

## **Life on the Highest Plane – Vol. II**

By Ruth Paxson

In Three Volumes

Volume 1: [The Person and Work of Christ](#)

Volume 2: [The Relation between Christ and the Christian](#)

Volume 3: [The Believer's Response to the Holy Spirit's Inworking](#)

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## Chapter Fourteen: Grace Triumphant over Sin

The most triumphant words ever spoken were those which fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ when on the cross He said, "It is finished." It was the divine proclamation that grace had triumphed over sin. It was God's pronouncement to the world that all that had been lost both to Him and to man through the first Adam had been regained through the last Adam.

Romans 5:20, "But where *sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*"

Romans 5:12, 15, "*By one man sin entered into the world. Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*"

### The Challenge of Grace — In Adam or In Christ

So far in our studies we have considered God's dealings with the human race *representatively* through two men, the first and the last Adam. Through the federal headship of the first Adam, God established a union with the whole human race in creation. All that Adam was in creation God intended all mankind latent in him to be.

But Adam sinned and thereby received a sinful nature, becoming a sinner both in desire and in deed. He came into bondage to sin, self and Satan. He became a subject in the kingdom of Satan and entered into the sphere of death, darkness and disorder. He became "flesh" and descended to life on the plane of the natural. There was *upon him* a sinner's guilt, *over him* a sinner's condemnation, and *before him* a sinner's doom.

Through his federal headship Adam bequeathed to the human race latent in him all that became his in the Fall. He became the progenitor of a race "begat . . . in his own likeness after his image" (Genesis 5:3). His posterity inherited his sinful nature and shared in the consequences of his sin. Every man by physical birth is "In Adam."

In Adam's creation God had established a union with the human race on the basis of personal communion and governmental cooperation. In Adam's Fall that union was broken and mankind was alienated from God. Sin an impassable chasm between a righteous, holy God and guilty, sinful men.

But as God dealt representatively with the human race in the first Adam so did He also in the last Adam. What was ruined in the Fall of the man God redeemed in the victory of the second Man. The loss that God and the race sustained by the sinful act of the first Adam was covered by the righteous act of the last Adam. The union that was broken through His first man God reestablished through His second Man. The impassable chasm made by the first Adam's sin was bridged by the Adam's sacrifice.

On the cross of Calvary Christ Jesus, the divine-human Mediator, the sinner's place and became the sinner's Substitute. The sinner's was borne, the sinner's condemnation was removed, and the sinner's was met, by the Sin-bearer. Adam's sin was put away and all of its sequences were borne by God's Son.

Through His federal headship Christ made *potential* for all sinners that became His through the victory of His death and resurrection. Men have been united to the first Adam in creation and in the Fall, men may be united to the last Adam in grace through faith. As all are "in Adam" so all men may be "in Christ."

Through the death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of the Jesus Christ mankind was *potentially* redeemed and God re-established a relationship with the race "by grace through faith" so that all men may come out of bondage to sin, self and Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God and into the bounteous inheritance of the heirs of God. "In Christ" all men may now find a way of escape from the sphere of death, darkness and disorder and an abundant entrance into the sphere of life, light and liberty and they may be delivered from the kingdom of Satan and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. "In Christ all men may now leave the plane of the natural and rise to the plane of the spiritual. Every man by spiritual birth may be "in Christ."

God deals representatively with the whole human race in these federal headships. It may be said, that judicially God has relation to two men in all the universe, Adam, the first and Adam, the last.

Romans 5:18-19, R.V., "So then as *through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of*

*life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."*

But through these two men God has a personal relationship with every individual on earth because every person is now either "In Adam" or "In Christ," either still is alienated from God through sin or is accepted by God through His Son.

Sin entered, abounded, and reigned (Romans 5:12, 20-21); on Calvary's cross grace entered and did much more abound and now reigns wherever God's gift is accepted by faith.

Romans 5:21, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, *even so might grace reign* through righteousness unto eternal life *by Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

And now every living person is challenged by grace to come out of the life of sin, to leave the life "In Adam" for the life "In Christ."

## Chapter Fifteen: Christ Our Saviour — the Bridge Crossed

In this book that we are writing, as it were, the spiritual biography of our story encompasses his life in creation, in the Fall, in grace, and in glory. We have seen what God meant him to be in creation, what came in the Fall, and what God has done for him through grace. We now come to the most crucial point in his whole history. A choice made that will give direction to all that lies beyond both for time eternity. It is a decision that determines destiny. Will the natural man remain on the plane of the natural or will he choose to live on the on the spiritual? Will he receive or refuse God's gift through grace? Cling to his sin or lay hold upon God's Son?

### 1. The Inevitable Choice — Your Sin or God's Son

God's first gift to man is that of a Saviour because this is man's need. It was God's love for *sinners* that led Him to give His Son to us (Romans 5:8). Christ was born into this world a Saviour.

Luke 2:11, "For *unto you is born* this day in the city of David and which is Christ the Lord."

It was Christ's love for *sinners* that brought Him from heaven to By His own testimony He came to seek and to save the lost.

1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*; of whom I am chief."

Luke 19:10, "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that was lost.*"

*"Man of Sorrows,' what a name,  
For the Son of God, who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim,  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"*

Christ crucified is the sinner's only way back to God. He is the sinner's only door of access into the presence of God and God's only door of access into the heart of the sinner.

John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, *I am the way*, the truth, and the life: *no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"

John 10:9, "*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*"

The initial relationship of the natural man to God must be that of a sinner penitently acknowledging his sin and accepting God's gracious gift of a Saviour. The sinner must come to God through *the crucified* Christ, or he cannot come to God at all.

This is an exceedingly humiliating position for the natural man to take, it knocks the underpinning from beneath his entire life for it strikes at the very root of his self-will, self-love, self-trust and self-exaltation. By it he is compelled to acknowledge that he has made an utter failure, that he is wholly incapable of living his own life in his own strength, but more than that, that he is absolutely unfit to live in the presence of One who is righteous and holy. It brings him altogether to the end of himself, to the foot of the cross to acknowledge his sinful, helpless, hopeless condition, and to look up in simple faith to the crucified Saviour, who alone can lift him to a higher plane of life.

Many sinners in the world today will not go thus far. They will acknowledge their lack of light and their need of a teacher; they will confess they do not know the right way of life and need a leader; they will admit the low level of their standards and their need of an example; but they will not acknowledge that they are out-and-out sinners needing a Saviour. They simply place themselves outside the class for which Christ died. But the Lord of glory did not leave the bosom of His Father and the joy of heaven for the suffering and sorrow of earth and the shame and scourging of Calvary's cross merely to receive the patronizing admiration of men and to help them to live a somewhat more intelligent, respectable, useful life as sinners on the plane of the natural man. He came only because men were lost and must be found: because they were sinners and must be saved. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Through Christ, *as Saviour*, God has provided the only way back to Himself that He deems effectual: He has opened the only door from earth into heaven. Through His Son, *as Saviour*, God had made salvation from Sin a potential gift to all sinners so that since Christ died and rose again all men everywhere are shut in to an inevitable choice—the choice between their sin and His Son. "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*"

Since the shedding of the precious blood of His only begotten Son on the cross of Calvary, God the Father sees every person on earth either with or without a Saviour.

## **2. The Gracious Invitation**

God not only provided a Saviour for every sinner but He has through the Gospel sent forth an invitation to those 'of every tongue, and people, and nation' to accept His gift, to partake of His feast, to inherit His riches, to share the blessings of His heavenly home.

His infinite grace, His tender love, His compassionate mercy have made room for all. He declares that none is too good to come, for if he is, the salvation provided for him in Christ is useless, and that none is too bad for salvation would thereby be proved ineffectual. Not one who has put his trust in the shed blood of the Saviour, however long he has lived in sin or however deep into it he has sunk or however crimson is its stain upon his life, will be turned away from the Father's heart or home. To the weary and heavy laden; to the hungry, thirsty and poor; to the wandering and the wayward; the loving Father says, "Come unto me."

Matthew 11:28, "*Come unto me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Isaiah 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, *come ye to the waters*, and he that hath no money; *come ye*, buy, and eat; yea, *come*, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

John 7:37, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, *let him come unto me*, and drink."

John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; *and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*"

Dear reader, are you still among the number who have not accepted God's gracious invitation to come unto Him? Are you troubled, perplexed anxious, restless? Christ says, "Come unto me, for in me ye may have peace."

Are you unhappy, discontented, and dissatisfied, and is your heart devoid of joy? Christ says, "Come unto me, my joy shall remain in you that your joy may be full."

Does life seem intolerable to you because of its burdens, its sufferings, its tribulations? Christ says, "Come unto me, in the world ye shall have tribulation but I have overcome the world."

Are you discouraged by the repeated temptation at the same vulnerable spot which you are utterly powerless to resist? Christ says, "Come unto me, and in me ye shall be more than conquerors."

Is your heart filled with an insatiable hunger which no one and no thing has ever been able to satisfy? Christ says, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger."

Is your soul parched with a thirst that you have tried to quench in a thousand ways and have failed? Christ says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Is your path strewn with disappointments, afflictions, trials, and does the road ahead seem to be dense darkness? Christ says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Are you terrified at the sin stains on your soul and doubt if ever they can be removed? Then the Saviour says, "Only come unto me, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Do you really wish to be free from sin, to end the despotic rule of self, and to sever your partnership with Satan? You may come out of this threefold bondage into the glorious liberty and the bounteous inheritance of a son and heir of God if you will avail yourself of God's gracious invitation. Christ Jesus is able to save you to the uttermost of your sin and to satisfy you to the uttermost of your need. The first

step out of the natural into the spiritual is such a very simple one that even a little child may take it for it is just the choice of God's Son instead of your sin; it is the personal acceptance of God's wondrous gift of a Saviour.

*"Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,  
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;  
Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light  
Jesus, I come to Thee.  
Out of my sickness into Thy health,  
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,  
Out of my sin and into Thyself,  
Jesus, I come to Thee."*

### **3. The Response of Faith — the Bridge Crossed**

Man has had nothing whatever to do with the building of the bridge of salvation. That was God's work and His alone. God furnished both the material and the workmanship by which this wondrous bridge was builded. *"By grace are ye saved."*

Titus 2:11, *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."*

2 Timothy 1:9, *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began."*

But God leaves it to the sinner to decide whether he will cross this bridge or not. What God's grace has provided man's faith must possess. The salvation made potential by grace God expects to be made experiential by faith. Salvation is not something to be purchased or earned or gained through merit of any kind, for salvation is a gift and a gift is received. Salvation is for all men but only those who believe and receive are saved. *"By grace are ye saved through faith."*

1 Timothy 4:10, *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."*

Ephesians 2:8-9, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."*

While man has had nothing to do with the building of the bridge yet he has everything to do with regard to the use of it for he decides whether or not he will cross it. Have you crossed this bridge? Has God's gracious invitation met with a glad response on your part? I must press the question home for it is one that will have to be answered either here and now, or yonder at the great white throne. No decision you will ever be called upon to make can begin to compare with this one in importance because upon it hangs your happiness and usefulness in this life and your destiny in the life to come.

Perhaps among the readers of this book are some earnest inquirers who are saying in their hearts, But what does crossing the bridge involve? And what must I do to be saved? Let us together now consider these questions in turn.

*Crossing the bridge means a decisive break with all that pertains to the old creation in the old sphere. If, then, one decides to become a Christian, his first step will be to turn his back on sin, and turn his face toward Christ his Saviour. In that first step he will renounce his sin and receive God's Son. The first step out of the life on the plane of the natural into life on the plane of the spiritual involves a twofold reversal in the sinner's relationship to God which the Bible calls repentance and faith.*

Acts 20:21, *"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Acts 26:18, *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*

1 Thessalonians 1:9, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and *how ye turned to God from idols* to serve the living and true God."

The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is the place at which this decisive break with the old life is made. It is the birthplace of real repentance and true faith.

In the parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:1-52), Christ likened the Kingdom of heaven to a field in which there were both wheat and tares, and to a net in which were both good and bad fish. He states that no attempt will be made to separate them until the harvest time at the end of the age. False professors and true possessors are in the visible church today and will continue to be until Christ comes again.

The false professor has never genuinely repented, for let us remind ourselves that repentance means a *change of mind*, a complete reversal of attitude toward God and consequently a change of mind toward all that is opposed to God. There is much in Christian experience today that is called repentance which is sheer camouflage. It is not genuine abhorrence and loathing of sin as something hateful and heinous in the sight of God, but is selfish and sinful regret in having sin exposed or in having to suffer its punishment. It is not a real turn about-face but it is a pretense at looking Godward while walking sinward. A repentance that makes one a possessor of God's gift through grace is born of a consciousness of sin that deepens into conviction and compels one to cry out in honesty of heart, "What must I do to be saved?"

Such repentance has its birth at the cross of Christ. Gazing upon the spotless, sinless, Son of God crucified upon a criminal's cross, bearing the sin of the world with all its stain; drinking the cup of suffering even to its bitter dregs; enduring the penalty and punishment of sin even unto death; the sinner comes to a realization of the sinfulness of sin. With the light of God's holiness and the warmth of God's love streaming into his own soul, the sinner has his first real revulsion toward sin; repentance which is "not only a heart broken *for* sin but *from* sin" follows. To see sin as God sees it in the light of the cross is to have the taste for it and the delight in it taken away.

Neither has the false professor ever truly believed for let us remember that to *believe* is to *receive* a Person into the life to possess and to control it as His own. There is much in Christian experience today that is called faith which is not faith at all. Sometimes one is deceived into thinking emotional feeling is faith. The emotions are played upon by sentimental appeals and a superficial response is made. But the seed sown has not taken root so a change of feeling results in a casting away of faith. That is sometimes called faith which is merely the assent of the mind to the great historical facts regarding Jesus Christ but is wholly divorced from any intention of accepting Him as Saviour, yielding to Him as Lord, and appropriating Him as Life. But, a faith that makes one a possessor of God's gift through grace is born of a consciousness of helplessness and hopelessness that compels the sinner to cry out in sincere Longing of heart, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Such a faith has its birth at the cross of Christ. The Holy Spirit having brought the sinner to acknowledge his own helpless and hopeless condition then fixes his gaze upon the all-sufficient Saviour. He points him to the One who bore his sins in His own body on the tree; to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world which included *his* sin. He reveals Christ Jesus as the One who tasted death for him and enables him to say, "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." He assures the sinner now burdened by the guilt and pollution of his sins that there is forgiveness and cleansing for him in the blood of the slain Lamb. Then He leads him to put his trust in Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour and by an act of his will to receive Him into his life as such.

Having considered what is involved in a genuine crossing of God's bridge of salvation let us now turn to the other question, "What must I do to be saved?" God's Word gives an abundant answer to this question.

John 20:31, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Acts 16:30-31, "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*"

John 1:12, "But *as many as received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even to them that believe on his name.*"

God wishes the poor, the unfortunate, the illiterate, the young and the untalented to come to Him and to have the blessings of salvation, as well as the rich, the favored, the learned, the aged, and the gifted. He has made the way of salvation so simple that all may walk in it and nobody need be excluded because of any lack in himself. Salvation is all wrapped up in a Saviour who is a gift of God to be received upon the one condition of faith. "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

Faith is very simple yet it is a very comprehensive thing and involves in its operation the mind, the heart, and the will. Faith includes belief which is the assent of the mind to the things written in God's Word concerning the Saviour. We believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, who died for our sins. Faith includes trust, which is the consent of the heart to the gracious work of Christ. We not only believe the things which the Word teaches about Christ, the Saviour, but we believe *on* Him. We put our trust and our dependence upon Him alone for our salvation. But faith also includes appropriation which is the decision of the will to receive Christ Jesus. Faith enables me first to *perceive* Christ as the Saviour of all men and then to *receive* Him as my own personal Saviour. Faith leads me to believe that "God so loved the world that whosoever believeth in him should not perish" and then leads me to receive Him who loved me and gave himself for me.

We see, then, that salvation is far more than mere assent to the doctrinal truth of the Bible, for one could believe every word in the Book and still not be saved. It is also far more than mere church membership for one could perform every ordinance and ceremony the church requires and still not be saved. Salvation centers not in a doctrine nor in an ordinance but in a Person and he only is saved who has put his trust in Christ as Saviour to the point of receiving Him into his whole being as *the Saviour from his sins*.

Such salvation is typified for us in the redemption of the children of Israel from their awful bondage to Pharaoh and their deliverance from the terrible judgment of death in Egypt. Because of Pharaoh's rebellion toward God, the firstborn in all the land were to be smitten with death. God gave definite instructions to the children of Israel through Moses as to what they were to do to avert this terrible sentence of death upon their households. They were told to take a lamb without blemish, slay it, and put the blood upon the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of the house. As God passed through the land of Egypt at midnight He would pass over every house upon which He saw the blood and into that home the plague of death would not come. "When I see the blood I will pass over you." The only thing that saved the firstborn in any household on that memorable night was the blood of the lamb on the doorpost.

Since God's dear Son laid down His life in death on Calvary's cross the sinner's only shelter from the wrath of God is under the cover of His precious blood. God has told us that we are "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" and asks us to take by faith the blood of Christ to cover all our sins. As He looks upon each of us today He sees us either with or without that covering.

Matthew 26:28, "For this is *my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*"

1 Peter 1:18-19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye *were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*"

The cross of Christ is the only place where God and the sinner can meet and the Lamb of God is the bond of union. The sinner looks up and trusts in the shed blood of the Saviour. God looks down and says "I see the blood and will pass over you." Faith has responded to grace and the Saviour and the sinner are made one at the cross.

My friend, whoever and wherever you are, have you crossed God's bridge of salvation? Have you responded to the unsearchable riches of God's grace as manifested in Christ, through faith? Have you believed on Him and received Him into your life as your own personal Saviour? Are you resting safe and secure today under the sheltering cover of the blood of the Lamb of God? If not, will you not lay this book down and right now look up in faith to him?

*"I take, O Cross, thy shadow,  
For my abiding place;  
I ask no other sunshine  
Than the sunshine of His face,  
Content to let the world go by,*

To know no gain or loss,  
 My sinful self my only shame,  
 My glory all the Cross." (See Diagram 08)

RECEIVE HIM --

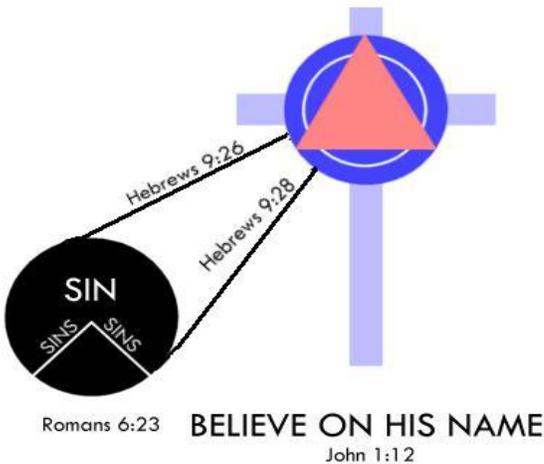


Diagram 8: Receiving Christ the Saviour

#### 4. The Firstfruits of Faith

The inheritance into which the believer enters as a son and heir of God is a very rich and beautiful one and includes every spiritual blessing in Christ. But the blessing primarily coveted is relief from the burden of sins, the sense of forgiveness, the assurance of pardon. The circumstances of conversion vary greatly and people come to God in vastly diverse ways. Some are born of Christian parents and are nurtured in an atmosphere surcharged with the love and worship of God. The name of Jesus is on the lips almost as soon as the name of "Father" or "Mother." Sometimes one cannot tell when that personal choice of Jesus Christ as Saviour was made, for love to Him seems always to have been in the heart. With others the new birth has meant a decided and definite break in the life. Not all have the keen realization of the awful sinfulness of sin nor does the guilt and condemnation of it rest on them as a terrible burden as it did upon Pilgrim in Bunyan's classic story, but to almost everyone there is the bondage to some besetting sin from which he seeks release. So the first blessing of which the sinner is conscious and the one in which he primarily rejoices is the forgiveness of sins.

Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of his grace."

The moment the sinner acknowledges his sin and turns in real faith to Christ as Saviour, that very moment God grants perfect and permanent pardon for all his sins: his past is blotted out and he will not be judged for sin that his Saviour has borne to the cross. But lack of assurance regarding forgiveness is a very common thing even in the lives of some who have been Christians for years. Because of ignorance of God's Word when perchance one falls again into some besetting sin, doubt comes into the heart and robs it of the joy of salvation. In order that the believer may rest in the conscious assurance of full acquittal, God unfolds in His Word the completeness of forgiveness. Are you resting today in the assurance of sins forgiven? If not, may God speak to you in these precious statements of His Word and enable you to claim each for yourself.

Isaiah 38:17, "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: *for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.*"

All my sins are behind God's back! Out of God's sight! Never to be seen again! O! The comfort of knowing that the sins God has forgiven *He* will never see again!

Psalms 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, *so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*"

All of my sins put the distance of the world's circumference from me! Out of my sight as well as out of the sight of God! While in China I received a cable telling of the death of a dearly loved sister in America. During the weeks that followed in which I waited for a letter giving further particulars of her death, I realized how far the east is from the west and there came a new, sweet experience of the assurance of my salvation in these precious words, "*As far—so far.*" O! The comfort of knowing that the sins which God has forgiven I shall never see again!

Micah 7:19, "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and *thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*"

All my sins cast into the depths of the sea! Not only out of sight but out of reach! A few years ago the steamship *Titanic* built at a cost of millions of dollars and carrying a cargo valued at many millions more went to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. So far as I know no attempt has ever been made to bring either the *Titanic* or her cargo from the depths of the sea. O! The comfort of knowing that the sins forgiven by God are out of reach, pardoned for time and for eternity!

Isaiah 44:22, "*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins.*"

Hebrews 8:12, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and *their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*"

All my sins blotted out and forgotten! Not only out of God's sight and out of God's reach, but out of God's memory! But in the unsearchable riches of His grace God has blotted out my sins so completely that there is not a trace of them left to remind Him that once they were. Oh! The comfort of knowing that the sins which God has forgiven He has also forgotten!

But the forgiveness of sins is but half, and that the negative half, of the first fruits of faith. Merely removing the penalty for and the punishment of sins does not undo all the work of sin. For the natural man is not only a sinner: he is a rebel and an outlaw as well. He needs not only to be redeemed but to be reinstated to favor with God. A criminal may be pardoned and released from prison but he returns to the community in which he lives as a pardoned criminal. No human judge has the power to reinstate him into society as one who never sinned. What man cannot do God can. Justification is the positive half of the first fruits of faith.

Acts 13:38-39, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that *through this man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And *by him all that believe are justified from all things*, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Corinthians 5:21, R.V., "Him who knew no sin *he made to be sin on our behalf*; that *we might become the righteousness of God in him.*"

Christ, our Saviour, not only pardoned our sin but He gave us the *standing* before the Father of one who had never sinned. The only way in which He could do this was to exchange places with us. He took our place upon the cross becoming sin for us that we might take His place before the Father becoming righteousness in Him. His death was one act with a double blessing. The negative side was forgiveness which took something from us, the penalty of our sins; the positive side was justification which gave something to us, the righteousness of God. The death of Jesus Christ accomplished a twofold work in the believer: it unclothed him by removing the filthy rags of sin and it clothed him by bestowing the pure garments of His perfect righteousness. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" here Christ Jesus is saying to His Father, Put their sins to my account. That we might be made the righteousness of God in him" here Christ Jesus is saying to His Father, Put my righteousness to their account Through His death upon the cross Jesus Christ not only took us out of the old standing in Adam, but He brought us into a new standing in Christ. The grace of God provides for justification, the blood of Jesus Christ procures it, and the faith of the believer possesses it.

Romans 3:24, "*Being justified freely by his grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Romans 5:9, "Much more then, *being now justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Romans 5:1, "Therefore *being justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Through justification certain definite and glorious blessings are secured to the believer. Chief among these is peace with God. Resistance and rebellion through self-will have ceased and the heart rests in the assurance of God's favor.

Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

All distance between God and the sinner is obliterated. All barriers are torn down. The believer is made near to God's heart through the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:13, "But now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off *are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*"

"O the love that sought me,  
O the blood that bought me,  
O the grace that brought me to the fold!"

## 5. The Great Refusal

Jesus Christ spoke some very sad and solemn words during His earthly ministry but among the saddest and the most solemn are these:

John 5:40, "And *ye will not come to me*, that ye might have life."

These words were spoken to men who professed to believe and to love the Scriptures and who even searched them in the hope of securing eternal life. The very Scriptures that they searched pointed everywhere to Jesus Christ as the Author and Giver of life, yet *Him* they stubbornly and persistently refused and rejected. To Him they would not come acknowledging themselves sinners needing Him as their Saviour. These men were guilty of the great refusal. They rejected God's Son as their Saviour. The cause of their refusal was self-will. Please note Christ said "*ye will not come to me*" Their rejection of Jesus Christ was not due to inability but to unwillingness. They *could* come but they *would not*. Note too that all Christ asked them to do was *to come to Him* that He might give them that which they needed more than they needed anything else.

Their decision determined their destiny. God left it with them to make the choice between their sin and His Son but having made it He determined what the result of that choice should be.

John 8:24, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for *if ye believe not that I am he*, ye shall die in your sins."

John 8:21, "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: *whither I go, ye cannot come.*"

To refuse grace is to invite judgment. To retain a sinner's guilt is to receive a sinner's doom. If the natural man chooses to live and to die on the natural man's plane then he must expect the natural man's destiny.

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has been preached all over the world yet millions upon millions of those who have heard it are living as though Christ had not died, as though God had not taken up the sin question and settled it in such a way as to provide salvation for all men. Throughout the world today are multitudes who are guilty of the great refusal, who are choosing to remain in their sins rather than accept God's Son as their Saviour.

Out of this number are some who apparently have no concern whatever over their souls. Their minds and hearts are set upon the pursuits and pleasures of this life as though there were no God to reckon with and no life beyond this to prepare for. There are others who through self-righteousness and self-exaltation refuse God's way of the cross. It is an offense unto them. They indulge in very shallow and superficial sentiments about the love of God which they think too great to ever condemn anyone to separation from Him forgetting altogether that the love of God spent itself on that very cross. Up to the cross God has infinite love for the sinner but if in self-exaltation he passes it by and rejects the Saviour, then on the other side that very love is wrath. There are others who say they want to believe but cannot. Unbelief is never due to inability. It may be due to unwillingness. Thomas was an honest doubter and said, "*I will not believe except I shall see.*" God gave him to see and he believed. It may be due to ignorance of what faith

is and requires. The all-important thing in faith is not its measure but its object. Christ Himself stated this when He said "Come unto me." Anyone *can* come.

There are countless sins of which every sinner is guilty but there is one above all others for which God is today condemning him and holding him accountable and that is the sin of refusing Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Wrapped up in that sin are all the others. That is the sin of sins. It is upon that sin the Holy Spirit puts all the pressure of conviction to bring a soul to God. This is His initial work in the sinner.

John 3:18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not *is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*"

John 16:8-9, "And when he [the Comforter] is come, *he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me.*"

God gives clear and unmistakable warnings to those who are facing the inevitable choice between their sin and His Son. The great refusal means death.

Romans 6:23, "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

The great refusal means the wrath of God abiding upon the unbeliever.

John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and *he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

The great refusal means the judgment of the great white throne.

Revelation 20:12, "*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*"

The great refusal leads to eternal separation from the presence of God.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*"

God invites you to receive Christ into your life as Saviour *today*. To drift is to refuse; to ignore is to refuse; to postpone is to refuse; to face the claim of Christ and to turn silently away is to refuse. The rich young ruler refused and is never mentioned again. A young official in China faced the claim and call of Christ one night but he said, "Tomorrow, wait until tomorrow." He refused; that night he was assassinated.

2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation."

Hebrews 3:15, "While it is said, *To-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

Proverbs 27:1, "*Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*"

"Choose ye *this day* whom ye will serve."

The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is the great divide. On which side of it are *you* today? The choice is inevitable your sin or God's Son. (See Diagram 09)

"AND YE WILL NOT COME TO ME  
THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE."  
John 5:40

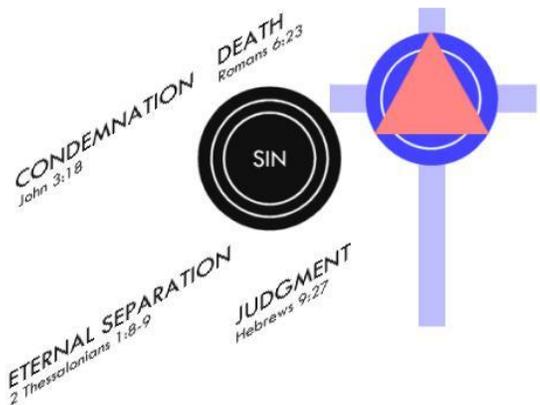


Diagram 9: Rejecting Christ the Saviour

## **Chapter Sixteen: Christ Our Head — A New Creation Formed**

Crossing God's bridge of salvation begins with the believer's justification but it does not end there for justification in its twofold aspect deals largely with our past and carries us only over the borderline into the new sphere. It gives us a new standing before God, but it does not equip us to live in a state becoming our standing. It paves the way for us into the presence of a holy God but it cannot make us holy. It opens the door for the establishment of the new order in Christ but it needs regeneration to furnish the certificate for membership in that order. Justification and regeneration are simultaneous in experience.

### **1. The Risen Christ — Head of a New Order**

In Christ crucified God made an end of the old creation and all that pertained to it; in Christ risen, He made the beginning of a new creation. Through His resurrection Christ Jesus became the Head of a new order of beings, who are to be as heavenly and holy, as pure and as perfect as He is; the Progenitor of a new race of redeemed men whose ultimate glory through grace is to be complete conformity to His image.

Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the first born among many brethren."

But life in the new order requires wholly new equipment which Scripture clearly describes.

### **2. The Implantation of a New Life**

The first necessity for fellowship with the living God is life; the first requirement for union with the divine Head is divine life; to live in the sphere of the Spirit one must have spiritual life. To belong to the new order one must have the same kind of life as the Head of the order.

But the natural man is "without Christ" therefore he is without "life." By nature every sinner in Adam whether rich or poor, literate or illiterate, moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, is spiritually dead. Every child born into this world, whatever his parentage or position in society, enters it entirely destitute of the divine life of God.

The primary need, then, for membership in the new order, for citizenship in the new Kingdom, for sonship in the new family, is life that fits one for his new relationships and environment. To be related to God either as a son in His family or as a subject in His Kingdom necessitates the possession of His eternal, divine, spiritual life. But how would a dead man become possessed of this life? The answer to this all-important question our Lord Himself gives in His conversation with Nicodemus recorded in the third chapter of John's gospel.

Nicodemus was a man of the Pharisees. So great was his fear of his coreligionists, yet so insistent was his desire for something the Lord Jesus possessed, that he came to Him under cover of the night. As a ruler of the Jews also he occupied an influential position yet despite his religious privileges his heart was unsatisfied and craved something which Pharisee-ism was unable to give him. Without question Nicodemus came to the Lord Jesus driven by a deep sense of need. What then did he come for? The answer to this question is important in the light of what Christ Jesus gave him; it may also help some reader to interpret his own greatest need and to understand the right method of approach to the One who alone is able to meet it. We are not told directly why he came but John 3:2 suggests a clue.

Nicodemus was himself a teacher but perhaps he recognized in Jesus' teaching an authority and attractiveness which were lacking in his own. He was a great religious leader yet he had no such miracle-working power as had Jesus. He was a ruler of the Jews and Jesus was only a humble itinerant preacher yet God was not with him as He was with Jesus. Did Nicodemus come seeking light upon the secret of such wisdom and power which possibly even for unselfish reasons he craved to possess? Did he come as a teacher to a greater teacher merely to be taught? ...As a leader to a greater leader simply to be led? Was the deepest need he felt in his life the need of *light*? Had he, who professed to be the physician of others' soul-sickness, failed to diagnose correctly his own? If so, there are many in similar positions today that have made the same mistake.

The conversation that follows shows that the Great Physician instantly went to the seat of Nicodemus's trouble. He who "knew what was in man" diagnosed his case aright and saw a much deeper and more imperative need than that of which Nicodemus himself was yet conscious. Nicodemus came for *light* but he needed *life*: and the light he wanted could only come out of the life he needed.

John 1:4, "In him was life; and *the life was the light of men.*"

Nicodemus wanted divine wisdom and spiritual power; these are the fruit of divine, spiritual life. Nicodemus came to Him who said, "I am the light of the world" to receive light but he had not come to Him who said, "I am the life" to receive life. Nicodemus came only as a teacher to be taught. The Lord Jesus saw that he needed to come as a sinner to a Saviour to be saved. So in His reply He met not the desire but the need of Nicodemus. He went to the core; He touched the quick of his need.

John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The proof that the Lord was right in His diagnosis and that Nicodemus was devoid of the life of God is plainly seen in his utter lack of spiritual apprehension of the Master's words. He had not the faintest idea of the meaning of the words "born again" as his perplexed question to Jesus revealed.

John 3:4, "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? *Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*"

What could Nicodemus have thought a man could gain through a second physical birth that he had not received through the first? What additional inheritance could be given him through the same parents in a second birth? The very question he asked revealed his need of light, but of spiritual light that is the product of spiritual life. Nicodemus was blind because he was dead. The thing which Nicodemus did not know, but which Christ did know, was that he was still in the sphere of death, out-side the Kingdom and family of God, and living on the plane of the natural man.

Consequently Nicodemus did not know that nothing which he had through the flesh could be put to his account in the realm of the spirit; that the position, possessions and privileges, upon which he prided himself in the sphere of the natural, were like counterfeit coins in the sphere of the spiritual. Nicodemus did not apprehend that nothing which he could have received through a thousand physical births could make him eligible to citizenship in the Kingdom of God or to sonship in the family of God.

The whole purpose of Jesus' conversation was to show Nicodemus that he was an alien and that citizenship in the Kingdom of God required naturalization through regeneration. Is it any wonder that the perplexed cry came from his heart, "How can these things be?" For was he not a Jew *by birth*, therefore was he not born into the Kingdom of God? Had he not scrupulously and punctiliously observed every ordinance and ceremony and fulfilled every religious duty, therefore had he not earned his way into the Kingdom of God *by good works*? Was he not a man of the Pharisees, even a ruler of the Jews, therefore was he not eligible to citizenship in the Kingdom of God *by his religion*? Nicodemus was all that he claimed to be by birth, by good works, and by religion, yet Jesus told him that none of these things in itself or all of them put together would serve as naturalization papers in the Kingdom of God. One thing was absolutely essential in a Kingdom that was built upon the supernatural, and that one thing was supernatural life. Without this no one, whatever his parentage, privileges or position, could qualify for entrance.

Seeing the perplexity of Nicodemus's mind, yet understanding the hunger of his heart, Jesus repeated and amplified His words on the absolute necessity of the new birth.

John 3:5, 7, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*  
Marvel not that I said unto thee, *Ye must be born again.*"

Is it possible that some reader of these pages is, like Nicodemus, trusting to his godly parentage, his good works, his exemplary morality, his inherited religion, for entrance into the Kingdom of God? If so, will you not heed the words which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus for He is speaking them to you as well?

The absolute necessity of the new birth as a requirement for entrance into the Kingdom of God could not have been expressed in more emphatic words, than the Lord uses here. If you will trace His conversations in the gospels you will notice that He never employs the use of the words "Verily, verily", except when teaching something of paramount importance. In John 3:5, 7, He uses three very emphatic words, "except," "cannot," and "must." The Lord of the Kingdom is declaring the first and fundamental

requirement of life in the Kingdom when He says "Ye" — no matter who you are — "*must* be born again." There are absolutely no exceptions to this law of the spiritual realm.

If anyone could have hoped for exemption from this requirement Nicodemus would have been that man. Yet his high moral character, his clean, upright life, his orthodox religious creed, his influential social position, his membership in the Sanhedrin, his faithful performance of religious duties, and his acknowledgment of Jesus as a great teacher and a good man, were insufficient to gain an entrance for him into the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ, who looks at men from the viewpoint of heavenly standards, told Nicodemus that even he could not see, much less enter, the heavenly Kingdom except this divine miracle of the new birth was wrought in his spirit.

### **3. The Impartation of a New Nature**

Jesus has expressed to Nicodemus the imperativeness and the inflexibility of the necessity of a new birth for the implantation of the new life. But has Jesus made an arbitrary, perhaps even an unreasonable demand, or has He only stated a law of the spiritual Kingdom, which admittedly is as reasonable as the law which governs the physical kingdom?

In the physical realm we recognize two laws which operate everywhere and always; physical life is the result of physical birth, and the thing that is born partakes of the nature of that which gave it birth. Like begets like. Natural begets natural. Jesus told Nicodemus that the same kind of a law prevails in the spiritual realm; the spiritual life is the result of spiritual birth and that which is born of God partakes of the nature of God. Like begets like. Divine begets divine.

John 3:6-7, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Ye must be born again.*"

In these verses Jesus has stated with intentional conciseness and clarity four profound truths:

1. There are two distinct spheres in which men live.
2. Entrance to each sphere is by birth.
3. Flesh begets flesh and Spirit begets spirit.
4. Anyone who wishes to pass out of the sphere of the flesh into the sphere of the Spirit can do so only by a second birth.

Nicodemus coveted for himself something which Jesus possessed. That which Nicodemus coveted was a spiritual thing. It belonged only to those living in the spiritual sphere; it could be bestowed only upon those who possessed a spiritual nature. But Nicodemus was living in the sphere of the flesh. He was no doubt living up to the best that he knew *in that sphere*; in fact he came to Jesus for *more light* on how to live a still better and more useful life in that same sphere. Was it not a reasonable and even laudable desire and should it not be granted?

Again Jesus goes to the very heart of the difficulty and shows the utter impossibility of making the flesh spiritual. "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*" and it can never be anything else. It may be educated flesh, cultured flesh, traveled flesh, moral flesh, yes, even religious flesh, but it is still flesh.

Even God makes no attempt to make the flesh anything but flesh. He tells us why in His Word.

Romans 8:7-8, R.V., "*Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. And they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*"

The flesh is God-hating and God-defying. It is irreconcilably hostile to God. Because the flesh is what it is, it is unchangeable and un-improvable. So God makes no attempt either to repair the ruin or to reconcile the enmity of the old, corrupt, defiled, rebellious, lawless nature. Even when outwardly clothed in the beautiful garments of geniality, amiability, kindness, generosity, courtesy and gentleness, it is still at heart God-hating and God-defying. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

How then could God permit one to enter His family as a son, or His Kingdom as a citizen, who had *only* the old nature of the flesh? How could one obey the laws of a spiritual Kingdom with only a fleshly nature? How could a corrupt, defiled nature that loved sin and hated holiness ever make a man holy? Upon what would God have to build, to conform the natural man into the image of His Son? Or what enjoyment would heaven offer to an unregenerate soul? If on earth those living in the flesh find no

pleasure in the companionship and converse of those living in the Spirit surely this would be even more true in heaven. The pursuits and pleasures, the desires and the deeds of the natural man, are the exact antitheses of those of the spiritual man. If Nicodemus were to possess and enjoy the spiritual thing for which his heart hungered he must have a spiritual nature.

"That which is born of the flesh *is* flesh." The old, fleshly nature equips one to live in the sphere of the flesh but nowhere else. So Jesus held out to Nicodemus no hope of his heart's desire and need being met and satisfied through any change either sudden or gradual in his old nature. Jesus makes no proposal to reinvigorate or reinforce the old nature by the addition of spiritual gifts and graces or by the subtraction of evil tendencies and practices. Jesus will not put a new piece on an old garment. Jesus shows unmistakably that "there is no process, even of divine alchemy, by which the base metal of the flesh can be transformed into the fine gold of the Spirit." The flesh cannot be improved, changed or utilized by God. There is nothing in it which God can accept.

What then does God purpose to do to equip a repentant, believing sinner for membership in the new order of heavenly holy men? He purposes to endow him with a new nature that fits him for citizenship in His Kingdom and for sonship in His family. He purposes to bestow upon him his own divine nature which will fructify in a supernatural life. To live the life of God one must have the nature of God, therefore through the new birth God plants his own seed in the spirit of man to abide there.

2 Peter 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that *by these ye might become partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

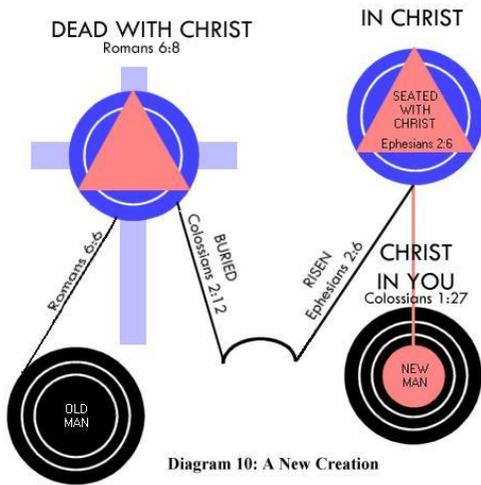
1 John 3:9, R.V., "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, *because his seed abideth in him*: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."

The believer in Christ Jesus becomes the possessor of something which he never possessed before the nature of God Himself. The eternal life of the uncreated God is implanted in the innermost part of his human personality and his whole being throbs with the divine energy of a new life. The new birth is the impartation of a new intellectual, emotional, volitional nature which produces in man a totally new life and fits him to live in a totally new sphere.

In the light of the Lord Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus it is a self-evident fact that God cannot accept any substitute for the new birth. *Reformation cannot be substituted for regeneration*. If God makes no attempt to reform "the old man" surely He cannot accept any fragmentary improvement man might effect. Reformation is purely man's work; it leaves the flesh *flesh*, for it is the human trying to better itself. Reformation may improve the character of the flesh by the lopping off of certain evil habits but it cannot change flesh into spirit. Reformation may make a man somewhat more kind, generous, courteous, but it cannot make him holy, and "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Reformation may help a man to better the condition of his living on the plane of the natural but this does not meet God's requirement for a totally new life on the plane of the spiritual.

*Respectability cannot be substituted for regeneration*. Many people are deluding themselves into thinking that if their character and conduct conform to the moral standards of the best society, that is a sufficient passport into the companionship of an altogether holy God. But God's standards are as far above man's as the heavens are above the earth.

*Religion cannot be substituted for regeneration*. Nicodemus was an ardent, active religionist but he was not a son of God or a citizen in the Kingdom of God. Over the doorway to the Kingdom of God no one will ever see written, "Admittance granted to those who have been baptized, who have been punctilious in church attendance, who have partaken of the Holy Communion, who have read the Scriptures and prayed, who have given their tithe." In His holy Word God has already written these solemn and irrevocable words over that doorway, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*." Jesus Himself, the righteous Judge, bars the gate of heaven to the unregenerate. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (See Diagram 10)



#### 4. The Holy Spirit — the Author of the New Life

But Nicodemus did marvel at what our Lord was saying and could only reply "How can these things be?" Nicodemus like many others today had preconceived ideas and prejudices which made it difficult for him either to understand or to accept the divine simplicity of God's plan of salvation. "He had to descend from the lofty heights of rabbinical learning and traditional religion and learn the alphabet of the Gospel in the school of Christ." Then, too, it would be a most humiliating thing for this prominent leader in religious circles who was supposed to teach others concerning the Kingdom to admit that he himself could not enter the Kingdom except he came as a sinner to a Saviour, confessing his need of a new nature.

But the Lord Jesus takes infinite pains to throw light into the darkened mind of Nicodemus because He knows that He is dealing with a hungry soul. So He tells him the "how" of the new birth.

John 3:8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"

As in justification, so in regeneration God takes the initiative and does the work. By grace are ye saved. The spiritual man is born of the Spirit. The new birth is God's work alone. It is a birth from above.

1 John 3:9, R.V., "*Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.*"

John 1:12-13, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"

"Born" - "not of blood..." Regeneration has no connection with natural descent. Recently I asked a gentleman if he were a Christian. Instantly he replied, "Certainly, I was born a Christian." I have a friend who felt quite sure that her *first* baby was born a Christian but now she has come to be more sure that not one of her seven could have been born Christians. God says distinctly that the divine, eternal, spiritual life of God is not passed to son but is implanted by God, the Holy Spirit, directly in the spirit of man. "Salvation does not run in the blood." Eternal life is not an inheritance from godly parents but it is the gift of God in Christ His Son.

"Born ..." - "... not of the will of the flesh." Regeneration has no connection with natural volition. The will of the flesh is hostile to God and left to itself it would never move God-ward. Did not Christ say to those who opposed Him, "Ye *will not* come to me that ye might have life"? Self-will would never abdicate in favor of God. But even if it would choose to do so it is altogether "without strength" (Romans 5:6). Good resolutions made when the heart is touched by an emotional appeal, or the turning over a new leaf on one's birthday, or at the beginning of the new year, or the fixed determination to cut one's self loose from an evil practice, do not constitute regeneration. Except grace takes the initiative and the Holy Ghost operates on the will of man he would never desire a new nature or be able to obtain one. "*So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that sheweth mercy*" (Romans 9:16).

"Born" - "not of the will of man..." Regeneration has no connection with natural relationships. God uses the faithful preaching and teaching of the Word by pastor and Sunday school teacher, the believing prayer of parents and friends, the earnest exhortation, warning and pleading of the personal worker to show another his need of a Saviour and to teach him the way of salvation, but no effort of theirs can beget in another the divine, supernatural life of God. No ordinance or rite, however sacred and holy, administered by priest or preacher has life-begetting power.

"Born" - "but of God..." Regeneration is solely the work of God. It is patent that no one can give the life of God to another but God Himself. To become a son of God one must receive the life of God from God. God, the Holy Spirit, is the sole author of this new life which He implants by a creative act in the sinner.

Sin's first devastation was wrought in the human spirit. So here is where the Holy Spirit begins His work in regeneration. In the human spirit of the believer is implanted the life of God.

Ephesians 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Ephesians 2:5, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.)"

Into this renewed human spirit the Holy Spirit comes to dwell. Here He will operate to make the implanted life a living reality. So the believer will be transformed into the image of Christ from glory to glory.

Ezekiel 36:26-27, "A new heart also will I give you, and *a new spirit will I put within you*: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. *And I will put my spirit within you*, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

1 Corinthians 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*"

In regeneration the Holy Spirit uses both a divine and a human instrument. The divine instrument is the Word of God.

1 Peter 1:23, "*Being born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever."

James 1:18, "*Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

To place the Word of God in the hands of those not yet born again or to unfold its truth to them God uses human instruments.

1 Corinthians 4:15, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: *for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*"

Galatians 4:19, "My little children, *of whom I travail in birth again* until Christ be formed in you."

## **5. The Cross — the Place of Spiritual Birth**

The Lord Jesus has told Nicodemus of the necessity, the nature, and the Author of the new birth, but he still said, "How can these things be?" Was it a *personal* question? Did Nicodemus want to know how such a miracle as regeneration could be wrought in himself even though he might still be unwilling to admit the need of it? Whether this be true or not Jesus now used the Scriptures with which this master in Israel was very familiar to tell him how he could be born again.

John 3:14-15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so must the Son of man be lifted up*: *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish*, but have eternal life."

The Old Testament incident was well known to every Jew. The Israelites were murmuring against God and Moses. The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, they were bitten by them and large numbers were dying. Moses prayed for their deliverance and the Lord told him to make a serpent of brass and to put it upon a pole that everyone who was bitten, when he looked upon it, should live.

The serpent of sin has put its deadly poison into every descendant of Adam. But God lifted up His Son, "made in the likeness of sinful flesh" to the cross where He put away sin and all its deadly effects by the sacrifice of Himself. One believing look at the serpent meant life to the death-smitten Israelite. One believing look at the crucified One means life to the one dead in trespasses and sins.

*"There is life for a look at the Crucified One;  
There is life at this moment for thee;  
Then, look, sinner, look unto Him, and be saved,  
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree."*

The cross of Christ reveals to us the Son of God dying as our Saviour. We look to Him in faith and the Holy Spirit implants in us the life of God and imparts to us the nature of God and we are born again. The cross of Jesus Christ is the believer's spiritual birthplace.

At the cross of Christ through the new birth the sinner leaves the family of Satan and becomes a son and an heir in the family of God. The new birth causes a radical reversal in his filial relationship.

Galatians 3:26, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

1 John 3:8-10, *"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."*

Romans 8:16-17, R.V., *"The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."*

At the cross of Christ through the new birth the rebel, the alien, the outlaw, becomes a citizen in the Kingdom of God.

Philippians 3:20, R.V., *"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."*

## **6. A New Creation Formed**

The new birth entitles the believer to membership in the new order of beings of which the risen Christ is the Head. Through the implantation of the divine life and the impartation of the divine nature in the believer a completely new entity is formed. The man in Christ is a new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17, R.V., margin, *"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new."*

Galatians 6:15, R.V., margin, *"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."*

In this new creation everything must partake of the character of the new nature which is its fountainhead; therefore the old things must pass away. Members of the new order have a new ambition which is to be altogether well pleasing unto the Lord its Head (2 Corinthians 5:9). To be like Christ is their supreme ambition. To attain this they are willing to count all things belonging to the old life but loss.

Philippians 3:7-8, *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."*

Members of the new order have new affections. The object of their affections has changed from self to Christ. The Holy Spirit has made the Lord Jesus so attractive and so satisfying that they can say from the heart:

*"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
More than all in Thee I find."*

The love of Christ constrains them to live unto God instead of unto themselves and to love God with all the mind, heart, strength and soul.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15, R.V., "*For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died: And he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.*"

Matthew 22:37, "Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*"

Loving God in this way with every faculty of the whole being means loving the things He loves and hating the things He hates. The expulsive power of this new affection removes the old things that grieve and displease Him; the things which are not to His honor and glory. The creative power of the new affection produces within us love for the things He cares for most, His Word, His house, His people, His day, His Kingdom.

Love for the Father includes love for all His children. The love of the Head of the new order constrains every member to love all the other members. Love for our brothers and sisters in Christ is one proof of our own rebirth.

1 John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life *because we love the brethren.* He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

The new order demands a new standard of life. Self-exaltation was the norm of the old life. Sin was less sinful than it really is and holiness was less holy than it really is.

In this new creation there is a new conception of sin. Things that before seemed altogether right now seem altogether wrong. Habits, haunts, practices, pursuits, pleasures, companionships, conversations, clothes, that were harmonious and suitable in the old sphere seem wholly out of place in the new. Their presence in the new sphere spoils its harmony and vitiates its atmosphere. After breathing the fresh, pure air of the higher altitude, the truly born-again one finds the atmosphere of the natural plane reeking with worldliness, selfishness and sin, stifling and sickening. The one born of God cannot go on sinning as he once did: he cannot continue in the practices which he knows to be contrary to God's will and Word. He has now a conception of sin which makes him loathe them.

1 John 3:9, "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*"

In the new creation there is also a new standard of measurement. In the old life the sinner measured himself by himself or by others like himself. But in the new order the victorious, obedient, holy life of the incarnate Son becomes the believer's pattern for his own life on earth and all his living is measured by that perfect standard.

Christ's unchanging and unchangeable teachings and principles are now the rule by which he lives and he rejoices in being free from the despotism of the constantly shifting customs and styles of worldly society. The new creation in Christ has a new standard of values. Time becomes an extremely precious thing, the use of which is to be sacredly guarded and prayerfully made. Money becomes invested with new meaning and power, for consecrated to the Lord and used in His service it may be the means of saving souls infinitely precious in God's sight. Men and women, boys and girls, become vastly more than flesh and blood; they are seen as God sees them, human souls lost in sin, redeemed by the precious blood of the Son of God, and waiting to be saved through faith in Him. In all things Christ the Son becomes the believer's Example.

John 13: 14-15, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*"

1 Peter 2:21, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.*"

But need we continue to enumerate the things made new through the new birth when God says so plainly that "*all things are become new*"? Indeed, they must become so because we have a new spring from which all things in our life come. "All things are of God" (2 Corinthians 5:18). The source of all our thoughts, feelings, motives, ambitions, aspirations, actions, affections, purposes and plans, is God

Himself. The new birth is just the beginning of a new life. "It is a crisis with view to a process; a rebirth with the prospect of a constant renewal."

Have you, my friend, been born again? Are you a member of the new order? Are you a new creation? If not, will you not begin that new life just now by one believing look at the crucified One?

But perchance, you have professed to come into the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ and yet you are discouraged today because of the countless old things that still persist in the new life. Is yours the case of new pieces on an old garment?

One day on the streets of Peking I saw an old countryman. He had on an old, faded, worn-out garment. It had been blue once but it was blue no longer. Right across the front and across the back of his faded garment were big, bright blue, new patches. On seeing the innocent old countryman's garment I laughed aloud. I could not help it for it looked so funny. But why did I laugh? The patches were all right. They were big and new and bright and blue and covered the whole of his garment, front and back. There was nothing the matter with the patches! Then why did I laugh? I will tell you why: because the garment and the patches were out of harmony with each other. The garment was old and faded and worn out; the patches were new and bright and blue. The garment and the patches did not belong to each other.

I wonder if as God looks down upon us today He sees some patched Christians! Some professors of Christianity rather than possessors of Christ! Perhaps you go to church, read your Bible, have daily prayer, and partake of the Holy Communion, all of which are part of every genuine Christian life. But in your life are these things like new patches on an old garment? Are they simply good habits added on to the old life of sin and self? Are you a patched Christian? ...A professor instead of a possessor? Or have the old things passed away and all things become new because you are in deed and truth a new creation in Christ?

## **Chapter Seventeen: Christ Our Lord — A New Sovereign in a New Sphere**

Crossing God's bridge of salvation the believer enters into a totally new sphere which requires the enthronement of a new Sovereign over his life. The Head of the new creation must become its Lord if all things are to become new.

When the risen Christ ascended to heaven His Father exalted Him to the place of Lordship over the universe and He included within that sovereignty the enthronement of Christ as Lord over the individual believer. To understand better the absolute necessity for such a change of sovereigns let us study these two spheres more in detail.

### **1. The Characteristic Mark of Each Sphere**

These two spheres are the exact antitheses of each other so that life in the one precludes life in the other. They may be readily distinguished because each has a characteristic mark.

Romans 8:5, "For they that are *after the flesh* do mind *the things of the flesh*; but they that are *after the Spirit* the things of the Spirit."

Romans 8:9, "But ye are not *in the flesh*, but *in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The characteristic mark of the old sphere is the "flesh" and of the new the "Spirit." The unbeliever is "in the flesh" and the believer is "in the Spirit."

The Bible teaches very plainly that "the flesh" and "the Spirit" are mutually irreconcilable enemies in totally diverse camps.

Romans 8:6, "For to be *carnally minded* is death; but to be *spiritually minded* is life and peace."

Galatians 5:17, "For the *flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, and the *Spirit against the flesh*: and *these are contrary the one to the other*: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Man became "flesh" through Adam's sin.

Genesis 6:3, R.V., "And Jehovah said, My spirit shall not strive with man for ever, *for that he also is flesh*."

The flesh is the whole natural man, the life of nature, whether good or bad, received though the first birth. It is the earthward, sinful life received through human generation. It is *all* that I am as a son of Adam.

John 3:6, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

God invariably describes "the flesh" as the cause of sin's power, of the Law's weakness, and as enmity toward Himself. God declares "the flesh" to be irreconcilably lawless.

Romans 7:25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but *with the flesh the law of sin*."

Romans 8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that *it was weak through the flesh*, God sending his own Son in the likeness of *sinful flesh*, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

Romans 8:7, "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God*: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

God sees nothing good in "the flesh." Even the very best product which physical generation can produce He casts away as altogether useless.

Romans 7:18, "For I know that *in me (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."

Paul's estimate of the flesh as given in this verse is God-inspired as anyone must readily admit who knows his former high regard for himself (Philippians 3:4-6). Through human generation Paul was indeed richly endowed. Yet inspired by the Holy Spirit he wrote "I know that in my flesh dwelleth *no* good thing." When he entered into the sphere of the Spirit he saw that the finest and best thing in him, his righteousness, was as "filthy rags" because it, too, was permeated and defiled by sin—it was *self*-righteousness. No, God sees no redeeming feature in any son of Adam. The flesh offers nothing which is acceptable to God. Indeed the flesh is the soil in which Satan works to keep the sinner alienated from God.

So there is but one possible attitude which God can have toward the flesh. It is the attitude of condemnation and rejection. God refuses to deal with the flesh on any terms for it is irretrievably displeasing to Him. "They that are in the flesh CANNOT please God" (Romans 8:8).

Regeneration opens the way for man to become spiritual. At the new birth, as we have already seen, it is the Holy Spirit who quickens our human spirit and then comes to dwell therein to make our entire life spiritual and supernatural, heavenly and holy. It is the Holy Spirit in us who causes sin's power to be broken, God's law to be kept, and love of God to be supreme.

Romans 8:2, 4, "For *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"

Romans 5:5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost* which is given unto us.

## 2. The Reign of the Old Man

In each of these spheres is a sovereign who purposes to rule with undivided authority.

Colossians 3:9-10, "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."

The sovereign in the old sphere is "the old man." The very essence of the flesh is self-will in the form of this God-resisting, God-rejecting nature. The heart of the flesh is this deep-dyed traitor which hates everything that God loves and loves everything that God hates.

The expression "the old man" is used but three times in the Bible, in Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9, and Romans 6:6. It has an equivalent in the "I" of Galatians 2:20 and in the word "sin" as used in Romans 6. The term commonly used is "self." Through the first Adam's fall, "self" usurped the throne of man's personality and has held it in its control and use ever since. Every child is born into the world with king "self" on the throne, a fact which is made evident before he can even walk or talk.

"The old man" on the throne determines what the whole life from center to circumference shall be. His evil desires become evil deeds; his unholy aspirations are transmitted into unholy acts; his unrighteous character manifests itself in unrighteous conduct; his ungodly will is expressed in ungodly works.

Ephesians 2:3, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, *fulfilling the desires of the flesh* and of the mind."

Colossians 3:9, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off *the old man with his deeds.*"

Galatians 5: 19-21, "*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; of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*"

"The old man" demands an environment that is in full accord with his tastes and inclinations, all of which are earthborn. He feeds on the things that are seen, he walks by sight, he revels in "the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes," and "the pride of life." So the only atmosphere in which he could live and breathe is that of the world. "The world" is "the old man's" native heath.

1 John 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, *is not of the Father, but is of the world.*"

### 3. The Dethronement of the Old Man — Co-Crucifixion with Christ

The vast majority of Christians stop short in their experience of the blessings of salvation with the joy of forgiveness of past sins and with the hope of heaven in the future. But the present is a forty-year wilderness experience full of futile wanderings, never enjoying peace and rest, never arriving in the promised land.

The history of God's dealing with the children of Israel is full of helpfulness and instruction for us at this point. Indeed it is typical of every phase of our deliverance from the old sphere and our entrance into the new. Egypt is the type of the world; the oppression of Pharaoh typifies the bondage to Satan in which the sinner is held; Canaan, the promised land flowing with milk and honey, typifies the heavenlies in which the believer has every spiritual blessing.

