

# HE THAT IS SPIRITUAL

by

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## CHAPTER SIX

### "WALK IN THE SPIRIT"

#### THE THIRD CONDITION OF TRUE SPIRITUALITY

TRUE spirituality also depends upon a positive attitude of reliance upon the presence and power of the indwelling Spirit. The two previously mentioned conditions have been negative in character. They represent things the believer, to be spiritual, must not do.

- He must not grieve the Spirit by retaining unconfessed any known sin.
- He must not quench the Spirit by saying "no" to GOD.

The third, and last, condition is positive in character. It is something the believer, to be spiritual, must do.

#### WHAT IS MEANT BY "WALK IN THE SPIRIT"?

There are several passages of Scripture in which this vital issue appears; but it is, perhaps most directly stated in Galatians 5:16: "**This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**"

The child of GOD has no power within himself whereby he can enter, promote, or maintain a "**walk in the Spirit.**" This Scripture, when rightly understood, does not make the impossible demand upon a Christian that he, in his own strength, is to accomplish a "**walk in the Spirit.**" It is rather revealed that the Spirit will do the walking in the Christian. The human responsibility is that of a whole dependence upon the Spirit. Walking by means of the Spirit is simply walking by a definite reliance upon the ability and power of the One who indwells.

The same truth, though differently presented, is stated in verse 18: "**But if ye be led of the**

## **Spirit, ye are not under the law."**

In no sense does the believer lead, or direct, the Spirit. He can, however, be dependent on the Spirit, and thus is his exact responsibility as revealed in this passage.

The third condition of true spirituality is, then, an unbroken reliance upon the Spirit to do what He has come to do and what He alone can do.

Such is the Father's provision that sin may be prevented in the life of His child. The results of the outworking of this divine provision are beyond our powers of estimation: "**Ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**"

It is often the "**beginning of days**" in a Christian's life when he really believes and heeds the Word of GOD enough to be made aware of his own limitations, and seriously considers the exact revelation as to what he of himself can or cannot do, and what the Spirit who indwells him has come to do. We seldom attempt to do the work we have engaged another to do.

We naturally rely on the person we have engaged to do it.

- Have we ever learned to depend on the Spirit for anything?
- Are we intelligently counting on the Spirit to undertake those particular things which, according to the Scriptures, He is appointed to do?
- Do we really believe we are just as helpless as His Word declares us to be?
- Do we really believe He is able and waiting to do every thing we cannot do?
- Having begun in the Spirit, so far as the divine undertaking in salvation is concerned, are we now to be perfected by the flesh?

In meeting the impossible issues of a true Christian life, are we consciously living upon a works-principle, or upon a faith-principle?

The Bible emphatically declares the believer to be upon a faith-principle when he is really within the plan of GOD for his daily life. These uncomplicated teachings are on the pages of GOD's Book and an attentive Christian can hardly avoid them.

The God-honoring quality of life is always the divine objective in the believer's daily life. Its realization is never by a human resolution or struggle or the resources of the flesh: it is by "**fighting the good fight of faith.**" There is a wide difference between "fighting" to do what GOD alone can do, and "fighting" to maintain an attitude of dependence on Him to do what He alone can do.

The child of GOD has an all-engaging responsibility of continuing in an attitude of reliance upon the Spirit. This is the point of his constant attention. This is his divinely appointed task and place of co-operation in the mighty undertakings of GOD.

The locomotive engineer will accomplish little when pushing at his ponderous train. He is not appointed to such a service. His real usefulness will begin when he takes his place at the throttle. The important conflict in the believer's life is to maintain the unbroken attitude of reliance upon

the Spirit. Thus, and only thus, can the Spirit possess and vitalize every human faculty, emotion and choice.

It is in every sense the Christian's own life which is lived and his only consciousness will be that of the use of his own faculties: but all these will be empowered by the Spirit as they otherwise could not be. The empowering work of the Spirit does not set aside the normal functions of the human soul and spirit. He works through unto fulness of power which realizes the blessed will of GOD. If by means of the Spirit ye are walking, ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh, for, "**Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.**"

Rationalism is directly opposed to faith.

There are those who rebel at the teaching that salvation is by faith alone. They rebel either because they do not know, or do not believe, the Word of GOD. There are those, likewise, who rebel at the teaching that an unbroken victory in the believer's daily life is by faith alone, and this, too, is either because they do not know, or do not believe, the Scriptures. The doctrine concerning a divinely produced sanctity of life does not rest upon one or two proof texts. It is one of the great themes, if not the most extensive, theme in the Epistles; for not only is the doctrine taught at length, but every injunction to the Christian is based upon the exact principles revealed in the doctrine. It is one of the most vital elements in the age-characterizing provisions in grace.

### **THREE REASONS FOR RELIANCE UPON THE SPIRIT**

The Bible assigns at least three outstanding causes which hinder spirituality in the child of GOD, making necessary implicit and constant reliance upon the indwelling Spirit:

- (1) "**The world**," or the opposite of the heavenly standards;
- (2) "**The flesh**," or that within the Christian which opposes the Spirit by "**lusting**" against the Spirit; and
- (3) "**The devil**," who opposes every plan and purpose of GOD.

These are now to be taken up more at length, but in a different order:

#### **FIRST, THE IMPOSSIBLE HEAVENLY STANDARD OF LIFE IN CONTRAST TO THE STANDARDS OF THE WORLD**

GOD has but one Book and that Book includes all people of every dispensation. In it we find His will and purpose for Israel in the age before the Cross, and His will and purpose for Israel and all the Gentile nations in the age to come. So, also, we find His will and purpose for the heavenly people of the present dispensation.

The children of Israel were redeemed and delivered out of Egypt and He gave to them their rule of life which should govern them in their land. These particular rules were never addressed to any other people than Israel, and these rules addressed to Israel made their appeal to the "**natural man**." They ceased to be in effect, as the required rule of life, after the death of CHRIST (John 1:17; Romans 6:14; II Corinthians 3:1-13; Galatians 5:18).

There is also revealed a rule of life which is to govern Israel when she is regathered and reestablished in her own land under the earth-wide rule of her Messiah King. His reign will be legal in character, or of the character of the law. Its principles are stated and anticipated by the prophets of the Old Testament and are also further revealed by passages in the New Testament.

The Bible also contains a rule of life which applies to the heavenly citizens of the present dispensation, who, though heavenly in position and responsibility, are called upon to live as "**pilgrims and strangers**" in the earth, and as witnesses in the enemy's land. Their governing principles will be found stated in The Acts and the Epistles and portions of the Gospels.

These heavenly standards are not imposed upon the unregenerate world. They have not received the Spirit and therefore have no enablement whereby they might live according to the standards which are committed to the Christian. It is both useless and unreasonable to apply Christian standards to an unregenerate world.

Again, the heavenly standard of life is as much higher in character than Israel's law, as heavenly citizenship is higher than a citizenship in the earth.

Israel's law incorporated many of the eternal principles growing out of the very character of GOD. These principles, as such, do not pass away; but the exact manner of their statement is changed that they may be adapted to the new relationships which the heavenly people sustain to GOD. Thus the believer is "**not under the law**"; though nine commandments of Moses in the Decalogue are carried forward and reappear with a different character and emphasis within the injunctions under grace. Neither is he "**without law**," being inlawed to CHRIST.

There is priceless value in knowing all that GOD has spoken to any people at any time; but the Christian is primarily concerned with the exact purpose and plan of GOD for him. The heavenly citizen will not find the full revelation of the will of GOD for him in any portion of the Scriptures spoken to people of other ages; though he may find much that is in common.

There can be no clear apprehension of GOD's Book apart from this distinction.

