

# STRAIGHTWAY

“And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.” (Mark 1:18)

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## The Sanctified Life and the Human Flesh

Dr. H. T. Spence

Continuing the burden from the last *Straightway* on the power of the flesh, this issue will address our *human* flesh and its need of the work of Christ in sanctification for continual living in this human flesh. Our human flesh should be seen distinct from the *sin-nature* flesh or the flesh principle which can reign with power and dominion in the human heart.

### The Creation of the Human Flesh

When God made man, He first made his body and the nature of that body from the ground, the earth. This specific ground that God used was called *adamah*, meaning a “moist, red ground” or a rich, cultivated ground. It is a ground ideal for a potter to use in the making of clay vessels.

God created man distinct from the angels who were created with no concept of physical or material identity. God created angels an immaterial creature with personality; He created man a *flesh* creature with personality. The term *flesh* identifies man with both having a body and being a moral agent with a will, emotions, and a mind. His emotions influence his will,

and his mind grants him an ability to think and reason. His body or a physical identification houses his soul, an invisible spirit concept of being, created without sin.

Although we have observed that man at the beginning was without a sin nature controlling his flesh, in the right situation and temptation his thoughts and emotions *potentially* could draw his will into a direction that could lead man away from his God to disobey his Creator. Thus, from the moist ground of the earth, God created man with *vulnerabilities* and *weaknesses*—without sin yet with weaknesses that if not guarded could lead man into the realm of sin.

### Crucifixion: Death to the Sin Principle

In the previous issue of *Straightway*, we noted the crisis of sanctification which dealt with putting to death the principle of “the flesh” (Rom. 6). It was also noted that another word is used in the New Testament along with sanctification: spiritual *circumcision* (Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28, 29). This attack of the flesh is called *crucifixion* in other pas-

sages of the New Testament.

Crucifixion, in the natural, is a very bold and aggressive attack upon the body causing excruciating pain and suffering. The purpose of the cross was to nail the fullness of the body of flesh to a pole, a tree, or a beam of wood with a crossbeam near the top to bring about a cruel and painful death of that body. The New Testament carefully notes that Christ's mode of death was on a cross. While His body was on that cross, our sins were *in* that body: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..." (1 Pet. 2:24). God's Word also declares that Christ became my sanctification or crucifixion *on* the cross at Calvary: "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" (Rom. 6:6).

The use of the term *crucifixion* auto-

matically means to be bound to the cross for death, or to take its victim down into death. It was not used simply for punishment; it was a mode of inflicting suffering that led to death. Christ was crucified! He *died* on the cross!

According to the Scriptures, individuals who have been crucified with Him are dead *with* Him to sin. On the cross Christ took the judgment of our sins, and thus, He was crucified *for* us; but we must also be crucified *with* Him: this is sanctification. We see in this crucifixion a death that means separation; a death to sin means a separation from sin.

Christ in His life, character, and entire being was pure, holy and spotless, and absolutely without sin in Himself. Therefore, Christ needed not to die for Himself, for He had no sin of his own from which to be separated by death. However, in His immaculate purity He was *made sin* ("... made him to be sin for us" 2 Cor. 5:21), or made to be the sin principle for us. He took our sins upon Himself; therefore, He had to die for sin. He had to expiate the sin of the world that He had made as if it were His own. He died by the shedding of His own blood. He had to die both for sin and unto sin (Rom. 6:10; Gr. "died unto the sin") to be separated from sin by death and raised up in the resurrection life freed from sin, or sanctified.

Christ having taken our sin upon Himself also had to put it away from Himself, that we through Him might

## STRAIGHTWAY

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put away sin and live by Him. We must keep in mind when the term *sin* is used in Romans 5 through 7, the original Greek uses the definite article expressing the sin. We are justified from our *sins* (plural), but through His sanctifying Himself for us, He put Himself to death, or separated Himself from the sin principle, or “the sin.” In John 17:19 Christ declares, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” His sanctification referred to the cross upon which He would take sin upon Himself, be made sin, answer for it, become dead to sin, all in order for us to become the righteousness of God in Him. Thus, we die with Him in His death to sin, are separated with Him from sin, are raised with Him in His resurrection life, and are presented with Him unto God as alive from the dead. In all of this work of Christ on the cross, we are sanctified with Him in His sanctification.

When Christ prayed to His Father in John 17 to sanctify His disciples through the truth, He was viewing His own cross. He sanctified Himself that His disciples might be sanctified through His suffering and death. His prayer was that His Father would bring His disciples to His cross that they might be able to apprehend the meaning of His death, that they might see in it their own crucifixion. He wanted them to realize fully their union with Him in His death to sin and in His resurrection from the grave, thus becoming partakers of His sanctification. He

sanctified Himself that they might be sanctified in Him. He was going ahead of them to the cross. He was going to work it all out for them, and He wanted His Father to bring His disciples right on after Him, that they might come into the full apprehension of all that He was to purchase for them by His own sanctification.

