grown so familiar." This writer goes on to elucidate his thought and proceeds to relate an incident that transpired in Westminster Abbey, London, which not only forcefully illustrates this point, but also illustrates the other point we have referred to as prevailing among Bible Students-that of discouraging the continued searching for truth. He says:

"I remember a curious illustration of this which occurred some years ago in England. It seems that in Westminster Abbey, a good many Roman Catholics have been in the habit of coming on the day of his sainthood, to, pray beside the tomb of Edward the Confessor, at the old shrine where petitions of devout pilgrims were offered *up* for centuries. The late Dean Stanley loved the custom; it pleased his catholicity and his historic sense, and he gave it *all* encouragement. But it seems that it did not so well please one of the old vergers or sextons of the Abbey; and one day when the worshipers were numerous, this venerable official came to one of them and touching him on the shoulder as he knelt upon the ground, said: 'You must go away from here!' The man meekly looked up and replied, 'Why? I am doing no harm.'

'No matter, you must go away,' reiterated the verger.

'But why?' persisted the worshiper, still on his knees,

'I am only praying.' But the verger persevered, and gave his most conclusive reason. 'No matter, I tell you, you must go away; this thing must stop. If this thing goes on, we shall have people praying all over the Abbey!'

*"There is a sort of verger Churchman, more sexton than priest of the house of God, who is always for stopping free inquiry, because if this thing goes on, we shall have men seeking for truth all over the Church of Christ."*

The true Bible student, truth seeker, knows that that is what is pleasing to Christ that it is what the Church of Christ is for, and he welcomes it, not merely for the truth which such a searching will bring to light, but for the searcher's sake he welcomes it. The truths that are required to constitute one a Christian, while of paramount importance, are very few; and these, when experienced in the life, are all that are required to admit one into fellowship with other Christians, in other words, to make one . a member of the true Church, which is the Body of Christ. More truth, to be sure, is required for the Christian's growth and development, but it should ever be remembered that while the various churches of human organization have insisted upon more than these to make one a member of their church, we do not find any others than these stipulated or taught by Christ and the inspired Apostles to become a member of the true Church which He founded. A noted Churchman, who did not have or claim to have the knowledge of the Divine Plan that many of us as "Truth people" claim to have, and doubtless do have, is on record as making a statement that even many of us will do well to emulate and profit by. Referring to his own church organization, he said:

*"The Church horizon . . . is always reaching out toward the Christian horizon, and trying to identify itself with it. If it could perfectly do so, all would be well. But there is not a church in Christendom which can 'do so today. There is not a church in Christendom-not ours, nor any other-which is not forced to own that there are men whom she will freely acknowledge to be Christian men, whom yet she is not ready and fit to receive into full communion and membership*

with herself, into full acceptance of her privileges and full enjoyment of her influence. Some dogma doubted,, or some dogma held, or some peculiarity of thought' or feeling on their part, stands in the way.. Some *excess, or some defect* of faith, keeps *the Christian outside the Christian Church.*"

This noted Churchman,- enlarging on this truly grave and lamentable condition, which, sad to say, so widely prevails, next asks:

"Is it, not so? I can see nothing to do but frankly to face the fact and own it. A man comes too you who are a minister of our church, and tells you of his faith-tells you how earnestly he loves, how deeply he honors the Lord Jesus Christ-tells you how he is trying to give his whole life to the Master's service. Is he, a Christian? Of course he is; you cannot doubt it a moment. You are sure what the Lord would have said if He had met him in Jerusalem. But can you, simply and solely because he is a Christian, throw wide open the door and bid him welcome to our church's privileges?" Are there no tests of doctrine, no definitions of orthodoxy, which lie within' the absolute truth, which you must apply before' you can bid that Christian welcome, and feel that he and it belong together?"

We listen to this man's words, and most, naturally we say: This man has come to understand God's wonderful Plan, or he never could talk this way. We are astonished; and as he draws or sums up the logical conclusions which most naturally are the results of these sad conditions that exist all around us, and even among "Truth people," "Bible Students," we ask: *Can we claim exemption? Are we better than our fellows?*

His conclusions are contained in the following brief but emphatic statement:

*"If there are [tests of doctrine and definitions of orthodoxy], then the Church is not prepared' today to make itself identical with Christianity.* If the chance to do 'so were freely given her, she is not ready, to accept it. Therefore she is not Catholic; she is not prepared' to lay claim to universality."

Of course, it would not be proper or Scriptural to say that all that is required of a Christian elder or bishop would be this limited measure of truth. However, the true standards of fellowship and membership "ought not to be one whit more, as well as not one whit less than the standard by which a-man would' have a 'right to count himself, and to think that Christ would count him, a true servant of the Lord of Christians." If a company of the Lord's followers dare not make this their standard, they ought to "rejoice that there are forms of worship and groups of believers, in which those Christians for whom she has no place, may find fellowship with one another and feed their souls on truth."

- R. E. Streeter

## Christ-Trained Fishers of Men

*"And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.- And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him." - Mark 1:17, 18.*

THE MASTER walked by the Sea of Galilee where men toiled at their chosen occupation, and, as it would seem from the meager bit of information given us, four men were found ready in a moment to leave all to follow Him. ' Simon and Andrew, James and John "straightway" entered the school of discipleship from which they were to graduate as Christ-trained fishers of men. A high honor was theirs to be thus singled out for so great a work; and with what becoming readiness of spirit these men accepted the call.