In the Scriptures the Christian is addressed as a supernatural man and a superhuman manner of life is placed before him. This is reasonable. Christians are citizens of Heaven from the moment they are saved and it is naturally required of them that they "**walk worthy of their heavenly calling**." From such a consistent life they cannot be excused. They are not made citizens by any manner of life, but being made citizens by the power of GOD, it becomes them to live according to the position that GOD has given them.

The following passages will serve to illustrate the superhuman character of the present rule of life for the child of GOD under grace:

- "**A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another**" (John 13:34);
- "**This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you**" (John 15:12).

The law required love to be to another "**as thyself.**" To love as CHRIST has loved us is infinitely higher, and humanly impossible.

- "**And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God**" (Ephesians 4:30).
- "**And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**" (II Corinthians 10:5).
- "**Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Ephesians 5:20).
- "**That ye should shew forth the praises [virtues] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light**" (I Peter 2:9).
- "**Rejoice evermore, Pray without ceasing**" (I Thessalonians 5:16,17).
- "**I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Though these passages present impossible demands upon the human resource, GOD most evidently expects them to be realized in every believer's daily life. He knows better than we that we could never produce any such quality of life; yet He is not unreasonable in His expectation, since He stands ready to supply all that He demands. The Spirit indwells the believer for this very purpose. Of our own selves, we are not asked even to attempt these standards. The Epistles are full of assurances that the imparted energy of GOD through the Spirit is sufficient for all that GOD has required. "**It is God which worketh [energizes] in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**"

The new rule of life which is placed before the child of GOD under grace is, then, impossible from the human standpoint, and its realization must depend on a definite reliance upon the indwelling Spirit to do the whole will of GOD. A Christian, to be spiritual, must "walk by means of the Spirit."

## **SECOND, THE CHRISTIAN FACES A WORLD-RULING FOE**

The Bible represents Satan as the enemy of the saints of GOD and especially is this seen to be true of the saints of this age.

There is no controversy between Satan and unsaved people; for they are a part of his world-system. They have not been delivered from the powers of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of GOD. Satan is the energizing power in those who are unsaved (Ephesians 2:2), as GOD is the energizing power in those who are saved (Philippians 2:13). Every human being is either under the power of Satan, or under the power of GOD. This is not to say that Christians may not be influenced by Satan and the unsaved not influenced by the Spirit of GOD; but their position is in one domain or the other, and Satan's domain is not in all matters characterized by things that are inherently evil as those things are estimated by the world. Satan's life-purpose is to be "**like the Most High**" (Isaiah 14:14), and he appears "**as an angel of light,**" and his ministers "**as the ministers of righteousness**" (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

His ministers, being ministers of righteousness, preach a gospel of reformation and salvation by

human character, rather than salvation by grace alone, unrelated to any human virtue. Therefore the world, with all its moral standards and culture, is not necessarily free from the power and energizing control of Satan. He would promote forms of religion and human excellence apart from the redemption that is in CHRIST, and the world is evidently energized to undertake that very thing. He has blinded the unsaved; but concerning one thing only: they are blinded by Satan lest the light of the gospel should shine unto them (II Corinthians 4:3, 4).

The enmity of Satan has always been against the Person of GOD alone, and not against humanity.

It is only when we have "**partaken of the divine nature**" that we are possessed with a new and mighty foe. The thrusts of his "**fiery darts**" are aimed at GOD who indwells us. However, the conflict is real and the foe is superhuman.

**"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [strategies] of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and Blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** (Ephesians 6:10-12).

These world-rulers of the darkness of this age, the spiritual powers of wickedness, who are here said to wage a ceaseless conflict against us, cannot be overcome by human strategy or strength. The Bible lends no sanction to foolish suppositions that the devil will flee at the mere resistance of a determined human will.

We are to "**resist the devil,**" but it must be done "**steadfast in the faith,**" and while "**submitting**" ourselves unto GOD (James 4:7; I Peter 5:9).

Satan, being by creation superior to all other creatures cannot be conquered by one of them. Even Michael the archangel, we are told, "**when contending with the devil . . . durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.**" Michael the archangel does not contend with Satan. He must depend on the power of Another; thus acting on a principle of faith, rather than on a principle of works.

Certainly a Christian, with all his limitations, must appeal to the power of GOD in the conflict with this mighty foe, and he is directed to do this: "**Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]**" (Ephesians 6:16). \*

\* A more extended treatment of the Bible teachings on this subject will be found in the author's book "*Satan*."

The believer's conflict with Satan is as fierce and unceasing as that mighty being can make it. Before him we of ourselves are as nothing; but GOD has anticipated our helplessness and provided a perfect victory through the indwelling Spirit: "**Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world**" (I John 4:4).

A Christian, because of the power of the new enemy, must "**walk in** [by means of] **the Spirit**" if he would be spiritual.

### **THIRD, THE ADAMIC NATURE**

Careless Christians are not concerned with the Person and work of the HOLY SPIRIT, or with the exact distinctions which condition true spirituality; but these distinctions and conditions do appeal to those who really desire a life that is well pleasing to GOD. We find that Satan has pitfalls and counterfeit doctrines in the realm of the deepest spiritual realities. The majority of these false teachings are based on a misapprehension of the Bible teaching about sin, especially the sin question as related to the believer.

The Scripture is "**profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect** [full grown], **thoroughly furnished unto all good works**" (II Timothy 3:16, 17); but in the same Epistle we are also urged to "**study**" and "**rightly divide**" the Word of Truth.

It should be noted that two out of four of the values of the Scriptures in the life of the "**man of God**," as recorded in the above passage are "**reproof**" and "**correction**"; yet how few, especially of those who are holding an error, are of a teachable spirit. It seems to be one of the characteristics of all Satanic errors that those who have embraced them seem never inclined honestly to reconsider their ground. They read only their sectarian, or misleading literature and often carefully avoid hearing any corrective teaching from the Word of GOD. This difficulty is greatly increased when their error has led them to assume some unwarranted position regarding a supposed deliverance from sin, or personal attainments in holiness. A "**correction**," or "**reproof**," to such seems to be a suggestion toward "**backsliding**," and no zealously minded person will easily choose such a course.

Much error is thriving along these lines with no other dynamic than human zeal, and the Word of GOD is persistently distorted to maintain human theories. Many of these errors are reprovved and corrected when the fundamental distinction is recognized between the Christian's position in CHRIST and his experience in daily life. Whatever GOD has done for us in CHRIST is perfect and complete; but such perfection should not be confused with the imperfect daily life.

There are five Biblical doctrines which are closely related to the question of sin in the believer which are most commonly misunderstood, and which, if perverted, may be used of the enemy to drive even serious minded believers into most misleading presumption and harmful error.

These doctrines are:

- (1) The fact of the continued presence of the Adamic nature in the believer, which is the present theme;
- (2) The divine cure for the effects of sin in the spiritual life of a Christian, already considered;
- (3) The Bible teaching about perfection;
- (4) The Bible teaching about sanctification; And,
- (5) the Bible teaching about the believer's death in CHRIST.

That there may be a clearer understanding of the present theme, the Bible teaching about perfection and sanctification are first to be considered briefly. The Bible teaching about the believer's death in CHRIST will be taken up at a later and more appropriate point in this discussion.

## THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION

In the Word of GOD, perfection is presented in seven aspects:

(1) *The Old Testament use of the word as applied to persons.*

The word in the Old Testament has the meaning of "**sincere**" and "**upright**."

- Noah was "**perfect**" (Genesis 6:9);
- Job was "**perfect**" (Job. 1:1, 8);
- In avoiding the sins of the nations, Israel might be "**perfect**" (Deuteronomy 18:13);
- The end of the "**perfect**" man was peace (Psalm 37:37);
- So, also, the saints of the Old Testament order will appear in Heaven as "**the spirits of just men made perfect**" (Hebrews 12:23).

The Bible does not teach that these people were sinless.

