

From Bondage to Freedom

The Dawn of a New Day

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Preface

This publication is a matured version of one which was transcribed from a tape-recorded study given by the author in 1965 in Australia. So blessed were the hearers that they pressed for the study to be produced in printed form. It was finally agreed that an interim printing should be made directly from the tape-recording with some editing to improve it. This was done and appeared under the title *From Bondage to Deliverance*.

Approximately ten years later the author undertook the work of writing a thorough revision of the original manuscript. Since then a great deal of experience had been obtained in the presentation of the subject, and life after life had witnessed to the certainty of the victory to be gained by all those who will faithfully apply these principles. Perhaps the reader will gain the impression that this experience of deliverance is only for active church members, but in fact it is possible for every person no matter what their background may be. This new, extended version was published with a slightly revised title, *From Bondage to Freedom*.

As the stock has been exhausted, but not the demand, it has become necessary to publish a new edition. This new version has been slightly revised in harmony with the increased understanding of this message.

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Introduction

Every publication is produced for a certain purpose. The purpose of this booklet is to show how to gain the victory over the besetting problems which so persistently mar the life experience of people today.

Its aim is not to tell you what your character should be. There is little need for that. Most people already know what they want to be and are striving to reach that objective. For those who are members of a church with high ideals and standards, the realization of what our characters should be is even clearer. Not only is this realization clearer, the demand upon the person to achieve that ideal is also more pressing.

The problem is: How can I reach the standard I know to be right? How can I achieve that which I desire above all else? That is the question which countless thousands of people today are earnestly asking.

If these are the questions you are asking, then this booklet is for you. It is not an armchair theory of one who has merely speculated about a way to victory. Rather, it is a presentation of the way of deliverance from the bondage of sin by one who, after seeking with intense earnestness to

reach the highest ideals of Christian living, finally found it. Not only is this a tried and proven procedure, but it is also the Scriptural procedure. Furthermore, it has proved as effective in the experience of other struggling souls, as it did for the author.

It is our most earnest prayer that it will do for you what it has done for us.

The publishers

Part 1

The Problem

Today the whole world is faced with terrible problems and people everywhere are intensely searching for solutions. But the source of all problems, whether they be environmental, crime, terrorism, economical, etc., is to be found in man. And there is only one place where man can find a satisfying, lasting solution to all these problems, and that is in the Word of the Living God. The reason for this is, as Peter and John declared of Jesus Christ: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." *Acts* 4:12.

Therefore, it is not to the psychologist, or the doctor, or the scientist, or the sociologist, or any such to whom we can go for the solution to these problems. There is but the one place which reveals the saving power of Jesus Christ, and that is the Word of God. It is only here that we can learn how this saving power can become ours personally and effectively.

In that Word we have the thrilling witness of Paul who knew for himself its saving power, and knowing it he declared, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ." *Romans* 1:16.

There was a very good reason as to why he was not ashamed of the gospel, a reason which he was quick to give: "For it is the power of God." *Romans 1:16*.

Think of all that Paul might have declared that gospel to be. He might have called it a theory, an argument, good news, or such like. But he used none of these definitions. The gospel, he proclaimed, "is the power of God." To Paul it was power, but not just any power. It was the power of God.

It is essential that right at the outset we understand what the gospel really is. We would do well to ponder the might and majesty of that power. It was by the power of God that the heavens and the earth were created. The many astronomical facts and figures in regard to the immensity of space give us a glimpse of the tremendous power of God.

The power which God exercised in creating the world is the same power now devoted to our salvation through the gospel. For, as Paul continues, "It is the power of God unto salvation." *Romans 1:16*. This text does not specify what the gospel is to save us from, but other scriptures make this point clear. For example, in speaking of Mary the angel of the Lord foretold, "She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." *Matthew 1:21*.

