
SPIRITUAL ARGONAUTS

by W. Carl Ketcherside

In the days of boyhood, when dreams gave substance to life, I used to while away the hours with books. They constituted then, as they do now, the lighter-than-air vessels enabling me to leave the poverty-stricken world of reality and soar into the delightful realm of fantasy, the magic kingdom of make-believe, where I met characters much more fascinating than those encountered on our village paths. We did not have streets.

It was thus I became acquainted with Jason, the legendary figure whose untiring devotion to a single mission held me enthralled and made me oblivious for the time to the merely mundane happenings of my puny, and often cruel, little world. When Phrixus was transported to Colchis on the back of a ram with golden fleece possessed of magical powers of transformation, the fleece was stripped from the back of the mythical animal and fell in to the hands of Aetes, king of Colchis. Jason dedicated his life to its recovery, and sailed on the perilous journey with the Argonauts. Eventually his mission became successful through his marriage to Medea, a sorceress who was the daughter of the king.

I have long held to a view with which I suspect that a goodly number of my readers will disagree. Simply stated, it is that the philosophic Greeks with a degree of wisdom not yet possessed by their contemporaries, whom they designated as barbarians because of linguistic shortcomings, sought to embalm in myths those beliefs, traits and characteristics, which they felt to be of such magnificent import that they should not be forgotten by subsequent generations.

All peoples have sought to preserve the wisdom in which they shared by incorporating it in literature. The Hebrews, who began as a nomadic race, were not noted for their originality, but being the chosen vessels of God to keep alive the concept of monotheism in the midst of a heathen culture, were vouchsafed the oracles of heaven, and these constituted their greatest literary contribution to humanity. The easiest method of preserving truths and memorializing events is by proverb and ballad, and thus, the *Hagiographa*, the wisdom literature of the Hebrews, contains both the proverbs of Solomon and other wise men, and the songs of David and other composers.

I am fully aware of the conclusions drawn by some of our modern gnostics, who try to make it appear that the records related to the life of Jesus, being cast in the Greek language, were mythologized by the writers. But I do not forget that most of these reject the supernatural and deny the divine breakthrough into the human arena. They deny the possibility of revelation and although they cannot blot Jesus out of human history they try to undermine the impact of his life and teaching with their conjecture that the apostles wove a cocoon of invention around fact.

There is a great deal of difference between the wisdom of this passing age seeking to perpetuate itself in myth, and the revelation of divine wisdom which is destined to outlast, and preside over the passing away of those ages which men have labeled by their discoveries. The Greeks embodied in Jason the thought that there are values of such superlative importance as to justify the dedication of one's whole being to the search for and pursuit of them with a fidelity which

knows no compromise. It is my conviction that the whole human family must engage in the quest for a golden fleece, or *the* golden fleece, which can transform the lives of all who touch it.

The medieval alchemist believed that since this was a universe in which there was no unrelated atom or factor, there must be a secret which would unlock all secrets and bring about the ultimate. In his dingy and pitiably deficient laboratory, he probed for the way of transmuting all of the baser elements into gold; of searching for the universal solvent; of seeking the panacea which would eliminate all sickness and cure all ills; and of discovering the elixir of life by which one could conquer the hold of death.

What he failed to find in the material realm is available in the spiritual. And it should be the goal of every rational being who bears in his inner being the stamp of God's eternal image although scarred and distorted by sin. The golden fleece for which the argonauts of the spirit must search so diligently is *truth*. It is this which will transform us and free us from enslavement. Even the very search for it will spare us in time of distress.

When Jeremiah was informed that he must cry against Jerusalem and predict the imminence of her destruction, God gave a ray of hope. "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, *that seeketh the truth*; and I will pardon it." Nothing is a greater safeguard for people than to seek the truth.

