

Espousal Newsletters

By Jim Golden — Article One - FREEDOM!

"Villains who twirl their mustaches are easy to spot but those who clothe themselves in good deeds are well camouflaged." My mind began to wander as I listened to the captain of NCC 1701D. He had just communicated a greater truth to his security officer, Warf, than he realized. The basic plot was the freedom or bondage that can be brought upon a society through the philosophy of that society. Poor Simon Tarsus (the medical assistant) was being persecuted and prosecuted for treason against the Federation because of his contact with a confessed spy. The fact that he hid the truth of his Romulan paternal grandfather on his entrance exam only fueled the fire his assailants sought to feed. At first glance everything being done seemed like the right thing to do. However, like so many well meaning endeavors, this one quickly turned into a *witch hunt* much to the mortification of our favorite Klingon. Yet Warf's great redeeming factor was his willingness to admit his wrong, and in humility, stop his participation.

It is every Christian's privilege to protect and preserve the faith that OUR loving God and Savior died to give us. Yet, I fear in doing so many have turned this wonderful responsibility into a modern inquisition, leaving many to burn at the stake. Church history is one endless succession of persecution. Yet the uninformed reader may be surprised to know that there has been more persecution of the Church by the Church, than by the unbeliever. The fact that we have so many branches and denominations is the direct result of the Persecution of the faithful by *the faithful*.

Our price for freedom is vigilance. We must be ever watchful and faithful to expose those who pervert the gospel and the freedom the shed blood of Jesus Christ purchased for us. Unfortunately, as history has shown, the ones being persecuted were usually the true defenders of the faith! A student of Christian history could easily become troubled by the atrocities wrought in the name of Christ and righteousness. Some of the scars of division on the body of our Lord Jesus today have been placed there by similar *well Meaning* people.

Those who draw their security from the status quo, or constantly speak of our Christian responsibilities to one another and God, should be the subject of our scrutiny. They often do so in order to see their vision of the Kingdom fulfilled, and may know little of or have forgotten, the freedom Christ's salvation bestows upon us. Still, many others call us to performance because they have not yet dealt with the guilt and pain that motivate them at the core of their being. For recipients of Christ's holy and blameless life, responsibility is better defined as *responsibility*. All we need to do to be responsible children of God is respond to His voice when He speaks.

The words that come from our heavenly Father's mouth are certain to accomplish what they proclaim. Whether they are past tense, as promises in Scripture, or present tense, as words impressed upon our heart by his Spirit, they are not bound by time, but are living and active. Christ said the words that he spoke were spirit and life. God's written or spoken words are not to be compared to the hollow sounds of air passing across the vocal chords of a

compared to the hollow sounds of air passing across the vocal chords of a fallen race!

His love for us compelled him to give himself over to the power of death. Yet his death wasn't to merely gain for us a form of godliness or positional righteousness. His death, on our behalf, gained for him the joyous right to become one with us, and to transform each individual believer into his very image, in his time and in his way. After his resurrection and ascension, he began to do just that by pouring out his Spirit on cowards and betrayers. Those who, just weeks before, had denied him became his champions and turned the known world upside down.

How ironic that the very next verse following our opening Scripture is 2 Cor 3:18, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." While the freedom his Spirit brings is the key to transformation, whose glory we are reflecting will become the true canon. The greatest way to preserve the faith is to become just like its author not a *mere* follower. Yet the where-with-all does not lie within the realm of human ability or effort. The ability to accomplish this mysterious transformation, Christ will share with no one. What hero would give his life for a fair maiden just so the villain could seduce her after his demise? Jesus never intended for anyone else to care for us, or teach us his ways, or cherish us in the intimate fashion that he wants to.

Our endeavors to make every child of God into what God claims they should be, often is not the result of his leading. More often it is the result of well meaning human desires or ecclesiastical intimidation. Andrew Murray wrote,

"Is it possible for God to do what he promised ? " One part of the promise we believe--the complete and perfect pardon of sin. Why should we not believe the other part--the law written on the heart and the direct divine fellowship and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

This desire to change each other may actually be the Spirit's life within us, but whose role it is to actually bring about that change cannot be confused or usurped. The reason I chose to address this subject in our first issue is because this unbelief mingled with our insecurity has become one of the main contributing factors to the scars of division being placed upon Jesus' body in our generation.

When we learn to walk the path of trust, in the faithfulness of God, we will walk on the pathway of power and freedom. Paul told us to follow him as he followed Christ. This kind of leadership is the only kind of leadership recognized in heaven.

The petty and pitiful titles that men bestow upon themselves mean little to the angels or God. Those who lead by example, those who follow hard after their heavenly lover, are the true leaders in heaven's eyes. It is their example alone that will lead us through the Portals of change and bring the healing oil of unity to the wounds of division and shame inflicted upon the Church today.

Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.