

HE THAT IS SPIRITUAL

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

AN ANALOGY AND THE CONCLUSION

1. AN ANALOGY

THE Bible treats our deliverance from the bond-servitude to sin as a distinct form of salvation, and there is an analogy between this and the more familiar aspect of salvation which is from the guilt and penalty of sin.

In the first five chapters of the letter to the Romans we have presented our salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin into justification and security through the redemption that is in CHRIST.

Beginning with chapter six, a new question is raised: "**Shall we** [who have been saved into safety] **continue in sin?**"

The major portion of three chapters, as has been stated, is then devoted to a statement of the facts and conditions of salvation from the reigning power of sin in the daily life of the child of GOD. The analogy between these two aspects of salvation may be considered in five particulars:

FIRST, THE ESTATE OF THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO BE SAVED

a. From the penalty of sin.

The Word of GOD presents an extended description of the estate of the unregenerate in their need of salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin. They are said to be "**lost**," "**condemned**," and spiritually "**dead**"; "**there is none righteous, no, not one**"; "**all have sinned and come short of the glory of God**." But back of all this is the revelation that in themselves they are helpless and without power to alter or improve their condition. Their only hope is to depend completely on Another for His saving power and grace. "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be**

saved."

b. From the power of sin.

In like manner the Scriptures reveal the estate of the regenerate in relation to the power of the sin nature, to be that of impotence and helplessness:

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing"; "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." The hope of the child of GOD in salvation from the power of sin is also a complete dependence upon the power and grace of Another. **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."** **"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."**

SECOND, THE DIVINE OBJECTIVE AND IDEAL IN SALVATION

a. From the penalty of sin.

The greatest possible contrast exists between what an unregenerate person is before he is saved, and that estate to which he is brought in the saving power of GOD. Eternity will hardly suffice to give opportunity to discover the manifold marvels of His saving grace, **"When we see him, we shall be like him."** Even now **"are we the sons of God."**

We are to be **"conformed to the image of his Son."**

b. From the power of sin.

So, also, the Christian, in the purpose of GOD, is to find a perfect victory through JESUS CHRIST, and by the power of the Spirit. **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."** **"Grieve not the Spirit."** **"Quench not the Spirit."** **"Walk in the light."** **"Abide in me."**

THIRD, SALVATION IS OF GOD ALONE

a. From the penalty of sin.

Salvation must be of GOD alone; for every aspect of it is beyond human power and strength. Of the many great miracles which taken together constitute salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin, not one of them could even be understood, let alone be accomplished, by man. **"It is the power of God unto salvation"; "That he might be the justifier of him which believeth."**

b. From the power of sin.

It is equally true that the believer is helpless to deliver himself from the power of sin. GOD alone can do it, and He proposes to do it according to the revelation contained in His Word. There is no power in man to deliver from **"the world, the flesh and the devil"** **"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"; "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"; "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"; "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the**

power of his might"; "Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

FOURTH, GOD CAN SAVE ONLY BY, AND THROUGH, THE CROSS

a. From the penalty of sin.

There would not be a sinner left to save, if GOD had to deal with the sin question in us, as to its guilt and penalty, at the moment He would exercise saving grace. It is only that He has already dealt with the penalty of sin in the death of CHRIST that He can save the sinner apart from consuming judgments. Now, the sinner has only to believe that such saving grace is open to him through the Son of GOD. The Lord JESUS suffered unto death **"for"** our sins. **"He bore our sins in his body on the tree"; "He was delivered for our transgressions"; "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died"** (in the One). By this death He so perfectly met the condemnation of sin for us that GOD is now free even to justify any sinner without penalty or condemnation. A moral hindrance in a sinner's life is no longer an issue in his salvation. By the death of His Son, GOD has rendered Himself free to save the chief of sinners. In such salvation He is righteous and just because the Lord JESUS has suffered for our sins.

b. From the power of sin.

There could not be any salvation for the Christian from the power of sin if GOD had not first taken the **"old man"** into judgment. Our condition would be hopeless if GOD had first to judge the sin nature in us before He could take control in our lives. He has already judged the **"old man"** by our co-crucifixion, co-death, and co-burial with CHRIST. The Lord not only suffered for our sins. He also died unto sin. He suffered under the penalty for our sins: He also died unto our sin nature. **"For in that he died he died unto sin once." "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him."** Because Christ has died unto sin, GOD is righteously free to take control of the **"flesh,"** and the Adamic nature, and exercise His power for our salvation from the bond-servitude to sin; exactly as He is righteously free to save the unregenerate from the penalty of sin because CHRIST has met every judgment for the sinner.

FIFTH, SALVATION IS BY FAITH

a. From the penalty of sin.