Though the New Testament contains comparatively little of the doings of Andrew as a fisher of men, and only a little more concerning James in the same capacity, yet we may feel assured that their prompt obedience to the Master's call resulted in all He promised to make them. Characters such as Peter and John may all along have been more in the forefront, yet who but the Master can know how vitally important and fruitful has been the service of the less prominent among His servants? In any event, as in the Body of Christ the service of one member is the service of all, each member contributing his or her quota of help, be it large or small, so in a unity and cooperation wonderful and practical, each, individual may rejoice as having a part in every branch of the Lord's service. While Paul may plant, Apollos water, yet, "neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." - 1 Cor. 3:6, 7.

But if Simon and Andrew were to become fishers of men in this high service, they must "*forsake their nets* and follow Him." Likewise, James and John must leave off "*mending their nets* and as readily respond to His call. The primary lesson here is the one so frequently set forth by Jesus, namely, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that hee hath, he cannot be My disciple."- Luke 14:33.

In the case of these early disciples, *their nets* must first be forsaken, then, a period of training begin. This was the import of the promise, "I will make you to *become* fishers of men. For a task so important as that to which He called them, this special preparation was important. Their need of such training is made apparent by incidents recorded in the Gospels showing their unfitness without it. Many viewpoints needed correcting, and not a few of their attitudes required attention. There was need for an occasional rebuke too, until they caught the spirit and outlook of their Master and Teacher. All of this has its meaning to us also, for in teaching, these first disciples how to become fishers competent to work among men, He was likewise instructing all subsequent disciples.

First, then, they needed much to catch His spirit.: A few incidents serve to show this. We recall how they acted when the Samaritans refused food and shelter as they journeyed toward Jerusalem, what readiness there was to call down fire from heaven because of this Samaritan-treatment of their Master. "But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. (Luke 9:55.) Again there' was the strife among them over who should be greatest, and the rebuke administered through seeing Jesus Himself taking the place of the lowest servant by washing their feet. There was also another typically human evidence of immaturity recorded about them for our benefit-the occasion on which they thought it proper to discredit the work of another in casting out devils apart from cooperation with themselves. These and other incidents reveal how great



was their need of training for efficient ministry; likewise our own need of similar instruction if we too would be fitted for His service.

Next, they needed to be instructed in regard to the message they were to carry' throughout the world. In this matter they must learn to obey His commands implicitly. Obedience to His instructions would be required of them all. No liberty could be taken to develop any message of their own, or to supplement His Word with expedients and inventions of their choice and development. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20.) This was His command, and He would have them know that His warning must not go unheeded, for He taught that many would overlook the urgency of this obedient attention to His clearly defined message, only to discover at the last that notwithstanding all they had done in His name, He knew them not. The keynote of His message was summed up in His statement: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." (John 12:32.) To this message these first disciples dedicated their lives, and to their credit it can be said that to this message in its original purity they adhered faithfully, leaving the early Church *looking unto Jesus* the Author and the Finisher of their faith.

True to the prophecy of Jesus, and also of Paul, grievous wolves came in later, and false teachers subverted the faith of many, yet may we not believe that notwithstanding the prolific crop of tares resulting from these sources, still there has ever been preserved in the earth "the whole counsel of God." Surely the Head of the Church, who so confidently declared that "the gates of hell" should never destroy His Church, would likewise see to it that there would always be one or another of its many outstanding servants or assemblies, and that His message would never be without a witness in the earth. As a matter of fact the truth has had its exponents and defenders all along the pathway of the Church. Consistent, therefore, with His clear command, Jesus has seen to it that His message has been preserved in its simplicity and power.

Having, then, called and trained these first disciples, equipping them with both His spirit and message, Jesus did indeed make them "to become fishers of men." Faithful they were in leaving all to follow Him, willingly suffering the inevitable results of "keeping and declaring His message; without adulteration. Of them it can be truly said, "They that sow in tears shall, reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." - Psa. 126:5, 6.

### **ALL OUR NETS MUST BE ABANDONED**

In the foregoing the foundation is laid for practical lessons we may need in our day. As we have seen, the four disciples when called, "straightway left their nets" to become followers of Jesus, but they were yet far from being competent fishers of men. The most that can be said for them up to this time would be in connection with their spontaneous acceptance of His call. There were others who at different times manifested a desire to become His followers, but one had a father to bury first, another must wait until he bade a suitable farewell to home folks. These incidents by their contrast give much of merit to the ready response of Simon and Andrew, James and John.

Their "forsaking all," however, was a progressive matter, and so it is with us. As with them it was first a readiness to forsake the immediate things, then to learn later the ever-widening yielding up that discipleship would demand, so we too are called and trained by the same Master-Teacher. We *do* learn in the passing of time more of what it means to say truthfully, "We have left *all* to follow Thee." When those first disciples so confidently affirmed that they had thus forsaken, all, they were honest in their claim, and so may we be likewise. But they were soon to discover that there was much to be willingly given up. So must it be with every true spirit among us. There

were bigger things than fishing nets for those men to give up, and things much more difficult to leave behind. Even so now, it is often easier to abandon "all our goods to feed the poor," or give "our body to be burned" out in some chosen form of service, than just to obey some of the simple but vitally important things our Lord asks of us.

Our four fishermen had truly left 'their literal nets behind, but what about some ideals and schemes still cherished' and by no means abandoned? How about *their plans* for a speedy setting up, of the hoped-for Kingdom-reign in which they would hold important positions? What of their spirit of striving over who should be greatest in that new order? These and other things were not as "straightway" forsaken as were the boats and the business of catching fish.

