

As the Son of man, He was bound by the weakness of humanity and oppressed by sin. His miracles were wrought through Him by the Holy Spirit, as they have been through other men who were yielded to God. While actually the Son of God, He clothed His divinity with humanity, and in that human personality was as dependent upon the Father as any one of His human brothers.

But after His death and resurrection, all this was changed. No longer was divinity clothed with humanity, but humanity was clothed with divinity. Having ascended to heaven and received the Father's approval of His whole life and sacrifice, He declared: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28: 18. This is the resurrection life.

Christ came forth from the grave-still the Son of man, but conqueror of the grave and victor over sin, not only for Himself, but for His brother men.

As the carpenter of Nazareth, and the teacher of Israel, He lived a life of toil and care, of many sorrows and fierce temptations and conflicts with the enemy, of physical weariness and pain, of long night vigils, of prayers and tears and supplications for strength to do the Father's will.

The victory which He thus wrought out He imparts to His children today. From the grave He came forth as a king, a mighty conqueror, with the keys of death and hell in His hand, having gained the victory over all the power of the enemy.

When we share in His life, let us remember that it is this resurrection life. It is a life that has already triumphed IN HUMAN NATURE over all sin, all temptation, the world, the flesh, and the devil, death and the grave. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Romans 6: 5.

As we enter THROUGH FAITH into His death, burial, and resurrection experience, we share in His victory. "For by the death which He died He became, once for all, dead in relation to sin; but by the life which He now lives HE IS ALIVE in relation to God. In the same way you also must regard yourselves as dead in relation to sin, but as ALIVE in relation to God, because you are in Christ Jesus." Romans 6: 10, 11 (Weymouth).

Faith Makes It So

"If we be dead with Christ, we BELIEVE that we shall also LIVE with Him. ... For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Romans 6:8-10.

How significant are the statements in these two verses! He died to sin. We died with Him. He liveth unto God. We shall also live with Him.

There can be no question as to what is meant by the believer's dying with Christ. It is a death to sin. It breaks all ties between him and the sins which have enslaved him. He is to regard his connection with sin SEVERED as completely as that of the silent form lying in the casket ready for the tomb.

The new life is to be lived wholly unto God. It is not his own. It is "bought with a price," even the precious blood of Christ. But we must remember that only as this life is wholly of God can it be LIVED wholly to God. It is not found in struggle or self-effort, nor in culture, education, or religious ceremonies, but is the GIFT of God imparted by His Spirit in response to faith. It is as much a miracle as the restoration of sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, or life to the dead. It is hard for those who are slaves to sin and evil habits they have long sought to overcome, to BELIEVE that by simply ACCEPTING Christ and yielding to Him they instantly receive a new nature, and power enabling them to live a new life. Yet this is true, and countless thousands have experienced this mighty miracle.

In our study of Romans 6 we come to a statement which is like the keystone to an arch. This is the point where the connection is made between the divine plan and the believer's experience. In this, as in all other cases, the connection is MADE BY FAITH. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Verse 11.

The moment a sinner becomes united to Christ by FAITH, God regards him as judicially dead to sin. Now He tells us that it is the believer's duty to join with God in reckoning himself dead to sin, and THEN, by the power of the Holy Spirit within, this judicial death is experienced.

Every man must accept God's provision for his death to sin, and must reckon it so, before he is actually dead to sin by EXPERIENCE. He must reckon himself dead to sin first BY FAITH, and THEN God makes that faith a REALITY.

It is exactly the same manner in which pardon for sin becomes experimental. The sinner confesses and asks forgiveness, but if he does not BELIEVE God pardons, HE IS NOT FORGIVEN. If he DOES believe, he IS forgiven.

"You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You WILL to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfil His word to you. If you believe the promise, - believe that you are forgiven and cleansed, - God supplies the FACT; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man BELIEVED that he was healed. It IS so if you BELIEVE it." - Steps to Christ, page 51.

In the same manner it is necessary to reckon ourselves dead to sin before God can make it a fact in our personal experience. And it is evident that no man will be dead indeed unto sin UNTIL HE OBEYS God and CLAIMS this death by FAITH.