God purposed not only to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt but into Canaan, not only out of bondage but into rest. There are three distinct stages recorded of this deliverance; while still in Egypt they were delivered from the judgment of death through the sprinkling of the blood of the Paschal lamb upon the doorposts; then they were delivered out of Egypt and from the enemies who pursued them by the miraculous passage of the Red Sea. Due to their rebellion and unbelief the forty long, weary years of futile wandering in the wilderness followed, during which all of the people, except Caleb and Joshua, died, never having "possessed their possessions." Then came the last stage in their deliverance when the two, who had wholly followed the Lord, led the new generation of Israelites into the promised land through the miraculous passage of the river Jordan. There they had victory over their enemies, entered into the possession of their inheritance and had rest.

God purposes not only to bring the sinner out of the world but into the heavenlies: not only out of sinfulness but into sainthood. There are three distinct stages in this deliverance which represent three different aspects of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not stages in the sense of being marked off in point of time for they all belong to the believer through his relationship to the crucified, risen, exalted Lord and are his in experience the moment he apprehends and claims them by faith.

While still in bondage God speaks to the sinner telling him the way of deliverance from death, through faith in the shed blood of the Lamb of God. This results in the joy and peace of forgiveness; this covers the past. But the sinner needs much more than this for he needs to be taken out of the old sphere and to be freed from the grip of his old enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. This is the passage of the Red Sea—the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ which makes a way clean out of the old sphere for the believer and at the same time swallows up the pursuing enemies in utter defeat and destruction. This is the believer's justification which gives him the standing before God of a freed and justified man and places the cross and the open tomb between him and his enemies.

Just here many believers stop; satisfied with release from the servitude of Pharaoh's land but not seeking the delights and rest of God's land of promise. They stop short of the last stage of the journey; hence the years of wilderness wandering, constantly going but never getting anywhere. They have been taken out of Egypt but Egypt is still in them. They hanker for the things of the world and of the flesh. Their lives are characterized by selfishness, murmuring, defeat, dissatisfaction, rebellion and fruitlessness. The Jordan crossing is still ahead for them. I wonder if this book has found such a wilderness wanderer in you? If so, may it come as God's Joshua to lead you over the Jordan into the land of your perfect inheritance in Christ Jesus. Through justification and regeneration the believer is separated from the old sphere of the natural man and all that pertains to it; through identification with Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension, he is brought out of the wilderness wanderings of the carnal life and into the victory, peace and rest of the spiritual life. Let us study together now what the crossing of the Jordan typifies for the believer.

Few people are willing to admit that "the old man" sits upon the throne and rules the whole being with despotic power. Even among Christians there are gross ignorance of and indifference to the subtle, insidious workings of the old "I." If the grosser "works of the flesh" are absent from the life, the individual rests in a complacent sense of goodness failing altogether to apprehend how obnoxious to God are the more refined and less openly manifest sins of the spirit and how they separate one leagues upon leagues from His pure holiness. No man living, except the one who through the enabling Spirit has seen Christ in His righteousness and holiness, will ever willingly say, "I know that in me (that is, in *my* flesh,) dwelleth *no* good thing."

Let us, then, pause for a moment to take a full-length portrait of this hideous, heinous self; let us face honestly his manifold operations and see if we are not forced to accept God's estimate of him and to acquiesce in the method of deliverance from his sovereignty. The foundation of life in the natural man is

foursquare; self-will, self-love, self-trust, and self-exaltation, and upon this foundation is reared a superstructure that is one huge capital "I." Self-will is the cornerstone and self-exaltation is the capstone.

*Self-Will*—"We have turned every one to his own way." The flesh wants its own way and is determined to have it even if it defies and disobeys God and overrides others. "I will" is the alphabet out of which self fashions its language of life.

*Self-centeredness*—"the old man" feeds upon himself. He is the beginning and the end. Life presents little that interests or affects him except as it relates to himself. He is the center of the world in which he lives and moves and he always looks out for number one.

*Self-assertion*—"the old man" believes that everyone is as interested in him and as fascinated by him as he himself is, so he protrudes and projects himself into the sight, hearing and notice of others continually. He monopolizes conversation and the theme is always "I," "my" and "mine." He walks with a swagger and expects the world to stop work and look at him. And he never dreams how offensive his self-importance is to others.

*Self-depreciation*—"the old man" is very versatile and sometimes it suits his purpose better to clothe his pride in a false humility. He curls up in his self-depreciation and shirks a lot of hard work which other people have to do. He magnifies his littleness and feebleness to his own advantage, yet with strange inconsistency he resents others' taking his professed estimate of himself and treating him accordingly.

*Self-conceit*—"the old man" lives so much in himself that he does not know how big the world is in which he lives and how many other really intelligent people there are in it, so he has little regard for the opinions of others, especially if contrary to his own. He looks with proud and supercilious pity upon those less favored and gifted than himself.

*Self-love*—"the old man" loves himself supremely, one might say almost exclusively. He loves God not at all and his human love for others is tainted more or less with selfishness, jealousy, envy or impurity. Indeed "the old man" makes an idol of himself which he not only loves but worships.

*Self-indulgence*—"the old man" eats, drinks, and is merry. For him to want anything is equivalent to having it. He pampers and coddles himself; he can even indulge his extravagant, fleshly appetites while others starve to death before his eyes.

*Self-pleasing*—"the old man" chafes under discomfort and deprivation and is grumpy and peevish unless everything in the life of his day ministers to his real or imagined needs. He lives unto only one person whose name is self.

*Self-seeking*—"the old man" is on a quest: he is after whatever will advance the cause of self. He seeks with feverish ambition and activity praise, position, power, prominence, and anything that checks his gaining them is attributed to others.

*Self-pity*—his love for himself often creates within "the old man" rebellion against his circumstances or relationships; he exaggerates his own possible suffering, discomfort or sorrow and makes himself and others miserable by his habitual murmuring.

*Self-sensitiveness*—"the old man" is extremely hard to live with because he is covered with wounds and is continually being hurt afresh. He is not very companionable because usually he is dissolved in tears, shrouded in silence, or enjoying a pout.

*Self-defense*—"the old man" is very jealous of his rights and busy avenging his wrongs. He indulges freely in lawsuits. In his pursuit of his own vindication and justification in cases of disagreement and estrangement with others he is blinded by his own sin.

*Self-trust*—"the old man" is very self-confident and feels no need of one wiser and stronger than himself. Trusting in his own powers and resources he is prone to say "Though all men shall deny Thee, yet will not I."

*Self-sufficiency*—the self-confidence of "the old man" fosters an egotistical, smug self-satisfaction which leaves him stagnant. He has neither desire nor sense of need for anything beyond what he already possesses.

*Self-consciousness*—"the old man" never forgets himself: wherever he goes he casts a shadow of himself before. He is constantly occupied with photographing himself and developing the plates. He is chained to himself and as he walks one hears the clank of the chains. He is often morbidly self-introspective.

*Self-exaltation*—"the old man" is absorbed in his own excellencies: he overestimates himself and his abilities: he thirsts for admiration and praise and he thrives on flattery. He secretly worships at the shrine "self" and he wishes others to do so publicly.

*Self-righteousness*—"the old man" loves to dress himself in the garments of morality, benevolence and public-spiritedness. He even patronizes the church and often assists in drives for raising money for philanthropic and religious purposes, heading the list of donors with a handsome gift. He keeps a double entry account book—both with the church and with the world and expects a reward both on earth and in heaven.

*Self-glorying*—perhaps "the old man" resents this plain delineation of himself as he really is and thinks the condemnation too sweeping. Immediately he begins to enumerate his good qualities, his amiableness, geniality, tolerance, self-control, sacrificial spirit and other virtues. In doing so he takes all the credit to himself for what he is, exhibiting ill-concealed pride and vanity.

All that we have desired to say of this hideous ugly self is said most tellingly by Gerhard Tersteegen in the following lines:

*"Apart from Thee  
I am not only naught but worse than naught,  
A wretched monster, horrible of mien!  
And when I work my works in self's vain strength,  
However good and holy they may seem,  
These works are hateful—nay, in Thy pure sight  
Are criminal and fiendish, since thereby  
I seek, and please, and magnify myself  
In subtle pride of goodness, and ascribe  
To Self the glory that is Thine alone.  
So dark, corrupt, so vile a thing is self.  
Seen in the presence of Thy purity  
It turns my soul to loathing and disgust;  
Yea, all the virtues that it boasts to own,  
Are foul and worthless when I look on Thee.  
Oh that there might be no more I or mine!  
That in myself I might no longer own  
As mine, my life, my thinking, or my choice,  
Or any other motion, but in me  
That Thou, my God, my Jesus might be all,  
And work the all in all! Let that, O Lord,  
Be dumb, forever die, and cease to be,  
Which Thou doest not Thyself in me inspire,  
And speak and work."*

Is this delineation of self true or untrue? You have three ways by which you may judge and decide; what God's Word says of him, what you have seen of his manifestation in other lives, and what you know to be true of yourself. In the light of our own experience is there one of us who would not have to confess to every one of these hateful manifestations of self at some moment in a greater or less degree? We each of us know what a hydra-headed monster that old "I" is. Luther knew it and said "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals. I have within me that great Pope Self."

What, then, shall be done with this most stubborn foe? ...this most tyrannical sovereign? ...this bold usurper of God's place? God has declared very plainly in His Word what He has already done with him. He has but one place for "the old man" and that is the cross, and but one plan for the termination of his despotic rule and that is by his crucifixion with Christ.

Romans 6:6, R.V., "Knowing this, that *our old man was crucified with him*, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin."

Galatians 2:20, R.V., "*I have been crucified with Christ*; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15, R.V., "For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that *one died for all, therefore all died*: And he died for all, that *they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him* who for their sakes died and rose again."

Two things explicitly stated in these verses should be noted; first, that the crucifixion of "the old man" is an already accomplished fact, and second, that it is a co-crucifixion.

Notice the tenses: "was crucified"—past, and "have been crucified"—past perfect. The judicial crucifixion of "the old man" took place centuries ago. Whether or not a single soul ever accepted this glorious fact that the entire old creation in Adam was carried to the cross and there crucified with Christ, it is as gloriously true as the fact that Christ Himself was crucified.

"One died for all."

**Substitution**—the Saviour on the cross for the sinner.

"Therefore all died."

**Identification**—the sinner on the cross with the Saviour.

It is part of the flawless provision of God's grace for the believer that everything that pertains to the old nature should terminate its sinful course at the cross. Whether from "sins" or from "self" the cross is God's only place of deliverance. But as surely as Christ Jesus "bore my sins in His own body on the tree" just so surely was my "old man crucified with Him" there. If I accept and act upon the one fact by faith, consistently I must accept and act upon the other fact by faith.

Deliverance from the old sphere "in the flesh" and entrance into the new sphere "in the spirit" demands the dethronement of self. It is very evident that a house divided against itself cannot stand. No house can entertain two masters without unceasing conflict. If the Lord Jesus is to take the throne and rule over the human personality then "the old man" must abdicate. That he will never do. So God must deal drastically with him. He is a usurper whom God has condemned, and sentenced to death. In His infinite grace God carried out that sentence on Calvary's cross. And now God declares to every person who cries out for deliverance from the tyranny of self, "the old man was crucified with Christ." Do you believe it and find it increasingly true?

I was once leading a series of meetings in a school in China and was showing the way of deliverance from both the penalty and the power of sin through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. One message was particularly on the theme we are now considering. The most attentive listener in the audience was a man who had been the classical teacher in that school for eleven years. Although he had daily heard the Gospel in chapel and had attended church he had never become a Christian. But during those days the Spirit of God worked mightily in his heart convicting and convincing him and finally leading him to an open confession of Christ. In conversation with a missionary afterward this teacher said that, although he had believed the Gospel truth that Christ died for his sins, he had never accepted Him as Saviour because this did not seem to fully meet his need. He said that he was under the dominion of sin, and was governed by that old sinful nature and that not until he learned that God in Christ's cross had dealt with that root, *sin*, out of which came the fruit, *sins*, did he believe it was a salvation sufficient to deliver him. But he found in this glorious truth of the crucifixion of "the old man" that God is able to save to the uttermost those that come to Him in Christ and accept the full work of His cross.

The second fact which these verses make clear is that this is a co-crucifixion. "Our old man" was crucified *with Christ*. This declares both the method and the time of this crucifixion. There is often confusion at this point.

Paul says, "I have been crucified *with Christ*." He did not try to crucify himself nor did his crucifixion take place at some special point in his spiritual experience through some act on his part. With that death Paul had no more to do than he had with the death of Christ Himself. The crucifixion of that old "I" was not *self*-crucifixion neither did it take place in Damascus, Arabia, nor when Paul was "caught up to the third heaven." But the death of the "I," which was Saul, took place on the cross when Christ died there.

The truth becomes easy of apprehension if we but remember that God sees every person either in Adam or in Christ. He deals with the human race through these two representative men. When Adam died the human race died in him. You died in Adam. So did I. Through that spiritual death "the old man" found birth and usurped God's place on the throne of man's life. Christ came as the last Adam to recover for God and for the race all that had been lost to them through the first Adam. God's method of defeating death is through death, so Christ died and the race of sinners died in Him. "One died for all: *therefore all died*."

When the last Adam died "the old man" died with Him. The old "I" in you and in me was judicially crucified with Christ. "Ye *died*" and your death dates from the death of Christ. "The old man," the old "self" in God's reckoning was taken to the cross with Christ and crucified and taken into the tomb with Christ and buried.

Romans 6:3-4, R.V., "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? *We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death*: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."

The perfection of God's grace is marvelously manifested in this glorious fact of co-crucifixion - the sinner with the Saviour on the cross. It needs only the perfection of man's faith to make it a glorious reality in his spiritual experience. Assurance of deliverance from the sphere of the "flesh" and of the dethronement of "the old man" rests upon the apprehension and acceptance of this fact of co-crucifixion.

#### **4. The Creation of the New Man. Co-resurrection with Christ**

Co-crucifixion opens the door into co-resurrection. Death is the gate to life. Identification with Christ in His death and burial is but the beginning of the believer's union with Him in endless life. Death is both an ending and a beginning; an exit and an entrance.

Romans 6:5, R.V., "For if we have become *united with him in the likeness of his death*, we shall be *also in the likeness of his resurrection*."

Romans 6:8, R.V., "But if *we died with Christ*, we believe that *we shall also live with him*."

Identification with Christ in His quickening, resurrection, and ascension takes the believer into the new sphere of the "Spirit" and begins the life of "the new man."

Ephesians 2:4-6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, *hath quickened us together with Christ* (by grace ye are saved;) and *hath raised us up together*, and *made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*."

Ephesians 4:24, "And that *ye put on the new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

"Together with Christ" on the cross, in the tomb, in the heavenlies! Thus would the exalted Lord of glory, Head of the new creation, share with every believer the glorious victory of His death, the mighty power of His resurrection, and the regal bounty of His throne.

*"If Christ would live and reign in me,  
I must die;  
With Him I crucified must be;  
I must die;  
Lord, drive the nails, nor heed the groans,  
My flesh may writhe and make its moans,  
But in this way, and this alone,  
I must die.*

*When I am dead, then Lord to Thee  
I shall live;  
My time, my strength, my all to Thee  
I shall give.  
O may the Son now make me free!  
Here, Lord, I give my all to Thee;  
For time and for eternity  
I will live."*

#### **5. The New Sphere — the Believer In Christ**

The moment a penitent sinner puts his faith in the atoning blood of the crucified Christ that moment he steps out of life "in Adam" and enters into life "in Christ." Forever after, he is ensphered and environed by the Lord of glory. He is "*in Christ Jesus*" and will be through the ages upon the ages to come. All that he is and has he is and has "in Christ." In God's reckoning the believer has no life apart from His Son. Christ is

the ground in which he is rooted and planted. Through the new birth the believer became a new creation with a new nature which demanded a new environment, a new atmosphere, as it were, where the new life could mature into an ever deepening conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. This new environment is "in Christ."

Let us read a few passages out of scores in the Bible in which this expression "in Christ" is used to show that from the eternity of the past through our present life on into the eternity of the future God thinks of who have accepted Christ as Saviour only in this relationship to His Son.

Ephesians 1:4, "According as he hath *chosen us in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Ephesians 1:6, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us *accepted in the beloved*."

Ephesians 2:13, "But now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off *are made nigh* by the blood of Christ."

1 John 2:6, "He that saith he *abideth in him* ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

Philippians 3:9, "And be *found in him*, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Romans 16:10, "Salute Apelles *approved in Christ*."

Colossians 2:7, "*Rooted and built up in him*, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he is *a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to *triumph in Christ*, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."

1 Corinthians 1:2, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

Colossians 2:9-10, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are *complete in him*, which is the head of all principality and power.

Colossians 1:28, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man *perfect in Christ Jesus*."

That every reader of this book might be led into a clearer apprehension of this marvelous truth I would commend the reading of the late Dr. A. T. Pierson's book *In Christ*. To whet the appetite for it I would quote the following from the introduction:

"A very small key may open a very complex lock and a very large door and that door may itself lead into a vast building with priceless stores of wealth and beauty. This brief phrase 'In Christ,' a preposition followed by a proper name, is the key to the whole New Testament. Those three short words, 'In Christ Jesus' are without doubt the most important ever written, even by an inspired pen, to express the mutual relation of the believer and Christ. They occur with their equivalents over one hundred and thirty times. Such repetition and variety must have some intense meaning. When, in the Word of God a phrase like this occurs so often and with such manifold applications, it cannot be a matter of accident; there is a deep design. These two words unlock and interpret every separate book in the New Testament. Here is God's own key whereby we may open all the various doors and enter all the glorious rooms in this Palace Beautiful and explore all the apartments in the house of the heavenly Interpreter from Matthew to the Apocalypse, when the door is opened into Heaven."

This relationship of the believer to the Lord Jesus determines his position, his privileges and his possessions. To be in Christ is to be where He is, to be what He is and to share what He has.

The believer in Christ is where Christ is. Christ is in His Father's immediate presence, He is at the Father's right hand, He is in the Father's sight; so is the believer in Christ.

Ephesians 2:6, "And hath raised us up together, and made us *sit together in heavenly places in Christ.*"

Colossians 3:3, "For ye are dead, and *your life is hid with Christ in God.*"

Christ has left the earth as His place of abode and now dwells in the heavenlies. The believer is in Christ, therefore even now while still on earth his real citizenship is in heaven and he is a pilgrim upon earth for his real life is in Christ.

Philippians 3:20, R.V., "For *our citizenship is in heaven*; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 13:14, "For *here have we no continuing city*, but we seek one to come."

Therefore the believer's heart is set upon heavenly things; he values and seeks heavenly things more than earthly.

Colossians 3:1-2, "If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above*, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. *Set your affection on things above*, not on things on the earth."

Do I hear someone say, "This is too high a standard for me; it is not only impossible but unattractive. I am on the earth and in this world, therefore, why should I not live as though I were and enjoy what this earth and this world have to give me, and leave the enjoyment of heaven until I reach there?" Such is the reasoning of vast numbers of Christians and their lives are in full harmony with their reasoning. As someone has aptly said they have become Christians much as a man takes out a life insurance policy—something that does not in any way alter one's manner of living but will be of use after death and is maintained with the payment of a yearly premium. With many a person becoming a Christian has made little if any difference in either his character or conduct. He is still of the earth—earthly.

Is it not conceivable that God would have us become acclimated to our eternal home in heaven with Christ during our transient stay on earth? If the atmosphere of heaven is stifling to me here what will it be to me there? If the heavenly pleasures and pursuits are unattractive to me now, what will they be to me then? There is music in heaven but it is not jazz; there are pleasures there but they are not the pleasures of the ballroom, the card table, or the cinema; there are pursuits in the glory land but not that of making money or a name or a place in society. Death is both an exit and an entrance all in one. For the believer it closes the door on earth to open one into heaven. There is not one instant for preparation for that higher altitude. If my heart cannot stand it here how will it stand it there?

Or is it unthinkable that God would wish to open a window into that blessed realm of light and life to some wayward, worn traveler on the road of darkness and death through the Spirit-filled lives of believers on earth? In fact is that not one of His most effectual ways today of making known the beauties and excellencies of that other world? Does He not want to bring heaven to earth that He may woo earth to heaven? And how else can He do it but through heaven-born, heaven-filled men and women?

Again is there one so selfish, so grasping, as to wish to get all from God and give nothing to God? Is there one who would accept a pass from earth to heaven provided only through God's matchless grace and marvelous love, who still will spend all his time and substance in pleasure-seeking?

No, God means that life down here shall be in harmony with life up there; that even while sojourning on earth we shall live a life partaking of the nature of heaven, a life holy and heavenly in character and conduct.

In Christ Jesus the believer is what Christ is in the reckoning of God. Christ, the Head, and the believer, a member of His Body, are one. Through this wonderful identification God looks upon us as joint-heirs with Christ, entering into and occupying the same position and enjoying the same privileges as His Son.

Romans 8:17, "And, if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and *joint-heirs with Christ*; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

We are so enfolded and environed by the Lord Jesus that God cannot see Christ today without seeing us. This moment as God looks upon His Son at His right hand He sees you and me if we are in Christ Jesus.

*"Near, so very near to God  
Nearer I could not be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
I'm just as near as He.  
Dear, so very dear to God,  
Dearer I could not be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
I'm just as dear as He."*

In Christ Jesus the believer shares with Christ all His possessions. Every spiritual blessing is ours in Christ. Dare we believe it? All things are ours in Christ. Dare we act as though we believed it?

Ephesians 1:3, R.V., "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us *with every spiritual blessing* in the heavenly places in Christ."

Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, *how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*"

1 Corinthians 3:21, "Therefore let no man glory in men. *For all things are yours.*"

God says in these and many other passages that the possessions of the exalted Christ are the possessions of the one united to Him by faith. Identification with Him in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension includes identification with Him in all the gain and the glory, all the privileges and possessions gained by Him through His passion. Christ's victory over Satan and all the forces of evil is ours and His present life of rest, peace and joy is ours.

What, then, should be the Christian's chief business in life? To possess his possessions in Christ Jesus that in daily life and service he may realize and utilize to the full his spiritual inheritance. How may this be done?

**1.** ...through *spiritual apprehension* of our riches in Christ:

1 Corinthians 2:12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*"

We could never know of ourselves but the Spirit knows and indwells us that He may illumine us regarding our riches in Christ.

**2.** ...through *spiritual aspiration* for our riches in Christ:

Colossians 3:1-2, "*Seek those things which are above . . . . Set your affection on things above.*"

Not only through the Holy Spirit's illumination but also through His impelling shall we possess our riches in Christ. The indwelling Spirit creates within us the desire for all our spiritual inheritance.

**3.** ...through *spiritual appropriation* of our riches in Christ:

2 Corinthians 3:18, R.V., "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, *even as from the Lord the Spirit.*"

Faith lays hold on our inheritance in Christ and appropriates that which God has so prodigally provided. We are energized by the Holy Spirit to take these things by faith.

## **6. The New Sovereign—Christ IN the Believer**

Through the new birth the believer enters into the Kingdom of God where God's will is supreme. The life of every loyal subject is lived wholly in the will of God. The government of God has spiritual laws which operate beneficently for the well-being both of the individual and of society in every department of life. Wherever these laws are implicitly obeyed, there the will of God is done on earth as in heaven, and peace,

rest and unity prevail. Through the new birth the believer enters into the family of God where the Father's will is supreme. The life of every filial child is lived wholly in the will of the Father.

Self-will is the cornerstone upon which Satan's kingdom is built and he constantly tempts the Christian to disobey. No man in his own strength is able to resist. Only one Man ever has wholly resisted it and refused the control of Satan over his will. Now as Head of the new creation He is absolute Lord in the new sphere.

By virtue of entering into that sphere every believer acknowledges Christ Jesus to be the Lord of his life and accepts the will of God as his rule of life. When Christ is thus crowned as Lord, then the responsibility is His to keep the believer from falling and to enable him to resist every temptation of Satan.

John 13:13, "*Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.*"

Romans 14:8-9, R.V., "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, *we are the Lord's*. For to this end Christ died and lived again, *that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.*"

To many Christians the most difficult thing they have to do is to consent willingly to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their whole being. They are loath to admit the necessity of the absolute dethronement of "the old man" and the perfect enthronement of the Lord Jesus. As someone has very aptly said, "I was quite willing that Jesus Christ should be King, so long as He allowed me to be Prime Minister." But Christ shares His Lordship with no one and unless "He is Lord of all, He is not Lord at all." -

But the perfection of God's grace meets even this weakness and inability in us in His gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit who enables us by His inward working to crown Christ Lord.

Thus Christ Jesus establishes His throne at the very center of the new creation and from there rules to the circumference of the believer's being. He becomes Lord of all.

## Chapter Eighteen: Christ Our Life — A Perfect Oneness Effectuated

Christ Jesus was made like us that we might be made like Him. In the incarnation there was the union of Deity with humanity that in regeneration there might be the union of humanity with Deity. When the Holy Spirit begat in the believer a new nature He opened the door to a living, organic union between Christ and the Christian which will exist through the ages upon ages to come. Christ and the Christian are eternally one. The exalted Christ lives now to bestow upon us in all of its fullness His own triumphant, joyous, holy life.

To be a Christian is nothing less than to have the glorified Christ living in us in actual presence, possession and power. It is to have Him as *the Life of our life* in such a way and to such a degree that we can say even as Paul said, "To me to live is Christ." To be a Christian is to *grow up into Christ in all things*: it is to have that divine seed which was planted in our innermost spirit blossom out into a growing conformity to His perfect life. To be a Christian is to have Christ the life of our minds, our hearts, our wills, so that it is Christ thinking through us, loving through us, willing through us. It is increasingly to have no life but the life of Christ within us filling us with ever increasing measure.

But I can hear some modern Nicodemus say, "How can these things be?" How can I live such a life in my home where I receive no sympathy nor help but rather ridicule and scoffing, and where I have for so long lived a sinful and a defeated life? How can I live a truly consistent Christ-life in my social circle where there is scarcely a person who ever gives Him a thought and where His name is never mentioned? How can I live "in the Spirit" in a place of business where I am surrounded by those living altogether "in the flesh" and where the very atmosphere seems surcharged with evil? How can I even learn to live the life more abundant when my membership is in a thoroughly worldly church where little is given to feed and strengthen my spiritual life?

As we are in Christ in the heavenlies so is He in us on earth. Christ in us can live this life anywhere, and that is what He longs to do. This truth our Lord gave in germ in His last conversation with His disciples on earth. He had told them that He was going away from them and they were wondering how they could ever be true disciples apart from Him. The burden of this last conversation was to assure them He would be with them in a spiritual Presence far more real and vital than the relationship they had with Him up to that time. The same life that was in Him as the Vine would flow through them as branches.

John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and *I in him*, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

It was likewise the burden of our Lord's high priestly prayer on that last night.

John 17:23, 26, "*I in them*, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. And I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou has loved me may be in them, and *I in them*."

"*I in them*"—these three simple but significant words close the prayer with that little inner circle in which He breathed forth the passionate desire of His heart for His own on down through the centuries. Now as well as then, it is the consuming desire of Jesus Christ to incarnate Himself in the Christian.

The apostle Paul in the revelation given him laid hold upon this precious, glorious truth and it is woven into the warp and woof of his experience, his preaching, and his missionary service. "Christ liveth in me" was the very acme of his personal spiritual life.

Galatians 2:20, B. V., "I have been crucified with Christ; and *it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me*: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."

Philippians 1:21, "*For to me to live is Christ*."

"Christ liveth in me" so that "To me to live is Christ"—there was nothing beyond this for Paul. Having the glorified Christ as his very life was all-inclusive in Paul's spiritual experience. This to him was *life on the highest plane*.

"*Christ in you*" was the heart of his message to the churches. It rang out with clarion clearness in all Paul's teaching and preaching. A cross section from any of Paul's epistles would reveal this truth written in capital letters.

Colossians 1:27, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; *which is Christ in you*, the hope of glory."

"*Christ in you*" was the very passion of his missionary service. Paul might employ different methods in his service for God, he might be all things to all men, but the end, the aim, the goal of it all was just one thing with him—that Christ Jesus Himself might be formed in each one who heard the Gospel message.

Galatians 4:19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again *until Christ be formed in you*."

To be a Christian is to accept Christ as Saviour and to crown Him as Lord. But there is one step more: it is to appropriate Him as Life. As the works within the watch are the real life of the watch so the Lord Jesus within the believer is the real life of the believer. "The Christian life is not merely a converted life nor even a consecrated life, but it is a Christ-life." Christ is the Christian's center; Christ is the Christian's circumference; Christ is all in between. As Paul has put it "Christ *is* all and *in* all."

Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

### **A Perfect Oneness Effected**

The spiritual history of a believer could be written in two phrases, "Ye in me" and "I in you." In God's reckoning Christ and the believer have become one in such a way that Christ is both in the heavenlies and upon earth and the believer is both on earth and in the heavenlies. The Church without Christ is a Body without a Head; Christ without the Church is a Head without a Body. The fullness of the Head is for the Body and the Body is "the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Colossians 2:9-10, B. V., "For *in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full*, who is the head of all principality and power.

Ephesians 1:22-23, B. V., "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to *the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all*."

Could God tell us more clearly that in His divine purpose He means for the fullness of Christ to be the fullness of the Christian? It is a staggering thought! Its' plain import is that you and I and all other Christians are to bring Christ down from heaven to earth and to let men see even in us who He is and what He has done and what He can do in a human life. It is to have Christ's life in such a perfection of likeness that men see Him in us and are drawn to Him in faith and love. It is to be such a oneness of life that one's human personality is but a vessel in which the beauty, holiness and glory of the Lord Jesus shine forth in undimmed transparency.

