

KNOWING AFTER THE FLESH.

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away." 2 Cor. 5:16.

Would that all God's children could look at this matter as Bro. Paul here expresses it: Once you and I were alive after the flesh. Then we knew and criticised each other from a fleshly standpoint – "after the flesh," but now the conditions are changed, we have become New Creatures in Christ. This new creation, new will, new mind, is still connected with the fleshly body and is thereby in continual danger of being overruled and controlled by the fleshly desires, hence there is a continual warfare between the old and the new natures, and the work of the new is, to conquer and put to death the old nature – to "crucify the flesh."

It will at best be a slow and toilsome work to root up and destroy every vestige of our former selves, but from the time the work begins we should "reckon ourselves dead indeed...but alive toward God." And not only so but we should reckon each other in Christ as dead to the flesh. If we were to carry this out fully we should "henceforth know no man (in Christ) after the flesh," and how much sympathy and love this would develop one toward another. If I should see you, a brother in Christ, "overtaken in a fault," would I harshly condemn you? No; I should say to myself: Ah, that dear brother's enemy – his old nature – has overcome him, and instead of harsh condemnation, I would seek to restore such an one, remembering that it is not my brother of the new creation which has thus sinned, but that his enemy, the flesh, has for the time being, gained the victory over him. And I should seek to

"restore such an one," in loving sympathy, remembering myself lest "I also be tempted" and overcome of my enemy – my fleshly nature.

Would that we thus knew each other after the new nature and not after the flesh. It is thus our Father recognizes us – as new creatures in Christ and looks upon us as pure and spotless, covered by Christ's righteousness, "not imputing our iniquities unto **[R216 : page 7]** us." He does not know us after the flesh, and oh how blessed it is for us that he does not. Let us thus look at each other and it will help us to "bear one another's burdens." And "ye that are strong (spiritually) can bear the infirmities of the weak." You can remember that your brother's spiritual nature may be weaker than yours and that he may have a stronger enemy to fight in the person of his fleshly nature than you have.

Let us recognize each other in all things as "members of the body of Christ," sons of God without rebuke, for "He that dwelleth in God sinneth not for his seed remaineth in him." 1 John 3:9. The only thing that would be counted as sin in such a one would be willful sin, and if your will consents to a sin, be sure you have not the mind of Christ and that you are not in him; you are yet in your sins. Remember then that, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," and let us so regard one another.
