

Awake to Righteousness



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"Awake to righteousness, and *sin* not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." *1 Corinthians* 15:34. *K.J.V.*

These words were written, not to the shameless, Godless sinner, but to the members of a well-established Christian congregation who were contentedly resting in the mistaken assurance that they were satisfactorily measuring up to the divine standards and were as certain as anyone could be of a place in Paradise. The Corinthian believers had been raised up by the mighty apostle Paul himself, and had initially enjoyed a rich spiritual experience, but they had drifted back into a life of "respectable" sin. Thus they, who ought to have been saving lights to the sinners in the world about them, were themselves in need of a specific call to separate from sin and live lives of perfect righteousness.

It is to the same class of people that this message continues to be addressed today. Therefore, professed child of God, these words demand that, under the Holy Spirit's ministration, a careful examination be made of one's personal experience to see if one does indeed have that knowledge of God which results in sinless living.

The common reaction to the call to "sin not", is that this is an impossibility anyway, but in reality, it is not the unattainable demand of a perfect God to an imperfect people.

God is a just, loving, and righteous God. Therefore, He would never require of His people that which was beyond His power to achieve in and through them. His call to "*Awake to righteousness, and sin not*", is to be recognized and received as God's priceless offer to His children, rather than His exacting demand upon them. It is His intention to ". . .to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness . . ."in the heart and life of every believer in Jesus. *Daniel 9:24*.

But, as with the Corinthians of old who, in their ignorance of God's power to save, regarded sin as being an unconquerable foe, the modern professed child of God accepts sin as an unfortunate but inseparable part of his existence. To such the Lord lovingly directs His plea, "*Awake to righteousness, and sin not!*" It is God's intention that none shall accept a life of sin as the only existing option. The Almighty longs for everyone to be fully aware that righteous living is accessible to every repenting, believing child of His.

When Jehovah invites us to "*Sin not*"! He is not pointing forward to some glorious future moment when, as a result of a dramatic miracle, the believer will suddenly find himself elevated into such a state of purity and holiness that he will not even be able to do wrong again. The Lord is talking in terms of *today*! Incredible as it may seem, He does not consider the handicap of sinful flesh in the environment of an evil world, a reason for continuing in sin.

He has every right to expect this, for He has made His own omnipotent power in the saving gospel of Jesus Christ available to everyone who will lay hold upon it. Through the gospel, the remedial system designed to bring the sinner back into harmony with God and His law, the Almighty has made full and complete provision that all might become like Him, and it is His glory and pleasure to accomplish this in all those who do not interpose a stubborn will and thus frustrate His divine work of grace. For this cause He sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, as it is written: "... you shall call His

name JESUS, for He will save His people *from* their sins." *Matthew* 1:21.

Christ was not commissioned by His Father to save His people in their sins, but *from* their sins. There are many theories in circulation which offer salvation in sin, but we can be assured that they do not find their origin in God's mind. "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." *1 John* 3:8.

Satan relentlessly toils to produce sin in human lives; his most successful argument being that it is impossible for fallen, sinful human beings to obey God's commandments. "Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts." *The Desire of Ages*, 24.

Against this monstrous lie stands God's pure and perfect truth. He says "... this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you . . . you can do it." *Deuteronomy* 30:11, 14. *R.S.V.* This is only one of the frequent statements by which the Lord has affirmed that obedience is a very real possibility for the believer. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." *1 Corinthians* 10:13.

Every person must choose which of these two propositions he will believe and by which his life shall be fashioned. Very few consciously realize that the issues are as clearly defined as they are. They fail to recognize that Satan's specific claim is that righteousness is unattainable by anyone. God, on the other hand, positively states that it is possible. The result is that the vast majority of professed Christians actually believes, supports, and teaches Satan's lie.

If such would consider the implications of this position, many at least would make haste to revise their belief, for to believe that it is impossible to overcome sin is to maintain that Satan is stronger than the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Spirit, and that sin is more powerful than righteousness. What sincere Christian would permit such ideas to find lodging in his mind? Surely there are none! Who among you would give utterance to such evil sentiments!

Yet many, prepared to let their own experience be the means by which truth is measured, will complain that, despite their most determined efforts, they are unable to overcome. They say, "How often I have determined to put away the hated thing! Again and again, I have given myself to Christ anew, and resolved to sin no more! How strenuously I have fought the good fight, how sorrowfully have I repented, how sincerely I have confessed, how earnestly I have begged for help, only to go down again in miserable defeat! I read the seventh chapter of *Romans* and find it a sad but accurate picture of my experience! What is my trouble? How does one ever come to the place where one can live a life in which he is able to sin not?

