

HIS SIDE VERSUS OUR SIDE - OVERVIEW OF GALATIANS

Or, What is a TRUE Christian?

by Norman Harrison

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CHAPTER 15

"I" CRUCIFIED VERSUS THE WORLD - GALATIANS 6:14-15

This topic considers the biblical question of separation.

"But 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. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Galatians 6:14,15)

GOD's one way of defeating the world is to crucify it, and with it the "I" to whom the world makes its appeal.

As the flesh was crucified jointly with CHRIST, so likewise the world that works hand in glove with the flesh for my undoing. GOD's great antithesis is carrying through to care for every point of practical difficulty. I and the world must be separated; so I and the world are set on opposite and opposing sides. If I am on His Side I am not on the world's side. If I am on the world's side, giving my allegiance to the world, I am no longer on His Side; I have denied the cross and the CHRIST by which and by whom -- both translations are equally permissible -- the separation was effected. I am back on Our Side; there is no middle ground.

What Is the World?

GOD ought to know. He has faced its opposition for millenniums and seen it bring its subtle methods to a high degree of efficiency in our day.

The world is a part of a closely coordinated triumvirate of evil: the world, the flesh, the devil. They appear as partners in man's undoing: in the temptation to fall away from GOD into sin (Genesis 3:6); in man's present fallen state (Ephesians 2:2,3); in drawing the Christian back into the world (1 John 2:15-17). The same appear in our Lord's temptation (Matthew 4:1-11).

They are inseparable; they work together; they have identical aims.

The world -- from the Greek kosmos, or world-system -- may be defined, in its bad, ethical sense, as the order or arrangement "under which Satan has organized the world of unbelieving mankind upon his cosmic principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and pleasure" (C.I. Scofield).

The world offers man everything he could wish; everything to satisfy his intellectual, physical, social, esthetic, and passionate craving; everything to keep him content in his present condition -- everything but GOD. **"For all that is in the world"** -- designed to appeal to **"the lust of the flesh,"** to **"the lust of the eyes"** as they look upon the things of the world and crave them, to **"the pride of life"** Satan-injected into man's veins -- **"is not of the Father, but is of the world"** (1 John 2:16).

Friends, search the Scriptures, with a good concordance or a chain reference Bible, for what GOD has to say about the world. He knows; you should know it as He knows it.

Delivered from the World

CHRIST came all the way from glory to deliver us. It cost Him His life to accomplish this deliverance: **"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world"** (Galatians 1:4), and in achieving such deliverance He was carrying out **"the will of God and our Father."**

CHRIST's life was itself one long triumph over the world, signalized by His words at its close: **"I have overcome the world"** (John 16:33). Its selfishness and greed -- He had refused it all. Its hatred, slander, and persecution -- He had met it all with divine patience, meekness and gentleness (II Corinthians 10:1).

The world gave Him a cross -- that also He endured, **"despising the shame"** (Hebrews 12:2). His death -- was it a defeat or a triumph? He died thus, **"that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"** (Hebrews 2:14,15). Hear the cry of the victor, **"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out"** (John 12:31).

Delivered from the world, its fears and their final outcome, death; from the world's god, the pride, ambition and selfishness he implants in his devotees. Then -- to think of it is grief of heart -- some Christian people persist in living world-ly lives, persist in being known for their world-liness. How can they? Only through ignorance, we trust. Only by getting "off side." They have necessarily left His Side and gone back to the bondage of Our Side.

The Principle of Separation

Running all the way through Holy Writ is an urgent, underlying principle -- that of separation. So long as GOD allows evil in the world He must adhere to this principle of separation from it. Considered historically:

Among the antediluvians the line of Seth was GOD's people. When they disregarded this principle of separation and intermarried with the descendants of Cain, evil multiplied and gave occasion for the judgment of the flood.

