

footsteps, obeying every moment the Comforter, whom He, Jesus, has sent to represent Him in His followers, must count on relentless persecution from most, if not all with whom he comes in contact who do not follow Jesus after the same pattern. And, mark the words, this persecuting spirit will only stop short of the death penalty because of its inability to inflict it. Hence it will not hesitate to do its utmost of injury against the objects of its persecuting hate.

Wherefore, as it was in the days of the first Christians, so now, when we exhort men and women to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ, we virtually invite them to face a cross only slightly, if at all, lessened in weight, as compared with the cross which Jesus planted before His disciples in the days of His flesh. And we well know that He who would have shrunk from the cross of blood in the early days of Christianity will now shrink from the cross which stands connected with walking in the Spirit in the Pentecostal sense.

We have already seen so many who, attracted by the joy which is in the Holy Ghost, had commenced this spiritual life, turn away from it when they began to realize how rugged the cross was, that human prudence alone makes its demand that we henceforth imitate our Master fully in presenting the cross of shame to all who approach the subject with serious thought. We hesitate not to say to all such this cross is vastly heavier than they can even imagine, and there is not a particle of sentiment in the words of Christ when He says: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."

Some have toned down the apparently hard condition imposed on the rich young man who came to Christ. But we maintain that that one condition, hard as it may seem in this money-loving age, is light in comparison with all that is represented in the cross of Christ. Hence there are no tests which can be invented by the ingenuity of man which can be too keen or far-reaching to be out of place at this the threshold of the Christian life.

Now, we frankly admit that all this is shocking in the extreme to modern sentiment, and will not be readily accepted as Gospel. But we challenge any and all to compare these thoughts with the clear, unadulterated teachings of Christ Jesus, and then see if they could truthfully soften down any part of it.

In a word, then, the taking up the cross means so surrendering to Christ as to accept the possibility of God in the person of the Holy Spirit teaching us *personally* what to do, and then yielding prompt obedience when He calls for any and every form of deprivation, and with the full understanding that this action on our part will separate us from all who do not thus walk, and, generally speaking, turn them against us in persecuting hate.

Now, whilst this is the true Scriptural idea of bearing the cross, there are many human counterfeits in the Church visible, which tend to bewilder many and ease the consciences of not a few. They can all be traced back to one and the same origin, viz., the effort to substitute the letter for the spirit; for to the natural man, the way of the Spirit always seems harder and more forbidding than the way of legalism.

Who would not consider it a heavy cross, indeed, to have to imitate the practices of the religionists of Christ's day—numerous fastings, long prayers, minute thything, singularity of dress, and punctilious observance not only of the laws of Moses, but of a multitude of additions thereto. There is no cross gotten up by any sect to-day, not excepting the Free Methodists, the Salvation Army, or the Menonites, which will compare with the self-denying ordinances of the strictest sect of the Pharisees; and yet it was before these very persons that Jesus Christ erected his cross of shame, and proclaimed that it, in the comparison, was vastly greater than any which man could devise. From all which we infer, that it is entirely a misnomer to call Christian testimony, plain dress, street parades, short rations, giving, or missionary work, the cross of Christ. These all may be made deadly rivals of the true cross, but can never be made a substi-