Since salvation is always and only a work of GOD, the only relation man can sustain to it is that of expectation toward the One who alone can undertake and accomplish it. Salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin is wrought for us the moment we believe. It is conditioned on the act of faith. Men are not saved, or kept saved, from the consequences of sins because they continue their faith. Saving faith, as related to the first aspect of salvation, is an act of faith. We are saved by grace through faith.

b. From the power of sin.

Salvation unto sanctity of daily life is equally a work of GOD, and the only relation the child of GOD can sustain to it is an attitude of expectation toward the One who alone is able. There should be an adjustment of the life and will to GOD, and this

salvation must then be claimed by faith; but in this case it is an attitude of faith. We are saved from the power of sin as we believe. The one who has been justified by an act of faith must now live by faith. There are a multitude of sinners for whom CHRIST has died who are not now saved.

On the divine side, everything has been provided, and they have only to enter by faith into His saving grace as it is for them in JESUS CHRIST. Just so, there are a multitude of saints whose sin nature has been perfectly judged and every provision made on the divine side for a life of victory and glory to GOD who are not now realizing a life of victory. They have only to enter by faith into the saving grace from the power and dominion of sin. This is the reality of a "**walk**," a "**race**," a "**warfare**." It is a constant attitude.

We are to "**fight the good fight of faith**." Sinners are not saved until they trust the Savior, and saints are not victorious until they trust the Deliverer. GOD has made this possible through the Cross of His Son. Salvation from the power of sin must be claimed by faith.*

* Discussing this aspect of this same analogy, Bishop Moule, of England, writes: "The first case is in its nature one and single: an admission, an incorporation. The second is in its nature progressive and developing: the discovery, advancing with the occasion for it, of the greatness of the resources of CHRIST for life. The latter may, not must, thus include one great crisis in consciousness, one particular spiritual act. It is much more certain to include many starting-points, critical developments, marked advances. The act of self-surrendering faith in the power of CHRIST for inward cleansing of the will and affections may be, and often indeed it is, as it were a new conversion, a new '**effectual calling**.' But it is sure, if the man knows himself in the light of CHRIST, to be followed by echoes and reiterations to the end; not mere returns to the beginnings from the old level (certainly it is not the plan of GOD that it should be so), but definite out-growths due to new discovery of personal need and sin, and of more than corresponding 'riches' in CHRIST. With each such advance the sacred promise of Fullness of the Spirit will be received with holy and happy realization." "*Outlines of Christian Doctrine*," page 199.

The Spirit, when saving from the reigning power of sin does not set aside the personality of the one He saves. He takes possession of the faculties and powers of the individual. It is the power of GOD acting through the human faculties of the will, emotions, desires and disposition. The experience of the believer who is being empowered is only that of a consciousness of his own power of choice, his own feelings, desires and disposition as related to his own self. The strength which he possesses is "in the Lord and in the power of his might."

II. THE CONCLUSION

Because thus far this discussion has dealt primarily with the theory, or doctrine of the spiritual life, the addition of a few practical suggestions may not be amiss.

Since a life in the power of the Spirit depends upon a continuous attitude of reckoning and appropriation, it is important for most Christians to have a time of definite dealing with GOD in which they examine their hearts in the matter of sin and their yieldedness, and in which they acknowledge both their insufficiency and His sufficiency by the Spirit. There, at that time, they may claim His power and strength to supplant their weakness. The Bible makes no rules as to time or conditions. It is the individual child, in all the latitude of his own personality, dealing with his Father.

Spirituality is not a future ideal: it is to be experienced now. The vital question is, "Am I walking in the Spirit now?" Answer to this question should not depend on the presence or absence of some unusual manifestation of the supernatural. Much of life will be lived in the uneventful commonplace; but, even there, we should have the conviction that we are right with GOD and in His unbroken fellowship. **"Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God"** (I John 3:21). Likewise, we should not mistake worn nerves, physical weakness or depression for unspirituality. Many times sleep is more needed than prayer, and physical recreation than heart searching.

Be it remembered, too, that His provisions are always perfect; but our entrance into these provisions is often imperfect. There is doubtless a too general reference to human attitudes and actions in relation to GOD as being "absolute": such as "absolute surrender," "absolute consecration," and "absolute devotion." If there are well-defined conditions upon which we may be spiritual, let us remember that, from the standpoint of the Infinite GOD, our compliance with those conditions is often imperfect. What He provides and bestows is in the fullest divine perfection; but our adjustment is human and therefore is usually subject to improvement. The fact of our possible deliverance, which depends upon Him alone, does not change. We shall have as much at any time as we make it possible for Him to bestow.

Normally, the spiritual Christian will be occupied with effective service for his Lord. This is not a rule. We need only to know that we are yielded and ready to do whatever He may choose. To **"rest in the Lord"** is one of the essential victories in a spiritual life. **"Come ye apart and rest awhile."** We are just as spiritual when resting, playing, sleeping or incapacitated, if it is His will for us, as we are when serving.