GOD began anew with Abraham, saying, "**Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee**" (Genesis 12:1). He obeyed, with one exception -- Lot. Genesis 13 is an exposition of the principle of separation: "**Separate thyself**"; "**and they separated themselves the one from the other**" (vv. 9,11). Then GOD was free to pronounce abundant blessing upon Abraham, "**after that Lot was separated from him**" (read please, vvs. 14-17). And now comes the experience of restored fellowship (vs. 18), and by contrast the dismal failure of worldly Lot (Genesis 14, 18, 19). And, remember, we are the spiritual children of Abraham (Galatians 3:7, 29).

The history of Abraham's descendants, the children of Israel, is the same. In Egypt, type of the world, they were in bondage. When delivered from Egypt and led into the promised land, they were called to separate themselves from the inhabitants of Canaan, as "a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people ... an holy nation" (Exodus 19:5, 6). So Solomon prayed, "**For Thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be Thine inheritance**" (1 Kings 8:53).

(Read and study also Deuteronomy 32:8,9; then the sadness of the "but," verse 15, when this separation is forsaken).

The ups and downs of Israel through Joshua, the Judges, and the Kings, is wholly a matter of separation observed or separation forsaken. The latter prevailed; GOD had but one course, the major operation of separating them from their land and all it meant to them, into the bondage of Babylon. Read please -- do read it -- this sad harvest from the sin of non-separation, II Chronicles 36:15-21.

Considered prophetically:

Spiritually the present state of the world is a mixed field of wheat and tares: "**Let both grow together until the harvest**," but the harvest is the appointed time of separation into different lots and destinies (Matthew 13:30). While all are to be raised from the dead, there will be two kinds of resurrection (John 5:28, 29). Yes, and two times of resurrection; so that "**they that are Christ's**," as distinct from those who are not, are to be raised at His coming from among the dead (see 1 Corinthians 15:23). The wicked dead are left for their appointed lot and judgment.

Considered presently:

Present living should conform to future prospect. Separation will obtain then, why not now? It should, and must, if we would keep "on side."

Read with bowed heart our Lord's prayer for His own (John 17). Some sixteen times He uses the word "world"; seven times He refers to His own as "given" to Him by the Father (how precious is a gift!). By such expressions as these He forever separates us, His gifts, from the world: "**The men which Thou gavest Me out of the world**" (vs. 6); "**I pray for them: I pray not for the**

world, but for them which Thou has given Me, for they are Thine" (v. 9); "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (vs. 14).

The Power of Separation

What is to bring about a life of separation? If I am expected to live this way, must it be by self-will and determination?

Then I would be in constant danger of giving way to the world's appeals. No; it's the cross! The cross **"by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."** There it stands, the cross, between me and the world that formerly claimed me. Something has happened to me; and something has happened to the world. The bond of responsiveness has been broken. The world had me by the eyes, ears and nose: I used to see, hear and smell all of its allurements; it had me at its beck and call. Now that "I" has died -- died with CHRIST, a new "I" -- risen with Him -- has been endowed with a new sense of seeing, hearing, and smelling, so that I recognize and appreciate spiritual values not found in the world's offerings. I find my life on a higher plane; I move in a different sphere. Crucifixion broke my bondage to the world; the resurrection that followed gave me a life of liberty.

But more. It is **"the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."** Its power to separate is not impersonal; rather, it's the power of a person. That Person lives today to make His cross operative; He lives in me. I was crucified to the world and raised to live a new life; CHRIST was crucified and raised to live His new life in me. The result: I am separated from the world, and separated to CHRIST. My life has a new center, a new set of desires, an entirely new outlook.

Considered typically, Separation has this twofold aspect as taught through the Tabernacle: the linen curtain of the court separates from the world outside, while the house line separates the believer to Father, Son and Spirit living within.

Every Christian should have a testimony ringing with the reality of this experience. I am glad to give my testimony in the words of a man referred to by Dr. Ironside. He had been in deep sin. After his conversion one of his friends in sin said to him, "Bill, I pity you -- a man that has been such a high-flyer as you. And now you have settled down, you go to church, or stay at home and read the Bible and pray; you never have good times any more."