How theft is it with us? Suppose we too have left off laying up treasures on earth to the extent of having counted them loss and dross, can it be that we have need to learn the same lessons as these disciples of the meaning of leaving *all* to follow our Lord and Teacher? Have we no cherished plans of, our own as yet unforsaken? Are there any "nets" of ours which we have come to think essential if we would be fishers of men approved, of the Master? How possible; it is that our favorite brand of equipment may be very ineffective for the work of gathering the *kind of characters* which the Lord would send us to find, if obedient to His instruction. How possible that it were better to cease trying to "mend *our* nets and appeal to the Lord for better instruments. Strange indeed it must be if such discoveries were impossible with us, since it has always been possible for human inventions to become attached to all originally good, sound reformation movements. Are we wiser than -the many who have gone before us? Are mistaken viewpoints that hinder effective service an impossibility with us? Certain it is, if we are ready to *leave all to follow the Master*, we shall learn how necessary it still is to listen attentively to His words, "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

Jesus talked much about foundations on which saving faith and acceptable works must be built. In doing this He swept away the innumerable traditions of men which have ever been introduced to vitiate the Word of God, and thus-He said, "It has been said of old time, but *I say unto thee*. Men multiplied commands making void the pure message, and invented burdens with which to confuse the minds and hearts of sincere worshipers. Jesus simplified the whole of the Decalogue into one brief term embracing God and man. None need have any difficulty in seeing that great learning has not been needed to feel the meaning and inspiration of His invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, there was nothing abstruse in such a reference to Himself. He can make it plain to every seeking heart, unlearned though it be, what it means to take up the cross daily and follow Him. Only by so doing throughout life will we eventually attain to a place with Him in His Kingdom reign. To such there will be no "hard saving" in the deep fundamental statement that a personal appropriation of Him as the Bread from heaven is imperative. Was it not just such profound truths He had in mind when thanking the Father that even to babes He revealed things so sublime? Surely so! The beloved John put it all in a brief sentence so that all who would run the Christian race aright might read it clearly, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." - 1 John 5:12.

If, then, we have "nets" which may better be abandoned in order to become more efficient fishers of men, what better nets will the Lord provide? The answer is found in His own effective methods with men. Christ's nets! What were they? Were they not His acts of compassion, and the gracious words which fell from His lips?-the words which made men say,

"Never man spake like this man"? Were they not those deep words of life and light which brought that noble confession from the lips of Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of

eternal life." Yes, it was by these He drew men to Himself and held them in ties nothing could break. The common people heard Him in gladness because He spoke in the simple terms of love; and by His acts radiated sympathy. Did not an Apostle, himself saved from the hardness of traditional religion, express in a few words the magnetic attractiveness of Jesus, in saying, "Jesus Christ came into the world-to save sinners, of whom I am chief"? The language of love was His special net, and by it publicans and sinners were drawn from a life of sin, and Israelites indeed, like Nathanael, constrained to follow Him. By these things a Nicodemus and a Joseph of Arimathea were made bold to befriend Him in the hour of ignominious death. His love drew a publican from his questionable business, and so affected him that a fourfold refund would gladly be made where wrong had, been done, and half of his remaining goods distributed to the poor, just through a visit of Jesus in his home. How many others too were lifted out of a life of shame into purity and honor, because He came not to condemn the world, but to call to repentance by revealing God to men. This, His own sweet spirit and manner of life He imparted to His chosen disciples, eradicating all their spirit of self-seeking; and by helping them to discard all their own schemes, they were made fishers of men by being made a perpetuation of Christ's personal influence among them.

### **THE WORD OF CHRIST TO DWELL RICHLY IN THE HEART**

Jesus lived in the closing days of the old dispensation wherein the Law was the schoolmaster. His fan was in His hand wherewith to separate the wheat from the chaff of that time, and in all of this His ministry was a perfect exemplification of the very text He used in declaring the nature of this separating work. This text in its brevity contained it all, and thus He read it, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He-hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of, sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." - Luke 4:18, 19, 21.

From fields "white and ready to harvest" He gathered by this message the characters, He sought. In the whitened fields of the present time the same message will accomplish the same desired ends. Those upon whom His spirit has come in anointing power will be similarly embued, and thereby be made Christ trained fishers of men. And what a blessed privilege it is to bring men and women to this knowledge of Jesus Christ! How wonderful that God should commit to imperfect men such a message of grace, when as we know, there must be myriads of perfectly equipped angels ready to do His bidding. How this should impress upon our minds the need of being apt students as Jesus teaches us the word to speak, and the true spirit in which to work in His vineyard.

There is a most urgent need of this; instruction lest it be necessary for Him to say to us now as it was said to others long before our time, "Whereas ye say, the Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken." (Ezek. 13:7.) Thus they did in the days when Israel's true Prophets went unheeded, and the vitiating preaching of men was preferred. It is quite possible to assume that the Lord has said something, when as a matter of fact it is just our own wish that is father of the much preferred interpretation. We need to remember that God speaks to us in a clear command in these words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye Him.*" (Matt. 17:5.) In similar strain Jesus speaks, saying, "Now ye are *clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*" (John 15:3.) No wonder then that the Apostle entreats us as he does in this admonition, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." - Col. 3:16.

"And I will make you to *become fishers of men*" was our Master's promise, and none can teach like Him. Who would not want to leave all and follow Him in such a privilege? Realizing the greatness of the service, how much we need to love like Him, and pray:

"O! arm me with the mind, Meek Lamb, that was in Thee;  
And let my fervent zeal be joined With grace and charity."