The spiritual life is not passive. Too often it is thus misjudged and because of the fact that one, to be spiritual, must cease from self-effort in the direction of spiritual attainments and learn to live and serve by the power GOD has provided. True spirituality knows little of "quietism." It is life more active, enlarged and vital because it is energized by the limitless power of GOD. Spirit-filled Christians are quite apt to be physically exhausted at the close of the day. They are weary in the work, but not weary of the work.

The Spirit-filled life is never free from temptations; but **"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."** The plain teaching of this promise, in harmony with all Scripture on this subject, is that temptations which are "common to man" come to us all, but there is a divinely provided way of escape. The child of GOD does not need to yield to temptation. There is always the possibility of sin; but never the necessity.

It has been well said that spiritual believers are honored with warfare in the front line trenches. There the fiercest pressure of the enemy is felt. But they are also privileged to witness the enemy's crushing defeat; so abundant is the power of GOD, and thus highly is the spiritual believer honored.

Living in unrealities is a source of hindrance to spirituality. Anything that savors of a "religious pose" is harmful. In a very particular sense the one who has been changed from the natural to the spiritual sometimes needs to be changed to a naturalness again,- meaning, of course, a naturalness of manner and life. The true spiritual life presents a latitude sufficient to allow us to live very close to all classes of people without drawing us from GOD. Spirituality hinders sin, but should never hinder the friendship and confidence of sinners (Luke 15:1). Who can see the failures of others more than the one who has spiritual vision? And because of this fact, who needs more the divine power to keep him from becoming critical, with all that follows with it?

We need to study most carefully the adaptation practiced by the Apostle Paul as revealed in I Corinthians 9:19-22. If our kind of spirituality makes CHRIST unattractive to others, it needs some drastic changes. May GOD save His children from assuming a holy tone of the voice, a holy somberness of spirit, a holy expression of the face, or a holy garb (if by the garb they wish to appear holy). True spirituality is an inward adorning. It is most simple and natural and should be a delight and attraction to all.

It will not do to impersonate ideals or to imitate others. Just here is the great danger in analyzing experiences. Some are so easily induced to try to imitate someone else. That which gives us our priceless distinctiveness is our own personality, and we cannot please Him more than by being what He designed us to be. Some Christians are disposed to "traffic in un-lived truth"; repeating pious phrases the truth of which they have never really experienced. This must always grieve the Spirit.

We are dealing always with our Father. Too often the walk in the Spirit is thought to be a mechanical thing. We are not dealing with a machine: we are dealing with the most loving and tender-hearted Father in all the universe. The deepest secret of our walk is just to know Him, and so to believe in His Father-heart that we can cry out our failures on His loving breast, if need be, or speak plainly to Him in thanksgiving for every victory. When we know the consolation and relief of such communion we shall have less occasion to trouble anyone else. It is ours to tell Him just what we feel, just how bad we are at heart, and even our darkest unbelief. To do this only opens our hearts in Him for His blessed light and strength.

Separation from close-up communion is the first thing that we should fear, and the "first aid" in every spiritual accident is the simple act of telling Him everything. Having made our confession, we should reckon our forgiveness and restoration fully accomplished and immediately take our place in His fellowship and grace.

The teaching that "the bird with the broken pinion never soars so high again" is most unscriptural. Through the sacrifice of CHRIST, no penalty because of sin remains for saint or sinner. Rather "the bird with a broken pinion may higher soar again"; but there should be no complacency with failure and defeat.

We are never wonderful saints of whom GOD may justly be proud: we are His little children,

immature and filled with foolishness, with whom He is endlessly patient and on whom He has been pleased to set all His infinite heart of love. He is wonderful. We are not.

Believe what is written. Remember the vital words of Romans 6:6, 9: "**Knowing this**," or "*because we know this*." We are always justified in acting on good evidence. Where is there a safer word of testimony than the imperishable Word of our GOD? From that Word we know that GOD has provided a finished judgment for our sins and for our sin, and that the way is open for an overflowing life in the power of the blessed Spirit. We know that such a life is His loving purpose for us. Ours is to believe His unfailing promise. So far from imposing on Him by claiming His grace, to fail to claim all that His love would bestow will hurt Him more than all else.

We need give no direct attention to the increase of our faith. Faith grows as we contemplate the faithfulness of GOD. Count His Word to be true when He says, "**My grace is sufficient for thee**." So count on every provision and promise of GOD.

True spirituality is a reality. It is all of the manifestations of the Spirit in and through the one in whom He dwells. He manifests in the believer the life which is CHRIST. He came not to reveal Himself but to make CHRIST real to the heart, and through the heart, of man. Thus the Apostle Paul could write: "**For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 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, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness 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, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.**"

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