

Cutting Off the Cross

We heard of a dear old brother, who for many years took his stand, opposing the worldliness and drift in his church and community. His family insisted that things had changed and all was so different now that he should give in and go along with the trends. His wife wanted to wear pant suits and cut her hair like the popular religious professors around her. The children tried to talk him into letting them install a television in the home.

He was told that he and his wife should put on rings now in their old age to prove that they were married. His girls wanted to wear short skirts, cut their hair, wear jewelry, and his boys wanted long hair. They all declared that they loved the Lord as much as he did, and that the popular was not so reproachful. He was troubled in his mind and wondered just what to do. It seemed there was no one who encouraged him to keep contending for the old paths.

Then one night, he dreamed that he was carrying his cross. The cross was cumbersome, heavy, and painful to his back. In his dream, his family sympathized with him and suggested that he saw off a little of the cross. So he cut off part of the heavy cross. He then found that his cross was less painful and much easier to bear. It appeared less obnoxious to the family and friends.

Traveling on in his dream, he came at last to a chasm deep and wide. Jagged rocks jutted from its sides and murky waters dashed and roared below. He realized this was the River of Death. To cross it safely meant a landing on the sunny banks of sweet deliverance. To fail meant to be carried down to the eternal regions of dark damnation.

His heart trembled as he contemplated the treacherous crossing. How could he make it? Then a voice seemed to say, "The cross. Use the cross that you carry." He placed one end of his cross on the jutting rocks at his feet, then let it fall in an effort to span the gulf. He started to walk across, but, alas, his cross was so short that it slipped off the edge on the far side, plunging him into the dark waters as he screamed in despair, "If only I had not shortened my cross!"

Awaking from his dream, he fell upon his knees and promised God that he would never compromise or let down, even if he must go all alone.