That so it may be with us as we follow Christ for training in so great a task, our constant prayer may well be, My Lord, in the midst of life's discords make me an influence for the promotion of Thy spirit of peace. Help me to faithfully hold up Thy redeeming sacrifice as the way back to God, and unto eternal life. Where there is bitterness of spirit, let me sow Thy words of love, and radiate the beauty of Thy forgiving spirit. Where hearts are growing impatient and doubting Thy loving care, may my steadfast faith in Thy power and unchanging character, encourage unwavering trust. Where- the darkening shadows seem to grow deeper across a fellow-traveler's pathway, let me be the bringer of Thy word, "Be of good cheer." Where the warfare seems beyond strength to endure, make me a Barnabas-comforter of the brethren. Lord, so let me be henceforth an instrument to spread the benediction of Thy peace, a vessel filled with Thy joy, and overflowing, and in all the relations which go to make up the round' of life's experience, let me be an example of Thy gentleness, that it may be seen that I have been with Thee, learning the perfect ways of God.

- *J. J. Blackburn.*

## The Letter to the Colossians

*"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." - Col. 2:14, 15.*

COMMENTATORS IN general see in these verses an allusion to the two main errors that prevailed in Colosse: subjection to ordinances, and reverence of principalities and powers. In the previous verses the Apostle had referred to the dangers of "philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments (A B C's), of the world and not after Christ," who, according to verse 10 (Col. 2:10), is "the head of all principality and power."

The first figure, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances," is an undoubted reference to the use of the Asiatic inks, made with burnt cork or ivory, which by the use merely of sponge and water might be erased without leaving a trace. What consolation there must have been in this allusion for those who for a lifetime had futilely labored to attain life by keeping a covenant that was beyond the power of any imperfect creature. However closely one might come to the keeping of it, it could be a source of life only if kept according to the letter, which St. Paul tells us (2 Cor. 3:6) "killeth" -- evidently because of man's weakness. According to the 7th, 11th, and 13th verses of this same chapter, that Law Covenant "is done away." In the 13th verse the thought is stressed by reiteration, not only speaking of its passing away, but also of its "end," "the limit at which a thing ceases to be." - *Thayer*.

The reason for the vanishing of the Mosaic Law is clearly stated in Heb. 7:18: "There is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness"--unprofitable and weak so far as giving life is concerned, because fallen flesh could not keep it. Nor. could -any imperfect human being by his death have brought any measure of life to the human family. Even one who was so near the perfect ancestor as Abel, could not bring salvation to any other. But we are come "to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of -Abel." In fact, it is just as impossible for one of us to give life to others as "for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin." (Heb. 12:24; 10:4.) "Christ also once for all [time] was offered to bear the sins of many ... for the Law [Covenant], having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the-comers thereunto perfect." (Heb. 9:28; 10:1.) Of this "shadow" the Hebrew Christians were endeavoring to construct a door which should be the sole entrance to the Church for Gentiles. "Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." "There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the Law of Moses." (Acts 15:1, 5.) In opposing, this view Peter confessed that no Jew had ever been able to keep the Law Covenant, saving: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Instead of giving life, the Law Covenant proved to be a crushing burden, an impassable barrier.

## **"AND TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY"**

The Apostle, in this expression, "Took it out of the way," is not giving us a new thought, but by reiteration making more forceful his statement that Christ is the end of the Law Covenant, and that it is so far removed from the pathway of those seeking life that no one need give concern to the fact that at one time it had blocked the pathway.

## **"NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS"**

There is lacking any definite historic evidence- as to the symbolism in the phrase "nailing it to His Cross," but we have no doubt that it tells the means by which there was a complete setting aside of the Law Covenant. Note also that the "handwriting of ordinances which was against us" is the thing nailed to the Cross. There is nothing in this phraseology to indicate that the Apostle is making any distinction between the moral and the ceremonial ordinances. Manifestly, one is just as much "against" the Jews as the other, since neither could be perfectly performed. Thayer in his lexicon has this note regarding "the handwriting": "A note of hand, or writing in which one acknowledges that money has either been deposited with him or lent to him by another, to be returned at an appointed time; metaphorically applied in Col. 2:14 to the Mosaic Law, which shows men to be chargeable with offenses for which they must pay the penalty."

The statement that "nailing it to His Cross" is an allusion to an ancient custom of cancelling legal documents by nailing them to a post in public view is denied by some. The form of expression does surely give weight to that tradition. If there was such a custom, it bore some resemblance to the present usage of banks, which return cancelled checks after having, similarly, pierced them. Since, however, the reality is the thing that is to us of most importance, we need not particularly concern ourselves as to the figure. Our assurance is that the same nails that hung our Lord on the cross fastened and cancelled there, every obligation that might be against us. This is a blessed assurance for those who have learned that though life was offered through the Law Covenant and would certainly have been the reward of any who kept it, to weakened flesh it was only a taskmaster, bidding them do but giving no ability for the performance- of its mandates. It was therefore an accuser, revealing unfulfilled duty and unfaithfulness to the God whom it in part revealed. The Law Covenant, nevertheless, was not a failure. One great and essential purpose was accomplished by it. "What things soever the Law [Covenant] saith, it saith to them that are under the Law [Covenant]; that every mouth [of those under it and those not under it] may be stopped, and all the; world [Jew and Gentile] may be brought under the judgment of God" -- the Apostle's preceding argument having demonstrated that all Gentiles were condemned "without the law." - Rom. 3:19. See R. V.

## **THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RANSOM**

All who are sons of Adam of necessity partake of his curse, but He who died, "the just for the unjust," was "made a curse for us," "made sin for us," by taking the place of the original sinner. Thus the perfect man, Jesus, could be a "corresponding price (anti-lutron) for all who were in Adam at the time of his sin; and the redemption of the original sinner would open the way for the giving of life to all his descendants.