### **That They Might Be Sanctified**

How were the disciples to apprehend this sanctification? How are we to do it? By *beholding the cross*. We once again call attention to John 17:19: “For their sakes [the disciples] I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” His sanctification meant the cross upon which He would take sin upon Himself, be made sin, answer for it, become dead to it, separate from it, and become alive unto God, that through Him we might become dead to sin and become the righteousness of God in Him. The apostle Paul declares in Romans 6:11, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” As we assume by faith the attitude of death to sin and devotion to God, the Holy Spirit will work in us our own reckoning of ourselves. We must in deed and in truth come to the end of the selfish, worldly, fleshly life: “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16) must go down before we can have the victory of the sanctified life.

The crucifixion of *the flesh* with the

affections and lusts, the death of the Old Man, and the destruction of the body of sin all refer to the same thing

ple controlling our life? Crucifixion must become the life of the Christian. Although this work of Christ put to

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death the flesh principle controlling my life, I still have the flesh that I live in. Al-

and are a part of sanctification. We are to reckon this done as a matter of fact by faith in the operation of God.

Paul says in Romans 6:22, "But now being made free from sin [the sin], and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness [sanctification], and the end everlasting life." Now these words in the beginning of this verse show a very definite crisis had taken place. Paul's hearers were Christians but carnal ones; their flesh nature controlled them. However, they could be emancipated from the dominion and power of the flesh—"now being made free from sin."

They could become servants to God, no longer servants to sin from that moment of yielding obedience unto righteousness to God. They could reckon it done at the time that they appropriated Him as their sanctification. We must not only be separated from sin and dedicated to God but also abide in that separation in order to abide in the sense of our sanctification.

### The Flesh Versus Flesh

What are we to do once *the flesh* principle is crucified "with Christ" and we are separated from this flesh princi-

ple controlling our life? Crucifixion must become the life of the Christian. Although this work of Christ put to death the flesh principle controlling my life, I still have the flesh that I live in. Although free from the flesh power, I continue with flesh weaknesses and proclivities. The answer for *the flesh* is Christ and His cross. Romans 8:12, 13: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [continue to make dead] the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Note 1 Peter 4:1, 2:

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered [crucifixion, the crisis of sanctification] in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time [from that crisis hour, do not live the rest of your life] in the flesh [that human flesh] to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Paul, in dealing with the Galatians who were born again in and through the power of Christ in the new birth, now warns them of looking to the power of the human flesh to perfect the Christian life. There is no spiritual power in the human flesh. Romans 7:18 declares, "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 [in my human flesh life] that which is good I find not."

So, what do we do? Galatians 2:20 responds:

I am crucified with Christ [He sanctifying Himself that day at the cross now is the One to sanctify me]; nevertheless I live [I live in a human body; I still live in human flesh]; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh [the human flesh, not the flesh principle] I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me [not only for my sins but also for the principle of sin, the flesh].

Christ lived in the flesh, the body, but He was not *of the flesh*; the flesh was not the controlling power. His body, His flesh, was not to do the will of the flesh. His body, His fleshly body was given to do the will of the Father.

In 1 Corinthians 9 as Paul writes to the Corinthians concerning the race, the good fight of faith, he describes his own conduct as a runner in the race. Paul kept his eye on Christ in running the race; he did not fight the air or shadow box. A real race and real fight necessitated disciplining the body, the human flesh. He did not want his body to be his master—laziness or weakness that would lead to the loss of the race and the loss of the fight. He must bring the flesh and the body into bondage or subjection, "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (9:27b).

We see in Paul this wholesome fear, rather than smugness and complacency in his life for Christ. Paul consummates his burden of living to the carnal, fleshly life in Romans 13:13, 14:

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering [a word that means given to the bed consumed in the pleasures of making love] and wantonness [no restraint of your living, indecency, that of shameless conduct, given to loose living, to every sin that enters the mind], not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

The Lord Jesus becomes the garment to cover the flesh and its desires. Do not give any forethought for the flesh. Do not let your thoughts as a Christian be consumed with the flesh and the desires of the flesh. We must even be careful of how we want Jesus. In what way do we want Him to be experienced?

## Conclusion

When Jesus was here on earth the disciples wanted to be with Him, in His physical presence. They wanted to see and be with Him, His body, His flesh. Even Joseph of Arimathaea craved for the *soma*, the "precious body" of Jesus. Yes, Jesus' body was precious to the disciples!

On the resurrection day when Mary heard Jesus' voice speaking her name (John 20:16, 17), she responded, "Rab-

boni"! She wanted the bodily presence of Christ. But Jesus told her, "Touch me not"! or, "Do not lean on me. Do not become obsessed with my bodily presence."

There were forty days between the resurrection of Christ and His ascension. One of the reasons for those days was to wean His disciples from His physical presence. Through His appearing and disappearing, He taught them that "I am with you alway" (Matt. 28:20).