(2) *Positional perfection in CHRIST.* "**For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified**" (Hebrews 10:14).

This is clearly the perfection of the work of CHRIST for us and must not be related to the Christian's daily life.

(3) *Spiritual maturity and understanding.* "**Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect**" (full grown, I Corinthians 2:6, cf 14:20. See, also, II Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 3:15; II Timothy 3:17).

(4) *Perfection which is progressive.* "**Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made [to be made] perfect by the flesh?**" (Galatians 3:3).

(5) *Perfection in some one particular.*

(a) In the will of GOD: "**That ye stand perfect and complete in all the will of God**" (Colossians 4:12).

(b) In imitating one aspect of the goodness of GOD: "**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect**" (Matthew 5:48).

The context is of the Father's love for His enemies and the injunction is that this aspect of the Father's goodness should be reproduced.

(c) In service: "**Make you perfect in every good work**" (Hebrews 13:21).

(d) In patience: "**But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect [mature] and**

**entire, wanting nothing**" (James 1:4).

(6) *The ultimate perfection of the individual in Heaven.* "**Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ**" (Colossians 1:28, cf. Colossians 1:22; Philippians 3:12; I Peter 5:10; I Thessalonians 3:13).

(7) *The intimate perfection of the corporate body of believers in Heaven.* "**Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**" (Ephesians 4:13. See, also, 5:27; John 17:23; Jude 24; Revelation 14:5).

The word "**perfection**" as found in the New Testament is a translation from either one of two Greek words, one meaning "*mature*" and the other meaning "*adjusted*." And it is obvious that neither of these words etymologically considered has any reference to sinlessness. These facts should be estimated most carefully by any who have attempted the formation of a doctrine on the somewhat misleading use of the English word "**perfect**." At this very point we may possibly discover the Scriptures to be unto us a word of "**reproof**" or "**correction**."

There is a complete deliverance by the Spirit for every child of GOD, but this should not be confused with any use of the word "**perfect**" when the incapacity to sin is implied by the use of that word.

## THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

Again the doctrine must not be made to exceed that which is actually expressed by the Biblical use of the word "**sanctify**." To discover the full scope and meaning of this word it is necessary to include all passages in the Old and New Testament wherein it is used and to add to these as well all passages wherein the words "**saint**" and, "**holy**" are used, since these three words are translations, both from the Hebrew and from the Greek, of the same root word.

The root meaning of "**sanctify**," "**saint**" and "**holy**" is that a person or thing is thereby said to be set apart, or classified; usually as pertaining unto GOD.

Though these words and the truth they express are found throughout the whole Bible, this discussion is concerned only with that aspect of the teaching which applies to the child of GOD under grace. \*

\* This subject is treated more fully in a pamphlet by the author entitled, "Sanctification."

Here we find that believers are the objects of a three-fold sanctification:

*First*, Positional sanctification.

"**But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification**" (I Corinthians 1:30); "**By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**" (Hebrews 10:10). Thus, also, the Apostle addresses all believers as

"**saints**," and in the Scriptures reference is made to "**holy prophets**," "**holy brethren**," "**holy priests**," "**holy women**," "**holy nation**." Such they are by their position in CHRIST. He even addressed the Corinthian believers as "**saints**" and as already "**sanctified**" (I Corinthians 1:2; 6:11); yet this very letter was written to correct those Christians because of terrible sin (I Corinthians 5:1, 2; 6:1, 7, 8). They were "**saints**" and "**sanctified**" in CHRIST, but were far from being such in daily life.

*Second*, Experimental sanctification.

This aspect of the work of GOD for the believer is progressive in some of its aspects, and is quite in contrast to the positional sanctification which is "**once for all**." It is accomplished by the power of GOD through the Spirit and through the Word:

"**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth**" (John 17:17. See, also, II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 5:25,26; I Thessalonians 5:23; II Peter 3:18).

Experimental sanctification is according to various relationships.

(1) *In relation to the believer's yieldedness to GOD.*

By presenting his body a living sacrifice, the child of GOD thereby is set apart unto GOD and so is experimentally sanctified. The presentation may be absolute and thus admit of no progression, or it may be partial and so require a further development. In either case it is experimental sanctification.

(2) *In relation to sin.*

The child of GOD may so comply with every condition for true spirituality as to be experiencing all the provided deliverance and victory from the power of sin, or, on the other hand, he may be experiencing a partial deliverance from the power of sin. In either case he is set apart and is thus experimentally sanctified.

(3) *In relation to Christian growth.*

This aspect of experimental sanctification in every case is progressive. It should in no way be confused with incomplete yieldedness to GOD or incomplete victory over sin. Its meaning is that the knowledge of truth, devotion and experience are naturally subject to development. By virtue of their present development, as Christians, believers experimentally are set apart unto GOD. That development should be advanced with each passing day. And thus, again, the Christian is subject to an experimental sanctification which is progressive.

*Third*, Ultimate sanctification.

Even experimental sanctification will be perfected when the saints are gathered into His presence in glory. "**When he shall appear, we shall be like him**," and "**conformed to the image of his Son**" (John 3:2; Romans 8:29).

The Bible teaching in regard to sanctification, then, is

- (1) that all believers are positionally sanctified in CHRIST "**once for all**" at the moment they are saved. This sanctification is as perfect as He is perfect.
- (2) All believers are being sanctified by the power of GOD through the Word and this sanctification is as perfect as the believer is perfect. So, also,
- (3) all believers will be sanctified and perfected in the glory into the very image of the Son of GOD.

The Bible, therefore, does not teach that any child of GOD is wholly sanctified in daily life before that final consummation of all things.

### **THE DOCTRINE OF THE ADAMIC NATURE**

The third and last reason to be mentioned as to why the believer must consciously rely on the Spirit, as has been stated, is that he still possesses the Adamic nature over which he, of himself, has no sufficient control. The Christian is saved and safe in the grace of GOD; but he cannot command himself into a God-honoring manner of life. For this he must rely upon divine power in order that he may be saved from the power of sin, as he has already relied on the power of GOD to save him from the penalty of sin. Salvation into safety, or sanctity, is all a work of GOD in and for the one who trusts Him.

The fact that the unregenerate possess a fallen nature is generally admitted. The misunderstanding is with regard to the Christian. The Bible teaching is clear, and yet some professing Christians are misled into assuming that they do not any longer possess the tendency to sin.

This question may be discussed both from the experimental and from the Biblical standpoint.

Experimentally, the most saintly of GOD's children have been conscious of the presence and power of a fallen nature. This may be called the normal consciousness of the devout believer. Such a consciousness is not an evidence of immaturity: it is rather the evidence of true humility and clear vision of one's own heart. It does not imply a lack of fellowship with GOD occasioned by a grieving of the HOLY SPIRIT through sin. Who can hate sin more than the one who is aware of its presence and power? And who is in greater danger of its havoc in his spiritual life than the one who in unwarranted presumption has assumed that the disposition to sin has been removed.

The contention that one has no disposition to sin must be based upon a shocking lack of self-knowledge as to the motives and impulses of the heart, or such an assumption is made through failure to comprehend the true character of sin itself.

If an individual can convince himself that sin is something different from anything he ever does, or is inclined to do; beyond anything he ever thinks, feels or undertakes, he can doubtless convince himself that he has not sinned. If, in his own mind, one can modify the character of sin, he can, by that process, relieve himself from the consciousness of sin. There are not a few such people in the world to-day. Truth can not stand when based upon a human experience. It must be

based upon revelation.

Sin is not what some prejudiced, misguided person claims it to be: it is what GOD has revealed it to be.

Sin has been well defined, from a study of the whole testimony of the Word of GOD, to be "any violation of, or want of conformity to, the revealed will of GOD." It is "missing the mark."

But what mark?