You *know* what is right, and you *desire* to achieve it. What is more, you are *striving* with all your might to accomplish the desired objective. Why, then, are these efforts not met with success?

The problem lies in the fact that you are striving to achieve the right thing with the wrong methods. You are trying to do in the old life what is impossible to do while the old life lives on. The old life, which is more accurately designated as the "old man", is not the flesh and blood body composed of sinful flesh and blood, but the offspring of Satan which dwells in the fallen, sinful, mortal flesh and blood, and rules over it against the desires of the mind and the convictions of the conscience. This is the "root" of evil in the life, the evil "fountain" of sin. While that unclean thing remains, the stream proceeding from it will likewise be unclean. "The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure." *The Desire of Ages*, 172.

In the Bible, other names are also given to this cruel and wicked power. Some of them are, "our old man", in *Romans* 6:6; "the carnal mind", in *Romans* 8:7; and "the heart of stone", in *Ezekiel* 36:26. It is likened to a thorn bush, and to

a slave master who rules over the person as did the Egyptians over the Israelites. The flesh becomes its "... instruments of unrighteousness to sin." *Romans* 6:13.

The vital truth so little understood today is that no matter how well Bible truth is comprehended, or how earnestly one may strive for the mastery, while the old man continues to reign in the soul temple, it will be utterly impossible to "awake to righteousness, and *sin not*". It just simply cannot be done. The Bible plainly and emphatically says so, and that is the end of any objections to the contrary. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be." *Romans* 8:7. "... it [the law] could not justify man, because *in his sinful nature* he could not keep the law ..." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 373.

Despite this fact, the universal approach to the problem is an attempt to keep the law while still under the domination of the old sin master. Diligent effort is expended to develop satisfactory habit patterns. Force, discipline, education, culture, and other means are used to bring the life into harmony with God, but always without success. A modified improvement of the old may be achieved, but the outward appearance of righteousness cannot entirely hide the continuing corruption within. While discipline, training, education, and culture all have their place, they are quite powerless to achieve sinless living.

It is pointless to continue with procedures which do not work, and it is equally foolish to draw the conclusion that the Bible promises and requirements are unattainable. Sinless living is God's standard for His people and nothing less than this is fitness for the kingdom. It follows then that a way must be found by which one can "awake to righteousness and sin not".

To the praise and honour of God, there is a solution which really does work. It is a plan which is of divine, not human, origin, and nothing is more plainly taught in the Scriptures. Despite the simplicity, clarity, effectiveness, and power of this solution, most people are so preoccupied with their attempts to make the old nature conform, that they en-

tirely miss God's solution to the problem—the only one which will truly work. Thus it is that so many go on asleep to righteousness and sinning still, having to their shame no true knowledge of God, and yet, amazingly enough, claiming to be His true and only children.

It seems that there are three different groups of people in the so-called Christian world. The first are those who utterly deny the possibility of sinning no more. The second group do admit the possibility of sinless living, but, not knowing God's way of achieving it, offer a system of deliverance which does not work. Finally, there are those who not only believe sin can be separated from them, but they also understand the way in which this experience can become theirs.

What, then, is the divine solution in which not one thread of human devising is to be found?

God's way is to solve the problem by removing the cause of the difficulty. Just as a gardener removes the problem of thorns in his garden by taking out the thorn bush and replacing it with a good tree, so the Lord proposes to eradicate the old man and to institute the new man in his place. Then, just as by *nature* we previously performed the works of evil, so now by *nature* we produce the deeds of righteousness. It will truly be ". . . that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses". *The Desire of Ages*, 668.

No man can serve two masters at the same time. Either he renders a bond service to the old man—the offspring of Satan—or he serves the Lord from a loving and willing heart, according to the nature of the new life within him. One look at the fruit produced by his life will tell him whose servant he is. If he has not ceased from known sin, and does not manifest the sweet fruits of the spirit, he can know that he is still in bondage to sin. If, on the other hand, he has positive victory over every known sin, so that the old dispositions to evil are no longer a part of him, and he finds himself filled with the spirit of love, joy, *peace*, and humility, he may know that he has truly passed from death to life and has indeed become God's true child.

The old man can never be taught or forced to obey God.

That is as impossible as trying to get a wolf to lead the life of a lamb, or for a thorn bush to yield grapes. A new life altogether must be instituted in place of the old, just as a good tree must be put where the evil tree was, if good fruit is to be acquired.