It is said that for weeks after the proclamation was issued emancipating the slaves in the South, many Negroes in remote places went on toiling as before. They did not know they had been legally freed, and therefore had no knowledge or hope of experimental freedom. But even after some heard the truth, they did not believe it and went on as before. Thought legally free, they were still experimentally in slavery, because of unbelief in the provision made for their liberty.

How many of Christ's followers are like those poor slaves- still in bondage and slavery to sin because they refuse to "reckon" themselves "dead indeed unto sin" through the death of Jesus Christ.

Having entered this experience by FAITH, there is a solemn warning AGAINST CONTINUING IN SIN: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." Romans 6:13.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Verse 16.

The believer must "reckon" himself "dead indeed unto sin," and then "sin shall not have dominion" over him. But if he now yields his members to unrighteousness, it is sin, and sin is unto death. "For the end of those things is death." "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:14, 21, 23.

These statements are given to the believer, the child of God. IF HE PERSISTS in indulging the appetites of the flesh, reverting to the old life and yielding to its evil habits, in the end this indulgence WILL NEUTRALIZE all the power of the gospel, and "sin leads to death, ends in death, and is paid its wages in death."

Some, appropriating the precious promises of God with simple, childlike faith, enter at once into a new and fuller life. A few words from a recent letter from one earnestly seeking this life, illustrate the point:

"The evening after I arrived home I chanced upon a very appropriate text. Without thinking where I was about to read, I opened at the first chapter of Colossians, and my eye fell on the thirteenth verse, 'Who HATH delivered us from the POWER of darkness.' That was a real message to me. Then I began farther up, and read the eleventh verse, 'Strengthened with ALL might, according to His

glorious power, unto ALL patience and long-suffering WITH JOYFULNESS.' I took that for my goal."

There may be those who question about the word "reckon," and ask, "How can I reckon I am dead to sin when I know that I am not?" To them it seems like a mere exercise of the imagination. But such miss the real thought back of this word, which simply calls for the exercise of PRACTICAL FAITH. No man ever knows whether he is forgiven EXCEPT as he takes God at His word. He reckons himself pardoned because that is what God promises. The MOMENT he meets the conditions and RECKONS himself pardoned, IT IS DONE. It is no more difficult to reckon himself dead to sin when God says he is dead, than to reckon his sins forgiven according to God's promise.

If we transfer our hope from HUMAN STRUGGLE to the promises of God, the only limit to our attainment is that of our OWN FAITH.

This is illustrated by the experience of Peter. Jesus appeared, walking on the water. It was evidently some distance, for the Saviour was seen too dimly to be recognized with certainty. When He was finally recognized, Peter joyfully cried, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come."

Springing out of the boat, Peter walked upon the water nearly the whole distance with his eyes fixed upon Jesus. But when almost at His Master's side he looked away, was frightened by the wind and waves, and began to sink. Peter had done what was otherwise impossible, because he was in touch with Christ BY FAITH. The instant that touch was broken, the power was GONE. One moment he was strong to do the impossible, the next he was helpless and sinking.

So in the matter of living unto God-the victorious life-it is a miracle as truly as walking on water. One moment a man may be strong to overcome all the powers of evil arrayed against him; the next he may sink in sin. It all depends upon the vital connection of FAITH by which his unity with Christ is MAINTAINED.

The moment we lay hold upon any promise of God by FAITH, having met the conditions, the blessing is ours. It is so if we BELIEVE it. Again and again the Scriptures illustrate most emphatically how salvation is complete in Christ and may be secured only by faith.

"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." Eph. 2:8, 9.

There is an old story of a Chinese Christian who was telling a heathen friend the difference between the Christian religion and heathen religions. He said:

"One day a man fell into a deep well. He could not possibly climb out. No one could hear his cries for help. After frantic struggles he gave up in despair. Then Buddha appeared, and looking down in the well, said, 'If you will come up here, I will teach you so that you will not fall into another well.' But the poor man could not climb out. Next came Confucius, who said, 'You poor man, had you obeyed my teachings, you would not have fallen into this well.' And again he was left to perish. Then Jesus came, and seeing his lost condition, Himself sprang into the well, and lifted the man out."