Surely the divine standard. Have we done all and only His will with motives as pure as Heaven and in the unchanging faithfulness of the Infinite?

GOD has provided a perfect victory; but we have all often failed in its realization. If possessed with any degree of the knowledge of GOD and self-knowledge, we are aware that we are too often far from sinless in the eyes of GOD. The consciousness of sinfulness at times has been the testimony of the most spiritual believers of all generations as they have been enabled to see the Person of GOD.

- Job, the upright in heart, abhorred himself before GOD.

- Daniel, against whom no sin is recorded, said, "**My comeliness was turned in me into corruption.**"

In considering the Biblical testimony concerning the sins of the Christian two questions may reasonably be asked:

- (1) "From what source does sin proceed in the child of GOD?" and,
- (2) "What is the divine remedy?"

There is abundant answer to these questions in the Word of GOD.

### **I. From what Source does Sin Proceed in a Christian?**

Sin is the fruit of a fallen nature. This has always been so, with the exception of the first sin which resulted in the fall. We sin because of a fallen nature received from Adam, and from countless generations of sinning parents. This is true of the unregenerate: it is equally true of the regenerate.

Yet it is claimed by some that a Christian who is supposed to have been delivered from the sin nature, can still continue sinning as Adam sinned,- from an unfallen nature.

Adam sinned but once from an unfallen nature, and no one else has so sinned from that time until now. Could we now be placed in the same state as our first parents, we would not be able to sin and still maintain that position. The first sin we committed would result in our return to a fallen state. Where would such a person be spiritually after he has sinned, if the experience of Adam is of any value as evidence in the case?

The Bible teaching on the subject of the Christian's sin may be better understood if three important words are defined:

### **"FLESH" (Gr. *sarx*)**

The word, in its general use, refers to the physical body. It however has a moral, or ethical, meaning as well and with this we are concerned.

**"Flesh,"** when used in the Bible with a moral meaning, refers to more than the physical body; it includes in its meaning the whole of the unregenerate person,- spirit, soul and body. It includes the body, but it also includes the human spirit and soul as animating the body.

A physical body is **"flesh"** whether dead or alive. But the moral use of the word implies that it is alive and includes that which makes it alive and that which expresses itself through the physical body.

The life impulses and desires are called **"lusts of the flesh."** **"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"** (Galatians 5:16. See also, Ephesians 2:3; II Peter 2:18; I John 2:16; Romans 13:14).

That the Bible use of the word **"lust"** is not limited to inordinate desires is evidenced by the fact that the HOLY SPIRIT is said to **"lust against the flesh,"** according to the next verse in this context (see, also, James 4:5). The Scriptures are still more explicit concerning the breadth of the meaning of this word.

Reference is made to:

- **"fleshly wisdom"** (II Corinthians 1:12);
- **"fleshly tables of the heart"** (II Corinthians 3:3);
- **"fleshly mind"** (Colossians 2:18, cf Romans 8:6).

The Apostle does not say that either his body or nature are **"fleshly"**; he says, **"I am carnal [fleshly]"** (Romans 7:14), and, **"in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing"** (Romans 7:18). **"Flesh"** is self. The unregenerate self is, within itself, hopelessly evil and condemned; but it is subject to the mighty re-creation and ultimate transformation provided for in the grace and power of GOD.

Into this whole **"natural man"** a new divine nature is imparted when we are saved. Salvation is more than a **"change of heart."** It is more than a transformation of the old: it is a regeneration, or creation, of something wholly new which is possessed in conjunction with the old nature so long as we are in this body.

The presence of two opposing natures (not two personalities) in one individual results in conflict.

**"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other"** (Galatians 5:17).

There is no hint that this divine restraint upon the flesh will ever be unnecessary so long as we are in this body; but there is clear Bible testimony that the believer may experience an unbroken **"walk in the Spirit,"** and **"not fulfill the lust of the flesh."**

To secure all of this, no removal of the **"flesh"** is promised. The human spirit, soul and body abide, and the victory is gained over the **"flesh"** by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

### **"OLD MAN" (Gr. *palaios anthropos*)**

This term is used only three times in the New Testament. Once it has to do with the present position of the **"old man"** through the death of CHRIST (Romans 6:6). In the other two passages (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:3, 9) the fact that the **"old man"** has been put off for ever is made the basis of an appeal for a holy life.

In Romans 6:6 we read: **"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him."** There can be no reference here to the experience of the Christian: it is rather a co-crucifixion **"with him"** and most evidently at the time and place where He was crucified.

In the context this passage follows immediately upon the statement concerning our transfer in federal headship from the first Adam to the Last Adam (Romans 5:12-21). The first Adam, as perpetuated in us, was judged in the crucifixion of CHRIST. Our **"old man,"** the fallen nature received from Adam, was **"crucified with him."** This co-crucifixion, it will be seen, is of the greatest importance, on the divine side, in making possible a true deliverance from the power of the **"old man."**

A righteous judgment must be gained against the sin nature before any divine work can be undertaken toward our deliverance. The judgment is now secured, and the way is open for blessed victory through the Spirit.

In the second passage in which the term **"old man"** is used, the fact that the old man is already crucified with CHRIST is the basis for an appeal: **"That ye [did] put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye [did] put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"** (Ephesians 4:22-24).

In the third passage the position suggests again the corresponding experience. **"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him"** (Colossians 3:9, 10).

Positionally, the **"old man"** has been put off for ever. Experimentally, the **"old man"** remains as an active force in the life which can be controlled only by the power of GOD. We avail ourselves of that divine sufficiency when we renounce entirely the thought of compromise with, or toleration of, the fruit of the old nature and by faith apply the divinely provided counter-agency for victory through the Spirit.

The result of so **"reckoning"** and **"mortifying our members"** will be to make way for the Spirit

to work out in the life the manifestations of the "**new man**," CHRIST JESUS. We could not judge the "**old man**." That has been done for us by CHRIST. Nor can we control the "**old man**." That is to be done for us by the Spirit.

**"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof"** (Romans 13:14).

The fruit of the "**old man**" and the fruit of the "**new man**," it will be remembered, are clearly contrasted in Galatians 5:19-23: "**Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance**" (self-control).

There is no Biblical ground for a distinction between the Adamic nature and a "**human nature**."

The unregenerate have but one nature, while the regenerate have two. There is but one fallen nature, which is from Adam, and one new nature, which is from GOD.

The "**old man**," then, is the Adamic nature which has been judged in the death of CHRIST. It still abides with us as an active principle in our lives, and our experimental victory over it will be realized only through a definite reliance upon the indwelling Spirit. The "**old man**" is a part, then, but not all, of the "**flesh**."

### **"SIN" (Gr. *hamartia*)**

The third Bible word related to the source of evil in the child of GOD is "**sin**."

In certain portions of the Scriptures, notably Romans 6:1 to 8:13 and I John 1:1 to 2:2, there is an important distinction between two uses of the word "**sin**."

The two meanings will be obvious if it is remembered that the word sometimes refers to the Adamic nature, and sometimes to evil resulting from that nature. Sin, as a nature, is the source of sin which is committed. Sin is the root which bears its own fruit in sin which is evil conduct. Sin is the "**old man**," while sins are the manifestations in the life. Sin is what we are by birth, while sins are the evil we do in life.

There is abundant Biblical testimony to the fact that the "**flesh**," the "**old man**," or "**sin**," are the sources of evil, and are the possession of the child of GOD so long as he remains in this earthly body. He has a blessed "**treasure**" in the possession of the "**new man**" indwelling him; but he has this treasure "**in an earthen vessel**." The earthen vessel is the "**body of our humiliation**" (II Corinthians 4:7; Philippians 3:21).

Personality - the Ego - remains the same individuality through all the operations of grace, though it experiences the greatest possible advancement, transformation and regeneration from its lost estate in Adam, to the positions and possessions of a son of GOD in CHRIST.