But here I hear the murmur of a doubting Thomas, "Except I see this Christ-life more perfectly in my fellow Christian or experience it more fully in my own life I will not believe it is possible!" All I can say in answer to this is, "I believe because I have seen." For six weeks I lived in a heaven upon earth in a Chicago boardinghouse, incredible as that may seem. It was run by a little woman who weighed about eighty-five pounds and who was kept from falling into a heap upon the floor by a brace which was worn night and day. She had lived on the third floor for two years with no outlook but the blue sky above and a patch of green grass a few feet square below. But her eyes shone like stars, upon her face was a smile that intense bodily suffering, straitened financial circumstances, few social contacts, limited opportunities for enjoyment of God's great and wonderful world, had not been able to remove, and mirrored in that face was a light that one never sees on sea or land except where the Light of the world dwells in undimmed brightness. Christ was the Life of her life.

A young Chinese man who had been a Christian less than two years came one day for a bit of Christian fellowship. From a godless life he had been very marvelously converted and transformed. Christ had in deed and truth become all and in all to him. After he left the house that day a gentleman who saw him for

only a brief moment said, "Who was that young man? I never met anyone who so instantly compelled me to think of Christ as did he."

A Christian businessman lay dying of cancer in a hospital. Friends called to comfort him and they left feeling that they had not only been taken to the very door of heaven but even that they had seen the King in His beauty. Christ had been the Life of his life in health and continued to be so in sickness.

A young woman of nobility and wealth was on the road that led into worldliness and ease, when she met her Lord. Captivated by His mighty love and power, even as was the apostle of old, she too said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The answer was, "I would go through you to carry the Gospel to China." For nearly thirty years she has been there without a furlough, working and praying through the cold of winter and the heat of summer, with only an occasional vacation of a week or two. In more than twenty places are groups of worshipers of the true God and many hundreds have been eternally blessed through that life crucified, buried, and risen with Jesus Christ. You say, "She must be old, worn and haggard." Far, far from it. In her beautiful face is all the joyous gladness of youth and yet all the wondrous peace of the twilight years of a life lived in the constant and conscious presence of the living God. Even a stranger immediately recognizes in that life something more than human; something that belongs to another world than this. Christ is the Life of her life.

A little girl of eleven years of age lay dying. She deeply and dearly loved her Lord and as He came to take her home she seemed fairly transfigured. She called father, mother, brothers and sisters to her and with the very love of Christ filling and flooding her little heart she pleaded with them to meet her in heaven. An elder sister who loved that child as she loved no one else went from that room crushed but with her heart steeled against her sister's Christ. Out into a life of reckless worldliness she went but ever haunted by the face of Christ and the voice of Christ as she had seen and heard it in her little sister. Two years passed by but the vision of His face and the sound of His voice were not dimmed and finally that cold, resisting heart was melted into such love of the Lord Jesus that she joyously accepted Him as her Saviour, and her life was marvelously transformed. Christ was the Life of that eleven-year-old child.

Is He the Life of your life? Could this be said of you?

*"Not I, but Christ be honoured, loved, exalted,  
Not I, but Christ be seen, be known, be heard;  
Not I, but Christ in every thought and action,  
Not I, but Christ in every look and word."*

The thought of living such a Christ-life could well make us tremble and fear did God not make it so clear that He does not expect us to live it in our own strength and power but that in the gift of the Holy Spirit He has made ample provision for our growing conformity into the image of His Son and for a continuous renewal of Christ's life within us. It is the Holy Spirit who brings the fullness of Christ's life in the heavenlies into our life on earth.

2 Corinthians 3:18, B. V., "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."

Ephesians 3:16-17, 19, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

*"There's a Man in the Glory  
Whose Life is for me,  
He's pure and He's holy,  
Triumphant and free.  
He's wise and He's loving,  
Tender is He;  
And His Life in the Glory,  
My life must be.*

*"There's a Man in the Glory  
Whose Life is for me,  
He overcame Satan;*

*From bondage He's free.  
In life He is reigning,  
Kingly is He;  
And His Life in the Glory,  
My life must be.*

*"There's a Man in the Glory  
Whose Life is for me,  
In Him is no sickness:  
No weakness has He.  
He's strong and in vigour,  
Buoyant is He;  
And His Life in the Glory,  
My life may be.*

*"There's a Man in the Glory  
Whose Life is for me.  
His peace is abiding;  
Patient is He.  
He's joyful and radiant,  
Expecting to see  
His Life in the Glory  
Lived out in me.*

## **Chapter Nineteen: Christ Our Sanctification - A People for His Possession and Use**

The Christian is a new creation, in a new sphere with a new Sovereign, living a new life, all of which speaks of differentiation and distinctiveness. The Christian is a marked man. There is a distinct line of cleavage between the man "in the flesh" and the man "in the Spirit." There is a definite boundary between "the world" and "the heavnlies" and the man who through redemption has stepped over that border line is thereby a sanctified man. Christ, the Saviour, has become his sanctification.

The necessity for sanctification will be clearly seen when we remember that man was created for God's possession and use but through sin he fell into the possession and use of Satan. In sanctification God recovers His own and fits him for communion and cooperation with Himself.

Sanctification, as Scripture reveals, has a very vital relationship to the believer's calling, position and condition. This is typified in God's redemptive dealings with the children of Israel. Through His call to Abraham God chose and set apart a nation for Himself. With them He made a covenant by which they were to be separated from all other peoples upon the earth and were to become a holy people who would show forth the praise and glory of His name among the heathen nations. The children of Israel were set apart as God's peculiar possession, under His sovereign control and for His exclusive use.

Deuteronomy 14:2, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and *the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*"

But the children of Israel were sold into the bondage of Egypt and became the subject—slaves of Pharaoh. That He might repossess His own, God redeemed them and brought them out of Egypt and into Canaan. In position as well as by calling they became a separated people; God's own possession.

Leviticus 20:24, 26, "But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey; *I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people.* And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and *have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*"

Numbers 3:13, "*Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the LORD.*"

Then God commanded them to live as a people who belonged wholly unto Him. The separateness which He had wrought through their changed position was to be manifested through a changed condition. As a people in covenant with a holy God, they were to live a holy life in the midst of altogether unholy nations and were to be God's instrument in the conquest of the promised land.

Leviticus 20:7-8, "*Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you.*"

### **1. The Believer: A Saint by Calling**

In the New Testament God says that believers are a chosen, called, and separated people. In Christ the believer was set apart as God's own peculiar possession even before the foundation of the world. Every believer is chosen in Christ to be holy; he is called to be a saint; he is set apart to show forth the beauty, glory and holiness of His God.

Ephesians 1:4, "*According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*"

Romans 1:6-7, "Among whom are ye also *the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

1 Peter 2:9, "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*"

Thus we see that every believer was chosen and called to be a saint and that a saint is one set apart as belonging to God and as separated unto Him for His use. Throughout Scripture this is invariably the meaning of the words "to sanctify" or "sanctification" whether used in connection with things or persons. That which is sanctified is something wholly set apart for God's possession and use and when God lays claim to anything and separates it unto His use it is by that act "sanctified." God's undivided proprietorship of the believer lies enfolded in the very heart of the truth of sanctification. In the eternity of the past God called us to be His own possession. He said, "Thou art mine."

## 2. The Believer: A Saint by Position

When, where, and how is the believer sanctified? At what point of time, at what stage in spiritual experience, and through what means is the believer wholly separated unto God and set apart as the special possession of the Lord? There has been much confusion on these points that has led to bewilderment on the part of many and even delusion on the part of some.

But God's Word is crystal clear on this theme as on all others connected with salvation if we keep to the scriptural meaning and method of the spiritual experiences God intends we should enjoy. Let us never forget that God is infinitely more concerned about our entrance into the fullness of our inheritance in Christ than we can possibly be. How hurt and harmed is the separate, holy Christ by the mixedness and unholiness in the lives of Christians. Then surely He would take great care that this wondrous truth of sanctification should be made very plain.

So the Word of God answers the above questions by showing us that sanctification is primarily a change in position and secondarily but of necessity a change in condition. God tells us very plainly when, where and how the children of Israel were sanctified.

Numbers 8:17, "For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: *on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.*"

Leviticus 11:45, "For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

By the blood of the Paschal lamb they were redeemed *in* Egypt and set apart as a people for God's own possession. By the crossing of the Red Sea they were redeemed *from* Egypt and separated from other people for the Lord's use. Even during the wilderness wanderings in which there was much of murmuring and rebellion they were, as far as their position before God was concerned, a sanctified people.

Just so the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ marks the place of the believer's sanctification; the blood of the Lamb of God is the means; and the moment in which the sinner puts his faith in that atoning blood for salvation marks the time.

Hebrews 10:10, "By the which will *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*"

Hebrews 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, *that he might sanctify the people with his own blood*, suffered without the gate."

Acts 26:18, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among *them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*"

God never acts apart from Christ. Everything that God does whether in creation or salvation He does through His Son. And everything that God does in Christ for man's salvation He begins at the cross. So our sanctification begins there. At the cross the sinner becomes a saint. Every believer has been set apart for God's own possession and use by the sacrifice of His Son. The believer is a saint by position. As in justification the guilty sinner is accounted righteous through the blood of the cross so in sanctification the defiled sinner is accounted holy. By the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ he "hath been perfected once for all." In this objective aspect sanctification is absolute and complete. Christ Himself and Christ alone is our sanctification.

Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering *he hath perfected for ever* them that are sanctified."

1 Corinthians 1:30, "But of him are *ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*"

Thus we see that sanctification in this aspect is not "a second work of grace" at some time subsequent to conversion; nor a result of any act of consecration or faith on part of the believer; but that it takes place through God's first and initial work of grace—the death of His Son—and is simultaneous with justification and regeneration. "The primary and fundamental idea of sanctification is neither an achievement nor a process, but a gift, *a divine bestowal of a position in Christ.*"

In this *positional* aspect of sanctification all believers share equally: the youngest, weakest and most immature is as truly and as much sanctified as the oldest, strongest and most spiritual Christian. This fact we see in the spiritual history of the Corinthian Christians as given in Paul's epistles. These letters were written to rebuke and correct gross sins, outstanding evils, even fearful immoralities in the Corinthian church yet the apostle writes to them as those that have been sanctified, those who are "holy in Christ." While he tells them that he cannot write unto them as unto spiritual but rather as unto carnal Christians yet he calls them saints. Even though they are still in the wilderness as regards spiritual experience yet he considers them a people separated unto God for His possession and use. It is because they have been so set apart and given such an exalted position that he reproves them for their unholy condition.

1 Corinthians 1:2, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, *to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,* with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

Their position as sanctified ones is the basis of his appeal for a corresponding condition of life. He reminds them that fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, drunkards, and revilers, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11), and then frankly says, "...and such were some of you" in the old sphere when you were wholly separated unto sin and wholly separated from God. But it is all different now for "you are sanctified" and are thereby set apart unto God. Therefore your condition should correspond with your position. You were once in the devil's possession and use but now you are set apart unto God for His possession and use. You are saints; therefore live like saints.

1 Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, *but ye are sanctified,* but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Are you a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Then you are a saint. Have you put your trust for salvation in Christ's shed blood? Then you are sanctified and set apart as one belonging wholly and only unto God.

Are you "a new creation in Christ Jesus"? Then you are also "a saint in Christ."

### **3. The Believer: A Saint by Condition**

A holy God must have a holy people. That which God has taken to be His own, which He has separated unto Himself must be holy even as He is holy. God took Israel out of Egypt into Canaan that they might be made a separate people shut in to Himself that through His presence in their midst as their Lord and Leader they might learn to do His will and obey His laws. He had called them to be a holy people. He had separated them that they might become a holy people. Their changed position from Egypt to Canaan presupposes a corresponding changed condition in all their manner of living. His very proprietorship of them demanded holiness. That which belongs to God must be holy, for God cannot presence Himself with unholiness, neither can He use in His service that which is unclean. If He did so, He would deny His own nature, dishonor His own name. What God is, that which belongs to Him must be, or else God would lay Himself open to the charge of being a partaker of the sin of His people. Because they were a separated people, God commanded them to be a holy people and to put all uncleanness of every kind away from them. He told them that the real purpose of their redemption had been their sanctification.

Leviticus 20:24, 26, "I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people. And *ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*"

2 Chronicles 29:5, 15-16, "And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, *sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.* And they gathered their brethren, and *sanctified themselves,* and came, according to the commandment of the

king, by the words of the LORD, *to cleanse the house of the Lord*. And the priests *went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the Lord.*"

God has taken the believer to be His own and His proprietorship of the life is in itself a call and a challenge to holiness. God has redeemed us that He might possess us; and He possesses us that He may conform us to the image of His Son. Christ saved us that He might sanctify us.

1 Thessalonians 4:7, "For God hath not *called us unto* uncleanness, but unto *holiness.*"

Ephesians 5:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, *even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*"

The position of the believer in Christ is a call and a challenge to holiness. It also reveals God's provision for the life of holiness which He expects of the believer. God requires Christians to live "as becometh saints," but the power for such a life is not in ourselves, but in Christ Himself. Through identification with Him in His death and resurrection we have been planted into Christ and He environs us with His own holiness. We are "holy—in Christ."

Ephesians 5:3, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be *once* named among you, *as becometh saints.*"

Philippians 4:21, "Salute every *saint in Christ Jesus.*"

The presence of Christ in the believer is a call and a challenge to holiness. "I am holy—be ye holy." Perfection of life is God's only standard. In Christ incarnate we find divine holiness in a human life and nature. Through Christ crucified, that holy, divine nature was imparted to us. In the risen, ascended Christ indwelling we have the very presence of the Holy One in power. In virtue of what Christ did *for* us we are made holy and in virtue of what He does *in* us we are kept holy. Christ Himself is our sanctification.

1 Peter 1:15-16, R.V., "But like *as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living*; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy."

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, "And the very God of peace *sanctify you wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, *who also will do it.*"

In this conditional aspect of sanctification there is a vast difference in believers. Some who have been Christians for a quarter of a century may show few evidences of a holy life while one who has known Christ but a short time may have much "fruit unto holiness." The progressive realization of holiness in life depends upon the believer's response to God's provision for it in Christ. With some this progress is a steady inflow, while with others it comes through a special experience which seems to them as marked as that of conversion. Let us now consider what that provision is.

#### **4. Sanctification is a Radical Reversal in Relationships**

Entrance into the new sphere involves a decisive, clean-cut reversal of every relationship obtaining in the old sphere. What the sinner was alive to the saint becomes dead to, and what the sinner was dead to the believer becomes alive to. The radical change wrought in the believer's position demands a complete reversal in every relationship if a corresponding change is to be wrought in his condition. Sanctification is one act with a double significance: negatively it means separation; positively it means holiness. Christ, our sanctification, separates us from all that is opposed to the will of God and lie separates us unto all that is consistent with that will.

Let us consider first the things to which the believer becomes dead.

## 5. The Believer Becomes Dead to Sin

Three phases of three words each which the apostle Paul uses throw marvelous light upon this reversal in the believer's relationship to sin. Please note that it is a study in prepositions.

Ephesians 2:5, "Even when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ."

Romans 6:8, "Now if we be *dead with Christ*, we believe that we shall also live with him."

Romans 6:2, "God forbid. How shall we, that are *dead to sin*, live any longer therein?"

"Dead *in sins*"—such is the sinner's relationship to sin in the old sphere. He is so permeated and saturated with sin that God can only describe his relationship to sin as one of immersion in it. ...Sin in his environment.

"Dead *with Christ*"—such is the sinner's identification with the Sin-bearer. Salvation had to put both the Saviour and the sinner on the cross to reverse the relationship to sin.

"Dead *to sin*"—such is the believer's relationship to sin in the new sphere. He is so insulated and enveloped by Christ that God can only describe his relationship to sin as one of death to it. Christ is his environment. (See Diagram 11)

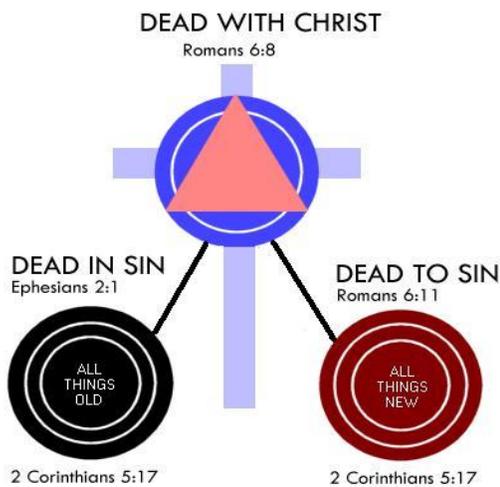


Diagram 11: Changed Relationships

Death defeats death and annuls its power over the sinner. The believer is so united with Christ in His death that he enters into precisely the same relationship to sin that Christ enjoys—Christ Jesus was never "dead in sins," the Lamb of God was "without spot and blemish" for there was no sin in him. But as the last Adam, the representative Man, the sinner's Substitute, He was in a very real sense "*made sin* for us." The sin of the whole world of sinners was upon Him so that on the cross of Calvary in a very real and awful sense He was so separated unto sin for our sakes that He was separated from God. But, praise God, His death once and for all changed not only His relationship to sin but that of the believing sinner in Him.

Romans 6:10, R.V., "For the death that he died, *he died unto sin once* [Gr., once and for all]: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

Romans 6:11, B. V., "*Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin*, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."

Let us not through unbelief or fear of the consequences minimize the force of the words in Romans 6:11. To make this truth stand out before us in all its daring ruggedness let this verse fall into its constituent parts before our eyes.

Dead unto sin ]- The believer's changed  
Alive unto God relationships.

In Christ Jesus —The divine Medium.

Reckon                    —The Human Means  
Even so                   —The defined Measure.

Simpler words could not have been used to convey to the mind and heart one of the most profound truths in the Bible, nor could language tell us more plainly the severing power of the cross of Christ, nor make more clear the meaning of sanctification in God's thought. The believer "dead with Christ" is dynamited out of the old relationship "dead in sins" into the new relationship "dead to sin".

But what does the expression "dead to sin" mean? Does it mean that sin is dead or that it is eradicated? Does it mean that the believer is beyond the reach of temptation or the possibility or ability to sin? No, it means nothing of the kind. God's Word teaches that the believer on earth has the penalty of sin removed and the power of sin broken but nowhere does it say that he is freed from the presence of sin. That blessed state is the believer's future inheritance as we shall see in a later study. Nor is he freed from temptation. In fact temptations are even more severe and more constant as one maintains in faith the attitude of "dead to sin." But "dead to sin" does mean that in Christ the believer has been brought *positionally* into such a relationship to it that he is beyond the reach of sin's dominion, that he is environed by Christ Jesus in such a measure as to share to the full His victory over sin. It means also that through the new birth he has been given a nature which hates sin and loves holiness. Where formerly there was response to sin, and apathy toward God, now the attitude is completely reversed. Sin meets with a cold reception and a quick rebuff while the whole being is aglow with an ever deepening love and devotion to its Lord. "The new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" refuses sin and chooses holiness; says no to sin and yes to God.

This positional victory over sin through grace is perfect. In Christ, God has taken the believer beyond the necessity of sin's lordship. In Christ sin's power is broken and its claim is canceled. Several times in Romans 6 God declares the believer's perfect freedom from the power of sin.

Romans 6:18, 22, B. V., "*And being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. Now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.*"

Romans 6:14, "*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.*"

These words if they teach anything clearly tell us that the believer in Christ need not sin, that sin has no rightful claim upon him. Let us get this thing straight and have no confusion in our minds about it. God nowhere says *that we are not able to sin* but He clearly says *that we are able not to sin*. In other verses in Romans 6 God states explicitly that sin still has power over the believer because the believer permits it. In other words, the believer sins because he wants to, because he yields to the allurements, the charms, the call of sin or he sins because he does not claim his privileges in Christ.

Just here I can almost hear the murmur of doubt in the heart of some reader as he says, "Is such victory possible?" Most of us have an inadequate conception of the meaning of the cross and of the power of Christ. We imagine Him able only to carry us safely over the borderline of the new sphere of life and unlock for us the door into heaven, but utterly impotent to keep us victorious and Christ-like in the midst of the temptations of a sinful world. We are so ready to believe in the strength of the devil and so loath to believe that we are indeed spiritual multimillionaires, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." But such you and I are, even while living as spiritual paupers. But "He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think," and will prove that He is so able if we but give Him the chance.

Perhaps some reader, if we were talking together personally, would put to me the questions that have been asked scores of times. Can this truth of complete and continuous victory over sin be brought from heaven to earth; can it be brought out of the realm of the doctrinal into the realm of the experiential? Will it really *work* if applied to *my* temper, jealousy, worry, pride, resentment and hatred? Can I in *my* daily walk in a world reeking in sin and placing temptation before me at every step really be kept unspotted and unsullied? Can the relationship "dead to sin" be actualized in *my* spiritual experience here and now on earth?

My answer to you would be, "Test the power of Jesus Christ's victory over sin on your besetting sin and give Him a fair chance to prove to you that He can save to the uttermost, even to make you dead to that sin. Take the sin that is dragging you down into the very depths of despair, and let Him who is your sanctification make you dead to it."

A missionary came once for a talk. Her face was the picture of despair. By her own confession hers was a joyless, peace-less, powerless life. She found no joy in Bible study; no reality in prayer; and she had no love for souls. She had dreaded having me come to that school to lead a series of evangelistic meetings because she thought she would be expected to do personal work among the girls and she was utterly devoid both of desire and of power for such a task. Her body as well as her spirit was ill and she had already told her Chinese co-workers and her fellow missionaries that because of ill health she did not intend to return to China after her furlough. We talked together of the life of victory in Christ but she repeated over and over again that while she believed it was for others she knew it was not for her. She knew intellectually the Bible truth about victory over sin and was altogether familiar with every Bible verse that I quoted. She had read many books on victory in Christ and could have told any person who came to her seeking help the way to victory. But she herself was living in utter defeat and abject discouragement. Deep down in her heart was a *hurt*. There it had been for four years eating away at her spiritual vitals like a cancer. To that hurt she was wholly "alive." We talked for hours but she left me as she came—in despair. However, a deep, quiet assurance of complete victory for her came into my heart. I knew that victory in Christ was God's will for her for He had said so in His Word so I confidently claimed His promise in 1 John 5:14-15 and thanked God for the answer to the prayer as I fell asleep.

Before breakfast there was a tap on the door. What a gloriously radiant face greeted my eyes as I opened it and she exclaimed: "Oh! It's gone and I know it will never come back again!" What is gone? The hurt. How? The Lord Jesus Christ, her Victor, had presented Himself in the spot where the hurt was and had made her dead to it. Since that time, fully seven years ago, God has used that missionary to help many another defeated one into the joy and peace of victory over sin.

Sanctification is separation from sin and Christ is the Separator and He sanctifies by indwelling, possessing and controlling. Victory is not a mere blessing, doctrine, or experience, but it is a Person. To have Him acknowledged as sole Proprietor of the whole being and allowed to act as such is to be assured of victory over sin. To have Him crowned as Lord and in control *is to have victory already*. This throws light on what real victory is and what it is not. Some of us may not have victory because we are altogether too superficial in our thinking. We trifle with this very important thing. We think we shall obtain victory by reading literature on the subject or by hearing messages at a conference, or by an interview with some Christian leader while all the time we are unwilling to face God alone that He may show us both what sin is and what victory is.

God does not speak of being dead to "sins" but to "sin." He does not talk of "victories" but of "victory." He does not command us to be troubled over our sin but to be "dead" to it. He makes it very clear that He does not mean mere control over *outward* expressions of sin but a definite dealing with *inner* disposition. Real victory is a glorious and marvelous change in the innermost recesses of the spirit which transforms the inner disposition and attitude as well as the outward deed and act. "Real victory never obliges you to conceal what is inside." No, more than that, if one has real victory over sin he longs with intensity to let others know what his treasure is.

If we are to look to the Lord Jesus to make our freedom from sin actual and if "dead to sin" is to be lifted out of its doctrinal setting in Romans 6 and made an experiential fact in your life and mine, then we must know both what sin is and what victory is. Satan blinds the minds, dulls the consciences, deadens the spiritual sensibilities so that countless Christians never think of calling some sinful things sin. Of course we are forced to call some glaring, outstanding offense against God and man that becomes more or less public, sin. But what about that black, defiling, evil thing, hidden away in the spirit, heart or thought which has not yet found its way out into a word or a deed, but which is open to the all-seeing, all-searching eye of our holy God? Is that sin? God would lead us to think it is.

Psalm 19:12, 14, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from *secret faults*. Let the word of my mouth, and *the meditation of my heart*, be acceptable *in thy sight*, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

Psalm 51:6, 10, "Behold, thou desirest truth *in the inward parts*: and *in the hidden part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a *right spirit* within me.

2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Let us face a few simple tests and see if we have been cleansed "from all filthiness of the spirit" and if there is freedom from sin "in the inward parts."

You used to lose your temper and give way to violent outbursts; now there is a large measure of outward control but a very great residue of inward irritation and secret resentment. Is that real victory?

Someone says something unkind or unjust to you; you do not answer back and outwardly you appear polite but inwardly you are angry and are saying to yourself, "I'd like to give her a piece of my mind!" Is that freedom from sin?

Someone has wronged you; you do not openly retaliate or seek to revenge the wrong but in your innermost heart you wish the person misfortune and rejoice when it comes. Is that having "a right spirit"?

You are a favored one through family, position or wealth. You do not openly boast but your heart is filled with secret pride, vanity and a sense of superiority. Is that counted as being "dead to sin"?

At a summer conference in China a woman came seeking help. She was unhappy and others around her were made unhappy. There was un-love in her heart; in fact, there was someone she hated. She was a Christian worker and recognizing the havoc this feeling was working in her own life and in that of others she tried to gain gradual victories over it. She had hated even the sight of the other person but she acknowledged finally the sinfulness of that. So she invited the person to dinner in her home *but hoped she wouldn't come!* When she came to me she had reached the point where she was "ready to forgive" but "would never forget!" Then she compelled herself to say that she "wouldn't hate" but she "couldn't love." Not until God, who is love, really possessed her heart did she become "dead" to that sin.

In Christ Jesus full provision has been made for you and me to be "dead to sin." But Romans 6:11 tells us that the believer must respond to God's act of grace by an act of faith. Man's faith is the cooperative complement of God's grace. Through faith God makes real in experience what through grace He has made real in fact. Through grace God has reversed the believer's relationship to sin and now God calls upon him to "reckon" upon this reversal as a fact and so to act, walk and live.

Furthermore, Romans 6:12-13 tells us that the believer must respond to God's act of grace by an act of the will.

Romans 6:12, "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*"

This is a call, a challenge and a command all in one. It is a call to higher ground, to life on the highest plane. It is a challenge to take God at His Word and prove His power as Victor. It is a command to assert the rights of one whose real life is in the heavenlies in Christ.

Through the finished work of Jesus Christ, God has done all He can do toward the believer's sanctification. If he enjoys in experience real separation from sin he must now act. His will must coalesce with God's will and work as a unit if he is to live as one "dead to sin." And God does not let this step be shrouded in misty vagueness but in Romans 6:13 tells in simplest and plainest language just what the believer must do to keep sin from reigning in his body.

Romans 6:13, "*Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*"

"Yield," "yield," "YIELD"—by a definite, intelligent, voluntary act of the will the believer must choose Christ as his new Master and yield himself to Him as Lord. Christ and sin cannot both "reign" over your life at the same time. There is no possibility in God's plan for such a compromising alliance. Jesus Christ not only desires to enter every life as Saviour but to rule as Lord and to reign as King. He not only designs to take possession but to assume control. He is not content to be recognized only as the owner of the house but purposes as well to be manager of the household. He is not satisfied to become something only to us but wishes to be everything.

Romans 6:14-22 reveals two incontrovertible facts:

1. We are able not to sin.
2. If we sin, we sin because "we want to sin; because we will to sin; because we choose to yield to our old master instead of to our new Master.

But it also clearly implies that by "reckoning" ourselves dead unto sin and by "yielding" ourselves unconditionally to Christ we may come to have a totally changed attitude to sin. Love for it and indulgence in it will become hatred for it and resistance to it. Sin is not dead and it will continue to entice but it will meet with no response from us. Our former master still lives and works hard at his task but Christ, our new Master, makes us deaf to sin's appeals by making us dead to sin itself.

## 6. The Believer becomes Dead to the Law

If one is to come into real liberty in the Lord and be released from the futile striving to attain by his own effort what by faith he may obtain as God's gift, he must apprehend this second reversal in his relationships. Paul in the light of his own experience expounds this truth quite fully in Romans 7. Paul as a sinner had tried to become righteous by keeping the Law of God. He had failed utterly and had come to Christ as his Saviour that he might be made righteous in Him. But in Romans 7 as a saint, he was trying to become holy by attempting to keep God's Law in his own strength. He had learned that he could not be saved by his own efforts but he had still to learn that he could not be sanctified in that way.

The Law is holy and demands of man both perfect righteousness and perfect holiness, but it cannot give to anyone the power to be righteous or holy. So when one comes into a realization of the holy nature of God's Law and of its rightful demand for holiness of life the attempt is made to live such a life in one's own strength. It is this that Paul is telling us in Romans 6 and 7, we neither can do nor need try to do. He tells us this in three different statements each of which unfolds a distinct phase of this truth.

First, the saint in the new sphere is under a distinctly different regime from the sinner in the old sphere. He is no longer under Law but under grace.