When we compare these scriptures we see that the purpose of the gospel is to save us from sin. Many people are unconcerned about the sin problem. They live according to their desires and the Lord gives them the perfect freedom to do so. But the fact remains that they are still sinners.

By contrast, there are those who are striving to conform to the divine pattern. When they lay hold on the power of the gospel by living faith, they will be so changed in themselves that love, patience, and purity will become their natural condition. They will experience in themselves the working of God's mighty power, and they will know that there is no power in earth or hell which can compel them to sin. They know that they do not need to sin at all. They can live a life of perfect victory over every known sin by clinging to the saving power of the Almighty.

Although the gospel is for everyone, it is not the power of God to everyone.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” *Romans* 1:16.

It is only for the believer that the gospel is the power of God to salvation from sin. To all others, it is but a theory, a story, a doctrine, or such like. For the believer alone is it the power of God.

In the next verse Paul proceeds to tell us the result of the power of that gospel, “For in it the

righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." *Romans* 1:17.

Within the gospel the righteousness of God Himself is revealed. What does the word "revealed" mean in this context?

It means that the righteousness of God is made visible so that it can be plainly seen. But where is the gospel of Christ revealed? It is revealed in the lives of those who have experienced it. And it is revealed in the life of Christ Himself, where it was the power of God that saved Him from sinning every day of His life on this earth. In His life, the righteousness of God has been revealed for all to see.

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." *1 Peter* 2:21. Just as the righteousness of God was revealed in the life of Christ through the power of the gospel, so it is to be revealed in the lives of His followers today.

As we look upon that Life and see the continual outflowing of love, mercy, grace, patience, and every other Christian virtue, we naturally long to copy the ideal. But a life of defeat and frustration in the past often discourages the thought that this could ever be possible. However, our faith needs to grasp the mighty truth that the gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation from sin, so that the righteousness of God may be revealed

in our lives. Then we will have the wonderful prospect of overcoming every sin through the power of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

This, then, is the gospel. It is the power which Jesus uses to fulfill His pledge to take a person just as they are—corrupt, polluted, undone; full of mischief, evil surmising, hatred, and all the fruits of the evil nature—, expel the sinfulness; and then fill the void with love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, patience, and all the fruits of the Spirit, so that the righteousness of God is revealed in the life.

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” *Ezekiel* 36:26. This is the gospel, and nothing else but that can ever be truthfully called the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But is this the experience of most Christians today? Is this your experience?

Ask yourself honestly, “Do I commit sin every day?”

If your answer is “Yes” then what do you do about it?

Do you confess it and ask the Lord to forgive you?

Now, what happens after this? Does that sin become a thing of the past, or is it still there? In other words, do you find that you commit the same sin again and again?

You may be surprised at such a question, for many Christians have the idea that since we are merely human, we have to struggle against the same sins as long as we live. In fact, it is generally accepted that we commit the same sins again and again, and therefore we need to confess them again and again. But can such an experience be called deliverance from sin? The answer is obviously No! This is an experience of sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing. But it is not deliverance.

Think back over your own experience and the chief besetting sin in your life. Think of how you have committed it, felt the remorse of guilt, sought the Lord for pardon, earnestly pled for His help to save you from repeating it, faithfully promised that you would never do it anymore, and then found that you did do it, in spite of your promises, again and again and again. Is it not true with you, as with many others, that the same sin which was your major problem ten years ago is still with you?

If in all honesty you can recognize that this is so, then you have taken one of the first steps towards deliverance. It is not the will of the Lord that we should be caught in the cycle of repeating the same sin over and over again. And it will not be so in the life of any believer who experiences the gospel as the power of God unto salvation.

The various churches of today hold different doctrinal beliefs, and each one claims that

theirs is right. But no matter how correct any doctrine may be, if we do not understand and experience the saving power of the gospel, we are just as lost as if we had never believed anything at all. It is not a theory of religion, a creed, a system, or a particular church, that brings salvation, but the truth applied to our own heart. Anything less than this will not help us. Therefore, we must know what the gospel of Jesus Christ can do in our lives, and then make sure that we apply it.