Elder E. J. Waggoner stated this truth very clearly: "There never was a time in the life of any man when of himself he had power to resist temptation. We cannot do it. *That proves that we must have a life different from our natural life in order to resist sin at all.* That must be a life that sin has never touched and can never touch." *Bible Studies on the Book of Romans*, 33, 34. 1981 Destiny Press edition.

There is only one such life, and that is the life of Christ. He who possesses that life in himself has the victory, for that life is the victory. Christ offers to impart that life to every one who will permit the Holy Spirit to implant it within him. But this heavenly ministry cannot be performed on anyone who does not surrender the old man up to death. Christ will never, and in fact can never, share the heart with any other ruler. He must have the believer entirely or not at all. There is no other way in which He can bring salvation to the sinner.

When considering the necessity for the implantation of Christ's righteous life within the believer, the difference between the *actions* of sin, which are the sins *of* the flesh, and the *sin master*, which is the "law of sin" in the flesh, must be understood. The former is the fruit of the latter. The Lord freely offers pardon for the sins which the individual commits, but no amount of forgiveness will solve the problem of the old man. The only solution which has any possibility of success calls for the eradication of the old man, and his replacement by the new. To achieve this, the needy soul must understand the problem, he must know and believe what the Lord has promised to do in order to solve it, and must be aware of what he in turn must do to experience the divine provisions.

The problem, as already noted, is the indwelling presence of the old man.

God has promised and is very eager to eradicate this

problem through the exercise of His divine power. Once this has been accomplished—and it is the work of only an instant—He will implant in the heart the divine seed of Christ.

For his part, the believer must come confessing the real cause of his problem which is not the actual deeds of sin, but the presence in him of an overruling power—the old man, the offspring of Satan, the sin master. He must then give this problem to the Lord, believing that He removes it and replaces it with His own divine life. Then he can rejoice in sonship with God and in fellowship with His children.

Only those who ask in faith will ever receive pardon for their sins. Likewise, only those who specifically request deliverance from the old man, will obtain the gift. Unfortunately, most people have their attention so fixed on the obvious sins of the flesh that they overlook the hidden evil within which is the real cause of their problems. This is exactly as Satan wants it, for he knows that the effort to clean up this and that sin will never make a man righteous. Only when the root of the problem has been removed will the victory be gained.

Naturally, the old man will never voluntarily vacate his position. He must be dispossessed. It is a simple fact that no reigning power in which there is no disposition to abdicate, can be dethroned by any power weaker than itself. What, then, is the almighty power by which this eradication can be accomplished? It is certainly not human power. A whole lifetime of servitude to the sin master is proof that you are not the greater power by which evil can be dismissed from its position of authority. Deliverance must be accomplished by a power wholly outside the human agent. You cannot do it and there is no use in trying. Victory comes, not by trying, but by dying.

There is only one power in existence that is stronger than the power of sin, and it is infinitely mightier. That is the power of God, available to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ; the omnipotent power of God to save from sin. When that enters the life, it is so much stronger than sin that the latter has no capacity to resist and remain. It must yield and depart.

Most people are hesitant to come to God to receive deliverance from sin, because they feel that He is reluctant to bless them in this way, but the real fact is that God desires intensely to bring this gift of life to them. He is disappointed when they keep Him waiting. All should put away their hesitancy and come eagerly and immediately to Him. With what joy the Father's heart would then be filled. While the Lord may delay the answers to some prayers, He always gives instant response to the true plea for deliverance from the indwelling presence of the sin master.

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification." *1 Thesalonians* 4:3.

"In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but *not so* when we ask for *deliverance from sin*. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life." *The Desire of Ages*, 266.

Thus it is written that the Lord promises to immediately do what He has the power and the willingness to do. Our part is to absolutely believe the promises just as they read and to avail ourselves of the blessing offered.

The Lord is so anxious that we understand these principles and come to Him to be saved, that He has revealed the way through various illustrations; one of which is marriage. This is set forth in *Romans* 7:1-3.

"Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

"For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

"So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."

In these verses it is made plain that there are two husbands; the second of whom is He who is raised from the dead, which is Christ, the resurrected One. If He is the second, Satan must be the first. The offspring of the new husband is called in Scripture, "the new man", while the child of the first husband is called "the old man".

If there is one point above all others that is stressed in these verses, it is that no one can have two husbands and their offspring at the same time. Not until the first husband has been removed, can there be a marriage with the second.