"But Bob," said the saved man, "you don't understand. I get drunk every time I want to. I go to the theatre every time I want to. I go to the dance when I want to. I play cards and gamble whenever I want to."

"I say," said Bob, "I don't understand it that way. I thought you had to give up these things to be a Christian."

"No, Bob," said his friend, "the Lord took the 'want to' out when He saved my soul, and He made me a new creature in CHRIST JESUS. I simply don't 'want to' do those things anymore."

In a real sense the Christian isn't giving up any thing. He is giving himself up to CHRIST. Then CHRIST takes care of the rest.

The Peril of Non-Separation

The above facts make perfectly evident to us all the true nature of the Christian life, as over against any other life, and the true purpose of CHRIST in establishing the New Covenant and in bringing us into it. That life is not just a good life; that purpose is not to make good people, with varying degrees of goodness as they may elect to live the life; rather, it is to have a PECULIAR people, peculiar to Himself, peculiarly His own, now and eternally.

(Our English word, 'peculiar,' when rightly understood, is full of meaning, and none more appropriate could be chosen. As Webster's Dictionary tells us, 'peculiar is from the Roman "peculium" which was a thing emphatically and distinctively one's own, and hence was dear'. A single word sometimes contains a sermon. And what a sermon we have here! To be a peculiar people is not to be an odd people. Still less to be a people noted for ungraciousness or rudeness. It is to be 'emphatically and distinctively' the Lord's own people, and therefore to be very specially dear to Him" [Tom Olson in Now]. Could there be any finer description of our bridal relationship?)

That peculiar, intimate relationship of endearment -- we giving ourselves to Him; He giving Himself to us -- is nothing short of a marriage union. It was to this end that He took us with Him through crucifixion, through death to every bond that previously obligated us -- to the law, yes, and to the world -- that we might be free, as a new creature, to be "**married to Another**," even to the risen, glorious CHRIST (Romans 7:4).

Thus GOD sees every child of His joined to His Son in a sacred, indissoluble union. He has brought us to His Side as a bride. We are joined in a life-union to the most beautiful, wonderful person in the universe. The HOLY SPIRIT is busily engaged in making us over into His likeness -- the fruit of the Spirit. To leave His Side, to go back to Our Side, to the reviving of the flesh and its cravings for the world -- what is it but gross infidelity! It is consorting with His enemy! It is adultery!

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4)

This is exceptionally strong language; it couldn't be stronger. And GOD means it! GOD sent His Son to deliver us from the world. He sent His Spirit to bring us into a vital marital union with His Son. He holds us precious to Himself in these bonds. Then we deliberately turn our back on the entire set-up, playing fast and loose with the world? He counts it infidelity -- adultery in the spirit.

Where are we? We are hopelessly back on Our Side. Allowing our flesh to draw us into friendship with the world, we have not merely broken fellowship with Him; we have made ourselves His enemy. Worldly Christian, GOD means it; you had best believe it.

An adulteress! What an ugly word. But the sin is far more ugly. If adultery of the flesh is offensive, how much more adultery of the spirit! While the one is grieving to the Spirit in His

lust against it, the other is a grief to the Father, the Son and the Spirit. It is an abomination in His sight.

Dear reader, thinking yourself free to be a so-called worldly Christian, consider what you are doing. The world is GOD's enemy. It put CHRIST on the cross. It would do it again. You are friendly with it and its ways. What can GOD do but count you on the other side? He says you have made yourself His enemy. There is no middle ground. You are sadly "off side."

Won't you turn again to CHRIST, to live in Him, to let His love constrain you to a life of utter devotedness to Him?

Oh, the joy of full salvation!
Oh, the peace of love divine!
Oh, the bliss of consecration!
I am His, and He is mine.

-- Rebecca S. Pollard

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of CHRIST, my GOD;
All the vain things that charm my most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

-- Isaac Watts

~ end of chapter 15 ~

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