A story comes to us from an ancient battlefield of a soldier that opened the way to victory by gathering to his breast as many enemy spear-points' as his arms could encircle, thus clearing an opening through which his fellow-soldiers could pass to victory. Not a few spear-points, but all "that was against us," Jesus "bare in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) It should always be

borne in mind, however, that it is not the understanding of this philosophy, .but faith in the blood, that, gives life.

Having secured for all, Jew and Gentile, a means of release from the penalty of the sin of Adam and of the violation of the Law Covenant, Jesus has by the same act purchased for Himself 'the privilege of "bringing out the prisoners from the prison" -- the prison-house of death. "I the Lord have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." - Isa. 42:6, 7.

There is a similar passage in Isa. 49:8, 9, which, to our astonishment, the Apostle Paul, for we presume he is the speaker, definitely applies to the Church, as recorded in Acts 13:47: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." He makes a similar application of this passage in 2 Cor. 6:2.

### **THE CEREMONIAL LAW ENDED**

Since sacrifice was the center of the Ceremonial Law, and since the Gospel Age introduced the day of the "better sacrifices" (Heb. 9:23) , there is manifestly no advantage in continuing the symbolic ceremonies.

"When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part is, done away," is a principle which is as much in force in this connection as in that in which it is used. (1 Cor. 13:10.) "The Law [Covenant] hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But *now that faith is come*, we are no longer under a tutor." (Gal. 3:24, 25, R. V.) While it is agreed that the words "schoolmaster" and - "tutor" do not give the exact thought of the' original, which rather refers to the slave who conducts the child to the school, the Law has also actually been our schoolmaster, for "by the Law is the knowledge of sin. - Rom. 3:20.

### **THE NEW TEMPLE**

The human, the carnal mind, must have a visible temple and visible sacrifices in order to worship. For some it may be a temple on Mt. Gerizim or Mt. Moriah (these are the sacred heights where Abraham's sacrifice of his beloved son is by contradictory traditions said to have been offered) or for more modern minds it may be merely a human organization, small or large. For such, only faithfulness to something that the human senses can apprehend gives satisfaction. Faith, in the Faith Age, can be satisfied with nothing less, however, than the sacrifices and the temple of the Spirit.

The typical temple, therefore, ended its mission when the greater temples were established. The first of these greater temples was Jesus. He said, "The Father is in Me." (John 10:38; 14:10.) But, "Ye [also] are the temple of God. "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." How holy is evident from our Lord's promise that "*the spirit* of truth shall be in you." Yea, even these imperfect bodies, counted perfect by the reckoning to us of His righteousness, are accepted as sufficiently holy for His indwelling by that spirit. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit." To what a high plane the life of such an individual rises is intimated by the Apostle's statement in Rom. 8:19: "Ye are in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you." - 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19; John 14:17.

## **A NEW PRIESTHOOD**

Jesus was not only the temple, but also the High Priest, "merciful and faithful, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," "a High Priest of good things to come," as well as "over 'the house of God." - Heb. 2:17; 7:26; 9:11; 10:21.

"The priesthood being *changed* [from the Levitical to the Melchisedec] there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Heb. 7:12.) The change is a startling one, for, associated with our High Priest, there is a priesthood a large percentage of whose numbers are being chosen from among the Gentiles. "Ye are a holy priesthood," "a royal priesthood." (1 Pet: 2:5, 9.) That this is said of Gentiles is evident from the 10th verse which indicates it is addressed to those "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."

Jesus is also the great antitypical Sacrifice, the Lamb of God of John 1:29. This Age of "better; sacrifices" (Heb. 9:23) also associates with Him all who respond to the entreaty of His "'tender compassions" (Rom. 12:1, Diaglott), and who gladly share with Him in His suffering (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:20; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12), though they neither can add to, nor have any desire to add to, His fully efficacious sacrifice. - Phil 4:18; Heb. 13:15, 16 1 Pet. 2:5.

## **THE MORAL CODE ENDED**

As has been noted, there is nothing in any of the texts pointing to the ending of the Law that gives warrant to the supposition often advanced that only the Ceremonial Law is meant. The sponge that wiped clean for all, the condemnation of unobserved or imperfectly observed ordinances, just as effectively obliterated the condemnation of the moral code "to them that believe.

Jesus as a perfect man was able to, and as a Jew did, keep the entire Law. But it was not in this respect that inspiration points to Him- as our example. He is "the author and the prince-leader [Thayer] [not in 'the keeping of the Law, but] of our faith. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked, might be mistakenly supposed to indicate that Christians are expected to keep the Law as perfectly as Jesus did; but we have the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to the true meaning of this text. The Apostle in the same letter explains our walk. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light." Our walk is in the light of the new dispensation which He began. (1 John 2:6; 1:7.) The "if" indicates that in the following phrases we have other blessings which are sure to follow, if we so walk. The first is one which we may safely use as a test as to whether we are walking in the light. It promises that "if" we are so walking, "we have fellowship one with another. It is still more startling to learn that "if we walk in the light,' as He is in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. Evidently the benefits of that blood will eventually be lost to those who do not walk in 'the light and manifest it by having "fellowship one with another. The Apostle Paul in Eph. 5:2 defines the walk as "in love as Christ also hath loved us." This can be only by the "laying down of our lives for our brethren" in the most absolute sense. As [in the same manner as] ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him," our great High Priest, "who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after *the Power of an endless life.*" - Heb. 7:16.

The introducing of this higher Law does not bring condemnation upon those who observe to the best of their ability any of the abrogated laws. On the contrary there is little in the old Law that would not be desirable in those who are under the direction of the new arrangement, but on a higher plane and from a higher motive. The old Law was- taken "out of the way" not that we might violate it, but that none should any longer *look to-it as a hope of life.* For the, new creature,



the main fault of the old' Law is in setting too low a standard. It was Jesus Himself who stated the new Law and the high plane upon which it operates. - See Matt. 5:27, 28; John 13:34; also 2 John 5.