Only those who have a personal victory over sin, who know for themselves what it means to be saved from their sins, and who see real growth in their lives, have the gospel of Christ. And it is only when we have experienced the gospel that we can preach it. Otherwise our words will be like sounding brass or a clanging cymbal (see *1 Corinthians* 13:1).

The important point to realize at this stage is that the work of salvation involves our intelligent co-operation. There is a work which only God can do, and there is a work which we must do. God knows what His part is, and He is ready and willing to do it at all times and in all places. But He cannot do His part unless we do ours.

That we have a part to play is confirmed by the following words of Christ, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." *John* 8:32.

The very purpose of this booklet is to make plain the truth which we are to know, and which will set us free. And we want to present this way from bondage to freedom as plainly and simply as we can.

What is Sin?

In our search to understand God's solution to our need, the first question which must be asked is, "What is sin?" The question is not "What are sins?" but "What is sin?" We know that sins include murder, lies, theft, and so on, but do we know what sin actually is? We need to know the answer to this, because it is only as we understand the problem correctly that we will look for a suitable solution.

Many Christians are confident that they know the answer to this question. When asked, they quickly reply, "Sin is the transgression of the law." *1 John 3:4 (KJV)*.

This Scriptural answer is of course correct. But we need to understand all that the text is actually saying, and not just our limited concept of it. The word "transgression" usually conveys the thought of action. In other words, the common understanding of this verse is that sin is a wrong act. Whoever commits a wrong act is considered to be guilty before God, and therefore in need of the divine remedy, which is pardon. This is shown in the following diagram.



We must know that an action is sinful before we will feel a sense of guilt. And it is only as we are aware of our guilt that we will seek for pardon. Therefore, it is crucial that we know what sin is, in order to obtain the divine remedy for it.

But the answer given so far does not have sufficient depth to guarantee salvation from sin. It is true that sin is what we do. But it is also much more than that. What we do is but the tip of the iceberg. What we do is the fruit of what we are. It is essential that we gain this deeper understanding of what sin is, before we can be set free from its power.

In one discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus set before them a clear definition of what sin is. He said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." These men revealed their ignorance of the basic principles of the sin problem by replying, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?" In His reply, Christ pointed to the heart of the problem,

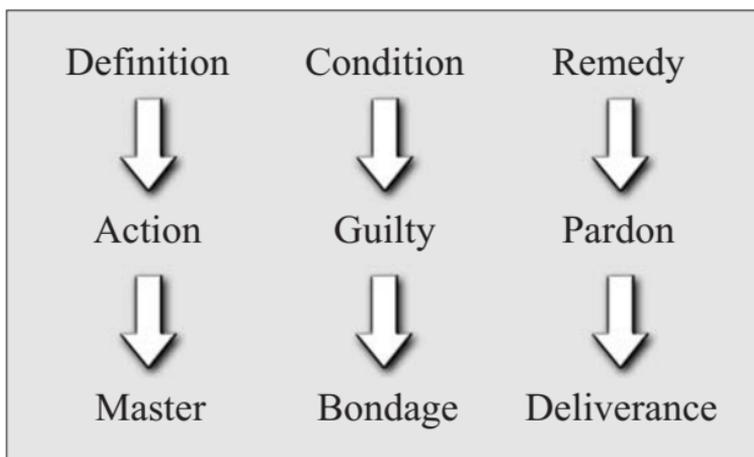
and His words give us a deeper understanding of what sin is: “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. See *John* 8:32–34.

Sin is a Master

Here sin is identified as being more than just an action—it is a slave master. For if the sinner is the slave of sin, then sin must be the master of the sinner. To be such a master, sin must be a power, for no one can rule as a master without the power to do so, especially when the subjects are unwilling to render their service. Sin compels its subjects to obey, and therefore we can think of it as being a slave master.