That which was, is said to be forgiven, justified, saved, and receives the new divine nature which is eternal life. That which was, is born again and becomes a new creature in CHRIST JESUS, though it remains the same personality which was born of certain parents after the flesh. Though born of GOD and possessing a new divine nature, the weakness of the flesh and the dispositions of the sin-nature abide until the final change from earth to Heaven.

In I John 1:8, 10 we have clear warning against any presumption concerning sin.

*First*, Christians are warned against saying that they have no sin nature: **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."** This is distinctly concerning the sin nature of the Christian and has no application whatever to the unsaved. It is addressed to believers, and to all believers. It will not do to suppose that reference is made in the passage to some unfortunate, unenlightened, or unsanctified class of Christians. There is no class distinction here. It is the testimony of the Spirit of GOD with reference to every born-again person. For any such to say that he has no sin nature means that the person is self-deceived and the truth is not in him. This passage is evidently intended for **"correction"** to those Christians who are claiming to be free from the sin nature and who may have made themselves believe that they are free. A self-satisfied mind is not necessarily the mind of GOD.

In the same passage Christians are also warned against saying that they have not sinned as a fruit of the old nature: **"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"** (I John 1:10). Nothing could be more explicit. It is possible that a Christian may have been instructed to say that he has not sinned; but here is a word of **"reproof,"** when he confronts the testimony of the Spirit of GOD. Again, this is not concerning some unsanctified class of Christians: it is concerning all Christians. To depart from the clear teaching of this great corrective passage is to make Him a **"liar"** and to disclose the fact that , **"his word is not in us."**

The source of sin is, then, the sin nature, rather than the new divine nature.

This important truth is pointed out in this same Epistle in a passage which primarily teaches that the Christian does not now practice sin as he did before he received the new divine nature, but which also teaches that sin cannot be traced to the divine nature as its source.

**"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed [the divine nature] remaineth in him: and he [with particular reference to the 'seed'] cannot sin, because he [the 'seed'] is born of God" (3:9)**

It is evident that the new nature is that which has been begotten of GOD, and because of the presence of this nature the one in whom it dwells does not now practice sin as he did before he was saved, nor can sin ever be produced by the new nature which is from GOD. The passage does not teach that Christians do not sin, or even that some Christians do not sin; for there is no class of Christians in view, and what is here said is true of all who have been **"begotten of God."**

It is further taught in the Scriptures that, since there are two natures in the believer, there is a conflict between the new nature, through the Spirit, and the old nature through the flesh. **"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the**

**other: so that** [when walking by the Spirit] **ye cannot do the things that ye** [otherwise] **would**" (Galatians 5:16, 17).

Another aspect of this truth is taken up at length in Romans 7:15 to 8:4. In this passage the old "I" is seen to be in active opposition to the new "I."

It is sometimes claimed of this passage that it refers to an experience in the Apostle's life before he was saved.

This is open to serious question. No such conflict can Biblically be related to the life of Saul of Tarsus, nor to any other unregenerate man.

Saul of Tarsus was not a "**wretched man**": he was a self-satisfied Pharisee, living "**in all good conscience**" and "**before the law blameless.**" It was only when he began to "**delight in the law of God after the inward man**" that this deeper conflict was experienced.

So, also, the claim is sometimes made that this passage had to do only with Paul as a Jew under the law of Moses and so could not apply to any Gentile, since the law of Moses was not addressed to Gentiles.

It is quite true that the law was not given to Gentiles. The primary purpose of this passage is not to set forth some distinguishing characteristic of a Jew under the law: it plainly represents a saint confronted with the impossibility of living according to the revealed will of GOD, not only because of the human impotence, but because of an active opposing principle in the "**flesh.**"

The law of Moses, if there referred to exclusively, it would seem, is referred to as an illustration of a clear statement of the mind and will of GOD. The mind and will of GOD for the believer under grace as has been seen, is infinitely more impossible to human strength than the law of Moses. So much the more are we found to be "**wretched**" men when attempting our present conflict in the "**arm of the flesh.**"

The "**law**" of GOD, as referred to in the New Testament, sometimes means His present will for His people rather than simply the "**law of Moses.**" It is clear that the conflict in this passage is over "**evil**" and "**good,**" in general terms, rather than over the law of Moses.

If believers under grace are not in view in Romans seven, neither are they in Romans eight; for in passing from one chapter to the other there is no break in the development of the doctrine or its application. \*

\* In meeting this claim it has been pointed out that there is a particular crisis indicated by the words in 7:25, "**I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" However this is not a word of thanksgiving for salvation: it is praise for deliverance from the reigning power of sin. And it is deliverance for one who could say: "**So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**" This scarcely describes the experience of an unregenerate man.

Earlier in the context the law of Moses has been set aside (6:14; 7:1-6), and the new law of CHRIST (I Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 5:2; John 15:10), the "**life in Christ Jesus**" (8:2), or that which is produced in the believer by the Spirit (8:4), has come into view.

No mention of the Spirit is made in this passage.

It is therefore not a conflict between the Spirit and the "**flesh**": it is rather a conflict between the new "**I**" and the old "**I**." It is the new "**I**" - the regenerate man - isolated, for the time being, from the enabling power of the Spirit, and seen as confronting the whole law of GOD (v 16), the unchanging "**flesh**" (v 18), and the capacities of the new man (vs. 22, 23, 25).

A vital question is raised - Can the regenerate man, apart from the Spirit, fulfill the whole will of GOD? The answer is clear. Though he "**delight**" in the law of GOD (in which no unregenerate man delights, see Romans 3:10-18; I Corinthians 2:14), he must discover the divinely provided power to live through the death of CHRIST (v. 25), and through the power of the Spirit (8:2). Apart from this there is only continued defeat (v. 24).

The passage, with some interpretations, is as follows:

**"For that which I [the old] do I [the new] allow not: for what I [the new] would, that do I [the old] not; but what I [the new] hate, that do I [the old]. If then I [the old] do that which I [the new] would not, I consent unto the law [or will of GOD for me] that it is good. Now then it is no more I [the new] that do it, but sin [the old] that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me [the old] (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I [the new] would I [the old] do not: but the evil which I [the new] would not, that I [the old] do. Now if I [the old] do that I [the new] would not, it is no more I [the new] that do it, but sin [the old] that dwelleth in me. I find then a law [not a law of Moses], that, when I [the new] would do good, evil [the old] is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members [the old], warring against the law of my mind [the new that delights in the law of GOD], and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin [the old] which is in my members. O wretched [Christian] man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"**

The answer to this great question and cry of distress with which the above passage closes is given in a following verse (8:2): "**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**"

This is more than a deliverance from the law of Moses: it is the immediate deliverance from sin (the old) and death (its results, see Romans 6:23).

The effect of this deliverance is indicated by the blessedness recorded in the eighth chapter as in contrast to the wretchedness recorded in the seventh chapter. It is all of the helpless and defeated "**I**" in the one case, and of the sufficient and victorious "**I**," by the Spirit, in the other.

We are, then, to be delivered by the "**law**," or power, of the Spirit. But attention must be called to the fact, stated in 7:25, that it is "**through Jesus Christ our Lord**." We are delivered by the

Spirit; but it is made righteously possible through JESUS CHRIST our Lord, because of our union with Him in His crucifixion, death, and burial.

### **THE BELIEVER'S DEATH WITH CHRIST**

Substitution is the only reason assigned in the Bible for the death of CHRIST. He was taking the place of others. It was an infinite undertaking which accomplished infinite results.

There is nothing more fundamental in a believer's understanding than that he apprehend to some degree just what the death of CHRIST wrought. There should be more teaching on this great theme. One result of the act of remembering the Lord's death in the breaking of bread is the deepening of the personal consciousness of the meaning and value of that death.