The suppliant seeking salvation is not in the position of a single person who has only to respond to the wooing of Christ and enter into a marriage relationship with Him. Instead, he stands in the position of a person already married, and this means that, if another union is to be formed, *there must first be the dissolution of the existing marriage.*

There are preachers today who recognize the evil nature of the old husband. They correctly describe his iniquity, cruelty, uncleanness, and various other evil characteristics. They point out that his children—hatred, pride, malice, bitterness, and so forth—are to have no place in the Christian experience. They then direct the attention to the beauty, power, righteousness, perfection, and holiness of the divine Husband, Jesus Christ, and urge their hearers to invite Christ into their hearts. They assure their listening congregation that the Saviour is well able to take command of the situation and prevent the manifestation of the evils within, but they make no mention of the necessity of firstly being delivered from the old marriage. On the contrary, they affirm that the evil presence of the old man must remain with us till the resurrection morning. One writer described this kind of life in a book entitled, *Living with a Tiger.*

Those who follow this advice wonder why they do not experience the promised deliverance, although the reason

should be plain enough. Christ is righteous and honourable. Therefore, He cannot possibly enter into an adulterous relationship. He can occupy the position left empty by the departed husband, but He cannot share it with an abiding one. Furthermore, He will not adopt the devil's children and, by using His omnipotent power, bring them into subjection. God is not interested in a forced obedience. He knows that hatred under control is not love, just as a caged wolf is not a lamb.

Those who omit the death of the old man and who affirm that we have to live with his nature in us till Christ's return, are preaching spiritual adultery and are aptly named the ministers of unrighteousness. Their end shall be according to their works, when they face the fearful retribution coming upon those who have led souls to perdition.

It is because Satan is an unlawful husband and a condemned murderer that Christ has the right to dispossess him of his position as husband of our humanity and father of our evil inner natures. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus won the battle over the enemy so that now He has the perfect right to claim us as His own.

Christians are not to look upon Satan as a foe to be conquered, but as one who has already been vanquished. The victory gained by the almighty Saviour is to be accepted by the believer as a *gift*. Paul understood this when he wrote, "But thanks be to God, who *gives* us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". *1 Corinthians* 15:57.

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

Therefore no Christian ever goes out to get the victory over Satan. If he does, he will never find it, but will suffer miserable defeat. The true Christian firstly obtains the victory and then he goes out to meet a foe already conquered. While he lives in that wonderful gift, he cannot possibly be overthrown.

To operate at this victorious and therefore successful level, is to live by faith and faith alone, as it is written: "But the just shall live by his faith." *Habakkuk* 2:4; *Romans* 1:17; *Galatians* 3:11; *Hebrews* 10:38.

It is worthy of note that the gospel is not the power of God to *everyone*, but to everyone "*who believes*". See *Romans* 1:16. To those who do not believe, it is only a theory, an argument, or a dogma in which there is no saving power whatsoever. Therefore, all who would find salvation must know how to believe and how to exercise that faith.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." *Hebrews* 11:6.

Living, effective faith must be possessed and exercised by everyone who would gain a place in Paradise, but the question is, How does one obtain this kind of faith? It is certainly not something which is natural to the human heart, for it has to be obtained, cultivated, and strengthened. Many of those who came to Jesus to receive the touch of His healing power went away unhelped because they possessed no real faith in Him. Others who came with little faith, such as the man from Capernaum whose son was about to die, caught such a vision of the power in Christ that faith sprang up and they were able to lay hold upon the promised blessing.

There is only one way in which faith can come, and that is through the Word of God. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." *Romans* 10:17.

True faith is not a feeling, nor is it based on feeling. It is built upon the unchangeable word of God. Therefore, the very first step in building faith is to become acquainted with the wonderful promises of God. These must be found, studied, and made to be a living part of the individual's experience. Time must be spent with each one of the divine declarations until they have been absorbed into the very being, and the believer becomes aware of the almighty power in them.

All must be careful not to build their faith merely on the testimony of others, for this is not the basis of living experience. I was once approached by a person who argued that the promises of God were wonderful, but they were just too good to be true. He was willing to believe them however, provided that I could produce one person who was living a

perfect life—one person in whom these promises were being fulfilled. Like the Pharisees of old who asked Jesus to show them a sign as a basis for their acceptance of Him, so this individual was doing the same. Had Christ provided the requested sign back there, they would not have believed, and neither would this young man.