So our definition of sin must now be extended to the following: Sin is a master who rules us against our will. In other words, we are in the condition of bondage. For this problem, pardon, or forgiveness, in the sense in which this word is generally understood, is not enough. What we need now is deliverance, as the following diagram illustrates.

As with pardon, so with deliverance—we never receive it unless we ask for it. But, we will never ask if we do not realize that we are in fact in bondage. And neither will we realize that we are in bondage unless we understand the nature of sin as a slave master over us. Therefore, it is clear that the very first step to deliverance from sin is to obtain a complete picture of what sin is.



Unfortunately, the understanding of many people stops at the level of: Action—Guilt—Pardon. This, in turn, means that the axe is never laid at the root of the tree. (See *Matthew* 3:10.) The slave master is not eradicated and a profession of religion—an external conformity to the demands of religion—passes as the genuine thing.

The slave master is given a number of names in the Bible. In *Romans* 8:7 it is called “the carnal mind”; in *Romans* 6:6 it is called “our old man”; in *Ezekiel* 11:19 it is called “the stony heart.” It is also symbolized by leprosy.

The Law Comes In

But nowhere is the working of the sin master better portrayed than in *Romans* 7. We will begin in verse 9, where we read, “I was alive once

without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” Paul here refers to a particular time when the law entered his life. Speaking of the time before he understood that the commandments extend to the thoughts and intents of the heart he says, “I was alive once without the law.” In other words, he was a willing sinner. This is our condition before we come to know God’s law. We are quite willing and happy to be sinners, even though we probably do not think of ourselves as such. Our condition does not worry us.

But there comes the time when the law enters our experience. It brings a knowledge of God’s righteous claims upon our life and behavior, and it is this experience that constitutes the very first step towards Christ. The law may come to us through the reading of the Word, through a preacher, or in some other way, but come it must if we are ever to find Christ as a Saviour from sin.

A knowledge of the law of God leads us further—to a knowledge of what we are before God. This is conviction of sin. It is the second essential step towards Christ.

Conviction, in turn, leads to repentance, provided that we do not stifle it by resisting the work of the Spirit on our hearts. This can happen, for it is not a pleasant experience to see ourselves as God sees us. The natural tendency of our human nature is to reject such a revelation as unwelcome. A case in point is found in the story of Felix and

Drusilla as recorded in *Acts* 24:24–27. “Now as he [Paul] reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’” Verse 25

The fact that Felix trembled is clear evidence that he was under deep conviction. This would have led him to repentance had he not dismissed the unwelcome revelations of himself. But he sent the apostle Paul away at the very time when he needed more of that ministry to lead him on, step by step, to the Master. So we too need to take great care that we do not reject the true picture of what we are when the Lord shows it to us through whichever instrument He chooses. If we accept it, He will give us the spirit of repentance when we ask for it.

Repentance

What is repentance? Repentance means more than many people realize. It is not only sorrowing for sin, but turning away from it in heart. It is not enough to lament the suffering that sin brings—the consequences of our sin. Judas and Balaam did just that, and failed to experience true repentance. We need to go further than that. We must see how sin separates us from God and what it means to appear before Him in such a condition. Just as we hate filth because it is filth, so

we are to learn to hate sin because it is sin. To do this will mean that we will also love righteousness because it is righteousness.

However, it is not natural for us to hate sin and love righteousness, nor can we generate it ourselves. Therefore God, through His goodness, grants us repentance as a gift. The Scriptures declare this truth in the following words: "Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." *Acts* 5:31. See also *Romans* 2:4.

Once repentance has been received as a gift from God, by the working of the Holy Spirit through His Word, it will be followed by confession of sin.

These, then, are the first four steps to Christ: knowledge, conviction, repentance, and confession. We may think we have experienced this process and assume that we are right with God. But have we been freed of the sin problem? If it still remains, it is because there is an underlying cause that has not yet been dealt with. Only a true experience in the first four steps will be accompanied by deliverance from sin.