The Nature of Truth

But what is truth? What is its nature? In its very essence truth is agreement with, or conformity to reality in whatever area it is being considered. When we speak of scientific truths we refer only to that which has been verified and indisputably established. When we speak of moral truths we refer to those teachings which are in exact harmony with the ethical or moral values which have been established by proper authority for the well-being of humanity.

It is a common mistake to speak of facts and truths as if they were interchangeable. All facts are truths, but not all truths are facts. Fact is from the Latin *factum*, a thing done. There are abstract truths but not abstract facts. The deeds that are performed and the words that are spoken, constitute facts. They can be apprehended by the sense of sight and hearing, and testimony may be borne to them by one who was a witness of them. In turn, that testimony may be believed, if rendered credible, by one who had no knowledge of the acts or statements.

Our relationship to God through Christ is not based upon abstractions or rationalization, but upon belief of facts. The Good News, or gospel, does not consist of a written code, a system of deductions, or a compilation of doctrinal requirements. It is composed of facts related to a person whose entrance into and exit from the material universe brought reconciliation and hope to lost mankind. These facts are seven in number, embracing the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation and glorification of the only begotten Son of God. All of these facts are substantiated by the testimony of witnesses, the first by men chosen and sent into the world, and the last two by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

The gospel was proclaimed in its absolute fullness on the first Pentecost after his resurrection, and those who accepted its demands obeyed it fully that day. Not one word was ever added to the gospel. Nothing ever spoken or written after that date became a part of the gospel, although many letters were written to those who had accepted the good news. The gospel is the saving truth of God, and since it is an account of what God has done for us and is historical fact, it can and must be believed to come into the state of reconciliation or salvation from sin.

Never has God demonstrated in greater measure that wisdom which is divine than in his provision for the saving of the human race. If it had been made contingent upon arrival at a certain degree of knowledge related to abstract truth, only the intellectually elite could have attained unto it. The huge mass of mankind would have been doomed to destruction by an imbecility they could not help. As it is, the humblest aborigine in the outback can hear the story of how Jesus came to earth, lived, died and rose again, and can be saved through faith.

It is the tragedy of the ages that men have taken these simple truths and poured them into creedal moulds, defining and re-defining them, and creating a “structure of faith,” or “a system of faith” which can only serve to confuse, and which, instead of producing joyful acceptance, has contributed to endless debate and strife. In God’s plan there is but one fact which must be believed and one act which must be performed, to bring one into that glorious fellowship of the redeemed. That fact is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and the Anointed One, and that act is immersion into the relationship expressed by the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Every person on this whole wide earth who trusts in Jesus upon the basis of the testimony of those who were his chosen envoys, and who validates the acceptance of the lordship of Jesus over his life by this initial and initiating step of obedience is in the fellowship. He is a child of God, a member of the one body, a citizen of the kingdom, and a living stone in the temple. He may be quite ignorant of many things, including the how and when of God’s forgiveness, as well as the truths upon which he will grow and thrive, but if he trusts in the righteousness of Jesus to deliver him, and is baptized to fulfill God’s righteousness, he is God’s child. God wants to accept all who come to him. He does not throw up intellectual barbed-wire entanglements through which one must work his way into freedom, as would some of the more aggressive children who feel obligated to guard the glory road and repel all who may be more ignorant (about some things) than themselves.

It was never the intention of God to reveal all truth to man. It was never his design to reveal any truth to man which man was capable of discovering and discerning by his own ability. It was only what eye could not see and ear could not hear, and what could not be deduced by rationalization that God has revealed through the Spirit. The sacred new covenant scriptures are not a textbook of scientific, mathematical, or even moral truths. They do not constitute a written code of ethics or a compendium of legal statutes. Their simple purpose is to reveal the truth concerning God’s reconciling move into an alienated world, motivated by the dynamic of love, and culminating in a restoration to wholeness of every sinful being who comes to trust in this divine thrust as his only hope of extrication from the impending doom wrought by sin.