Romans 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for *ye are not under the law, but under grace.*"

Second, the believer has come under the regime of grace through his union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. So now under grace he fully shares Christ's relationship to the Law. In His incarnate life Christ Jesus as the representative Man met every demand of the Law both for righteousness and holiness. In His death, as the sinner's Saviour, He met every claim of the Law for righteousness against the sinner and in His resurrection, as the Head of the new creation; He met every claim of the Law for holiness against the saint. The Law has no further claim against the believer either for righteousness or for holiness for every claim has been fully satisfied.

Third, the believer is, therefore, dead to the Law.

Romans 7:4, "Wherefore, my brethren, *ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*"

Galatians 2:19, "For *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*"

It is the function of grace to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. It is the work of grace to undo the work of sin. Sin made us unholy: grace makes us holy. Grace always operates through Jesus Christ who dwells within us in the very perfection of His own holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Does this not show us how needless and futile are our efforts to compel ourselves to live well pleasing unto God, to achieve victory over sin through good resolutions or through willpower, and to live a holy life through legal bondage to certain principles or practices? The way of sanctification is as simple as the way of salvation. As truly as Christ is our Saviour just so truly He is our sanctification. Our part is to believe and to receive.

Holiness is a gift and a gift is not "attained" but "obtained." Christ Himself is our holiness. Holiness does not come as a result of "works" but is a "fruit." Becoming "servants to God, ye have your *fruit unto holiness*" (Romans 6:22).

Becoming "dead to the law" does not give to any Christian the license to sin. Far from it. His death to the Law is accomplished only through his marriage union with the Holy One Himself and that for one definite, distinct purpose, that he may "bring forth fruit unto God" and live wholly unto Him. It is for the one purpose of enabling him to do the will of God in every department of his life.

## 7. The Believer Becomes Dead to Self

The exact words are not in Scripture but the thought is clearly there in the following passages which show the believer's radical reversal in his relationship to self.

2 Corinthians 5:15, R.V., "And he died for all, that *they that live should no longer live unto themselves*, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again."

Galatians 5:24, "And *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts."

"The old man" never acknowledges himself as dead. Self-will is married to self-love and they and their entire offspring will work night and day to retake the throne of the believer's life permanently, if possible, but if not, temporarily. But Christ enables us to say a continuous and firm no to every appeal of self and to refuse it even a foothold in any of the territory which He has conquered. The divine Proprietor is amply able to guard and keep His property for Himself. Our part is to maintain a persistent and consistent attitude of death to self.

## 8. The Believer Becomes Dead to the World

Christ, as our sanctification, brings out a very radical reversal in the believer's relationship to the world and in its relationship to the believer. The apostle Paul uses a very strong expression in stating it.

Galatians 6:14, "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.*"

He says it is a twofold crucifixion. A double death takes place at the cross of Christ when the sinner becomes a saint. The absolute necessity for this is clearly seen when we remember that the sinner is part of the system, called the world, which is Satan's channel of manifestation and his instrument for service. The world and the Church are wholly antagonistic in their whole manner of living and working: their pleasures, pursuits, plans and programs are as different from each other as Christ is different from Satan. So when Christ sanctifies the believer as His own possession and for His own use, He takes him so altogether out of this world-system and separates him so wholly unto Himself that he is thereafter "dead to the world."

As soon as the believer really takes this attitude toward the world and maintains his position in Christ as a consistent member of His Body then the world hates him and disclaims any relationship or affiliation with him. As long as the believer compromises and maintains a friendly attitude toward the world, the latter will be friendly with the hope of winning the Christian back into its fold. But the world only loves its own and hates all that is not of it so that when the believer comes out into an open, decisive separateness the world thereafter is crucified unto him.

John 15:19, "*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*"

1 John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: *therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*"

The real secret governing our abandonment of the world is our love for the Lord Jesus Himself. He loved us so much that He gave Himself for us. We are captivated by that love and we open our hearts to receive Him, then He gives Himself to us. He in His loveliness becomes much more attractive than anything the world can offer; He in His tender sympathy, loving understanding and exquisite love bestows upon us much more than the world can give; He in His own wondrous divine-human Person satisfies our hearts as all that the world has to give could never satisfy.

It was so in the life of a university student who was enamored of the world. She fed on worldliness; she walked and lived in it. Her clothes, her companionships, her pleasures, her conversations, her tastes, her choices, in fact everything about her bore the mark of the world. She had been indulging in the gaieties of the university life to an excess that troubled even her worldly minded friends. But one night in the beginning of the spring term of her senior year she found Christ as her Saviour and her Master. Only a few days later she was to have attended the biggest dance of the season. She did not go but spent the entire evening in communion with her newfound Lord over His Word and in prayer. Throughout the remaining weeks of her senior year she refused scores of invitations to similar parties. A something had come into

her life that made some who had known and prayed for her very happy and that made others who had companioned with her in the past very contemptuous. She would have told you that that something was a Someone, it was the Lord Jesus. Love for Him had made her dead to the world, which, when she no longer belonged to it had become dead to her.

This radical reversal of our relationship to sin, to the Law, to self and to the world is brought about through our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. In Christ crucified and risen we are made a *separate* people for His possession and use.

Christ our sanctification not only made a clean-cut reversal in our relationship to Satan and to everything pertaining to his sphere but He made an equally revolutionary change in our relationship to God and to everything that belongs to His Kingdom.

## **9. The Believer Becomes "Alive Unto God"**

Having been born into God's family as a child and into His Kingdom as a citizen his whole life is now centered in the family and Kingdom interests. Having been accepted as Saviour, united with as Head, and crowned Lord, Christ has become both the center and the circumference of his life and all in between. In Christ Himself the believer finds his deepest joy, his greatest delight and his completest satisfaction.

As being "dead to sin" detracts from sin's charms and breaks its power to lure and entice so being "alive unto God" enhances Christ's charms and heightens the Holy Spirit's power to woo and to win us to love our Lord and to delight in Him. To be "alive unto God" is to love the Lord Jesus as we love no other person or thing in heaven or upon earth. It is to adore Him as the Beloved, to give Him the place of preeminence in our lives. *It is for Christ Jesus Himself to be all and in all to us.*

Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; *that in all things he might have the preeminence.*"

Song of Solomon 5:10, "*My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.*"

Colossians 3:11, "*But Christ is all, and in all.*"

But is there in the lives of very many Christians whom you know such a personal passion for the Lord Jesus? Does the average church member impress the world as being "alive unto God"? Is the Christian businessman more eager for God's projects to succeed than his own? Upon which does the Christian mother put most thought and time—her daughter's health, her place in society, or growth in her spiritual life? Which does the ordinary church member attend most regularly, the cinema or the prayer meeting? Is there not a sluggishness and stagnancy in the lives of thousands upon thousands of professed Christians today that amounts almost to deadness toward God and His interests? Many of God's children in all parts of the world believe that the Church of Christ is in just such a dead condition and that there is great need of revival.

Perhaps this book will fall into the hands of some persons who are altogether unconscious of the need of such a quickening. They are conventional, respectable Christians. They always attend church, go to prayer meeting and fulfill faithfully what they consider to be their financial obligation to the church. They never do anyone any harm; neither do they do anyone any good. They would not consciously put a stumbling block in the way of somebody's becoming a Christian; neither would it ever dawn upon them to put forth an effort to win one. They are colorless Christians. They would be disgusted with the frivolous person who found pleasure for a morning in reading a trashy book but just so they would be bewildered at the joy some earnest soul found in several hours' study of the Word. To them the pleasure places of the world have no attraction but neither does the trysting place of prayer. They are the lineal descendants of the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal, who did not bring disgrace to his father's name but neither did he bring joy to his father's heart.

What I am trying to say is that you and I may be separate and yet not be holy; we may be orthodox and yet not be spiritual; we may be "dead to sin" and yet not be "alive to God." We may have cut ourselves loose from every form of worldliness but in so doing have become critical and self-righteous. We may be loyal defenders of the faith, ready even to lay down our lives for it and in so doing become bitter and unloving. We may be faithful in the fulfilling of every obligation to God and have given ourselves in self-sacrificing devotion to His cause and yet have no warm glow of love in our hearts, no spring of joy in our souls, no fervency of spirit in our communion with the Lord Jesus Himself.

But the divine-human God-man can never be satisfied with negation. If He died and rose again to separate us from sin, He ascended into heaven and was exalted to the throne that He might separate us unto the Lord. The work of the cross is to be perfected through the work of the throne. What the Saviour began the Sanctifier is to continue. The ascended Lord lives to keep us holy through His Spirit.

This He does as our great High Priest, our Advocate and our Intercessor. He has lived on earth and He knows how unceasingly we are in contact with that which defiles. He knows the insidiousness of Satan's temptations and how he takes advantage of our times of trial, affliction, weariness, loneliness, sickness, disappointment, stress and sorrow to press upon some vulnerable spot in our character to tempt us into sin. So there He is as our Representative before the Father's throne pleading our case and as we turn to Him in frank open confession of our sin He applies the precious blood that cleanses and enables us to walk again in the light of his holy presence. Christ has come not only to save us but to save us to the uttermost. A life as pure and perfect as his own is His only standard for us. For this He intercedes constantly at His Father's throne.

1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And *if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*"

Hebrews 7:25-26, "Wherefore *he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*"

But how could the believer's conscience ever become enlightened to discern the presence of sin and how would his heart be made to recoil from its defilement and his spirit to resent its intrusion? Here again we see the perfection of God's grace in the gift of the Holy Spirit by whom the initial work of sanctification in us is begun and through whom its progressive work is carried on. It is He who makes us feel the need of cleansing and leads us to Him who alone can cleanse.

1 Peter 1:2, "...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*"

2 Thessalonians 2:13, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit* and belief of the truth."

A holy God has opened the way into His presence and has taken unto Himself a people to live there in abiding communion with Himself. Blessed the man or the woman who has found his way into that holy sanctuary and delights himself in the Holy One! Upon such God sets His seal signifying that they are His own possession forever and that He has begun to work within them conformity to the image of his Son. This seal is none other than the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: *in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.*"

2 Corinthians 1:21-22, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; *who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*"

## **Chapter Twenty: Christ Our Captain and Conqueror — Conflict and Conquest**

When Jesus Christ ascended into heaven He went as Conqueror over the evil one and all his hosts. When God exalted Him to Lordship over the universe He set Him at His own right hand far above all the principalities and powers that belonged to the kingdom of Satan and put them all under His feet. Through His death upon the cross Jesus Christ wrested from Satan every vestige of his claim upon the world and upon men. Through His resurrection and ascension He passed as Conqueror through the enemy's territory. At His exaltation God and all the heavenly host united in crowning Him King of kings and Lord of lords, the one and only Potentate. Through His Saviourhood He has now a claim upon every man's life and through His installation as Head of the new creation He gained the right to the worship of all that believe. He has regained for God His sovereignty over millions upon millions of lives which are now in the possession and use of their rightful Owner. Jesus Christ has entered into the enemy's territory and inch by inch has won it back for God.

Ephesians 1:20-22, "*Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.*"

1 Timothy 6:14-15, "*Our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.*"

Satan was judged, sentenced and doomed at the cross of Christ but, until that sentence is executed, he is contesting fiercely the Lord's victory and with all the might of his supernatural power is fighting to hold his ground and to regain what he has lost.

This conflict is typified in the conquest of the children of Israel over the wicked nations dwelling in Canaan as recorded in the book of Joshua. The land of Canaan was the land that God promised to the seed of Abraham. It was theirs by the right of God's gift. But it was occupied by the Canaanites who were an accursed race (Genesis 9:25), and other kindred nations who also were steeped in iniquity and wickedness.

These wicked nations in the land of promise were under the leadership and control of Satan to defeat God in carrying out of His divine purpose for, in, and through, His chosen people. Satan, through his emissaries, would keep God's people from the possession, enjoyment and use of their promised inheritance. These wicked nations were very powerful and, although each was under its own ruler, were easily welded together as one in aggressive alliance against God's people.

God commanded the children of Israel first to enter the promised land and then to possess and to hold it.

Joshua 1:11, "*Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.*"

God equipped them for the conquest of the land with a promise and a Presence; the promise was of victory, the Presence was that of the Victor.

Joshua 1:5, "*There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*"

As they moved toward Jericho to begin the conquest of these strong, powerful enemies, there appeared unto Joshua a man with a sword drawn in his hand. It was Jehovah, the Lord, who then and there became the Captain of the hosts of the Israelites as they went forth into battle against the Lord's enemies and theirs.

Joshua 5:13-14, "*And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?"*

Under the command of the Lord of hosts Israel went forth to take Jericho, Ai, Gibeon and to win victory over thirty-one kings. "The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel." The victory of God's children was accomplished through the presence of the Victor.

Joshua 10:42, "And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, *because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.*"

The book of Joshua in the Old Testament has its counterpart in the New in the epistle to the Ephesians. The conflict and conquest of the children of Israel under Jehovah, the Captain of the host, foreshadows the conflict and conquest of the new creation, the Body of Christ, under the Lord Jesus Christ, its Head and Conqueror.

## 1. The Conflict in the Heavens

"In Christ" in the heavens is the believer's promised land. This is his God-given inheritance promised even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4, 11). "In Christ" in the heavens every spiritual blessing is his possession by right (Ephesians 1:3). Through his identification with Christ the believer has already entered into the heavens (Ephesians 2:5-6).

Christ, his *Saviour*, has won him from the kingdom and family of Satan to the Kingdom and family of God; Christ, his *Head*, has given him His own divine nature; Christ, his *Lord*, has dethroned self and has assumed the undivided control of his life; Christ, his *Life*, has shared with him His risen, glorified, supernatural life in all its fullness; Christ, his *Sanctification*, has put His blood, His cross and His throne between the believer and the world, the flesh and the devil; and Christ, his *Conqueror*, gives Himself in His high-priestly and intercessory ministry for the believer's continuous and complete victory.

All this maddens the devil and spurs him into warfare against the saints of God. It is the twofold triumph of Christ in the believer and the believer in Christ that causes the conflict in the heavens. It is Satan contesting with Christ His inheritance in the saints and their inheritance in Him.

It is a spiritual conflict. It is a battle between supernatural forces. It is he who is the very personification of evil and wickedness and all his evil subordinates warring against Him who is the very personification of righteousness and holiness and all of His holy warriors. It is the hierarchy of hell against the theocracy of heaven.

Ephesians 6:12, R.V., "For *our wrestling* is not against flesh and blood, but *against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*"

If in this conflict Christ is to be manifested as the Victor there must be on the believer's part a realization of the power of the enemy. It is a very foolish thing to underestimate the power of the devil for we do it not only to our hurt but to the detriment of the Body of Christ of which we are a member. The devil is mighty and powerful; he is cunning and crafty; he is intelligent and industrious.

His forces of evil are invisible—"not flesh and blood."

They are well organized—"principalities."

They are well governed—"powers."

They work in secret—"the darkness of this world."

They are entrenched in innumerable hosts in the very territory where the believer dwells—"hosts of wickedness in heavenly places."

It behooves the believer to know that he is surrounded by the unseen, cunning, malicious, powerful hosts of the evil one who plots his downfall.

1 Peter 5:8, R.V., "Be sober, be watchful: *your adversary the devil*, as a roaring lion, walketh about, *seeking whom he may devour.*"

The believer is the channel through which Christ manifests Himself to a world in Satan's embrace, and through which Christ witnesses and works in that world to win it back to Himself. So if the devil can defeat the believer and cause his testimony, his prayer and his service, to be powerless, he has to that extent defeated Christ for he has held his ground in the world and regained ground in the believer. The only way in which he can hold his kingdom is by keeping his dominion over human lives. The most holy and spiritual Christian is Satan's greatest hindrance so against him will be launched his fiercest onslaughts.

This being true, not only is it necessary to realize the power of our foe but also to recognize his methods of attack. He is a deceiver and seldom fights in the open. He lays snares to entrap the ignorant and innocent and comes as an angel of light to deceive even the elect. He works most successfully through the subtlety of seduction.

2 Corinthians 2:11, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for *we are not ignorant of his devices.*"

2 Timothy 2:26, "And that they may recover themselves out of *the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*"

2 Corinthians 11:14, "And no marvel; for *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*"

2 Timothy 3:13, "But evil men and *seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

In the Garden of Gethsemane we see the devil making his final attack upon the God-man by trying to drive a wedge between the Father and the Son. To accomplish this he aimed his fiery darts at our Lord's spirit, soul and body. All the hosts of hell were united in that spiritual battle to keep Him from the cross. And now he works in every conceivable way to keep the Body of Christ from appropriating and abiding in the victory He gained for it at the cross and shares with it from the throne. Against both the corporate Body of Christ and its individual members the devil is massing his hosts, for he knows the time is now near when the sentence against him will be executed.

To understand his present method of attack we shall need to remind ourselves that he has two accomplices: the world and the flesh. The flesh is the material in human life upon which he works and the world is flesh in the aggregate. We shall need to understand also just what the devil is doing in this world which is wholly under his leadership and control.

His aim, as we have seen in chapter 5, is the dethronement of God. To accomplish this there must be the undermining of the authority of God in every relationship He bears to man, and the democracy of self-will must be established in its place. To achieve this success Satan planned a worldwide revolution in government, in society, and in religion. His plan is to destroy government through anarchy; society through debauchery; religion through apostasy.

The daily papers chronicle his successes in his worldwide revolution in government. Under the deceiving guise of a fair-looking but falsely working nationalism he is seducing countless numbers of men and women in various countries, some of whom are truly honest patriots at heart, into action that must inevitably end in the overthrow of stable government.

His successes in the worldwide revolutions in society are no less apparent. The immodesty and indecency in women's dress, the surrender of the outward marks of gracious womanliness for an aping mannishness; the laxness in the marriage vow as evidenced in the frequency of divorce; the insubordination of children and lack of parental discipline; the fading of the fair bloom of purity from the heart life of countless boys and girls; the growing unfaithfulness in the sacred relationship of husband and wife which reaches its height in the hell-born doctrine of free love; the feverish pursuit of pleasure on the part of both old and young: all are but a few of the manifestations of the social debauchery into which the devil is leading the world.

His successes in the worldwide revolution in religion is a topic of daily conversation in almost every country of the world today. The devil would have no religion but devil worship; he would do away with all authority but that of self-will. The authority of the sovereign God, delegated to the incarnate Word and revealed in the written Word, is set aside as something obsolete in the modern world. The right of every man to be a law unto himself in all matters of religion is the basic principle in the present appalling apostasy.

This terrible condition which God so plainly predicted would be seen in the last days is clearly outlined in one passage of Scripture. In the following verses we see the full-blown flower of anarchy, debauchery and apostasy.

2 Timothy 3:1-8, R.V., "But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. *For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors,*

headstrong, puffed up, *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away. For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth; men corrupted in mind, *reprobate concerning the faith*."

Against the corporate Body of Christ, Satan is working in two very distinct and definite ways at the present time, through degeneration and through division.

First of all, he is sowing tares among the wheat. He is placing his emissaries both in the pulpit and in the pews for the sole purpose of leavening the whole. He is mixing his own progeny among the people of God so as to lower the standard of the entire Body of Christ. Thus Christ will be so caricatured before those in Satan's kingdom that they will see no advantage in leaving it for the Kingdom of God.

Satan is working through his paid and his lay agents in the professing church to destroy the sovereignty of God; to undermine the authority of His Word; to strip Christ of His deity, and to unseat Him from the place and preeminence of Lordship; and to lead His people away from full conformity to the image of Christ by partial conformity to the standards and fashions of the world. Thus through this degeneration within the visible church, the Body of Christ is being made impotent in the midst of the world's appalling need.

The world has its standard of what the Christian should be, and inconsistent as it may seem, it holds the Church of Christ up to that standard. A worldly minded woman was asked by a minister's wife to become a Christian. Her response was as revealing as it was cutting, "If I should become a Christian, I could never wear the immodest clothes that you wear. The emptiness of the pews speaks of the contempt the world has for a church that degenerates into a lecture hall and a place of entertainment. A friend, who was eagerly praying for a husband's conversion, who out of regard for her went regularly to church said, "Oh! Why doesn't the minister *preach Christ*?" "Anything but Christ crucified, risen, ascended, exalted" is the devil's motto and he is doing his best to get ministers of the Gospel to make it theirs.

But the devil has another mode of attack upon the corporate Body of Christ. He is doing a very deadly work even among the saints of God through division. When he sees that he cannot touch the spiritual man through deceiving him regarding the fundamental truths of God, or undermine his love for God, or deflect him from doing the will of God, then he works to make him so zealous in his defense of the truth, so ardent in his love for it, so set in his own particular interpretation of it, that he will not fellowship with those who, as sound and true and devoted as he, do not see and act as he does. He cannot see that "adorning the doctrine" may be as great a manifestation of real love for Christ and as potent a weapon against the appalling apostasy as "defending" it. Or perhaps in his desire for vital spirituality within the Church he has placed such emphasis upon some segment of truth that he unspiritualizes other brethren who do not give that truth the same emphasis. Thus the devil succeeds in injecting into the very vitals of Christ's Body the poison of acrimonious criticism, unwarranted suspicion, unloving intolerance and bitter feeling. By weakening and dividing the spiritual forces of Christ and by turning their eyes in upon themselves rather than out upon the world lying in sin, Satan gains a tremendous victory in the conflict.

But the devil goes still further and presses on in an attack upon the individual members of Christ's Body who have entered into real oneness with their Lord. He sends forth his fiery darts to carry depression of spirit, delusion of mind, distraction of heart, deflection of will and distress of body.

The human spirit is the headquarters of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life and the vantage ground from which He works to carry the life of Christ out to the uttermost part of the human personality. So it is very necessary to have it untrammelled, joyous, and assured. But the evil one works to inject the poison of doubt concerning one's spiritual condition, and discouragement over one's work. Especially are Christian workers being attacked in this manner by Satan.

The world today is flooded with cults. Tons of literature are sent broadcast-filled with satanic propaganda. Reading rooms and lecture bureaus are established and everything possible is done to delude people and to seduce them from the simplicity of the faith of Christ. Earnest children of God are often caught unawares in some time of sorrow or affliction when they seek for light and comfort. These cults hold forth spurious hope through specious lies and people are ensnared. Or some through neglect of God's Word and failure to appropriate their inheritance in Christ by faith are unsatisfied in their Christian lives and turn to one of these novelties in religion, hoping by some shortcut to obtain what they have hitherto not had in

experience. Others who desire the deepest spiritual life are led to take some truth of God's Word and then go beyond what the Word teaches regarding it into disastrous error. Or sometimes Satan seduces a Christian worker into a study of the books of these various cults under the guise of ability to save others from deception, and be thereby becomes entrapped. Satan has a thousand methods suited to the temperament and circumstances of the one he is trying to ensnare. Satan hates the Word of God and works against it by blinding men's eyes (2 Corinthians 4:4), by substituting his own doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1-2), by contradicting it (Genesis 3:5), by wresting it (Matthew 4:6), by leading men to disbelieve it (2 Timothy 4:3-4), by taking it out of men's hearts (Mark 4:15). Above all he would keep God's children ignorant of the truth concerning himself which the Bible reveals, and of the victory which Christ Jesus has already gained over him at the cross.

Satan works to cause distraction of heart. Many of God's consecrated children are being tortured by cruel and crushing suffering and sorrow which have their source in Satan. He is sending his poisoned shaft into the home, alienating husband and wife through unfaithfulness. He is causing estrangements in family circles based on falsehood, misunderstanding and false interpretation of motives, words and acts. Through the shirking of the burden on the part of one member of the family he is placing an intolerable load upon another. Others who have made their business a real partnership with God he attempts to overwhelm with business perplexities and financial losses through the unscrupulousness of others. The evil one works to rob God's child of the peace of God.

Satan schemes to cause deflection from God's plan and purpose in work. He will do anything to keep God's child from the direct work of saving souls. He directs the attention to secondary matters; he divides the energy over unnecessary tasks, and he darkens the mind over questions of guidance.

Satan works to cause distress of body through weakening it by disease or crippling it by disaster (Job 2:7). Through his continued onslaughts upon every part of the believer's being the devil is trying to move him out of the will of God by getting him experientially out of his position in Christ Jesus.

## **2. The Captain of the Host**

Some believers are ensnared by Satan because they fail to realize his power and to recognize his tactics. But others make the equally fatal mistake of overestimating his power and of overemphasis upon his activities. He is mighty, but there is One infinitely mightier. He is powerful, but there is One who is all-powerful. He can and does attack us from without, but there is an omnipotent, triumphant One who can and does strengthen, sustain and energize us from within. He is the One to whom all power has been given in heaven and upon earth. He is the Captain of our salvation; the Leader of God's hosts.

1 John 4:4, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: *because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*"

Matthew 28:18, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*"

Romans 8:37, "Nay, *in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*"

Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, *to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*"

The believer should always look upon Satan as a defeated foe. He has already been overcome by the Captain of our host. Any power which he exercises today is only a permitted power that God may get greater glory to Himself through the victory gained by His child before a doubting world, and also that the Christian's life in Christ may be deepened and strengthened. Satan was permitted through his human tools to stone Stephen to death but through Stephen's gloriously triumphant martyrdom God won the crown jewel from Satan's diadem, Saul of Tarsus. He was allowed through human instruments to put to death the Lord of glory but in doing it he sent himself to the bottomless pit.

That wicked one has no claim whatever upon one who is born of God and he has no power to harm or hurt him. The believer who is hid with Christ in God and who is one with his ascended Lord has the right to claim the perfect protection which that position provides and to reckon himself as a conqueror in Christ Jesus.

1 John 5:18, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and *that wicked one toucheth him not.*"

Romans 16:20, "And *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*"

The Captain of the host never commanded the children of Israel to fight *for* a position of victory but to fight *from* a position of victory. In His reckoning the battle was won before it was begun. Even before entrance into a battle He invariably spoke in the *past* tense of the deliverance of the enemy into their hands.

Joshua 6:2-3, "And the LORD said unto Joshua, *See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.*"

Then why did they have to fight the battle at all? That through faith in their Captain and His Word they might come to share His assurance of complete conquest over the enemy. While the walls of Jericho were still standing and the children of Israel were shut outside the gates Joshua proclaimed to the people that their conquest of the city was an accomplished fact.

Joshua 6:16, "And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, *Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.*"

The battle of the believer is that of faith from his position of accomplished victory over the evil one through his oneness with His ascended Lord.

### **3. The Conquest of the Enemy**

In Ephesians 6:10-18 our Captain tells us that power to stand against the enemy depends upon our position and upon our protection.

Ephesians 6:10-11, "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 of the devil.*"

In ourselves we have no power and we would have to succumb instantly to the attacks of the evil one. But "in Christ" oh! How different! Our Victor over Satan envelops us for we are hid with Christ in God. As someone has truly said, "Before the devil can reach your life to touch it, he must get through God and through Christ." Our part then in the conquest is, calmly and confidently, to meet every onslaught of the enemy from our hidden position in Christ Jesus and to sing as we fight "The Lord *hath* given me the victory." Then it will be ours in the conquering power of His might.

In ourselves we have no power to withstand the continuous attacks of the enemy against every part of our lives. But God has provided an armor that will protect at every point.

Ephesians 6:14-18, R.V., "Stand therefore, *having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*"

"*Stand—girded with truth...*" The power of the deceiver lies in his ability to persuade people to believe him instead of God and thus to lead them into doubt, disbelief and error. The antidote to this deception is to abide in Him who is the truth. We should saturate our lives in the truth of His love, His faithfulness, His power, His holiness, His purposes—in the truth of Christ Himself so that such truth like a girdle will bind us to Him in unswerving love and loyalty. But we need also to have Him, who is the truth, abide in us so that there may be nothing hypocritical, dishonest or shady upon which the prince of darkness can lay hold and use against us.

"*Stand—having put on the breastplate of righteousness.*" Rooted in Him who is our righteousness and growing up into His own uprightness of life more perfectly day by day through the indwelling and working

of the Holy Spirit, the believer can stand before every accusation of the devil with "a conscience void of offense toward God and men," as the tall pine tree whose roots have hid themselves in the bowels of the earth resists the blasts of the winter storm.

*"Stand—having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."* Our walk is through a world of disorder. Thousands of things happen to us to cut, to bruise, to wound, to grieve, to rob us of the peace of God that passeth all understanding and to hinder our testimony regarding a Gospel of peace and joy and rest. Countless things occur, many of them very trivial, which the devil rejoices to use to cause estrangement and misunderstanding. But the believer has the love of God in his heart so he is enabled to live at peace with all men. Over the mountain roads of Switzerland travelers wear heavy boots with thick soles, often with spikes, so that as they walk over the rough, stony paths they are unbruised, and over the ice and snow they are kept from stumbling and falling. They are rightly shod.

*"Stand—taking the shield of faith..."* Conybeare's translation adds to the understanding of this direction from our Captain by saying "take up to cover you the shield of faith." How does the believer know from which direction the enemy under the cover of darkness will send forth a fiery dart, or at what point in his life it may be aimed? Paul speaks of "all" the fiery darts, intimating that possibly the devil sends many of them at the same time. There is great need that faith should be a covering. So the believer needs to walk in faith, to pray in faith, to speak in faith, to praise in faith, to live continuously believing in the faithfulness of God to keep that which has been committed unto Him.