A Knowledge of the Truth

Let us examine our experience when we first came to a knowledge of God's truth. No doubt the truth appeared beautiful and consistent, but it should also have brought conviction. In the light of

God's goodness our past life is seen as being filled with selfishness and sin. This conviction is designed to work deep repentance in us, so that we desire nothing more than to be rid of our sin. Like the Israelites of old who said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient," (see *Exodus 24:7*), we determine to turn away from sin, and obey the commandments of God.

Then there is a period of success, as far as outward behavior is concerned. Great victories may even be gained over those attractions of the world which previously held us. But somehow, the inner problems such as impatience, bad temper, and so on, remain. They rise up to defeat us. Then we bow under deep conviction of continued sin. We confess the sins and determine that from now on it will be different—but it is not. The same troubles appear again and again. Our experience is one of trying and failing, confessing and trying and failing again.

Paul's Experience

This is precisely the picture which the apostle Paul testifies to in *Romans 7:15–24*. "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me

(that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

In these words, Paul gives us a very apt description of the experience of many professed children of God. And such a person may be heard to say, "That is the exact picture of my experience. Paul was writing about me when he wrote those words."

As we examine this text, we can see that Paul did experience all those first four steps. He repeatedly admits that he comes short of what the law requires, which shows that he knew the law and his own condition in relation to it. Earlier in the chapter he directly testified to it in these words, "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good." *Romans* 7:12.

Again, he says, "For we know that the law is spiritual." Verse 14. We have already noted that a knowledge of the law leads to a knowledge of ourselves. So immediately after saying, "For we know

that the law is spiritual,” Paul confesses, “but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Obviously, Paul also had the gift of repentance at this stage for he hated sin, as he himself says, “But what I hate, that I do.” Verse 15. Furthermore, his repentance is accompanied by confession of sin. In fact the whole of this passage is a confession.

So we can see then, that at this stage in his quest for salvation Paul has indeed experienced these first four steps to Christ: knowledge, conviction, repentance, and confession. But at the same time, it is evident that he does not have deliverance from sin.

It is critical that we see this point, for if we think we have taken these steps and are therefore safe, we are in great danger of never receiving true deliverance from sin. But Paul’s experience, as described in *Romans* seven, clearly shows us that it is possible to have taken these steps, at least to some degree, and still be a slave to sin—still in need of deliverance from the power of the sin master who rules us against our wills. It is this bondage that condemns us to the experience of sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting over the same besetting sins day after day, year after year. It is the life of slavery to sin, even though we may know better and desire with all our heart to do better.

When we first come to a knowledge of the truth of God, and experience conviction of sin,

then repent of it, and confess it, we tend to believe that we have found salvation. Paul's testimony in *Romans* seven appears to us to confirm that this is so. And yet, we may still be in slavery to our old sinful nature.

Naturally, from Paul's testimony of his experience in *Romans* seven, we could draw the conclusion that he has found salvation. We could reason as follows: Paul was a great man of God. He understood the gospel and the plan of salvation. He will be in the kingdom, yet he testified that he was carnal, sold under sin, and a slave to it. He did not do what he knew to be right, but found himself doing the very things he knew to be wrong. If this was Paul's experience then we must expect that our Christian experience will be the same as he described in *Romans* seven. In other words, the experience of the man of *Romans* seven is the experience of the born again child of God.

But the crucial question we need to ask is this: was Paul describing his experience as it was after he became a Christian, or was he relating what he experienced before he became a victorious Christian?