The word of God is true! It is unquestionably and undeniably so, being an expression of one who cannot lie, because of his nature, which is grounded in verity, without a shadow of change or variation. The word of God is truth, but not all truth is the word of God, from the standpoint of having been given by revelation. Truth is not contradictory, so those truths discovered in the laboratory or by exploration of the physical universe, are not in contravention to the truth which God has spoken.

Since the truth makes men free, men must be free to probe for truth in the whole universe. God has placed no limitations upon our acquisition of truth, except those we place upon ourselves through fear or inner trepidation. It is one of the pathetic and lamentable commentaries upon the human race that those who have claimed to know the truth of revelation have used it as an excuse to throw roadblocks across the pathway of those who are the real searchers for the golden fleece. We owe most enriching discoveries to “heretics” and not to defenders of the status quo. The latter have been so occupied with devising new means to torture and destroy the former that they have had little time to discover anything else.

Questions About Truth

It is my intention to face up directly to some of the problems raised by my own generation as relates to truth. If my approach to these seems simplistic and unsophisticated you will have to recognize that one whose thought-processes fall within these categories could hardly do otherwise than I shall do.

Some very wise men in our age are quite convinced that all truth is relative, and that no proposition enunciated by men can ever be accepted as absolute. They have lived to see certain truths accepted as axiomatic by philosophers of other days, not only challenged, but actually shown to be relativistic. Of course, the conclusion is that, given enough time and enough money for research, and every truth will be knocked from the saddle and rendered *hors de combat*.

It is obvious, I think, that no one who believes that all truth is relative, can ever state it with any real hope that it be accepted. If he thinks it is true that all truth is relative, he cannot expect me to accept that as an absolute. He is either stating a falsehood or a truth when he lays down the proposition that “all truth is relative.” If it is a falsehood I should not believe it at all; but if it is a truth I can only regard it as relative. If it is an absolute truth that all truth is relative, then he who states it stabs himself with his own sword and is “hoist on his own petard.”

On the other hand if it is not an absolute truth that “all truth is relative” there is left a loophole for some truth that is not relative. Since I am not particularly intrigued by semantic maneuvers, not even when they are my own, I can shorten the process by climbing across the fence and cutting across the pasture without going around the main philosophic turnpike. I am quite convinced that the real question is not one’s concept of truth at all, but his concept of God which makes the difference.

In the final analysis, the question of whether there is absolute truth in a universe inhabited by fallible men, must be determined for each of us by whether or not we believe in an infallible God. This means that it is a question of faith and not merely one of rationalization. Do not be

mistaken at this juncture. It is not a question of faith for just one party, he who believes in an infallible God. It is also a question of faith for the other who *believes* there is no such divine being.

If I start with an infallible God, based upon my interpretation of the evidence for such a being in the universe, I not only can believe there is absolute truth, but I am forced to believe it. On the other hand, if I start with fallible man as being the highest order of intellectual being, I must reach the conclusion that any proposition stated by such a being must be regarded as relativistic by all of his peers.

It is for this reason that I have argued, and still do when I can get any one to listen, that truth in its origin and its ultimate is not propositional, but personal. That is, it is not embodied in propositions, either at its source or terminus, but in a person. Every proposition before it is expressed exists as a concept or mental image. Propositions are not conceived on paper but in minds. Before any truth was ever proposed it was first composed in an intellect. Thus, when traced to its source, infinite truth existed in an infinite mind, and was and is absolute, because of the nature of divine intelligence, which is not in degrees, but perfect. What makes truth absolute is that truth originated with God.

Jesus, the Word of God incarnated, declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He did not mean that he was the embodiment of propositions about him, although these conveyed truths. But he was truth in its origin, truth so ineffable that we must await freedom from our flesh and blood in order to fully grasp it. The Word of God has not been exhausted by words of God. There is truth yet unrevealed. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." In its ultimate truth will again become personalized. Just as the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world will preclude the need of sun or moon and resolve itself into the glory of God (Rev. 21:23), so truth affirmed, proclaimed and believed, will again be personalized in its creator and our benefactor.