The flesh is not the priority! Even in 2 Corinthians 5:14-17, after Paul speaks of the resurrection, he declares in verse 16, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more [after the flesh]." Christ came not only to deliver us from the power of the flesh principle but also to control the human flesh. He wants to crucify the world unto us, to put to death the love for it, the devotion to it, and the love of the will and life for it. "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" (Rom. 8:5).

To mind or to set one's mind on fleshly things is the goal of the sinner and the carnal Christian. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:8, 9).

What is the antidote for the human flesh? It is Romans 12:1, 2:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [your *soma*, the human flesh-body, the human nature delivered from the flesh sin principle] a living sacrifice [continually], holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed [present passive imperative, the continual, ongoing work of Christ] by the renewing of your mind [in Romans *mind* is the term for the new man], that ye may prove [or constantly test or try] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God [the one will of God that is good, acceptable, and perfect in your living in the human flesh body].

Additionally, Galatians 2:20 declares, "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." In living in my human flesh His will for my life, I must ever be yielding my human life, flesh body, to Christ.

*The flesh* must know a death, a crucifixion of its power; but *human* or natural flesh must know the crucified life of the cross of Christ to keep it "under" Christ's power. As Paul said, "Nevertheless I live [after the crucifixion of the *I* of the flesh principle of sin]; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me [the human flesh *I* continues to live, but actually it must be Christ Himself living through the human flesh *I*]."

# FOUNDATIONS BIBLE COLLEGE & THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY A CONGRESS FOR THE CHRISTIAN REMNANT

**October 2–6, 2024**

“Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds;

***But the Word of God Is Not Bound.***”

2 Timothy 2:9

Ten messages will be given on truths vital to the present hour in which those of the Christian remnant find themselves living.

All messages will be taken from Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy.

“Paul’s Final Days: A Foretaste of These Perilous Times”

“Apostasy Versus Biblical Continuity”

“A Form of Godliness But Denying the Power Thereof”

“Living With an Unfeigned Faith”

“The Bonds of Christians Throughout History”

“The Need of Faithful Men”

“Enduring Hardness As a Good Soldier”

“Preparing Our Children in These Perilous Times”

“The Christian Student in These Perilous Times”

“The Call, the Vision, and the Passion for the Future”

Services Wednesday through Friday at 8:30 AM, 10:00 AM, and 7:00 PM

Saturday A Special Film on the *Life and Martyrdom of Polycarp* at 6:00 PM

Sunday Services at 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM, and 6:00 PM

Please plan to join us for as many of the services as you are able.

# The Clay, the Mire, and the Brittle Clay

Dr. H. T. Spence

History is one of the greatest voices against the contemporary powers of our time. History teaches us from where we have come, revealing either digression toward failure or progression toward success. It is imperative that we know "from whence cometh man?" Such a question must also include from "whence cometh the earth and the universe?" Maybe more importantly, we should ask, "from whence cometh the evil of man, his wickedness, and his proclivity to destroy the good and promote the bad?" This inquiry leads invariably to other questions: "Was man ever good? If he was, what brought about his innate desires and obsessiveness to evil?" "Has man devolved?" "Is man's progression to evil to be called evolution?" "Is man's innate pull to evil a part of an animalistic nature that still controls his evolution?"

## The Fall of Man

Contemporary man—with all of his evils, violence, immorality, stupidity, and pride—wants us to believe that man's beginning was nebulous, unintelligible, mud-mired, slimy, and animalistic. He declares that after millions of years we have arisen out of this mud unto a perfection of intelligence, law, order, design, and beauty. This utopian idealism is vanity because he does not see his depravity, his sin pollution which has destroyed everything

that he has pursued and birthed in his view of greatness.

The Bible, the infallible Word of God, reveals a different beginning to man, fully contradictory to an evolutionary presupposition. We were created in the image and likeness of God. We were created in true righteousness and holiness. We were created in an environment of an earth of perfection and order. We were created by a holy, infinite God, to walk with Him, to love Him, to serve Him, and to live forever with Him.

This holy God created man twofold: (1) He made man's physical body and nature out of *adamah*, the moist red ground; this was to be his being. (2) Then God breathed into man and he became a living soul. Elihu declared to Job in 32:8, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 33:4 declares, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Solomon, the sage of Jerusalem, declared that our times are placed in life by God Himself. And in Ecclesiastes 3:11 he revealed, "He [God] hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." God "set the world [Heb. *olam*, 'eternity'] in their heart." Truly man is a creature like no other creature God has ever made.