The Man of Romans Seven

To illustrate this point, I will relate an experience I once had. I had been invited to speak about

the way of deliverance to a man who held a high position in a church office. He was the manager of a religious institution, well-versed in the doctrines of that church, and obviously kept the law as far as outward requirements were concerned. For years he had been standing in the pulpit preaching to the people. Yet when I read to him the words of Paul in *Romans* seven, he said to me, "That is the exact picture of my experience ever since I gave myself to the Lord. I was born with the curse of a bad temper and I still have that problem. I lose my temper. Then I feel the conviction of the sin. I confess it and determine that it will never happen again. But when the temptation comes I lose it again and again and again. I can certainly feel for Paul in this chapter."

This man was as frank and open as Paul in *Romans*. Without judging him, it is proper to ask, Has he experienced deliverance from sin, as promised in God's word?

Before attempting to answer this question we should be sure that we understand just what this man's experience actually is: He knows the law of God and is keeping it as best as he can. He is faithful in church attendance every week and holds a high office in the church. He makes regular contributions. He actively engages in the missionary projects for his church and is highly respected by the community. But he has

to testify that he is yet the slave of his own inner nature and cannot do the things which he knows in his heart he should be doing and ardently strives to do.

This is indeed the man of *Romans* seven. It is not the willing sinner in the world who has but little care for the things of God and eternity. We know that the man of the world, while he remains such, cannot be saved, but what of the man in *Romans* seven? This is the question, and it is vital to our eternal welfare that we know the correct answer to it.

There are however, two other factors which could strongly influence us to say that this is the experience of a true child of God. Firstly, there is the witness of our own lives, which is in harmony with the description in *Romans* seven. When we think of all the sacrifices we have made for the truth we may be very reluctant to admit that it has all been for nothing.

Then, again, we think of those loved ones who have died and whom we know to have been in the *Romans* seven experience. We cherish the hope of seeing them again in heaven. But if the man of *Romans* seven is not a child of God, then we fear that we will never see them again.

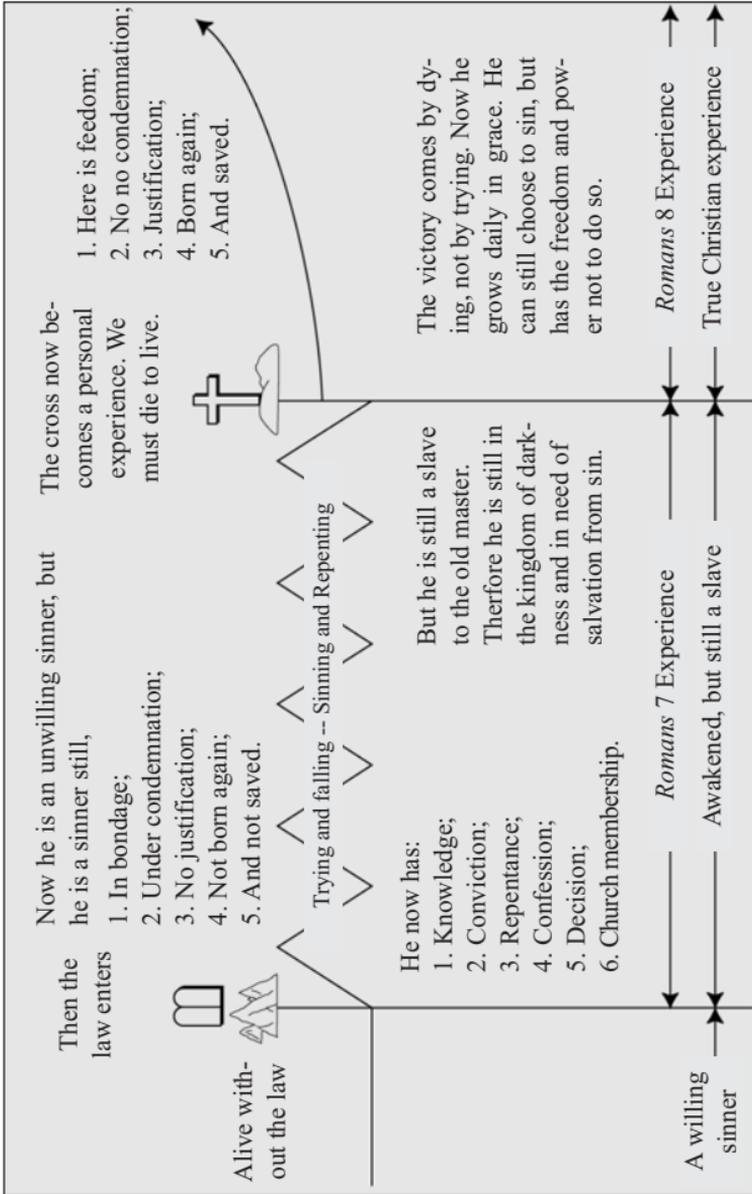
With these personal influences at work on our minds, we should be aware that neither our hopes nor our fears will change the facts of the matter in the slightest.