*"Stand—taking the helmet of salvation..."* The helmet is for the head. One of the most vulnerable places in the believer is his thoughts. Perhaps the devil finds entrance here more quickly than elsewhere. Is this not the reason why the apostle Paul exhorts Christians to think of things that are "true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report?" *Every thought* needs to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ if the believer is to know how to refuse the thoughts that come from the evil one. Satan also finds an undisciplined, undiscerning mind an easy prey to his delusions and oft times an unconscious instrument in his service. Even earnest Christians are often gullible and commend a sermon that is saturated with the most insidious denial of the Person and work of Jesus Christ because it is couched in eloquent, fervent language and even flattering admiration of the Lord it betrays. If ever there was a time when Christians needed to put on the helmet of salvation it is now. And putting it on will mean such a thorough and intelligent knowledge of salvation in Christ as shall make the believer impervious to every satanic attack even in these days of growing apostasy.

*"Stand—taking the sword of the Spirit..."* Jesus Christ puts into the Christian's heart and hand the only weapon which He Himself used when He won that perfect victory in the wilderness. The sword of the Word of God, when used in the power of the Holy Spirit, is the mightiest weapon in this spiritual conflict. Satan cannot stand before "It is written" spoken out of the assurance of the believer's own experience of its absolute trustworthiness and power. It is the spiritual man who has been taught by the Holy Spirit the very deep things of God who is best able to put the enemy to rout by the use of this powerful weapon.

*"Stand—praying in the Spirit and watching..."* The Christian warrior clad in his protective armor is now ready for the hardest fight of the battle. It is "prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto" until the enemy is routed. It takes a truly spiritual man to be a potent prayer warrior. True "praying in the Holy Spirit" leads him out of himself into intercession for the lifting of the whole Body of Christ to life on the highest plane for the victory of the ascended Head to be manifested in the whole life of each member of His Body on earth.

Thus the believer, who is deeply rooted in his position in Christ and who has put on the whole of his protective armor, is able to stand and to withstand every onslaught and attack of Satan. The ground gained for him by Christ is held by him for Christ and a steady and successful advance is made into the territory still held in the dominion of the evil one. The spiritual man becomes an overcomer and, one with his ascended Lord, rejoices in daily and hourly conquest in this spiritual conflict in the heavenlies.

## **Chapter Twenty-One: Life on the Highest Plane**

In the quiet of a village in Switzerland God has been teaching me many precious lessons about this ascent to life on the highest plane. Grindelwald is thirty-six hundred feet above the sea and from my window I can see four majestic, snowcapped mountains rise to immense heights out of this little valley. For days after coming here I was absolutely satisfied with what I could see from my window. What more of beauty, of majesty, of glory could one want, or take in! But as I got a glimpse here and there of higher peaks hidden from view by these nearer mountains the desire came to climb to some place where I could look out over them all.

One day a party of us started on such a climb. The way was unknown to us but green paint on rock, tree and fence told us the path. We carried that day only what was necessary for the trip; everything but what we actually needed was left behind. The path led steadily up with almost no stretches on the level, in places quite steep. As the sun shone upon us we grew warm, the rough, stony places made our feet burn and ache, unused muscles were stretched and strained, and we had to stop often to rest; every part of the body felt the tug of the climb. To endure the difficulties of the mountain climb and to enjoy all the beautiful things God has placed along the way to see and hear and smell, every faculty of our being and every member of our body was brought into play.

Very often on the upward climb we stopped to rest and refresh ourselves by looking back over the road already traversed and at the new beauties that greeted us the higher up we went. At one point in the way we caught sight of just the summit of a pyramid-shaped, snow-covered peak different from all others we had seen. It arrested our attention and provoked inquiry because of its distinctiveness in shape and its purity of covering. How thrilled we were to learn that it was the Jungfrau, that queen of the Alps.

But oh! what joy when we reached the Waldspitz and how amply repaid we felt in just one moment's time as we gazed at that indescribably beautiful panorama of several of the highest snowcapped Alpine mountains, which is thought one of three of the most beautiful views in Switzerland. Below us the valley and everything in it seemed dwarfed; the glaciers that in the valley towered so high were now so far below; and the nearer mountains that from the valley seemed so high as to live in the clouds were over-towered by the majestic Schreckhorn and the peerless Jungfrau.

We were very, very far yet from reaching the highest height of the Alps but we had gone far enough on such a mountain climb to know that it was worth all its cost, and to get a vision of what majestic glory must be in store for one who dared to go to the top where he could look up to God's heaven and out over God's world from the highest plane.

Dare I hope that the studies in this book have meant just such a spiritual ascent to some readers? Did the book find you living in the heat and stress and strife of life below sea level, on the plane of the natural but with a true desire to seek relief in a higher spiritual altitude? Or had you already left the old sphere of the natural and were enjoying life a few hundred feet above sea level, on the plane of the carnal? Had you settled down in complacent self-satisfaction with what you could see from the little window of your valley experience and had you become content to live at the halfway house of spiritual achievement? Did you aspire for nothing higher than the pleasant walks you could take on the level road where you would not need spiked shoes, a traveler's kit and a climber's stick but could still wear your best clothes and high heeled shoes and only get comfortably tired? But when the book found you was there a stirring of discontent in your soul because at times when walking in communion with Him alone, or in the companionship with some saint of God who had reached the highest plane and told you of its glories, you had seen glimpses of a life in Christ immeasurably beyond anything you had ever seen or dreamed of, and your whole soul cried within you for an experience of such victory, glory, peace and holiness as you knew were possible?

Dare I hope that you essayed to make the climb and that the studies, chapter by chapter, have pointed the way for you out of the natural into the spiritual life in Christ Jesus? I know from experience that it has not been an easy climb. Besetting sins and hindering weights have had to be left behind and only those things taken with you which would strengthen and assist you on the upward climb toward God; the sunshine of God's chastening has heated you to the highest pitch of endurance at times; your feet have been cut and torn by the temptations and afflictions along the way; unused muscles of faith, love, long-suffering, patience and devotion have been stretched to the point of strain; perhaps you have been easily winded by the buffeting and blows of the world, the flesh and the devil. I am sure that before you had gone very far from the valley experience of life on the carnal plane you found that every part of your

being was feeling the pull of the climb; and that spirit, soul and body needed to be wholly sanctified and surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ and put under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that you might not be overcome by the difficulties and might not miss the blessings God had strewn along the way.

But now you have reached the place where you may look out upon God's spiritual Alpine range of salvation and get one glorious panoramic view of peak upon peak which altogether reveal the infinite grace and boundless love of the triune God. Off yonder in the range of vision are the twin peaks of Forgiveness and Justification; next in sharp, clear outline is the lovely peak of Regeneration; further to the back is a majestic peak which one does not see at all from the valley viewpoint of the carnal life because it is hidden by the nearer mountain of Regeneration, the peak of Identification with Christ in His death, resurrection, ascension and present life in glory. But off in the distance is one peak different from all the rest, distinctive in its snow white purity and holiness, the crown of all the others. It is Sanctification, the Jungfrau of spiritual experience. As you have gazed upon the flawless perfection, the indescribable grandeur, the overpowering majesty of the wonders of God's infinite grace and perfect love has not everything in the valley of your carnal life seemed to sink into utter insignificance? Have not things which seemed high above you and that overpowered you by their weight taken their proper place beneath your feet? Have you not realized how shut in you were down there by narrow interests, selfish enjoyments, petty pleasures, puny aspirations? Do you not feel that life for you can never again be the same now that you have felt the thrill of the climb on the ascent and have viewed God's gracious, glorious plan of salvation from the mountaintop?

If this be true of you, dear fellow traveler, may we not just rest a while with this glorious vision before us and sit in quiet meditation upon what we have seen life on the highest plane to be.

### **1. It is a Life Saved through God's Gracious Provision**

The salvation which God has provided for the sinner is a perfect salvation. It is without flaw. It provides for his past, present and future. It covers every need of every part of his being under every circumstance. It relates him rightly to heaven and to earth; to the divine and to the human; to God and to man for time and for eternity. It is a salvation to the uttermost.

Such a salvation is the gracious provision of God in Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ no man can be saved; in Christ any man may be saved to the uttermost because in Christ incarnate, crucified, risen, ascended and exalted, God found everything needful to restore a believing sinner to fellowship with Himself.

Acts 4:12, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*"

2 Timothy 2:10, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the *salvation which is in Christ Jesus* with eternal glory."

The provision that God made in Christ for every believer is threefold. He sent Him to die on the cross as our Saviour; He raised Him from the dead to make Him the Head and the Lord of the Church, His Body; and He exalted Him to His right hand and gave Him all power in heaven and upon earth that He might share Himself and His possession in the heavenlies with His joint heirs on earth. The one who has reached the goal of life on the highest plane has accepted Christ as his Saviour, yielded to Him as his Lord, and appropriated Him as his Life.

### **2. It is a Life Conformed to God's Perfect Pattern**

Complete conformity of the penitent, believing sinner to the image of his perfect Saviour was the purpose of the wondrous plan of salvation wrought out in the eternal counsels of the triune God before ever the world or man was made.

God laid the foundation for such an achievement in the creation of the first man in His own image. In His second Man, God gave mankind the perfect pattern to which He would conform every believer in Christ Jesus. May we see, then, what were the constituent elements in the life of this perfect pattern that we may fully understand and quickly respond to the operation of the Holy Spirit as He works to fashion us according to it.

We have seen in our study on the incarnation that the life of the God-man was a truly human life in every sense in which our life is human, except in its sinfulness. He lived in the same kind of a world and was involved in the same kind of relationships. So the constituent elements in His moral and spiritual character

that enables Him to be a perfect pattern to all mankind must be in us if we are fully conformed to His image.

The God-man's surpassing perfection is seen most clearly in His relationship to His Father which was one of unimpaired obedience and of un-intermittent dependence. The will of God was the center and the circumference of His life, and all that took place from His birth in the manger to His death on the cross was the execution of His Father's will. He came, He lived, He died, that His Father's will might be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Obedience was the invariable, unalterable rule in the life of Christ on earth. He always said yes to God. Self-will had no place in His life.

Hebrews 10:9, "*Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*"

John 6:38, "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*"

John 4:34, "*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*"

Christ, the perfect pattern, was also absolutely dependent. Self-trust had no place in the life of the God-man. The last Adam lived the life of dependence which the first Adam refused to live. Never was a life lived on earth so dependent upon God as was His. His thoughts, His words, His works, were those of His Father. He was a Sent One and He did only what He had been sent to do. He never initiated or executed anything which had its spring in Himself for His was a life "insulated in God's will." In His utter dependence upon God the last Adam was the perfect pattern.

John 5:30, "*I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*"

John 14:10, "*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*"

The God-man's surpassing perfection is seen again most transparently in His glorious victory and in His spotless holiness. Tempted in all points as we are, having no companionship but that of sinful men and women in a world of sin, tested by His Father and tempted by the devil, yet He came forth so victorious that both friend and foe alike acknowledged no fault in Him.

Luke 23:22, "*And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.*"

1 Peter 2:22, "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*"

But the perfection of His character did not consist so much in the negative quality of sinlessness as in the positive one of holiness—a holiness so rare, so wondrous, so unearthly that it compelled His Father to break the silence of heaven three times that He might speak forth His divine appreciation and evaluation of it.

Luke 1:35, "*And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*"

Matthew 17:5, "*While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*"

The God-man's surpassing perfection is seen again most wondrously in His regal righteousness and in His sacrificial love. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He was despised, persecuted, rejected and finally crucified by the very ones He came to save yet there was never a trace of bitterness, malice or revenge in His heart. Even from the cross He prayed for His murderers. He was reviled, yet He showed no trace of retaliation; He suffered unjustly, yet He made no threats of redress. When He drove the money changers from the Temple and when He spoke the scorching, scathing denunciations of the hypocritical Pharisees it was but the outward expression of His own regal righteousness. Whether dealing with friend or foe, in mercy or in judgment, Christ Jesus was always the perfect pattern.

1 Peter 2:21-23, "For even hereunto were ye called: because *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*"

But it was in His sacrificial love for men that the perfection of Christ's character shone forth even more than in His righteous treatment of them. Christ Jesus never pampered or pleased Himself. Though weary and hungry the soul need of a prostitute in Samaria would detain Him by Jacob's well while the others went on into town to buy food; His night's sleep was gladly forfeited that He might talk with the man who feared to come to Him by day; He did not stop short with self-emptying and self-humbling, costly as they were, but kept on giving Himself even unto death, the death of the cross. The God-man pouring out His soul unto death in sacrificial love is the perfect pattern.

John 15:12, "This is my commandment, *that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*"

The spiritual man is the man who lives his daily life according to the perfect pattern. In Him are to be found the same constituent moral and spiritual elements which were regnant in the character and conduct of the God-man. He has made the will of Jesus Christ the center and the circumference of his life, and so he is obedient. He acknowledges that he has no life apart from Christ and takes the Lord Jesus for everything in his inner life, his environment and his service, and so he is dependent. The spiritual man has crowned Christ Lord and placed his life completely under the control of his Master, therefore he is gloriously victorious. He has appropriated Christ as the Life of his life therefore he becomes the partaker of His holiness. The spiritual man has accepted Christ's commission as one sent into the world to save sinners even as Christ accepted this commission from His Father, so his attitude to all men whether friend or foe is based on Christ's principles of righteousness and love.

The spiritual man is one who is being conformed to the image of Christ, the perfect pattern. When this has been said, everything has been said. In God's reckoning there is nothing for man beyond conformity to the image of His Son. Christ is God's perfection and to be fully conformed to His image is to be perfect before Him.

The process of conformity is going on day by day in the spiritual man's life. It is a transformation from obedience to obedience, from dependence to dependence, from victory to victory, from holiness to holiness, from righteousness to righteousness and from love to love. As the spiritual man gets a larger vision of this perfect pattern through daily study of God's Word, he takes higher ground along the line of the God-given revelation, so that his life is a continuous growing up into Christ in all things.

2 Corinthians 3:18, R.V., "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, *are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.*"

The consummation of this conformity will not be experienced until the Lord Jesus returns to take His own to be forever beyond the presence of sin into the presence of the Saviour (1 John 3:2).

### **3. It is a Life Perfected by God's Holy Presence**

I hasten to this point because I would not have anyone think even for an instant that conformity to the image of Christ is effected by imitation of a pattern, no matter how perfect. Such conformity as the Bible speaks of is not wrought in the believer through the imitation of a pattern without but through the presence of a Person within. It is only through the union whereby the Vine lives in the branch and the branch in the Vine that such conformity is found. It is only the man who apprehends his position in Christ and Christ's possession in him who grows up into likeness to his Lord. It is only the man who consistently can say, "Christ liveth in me" who can say honestly, "To me to live is Christ." It is not the imitation of the incarnate Son but it is the indwelling of the crucified, risen, ascended, exalted Son that perfects conformity to His image. What He was I am to be because of what He did on the cross and now does from the throne. It is the Father's answer to the last three words of His Son's high-priestly prayer that produces conformity to Christ in the believer. Oneness with the Lord makes likeness to the Lord.

John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me and *I in him*, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

John 17:26, "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and *I in them.*"

#### **4. It is a Life Energized by God's Mighty Power**

One has only to begin to live his life on the highest plane to know that life can never be maintained on that level in one's own power. Living steadfastly and habitually in the altitude of the heavenlies is the spiritual man's greatest difficulty. Even after taking Christ Jesus as his perfect pattern and realizing His holy presence within, the believer often has periods of dismal failure and terrible defeat.

But the spiritually minded man has learned God's way of maintaining his life in the heavenlies and his life is energized by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit whom God bestows upon every child of His. The Holy Spirit is given when the new nature is imparted to the believer for the very purpose of effecting this growing conformity to the image of Christ.

Ephesians 3:16-17, 19-20, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, *to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; That ye might be filled unto all the fullness of God . . .* Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us.*"

Life on the highest plane is consistently and continuously maintained by the energizing power of the indwelling power of the indwelling Spirit of God.

#### **5. It is a Life Fulfilling God's Eternal Purpose**

Before ever the world was created or man was made to inhabit it God had a purpose which He intended to carry out through His Son.

Ephesians 3:11, "According to *the eternal purpose* which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, *but according to his own purpose and grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began.*"

This purpose God kept hid in His heart, yet throughout all the centuries preceding the incarnation of His eternal Son He was working toward its fulfillment. Then Christ came, lived, died, rose again and ascended into heaven. Now the time had come both for the revelation and the realization of this purpose. Through the apostle Paul, God's chosen vessel, the revelation of this eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus was made and its clearest unfolding is given to us in the epistle to the Ephesians.

Through the finished work of Christ upon the cross and from the throne God would call out a people unto Himself who during this present period of His Son's absence from earth would witness and work for Him here as His Body and upon His return to earth to reign would come with Him as His Bride.

Ephesians 1:22-23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, *which is his body*, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Revelation 21:9, "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, *Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*"

The Holy Spirit as a purifying and energizing power works within the Church to prepare it to live on earth as Christ's Body and to present it in heaven to Christ as His Bride.

2 Timothy 2:20-21, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, *he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*"

Ephesians 5:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, *that he might present it to himself a glorious*

*church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*

But there are two things which are absolutely essential in the relationship between Christ and the believer if God's eternal purpose is to be fulfilled; one is communion and the other is cooperation. God is love and love is a reciprocal thing. Love must both give and receive. There is no such thing as love between God and man or man and man unless there exists in the relationship both communion and cooperation, and the greater the love the fuller is the communion and the cooperation.

In the eternity of the past the eternal Son rested in the bosom of the eternal Father—that was communion. And when the triune God initiated the wondrous plan of redemption the eternal Son offered Himself as the Lamb to be slain—that was cooperation. In the Garden of Eden the Lover-Creator and His first man must have walked often in the garden in the cool of the day—that was communion. And the sovereign Lord God gave to His subject the dominion over everything on earth—that was cooperation. The night before His crucifixion the God-man sat at supper with the twelve—that was communion. And before He ascended into heaven He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"—that is cooperation.

The spiritual man apprehends this truth and appreciates the significance of it. He sees that it means such a yielding of himself to Jesus Christ as Lord, as will make possible the perfect possession, the complete control and the unhindered use of his entire being. He clearly perceives that salvation includes sanctification and that life on the highest plane demands not only a separation from sin but a separation unto God, and he rejoices in being thus wholly set apart unto communion and cooperation with the Lord of glory.

## **6. It is a Life Fashioned on God's Original Plan**

In God's original plan the human personality was a unity. The human spirit, dominated and directed by the Holy Spirit, was supreme in authority over the soul and the body so that the Holy Spirit through the channel of the human spirit made and kept the whole being spiritual.

As we have seen in chapter 17 sin began its deadly work in Adam's spirit by severing it from the divine Spirit thus alienating it from the life of God and making it a death chamber. Sin also dethroned it as sovereign over the human personality and made it a slave to the soul and body. Thus sin left the human spirit darkened and dethroned. Salvation must begin where sin began; the human spirit must be quickened. The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit over it must be restored, and its supremacy over soul and body must be revived.

*The human spirit was made the receptacle of the eternal life of God.* Salvation always outruns sin for "where sin abounded grace did much more abound." In the quickening of the human spirit God not only made it cease being a death chamber but He made it the receptacle of the eternal life of the triune God. Through the new birth He implanted within it something which had never been there before, the divine, spiritual, eternal life of the triune God in the Person of Christ the Son in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

1 John 5:11-12, "And this is the record, *that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*"

Into this quickened spirit the Holy Spirit comes to dwell, feeding and fostering this new life within that it may grow up "into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). A renewal of this divine life within is made daily by the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26-27, "A new heart also will I give you, *and a new spirit will I put within you:* and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*"

2 Corinthians 4:16, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, *yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*"

The spiritual man is one in whom the human spirit is supernaturally recreated through the implantation of the uncreated life of God at the new birth. Into this quickened spirit the Holy Spirit has come to abide, to

control, to renew and to energize. Between them "a perpetual partnership" is established. Through this supernatural reunion of the divine Spirit and the human spirit Christ and the believer are joined into one spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:17, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is *one spirit*."

Through this act of God in regeneration the maladjustment within the believer's human personality is remedied. True balance between the constituent parts is restored; the sovereignty of the spirit over soul and body is revived, and the human spirit is again the premier in the governmental affairs of the human being, and the soul and body are its loyal and faithful underlings.

*The human soul becomes the illumined vessel of the divine Spirit.*

**1.** The mind is renewed. The spiritual man is spiritually minded. He thinks the thoughts of God. He craves divine wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:7); he sits at the feet of a divine Teacher (John 16:13); he loves God with all his mind (Matthew 22:37); he minds the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5); he thinks on the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:8); he is of one mind with his brethren (Philippians 2:2); he has the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16); he is of sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7), and every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Intellect, reason and every faculty of his mind are renewed and illumined by Him who knows the mind of God.

Ephesians 4:23, "*And be renewed in the spirit of your mind...*"

Romans 8:6, "For to be carnally minded is death; but *to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*"

Philippians 2:5, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*"

**2.** The heart is purified. The spiritual man is pure-hearted. He wants to possess his inheritance in Christ so he sets his affection on things above (Colossians 3:2); he craves the vision of God granted only to the pure in heart (Matthew 5:8); he desires to see his Lord which is only the prerogative of the holy (Hebrews 12:14); he seeks the conformity to Christ promised upon His return to those who purify themselves even as He is pure (1 John 3:2), and so he allows the Holy Spirit to do within him all needed work of pruning and purifying.

Acts 15:8-9, "And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, *giving them the Holy Ghost*, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith.*"

1 Thessalonians 3:13, "*To the end that he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God*, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

**3.** The will is energized. The spiritual man knows that at the center of Satan's being is self-will and that everyone in whose life self-will is supreme is the seed and the subject of Satan. He knows that at the center of Christ's being is God's will and that everyone in whose life God's will is supreme is the seed and the subject of Christ. He has compared and contrasted the "I will" of Satan, Isaiah 14:12-15 and its result in Revelation 20:7-15 with the "I will" of Christ in Hebrews 10:5-13 and its result in Philippians 2:5-11 and has decided to cast in his lot for time and for eternity with Jesus Christ the obedient, dependent One. The spiritual man looks to the Holy Spirit to work in and then work out God's perfect will within him.

Hebrews 13:21, "*Make you perfect in event good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.*"

Philippians 2:13, "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure...*"

*The human body becomes the habitation of the triune God on earth.* The spiritual man apprehends the spiritual significance and sacredness of his body. Under the Holy Spirit's illumination he learns what it becomes through the new birth.

**1.** The body is the temple of the living God.

2 Corinthians 6:16, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? *For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*"

**2.** The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "What? Know ye not that *your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

**3.** The body is a member of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:15, "*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ. Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*"

**4.** The body is the container of the heavenly treasure.

2 Corinthians 4:7, "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*"

**5.** The body is the channel for good works.

2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*"

**6.** The body is Christ's broadcasting station.

2 Corinthians 4:10-11, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*"

The spiritual man perceives through this truth that God wishes to become incarnate and to dwell on earth and that the way in which He has chosen to do this is by having the perfect possession, the complete control and the unhindered use of the human body of the believer. Acting upon this knowledge the spiritual man has presented God with his body here and now as a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, *that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"

Not wishing to run any risk of defrauding God or of deceiving himself in regard to the completeness of this transaction he makes a special gift to God of each individual member of his body to be used hereafter as God's instrument.

Romans 6:13, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and *your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*"

But the spiritual man knows also that the redemption of the body is not yet completed and will not be until the Lord comes again when this body of humiliation will be exchanged for one glorified even as Christ's is glorified now (Romans 8:23, Philippians 3:20—21, R.V.). He knows further that the flesh is still entrenched within him even though he is not now in the sphere of the flesh and that he is still environed by a hostile, hateful world.

Romans 8:10, "And if Christ be in you, *the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*"

John 17:15, 18, R.V., "*I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.*"

So he understands the need of constant vigilance over the body that it may be kept under the dominating control of the Holy Spirit lest he yield to any of the appetites, passions and lusts of the flesh or be conformed to the fashions and foibles of the world. The spiritual man is willing for any work of the Holy Spirit within him in the way of discipline that will keep the body under and enable him to possess it in honor and sanctification.

1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

1 Thessalonians 4:4, "That every one of you shall know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."

Thus we see that in grace the human personality was sacredly preserved as an entity as it was made in creation and remained in the Fall. All that was ruined was redeemed and restored, *plus*. For through the new nature imparted and the new life implanted that which in creation was earthly and human only, in re-creation became heavenly and divine. With this perfect adjustment to God, the life becomes righteous and holy; and then of necessity follows adjustment within and without. Through the spiritual man's perfect harmony with God, with himself and with others the Kingdom of God begins on earth and the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven.

## 7. It is a Life Lived on God's Appointed Plane

As God has never had but one *plan* for the life of man, and that a spiritual one, so He has never had but one *plane* on which He means man to live, and that the plane of the spiritual. Life lived on the highest plane is a life of deep, vital, growing spirituality. When God speaks of the man who is capable of examining and understanding the things of God and of the one whom He can trust to help weak and sinful believers He calls him "he that is spiritual."

1 Corinthians 2:15, "But *he that is spiritual* judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual* restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

There are three outstanding marks of the life lived on the highest plane, the first is—*it is an abounding life*. The spiritual man draws all his resources directly from God consequently he never need lack for anything. God's granaries are always full and the doors are opened earthward. In Christ the believer's life "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and in Him the believer may be made as "full" as he wishes to be (Colossians 2:9-10). The spiritual man desires with a deepening intensity to "be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19) consequently he draws bountifully from Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:7, "Therefore, *as ye abound in every thing*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."

2 Corinthians 9:11, "*Being enriched in every thing to all bountifullness*, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God."

### 1. The spiritual man abounds in grace.

2 Corinthians 9:8, "And God is able to make *all grace abound toward you*; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

### 2. The spiritual man abounds in hope.

Romans 15:13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, *that ye may abound in hope*, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

### 3. The spiritual man abounds in joy.

John 15:11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that your joy might be full*."

### 4. The spiritual man abounds in peace.

Colossians 3:15, "And *let the peace of God rule in your hearts*, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

### 5. The spiritual man abounds in thankfulness.

Ephesians 5:20, "*Giving thanks always for all things unto God* and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**6.** The spiritual man abounds in knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:5, "That in *every thing ye are enriched by him*, in all utterance, and *in all knowledge*."

**7.** The spiritual man abounds in love.

Philippians 1:9, "And this I pray, that *your love may abound yet more and more* in knowledge and in all judgment."

The more the spiritual man abounds in the riches of God's grace the more unsearchable and exhaustless he finds them to be so that there exists in his life a strange but joyous paradox—that of always being satisfied in Christ and yet always unsatisfied. The spiritual man never stops growing because he is always reaching upward to that still higher height that is just beyond. It was this passionate up-reaching toward Christ in the heart of the apostle Paul that inspired those words to the Christians at Philippi.

Philippians 3:12-14, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, *if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus*. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this one thing I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and *reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*."

The second mark of life lived on the highest plane is—*it is an overcoming life*. Having taken his position by faith in the heavenlies in Christ the spiritual man lives in the atmosphere of triumph which prevails there. The spiritual man is on top of his difficulties; he is the conqueror not the conquered; the victor not the vanquished. His identification with Jesus Christ in the victory over sin and Satan is a reality to him and he looks upon Satan as an already defeated foe and treats him accordingly and reckons upon his own death to sin, to self and to the world.

Romans 8:37, "Nay, *in all these things we are more than conquerors* through him that loved us."

1 John 5:4, "For *whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world*: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The spiritual man aspires to such an overcoming life on earth as will win for him a share in the reigning life of heaven.

Revelation 3:21, "*To him that overcometh* will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The third mark of life lived on the highest plane is—*it is an overflowing life*. The spiritual man has enough and to spare. He does not have to hoard his spiritual riches for he is the child of a King and knows that his Father is a royal Giver and has taught His child "that it is more blessed to give than to receive." He is assured that the more he gives the more he will receive. Out of his innermost being flow the rivers of living water to bring life more abundant to every life he touches.

John 7:38, R.V., "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, *from within him shall flow rivers of living water*."

A life lived on the highest plane is a continuous miracle of God's grace.

## Chapter Twenty-Two: Carnal or Spiritual

That God has made ample provision in Christ for each person to live his life on the highest plane is evident from our previous studies. But that every believer does not exercise this privilege needs no argument. We feel how far short of it we ourselves fall and we observe the low spiritual level upon which other lives are lived. A casual perusal of Paul's letters to the churches will reveal the fact that there is more than one kind of Christian. In the sixth through the eighth chapters of Romans this truth is clearly taught.

Romans 6 is the hub of life on the highest plane. Deep spirituality emanates from a spiritual apprehension, appropriation and assimilation of the truth of this chapter. In this divine revelation God gives us the spiritual seed from which the full-blown flower—a life in growing conformity to the image of Christ—springs. Here man is delivered from the sphere of darkness, death and bondage; here he leaves behind the old servitude to sin and becomes the servant of righteousness; here he comes out from under the yoke of the Law to live under the reign of grace; here he witnesses the crucifixion of the old man to make way for the control of the new nature; here God tells the believer that he not only need not sin but that he may be holy. Romans 6 tells us plainly that God has made full provision in Christ for lifting the sinner from the lowest depths of life on the plane of the natural to the highest heights of life on the plane of the spiritual.

Romans 7 and 8 each picture the life of a Christian but the difference in likeness to the pattern set in Romans 6 is so great as to lead one to think that there are surely two kinds of Christians.

Romans 7 pictures a life of storm, stress and struggle; a life of defeat and discouragement crowned with despair. Romans 7 is the divine photograph of an eager Alpine climber. He starts at the base (Romans 6) of the majestic snowcapped Jungfrau and aspires to scale its highest height (Romans 8). He has studied a guidebook about Alpine climbing and confident of his own strength and ability he presumes to ascend without a guide. After hours upon hours of toilsome climbing, ignorant of the way, floundering in masses of ice and snow, worn out with his effort to ascend the steep and dangerous path, he sinks down exhausted and filled with despair and in the darkness of the night that has overtaken him cries out for deliverance (Romans 7:24).