Now, if you will permit, I should like to think with you about the truth which makes men free. At the very outset, let me affirm that every truth produces freedom to the extent that it is apprehended by an honest mind. It is the nature of truth to strike the shackles from men's hearts. Ignorance is dispelled, superstition is erased, and darkness flees, when the door is thrown open and truth is allowed to penetrate the inner being. Men are enslaved to the extent of their ignorance and there is no one of us who is wholly free from mistaken views, nor will we ever be in the flesh. It is a Part of the human predicament that we will not be able to know everything, and will always be ignorant about much. Just as light pushes darkness back only to the extent of its wattage or power, so knowledge of truth dispels ignorance only as far as it penetrates.

The Truth That Frees

At this point I wish to examine the implications of the statement of Jesus to certain Jews, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). I once equated the word truth here with the words spoken by Jesus. Now I am not so certain of that position. I am inclined to think that *the truth* which frees is the Son of God, and it is not the accumulation of facts about him but the experience of an

intimate sharing relationship with him that brings freedom. Jesus is the truth who sets men free, and his word is intended to bring us to this experiential relationship.

Actually, the encounter which led to this statement began in the temple treasury when Jesus informed them that he was the light of life and that those who followed him would walk in light rather than in darkness. The Jews countered with the legalistic objection that his claims were valueless because they represented only his opinion about himself. Jesus responded that their judgment was on a purely human basis. He cited their law which validated testimony at the mouth of two or three witnesses and pointed out that the Father concurred in his testimony.

The exchange led him to say, “If you believe not that I Am (the I Am) you will die in your sins.” Because they could not grasp what he was saying about his relationship to the Father, Jesus declared, “When you have lifted up the Son of man, you will know that I Am (the I Am) and that I do nothing of myself, but I speak only the things which the Father hath taught me.” Upon hearing this, some of the Jews overcame their skepticism and believed in him.

It was to these that Jesus made the statement we are examining. Discipleship consists not of merely hearing a man once and mentally assenting to what he has said. It involves a consistent willingness to hear and to implement his teaching, conforming the life unto the message. Disciples indeed are the committed ones, those who continue in the word. But the purpose of the testimony is to lead one to Christ as the Truth and the Life. Life does not come from knowing scripture but from knowing Jesus.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). “This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11, 12). “You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me, and you will not come unto me that you might have life” (John 5:39).

In the same way it is Jesus who makes us free. We are exhorted to “stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free” (Gal. 5:1). In the very context in which Jesus says we will know the truth and it will make us free, he explains his statement in these words, “If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” The purpose of the written word is to guide us to the Living Word, and inform us how to walk in love as he loved us. Jesus is the great liberator. He sets the captive free. He is the truth who makes it possible for me to share in that liberty which belongs unto the sons of God.

It is very essential that we distinguish between the truth which saves and truths related to our salvation. All truths are equally true but all truths are not equally important. When one commits himself to Jesus as the truth, he thereupon pledges his allegiance to all truth as he learns or discovers it. If he loves Jesus he loves him who is the truth, and he will love truth for truth’s sake, because of the very nature of the one to whom he belongs.

But it is not necessary for one to know all of the truths contained in God’s revelation to be saved, else no one would ever be saved. When one is in Christ it is not so much how many truths he

knows at a given time that counts, but rather his attitude toward truth all of the time. We are saved by the truth of the gospel, and the spirit of the gospel is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. There will never come a time that we will not be learners or disciples, but if we knew all truth at a precise moment, we would cease to be seekers after truth. One is not a disciple because of what he knows but because of who he follows.

So long as we continue to hide behind the dishonest facade that men are saved because of how much of the Bible they correctly understand we are going to be frustrated and divisive. An intellectual power structure will develop which will hand down to the uninformed and illiterate masses what they must subscribe to in order to be saved, and these written and unwritten creeds will be parroted by intolerant partisans who cannot explain them without calling in the clerical representatives of the local headquarters.