The endeavor of the Jews to keep the old Law was largely because of its offer of life; but Jesus indirectly offers a higher motive for the keeping of, the new -- that we may prove our love for Him; that we may abide in His love; that we may have His friendship; and above all, that we may glorify our Father in the bearing of fruit. - John 14:15; 15:10, 14, 8.

### **THE CROSS TRIUMPHANT OVER THE POWERS OF EVIL**

It will be of no advantage to us to concern ourselves with the learned discussions of the commentators as to just what limitations may be placed upon the phrase, "principalities and powers," in the 15th verse. We see no need of, placing any limitations. on the phrase, for our Lord has risen in might above every power in the universe save that of God Himself. - 1 Cor. 15:27.

There is also much diversity of opinion as to whether Jesus "spoiled" (Gr.: stripped) principalities and powers or whether He stripped these from Himself. We know that both are true The former, many commentators infer, is a picture that comes from military life and is that of a conqueror, whose first act is to strip from the conquered peoples every implement of warfare. There are other Scriptures quite in harmony with this suggestion. Jesus Himself said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "And the prince of this world cometh: and hath nothing in common with me." (Fenton.) "The prince of this world hath been judged." (R.V.) "Thou hast led captivity captive." - John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

Jesus, who conquered the Prince of Darkness in the temptation in the wilderness, was victor on the cross over *all* the powers of evil, and there could say, "It is finished." (John 19:30.) There He forged the last' link of the chain that would bind the "strong mall." (Matt. 12:28, 29; Luke 11:21, 22.) For His crown of thorns He was given the imperishable laurel of "the Crown of Gold. "More than conquerors," we,, His unworthy associates, may be sharers with Him in the laurels. To some it may seem strange that these crowns should be promised on a basis of love for "His appearing (Rom. 8:37; 2 Tim. 4:8), but surely he who does not look for it with intense longing, loves neither his Lord nor the groaning creation He comes to bless.

The Prophet assures us that the time of Jesus' treading of the winepress; is "the *day* of vengeance"; but there is a glorious period following of greater length, "the *year* of His redeemed." (Isa. 63:3.) This will be a triumphal procession, a conqueror's chariot such as the world has never seen, one that will dispense the bounties of heaven for the blessing of all the conquered.

A Diaglott footnote on the passage with which we close (2 Cor. 2:14) explains that it is "an allusion to the custom of victorious generals, who, in their triumphal procession, carried some of their relations with them in their chariot [though they had no part in gaining the victory]. The streets through which the processions passed were strewn with *flowers*, and as Plutarch tells us, the streets were full of *incense*."

"Now, thanks be to that God, who [thus] always leads us forth to triumph *with* the- Anointed One, and who diffuses by us the fragrance of the knowledge *o f Him*, in every place." - 2 Cor. 2:14.

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord, ' Jesus Christ." - 1 Cor. 15:57.

- P. E. Thomson.

## "As Always, So Now"

### PART V - "I AM NOW READY"

*"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." - Phil. 1:20.*

FOR PAUL to live was "Christ" -- on the one hand, contact and fellowship with his Lord; on the other, deep care and concern for all who had received the "heavenly call." Let us recall what advantages he surrendered to shoulder this charge; let us realize also that he diligently pushed open the door of opportunity himself, and that apart from the compelling urge that was in his soul, there was no reason why he should have taken such risks *or* gone to such extremes of labor and effort to reach' out to others' needs. His Master had come down from heaven under the same compelling power, and out of His unfathomed love had brought redemption for Paul, and the throb of the Master's heart had gripped and charged Paul's own with the same wonderful dynamic power. "He loved. me and gave Himself for me," says Paul, and in those few *words* he explains it all. How enthralling this thought to Paul-"He gave Himself a ransom for all"! -- yes, a wonderful thing, of universal application. Paul delighted to speak of that. "He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it"! yes, just the thing for the Divine Wooer to do, to win a Bride. Paul went into ecstasies over that. *But* "He loved me, and gave Himself -for *me*" touched the mainspring of all Paul's affection, and won his heart, his life, his soul; his all. A full score years before, when he was a persecutor,, *and* injurious, the Lord had loved him, and saved him, and forgiven him, and sent him forth, his zealous heart turned *to* a loftier service, and for all these years the *love* that had bought him, had kept *him*, and charged that heart with its own compassionate care, until the love of the Master had become the -- love of the slave -- the two hearts beat as one -- and that was just the secret of it all. Should the Master now ask of him a testimony in Caesar's Court, could he do other than he had done before?' and if that testimony should require to be sealed with blood, was it likely he could do other than "as always"? Or if his presentiment of, freedom from chains should come to pass, no earthly thing should check his loving allegiance and service to the Master he adored, and to the brethren whom he loved more than life itself. Do we ask the secret of such a life as this? Do we think the secret lies too deep to understand? Let us ponder a moment upon the sublime devotion enshrined in our "four" brief words, and ask how it was possible for the Apostle to rise to such heights of self-sacrifice, and self-less devotion! Was it because he was the most conspicuous theologian of his day? Was it because of his almost incomparable intellectual power?