It is noticeable that those Christians who are frequently exercised in spirit toward His death in the breaking of bread are most awake concerning the value of the sacrifice of CHRIST for them. The disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). They knew the real desire of the Lord for them in this important matter and they knew the value of this ordinance in their own lives. A child of GOD should always be increasing in heart appreciation of his Saviour's finished work. Provision for this has been made in the faithful remembering of His death at His table.

Through His sufferings unto death the Son of GOD bore the penalty of our sins, making it righteously possible for a holy GOD to receive sinners into His saving grace without punishment for their sins.

Sinners, because of His substitution for them, have only to believe and be saved. Men are now facing the one issue of personal trust in the Saviour, and are condemned only because of their failure to believe on the Son of GOD ( John 3:18; II Corinthians 5:19).

In like manner, a positive reality concerning the sin nature was accomplished for the believer in the death of CHRIST. By that death it has been made righteously possible for a holy GOD to take control of the old nature without any present judgments of that nature, and for the believer to be delivered from its power. By the death of CHRIST the penalty of sins committed was borne for all men, and the power of sin was judged and broken for the children of GOD. The accomplishment of all this was a problem of infinite dimensions; for sin is primarily against GOD and He alone can deal with it.

The Bible pictures sin as seen from the divine standpoint. It also unfolds GOD's problem which was created by sin and records His exact manner and method of its solution.

The theme under consideration is concerned with the death of CHRIST as that death is related to the divine judgments of the sin nature in the child of GOD. The necessity for such judgments and the sublime revelation that these judgments are now fully accomplished for us is unfolded in Romans 6:1-10.

This passage is the foundation as well as the key to the possibility of a "**walk in the Spirit.**" Herein it is declared that Christians need not "**continue in sin,**" but may "**walk in newness of**

**life.** "Sin shall not have dominion over you," and we need no longer be the "servants to sin." To this end He hath wrought in the Cross. How important in His eyes, then, is the quality of our daily life; for His death not only contemplated our eternal blessedness in the glory, but our present "walk" as well!

The old nature must be judged in order that GOD may be free to deal with it in the believer's daily life and apart from all judgments.

What destruction would fall on the unsaved if GOD had to judge them for their sins before they could be saved! "O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jeremiah 10:24). How great is His mercy! He has already taken up the sin question and solved it for all men in the death of the Substitute. Because of this He can now save from the penalty of sin.

Even so, to what lengths His mercy has gone since He has also entered into righteous judgments of our "old man"! And because of this He is now able to deliver His child from the power of sin.

The "old man" is said to have been "crucified with him," and we are "dead with him," "buried with him" and are partaking in His resurrection life. All this, it is revealed, was to one great purpose, that "we also should walk in newness of life," even as CHRIST "was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." What a deliverance and walk may be experienced since it is according to the power and glory of the resurrection! Resurrection, it may be added, is not the mere reversal of death; it is the introduction into the power and limitless boundaries of eternal life. In that new sphere and by that new power the Christian may now "walk."

The passage opens thus: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin [We who have died to sin. So, also, vs. 7, 8, 11; Colossians 2:20; 3:3], live any longer therein?"

In the preceding chapters of this Epistle salvation into safety has been presented.

At the beginning of this passage the question of salvation into sanctity of daily life is taken up. This second aspect of salvation is provided only for the one who is already saved into safety.

"Shall we [who are now saved and safe in grace] continue in sin?" It would not become us to do so, as the children of GOD, and it is not necessary for us to do so since we are now "dead to sin." But who is "dead to sin"?

Is it true that any Christian ever experienced a death to sin? Never was there one. But the death which is mentioned in this passage is said to be accomplished for every believer.

All Christians are here said to have died unto sin. A death which is all-inclusive could not be experimental. It is positional. GOD reckons all believers, as to their sin nature, to have died in CHRIST and with CHRIST; for only thus can they "walk in newness of life" as those who are "alive unto God." It is no longer necessary to sin.

We cannot plead the power of a tendency over which we have no control. We still have the

tendency, and it is more than we can control; but GOD has provided the possibility of a complete victory and freedom both by judging the old nature and by giving us the presence and power of the Spirit. We are dependent upon GOD alone for any deliverance; but He could not deliver until He had first righteously judged our sin nature. This He has done and He has also given us the Spirit who is ever present and wholly able. Thus the necessity to sin is broken and we are free to move on another plane and in the power of His resurrection life.

Then follows the important explanation of the believer's present relation to the death of CHRIST as forming the grounds of his deliverance from the power of sin.

First an outline is given (vs. 3, 4), and then the same truth is repeated, but more in detail (vs. 5-10).

It is not within the scope of this discussion to consider the importance of a sacrament that purports to represent the truth of our death with CHRIST. Such, at best, is but the shadow of the substance. No ordinance performed by man can accomplish what is here described.

Our baptism into JESUS CHRIST can be none other than the act of GOD in placing us in CHRIST (cf. Galatians 3:27). This evidently is our baptism into His body by the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13); for in no other sense are we all "**baptized into Jesus Christ.**" Being by the baptism of the Spirit vitally united and placed "**in Him**" we partake of what He is, and what He has done. He is the righteousness of GOD and the Scriptures teach that we are made the righteousness of GOD in Him (II Corinthians 5:21), and are made accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6). All this is true because we are "**in Him.**"

So, also, He has substituted for us, and what He has done is reckoned unto us because we are "**in Him,**" - or because we are baptized into JESUS CHRIST. The argument in this passage is based on this vital union by which we are organically united to CHRIST through our baptism in to His body: "**Know ye not [Or are ye ignorant] that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?**" As certainly as we are "**in Him**" we partake of the value of His death.

So, also the passage states: "**Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death**" (cf. Colossians 2:12). Thus we are actually partakers of His crucifixion (v. 6), death (v. 8), burial (v. 4), and resurrection (vs.4, 5, 8) and as essentially as we would partake had we been crucified, dead, buried and raised. Being baptized into JESUS CHRIST is the substance of which co-crucifixion, co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection are attributes.

One is the cause: while the others are the effects.

All this is unto the realization of one great divine purpose. "**That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life,**" or by a new life principle. Our "**walk,**" then, is the divine objective. CHRIST died in our stead. The judgment belonged to us; but He became our Substitute. We are thus counted as co-partners in all that our Substitute did. What He did, forever satisfied the righteous demands of GOD against our "**old man**" and opened the way for a "**walk**" well pleasing to GOD (see II Corinthians 5:15).

As the passage proceeds, this truth of our co-partnership in CHRIST is presented again and with greater detail: "**For if [as] we have been planted [conjoined, united, grown together, the word is used but once in the New Testament] together in the likeness [oneness, see Romans 8:3; Philippians 2:7] of his death, we shall be [now, and forever] also in the likeness of his resurrection.**"

We are already conjoined to CHRIST by the baptism of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12, 13) which places us positionally beyond the judgments of sin and we are therefore free to enter the experience of the eternal power and victory of His resurrection. "**Knowing this [because we know this] that our old man is [was] crucified with him [for the same divine purpose as stated before], that the body of sin might be destroyed [Our power of expression is through the body. This fact is used as a figure concerning the manifestation of sin. The body is not destroyed; but sin's power and means of expression may be disannulled. See v. 12], that henceforth we should not serve [be bond-slaves to] sin [the "old man"]. For he that is dead is freed [justified] from sin [they who have once died to sin, as we have in our Substitute, now stand free from its legal claims]. Now if we be dead with Christ [or, as we died with CHRIST], we believe we shall also live with him [not only in Heaven, but now. There is as much certainty for the life in Him as there is certainty in the death in Him]: Knowing [or, because we know] that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him [We are thereby encouraged to believe as much concerning ourselves]. For in that he died, he died unto sin [the nature] once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (and so we may live unto God).**

Such facts are recorded in the Scriptures concerning the meaning and value of the death of CHRIST and our present position in Him that we may be led to believe that it is all for us and is actually true of us now. Believing this, we will fearlessly claim our position in His boundless grace and dare to enter the life of victory.