When Adam fell into sin, something happened to his body, his soul, and his personality. Adam, in his disobedience to God created an inward principle that aggressively and profoundly pervaded every aspect of man. The body God made for man was given to decay and ultimate dissolution because of the intentional fall and disobedience of man; meanwhile, his soul would separate from the body bringing forth death. This sin nature or sin principle (though distinct from the human nature) became an interwoven nature with man's human nature. From the fall brought about by a married man and woman, all of humanity is conceived with a human body and nature as well as with the corruption and pollution of the sin nature. The sin nature is with man from the very beginning of his personal conception and throughout his ongoing existence. His human nature which also came from the ground is now contaminated, soiled, and given to selfishness.

### **What the Fallen Man Becomes**

When a child is born into the world, his ground-being eventually will become miry mud: "He brought me ... out of the miry clay" (Psalm 40:2). This Hebrew word for *miry* refers to dregs or even feces. Since his fall, man has become the worst of clay, the product not only of inherited sin but also of

his own self-waste. What a horrible sight of man this is! Once the corruption of Adam's sin begins working in an individual, every day this corruption deepens turning the polluted soil into miry soil. Even when man finally comes to God, often the sin principle has worked its way through every compartment of life, making the depraved soil more and more miry. The longer he is away from God, the worse the soil becomes. He becomes more and more the dregs, the worthless parts of life, the waste of living.

The self of life began with the natural life God created for us. As our natural life unfolded, a multitude of influ-

**The Christian heart must long for a life, a heart, and a self, that is the product of grace and not a product of living for self.**

ences came upon us—the company we kept, the things we did with life, the sins we committed, the

habits of sin, the careless heart for the things of God, the spiritual apathy in which we grew up in a family, the places we went, the actions we performed, and the thoughts we meditated upon consistently—all these collectively deepened sin and darkness in our lives beyond what we were in the God-appointed conception of life.

Even growing up in a Christian home where we may have had moments of thoughts toward God, our life was given more to other things such as the dreams and hopes for self without God. We soon learned to crowd God out of our desires. Every day we cre-

ated out of our personal soil, dregs, and waste a conception of self which became ultimately our god. The longer we lived in self, the more miry the life became. This deepening mire affected our thinking and cultivated immaturity about living life. It affected our marriage, our view of family, our living with self as well with others. Time allowed a deepening of this mire.

Although an individual may have gained money, a home, a car, and possessions around himself, his life before God may have no purpose or reality. His inward life may be a sorry mess; his heart increasingly covered the self-created waste. The concern here is not so much the sins that he has committed, for God can deliver him in a moment from its guilt. More importantly now is what those sins produced in self and all that the individual became in order to sin those sins. It is the side effects of those sins from the decisions he made in life that were not right, that were not based upon God and the promotion of grace.

The spirit and mood one has when growing up and the proclivities one stubbornly presses in life when corrected, all contribute to this wasteland of mire! Oh, this mire is the true me; it is what I have made myself to be.

Yes, dear reader, we become that spirit, that mood! We may control a sweet and nice exterior manner, but in a crisis where this mire explodes, all see our true self. We become the waste of our personal living, and this mire affects everything we do.

## The Mire of Self

Man's original ground (*adamah*) has become his mire (*yaven*). In the new birth, God must place us in a position where He can help us with self. He must first place me into a position of reconciliation or justification. This is a standing relationship with Him that is the beginning of a life with God. Then for the rest of my life God deals with this mire, these dregs, this feces waste, this product of myself that I have become.

The cry of David in Psalm 69:14 declares, "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink." We may think that there is no further need of God's grace from His Son once we are saved from our sins. Nevertheless, we must be saved also from what sin and self have made us. The prophet in Isaiah 57:20, 21 gave the commentary, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." This troubled watery mire should not be a continuing commentary of the Christian's life.

In 2 Peter 2:22 the apostle described the powers of one turning away from everything God had worked in the life: "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." How sad it is when one, who has been delivered from the pollutions of this world through the "knowledge" (Gr., *epignosko*, the full, experiential knowledge) of a trans-

formed, delivered life, returns to wallowing in his old mire.

Oh, dear reader, the Christian heart must long for a life, a heart, and a self, that is the product of grace and not a product of living for self. This is one of the precious purposes of the work of sanctification and the sanctified life. It is not about my standing before God in heaven; it is about the imperative need of the atonement within to deal with what I have become in my daily living.

Prophecy reveals that the End Time will be given to this power of the mire. Note Daniel 2:41, 43:

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.... And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

Man today projects himself in authoritative iron, declaring himself to be God and through the philosophy of evolution taking the place of God. However, mixed with the dregs of humanity, debauchery, and immorality, man has become the product of himself. The hour in which we live has become so critical, dark, and hopeless, that God must send His Son back to save man from total destruction. Mire is the commentary of End-time hu-

manity, and we tend to live with it and by it.

In Psalm 40:1, 2 we observe the prayer, the hope of David (who had mire as part of his life). Waiting patiently for the Lord, he cried out for God to change what is in him. He wanted the Lord to bring deliverance from what he had become. And we read on, "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." Yes, he waited with hope for the Lord to do His work. "He brought me up." He caused me to ascend out of a horrible pit—tumult—a swirling pit of confusion with many voices telling me what to do and how to live.

