



¹ Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ And did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Cor 10:1-4)

This past Sunday I lingered on the lawn of my second church in Ozark, Alabama to chat with the older members. This church is very traditional and old fashioned. Most of the members exceed the age of 65 years. The church itself is almost two hundred years old. It was organized by Scottish people who immigrated there in the 1830's from Argura, Scotland, and formed this rural community of Arguta.

As I surveyed the lush, green Alabama surroundings, I noticed a huge tree near the edge of the churchyard which seemed to be ancient. When I remarked on the antiquity of the tree, an elderly lady told me this interesting story about it:

When this lady was a small girl (about 60 years ago) horse-drawn conveyances were still quite common in the rural South. In those days, the lady told me, there was an older man who rode his mule-drawn surrency to church every Sunday. He would tie the mule to the old tree - which seemed to the woman to have been of similar appearance even those many years ago.

After several years of driving to church and tying the mule to the tree, the old man Failed to attend services one Sunday. The old mule, however, did not forget. He appeared at church at the appointed time and went to his accustomed place of peace and safety under that massive old tree. After service, when the men of the church attempted to take hold of the mule and deliver him home, he would not hear of it. The mule went berserk and would not leave this familiar place.

Every time the attempt was made to move the mule, he would wildly resist so that no one dared go near him. The mule insisted, after all those years of standing under the tree, in remaining this last time at this shade of peace and comfort. Finally, in desperation, a rifle was brought and the mule was killed.

I realize this is a sad story to tell. I admire the character of that old mule. It is sad because of the mule's attachment to the one thing in his life that never changed and, in the last moments of his life, he refused to move from it. But this story is also inspiring

because we are reminded that there are anchors in our lives which never change, which remain steady and unyielding to the demands of a fickle world.

We, from our youth, have learned of the ancient Rock which does not move. We have been taught to build our lives upon It and, when the rains and floods descend, our building thereon will remain fixed and weather the storms of life. That Rock of Ages followed after the Children of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness. And that Rock and Fortress abides with us daily as we are challenged by change and uncertainty. Yet, that Rock remains steady, strong and unchangeable in the face of the storm.

Perhaps we can learn from the sad story of the mule - some things are worth the dying rather than to move from them. The Holy Scriptures, the Love of God, the Love of family and Country are all things worthy of our immovable devotion. During these uncertain times of spiritual and social decadence, shall we be blown about by every wind of doctrine? or shall we stand on that ancient Rock and Fortress which is Christ?

~ by *Jerry Ogles*

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