So the question remains before us in all its vital importance: Does the experience recorded in *Romans* seven express the experience of a true child of God or not?

There are three possible replies to this question. There are those who say at once that he is saved. Then there are those who are not certain. And finally, there are others who say that this man is certainly not saved.

It is therefore obvious that there are differences of opinion as to whether the man of *Romans* seven represents the experience of those who are saved or those who are lost. But it is equally obvious that we must know the truth on this question. If we believe that the man of *Romans* seven is enjoying a true Christian experience, we shall certainly seek for nothing more. But if, on the other hand, he is not, then we must seek for God's solution to this problem. The issue is too important for us to remain unsure, for we do not want to pass through life leaning on a false hope and imagining that we are on the right path when in fact we are not.

We need to beware of human interpretations and opinions in answering this question. The only authority on this subject is the Word of God. When we find the answer there, we need to believe it simply because it is the Word of God, given to us for our salvation.



Three Witnesses

As we read Paul's words, we can see that the man in *Romans* seven is in bondage. He knows what he should do, but he finds it impossible to do it. He is definitely not a willing sinner, but he is a sinner still. He is serving the power of sin and is, therefore, in the service of Satan.

If he is serving Satan, then he cannot be serving God, for, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." *Matthew* 6:24.

If the man of *Romans* seven is not serving God, how can he be a child of God? He simply cannot. And if he is not a child of God, then how can he have salvation? Again the answer is that he cannot. Therefore, on the basis of this evidence, it is clear that the man of *Romans* seven does not have salvation.

This is one witness that the man of *Romans* seven does not have salvation. It is clear and convincing, but it is not enough, for it is the rule of the Scriptures that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." *Matthew* 18:16. Therefore, we shall seek for further Bible witnesses.

In the closing verses of *Romans* seven, Paul comes to the end of his description of being in

slavery to sin's power. In hopeless despair he then cries out, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Verse 24.

It is proper to ask a question at this point, which was both well expressed and answered by Dr. E. J. Waggoner in his book, *Christ and His Righteousness*, 86, 87. "Is a true Christian experiencing a body of death so terrible that the soul is constrained to cry for deliverance?—Nay, verily.

"... Does Christ deliver from a true Christian experience?—No, indeed. Then the bondage of sin, of which the apostle complains in the seventh of *Romans*, is not the experience of a child of God, but of the servant of sin. It is to deliver men from this captivity that Christ came; not to deliver us, during this life, from warfare and struggles, but from defeat; to enable us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, so that we could give thanks unto the Father 'who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son,' through whose blood we have redemption."

The point that E. J. Waggoner so clearly makes here is that Christ would never deliver us from a true Christian experience. Yet here is Paul, asking to be delivered from the experience of *Romans* seven. This is the second witness that *Romans* seven is not the experience of a true child of God.