At the bottom of this pit was the slime, dregs, and waste of self and humanity. So many things encumbered David, and each one of them could have destroyed him. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay." Once he was delivered, the Lord "set my feet upon a rock." Oh, the solidarity of life! This immutable rock is the antithesis to slimy mud that sucks man's feet down. The transforming power of God brings the firmness of steps. This is what sanctification is to do for the Christian, unfolding what a life is to be through Christ and His Word! This is what we read in the unfolding of Psalm 40.

### **The End-Time Miry Clay**

As we have mentioned, according to Daniel 2:41 and 43, the End-time miry clay will consummate in what the He-

brew renders as hardened mire or brittle clay. This brittle condition is the final frontier of the mire of humanity. Today, we are witnessing the hardening, crusting clay in both global-governing politics and End-time public Christianity.

The church speaks of power with God, and the mega church declares itself rich, increased with goods, and having need of nothing. But both the institutional church and the public Christianity of the End Time are filled with the dregs of what the global apostasy of Christianity has produced: wretchedness, spiritual poverty, blindness, and spiritual nakedness. The Christ has left the church; there is nothing remaining but the dregs and waste of humanity within. We must remember that when Christ came to earth, He came into a sterile, spiritually dead humanity. Just as the Mosaic Tabernacle was set up in the sterile, lifeless wilderness, so Christ took on flesh. There was nothing of worth in flesh; sin had absolutely destroyed the human flesh. Christ's first coming is what brought hope for humanity.

Blessed is the day when we become tired of going our way, living in our manner and by the power of self. It is time that we pray for God to deliver us from the mire of the flesh and our proneness to sink back into it. We may think that there is no further need of God's grace from His Son once we are saved from our sins. However, after our conversion we must be saved from what both sin and self have made us.

In Psalm 69:2 David declares, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing ..." The Christian will come to abhor what he has become in the power of not only sin but also self.

While our sins may have been bad and many, both secret and open, there are also the side effects of these sins—thoughts and habits mounting up collectively. All this debris left behind has become a part of my life; this is where the problem now lies. The moodiness of self, sensitivity of self, the anger of being corrected, and the touchiness of the human spirit are all a part of this miry debris. These many other side effects have a way of settling to the bottom of my being. I am the product of my growing up, my reaction to my past, the deep moods never corrected that became set and congealed in my ways. This debris also includes powers that came into my life that were never corrected, such as the root of bitterness, hatred, and self-centeredness.

When we grow older, these things set like concrete in us making change and healing very difficult. Unless a stroke of power from the Word of God opens the eyes and the cry comes for God to change us, even our Christian life will have the mixture of all this mire. Isaiah 53:3 reveals that "He [the coming Messiah] is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." Why does hatred and rejection come to the heart looking upon the Saviour

on the cross? Because He reminds us of ourselves! Instead, great compassion should come upon such a person. Why do we hate the Man on the cross? Because we see a judgment of ourselves by God!

In Isaiah 53:4, 5 we have often viewed the quartet of words *griefs, sorrows, transgressions*, and *iniquities*. The griefs are the side effects of our sins; they are what our sins did to us and others. The sorrows represent the pains, the depression, the dark thoughts, despair, fear, torment, and pains to others that our sins produced. The transgressions represent the acts of each sin, rebellion, our transgres-

sion against God. And the iniquities represent the root of the principle of sin: “knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him.” Yes, Christ died not only for our sins and the sin principle but also for all the side effects that our sins produced against ourselves and others.

Isaiah 53:6 brings us to the atoning work of Christ as He deals with the self and what it became. We are simpletons, foolish creatures, exceedingly apt to struggle and lose ourselves, as we have gone astray from God. What did we do?! “We have turned every one to his own way.” Amidst all that we did over the seasons of life dedicated to

*Continued*

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## **Winter Events at Foundations**

### **Thanksgiving Day Service**

Thursday, November 28, 2024

A special Thanksgiving Day service is held annually to express our hearts of gratitude to God in worship in the spirit of that first Pilgrim Thanksgiving celebration.

### **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

Tuesday, December 24, 2024

This service is held annually on Christmas Eve and includes a variety of vocal and instrumental carols, readings of the Christmas Story as recorded in the Gospels, and a pointed Christmas message appropriate to the present hour of history.

### **New Year's Eve Candlelight Service**

Tuesday, December 31, 2024

Join with us as we usher in the new year around the Word of God and prayer. This annual service features both vocal and instrumental presentations of hymns as well as a word from God's Word drawing our hearts to truths needed for the coming year. The evening concludes with prayer around the altar as the new year enters in the will of God.

sin, we created our own unique way of life. It was *our way*.