It was pointed out to him that his faith did not depend upon the success of others in applying the promises of God. If he was the only person on earth who believed God's word, He would be saved by the power of the Almighty in that word. On the other hand, if he had to wait till someone else proved the promises before he could believe in and be blessed by them, then he would die waiting if no one else could be found.

The way in which faith is to be obtained and exercised, is illustrated in the Scriptures through the ministry of Christ. There is no better example of this than the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. This story is recorded in *John* 5:1-9.

In Jerusalem was a pool about which a legend had been built over the years. Simple folk believed the lie that whenever the pool was disturbed, the first sick person to plunge into the water would be healed of any disease afflicting him. Of course, no really sick person ever was the first into the pool, for those who were suffering only imagined ills, were always ahead of everyone else. Obviously, the idea never found its source with God, for it is not His way to bestow His healing power on the fittest and least needy, to the detriment of all the rest. Furthermore, it is faith in His power which brings restoration, not some physical feat whereby one can outdistance all others.

At this pool lay an impotent man who had been diseased for thirty-eight years. With the help of well-meaning friends, he had repeatedly attempted to obtain healing by being the first into the water, but someone else had always beaten him to it.

This man's physical condition is an exact replica of the sinner's spiritual condition. The man had a body which God

had designed to carry out the functions of normal, everyday living, and, in his mind, this is just what he desired to do. He did not want to lie there helpless and useless day after day. He desired to work, to build, to plant and reap, and do whatever else life offered him, but he could not do any of these things, for within him dwelt a master which ruled over his body against the desires of his mind.

So it is with the person in whom dwells the old man—the sin master. We all have body instruments designed to work the works of righteousness, and, in our minds, that is just what we desire to do. We want to be loving, kind, merciful, peaceful, and holy, but, despite our best intentions, we find ourselves doing the very things we do not want to do. When we read *Romans* 7:14-25, we find ourselves reading an exact description of our experience. The things we want to do we cannot do, while the very things we abhor, are those that we continue to do day after day. The problem lies in the fact that we are as dominated by the sin master in us, as the impotent man was ruled by the disease within him.

Year after year this man had tried to obtain deliverance through a certain procedure; namely, by plunging into the pool, but it had never worked. He was even sicker and weaker after thirty-eight years than he had been at the beginning of that period. Finally, the time came when he abandoned all hope of being saved by these procedures.

In like manner, people seek for many years to obtain deliverance by striving hard to do what the law requires. Instead of bringing their old natures to the Lord to be removed and replaced, they try to control and discipline the evil within them. Eventually, they lose all confidence in obtaining victory through the wrong way. It is then, when all self-sufficiency has been removed, that the Saviour can come to them and offer His way of deliverance.

It was when the man at Bethesda had lost all confidence in the supposed system of deliverance he had tried for so long, that the Saviour came to him—not before! Arriving in his presence, the Healer asked him if he would like to be made whole. The man supposed that Christ was offering to

carry him down into the water the next time it was troubled and he hastened to assure the Master that there was no point in doing this because he was fully persuaded that the effort would be futile. This was the very confession that Jesus desired to hear and, upon hearing it, He promptly directed the man to take up his bed and walk.

The sick man had not used his limbs for many years and he could very easily have greeted Christ's words with scorn. He could have rejected them as impossible, as so many do when they read the simple command, "Awake to righteousness, and *sin not*." Then again he might have responded as follows:

"Ah! Lord! I have heard about you! You are the mighty Healer! You give sight to the blind, life to the dead, health to lepers, and strength to those who are maimed and crippled as I am. I know that you have the power to heal me and that you will do so. In happy anticipation, I am waiting here until I can feel the surge of your healing power throughout my body and then I will gladly obey your command."

But the Saviour had not said to the man, "I am going to heal you. Soon you will feel life and strength flowing into your body, and, when you do, stand upon your feet and walk."

These were not His instructions. He simply said to the sick man, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." It was not for the man to question whether or not it could be done, for that was not his responsibility. All God's biddings are His enablings, and He never calls upon anyone to do the impossible. As surely as Christ bade that man rise up and walk, so certainly did He guarantee the power to do it. Likewise, when He calls upon us to sin no more, in that very command is the assurance that it can be done.

It was fortunate for the impotent man that he believed Christ's words and acted upon them without question. The instant he directed his wasted muscles to support his weight, God sent a stream of healing power through his body and he was made whole. He sprang to his feet. The disease was banished from his system, and vitality, health, and strength

took its place. He then walked by *the power that was now in him*.