This is strikingly like the experience of David. He says in Psalms 40:1-3:

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Ps. 40:1-3.

It is important to notice what David did:

"I waited patiently."

And then what the Lord did:

"He inclined unto me, and heard my cry."

"He brought me up also out of a horrible pit."

He "set my feet upon a rock."

He "established my goings."

He "put a new song in my mouth."

Could any illustration be found to teach more absolutely than SALVATION IN CHRIST IS A FINISHED WORK? He does not HELP US CLIMB OUT OF THE PIT OF SIN. HE LIFTS us OUT! He does not leave us on slippery ground, but sets our feet upon a rock. He does not leave us weak and helpless to fall from the rock, but He ESTABLISHES our goings. And then He puts a song of praise in our mouth that charms and captivates other lost ones, and wins them to the Saviour.

Blessed be His name, He saves "to the uttermost" all who come unto God by Him, "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Right Action of the Will

In Romans 13:14 Paul says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." This is the practical equivalent of Romans 6:11. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but ALIVE unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." But this reckoning must be more than the EXERCISE of the IMAGINATION or a mere PASSIVE CONSENT to what God SAYS. Faith is an active principle, a mighty force, and this judicial freedom provided by God must be laid hold of BY FAITH that COMES FROM GOD and has in it the ENERGY of God. There is no virtue whatever in saying, "I reckon myself dead to my violent temper, but of course I expect I shall expect I shall get angry sometimes."

To COUNT ON SINNING is a form of UNBELIEF, and that is sin. We make provision for many things day by day, planning for our clothing, our food, and other temporal wants. But if a man knew that he would die TODAY, he would NOT PLAN longer for living, but would IMMEDIATELY cease preparation for living and prepare for dying. God proposes that our union with Christ shall make death to sin a great reality in our lives, so that we shall reckon ourselves dead to sin, immediately cease all provision for sinning and plan only to live the new life in Christ Jesus.

This reckoning of death to sin and EXPECTATION OF TRIUMPH over sin has a profound effect upon the life. One who expects to sin WILL sin, but one who reckons himself no longer under sin's dominion, but victorious through the indwelling Christ, is fortified by his very attitude, and actually challenges God to make good that deliverance upon which His child confidently relies. The fact that he trusts humbly and implicitly in the promises, makes it certain that God will fulfil them to the uttermost. "The secret of true and full holiness is BY FAITH and in the power of the Holy Spirit to LIVE IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS, I am dead to sin."

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that he should obey in it the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, BUT UNDER GRACE."
Romans 6:12, 13.

In the previous chapter the emphasis is on the word "reckon." In this it is on the word "yield." First, "yield" not your members "as instruments of unrighteousness;" second, "yield yourselves unto God."

The great decisive factor in the life is the WILL. Sin has its roots in the will and through the will holds the sinner in slavery. But when the will is exercised in renouncing sin and choosing Christ as master, the same power which changes the heart and imparts a new life also changes the will. The unbeliever willed only to please self. Now he wills to please and obey God. But he remains a free moral agent. True obedience to God is never compulsory, but remains forever voluntary and prompted by love.

Hence it is still POSSIBLE for the believer to YIELD to those tendencies to sin which have become habitual to the body.

It is clearly implied in the text that the way of victory over these temptations is not to struggle, but to YIELD IN FAITH to the new Master. No man can have two masters; and an active, conscious yielding to Christ leaves no room for the dominance of the old master whom he has renounced forever. By withholding our members from him and yielding them to God, we ENABLE God to make actual and experimental (our experience) what He already reckons us to be as His children.

We are at first declared justified, judicially freed from the CONDEMNATION of the law; but now, being born into the family of God as sons, we must DEMONSTRATE this relationship by a holy life. What a dishonor to God to have children who are yet the slaves of sin! It would testify either that God was unable to rescue His own children from the enemy, or that sin is more attractive to His children than holiness. "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Romans 6:13. Not until his death with Christ to sin and his burial have become a great reality, can the believer appreciate and understand the new life. The only life Jesus has now to impart is His resurrected life. It is the life the other side of the INFLICTION OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR SIN. [not free from the law of God, but from the condemnation of the law. Condemnation = death penalty] If we have died with Him, and yet live, truly the life we now live is HIS LIFE. We can live this life only "by the faith of the Son of God," who loved us and gave Himself for us. Gal. 2:20.