Once again, this is one of the precious purposes of the working of sanctification. Sanctification is the imperative need of the atonement “within” to deal with what I have become. Psalm 40:1–4 is the whole view of the atonement of Christ for us. This is what we want for our life. We pray, cry, call upon God, waiting patiently for the Lord in hope for a change! “Change this in me, O Lord; do this! I have become this!”

### Psalm 40 and Its Unfolding

In Psalm 40:1 *waiting* is that hope for the Word of God to do its work. David continues, “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit.” An ascent is made that leads to the setting of our feet upon a rock, the solidarity of life, the antithesis to slimy mud that sucks man’s feet down. Upon this rock is now the firmness of the Christian’s steps.

We are warned in verse 4 to trust only the Lord, not respecting the proud nor turning aside to lies forged by others to me, or even my own self trying to convince myself contrary to God’s Word. Oh, the pride of me! This is what pulled me into my mess!

In verse 5 the Christian must ever be living in the holy contemplation of the wonderful works which God has done and His thoughts toward him. Yea, in the light of all that the Lord has done, my words will ever be inadequate to

express the infinite bounty of His works toward me!

The Psalmist continues his ascent higher and higher in what is needed for ongoing deliverance. He brings us into verse 6, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.” Obedience to God is greater than offerings and sacrifices. The prophet Samuel strongly told King Saul that “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22). Oh, to keep us out of the mire, we must ever be living in obedience to God’s precious Word.

Part of the work of sanctification is symbolically and in shadow and type the boring of a hole through the ear of a slave/servant as presented in Exodus 21:6. It was the sign of a *love slave*—one who had his ear crucified to absolute obedience to the master’s voice, the one whom the servant had come to love. We read of this truth in Isaiah 50:5, “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.”

The Psalmist continues in Psalm 40:7, “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume [roll] of the book it is written of me [or it is prescribed for me].” What is that which is written? “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is in my heart” (verse 8). (We will observe this of Christ Himself in Hebrews 10:6–9.) Part of the proof of the Psalmist’s delight in that law is found in verses 9 and 10. David then declares

that he must see his need before God. Others may see it, but do I see my need before God?

Psalm 40 concludes with verses 13–17: we must always remember that the Lord is thinking upon us for our needs, and His desire is toward us for the *self* of our humanity, what and who I am.

## Conclusion

What truth is needed for our life's clay to be protected from becoming miry? The Bible reveals different truths for different needs. But there may be concepts of truth that affect us and become destructive to us.

We conclude with seven concepts of truth, though a few may become enemies to our heart and living. There is (1) *soil truth*, (2) *seed truth*, (3) *sterile truth*, (4) *static (stale) truth*, (5) *spiritual truth*, (6) *perfecting truth*, and (7) *consummate truth*. We must find the specific truth in God's Word that is needed for our clay and beware of any truth that would be detrimental.

The first truth for our *soil* is found in Matthew 13:4, 5, 7, 8. There is the need of truth to prepare my soil. My soil is made up of my heart, my thoughts, my will, my conscience. *Soil truth* will be needed to change my soil. The sower is Christ; the seed is the true Gospel.

Though I need my life prepared for the seed, I will need *seed truth*; this truth is found in Mark 4:15, 16, 18, 20. It is truth that is in its beginning, a beginning truth. First Peter 1:23 speaks of this seed truth, this beginning truth: "Being born again, not of corruptible

seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." First John 3:9 reveals a seed truth: "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." Jeremiah 2:21 reveals another seed truth: "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?"

But we must be careful about *sterile truth*. Matthew 23:23 reveals this kind of truth:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

This reveals that we can have truth which is part of the knowledge of God's Word, but we do not have its power. This truth could also be a truth that is not the crucial need for a specific moment in life. We could hold this truth without fruit. Unfruitful truth given in the absence of a needed truth for that hour will fall upon the ears as *sterile truth*.

Another warning is *static (stale) truth*. Paul reveals this truth in Hebrews 5:11–14. Here Paul speaks of a heart that has grown content with only the truth it knows and does not go on in truth.

A fifth context of truth is *spiritual*



*truth.* We read in John 6:63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15 the apostle reveals this *spiritual truth*: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things [of God], yet he himself is judged of no man [of no natural man]." Spiritual truth is part of the spiritual life, feeding and producing life.

*Perfecting truth* is presented in Philippians 3:12–15; it is truth that perfects:

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. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Finally, there is *consummate truth*. First Corinthians 13:9–12 unfolds this truth:

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that

which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

This is also seen in Revelation 4:6, "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." Consummate truth will only be known in heaven.

The unfolding of truth must continue in my life; it must ever be working. The fundamental parts of truth are found at the beginning of life. The deeper we go in Christ and His truth, the more we will find Him dealing with the smaller areas of our life, areas that we tended not to address in the earlier part of our Christian faith. We must be warned of the possibility as found in 2 Timothy 3:8, "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." To resist the truth is to set the heart and one's self against the truth.