Theologian he most certainly was-an unsurpassed knowledge of doctrine he most certainly had, and the ability to reason out the truth was his precious gift, yet *all* this, notwithstanding, it was not in the power of mere abstract truth to kindle such a flame, *nor* create such an energy. Over and above such matchless understanding of the Word and *purposes* of God, was the conviction that he had received a Divine Commission -to preach the Gospel of God's Love; a persuasion that he had been appointed to an Apostleship to proclaim the evangel of Redemption through Christ Jesus his Lord. He had seen, and conversed with the Blessed One. He knew that Jesus lived, and was alive forevermore. He knew that Jesus had sent him to testify to "Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." He knew that Jesus was with him as he suffered great things for the sake of His Name. In his busy life there was room for one thing only, nothing else shared his love with Christ. He had no place for leisure, or pleasure, or relaxation, or vacations. Night and day he

toiled to fulfill the stewardship committed to him. He had but one short life to give, but he would give it *all*, every moment of it. *To* the Greek, he became a Greek, and spake as a Greek. To the Jew, he became a Jew, if by that he could win some; and when words did not win their way, then tears must. But the dynamic force behind all his life, behind all his understanding and his labor, was the utter conviction that Christ was his Lord, and he was Christ's slave. He delighted to call himself Christ's slave, and to have no thoughts but His. He exulted in being Christ's ambassador, even though like his Master, he was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

### **A LIVING CHRIST-THE MAINSPRING OF HIS LIFE**

He believed that the love of God was in his heart, and that the mind of Christ used his brain, and that all his experiences were a "filling *up* of that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ," even going so far *as* to *say* that the wounds *of* the Master were being reproduced *in* his own scars. He said he was dying that others might live, even as Christ had given Himself for him. It was the deep, unassailable, unquenchable conviction that Jesus had done everything necessary to redeem him *and set* him free that had made him what he was. *So* utterly, completely, and unreservedly did he live in Christ and Christ in him that he could say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." - Gal. 2:20.

That was the secret of everything. That and that alone was the mainspring of his life. Not doctrine, not theology, not unmatched intellect, but a Living, Loving Christ, was the deep fountain from which all else had flowed, and made his life fruitful and green as an oasis. Well marked beliefs he had; clearly defined theology he had taught, but it was the indwelling of the Living Lord which gave him power' to live a life of Christian constancy, and say at all times, "As always, so now."

Brethren, beloved in the Lord, let us learn his secret and know 'that Fountain whence sprang all Paul's comforts and delights. The same loving Jesus is our Lord and Master. He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." He changes not. 'But His promises do not fructify in us if there is a lack of trust. Too many lives miss their purpose and effectiveness because like waters which lose themselves in the stagnant marsh, they have too many channels as conduits for their energy. Their lives are too broad—they have too many interests. Other things beside Christ share their affections; and in this liberalism they know not where to draw the line.

### **ACQUITTED-REVISITS THE BRETHREN**

The Acts of the Apostles breaks off its story of the Apostle's life with a brief reference to his two years' imprisonment in Rome. That "hired house" became a busy hive of spiritual industry, for from it and to it went willing feet carrying the messages of comfort and exhortation which Paul, unable himself to go, sent by proxy to all *his* scattered flock. But with the expiration of the two years and the appearance of Paul before Nero, the narrative breaks off abruptly! Is this because there is no more to tell? Was the verdict an unfavorable one, and did Paul find' his "gain" through death? Or was he set free from prison to resume his life for Christ, and collect other fruit by his labor? Luke does not say, but where the sacred *historian* deserts us, there the testimony of tradition comes to our aid. It tells us that he was acquitted, and let out of prison, and that he went, forth again, revisiting his converts, and striking out into new fields even "to the extreme bounds of the West.

We are not limited solely to the testimony of tradition, however, concerning these last days. We have writings from Paul's pen of later date than his two years' imprisonment. These are the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, called by commentators "the Pastoral Epistles." Here we read of him revisiting old friends, and setting things in order, so that the affairs of the churches should be carried on after his decease. We cannot trace his footsteps with any certainty, but we do find him at Ephesus and Troas. We find him in Crete, an island at which he had touched on his way to Rome. We find him at Miletus, and at last intending to spend a winter at Nicopolis.

This is as far as Scripture record carries us. Tradition claims that he visited Spain, and probably Britain, though these records are mainly legendary. But this freedom did not last long-no more than five years at the very most. An event had happened in Rome, soon after his release, which was to have far reaching effects upon Paul and many of his brethren. The city of Rome was set on fire. This incendiary work was charged against the Christians. Instantly the most atrocious persecution broke out against them. Many of the Roman citizens charged this conflagration against the man who wore the Imperial purple; but he found ways and means to attribute it to the Christians. They were punished in the most revolting manner, some being burned alive, others thrown to wild beasts.

### **IMPRISONED AND FORSAKEN**

The report of this appalling disaster to the City soon spread over the Roman world, and it was not likely that the chief exponent of Christian doctrine could long escape the hue and cry. Every local governor knew that he could not please his Imperial, master in any better way than by sending Paul again to Rome in chains. Apparently his arrest had been carried out in a hurried manner, for he seems not to have had time to collect all his belongings together. He had intended to winter at Nicopolis; but whether it was in that city he was apprehended we know not. He was soon dispatched to Rome and put in close confinement there. It was no mild imprisonment in his own hired house this time, but the worst and severest known to the law. No hosts of friends came now to greet him-no message to his converts left his cell. No greetings from, loved ones came to comfort him. A few words from his pen show that those who found *him* did so with difficulty. "Onesiphorous . . . oft refreshed me, *and* was., not ashamed of my chain . . . he. sought *me* out, *very diligently, and found me.*" - 2 Tim. 1:16, 17.