We will automatically damn millions of unfortunate souls who were born in areas of the globe where formal education was denied them, or where circumstances in life made it impossible for them to receive schooling. They will be forced to trust in the wisdom of men and not in the grace of God for salvation. God has made salvation contingent upon believing the report of a herald that he entered the world in the form of a Son and took the burden of my guilt to a cross where his blood atoned for my transgressions. I am saved by hearing, believing and responding to news. If my salvation hinges upon understanding, interpreting and assimilating a code of doctrinal and abstract truths, I can never know that I am saved.

Not only will I be doomed to go through my earthly life span always doubting whether I have learned enough to make a passing grade on my final examination, but I will develop a kind of Pharisaical arrogance which will make me draw back from all who have not reasoned out the same truths which I have discovered, or who have found truths I do not regard as such. Thus, I will make the faction composed of myself and my henchmen the dispenser of grace rather than the recipient of it, and conclude that no one can be in the good grace of God who is not in the good graces of the party.

I reject unequivocally this whole sectarian approach to the mercy of God. A knowledge of truths related to both nature and revelation is to be eagerly desired and fervently pursued. But neither in the natural or spiritual domain is life dependent upon how much one knows about abstract truths, or the nature of the domain in which he lives, moves and has his being. Some very ignorant people may survive in the world which is not very gracious, and some very ignorant people may abide in the family of the Father who is very gracious.

Knowledge is better than ignorance, but lack of knowledge is not a sin unless it results from a deliberate closing of one's eyes. There is a great deal of difference between blindness which one cannot help and which he strives to overcome, and the deliberate blindfolding of the eyes by one who prefers not to see. There are two kinds of ignorance – voluntary and involuntary – but only the first is sin, and it is sin because man is a responsible being, and by deliberately remaining ignorant *chooses* to fall below his potential.

We must make a distinction between transgression, disobedience, and error in thought or judgment. Only an infinite mind is capable of perfect knowledge. For those who are fallible the

only possibility is to eliminate areas of error by a maturing process which is slow and often even painful. If perfection in knowledge is a requisite of fellowship with God there is no room for compassion and divine mercy is a cruel hoax. The great question must always be, not what think ye of this, or that – the millennium, the perseverance of the saints, or pacifism – but what think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?

It is more than slightly dishonest to urge men and women to choose Jesus, if there are a lot of hidden mental inclinations of our own which they must also choose, or be cast out of our synagogues as an indication to God that we are faithfully separating the goats from the sheep and saving him the trouble later on. The very least we can do is to print a copy of our policy and list all of the requirements, exemptions and stipulations, and hand it to those who come forward and urge them to read it and study it and consult with their lawyer before signing up by baptism.

It is a little bit diabolic to baptize people into Christ on the basis of one great proposition and then throw them out because of the fine print in our human creeds. We should meet them at the water's edge and see if they can pronounce our shibboleth, and if they cannot we should slay them as aliens lest we be guilty of murdering God's children later on. Only God can lay the axe at the root because only God knows the secrets of the heart. Any other would-be executioners are self-appointed and generally a little careless in their sideswiping. Fortunately they usually cut off their own foot while aiming at another's head, and go limping through life as an object of pity to those who prefer shaking hands than swinging fists.

Truth Is Universal

The truth of God is a body of revelation composed of many members as is the physical body. Not all of these are essential to being. Some are essential to well-being. The selection of any of these and its elevation out of proportion to the rest is not a sign of faithfulness to God or truth, but an indication of a diseased heart. All truths are important only as they relate to all other truths and undue emphasis of one does not represent clear rationalization but warped thinking.

When such a truth becomes a standard around which a tribal encampment is formed, or a totem around which a faction engages in a war dance, it is made the basis of sectarianism, which is a work of the flesh. No truth becomes less true because of factional emphasis and this creates two dangers. First, the party which selects a truth as a rallying-point always neglects other truths in an avid and fanatical defense of its *beau ideal*, while those in other parties frequently deny that truth in order to destroy the rival faction. God has raised up an ensign around which Jew and Greek must rally. It is not a truth or a proposition, but the truth embodied in a person. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:10).