"We are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6:15. The law places before us a standard, and demands obedience, but it imparts no power to obey. It says, "Do and live." It requires, but does not enable.

Grace holds before us the same divine standard, and then offers POWER to meet the requirements [of the law]. It says, "Believe and accept." The strength, the obedience, the righteousness, are all of God through FAITH. Grace does NOT SET ASIDE THE LAW which is God's standard of righteousness. But of one who is not under the law but under grace Paul says, "It is God which worketh IN YOU both to WILL and to DO of His good pleasure." Phi. 2:13.

It may be wise to discuss here more fully the immense importance of yielding the will and making a complete and CONTINUOUS surrender to God.

"The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight-the greatest battle that was ever fought by man-is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. ...

"He who determines to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of an unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him." [Satan will gather all his powers to keep it from happening!.] - *The Mount of Blessing*, pages 203 and 204.

Though opposed by forces within and without, the POWER to surrender the WILL and open the heart to God is possessed BY EVERY HUMAN BEING. "The power of choice God has given to men; it is their to exercise. You cannot change your heart; you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can CHOOSE to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to WILL and to DO according to Him good pleasure." - *Steps to Christ*, page 47.

Those who fight this great battle to the point of real surrender, enter on a new world in the Christian experience, as the following extract from a letter witnesses:

"That motto, 'Let go, and let God,' appealed to me as such a good one. I cannot remember that I ever heard it before. It kept ringing in my ears, and then as I left the college that last night, I determined to go home and settle the matter before going to sleep. The folks had retired; so I sat down by the fire and thought it over. Then I prayed something like this: 'Dear Lord, I WILL let go-as far as lies within my power, I will let go. Let come what may; only sustain me by Thy grace. Dear Lord, I do let go of it all.' And I surrendered-I let go, then and there.

"That prayer the Lord heard and answered with any delay. Immediately the burden was lifted and the light came. My soul was filled with peace and joy and a blessed relief that I never before had experience to such an extent. I was abundantly blessed beyond anything I had ever thought of. I have never seen the Christian life in its beauty, simplicity, and reality as I do not. There is a fuller, richer, deeper meaning in the promises of God.

"What an unwise thing to make the least vestige of reserve! [don't hold back!] I have learned that God DOES NOT ACCEPT service, time, money, or anything else as a SUBSTITUTE for a fully surrendered heart and will." - EGW

This surrender should be made ONCE FOR ALL, and then REPEATED EVERY DAY and made a continuous experience.

"Through the RIGHT exercise of the will, an ENTIRE CHANGE may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power [God's power] that is above all principalities and powers [Satan's power]. You will have strength from above to HOLD YOU STEADFAST, and thus through CONSTANT surrender to God you will be ENABLED to live the new life, even the LIFE OF FAITH." - Steps to Christ, page 48.

As this surrender is MAINTAINED DAY BY DAY, the way grows brighter and more delightful because of fellowship with Christ.

"By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. [the law still applies] When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is UNITED with His heart, the WILL is merged in His will, the MIND becomes one with His mind, the THOUGHTS are brought into captivity to Him; we LIVE His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness." Christ's Object Lessons - page 312.

The Closest Union

The seventh chapter of Romans opens with a new and striking illustration, which presents a different aspects of the doctrine of our union with Christ:

"The woman which hath an husband is BOUND BY THE LAW to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she IS FREE FROM THAT LAW; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

Here the sinner is REPRESENTED as a woman bound to her husband by the LAW OF MARRIAGE. The husband represents the flesh, or "old man." As the woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives, so the sinner is bound to his natural sinful flesh, and can be released only by death. So long as the old man of sin lives, all his profession of religion is hypocrisy, or spiritual adultery. "But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the LAW OF HER HUSBAND."

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become DEAD TO THE LAW by the body of Christ." It is in the body of Christ crucified that our "old man" dies, and WE ARE DELIVERED FROM THE CONDEMNATION of the law, and free to enter that closest, most sacred relationship with Him.