"In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ." *Steps to Christ*, 51.

Everyone knows that human beings cannot atone for their past sins, nor can they make themselves into holy beings, although some people try very hard to do that. The class who do, are those who feel that they cannot come to God unless they firstly make themselves presentable. Mostly however, people simply dismiss as impossible, the idea of anyone on this earth being holy. But, the Lord *promises* to make you holy. If that is so, then you *must believe it*. As surely as you do, you have taken a mighty step toward achieving it.

"You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You *will* to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill 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.

"Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, 'I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.' " *ibid*.

When making the confession called for above, it is vital that the needy one does not limit himself to confessing only what he has done. For more importantly, he must confess what he is. One does not get deliverance from hatred, pride, and evil temper, item by item. These are manifestations of the old man, and it is only when he is taken away, that they go with him.

Setting the will to obey God requires that the believer steps out to fulfil His commands without any concern about the possibility of accomplishing them. If the Lord directs him to do it, then he proceeds, leaving the problem of accomplishment entirely with the Almighty. When the believer

learns to walk by faith in this way, he is assured of continual victory.

Some object to these beautiful and saving truths on the grounds that this would make a person so self-sufficient that he would no longer need the Saviour. This argument is as foolish as contending that once a woman married, she would no longer need her husband. The dependence of the Christian on Christ is just as complete once he has been delivered from the sin master, as it was in his being set free.

Without Christ, man can do nothing. Day by day, a living connection must be maintained with Him, for without unbroken infusions of strength and power every day, the soul will faint and die.

At the point where the old man is eradicated and a new man takes his place, full Christian maturity has not been reached, for the believer is but a new born babe in the message and he has much growing yet to do. He has entered both the family and the school of Christ.

As a member of the family, he is provided with all that is needed to nourish and sustain the new life, although it remains his responsibility to feed upon the nourishment that Christ makes available. Every day should begin with a period of close communion with the heavenly powers so that the life will be charged with vitality, clearness of perception to discern the enemy's temptations, and strength to resist them.

As a student in Christ's school, the process of unlearning the deceits of Satan and of learning the mind of Christ begins. This work is not accomplished in a moment. It requires the remainder of our lives to accomplish. Many will be the struggles as old ideas and theories strive for the mastery, but if the student learns to distrust what he has learned in the past and to open his heart to the sweet influences of the heavenly teachers, he will make much more decided progress in the Christian life.

Satan, of course, does not give us up. While he has lost us to Christ, he will contest every step of the way, working very hard to introduce doubt into the mind. If he can cause us to question God's utterly reliable promises, then he will

certainly cause us to fall back into sin once more. If this should happen, all is not lost. The Lord is quick to forgive and cleanse in response to the prayer of faith. He will treat the incident not as a basis for condemnation, but as a lesson containing instruction by which the temptation can be successfully met the next time Satan brings it against us.

While there is far more that could be said on this wonderful subject, enough has been discussed here to demonstrate that the Lord has made abundant provision for every one who will, to *awake to righteousness, and sin not*. It is time to shake off the lethargy and unbelief which prevents so many from living the life God has planned for the free. "No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has either seen Him or known Him." *1 John 3:6. R.S.V.* "When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of *continual obedience*." *The Desire of Ages*, 668.

In the day of final reckoning, many who thought they knew God and considered themselves to be His true children, will be bitterly and eternally disappointed, as it is written: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'"

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness.' " *Matthew 7:22, 23.*

To do God's will is to cease from sin. God's power and provisions are so ample that there is no excuse for sin. "A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God." *The Desire of Ages*, 311.

Soon, and none know how soon, the final judgment shall sit to try every man's works to see if they are truly righteous or not. When that time comes, the opportunity to avail one's self of the divinely formulated remedy will be gone, never to return. Therefore, today, before it is forever too late, dear professed child of the Righteous God,

AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SIN NOT.

The vast majority simply accept sin as an incurable affliction, and inescapable the misery which it produces. The Jews in Christ's day held the same views about disease, but the Saviour demonstrated that there is no power, be it the might of physical or spiritual disease, which can withstand His saving grace.

AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS boldly demonstrates that that which so many accept as the best that the Lord can and will do for them is far less than the Lord has in mind. His command is to sin not, and, inasmuch as all His biddings are enablings, He is inviting souls to avail themselves of the almighty provisions which He has prepared for the lost and the erring.

AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS offers new hope and recovered confidence in God's saving power and indicates that the old life of continual defeat can be replaced by one of consistent victory.

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