Our tribal encampments, with each tribe around its own standard, separated from the holy place by a royal guard of the priestly caste, belongs to the legalistic age which originated on Sinai. It has no relevance to the covenant made at Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with its myriads of angels. It is indicative of the sad fact that God's people have overlooked the significance of the unifying power of the blood of Jesus. They are living B. C. lives in an A. D. world. They are not really one loaf and one body!

It is ridiculous to give the name of a mere man to a truth uncovered by sincere study, and to build around the man and his discovery a system which results in a distinctive “ism.” Martin Luther, as a reformer, did a great service to humanity, when he dug beneath the rubbish of centuries and found and polished the lamp of “justification by faith” and lighted it again. But justification by faith and its concomitant peace with God, was not a truth of Martin Luther but of God.

When a party was built around the reformer and his voluminous writings, and it was mistakenly called “the Lutheran *Church*” that party was dedicated from that time forward to promulgating Lutheranism. As a humble disciple of Jesus I acknowledge every truth (and there are many) in Lutheranism. But I acknowledge none of these as Lutheran truths, for there is no such thing. Truth is the beneficent gift of a God who is love to all of his creatures, even as is the atmosphere we breathe.

Men may purify the air even as they may pollute it, but they cannot create it, and it is no more their atmosphere after they purify it than it was previously the atmosphere of those who polluted it. I hail with appreciation every scientist who purges the air of pollutants and takes us another step back toward its original purity, but I do not breathe it as his air, for it belongs to all of God’s creation, even to those who do not recognize its source.

I appreciate more than I can express the efforts of John and Charles Wesley, John Calvin, George Fox, Roger Williams, and Pope John XXIII. I cheerfully give my approbation to any truth which they enunciated. But I am not a Wesleyan or a Calvinist. I am catholic in faith but I do not identify with “the Catholic faith.” I am literally a baptist, and have demonstrated it in thousands of instances but I am not a communicant of the Baptist Church. I could not take the truth about baptism and build a sect around it. I am a friend of Christ but I am not in the “Society of Friends.” I would never take a relationship, even of an amiable nature, and build a sect around it.

By the same token, I am not identified with a “Christian Church” party. I am fully aware that the disciples of our Lord were first labeled as Christians at Antioch in Syria, and I am thoroughly familiar with all of the arguments pro or con, relating to whether this designation was divinely bestowed or used in derision by the pagan society. I have no real feelings about its origin, but like the apostate Agrippa or the apostle Peter, I accept it as an adequate term to identify the followers of the Messiah. However, I do not forget that many who followed him suffered and died for their allegiance before anyone knew they were Christians. I would never take a name indicating a relationship and build an exclusivistic party around it. It is a truth that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, but it is not true that one cannot be a disciple of Jesus unless he acknowledges and adopts the appellation of Christian.

I am not identified with an exclusive party designated in the census records as “Church of Christ.” Once I was a “Church of Christ Christian,” just as at an earlier date I was a Lutheran. I was as honest in one as in the other. I knew some truths in the first relationship and many more truths in the second. But I did not quit studying God’s previous revelation, and the same Spirit which helped me see the sectarian and exclusive spirit of Lutheranism helped me to see the sectarian and exclusive spirit of Church of Christism.

I am a Christian and I am in the community of saints created by the blood of my precious Savior. I acknowledge readily and freely every truth which my beloved brethren have discovered, insofar as it commends itself to me as truth. I cheerfully commend them in what I can conscientiously endorse or sanction, and in what I cannot approve I commend them not. But I am a free man in Christ Jesus. My allegiance is to the Lord and not to any institution. I am thus at liberty to accept all truth without at the same time endorsing a system which may include some error.