But such refreshment was very rare, for it was *a* dangerous matter to be known as *a* Christian in Rome in those days. All his friends from Asia Minor had forsaken him and fled. "Demas hash forsaken me, having loved this present world." "Only Luke is with me," so he writes to Timothy. "At my first answer [hearing], no man stood with me, but all forsook me. (2 Tim. 4:10, 11, 16.) How pathetic to read of this "knight of the. open road" caged and isolated thus, bereft of the counsel and comfort of nearly all his friends. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. . . . Do thy diligence to come before winter," he pleads to Timothy. (Chap. 4:9, 20.) Dearest and best of all his absent friends, oh, how he longed for a glimpse of "son Timothy's face," before he faced the executioner's sword.

His letter reveals also the miseries of his dungeon. He begs Timothy to bring his old cloak he had left at Troas to protect him from the damp of his cell, and the cold of the winter. Was the courageous spirit at last breaking down under the strain? Was the brave heart at last fainting by the way? Nay indeed -read his words and see: ". . . I suffer these things, nevertheless; I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." How does' he end his letter? "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. . Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of

righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." Those are not the words of the broken and the vanquished! They are the words of victory.

Again, did he forget his specific mission for Jesus, to, the nations, in this dire physical distress? Listen again, "At my first answer [hearing] . . . the Lord . . . 'strengthened' me, that by me the preaching might be fully made known and that all the Gentiles might hear." (2 Tim. 4:16, 17.) Paul had been charged on several counts, and it appears that each count of the indictment was taken separately and, on different days. Since so many of the already martyred Christians, for their alleged complicity in the burning of Rome, had been thrown to wild beasts, it is thought that the count first taken against Paul was for having: previously arranged for that conflagration to happen after he had left the city following his release from the first captivity. Evidently he had successfully disproved that charge, for he was spared "from the mouth of the lion"-the fate reserved for those adjudged guilty of that incendiaryism. But concerning that hearing, he says, "The Lord strengthened my heart; that by me the proclamation of the glad tidings might be accomplished in full measure; and that all the Gentiles might *hear*." - *Conybeare and Howson's translation*.

### **"THE LORD STOOD WITH ME"**

The charge was a criminal one; hence taken before the city's principal magistrate. With him was a body of assessors, who interpreted the law in the case. So notorious a prisoner as Paul (the principal leader of the Christians) would be sure to attract a full audience from amongst all the nations ' then represented and living in Rome. Hence before such a cosmopolitan audience, Paul spoke in self-defense. No advocate would venture to plead for him; no lawyer would help him to arrange his evidence, for it, was a position of greatest danger to appear in public as the friend or adviser of this detested and hated leader of the Christians. Not, even his powerful friends, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia (who by reason of royal associations had high standing in Imperial circles) dared to move to his assistance. Paul says he proclaimed the Glad Message in full measure to this inquisitive assembly. Thus, though speaking in defense of his own position, he told them of Jesus-of His death and resurrection, and of His coming Kingdom; for nothing less than this was the Gospel on the lips of Paul. "At my first answer [hearing] no man stood with me, but all forsook me," yet, "as always, so now" this valiant, faithful heart quailed not, nor failed to bear the testimony for his Lord, which: he was sent to bear. And why "now," "as always"? "The Lord stood with me," is the answer. "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." In fulfillment of the Lord's promise that it should be given them in that same hour what to say, the Lord drew very close, and became, to him, almost visibly present with him -- a Friend closer than a brother, an Advocate wiser than men, who would never leave him nor forsake him even in the toils of mighty Rome.

While the other hearings were pending, Paul pens this urgent letter to Timothy, requesting; him to come with all possible speed. Why had Paul sent-for Timothy? Just to be a comfort to him in his last crucial hours? Not a bit of it. Listen again, "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry, *for I* am now ready to be offered . . ." (2 Tim. 4:1, 5, 6.) Paul knew his days were all but numbered, and that soon, for him, the warfare would be ended; but, his concern for his brethren was so great a power in his heart, that he could not let the occasion pass without calling upon "Son Timothy" to rise up and try to take his place. Like Moses just before his death, blessing and installing Joshua as Israel's leader, so Paul passed on to his young lieutenant, the post as generalissimo which he had so long and ably filled. In case Timothy should not arrive in time, Paul had put into permanent form his last instructions to "his son," so that he should know

how to conduct himself in the Church of God. And for that we may thank God today, for this letter is a very precious one.

For the rest we are dependent upon the words of the historian. At his next hearing Paul was declared guilty as a disturber of the Empire, and sentenced to death. As a Roman citizen he was accorded the honor of a Roman's death. Tradition says he was beheaded by the lictor's sword or, axe, just outside the city walls on the Ostian way. Thus faithful unto death, he possessed himself of that "gain" which he knew would complete that Christlike treasure, which he had now committed into the keeping of Him whom he had believed. "I am now ready," said Paul -- the last of all those "so now" occasions, in which his faithfulness "as always" had exhibited itself. So ended the life of that noble, exemplary -follower of the Lord Jesus. - *T. Holmes.*

## **A Suggestion to Our Readers**

Many brethren are evidently depriving themselves of the visits of "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom" because too reticent to ask for it free. It is our desire to have the "Herald" in the homes of all who would find any spiritual help in it, and we hope the following suggestion may result in reaching a few additional brethren in the communities where there are subscribers to handle the matter.

The proposal is that the subscribers ascertain about how many there are to whom they could profitably arrange to deliver a copy of the "Herald" monthly. They will then advise us as to the number and to what address to send them, notifying us when this number proves too small or too large.

This suggestion should not change the arrangement for those already receiving the "Herald" on the free; list. Except in territory outside the United States there would be no great saving, to us by mailing copies in packages instead of singly as at present. Where there would be any saving to us, it is not sufficient to compensate for the delay of copies reaching individuals.