

THE CRUCIFIED LIFE

By Ivan Q. Spencer, Founder & President
Elim Bible Institute, Elim, New York

In these days of testing, the message of the burnt offering comes home to us in a very real way. First of all, it speaks to us of Jesus, who was wholly offered up to the will of God as a voluntary offering to make atonement for the sins of the people. It was to be an offering without blemish and by fire. The fire speaks of the suffering of the cross which He endured to atone for the sins of the people. His was a suffering that was entirely voluntary. He laid down His life for us. Praise His precious name.

As the burnt offering is typical of Jesus; so it also speaks to us of those that follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth and who take the way of sacrifice and crucifixion that they may be to His honor, praise, and glory. In order for the bride to share His throne, she must know the path of absolute surrender to His sweet will and an abandonment or yieldedness to Him in all things, that she may be conformed to His image and ways.

The Hebrew word from whence we get the word “burnt offering” means, “that which goes up.” It was the surrender of the complete sacrifice coming up into the nostrils of God which was a sweet savor unto Him. We are more occupied with that which comes down. We are continually looking for a blessing to satisfy us, when our choicest thought should be that He would be satisfied with us. We often lift our hands and open them: the position they are in shows whether there springs from our hearts a yieldedness to Him and worship or whether we are expecting Him to drop something into them. If we would only joyfully allow Him to put us through the fire, and in the midst of it praise Him, it would be a sweet odor unto Him.

Notice that this is a voluntary offering. It speaks of those who put their confidence and trust in Him: surrendering entirely our will to Him in all things. God never compels us to go against our wills, but He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

The sacrifice was first flayed or skinned. Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, was naked and open before the world. He had nothing that He withheld from humanity, if they would only receive it. His nature was practically open. So it is with us: we can have nothing hidden or covered, but we must be open before Him. The carcass was then cut in pieces and placed upon the fire. In all of the other offerings, parts were saved for the priests and Levites, but not so in the burnt offering: all must go up in the fire; nothing saved. So all our being must undergo real crucifixion. Jesus said, "If a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit," and again, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." The general idea of self-denial is to deny yourself of something that you like, but self-denial is to deny self. This can only be done by the Spirit's working in us real crucifixion.

Some of these parts of the carcass are mentioned. The head especially must be crucified. How much our heads get in the way of the Spirit of God. Our fleshly reasoning, imagining, and mental training run on in a stream of natural life which is contrary to the stream of life in the Spirit, thus hindering God in so many ways. If the Spirit of God has His way in our minds, there will be a casting down of our imaginations, reasonings, and everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God: bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

The fat is also mentioned. This speaks to us of that which is sweet and naturally satisfying in our natures and make-up. Some people are naturally very sweet and congenial, and many are cultivated to be such; but as the Lord has His way in us and puts us in tests and trials, we find that this is only a camouflage. We are often exposed as to what we really are and those about us see and know our actual state.

The inwards and the legs are especially mentioned with the thought that they were to be washed first with pure water. God must first deal in a special way with our inner affections, desires, motives, etc. There is a washing in water by the Word which cleanses us. To be delivered from that in our inner life which only God can see, we must undergo the fire. How the human heart casts its affections on human beings and things which are perfectly legitimate; but often as a result, others have first place and Jesus second, or possibly He is crowded out entirely, and many times we are not conscious of what our difficulty is. What intense sufferings and separations God's people often have to be carried through in order to be brought into the place where Jesus completely fills their vision and satisfies. How many of God's people have started out to follow Him in a splendid way; then their hearts have opened up to someone or something in a natural way and, as a result, the devil has tripped them up and they have lost their way. Many young people through human attachments of heart affection miss their call and spend a life of waywardness and separation from God's first will and choice.

*“When fingers cling,
They sorrow bring
Into the loving heart.
Crown Jesus king
In every thing:
From all thy idols part.”*

Sometimes we think that our motives are pure and our desires spring from the Lord, but remember the human heart is deceptive and it is possible that they spring partly, at least, from our own human volitions, and as a result there is a mixture in our workings and ways, and even in our service for Him.

*“So wash thou me, without, within,
And purge with fire if that must be.
No matter how, if only sin
Die our in me, die out in me.”*

The legs speak of our daily walk with the Lord. These, too, are washed with water. God must have a people that walk before each other in submission and before Him in holiness. If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. How much reproach is brought to bear upon the cause of Christ, because of a waywardness of God's people. But the true Bride of Christ will really come to walk in His ways and completely follow His steps. Let us pray these days, Lord, search me and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. The Lord loveth a broken and a contrite heart.