In Romans 7 we find the believer acknowledging that the Law of God is holy, just and good, and admitting that it should be obeyed. A part of him longs to keep it, even strives to do so in his own strength, while another part of him resists. How to conquer in this conflict he does not know. He knows that he need not sin and resolves that he will not but he goes on sinning. His will functions but he is baffled in knowing how to fulfill its decree to be holy and to do good. He wills and he works to reach the plane of the spiritual but is unsuccessful and inevitably must fail, for a man cannot sanctify himself any more than he can save himself.

Romans 8 pictures discernment after delusion, conquest after conflict, sunshine after storm. The despairing cry of the Alpine climber has been heard by an unseen Guide who has climbed all the way with him. Unwilling to intrude where not wanted, He has remained silent, but the moment He hears the cry for help He flashes light upon the midnight darkness of the traveler's path. He points out the way; He even lifts the weary traveler up and enables him to overcome every difficulty of the way and to reach the goal of his aspiration. The "I" used more than thirty times in Romans 7 is displaced by the "Holy Spirit" who in that chapter is not mentioned once. The mountain is the same; the path is no less difficult or dangerous. But the difference between Romans 7 and 8 is the difference of a *Guide* who knows the way and can enable the traveler to reach the top.

Romans 8 reveals as clearly as does Romans 7 that there is a conflict on within every believer which never ends as long as one dwells on earth, but it reveals *the way of victory*. It removes the delusion that the believer can fight the enemy in his own strength and gives spiritual discernment of God's gracious provision of *the means of victory*. Romans 8 lifts the believer above the clouds of discouragement into the clear sunlight of abiding peace and rest because it assures him at the beginning that "in Christ" there is no condemnation by God as regards his past, and at the end that "in Christ" there is no separation from God as regards his future, and all the verses in between proclaim the perfect provision made "in Christ" for victory over every enemy within and without as regards the present (Romans 8:2-34). The Father has given unto every believer the Spirit of His Son to guide him on life's pathway.

Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Romans 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

There are, then, two kinds of Christians clearly named and described in Scripture. It is of the utmost importance that every believer should know which kind of Christian he is and that, after knowing, he should determine which kind he wishes *to be*. Let us read these verses from Paul's letter to the Corinthian church, and note the names he gives to these two classes. One he addresses as carnal, the other as spiritual Christians.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto *spiritual*. but as unto *carnal*, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet *carnal*: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not *carnal*, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not *carnal*?"

### **1. The Marks of the Carnal Christian**

The up and down line in the first diagram is photographic. It is almost cruelly self-revealing. It visualizes the average church member. It is like a costly picture cheaply framed or an exquisite garment illy fitted. One look tells you that something is wrong and no matter how often you look it never seems right. We know instinctively that the true Christian life could never be symbolized by a wavering line. Christianity, which is Christ-possessing, controlling and using, must spell straightness and steadiness. It must be life on the spiritual plane. The life of the carnal Christian is not so.

#### ***It is a Life of Unceasing Conflict***

Romans 7:22-23, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see *another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind*, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Galatians 5:17, "For *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

One law "warring against" another law in the same personality; part of a man "serving" one law and part of him serving another—this is indeed the language of conflict. Two forces absolutely contrary to each other are each working to gain and to keep control over the entire personality. Two natures, the divine and the fleshly, are engaged in deadly warfare. The spiritual is sometimes in the ascendancy and the believer enjoys a momentary joy, peace and rest. The divine nature imparted to him at his rebirth is in control and Christ in him is victorious. But the fleshly nature, which is always defiant to the authority and rule of God, rebels. Conflict ensues. The fleshly nature is again the master, and joy and peace are gone. Such is the miserable existence of the carnal Christian.

A friend told me a story of her six-year-old nephew which tellingly illustrates this manner of living. Her nephew was often tempted to run away and his mother was much distressed by it. One day she told him that if he ran away again she would have to punish him. Soon afterwards the temptation came through a neighbor boy and he yielded to it. Upon returning home his mother said, "James, didn't you remember that I said if you ran away again I would punish you?" "Yes," said James, "I remembered." "Then why did you do it?" asked his mother. Little James replied, "It was this way, Mother. As I stood there in the road thinking about it Jesus pulled on one leg and the devil pulled on the other and the devil pulled the harder!" The Lord Jesus pulling on one leg and Satan pulling on the other is the constant experience of the Christian, but yielding to the devil and giving to him the victory over Christ is the wretched condition of the carnal Christian.

### ***It is a Life of Repeated Defeat***

Romans 7:15, R.V., "For that which I do I know not: *for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do.*"

Romans 7:19, R.V., "For *the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice.*"

As one reads Romans 7 he feels that the apostle Paul is writing someone's spiritual biography. It was no doubt his own. But could it not have been yours and mine as well? It is the revelation of a true desire and an honest attempt to live a right and a holy life but it is surcharged with the atmosphere of deadly defeat; a defeat so overpowering as to burst forth in that despairing cry for deliverance.

Romans 7:24, "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"

Who of us has not uttered it? We have made countless resolutions at the dawn of a new day or of a new year regarding the things we would or would not do. But long before the twilight hour our hearts have been heavy with a humiliating sense of failure. The things we steadfastly determined to do were left undone and the things we solemnly resolved not to do were repeatedly done. Sins both of commission and of omission, like evil spirits, haunt our bedchamber and rob us even of the balm of sleep. Temper, anger, fretting, worry, murmuring, pride, selfishness, malice, worldliness, unfaithfulness, evil speaking, bitterness, jealousy, envy, quarreling, hatred, in fact "the old man's" entire family of evil passions and desires may have worked havoc in one's own personal life, and spoiled the day not only for one's self, but for one's family and friends and, most of all, have grieved God.

The trouble was not with the will for it was very sincere in the decisions made at dawn and fully purposed to carry them out.

Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (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.*"

But in the carnal Christian, Christ is compelled to share the control of the life with another and the result is both inner and outer maladjustment. Self-will, self-love, self-trust and self-exaltation always spell envying, quarreling, bitterness and division.

1 Corinthians 3:3, "For *ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*"

The state of the carnal Christian is one of failure and defeat and it *never* can be anything else. If he wishes deliverance he may have it, but it will be a deliverance out of Romans 7 into Romans 8.

### ***It is a Life of Protracted Infancy***

The carnal Christian never grows up. He remains, stunted and dwarfed, a mere "babe in Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:1-2, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, *but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.* I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for *hitherto* ye were not able to bear it, *neither yet now are ye able.*"

The Corinthian Christians should have been full grown; they had been Christians long enough to have become spiritual adults but they were mere "babes in Christ." They should have been strong, healthy, meat-eating grown-ups; instead they were weak, milk-drinking infants. They did not measure up either in stature or strength to what they should have.

Nothing on earth could be sweeter or more perfect to loving parents than *a baby in babyhood*; but oh! the indescribable heartache endured by the parents if that precious child remains a baby in body or in mind. Nothing on earth sets the joy bells of heaven ringing as the birth of one into the family of God; but oh! what pain it must cause the heavenly Father to see that spiritual babe remain in a state of protracted infancy!

Which are you today, dear reader, a spiritual babe or an adult? Are you still in infancy in spiritual things or are you full grown? To answer the question it may help to ask and answer another. What are the marks of a babe? A baby cannot serve himself but is helplessly dependent upon others. He may give enjoyment to

others but he cannot help them. A baby absorbs attention; he expects to be the center of his little world. A baby lives in the realm of his feelings, being entirely governed by them. If all goes well, he is pleased and smiling but he is exceedingly touchy, and if his desire is crossed at any point he quickly lets it be known in lusty remonstrance. God's Word shows that the carnal Christian bears these selfsame marks.

Hebrews 5:12-14, R.V., "*For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.*"

The Christians to whom this epistle to the Hebrews was written were evidently carnal Christians also. They ought to have been teaching others yet they themselves still needed to be taught even the elementary truths of spiritual experience. They, as well as the Corinthians, should have been able to eat meat but they were still content to feed on milk. They were able neither to help themselves nor others. They were incapacitated through their protracted infancy either to receive the deep things of God or to impart them to others.

Perhaps Paul puts his finger upon the reason for the stunted condition of the Corinthian Christians in the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians. He teaches us that the spiritual man knows the deep things of God through the discernment made possible by the Holy Spirit's illumination. The spiritual man is one who, delighting in God's Word, devours and digests it. By feeding upon it he grows in stature and strength.

But the Corinthian Christians were very evidently not of this type. They were following human leaders, esteeming lightly the wisdom of God and exalting highly the wisdom of men. They were substituting fodder for food and attempting to satisfy hunger on husks. Consequently they were still "babes in Christ"—weak, emaciated Christians.

Much the same condition prevails today in the churches of Christendom. The average professing Christian is not going firsthand to the Bible for food, expecting the Holy Spirit to give him the strong meat of the Word. He is looking to human teachers for his nourishment and gulps down whatever is given him. He is a spiritual parasite living on predigested food; consequently he is underfed and anemic. In this weakened state he is open to all forms of spiritual disease. He is an easy prey for temper, impurity, pride, bitterness and selfishness and because of his close relationship to other members of the Body of Christ; the result is often just such an epidemic of sin as existed in the Corinthian church.

### ***It is a Life of Barren Fruitlessness***

Luke 13:6-7, "*He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"*

John 15:2, "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*"

The influence of the carnal Christian is always negative. The carnal Christian occupies a pew in church on the Lord's Day indicating some love in his heart for the Lord and devotion to Him but he is unable to bring with him any member of his family or associate in business or friend because of the inconsistency of his life before them during the week. He is a branch of the vine but a fruitless, hence a useless, branch.

### ***It is a Life of Adulterous Infidelity***

James 4:4, "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*"

1 John 2:15-16, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*"

The language of James 4:4 is drastic and austere. There is an irrevocable finality about it. Men may hold two opinions about "the world" but not so with God. In James 4:4 He at least leaves no Christian any room whatever for argument regarding his attitude toward and relationship to "the world" but declares in words of transparent clearness that any Christian who maintains friendship with the world is guilty of adulterous infidelity in his relationship to Christ.

To realize the truth of God's pungent statement the reader need only remind himself of what the world is and of its attitude to Christ. "The world" is Satan's eyes, ears, hands and feet combined to fashion his most cunning weapon for defeating God by capturing the souls of men. "The world" is Satan's *lair* for the unsaved and his *lure* to the saved to keep them from God. "The world" is human life and human society *with God left out*.

What, then, should be the Christian's relationship to the world? The answer is found in the Christian's relationship to Christ. Christ and the Christian are one. They are joined together, as we have seen, in such an intimate union and identification of life that God, the Holy Spirit, does not hesitate to say that the love relationship they bear to each other is one analogous to that of marriage.

Is it any wonder, then, that God says that friendship with the world on the part of a Christian is tantamount to spiritual adultery and that He brands "the friend of the world" "an enemy of God"? Hobnobbing with the world in its pleasures, entering into partnership with it in its pursuits, fashioning one's life by its principles, working to carry out its program, all make one an accomplice of the evil one against one's own Beloved, against the Saviour, Lord and King of one's life. Such adulterous unfaithfulness in love marks one as a carnal Christian.

But perhaps some reader is still in the dark as to what is worldly. He is not clear as to what he may have, do or enjoy. The acid test of worldliness is given in 1 John 2:16. Under the Holy Spirit's illumination test your life by it and you will quickly discern the mark of the worldly.

Worldliness is "all that is not of the Father." Whatever would not be as appropriate and fitting to Christ's life in the heavenlies as to the Christian's life on earth is worldly. Whatever does not come out from God and cannot go back to Him with His blessing is worldliness. Such is the negative aspect of worldliness.

It has a positive aspect as well. Worldliness is "the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes," and "the pride of life." Worldliness may be manifested in one's conversation, in one's style of hair-dress, in the clothes one wears, in the company one keeps, in the pleasures one enjoys, in the books one reads, in the appetites one indulges, in the things one buys, in the ambitions by which one is ruled, and in the activities in which one engages. Anything which feeds or pampers the flesh, the animal part of man, whether it results in gross sensuality, or in taking the bloom from heart purity, or merely in soft self-indulgence and self-ease, is worldliness. Anything that stains the heart, soils the hands, stings the conscience and separates one from the joy and sweetness of communion with Christ, is worldliness. It is "the lust of the flesh."

Anything that caters merely to the fashions of this world, that stimulates desire for possession and property, that aims merely to please men and gain their approval, that keeps the eyes fixed on the lowlands instead of on the heights, on the seen rather than on the unseen, anything that puts a cloud between Christ and the Christian and shuts Him out from one's vision is "the lust of the eyes."

Anything that exalts self, that fosters pomp and pride, that clips the wings of the soul so that it grovels in the dust of earth instead of soaring heavenward, that sets the affections upon the wealth, the fame, the honors of earth rather than upon the treasures of heaven, that robs the Christian of his possessions and privileges in Christ, is "the pride of life."

There can be no confluence between these streams. Their admixture in a human life produces the carnal Christian.

### ***It is a Life of Dishonoring Hypocrisy***

Ephesians 5:8, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but *now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.*"

1 John 1:5-6, "God is light, and *in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*"

1 Corinthians 3:3, "Are ye not carnal, and *walk as men?*"

The carnal man says one thing and does another; his walk does not correspond with his witness; he professes what he does not possess. The carnal man walks as those who make no profession of being Christians and presents them with such a caricature of Christ that he has no power to win them to his Saviour.

Does anything more need to be said to prove that the carnal Christian falls far short of God's best and is not well pleasing unto Him? But there is abundant hope for the believer who, wearied with the conflict, humiliated by the defeat, chagrined by the immaturity, distressed by the fruitlessness, convicted of the infidelity, and pained by the hypocrisy, turns to God and cries out for deliverance from the wretched captivity of carnality into the glorious liberty of spirituality.

## **2. The Marks of a Spiritual Christian**

### *It is a Life of Abiding Peace*

John 14:27, "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*"

John 16:33, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*"

The peace of the spiritual Christian is that of Christ's presence. "My peace I give unto you." It does not mean that there is no conflict in the life of the spiritual Christian for it is through conquest in conflict that he grows, but it does mean the peace of conscious victory in Christ. The spiritual Christian does not continue in the practice of known, willful sin so he lives in the unclouded sunshine of the Father's presence and in the unshadowed light of the Father's countenance. His communion with the Father is unmarred by the gnawing consciousness of soiled hands, by the pricking of a wounded conscience, or by the condemnation of an accusing heart. There is abiding peace, deepening joy and satisfying rest.

### *It is Life of Habitual Victory*

1 Corinthians 15:57, "*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Romans 8:37, "*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*"

2 Corinthians 2:14, "*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*"

The believer has changed masters and has entered into a new servitude which is perfect freedom. God tells him he has been made "free from sin"; that he is "more than conqueror" through Christ; that "the victory" of the cross was all-inclusive; and that "in Christ" he may walk through life's battlefield "in triumph." The spiritual Christian takes God's word at face value, he dares to believe it and to act accordingly.

The believer's identification with Christ did not secure for him "victories" only but "victory." His victory over sin is all-inclusive, the greater has wrapped within it the lesser. He who has given victory over one sin can give victory over all sin; He, who has kept from sin for a moment, can with equal ease keep for an hour or a day. Victory over sin is a gift through Christ.

Victory need not be intermittent but may be habitual. God can cause us *always* in all places, under all circumstances, at all times, in all things, "to triumph in Christ" for "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Perhaps some reader will say, I have experienced occasionally this glorious freedom from some besetting sin but it has been only a transient liberty. Is there really such a thing here on earth as habitual victory over all known sin?

Let us think of the difference between such a transient liberty and a permanent freedom. It was made very clear to me once through an experience in speaking on two Sundays to the women in Cook County Jail in Chicago. At the first meeting one hard-faced, rough-looking woman made considerable trouble,

nearly breaking up the meeting. She came at the close imploring me to secure her release from jail, making all sorts of lavish promises of good behavior, even to becoming a Christian if I would do her this favor. Twenty-six times she had been behind those bars for the same offense, she said. This confession told me why she was in jail. Liberty she had had twenty-five times: freedom she had never known. She had no desire to break with sin but only to break from jail.

The following Lord's Day I spoke on the difference between liberty and freedom. Knowing that the woman's attention must be held for the sake of others as well as for herself I had taken some thread and scissors to illustrate the message. During the talk I asked her for the loan of her fingers. I wound the thread lightly around them and then asked her to free herself. With her strong, brawny hands it was an easy matter just to loosen the thread and she did it exultingly. Then I wound it around again and again some fifty times until her fingers were truly "bond servants" to that thread, praying that God would drive home the truth of her terrible bondage to sin. All the time her face grew longer and more perplexed. Finally I stopped and asked her again to loosen her fingers and free herself. With real seriousness she looked into my face and said bluntly, "You know I can't!" I said, "Yes, I know you can't and are you not glad that I have brought these scissors along which can cut this thread and set your fingers free?" Then I told her of the Saviour who came from heaven to die on Calvary's cross that through the outpouring of His precious blood she might be cut loose from sin and set free forever and ever. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

To make that perfect victory permanent He has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell and control. The carnal man is under the power of the law of sin. It operates in his life, bringing him much of the time under its dominion. But there is another and a higher law at work in the believer and as he yields himself to its mighty power the spiritual man is delivered from the law of sin and death. Herein lies his habitual victory over all known sin.

Romans 8:2, "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*"

#### ***It is a Life of Constant Growth into Christ-likeness***

2 Corinthians 3:18, R.V., "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, *are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.*"

There is nothing static in true spiritual experience. The upward look and the unveiled face must catch something of the glory of the Lord and reflect it. With a growing knowledge of Him and a deepening communion with Him, there must inevitably be a growing likeness to Him. It is a transformation into His image *from glory to glory*. The spiritual nature is ever reaching out after and laying hold of that which is spiritual in order that it may become more spiritual. "As the bursting acorns lay hungry hold only on what will produce oaks" so the spiritual man lays hungry hold only on what will produce likeness to Christ Jesus.

John 15:2, 5, "Every branch in me that heareth *not fruit* he taketh away: and every branch that beareth *fruit*, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth *more fruit*. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth *much fruit*: for without me ye can do nothing."

Surely there is progression in Christ-likeness—"not fruit," "fruit," "more fruit" "much fruit." Do these phrases not unveil before us the possibilities and potentialities for Christ-likeness open to every branch in the vine? Do they not also show us the positive progression "*from glory to glory*" God expects to see in us? These expressions are descriptive. Which one describes you? There is but one branch that fully satisfies the heart of the divine Husbandman.

John 15:8, "*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*"

God makes very clear what is the fruit which He expects to find on the branch.

Galatians 5:22-23, R.V., "But the *fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law."

The "fruit of the Spirit" is the full-orbed, symmetrical character of the Lord Jesus Christ in which there is no lack and no excess. The apostle Paul did not speak of "*the fruits* of the Spirit" as he is so often

misquoted. It is just one cluster, and all nine graces are essential to reveal the beauty and glory of true Christ-likeness. But how often we see a great heart of love spoiled by a very quick temper—there is "love" but not "self-control." Or we see long-suffering marred by boastfulness—the person being so afraid the long-suffering will not be noted and appreciated that there is a repeated reminder of it. There is "long-suffering" but not "meekness." Occasionally one sees a Christian long on faith but very short on gentleness. He has in his makeup the thunder of Mount Sinai more than the love of Calvary. He believes the doctrine and defends it with better success than he adorns it. He has "faith" but not "kindness." Or often we see one whose life is the embodiment of goodness but the goodness is overshadowed by anxiety, worry, and fretting. The presence of "goodness" is limited in its beneficent working by the absence of "peace." Oh! How the lack or the excess of one of these graces mars the beauty, the completeness, the symmetry of the cluster! In the spiritual Christian all nine of these graces blend in such beautiful and winsome attractiveness and harmony that the world sees Christ living within.

I was traveling upon the Yangtze River in central China. A heavy rainstorm had just cleared away and the sun had come out brightly from behind the banked-up clouds. I felt an inward impelling to go out upon the deck and the Lord had a precious message awaiting me. The water of the Yangtze River is very muddy. But as I stepped to the railing and looked over I did not see the dirty, yellow water that day but instead the heavenly blue and fleecy white of the heavens above and all so perfectly reflected that I actually could not believe that I was looking down instead of up. Instantly the Holy Spirit flashed 2 Corinthians 3:18 into my mind and said, "In yourself you are as unattractive as the water of the Yangtze River but when your whole being is turned God-ward and your life lies all open to Him so that His glory shines upon it and into it then you will be so transformed into His image that others looking at you will see not you but Christ in you." Oh! Friends, are you and I "reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord"?

### ***It is a Life of Supernatural Power***

John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, *the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*"

These words were spoken by Jesus Christ to a little group of unlettered men. One of them was a sunburned, weather-beaten, rough old fisherman. He would be ill at ease in a modern college crowd and very probably would fail to pass entrance examinations into a present-day theological seminary. But he belonged to the company of believers to whom this promise was given and one day it was marvelously fulfilled in his life when through one sermon he won six times as many souls to true discipleship as Jesus did in the three years of His public ministry.

In what did Peter's power consist and does it avail for you and me? Was it the power of personal charm? ... of gracious manner? ... of giant intellect? ... of eloquent speech? ... of massive scholarship? ... of dominant will? While there were many lovable qualities in the impulsive, eager, loving old fisherman yet none of them could begin to account for such an overwhelming fulfillment of our Lord's promise in him. God clearly reveals the secret of Peter's power.

Acts 1:8, "*But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"

The power to do "the same works and even greater" is not the power which resides in anything human. On the contrary it is the power of God the Holy Spirit which is fully at our disposal when we are fully yielded to Him. Is His supernatural power manifested in your life and works today?

### ***It is a Life of Devoted Separateness***

1 Thessalonians 4:3, "*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.*"

Hebrews 7:26, "*For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*"

John 14:17, "*Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*"

The spiritual man apprehends the will of the Father, the walk of the Son, and the work of the Spirit, in relation to his sanctification. The Father willed that he should be set apart and separated wholly unto

Himself and the spiritual man acquiesces in the Father's purpose and wills to separate himself from everything that he knows would keep him from becoming a vessel fit for the Master's use.

The spiritual man takes Christ as his Example and determines to walk as He walked. Christ lived a life that was "holy, undefiled, separate from sinners." He was in the world but not of it. He had the closest contact with the world but without conformity to it or contagion from it. He lived in a world evil, corrupt, polluted, yet He remained unspotted, unstained and unsullied. The spiritual man aspires to a similar separateness of walk in this evil world.

The spiritual man lives habitually under the dominating control of the Holy Spirit who indwells him. The Holy Spirit and the world have nothing in common. The world cannot see or know the Holy Spirit for He is unseen and invisible and the world comprehends only the seen and the tangible. The Holy Spirit working within the believer enables the risen Lord to continue from the throne the work of sanctification begun in the believer at the cross. The spiritual man yields unconditionally to the Spirit's power as He works out God's full purpose in him.

God, the Father, works through His Son, by the Holy Spirit, to carry out His will of complete sanctification.

1 Peter 1:2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And *the very God of peace sanctify you wholly*; and I pray God *your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Holy Trinity is at work within the believer to separate him wholly unto the Lord and to set him apart as a vessel fit for the Master's use. God is ever working to bring the believer into full conformity to the image of His Son.

When there is complete separateness the Christian will bear the same relationship to the world as Christ bore to it and the world will bear the same relationship to him as it bore to Christ. The Christian will regard the pleasures, the pursuits, the principles and the plans of the world exactly as Jesus Christ did. He is not of the world; therefore the world hated, persecuted and crucified Him. Such an experience the spiritual Christian will likewise have.

John 17:16, "*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*"

John 15:19-20, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but *because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, *they will also persecute you*; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

There can be no successful attempt at a compromising admixture of the world and the heavenlies, of the flesh and the Spirit in the life of the one who truly aspires to life on the highest plane. God has separated these two unmixables by the cross of Christ. Any believer who submits to the perfect work of that cross both *for* and *in* him must choose to leave the world and the flesh behind and be wholly separated unto the pleasures and pursuits of life in Christ in the heavenlies.

God calls the believer to a life of spiritual "isolation" and "insulation" in order that he may be conformed to the "image of his Son and filled by His Spirit. The spiritual Christian responds to the call and obeys God's command to come out and live a life of devoted separateness.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*"

But it is not merely the apprehension of and acquiescence in the will of God that loosen the grip of the world and the flesh upon the believer. It is the deeper appreciation of the gracious love of the Father and the sacrificial love of the Son that woos and wins him into a life of devoted separateness. We consent to be truly separated when once we spiritually discern how for our sakes He sanctified Himself that we might be sanctified. It is the one, who beholding the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, says, "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" who gladly consents to be crucified unto the world and to have the world crucified unto him.

May the writer bear testimony that it was so in her experience. Life in the flesh and in the world kept her for some years after her conversion and entrance into church fellowship from victory and peace in her inner life and from power in service. Hour upon hour had been spent in argument with a dear friend and a separated Christian upon the harmlessness and rightfulness of her worldly walk. But one day face to face with God the decision of the will was made and the front door of her life was opened and the King of kings and Lord of lords was invited to enter and to take real control. Thereupon the vagabonds and hirelings that had robbed her of her possessions and privileges in Christ sneaked out the back door, and desire for and delight in their companionship were gone forever. It was with her in deed and truth "the expulsive power of a new affection" that kept her so occupied with her adorable Lord and so happy in His service that there was no sense of loss but rather of incalculable gain.

### *It is a Life of Winsome Holiness*

Exodus 15:11, "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*"

1 Peter 1:15-16, R.V., "But *like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; Because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.*"

God's holiness is His crown of glory. It is His holiness that measures the awful distance between Himself and the sinner. Yet He calls His own to be holy *because* He is holy and there is no other way by which he may come to have fellowship with Him for "without [holiness] . . . no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

Every Christian is called by his new position in Christ to a life of holiness. But there are many Christians who frankly do not want to be holy. There are others however who truly desire to be spiritual but are nevertheless afraid to be "holy." This may be due to their misunderstanding of what holiness is, either through their own neglect of the study of God's Word or through the false teaching on this subject which makes them shy of it through fear.

If one aspires to life on the highest plane he must be holy according to scriptural holiness. What, then, is it? First, may we say what it is not. Holiness is not sinless perfection; it does not place one beyond the possibility of sinning nor remove from him the presence of sin. Scriptural holiness is not "faultlessness." That is a condition he will reach only upon the return of the Lord Jesus who takes him beyond all contact with a world of sin. Scriptural holiness is not "faultlessness" but it is "blamelessness" in the sight of God. We are to be "preserved blameless" unto His coming and we shall be "presented faultless" *at* His coming.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be *preserved blameless unto the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude 24, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and *to present you faultless before the presence of his glory* with exceeding joy."

This truth was unfolded to me with fresh meaning four years ago when I was called upon to dispose of the personal belongings of a dearly loved sister whom God had called home. Among the things she especially treasured was found a letter written to her when I was seven years of age. She had gone on a visit; I loved her and missed her and that letter was the love of my heart expressed in words. The letter was by no means "faultless" for the penmanship was poor, the grammar was incorrect and the spelling was imperfect, but it was "blameless" in the sight of my sister for it came out of a heart of love and was the best letter I could write. For me, a grown woman, to write the same letter today would not be "blameless" for my experience in penmanship and my knowledge of grammar and of spelling are far greater.

Holiness is a heart of pure love for God expressed in character, conversation and conduct. Holiness is Christ, our sanctification, enthroned as Life of our life. It is Christ in us, living, speaking, walking. The

character of even the greatest saint will have in it some lack, his conversation will often fail in magnifying his Lord and his conduct in some respect will fall short of his calling in Christ Jesus. He will not be sinless but his heart will be pure love for God and he will give Christ the place of supreme preeminence in his mind, heart, strength and soul. There will be nothing static in his holiness, but daily by the Holy Spirit's faithful sanctifying work in his inmost life Christ Jesus will be formed more perfectly within him. The result will be a "transformation into His image from glory to glory."

1 Thessalonians 3:13, "To the end he may stablish *your hearts unblameable in holiness* before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

Such holiness is winsome for it spells the holy calm of God mirrored in the face, the holy quietness of God manifested in the voice, the holy graciousness of God expressed in the manner, and the holy fragrance of God emanating from the whole life. It is God so inhabiting His holy temple, which temple you are, that He reveals Himself through human personality.

A sermon I heard when a student at the Moody Bible Institute thirty years ago brought me the meaning of true holiness. The sermon was not a long one, neither was it preached by a famous preacher. It was a sermon of just six words preached to an audience of one by Amelia, the maid who waited upon the door. Amelia's sermon was occasioned by the call upon me of a very poor woman needing help on a very hot day when I was packing a very big trunk in a very small room. Several times I had gladly gone to this woman's home to help her but on this particular day I did not want to see her. Of course, I did not want Amelia to know that, so smiling sweetly I said, "I will be down soon." Amelia turned and went a few steps, then came back and with a pained expression in her face said, "Why, Miss Paxson, you *looked* cross!" Amelia taught me that day that holiness is an inward possession and not an outward profession and a possession that implies a Presence—that penetrates to the inmost spirit, that permeates the whole being and that purifies it in every part.