Thus far in this passage nothing has been said touching any human obligation, nor has reference been made to any work of man. It is all the work of GOD for us, and the conclusion of this great passage is to the effect that it is His plan and provision that we should know that we have already provided for us a deliverance from the bond-servitude to sin. Based on this knowledge gained from His Word concerning all that GOD has done in CHRIST, an injunction immediately follows which presents our responsibility: "**Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**"

We are not exhorted to reckon the sin nature to be dead; but we are exhorted to reckon ourselves to be dead unto it. Did the death of CHRIST literally destroy the power of the "**old man**" so that we can have no disposition to sin? No, for the passage goes on to state: "**Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.**" Evidently, then, the "**old man**" will remain active, apart from sufficient control.

The union with CHRIST has provided a possible deliverance; but it must be entered into and claimed by such human acts of faith as are expressed in the word "**reckon**," and the additional words which follow in the passage: "**But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin [the nature] shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law [which provides no**

power for its fulfilment], **but under grace**" (which provides the sufficient Substitute and the limitless enablement of the Spirit of GOD).

Every provision has been made. **"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."**

Who can measure the truth that is compressed in the one word **"therefore"**?

It refers to all of the divine undertaking in the death of CHRIST by which we have been conjoined to CHRIST in order that we may receive the eternal values of His crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection. All this was accomplished for us before we were born.

**"Therefore,"** because of all this that is now accomplished and provided, we have limitless encouragement to enter into His plan and purpose for our deliverance. Faith, which believes the victory to be possible because it reckons the **"old man"** to have been judged, is the normal result of such a revelation. We are nowhere enjoined to enact His crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection; but we are encouraged by the revelation of what has been done to reckon the divine requirements for our deliverance from the **"old man"** to have been met perfectly and to believe that, because of this, we can now **"walk in newness of life."**

Will any Scripture justify the claim that some Christians have died to sin as a personal experience?

Several New Testament passages refer to the believer as being already dead. None of these, however, refer to an experience: they refer rather to a position into which the believer has been brought through his union with JESUS CHRIST in His death.

- **"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ"** (Colossians 2:20);
- **"For ye are dead [ye died], and your life is hid with Christ in God"** (Colossians 3:3);
- **"I am crucified with Christ"** (Galatians 2:20);
- **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"** (Galatians 6:14);
- **"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts"** (Galatians 5:24).

In the last passage, as in the others, reference is made to something that is accomplished in all those who are CHRIST's.

It could not, therefore, refer to some experience, the result of a special or particular sanctity on the part of a few.

These passages, since they refer to all believers, can have but one meaning: in their union with CHRIST the **"flesh with the affections and lusts"** has positionally been crucified. The word crucify as related to believers is always in the past, implying the judicial fact and not a spiritual experience. The believer may **"mortify"** which means to reckon to be dead; but he is never called upon to crucify.

Even mortifying is possible only by the enabling power of the Spirit. "**But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live**" (Romans 8:13).

We are plainly told that crucifixion is accomplished once for all. In view of this divine accomplishment, the child of GOD is to:

- "**reckon,**"
- "**yield,**"
- "**mortify**" (count to be dead),
- "**put off,**"
- "**let,**"
- "**put away,**"
- "**take unto you the whole armour of God,**"
- "**set your affection on things above,**"
- "**put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him,**"
- "**deny himself,**"
- "**abide**" in CHRIST,
- "**fight,**"
- "**run the race,**"
- "**walk in love,**"
- "**walk in the Spirit,**"
- "**walk in the light,**"
- "**walk in newness of life.**"

Such is the human responsibility toward that deliverance which GOD has provided through the death of His Son and proposes now to accomplish by the Spirit.

The divine objective, then, in all that is recorded in Romans 6:1-10 is that we may "**walk in newness of life.**"

GOD has met every demand of His holiness in accomplishing for us, through CHRIST, all the judgments against the sin nature that He could ever demand. It is recorded for us to understand and believe. "**Knowing this,**" or, because we know this, we are justified in our confidence that we may "**walk in newness of life,**" by the enabling power of the Spirit.

What rest, peace and victory would be the portion of the children of GOD if they really did know that the "**old man**" was crucified with CHRIST and so, on the divine side, it is made possible for them to live where sin's power and manifestation may be constantly disannulled!

### **THE SUMMARIZING SCRIPTURE**

The whole doctrinal statement concerning a possible deliverance from the bond-servitude to sin, contained in Romans 6:1 to 8:4, is summarized and concluded in the last two verses of the context (8:3, 4). In these two verses seven factors which enter into the revelation concerning a possible victory over sin, and which have been the subjects of discussion in the whole context, are mentioned again as a consummation of all that has gone before.

The seven factors are:

1. "**The law**" (8:3) which represents the righteous will of GOD. Not limited to the law of Moses (see 6:14; 7:4, 25) which passed away (7:1-4; II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:24, 25). It includes that which the Spirit produces in the one who is spiritual (8:4; Galatians 5:22, 23). The attempt to secure perfect righteousness through obedience, in mere human strength, to any precepts will always fail. Grace provides that its heaven-high standards shall be realized through the energizing power of the Spirit.
2. "**The weakness of the flesh**" (8:3), or the utter inability of human resources in the presence of the heavenly requirements (7:14-21; John 15:5).
3. "**Sin in the flesh**" (8:3). That in the flesh which is different from "**weakness**": it is opposed to the Spirit (7:14-23; Galatians 5:17).
4. CHRIST came "**in the likeness of sinful flesh**" (8:3). He took the place of vital union with the sinner (6:5, 10, 11); but did not become a sinner, or partake of the sin nature (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26).
5. "**And for sin, condemned [judged] sin in the flesh**" (8:3). Thus He met every claim of the righteousness of GOD against the "**old man**" (6:10; 7:25).
6. "**That the righteousness of the law [see 7:4, 22, 25] might be fulfilled in us**" (8:4): never to be fulfilled by us (6:4,14; 7:4, 6). It is the "**fruit of the Spirit.**"
7. "**Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**" (8:4). Such is the human condition for a victorious "**walk.**" It must be by the Spirit (6:11-22).

Full provisions are made through the divine judgment of the "**flesh**" and the "**old man**" for the spiritual life of every Christian, even the fulfilling of the whole will of GOD in us by the Spirit. But these provisions become effective only to those who "**walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**"

We have clear revelations and instructions from GOD and it is perilous to neglect or confuse these, or to fail in the exact responsibilities committed to us.

## II. The Divine Remedy

The divine method of dealing with the sin nature in the believer is by direct and unceasing control over that nature by the indwelling Spirit. This it may be stated, is one of the most important undertakings of the Spirit in and for the believer. He proposes both to control the old nature and to manifest the new.

## TWO THEORIES

Two general theories are held as to the divine method of dealing with the sin nature in believers.

One suggests that the old nature is eradicated, either when one is saved, or at some subsequent crisis of experience and spiritual blessing, and the quality of the believer's life depends, therefore, on the absence of the disposition to sin. \*

\* Eradication beliefs are not well defined. There is marked disagreement among its supporters as to the lengths to which they are willing to press the theory. It is not within the purpose of this discussion to present the various shades and modifications that are held of this theory: rather the extreme logical results of the theory are stated in order that the most obvious contrasts may be drawn between these two entirely different principles of Christian living.

The other theory contends that the old nature abides so long as the Christian is in this body and that the quality of life depends on the immediate and constant control over the "**flesh**" by the indwelling Spirit of GOD, and this is made possible through the death of CHRIST.