Finally, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4:4, "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Oh, dear reader, when the heart turns from the truth, the clay of life will turn into mire and the mire eventually into brittle clay,



hard and callous to God and His Word. If you turn away from the truth, the turning will place you in a position that can cause the heart never to return to truth or to come in contact with it again.

This is our generation. Our generation has become brittle clay because it has rejected God and the truth of His Word.

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Psalm 11:3

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# Forever the Clay—Forever the Christ

Dr. H. T. Spence

Throughout all of God's creation, from the vastness of the universe and the angelic hosts to the earth and all that is found upon it, there is no creature declared to be made in the image and likeness of God except man. To some extent this truth declared in Genesis 1:26 ("And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness") has been an enigma throughout the history of theological study. To what extent is this image and likeness? Truly God made man with holiness and righteousness, with an absence of sin, and with an eternity of soul. God chose to make man with a full personality of intellect, emotions, a will, a self, a heart, all found in a spirit-soul breathed into man. We may go so far as to believe that man's bodily image was fashioned after the image in which the second personality of the Trinity, the Son, later came to earth.

## The Image of God Versus the Fall of Man

To what extent was man's image and likeness in creation? At this point of our writing, we will acknowledge that, whatever that image and likeness was at the fall of Adam, it was profoundly affected by the Adamic sin principle that was brought about by man. This sin principle now became an integral part of the existence of the offspring of Adam. After the fall, man had a human nature made by God

mixed with the inherited pollution of Adam.

The overt desire and will of the archangel Lucifer is carefully revealed in Isaiah 14:12-14. He wanted to be "like" God but not in the matter of heart or of the essence of His holiness and righteousness. He wanted to be like God in power, in control, in headship, in sovereignty over all, and in a manifested glory over all creation. He tried to overthrow God and take His place, but he did not have the nature of God, and he did not desire to have God's nature and attributes of holiness and grace and righteousness. When the serpent convinced Eve to become like God, it was only in the matter of the right to choose what is good and evil, right and wrong. Eve would become her own ethical authority about good and evil. This authority is the only concept of God that man wanted. No, it was not the holy and righteous nature of God he sought.

This willful disobedience and rebellion against God became a natural principle of sin that pervaded every aspect of man, his personality, his self, his fountain of existence—his heart, his conscience, and his spirit. Man's holiness and righteousness were gone simply because he was no longer absent of sin; he no longer could be declared holy, and he was no longer righteous. Because Adam fell away into sin, is there ever the hope of reclaiming this created image and like-

ness of God?

## The Coming of the Son

Yes, the answer to reclaiming this image is found in the coming of the Son of God to the earth, His taking on flesh and the nature of man. The New Testament reveals the Son in the human context of living in this image and likeness of God. Note the apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4:

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

In Colossians 1:15 the apostle declares, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." The second member of the Trinity, taking on flesh became the "firstborn" of a new humanity. God created the human flesh and human nature for His Son; He took upon Himself that created body and nature as part of His existence. He is ever now a part of this creation, though He was and continues to be eternal with the Father in personality and in the power behind the creation of man (John 1:3, 4). Note Hebrews 1:2, 3:

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness [the effulgence] of his glory, and the express image of his person, and

upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

## Being Conformed to His Image

Colossians 3:10 further reveals this image: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge [Gr., *epignosko*, 'a full experiential knowledge'] after the image of him that created him." In the epistle dedicated to the unfolding of the full Gospel, Paul declares in 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 firstborn among many brethren." Here the apostle reveals our predestination to be *conformed* to the Son. The believer is to acquire God's likeness of Christ in his own life. The Greek word for *conformed* is *sunmorphe*; this word in this passage means to pattern ourselves after Him because we have been made within after Him. Paul furthers this truth in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Everything of our life is to be conformed to our Saviour's human nature. He was the image and likeness that the Trinity made man to be. We were made in the image and likeness of God! The redeemed human becomes like God; he becomes God-like in Christ. Lucifer wanted to become

“like” God, but like Him in power, authority, and sovereignty. God wants us to become like Him in spirit, in heart, in humility, even as Christ in submissiveness. This is truly *like God*. It includes the fullness of what we are spiritually, and the manifested self—our

with our family’s spirit, the environment in which we lived, all contribute to the molding force of our lives. It includes the things we were able to get away with, the way we were taught (good or bad), and our own secret sins that became woven into what we have

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become. Our thought life also greatly invested in our spirit. Redemption of

spirit.

This meekness and submissiveness begins in simplicity as that of a child. But as a child grows older, his spirit is being formed and manifested. Things that are instilled in the child for good become a part of the child’s spirit. When the child is permitted to get away with wrong, it also becomes a part of that child’s spirit. As he grows older this growing spirit becomes part of the warp and woof of the fabric of a child’s character. This could include proclivities to hatred, anger, recklessness, undisciplined manner, moodiness, apathy, getting his way, etc. These are spirit matters that become a part of the spirit of the child. When one grows up in a home given to these things (such as an exploding mother or father, a lawless home, etc.), all of these characteristics contribute to a child’s spirit.