The life of the spiritual Christian which has been unfolded is that which every true believer desires but which very few expect to live on earth. To many, such a life seems to be the prerogative of only a few rare souls chosen by God for especially high and holy tasks and to be utterly impossible for others. On that contrary, it is not the prerogative of a few but the privilege of all. To some it is a life which they have admired in others but have feared for themselves because of the demand it made for complete surrender. To others there has been utter ignorance either of the possibility of such a life or how to live it. But I believe there are a very large number of Christians today who are not satisfied with the lives they are living and who desire to know what are the cause and the cure of carnality. Diagnosis precedes cure. We have attempted in this chapter to make a diagnosis. Let us now seek to find a cure.

## Chapter Twenty-Three: The Christian's Choice — Self or Christ?

There are two kinds of Christians, easily identified and clearly distinguished from each other. How can there be such a paradox? It is the question that must present itself to every thoughtful mind. The fountainhead of the Christian life is the same for all. Then how can there be two streams from it which flow so widely apart? When every Christian, as we have seen, has been brought through God's grace into the same position and put under the same control how does one become carnal and another spiritual? How can two persons, each of whom is born again, live such differing lives? An answer to this question is essential if one is to choose intelligently to be a spiritual Christian and to carry out that choice steadfastly.

### 1. The Coexistence of Two Natures in Every Believer

Every Christian is conscious of inward conflict, of a duality within himself which he experiences but perhaps does not understand. Part of him aspires to be well pleasing unto God; another part of him wants to satisfy every demand of self. Part of him longs for the peace and rest of the promised land, another part of him lusts for the leeks, onions and garlic of Egypt; part of him grasps Christ and part of him grips the world. He has to admit that there seems to be a law of gravitation which tends ever to pull him sinward while at the same time a counteracting law lifts him Christward.

The scriptural explanation of this duality in Christian experience is found in the coexistence of two natures within the believer: the old, sinful Adamic nature and the new, spiritual Christ nature. Let us turn to the first epistle of John for its clear unfolding of this very important truth. The apostle John is a mature Christian and he is writing to those who are at least capable of receiving very deep spiritual truth. In the simplest of language he teaches the coexistence of the two natures in every believer.

I John 1:8, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*"

If any Christian, no matter how full grown he is or how many special experiences he has had, says that he is entirely freed from the old sinful nature, he deceives himself. But such a person does not deceive his family, or his neighbors, or his fellow Christians, nor does he deceive God. In the next verse God makes provision for the very sins which will come out of the root of sin still existing in this self-deceived Christian (1 John 1:9). These "sins" which are forgiven and the "unrighteousness" which is cleansed are the sins and the unrighteousness of saints.

But the apostle John goes further. "If we say we have *no sin*" the inevitableness of logic compels us to say that we do *not* sin for if the root of sin is eradicated, then from what source could sins come? Every stream no matter how tiny must have a source. A few days ago looking out upon the Alps in a heavy rainstorm I saw ten streams of water flowing down the mountainside. In today's sunshine I look out again and not one of those streams can be seen. If there is "no sin," then the believer "*cannot sin.*" The old apostle uses very drastic language here—it may be that he knew he was writing to some who in the very earnestness and intensity of desire were in danger of believing this unscriptural doctrine.

I John 1:10, "*If we say that we have not sinned, we make him [God] a liar, and his word is not in us.*"

The gross, vulgar, more open sins may have gone from us but what of the hidden sins of the heart; the pride even in our spiritual attainment, the attitude of self-righteousness toward others who are still on a lower plane, the harshness of judgment of those who do not believe as we do, the secret irritability, sometimes even toward those we love best, the unloving thought toward relative, friend or servant, the intolerance toward the weak or willful, or the countless sins of omission that must be charged against the Christian by the One who said, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Sin is not merely an act; it is also an attitude and an absence. It is not alone *what* we do but *what we do not do*. It is what we are and what we are not in the innermost part of our being as God sees us. Who that has a scriptural apprehension of sin as it is in man and of holiness as it is in God could ever say he is without sin?

There is in every believer that old nature which can do nothing but sin. John traces this sinful nature back to its original source in Satan. Inherent within the old nature is a threefold inability: it cannot know God, it cannot obey God, it cannot please God. By physical birth every person becomes the possessor of this God-ignorant, God-defying and God-displeasing nature and it remains in him as long as he lives on earth.

But there is in every believer that new nature which cannot sin. The old apostle leads us along the trail to its source in God. Inherent within the new nature is a threefold capacity: it can and does know God, obey God and please God. By spiritual birth every person becomes the possessor of this God-knowing, God-obeying, God-pleasing nature.

I John 3:6-9, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. *He that committeth sin is of the devil*; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. *Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin*; for his seed remaineth in him: and *he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*"

These two natures co-inhabit every believer. This truth is repeatedly brought out in 1 John. John wrote to those believers as though he did not expect them to sin because they had within them this God-inspired, God-begotten nature.

I John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, *that ye sin not.*"

Yet he made full provision for their sinning because they had within them this Satan-inspired, devil-begotten nature.

I John 2:1, "And *if any man sin*, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

God makes no attempt to change or to improve the old nature because it is unchangeable and unimprovable. Cultivation through education and travel do not change it one iota but simply clothe it in a more refined and respectable costume. God makes no attempt to subject it for it is incorrigible and irreconcilable. Government and laws may keep it partially suppressed but it is planning and secretly executing a world revolution against God and His government, and stands ready to break out in vehement action at every favorable opportunity. God makes no attempt to eradicate it, because He has a far more wonderful way of conquest over this sinful nature which we shall soon consider.

## **2. The Conflict of these Two Natures in Every Believer**

To admit the coexistence of these two diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive natures is to admit the necessity of fiercest conflict. It is indeed the age-long conflict between Satan and Christ with the believer's inner life as the battlefield. It is self contesting Christ's right to His purchased possession.

This conflict is personalized in the spiritual experience of the apostle Paul. He has been reborn; he was justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus had come in to possess His possession and to take control. But there was one who contested His right. A conflict ensued between the old Saul and the new Paul. Two antagonists were fighting a deadly battle for a coveted prize. Romans 7 pictures a Christian torn to pieces by this awful conflict and baffled and discouraged beyond words by it all. He wonders if there is any possible way into victory and rest.

It is this conflict which staggers many a young Christian, and often causes a total eclipse of faith or a gradual backsliding into the world. He took the first step into the Christian life because his conscience was awakened to the evil of his doings. His chief concern was for his sins. He had been convicted of the sinfulness of acts and habits, and felt a sense of guilt because of them. He came to Christ and accepted Him as Saviour that he might be rid of certain sins. In the realization of forgiveness and the assurance of pardon he experiences great joy and gladly witnesses for Christ.

But he soon finds himself doing the old things again; the evil habits persist; the sinful disposition manifests itself in hydra-headed fashion; wicked practices return; worse than all, the joy in fellowship with Christ lessens; the heart grows cold; the spirit is dulled; he grows utterly discouraged. But his love for God has not been altogether quenched and flames up into intense desire under the inspiration of some message from God's Word or by the glimpse into a life which reflects peace and joy. Something in him cries out for God while another something contests every inch of God's claim upon the life. He is wholly nonplussed by this duality within himself.

Something within him will not let him release his hold upon God. Consequently he strives against these sins, agonizes over them, prays for release, and makes every effort possible within his own power to get victory. But in spite of all he does his life is a kingdom divided against itself. Then something tells him it is

no use trying to live a victorious life and he may as well give up. Over and over again he asks himself the question "Is it all worthwhile?" He tries even to persuade himself that the man who makes no profession of Christ is much happier than he. But one day when on the very verge of absolute despair he cries out of deep heart desire for deliverance, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

What seems like his utter downfall is really his hour of deliverance for it is the time of abject self-despair to which he had to come before God could step in and open before him the way of deliverance.

Dear friend, are you living in Romans 7 today? Are you worn out with the conflict? Do you wish to know the way out? Then just close this book for a moment and tell Him so; then open it and ask Him to show you the way out into conquest and victory.

### **3. The Conquest of the Old Nature**

God gives to us very clear and definite instruction regarding our part in the dethronement of this usurper self and the enthronement of Christ as sole Possessor and only Ruler over His inheritance in us.

#### ***We Must Condemn the Flesh***

God condemns the flesh as altogether sinful (Romans 8:3); He sees in it "no good thing" (Romans 7:18) and no Christian will ever have conquest over it until he accepts God's estimate of it and acts accordingly. This may seem like an easy thing to do but on the contrary it is exceedingly difficult. God's standard is very exacting. He says there is "no good thing" in the flesh. God says that "the flesh" both at its center and circumference is sinful; He condemns both its innermost desires and its outermost deeds (Ephesians 2:3, Colossians 3:9), and declares that it is unworthy of any confidence on our part. The first step which the apostle Paul took to the life on the highest plane was this—to condemn as unsafe, unclean and untrustworthy, the flesh which formerly he had so highly regarded.

Philippians 3:3-4, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, *and have no confidence in the flesh*. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. *If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.*

But we do have a great deal of confidence in the flesh. We divide it into the good and the bad. Certain things in the flesh we are compelled to distrust because they have got us into trouble. Certain other things we have gone so far as to acknowledge as weaknesses, faults, possible danger points. But there is another good-sized portion of the flesh that we rate rather high and in which we trust without reserve. It may be our refined and cultured tastes; the opinions and judgments which are the product of our educated minds; our generous, noble, philanthropic feelings; our high standard of morality; or, like Paul, our ancestral heritage. So that when we make a cross section of *our* "flesh," taking good and bad together, it seems in our sight to measure up fairly well; at least we can see no reason for such a wholesale condemnation of it as God makes.

But let us put this best product of the flesh to the test. Let us take it from a home in which love reigned and sweet companionship was its daily portion, where books lined the library shelves, beautiful pictures adorned the walls, snow white linen covered the table, and from a community life which offered everything needful to satisfy the intellectual, social, aesthetic and spiritual desires and needs. Transplant this life to an interior village on the mission field to live within a house with several people of varying temperaments and tastes, with limited household appointments, with untaught, untrained servants, with nothing without upon which to rest the eye but mud walls and dirty narrow streets, surrounded by jarring voices and unpleasant odors, and a furlough seven years off—would this best product of the flesh stand the test and come off more than conqueror? More than one missionary has left the mission field even before furlough was due and for no other reason than that "the flesh" broke down under the test.

Or let us put it to a different kind of a test. Perhaps "the flesh" boasts of that godlike quality of character called love. So choose the deepest, purest human love we can find and place it alongside of the love of 1 Corinthians 13. Is it a love that in nothing or at no time seeketh its own, that is absolutely free from the slightest taint of jealousy? Does it suffer long and is it always kind or is there sometimes not a feeling of secret irritability toward the one most deeply loved? Has it unflinchingly been so charitable that it has never taken account of evil? Would it not have to blush with shame at its jealousy, envy, snobbishness, intolerance, selfishness, impatience and irritability? Has our "flesh" never broken down under this divine test?

May we make one more analytical test of "the flesh." This time let it be a chemical analysis in God's laboratory. Here is a man who boasts of his generosity and is considered one of the best givers in the city. He lavishes expensive gifts upon his family and gives costly dinners to his friends and subscribes largely to campaigns when the newspapers print the list of donors. But he grinds the most possible labor out of his employees for the least possible pay, he quarrels with his tailor over his bill, and he robs God of even the tithe which is His by right. Here is a woman who rides triumphantly upon the social wave as one of the most gracious and charming women in the community. But she nags her husband, is impatient with her children and scolds her servants. "The flesh" always has its blind side.

But I can almost hear someone rise up in defense of "the flesh" and say, But is it not natural to resent wrong? ... to dislike some people? ... to crave certain things? ... to stand up for your own rights? Yes, it is *natural* and that is just why it is sinful. That is just what "the flesh" is, it is our natural life; including all we call highest and best as well as all we deem worst and weakest. What God asks us to do is to take the cross section of "the flesh" we have made and condemn it all, to believe in its utter impotence to do good and in its mighty power to do evil.

### ***We Must Consent to the Crucifixion of the Old Man***

Having condemned "the old man" as a hideous, hateful, heinous thing we are prepared for the next step God asks us to take. He has declared "the old man" worthy of crucifixion; in fact, He has already accomplished his crucifixion with Christ. Now God asks the believer to give his hearty consent to this transaction and to consider it an accomplished fact in his experience. Again this would seem like an extremely easy thing to do. In theory it is, in practice it is not, for "the old man" will fight like a tiger for his life.

"Self will make any concession if allowed to live. Self will permit the believer to do anything, give anything, sacrifice anything, go anywhere, take any liberties, bear any crosses, and afflict soul or body to any degree— anything, if it can only live. It will consent to live in a hovel, in a garret, in the slums, in faraway heathendom, if only its life can be spared. It will endure any garb, any fare, any menial service rather than die."

But God says nothing short of the crucifixion of self will do. This was the second step which the apostle Paul took to life on the highest plane—he gave his whole-souled consent to his co-crucifixion with Christ Jesus and considered it something now past.

Galatians 2:20, R.V., "*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.*"

"The Cross only severs what you consent to part from. The severing of the Cross is not an actual experience, unless the will of the believer desires and consents to the actual separation in fact and practice."

Have you consented to your crucifixion with Christ? There can be no reservations, no holding back part of the price. The whole "I" must be counted dead. God asks you to put your signature to this statement, "I have been crucified with Christ." If you have never done so, will you do it today?

### ***We Must Cooperate With the Holy Spirit in Keeping the Old Man Crucified***

What Christ has made possible for us the Holy Spirit makes real within us, but only with our intelligent cooperation. God states very clearly in His Word what our part is and it is the duty of every believer to know and to do his part.

#### **1. Reckon yourself dead unto sin.**

Romans 6:11, "*Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

Through the crucifixion of "the old man" with Christ, the believer has been made dead unto sin, he has been completely freed from sin's power, he has been taken beyond sin's grip, every claim of sin upon him has been nullified. This is the flawless provision of God's grace but this accomplished fact can only become an actual reality in the believer's experience as faith lays hold upon it and enables him moment by moment, day by day, though temptation assail him, "to reckon" it true. As he *reckons* the Holy Spirit

makes *real*; as he continues to reckon, the Holy Spirit continues to make real. Sin need have no more power over the believer than he grants it through unbelief. If he is alive unto sin it will be due largely to the fact that he has failed "to reckon himself dead unto sin in Christ." We cannot expect God to do His part and our part too. His part has been done perfectly; He waits now for us to cooperate with Him through faith in making this perfect salvation a reality in experience. Through grace "the old man" was nailed to the cross and buried in the tomb: through faith "the old man" will be kept there. Continuously reckon yourself to be totally severed from all that belonged to the old life and all that pertained to the old sphere, and faith will eventuate into experience.

Because I know in personal experience the defeat and discouragement that ensues from failure to reckon one's self dead unto sin and because I believe it is the common experience of scores of Christian workers I am quoting at length from a letter received from a missionary. God will use this testimony to help many, I confidently believe, to see the place of failure:

*"Last night I had a long conference with my Father. It was like other nights in my life, when after long periods of perplexity and prayer for light, the Lord has settled matters for me. I asked Him to show me why I was failing, why my life was not more even and assured. He knew I was keeping back nothing, and that I believed Jesus had met the whole sin question, branches and root, on the Cross. Why was my experience so fluctuating?"*

*"It was not long before the answer came, and I saw, what I had never realized before, that while I had taken the work of Christ on the Cross as the perfect and complete satisfaction for the guilt of my sin, so that the devil in all his assaults had not been able to move me from my confidence that all my sins, past, present and future are under the blood, and powerless to bring me again under the condemnation of God; I had never appreciated to the full the value of His dealing with the root of sin in me. I believed He had dealt with it. I believed He had identified me with Himself on the Cross, and that in Him I was crucified, "dead unto sin and alive unto God." I believed it as a fact in the Lord's glorious work, but I had been appropriating the value of it only piecemeal, so to speak. It had been the way of victory to me for years. Many of the temptations resisted, the victories won, were through a definite reckoning of myself as dead to sin and alive to God. Such victories have lasted months sometimes, blessed seasons! But I saw that just as I would have fallen into distressing condemnation under Satan's assaults, if I had not taken Christ's atoning work in its entirety, once for all; so my failure to appropriate the work of the Cross for my sinful self, in its entirety, had left me an occasional prey to its power. I had been reckoning just parts of myself dead, instead of my whole self. As a result I was afraid of self, often uneasy and not sure of victory. And he that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

*"Your words Sunday helped me, '... Who giveth us the victory, not victories.' Well, dear friend, I have taken Christ in death and resurrection as the full and perfect solution for the whole of the sin problem. He has done it and it is done. I have asked for the same immovable assurance about sin as I have enjoyed for years about my sins, and I believe He has given it and will maintain it. He has given me deep calm about it all.*

*"I see how my failure to trust fully the work of the Cross has hindered the inflow and outflow of the Holy Spirit. The failure to give Christ the full glory due Him has meant that my carnal self was able to keep me, much of the time, without the Holy of Holies of the presence of Father and Son, where in the Spirit it is my privilege to dwell.*

*"Glory be to God, the triune God! You will give Him glory with me, for this unfolding of His truth to His unworthy child. I believe this was the one thing needed to enable me to be used to work all the good pleasure of His will."*

## **2. Make no provision for the flesh.**

Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*"

Galatians 6:8, "For *he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*"

Romans 8:5, "For they that are after the flesh *do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*"

Romans 8:4, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"

Here before us is very definite and practical instruction on the way of conquest of "the old man" which is constantly ignored and often willfully disobeyed by Christians. How can the Holy Spirit make real within us our complete severance from "the old man" and all that pertains to the old creation when we daily make ample provision for the renewal of that life within us by feeding him upon the food that makes fat? What is food to "the flesh" is fodder to the Spirit and *vice versa*. Search your own life under the Spirit's guidance to discover what stores you have on hand that are making "the flesh" fat in you and then throw the entire supply away and stock your shelves with those things upon which the Spirit can feed.

God's law of sowing and reaping in the spiritual realm is as inexorable as it is in the material realm. If we sow to "the flesh" we shall reap of "the flesh." What folly for a Christian woman to think she can sow to "the flesh" in mannish hair, dress, indecent clothes, trashy books and worldly pleasures and then reap in return an unspotted husband, Christian children and spiritual fellowship in the home! And what inconceivable absurdity for a church to sow to its young people the dance and the movie and expect to reap a prayer meeting or a revival! To which are you sowing your time, your strength, your money—to "the flesh" or to the Spirit?

What things do you "mind"? It is a strong word. Upon what things are your mind, heart, will set? In what kind of things are you so immersed as to be oblivious to other things? With the desire for what kind of things are you saturated? With a consuming, compelling passion for what kind of things are you filled? You are responsible for the direction your desires take because in cooperation with the Holy Spirit He will direct you away from the things of "the flesh" toward the things of the Spirit. Are you making provision for "the flesh" in the things that you "mind"?

The world judges a Christian very largely by his "walk." To a world deaf to every other kind of a message the Christian may witness by his "walk." But what kind of a witness is the Christian if the worldly man finds him walking just where and just as he walks? What power will a Christian walking "in the flesh" have to deliver a sinner from the sphere of the flesh? Here is largely the secret of the shameful fruitlessness of the Church of Christ in the world today. Are you walking "in the flesh" or in the Spirit?

God commands every believer to take a definite, decisive attitude toward "the flesh" and to maintain it by the Holy Spirit's power under all circumstances.

1 Peter 2:11, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, *abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*"

Galatians 5:24, "And *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and the lusts.*"

It resolves itself into a total abstinence of all that feeds or fosters the life of "the flesh" and a full appreciation of all that starves and stifles it.

### **3. Ignore the claims of the flesh.**

Romans 8:12, "Therefore, brethren, *we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*"

"The flesh" is a fighter and will never abdicate the throne of its own will nor will it ever renounce its claim upon the believer's life. We owe "the flesh" nothing: we owe the Saviour, who severed us from its deadly, deathly poison, everything. Our invariable, unswerving attitude to every claim of "the flesh" upon us should be one of insistent refusal. It is the believer's privilege in the face of any claim it may advance to quietly, persistently say, "I am dead to that thing." Take sides instantly with the Holy Spirit whenever "the flesh" puts forth a claim to any part of your life and victory in Christ will be yours.

### **4. Mortify the members of the body.**

Colossians 3:5, "*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*"

Romans 8:13, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but *if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*"

The body is the playground of "the flesh." Through it as a channel the believer is continuously open to temptation; its members have long been the tools of sin. But by yielding every member of the body as an instrument of righteousness to Jesus Christ we may cooperate with the Holy Spirit in routing "the flesh" from its long fortified stronghold.

### ***We Must Cast Off the Old Man***

Ephesians 4:22, R.V., "That ye *put away as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit.*"

Colossians 3:9, "Lie not one to another, *seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*"

The old nature is cast aside as a filthy, worthless garment. It is as though a beggar had become betrothed to the King of all the earth and cast aside her filthy rags that she might don her bridal robe.

### ***THE LORD JESUS IN CONTROL***

But the conquest of the old nature is but the negative side of a life that is spiritual. The positive aspect of it is the supernatural control of every department of the believer's being by the Lord Jesus. It was not enough that the children of Israel should cross the Jordan; they were commanded to possess the land and by dispossessing every enemy live in victory and peace.

### ***We Must Crown Jesus Christ as Lord***

2 Corinthians 5:15, "And that he died for all, that *they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*"

Galatians 2:20, B. V., "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is *no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.*

Philippians 1:21, "For *to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"

The very purpose of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection is to dispossess, to displace and to dethrone that old "I," and to give the throne of the human personality to Him to whom it belongs by the right of creation and of purchase, that He might reign there as its sole Lord and King. "...To me to live is Christ" is the life God expects every believer to live. The apostle's cry of despair, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and his shout of victory, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," were spoken almost in the same breath. By one supreme act of the will he seemed to step out of the grip of the old nature into the control of the new.

Dear friend, has Christ's coronation day as King been celebrated yet in your life? Who sits today on the throne of your being, self or Christ? Unless by a definite act of your will you have chosen Him as Lord it is futile for you to expect Him to control your life.

### ***We Must Covet the Things of Christ***

Colossians 3:1-3, "If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*"

It will never do merely to crown Christ as a puppet King by an act of the will and then live under the democracy of self-*desire*. Of self, for self and by self, seems to be the threefold principle governing countless Christian lives. If self-will dethrones God in human lives today, it is self-love that votes to keep Him dethroned. It is not enough to have the will fixed in its purpose to crown Him as Lord and then have the affections lusting for the things of the world, the flesh and the devil. The desires of the heart must keep step with the decision of the will; the believer must "seek those things which are above" and joyfully, eagerly, "set his affections" upon them. How incongruous for him to be "in Christ" seated in the heavenlies at the right hand of God and hid away with Christ in the Father's innermost sanctuary and yet be hankering for the things of earth and of time and of sense!

If one truly covets Christ, he will be willing to count all things loss. He will not only cut loose from every besetting sin and entangling alliance but he will stand ready to lay aside every hindering weight. He will make himself ready to be a victor in the race of life here on earth (1 Corinthians 9:24-27), and he will have his bridal robe ready for the coming marriage to the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-8).

Philippians 3:7-8, R.V., "Howbeit what things were gain to me, *these have I counted loss for Christ*. Yea verily, and *I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things*, and do count them but refuse, *that I may gain Christ*."

Hebrews 12:1, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, *let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

The apostle Paul put before him a prize to be gained—Christ Jesus Himself—and this prize he coveted above all else in life. His passionate desire for the Lord Jesus made him willing, even eager; not only to renounce all known sin but even to cast aside anything and everything that tended to make his spiritual experience stagnant and sluggish.

The Alpine climber prepares to ascend the Jungfrau—at last a long-cherished ambition is to be realized. Into his pack go necessities as he thinks them to be. A heavy load it becomes. Early in the climb he is overcome. His body is wearied through its excessive burden. Finally the guide tells him a choice must be made because not only is he hindering his own progress but that of the other climbers to whom he is roped. He must either give up his hope of reaching the summit or he must cast aside the weights. Does he covet his prize enough to count all these things but loss that he may gain the summit of the Jungfrau?

My friend, have you been living in the valley, self-satisfied and self-complacent? As you have gone with me through these studies has your eye traveled up, up, up to the very summit of spiritual experience—Christ Jesus, crucified, risen, ascended, exalted, living in all the fullness of His beauty, power, glory, and holiness in human life, conforming it to His image, and then using it to bring other lives into the same conformity? Have you aspired to reach the top—to live your life on that highest plane? The ascent is steep and difficult but it is possible and a thousand times repaying. But, if you attempt it, you will have to follow the explicit direction of the Guide not only for your own sake but for the sake of others. The divine Spirit will command you to renounce all known sin; He will even ask you to cast away some things which *He* sees are weighing you down and wearying you so that you cannot keep pace with your spiritual companions, which, if carried, will keep you from reaching the top. Perhaps He will require you to make that choice today. God grant that you may count all things but loss that you may win Christ.

### ***We Must Cooperate With the Holy Spirit in Keeping Christ Enthroned***

It is not crowning Christ as Lord that troubles many an earnest soul but the keeping Him enthroned. It is not reaching the high altitude in the spiritual realm but it is the maintaining of life on that highest plane. But for this specific purpose God's second gift, the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon every believer. Through His indwelling the Christian He enables him to glorify Christ in character, conversation and conduct. But His omnipotent working depends upon the believer's constant and consistent cooperation. And He tells him just what he must do to cooperate.

#### **1. "Reckon yourself alive unto God."**

Romans 6:11, "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but *alive unto God* through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Through identification with Jesus Christ in His resurrection the believer has been made "alive unto God." Through the burial of "the old man" with Christ in the tomb he was completely separated *from* all that belonged to the old creation. Through the emergence of "the new man" with Christ from the tomb he was completely separated *unto* all that belongs to the new creation. This is the faultless provision of God's grace for every believer. Every believer is already in the heavenlies in Christ; Christ is now the source and sustenance of every Christian's life. All that the Man in the glory is and has is the rightful possession of every believer here and now. But what God provides through grace He expects the believer to possess through faith. Emissaries from the realm of darkness and death will come to lure him away from his hidden life in Christ but as he "reckons himself to be alive unto God" he will be able to resist the evil one and to maintain his position in Christ. As he "reckons" upon this accomplished fact based on his Saviour's

resurrection the Holy Spirit works within to make it real. As he continues to "reckon" moment by moment that he has no life but life in Christ, the Holy Spirit keeps him abiding.

## 2. Make every provision for the Spirit.

Romans 8:9, "But ye are not in the flesh, *but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.*"

The moment the believer becomes the possessor of the new nature he leaves the sphere of the flesh to abide in the sphere of the Spirit, and the Spirit comes to abide in him. In other words, he is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in him. The maintenance of such a life in such a world as this requires the most careful and constant provision.

Only the Holy Spirit knows what will sustain and strengthen life in His sphere. He alone can provide that food. This He has done for every believer and all He asks is for the acceptance of the food He offers. He knows both the age and the capacity of each believer and will suit his food to his need.

1 Peter 2:2, "As newborn babes, *desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*"

Hebrews 5:14, "*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*"

## 3. Follow the leading of the Spirit.

Romans 8:14, "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*"

The only way to combat successfully the claims of the flesh is to obey implicitly every prompting or motion of the Spirit, be it ever so slight. Whether it be a warning, a check, a leading, or a teaching, all are given by Him as He sees necessary, and should be followed instantly.

## 4. Yield to Christ the control of every member of the body.

Romans 6:13, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those alive from the dead, and *your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*"

It is utter folly to talk about Christ's control over and use of our lives if we have blinded our eyes to His vision and deafened our ears to His voice and tied our tongues as His witnesses and fettered our hands as His tools and lamed our feet as His messengers, through yielding them to the devil as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. But it is just such a stultified life that countless Christians expect Christ to use. If Christ's control is to count for anything in our lives and through us in the lives of others, every member of our bodies must be at His absolute disposal.

### ***We Must Clothe Ourselves with Christ***

Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ *have put on Christ.*"

Romans 13:14, "But *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*"

Did you discern in reading these two verses that in the first one God declares that the believer has already put on the Lord Jesus Christ and in the last one He exhorts—may we put it stronger yet—He commands him to do so? Through the grace, mercy and love of God the believer has been unclothed and clothed upon in the new position in Christ to which he has been brought. The snow white linen of Christ's righteousness and holiness are his. But God requires the cooperative response of the believer's love, devotion and faith in keeping these garments clean and rightly fitted to the believer's daily walk and warfare.

Dear fellow Christian, perhaps we have come to the second crucial milestone in your spiritual experience. Already you have accepted Christ as Saviour. You faced the choice of your sin or God's Son and you chose Christ as your Saviour. But have you wandered forty years in the wilderness of defeat, of discouragement and oftentimes of despair? Are you weary and footsore? Does your heart cry out for the peace, joy, victory and power you see others enjoying? If so, are you ready just now to take the second step into the life on

the highest plane by crowning Jesus Christ as Lord over your spirit, soul and body and by placing your whole being unconditionally under His control? Before you is this choice, self or Christ?

"Oh! The bitter shame and sorrow,  
That a time could ever be,  
When I let the Saviour's pity  
Plead in vain, and proudly answered—  
'All of Self and none of Thee.'

"Yet He found me: I beheld Him  
Bleeding on the cursed tree;  
Heard Him pray, 'Forgive them, Father,'  
And my wistful heart said faintly—  
'Some of Self and some of Thee.'

"Day by day His tender mercy,  
Healing, helping, full and free,  
Sweet and strong, and oh! so patient,  
Brought me lower while I whispered—  
'Less of Self and more of Thee.'

"Higher than the highest heavens,  
Deeper than the deepest sea;  
Lord, thy love at last has conquered:  
Grant me now my soul's petition—  
'None of Self and all of Thee.'"

## End of Volume 2

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