

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

How Obtained - How Maintained

STUDIES SETTING FORTH THE BELIEVER'S POSSESSIONS IN CHRIST

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Chapter Three -

TWO CONTRASTING SPHERES

The first step from life on the lowest plane to life on the highest plane is the acceptance of JESUS CHRIST as Saviour. At the Cross the believing sinner makes a clean-cut separation from the old sphere with all that pertains to it and enters into a totally new sphere of life.

Two Contrasting Spheres

These two spheres are clearly named and defined. **"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"** (I Corinthians 15:22).

GOD has dealt with the whole human race through two representative men, Adam and CHRIST. Adam is the source of all in the old sphere; CHRIST is the source of all in the new sphere. By Adam sin entered into the world; by CHRIST salvation came to all men; the sinner is in Adam; the believer is in CHRIST.

- **"In Adam"** we are what we are by nature; **"in Christ"** we are what we are by grace.
- **"In Adam"** we have the life received through human generation; **"in Christ"** we have the life received through divine regeneration.
- **"In Adam"** man was ruined through the first man's sin; **"in Christ"** man is redeemed through the second Man's sacrifice.
- **"In Adam"** all is sin, darkness and death; **"in Christ"** all is righteousness, light and life.

These two spheres are the exact antithesis of each other, so that life in one precludes life in the other. Every human being is one of these two spheres and his relationship to JESUS CHRIST determines which one it is.

The Characteristic Mark of Each Sphere

These two spheres may be readily distinguished because each has a characteristic mark.

"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 8:5).

"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" (Romans 8:9).

The mark of the old sphere is the "**flesh**" and of the new the "**Spirit**." The sinner "**in Adam**" is in the flesh; the believer "**in Christ**" is in the Spirit. The flesh and the Spirit are mutually irreconcilable enemies in totally diverse camps.

"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" (Galatians 5:17).

Man became "**flesh**" through Adam's sin.

"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3).

The flesh is the whole natural man, spirit, soul and body, alienated from GOD. It is the life of nature, whether good or bad, received through human generation. It is all that I am as a son of Adam. "**That which is born of the flesh is flesh**" (John 3:6).

GOD sees nothing good in the flesh. Even, the very best product which physical generation can produce He rejects. "**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"** (Romans 7:18).

Paul's estimate of the flesh as here given 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 richly endowed. Paul's "**flesh**" was educated, cultured, moral, even religious flesh, yet it was wholly unacceptable to GOD. So there is but one attitude which GOD can possibly have toward the flesh, which is that 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 the believer to enter the sphere of the Spirit. At the new birth the HOLY SPIRIT quickens the human spirit and then makes it His home.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

The Reign of the Old Man

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

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephesians 4:22).

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

The sovereign in the old sphere is "**the old man**." The very core of the flesh is this sinful, corrupt nature, called "**the old man**," which is a deep-dyed traitor that 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" of 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 possession, control and use ever since.

Every child is born into the world with KING SELF on the throne, a fact often made evident before he can 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. The root "sin" bears fruit in "sins."

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 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.

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 is 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. How few are willing to say, "**I know that in me... dwelleth no good thing.**"

Let us, then, pause for a moment to take a full-length portrait of this hideous self 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-centeredness, self-assertion, self-conceit, self-indulgence, self-pleasing, self-seeking, self-pity, self-sensitiveness, self-defense, self-sufficiency, self-consciousness, self-righteousness, self-glorying - this is the material out of which the building is fashioned.

Is this delineation of self true or untrue? As we look within our own lives is there one of us who would not have to confess to everyone of these hateful manifestations of self at some time 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 bold usurper of GOD's place? GOD has declared very plainly 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.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Two facts are clearly stated here; first that the crucifixion of "**the old man**" is an already accomplished fact, and, second, that it is a co-crucifixion. Notice the tenses: "**is crucified**" - past, and "**am 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.

Whether from sins or from self the Cross is GOD's only place of deliverance. As surely as CHRIST "**bare [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 Adam**" and entrance into the new sphere "**in Christ**" demands the dethronement of self. No house can entertain two masters. 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.

That sentence was carried out on Calvary's cross. Now GOD declares to every person who cries out for deliverance from the tyranny of self, "**the old man is crucified with Christ.**"

Do you believe it?

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

Paul says, "**I am 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. It did not take place in Damascus, Arabia, or even when he was caught up to the third Heaven. But the death of the old "I" took place on the Cross when CHRIST died there.

This 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. But 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. CHRIST died and the race of sinners I died in Him. The old "I" in you and in me was judicially crucified with CHRIST. You "**died**," and your death dates from the death of CHRIST.

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 sense.

~ end of chapter 3 ~
