

The Cross and the Scandal

by G.W. North

The cross is a scandal that humbles everyone, but it is also a matter of salvation and a live issue that requires every person to pass their personal judgment upon what happened.

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23, John 3:36, Acts 4:12, Romans 14:12, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Galatians 5:11, Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 10:26-27, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Accountability to God", "The Scandal of the Cross"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the scandalous nature of the cross, highlighting its offense to those who view it through a worldly lens. He explains that the cross, as a symbol of curse and humiliation, challenges human pride and morality, making it a stumbling block for many. North asserts that the crucifixion of Christ reveals humanity's deep-seated rebellion against God and underscores the necessity of humility for salvation. He warns that every individual is accountable for their response to the cross, as it represents a decisive moment in history that demands personal judgment. Ultimately, the message of the cross is a contemporary issue that requires all to confront their relationship with God and the implications of Christ's sacrifice.

Transcript

Paul's fourth reference to the cross is to its unacceptability; he speaks of 'the offence of the cross'. He is really continuing his theme, for this is closely related to his previous reference to it. Precisely because the cross was in itself the symbol of curse and execration it was a terrible offence to everybody. There is no doubt that to the outsider and the merely religious believer the emphasis upon the true nature and purposes of God by the cross is the most offensive thing about the gospel. To the normal mind the cross is an affront to decency, it is immoral, undignified, distasteful, illogical, inhumane; how therefore could it be thought acceptable that God should make it central to all salvation? The idea is scandalous; that is exactly the word Paul uses -- 'the scandal of the cross'; he is not trying to hide it, he is deliberately forcing us to face the shame of the gospel. He is setting out methodically to destroy pride -- no proud person can be a child of God. Christ humbled Himself to the cross and so must everybody else who wants to be a son with Him. The cross will humiliate everyone but the humble. Refusal or inability to bear the scandal of the cross has been the downfall of many. The crucifixion of Christ is mankind's greatest condemnation, the crime of the ages, proving man's unqualified hatred of God; it reveals man's insanity and outlawry. To be bloodthirsty for His death and that particular form of it would have been stupid and barbarous even if He had only been a man, but because He was the Man it was an infamy and because He was God it was a

blasphemy. Worse, far worse than this, it was indescribably sinful and should a man in any way unrepentantly defend and justify it he is unforgivable.

The seriousness of the gospel for all of us lies just here, because Jesus was raised from the dead. His crucifixion is not only a matter of history; it is also a contemporary issue. The cross and the crime are not a dead issue; it is a live subject to this day. The prime purpose of the gospel is to focus attention upon this. Every man who has heard the gospel is in some degree drawn to the cross and the crucified One. From that moment he is obligated by God to pass his personal judgement upon what happened those years ago; God has furnished us with the documents containing all the evidence we need to have. Christ was the Man and the God and each man's future shall stand upon his own evaluation and judgement of Him. What was done by the Jews through the Romans at the dividing of time was superseded entirely by what God did by the same act for us all -- it was the decisive hour for all mankind. All must be awakened to their accountability to God for what He did then.

Moral complicity in the Jews' and Romans' crime and criminal culpability are not imputed to us; we do not have to answer for what they did.. No individual is held responsible for what another individual does in his own age or in any past age or shall do in the future. The presentation of the crucifixion to modern man is a fait accompli by God though; all men are as inescapably shut up to it as were the Jews in their day and Israel to the law before that. Those who then rebelled against Moses' law were cut off without mercy; likewise they who now purposely and unrepentantly rebel against Christ's cross and law shall as irremediably as they be cut off without mercy. This is unpleasant truth terrible to contemplate, nevertheless it is predetermined by God; having fixed it, He has made or will yet make all men face up to it, either in this age or in an age to come.

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