It is one thing to be forgiven of sins (physical, mental, and spiritual), but it is another thing for the human spirit to be conformed to the Spirit of Christ. The complexity of our spirit, along

Christ is for the whole man, and that includes our spirit. We must ask God to deliver us from everything that has affected our life over the years that mars our conformity to Christ. And, we must also pray that the Spirit of God will conform us more and more into the image of God.

Coming out of the chapter dedicated to faith in Hebrews 11, we enter into the sobering words of Hebrews 12:1, which encourage us to “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.” We quote from our commentary on the *Epistle to the Hebrews* on page 259, 260:

These weights to be set aside refer to weights that runners placed on their ankles and wrists while they were in training for a race. However, at the time of the race, these weights would be removed, enabling them to run unhindered and thus faster. A Christian’s weights are those aspects of self that encumber his faith in God. Not always sins, they could be anything that hinder our spiritual

progress. The greater life of faith, with a steady and unflinching resolve, will lead one to even sacrifice right things in order to keep from slowing his race. He realizes that what may be innocent or commendable in another is a hindrance he willfully sets aside. This weight could even be an innocent affection that threatens to turn away the diligence of his heart's love. Paul does not make any suggestion as to what these encumbrances may be; nevertheless, he does imply that he who sets himself to this solemn race will early discover that which proves to be a hindrance to them.

The apostle then gives the exhortation of laying aside every *besetting* sin. We also quote from the commentary this passage on page 260:

The word sin (Gr., *harmartia*) is a singular noun; in this context the author is not addressing sins. This word is in reference to the singular sin principle from which all sins (in the plural) flow. Thus, the writer here is not referring to any particular sin; he is referring to the principle of sin itself. Its posture of besetting the believer means it surrounds the Christian, keeping him from growing on with God in this race. The command to lay side (Gr., *apotithemi*) means 'to put off or away' this hindering principle promptly. This is the command to seek God for the crisis experience of sanctification.

Everything we need for godliness and conformity to Christ is found in

His redemptive work. Christ even died to do away with the wrinkles: "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" (Eph. 5:27). The "spot" is any act of sin; the "wrinkle" is any imperfection concerning the character of Christ in us.

### **The Final Conformity to Christ's Image**

What will be the finality of this image? There will be the need of the *Bematos* or the Judgment Seat of Christ, to rid our lives of anything that has become a part of us as a product of the flesh and not of Christ. Note 1 Corinthians 3:11-15:

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

These things of the earthly life which were based on flesh and wrought by our own power, Christ must judge and burn up, "that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. 1:29). Only humanity conformed to

His image is to be found in heaven. We also read in Hebrews 12:23, "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." The final Greek word in the phrase "men made perfect" is *tetelios*, which is the word meaning "absolutely, perfectly" conformed.

In 1 John 3:2 the apostle John declares, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Paul in Ephesians 5:30 writes, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

What is a glorified body? Christ became flesh, bone, and blood. After He died and His soul reentered His body on the day of His resurrection, He arose with the same body, yet it was a glorified body. It is this glorified body that our body will be fashioned like unto. Only humans can have such a body—in a glorified state, in heaven, forever.

In Luke 24:38, 39 we read that on the evening of the resurrection, when Jesus appeared where the ten disciples were gathered together: "He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit

hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

The only thing absent from that body was blood. There will be another principle to take the place of blood in the glorified, human body. We believe *Spirit* is to be the *life* principle.

According to Romans 8:23, the final change of redemption will be our body, identified in the context of the image and likeness of His glorified body: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." And, 1 John 3:2, 3 reveals the final change: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The final resolve of our clay body will be fashioned like unto His Body.

Thank God! Christ is the power over all flesh: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh..." (John 17:2). He has the power to deal with the flesh principle in this life and in the final resolve of the natural flesh in heaven as we will be fashioned like unto Him.

## Conclusion

Although our knowledge of God will ever be increasing throughout the unending ages, our character will be sealed the moment we die or are captured. Both grace and suffering are de-

manded in order to increase our character; heaven will be a place without suffering. Thus, our character is sealed at death by what we were in this life. Some Christians will be saved as by fire, losing all of their professing Christian life because the life they had in professing the Christian faith was all through the power of the flesh rather than through the power and life of Christ. Others will know the gold (Christ's righteousness within, covering every aspect of life), silver (the re-

demptive work of Christ), and precious stones (the individual characteristics of Christ in the life) that become the character of the saints and a part of their beauty in that they yield to Christ and His Word rather than to their religious flesh.

Oh, dear Christian, we will forever be clay and flesh, yet in heaven, this clay and flesh will be glorified. We will forever be as Christ's flesh and bone—glorified!

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