This leads to another very valid conclusion. I am also free to recognize and acknowledge every child of God as my brother and to treat him as such. Whether such a child of God is in the Church of Christ, the Christian Church, the Baptist Church, the Church of God, or any other party, he is my brother because he is God's child. I do not receive one *because* he is a Baptist but because he is a child of God. If I received him because he was a Baptist this would preclude the acceptance of all who were not Baptists and would make me a sectarian.

One becomes a child of God by the adoption of God. He becomes a Baptist by his adoption of the Baptist creed, just as another becomes a Methodist by his adoption of the Methodist creed. One is by the election of God, the other by the selection of man. So I do not receive Baptists, Methodists, or Presbyterians, for these terms are strangers to the revelation of heaven. I receive those who are the children of God, and if they happen to be among these, I still receive them.

I am fully aware of the fact that because I refuse to leave the brethren whom I love and with whom I have been more closely associated I will be accused of continuing as a sectarian. But such an accusation overlooks one thing. One can be in a sect without being a sectarian, just as one can be in Russia without being a Russian, or in America without being an American.

Sectarianism is not a location but an attitude. It is not who you are with but who and what you are for. It is a spirit, a motivating principle, a dominating influence. The very word means a "party spirit." It is one thing to be associated with a group of saints, but a wholly different thing to possess a party spirit. Through the Spirit of God I have been able to crucify the flesh and its works. I am able now, without qualm or fear, to move among all who love God and share with them my feeble insights. I praise His name for making it possible for me to serve others in love. What a thrill, what joy to know that I am his, and he is mine! And thousands of wonderful brethren are now being delivered from the sectarian spirit to joy and rejoice in Christ Jesus alone. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in my eyes!

As I view it, there is only one community of saints, or church, on earth. All who are in Christ are in it. He is the head of the body, and we are individually members of it. I am not joined to him because I am joined to others, but I am joined to others because they are joined to him. Our unity is in Christ and through him. It is not upon a horizontal but upon a vertical plane. If a brother is joined to Christ I cannot separate from him without separating from Christ. If I remain in Christ, I must receive all whom he receives.

I do not establish the relationship with Jesus by identification with a party, but by personal faith and obedience. And everyone else upon earth who believes and obeys is added to the one body, and is indwelt by the one Spirit. To deny the fraternity with God's children is not a reflection

against them but against myself and God, who is their father. To refuse to recognize his children does not destroy fraternity but derides paternity!

It is not my intention to rally a following around myself or any of my concepts. To do so would be to form another party. A non-partisan party is an anomaly and would be as sinful as any other party. Let men accept truth where they are. Let them respond to it, obey its demands, share it, and allow its power to be felt. Let it work from within every party to leaven it with the love of God, to erode away the party spirit, to destroy the factional attitude.

I hold myself ready to accept every truth that I learn. I will not fear what men will do unto me. I am free from all men even while I am the servant of all. I will stand or fall to but one master. I will allow all others to be free under God. If a brother sincerely feels that he can better serve our loving Father in another segment of believers, he will go with my feeble blessing. He will be no less my brother while he is there and no more so if he returns to labor by my side.

The *way* for me is Jesus! The *truth* for me is Jesus! The *life* for me is Jesus! I want to walk in that way. I want to share in that truth. I want to love and live in that life. I shall rejoice in whatever may be his lot for me. “If I must boast, I will boast of things that show how weak I am. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus – blessed be his name forever – knows that I am not lying” (2 Cor. 11:30, 31).

I am grateful that my unprofitable life has been spared to this day. I am thrilled that the Spirit has overflowed my heart, flooding it with the love of God. I am joyful because I have come to know and experience the truth, and he has made me free. Praise the living God, I’m free at last. It is a genuine thrill to be here as an argonaut of the spirit, and to look forward to that transcendent freedom when this mortal will put on immortality and this corruption will put on incorruption, and death will be swallowed up in victory. “O glorious victory, that overcomes the world!”