In both of these propositions there is a sincere attempt to realize the full victory in daily life which is promised to the child of GOD.

One theory begins with a very high assumption and then immediately modifies and qualifies its claims until it approaches the level of actual experience. The other begins with a full recognition of the human limitation and then discovers so much in the death of CHRIST and in the presence, purpose and power of the Spirit that the possible results are boundless. The life that is delivered from the bond-servitude to sin is the objective in each theory. It is therefore only a question as to which is the plan and method of GOD in the realization. Both theories cannot be true, for they are contradictory.

In seeking to determine which of the two is according to the Word of GOD, it may be stated:

*First*, Eradication is not the divine method of dealing with the believer's difficulties.

There are three outstanding reasons why the Christian must depend wholly on the Spirit of GOD.

- He faces the "**world, the flesh and the devil.**"
- He is not delivered from the low standards of the world into the high standards of the heavenly citizen by the eradication of the world.
- He is not delivered from his conflict with the enemy by the eradication of Satan.

These victories are said to be gained by the direct and constant power of GOD. It is reasonable in the light of these facts to conclude that it is not the divine method to deal with the "**flesh,**" or "**sin**" by eradication. Of what real value is eradication in the conflict with the sin nature if it cannot be claimed in the conflict with the world and with the devil?

*Second*, Eradication is not according to human experience.

It may be according to the immodest human assumption of a few; but most of its defenders dare not claim complete freedom from sin, but they have invented various theories by which they

seek to account for their sin.

One theory is to the effect that their sin is the sin of an unfallen being, such as Adam was before he sinned. Concerning this claim it may be said that we are not saved into conformity to the first Adam: we are now in CHRIST and saved into conformity to the Last Adam. If this theory were true, the first sin committed by any person in that innocent state would result in a fall as far reaching and serious as was the effect of Adam's sin on his own nature and on his relation to GOD.

Again, some fancy a distinction between their fallen nature and the human nature, and they claim that they sin from the human nature even though the fallen nature is eradicated. Such a theory finds no basis in the Scriptures.

GOD has a better way of preventing sin, which is clearly revealed. It is free from bold assumption because it makes "**no provision for the flesh**" and depends only upon the power of the Spirit. The claim of eradication is foreign to the experience of the most spiritual saints in this and past generations.

There is no example of eradication in the Word of GOD.

*Third*, Eradication is not according to Revelation.

In the Word of GOD we have "**instruction**," "**correction**," and "**reproof**." By these we must determine our conclusions rather than by any impression of the mind, or by analyzing any person's experience whatsoever.

The Bible teaches:

(1). All believers are warned against the assumptions of the eradication theory: "**If we say that we have no sin [nature], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us**" (I John 1:8).

(2). The Spirit has come to be our Deliverer and the whole Bible teaching concerning His presence, purpose and power is manifestly meaningless if our victory is to be by another means altogether. For this reason the eradication theory makes little place for the Person and work of the Spirit.

(3). The Spirit delivers by an unceasing conflict.

"**The flesh** [which includes the old nature] **lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that** [when walking by the Spirit] **ye cannot do the things that ye [otherwise] would**" (Galatians 5:17, cf. James 4:5). So, also, in Romans 7:15-24, and 8:2, the source of sin in the believer is said to be the sin nature working through the flesh, and the victory is by the superior power of the Spirit.

The extreme teachings of the eradication theory are to the effect that a Christian will have no disposition to sin to-morrow and thus the theory prompts one to an alarming disregard for true watchfulness and reliance upon the power of GOD.

The Bible teaches that the latent source of sin remains and, should the "**walk in the Spirit**" cease, there will be an immediate return to the "**desires**", and "**lusts**" of the flesh. So long as we are walking in the Spirit, "**ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**" We are all creatures of habit and may become increasingly adapted to the walk in the Spirit. We store knowledge through experience as well. Thus the walk in the "**flesh**" may cease at a given time; but the ability to walk after the "**flesh**" abides.

In this aspect of it, true spirituality means, for the time, not wishing to sin (Philippians 2:13); but this does not imply the eradication of the ability to sin: it means rather that, because of the energizing power of GOD, a complete victory for the present time is possible. It remains true that we always need Him completely. He said, "**Apart from me ye can do nothing**" (John 15:5). Because the "infection" of sin is always in us, we need every moment "the conquering counteraction of the Spirit." The "**walk**" in the Spirit is divinely enabled at every step of the way.

(4). The divine provisional dealings with the "**flesh**" and the "**old man**" have not been unto eradication. GOD has wrought on an infinite scale in the death of His Son that the way might be made whereby we may "**walk in newness of life.**" The manner of this walk is stated in such injunctions as "**reckon,**" "**yield,**" "**let not,**" "**put off,**" "**mortify,**" "**abide**": yet not one of these injunctions would have the semblance of meaning under the eradication theory. The Scriptures do not counsel us to "**reckon**" the nature to be dead: it urges us to "**reckon**" ourselves to be dead unto it.

(5). The teachings of the eradicationists are based on a false interpretation of Scripture concerning the present union of the believer with CHRIST in His death. That in the Bible which is held to be positional and existing only in the mind and reckoning of GOD, and which is accomplished once for all for every child of GOD, is supposed to mean an experience in the daily life of a few who dare to class themselves as those who are free from the disposition to sin.

(6). The conclusions of the doctrine of eradication are based on false teachings concerning the Bible use of the word "**flesh.**" The advocates of this teaching do not understand that the word "**flesh**" refers to all,- spirit, soul and body,- of the natural man, and, were it possible, the removal of the sin nature would not dispose of all the problems created by the limitations of the "**flesh.**" "**In me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing.**" The "**flesh**" must, therefore remain so long as the "**earthen vessel,**" the "**body of our humiliation**" remains. Certainly the body is not eradicated.

(7), Eradication teaching is more concerned with human experience than with the revelation of GOD. It has always been content to analyze experience and attempt to prove its conclusions by such analysis. That which is a normal experience of deliverance by the power of the Spirit may easily be supposed to be an evidence of "sinless perfection," "entire sanctification" and "eradication." A human supposition can never take the place of the divine revelation.

The two theories are irreconcilable. We are either to be delivered by the abrupt removal of all tendency to sin and so no longer need the enabling power of GOD to combat the power of sin, or we are to be delivered by the immediate and constant power of the indwelling Spirit. The Bible evidently teaches the latter.

## WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

The third condition, then, upon which one may be spiritual, is a definite reliance upon the Spirit, which is a walk by means of the Spirit. Such a reliance upon the Spirit is imperative because of the impossible heavenly calling, the opposing power of Satan, and the continued presence of the "**flesh**" with its Adamic nature. We cannot meet to-morrow's issues to-day. The walk is step by step and this demands a constant appropriation of the power of GOD. The Christian life is never likened to a balloon ascension in which we might go up once for all and have no trouble or temptation again.

It is a "**walk**," a "**race**," a "**fight**." All this speaks of continuation. The fight of faith is that of continuing the attitude of reliance upon the Spirit. To those who thus walk with GOD, there is open a door into "**fellowship with the Father and with his Son**" and into a life of fruit-bearing and service with every spiritual manifestation to the glory of GOD.

What, then, is true spirituality?

It is the unhindered manifestations of the indwelling Spirit. There are in all, seven of these manifestations. These blessed realities are all provided for in the presence and power of the Spirit and will be normally produced by the Spirit in the Christian who is not grieving the Spirit, but has confessed every known sin; who is not quenching the Spirit, but is yielded to GOD; and who is walking in the Spirit by an attitude of dependence upon His power alone. Such an one is spiritual because He is Spirit-filled. The Spirit is free to fulfill in him all the purpose and desire of GOD for him. There is nothing in daily life and service to be desired beyond this. "**But thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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