But Paul's cry for deliverance is made in faith. He knows that there is salvation in God

alone, and that the gospel is the power of God to save from sin. Therefore, in response to his question, "Who will deliver me?" he is able to say, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" *Romans* 7:25. He pauses only long enough to sum up the experience of *Romans* seven by adding the words, "So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." He knows what is right, and in his mind he has decided to serve God. He believes the truths of God. He wants to be loyal to the Lord, but the actual behavior of his life is devoted to the service of sin.

Paul then goes on to describe the changed scene subsequent to his heart-rending appeal for deliverance and his thankfulness in receiving it. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." *Romans* 8:1, 2.

Then, throughout the rest of *Romans* eight, Paul speaks of freedom, of victory, of sonship with God, and finally ends with the triumphant testimony, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any

other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” *Romans* 8:37–39.

Two Different Experiences

If *Romans* seven is compared carefully with *Romans* eight, it will be seen that they are two very different experiences. *Romans* seven is the experience of a slave who is constrained against his will to do the works of sin, whereas chapter eight is the story of a man who has been set free from sin’s power and can now do what he knows to be right and wishes to do. Both chapters cannot be a true description of a born again Christian. While we may find it hard to see that the man of *Romans* seven is not a child of God, we should not have difficulty in recognizing that the man of *Romans* eight is a Christian.

The following verses in *Romans* eight show us that this man is indeed enjoying a Christian experience: there is “no condemnation” (verse 1); he is “free from the law of sin and death” (verse 2); the righteousness of the law is being fulfilled in him, and he does not walk “according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (verse 4); he is a son of God and therefore a child of God (verses 14–16); therefore, he is an heir, and, in fact, a joint heir with Christ (verse 17); and he is more than a conqueror through Him that loved us (verse 37).

All this points to the experience of a truly born-again Christian. But how different this eighth chapter is from the experience depicted in the previous chapter. Therefore, *Romans* seven must be the description of something else. It cannot be the description of the experience of a Christian. This is the third witness that the man of *Romans* seven does not have salvation.

But this is not all the evidence. At the end of *Romans* seven, Paul cries out to be delivered and, as the great change comes, he thanks the Lord for it. Then his immediate testimony is, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." *Romans* 8:1.

Paul has just described his passing through the grim experience of being in bondage to the power of sin, his crying out for deliverance, and his receiving it. Then he draws the conclusion of the whole affair and asserts that he is no longer under condemnation. To make sure that everyone understands why there is now no condemnation, he goes on to say, "for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." *Romans* 8:2.

Back in *Romans* seven, Paul's testimony was very different. There, he was certainly not free from the law of sin and death. But in *Romans* eight he is free, and because he is, there is no

condemnation. In other words, when he was not free from the law of sin and death, he was under condemnation.

We have by no means exhausted all the witnesses which declare that the man of *Romans* seven does not have salvation, but these are more than sufficient to make the point.

What Does This Mean to Me?

If you look at your own experience very candidly you will be able to see whether it corresponds with the description given in *Romans* seven or with that in *Romans* eight. If the man of *Romans* seven is a picture of your spiritual state, then you need to realize that you do not have salvation from sin yet.

You may be a faithful member of a church, occupied in its activities, subscribing to its beliefs, and liberally supporting its programs, while having a good reputation in the neighborhood. If so, this revelation that you are still in the experience described in *Romans* seven will come as a severe shock. Yet it is vitally necessary that it does come, because we need to understand our true condition before we can lay hold on what the Lord is waiting to give us.

There are two possible reactions to this realization. Human nature tends to reject anything that disturbs the established patterns of life. After resting for so long in the comfortable assumption

of salvation, we are unwilling to face the truth about our true condition. Therefore, there is the very real danger that we will turn away from it to something more acceptable and pleasant to us.

If you succumb to this temptation, then a number of arguments will immediately spring to mind to counter the evidences of the Word of God. In your anxiety you might say, "Why, of course I am a Christian! Look at what I have given up to follow Christ! Look at my wide knowledge of the Scriptures, the time I spend in study and prayer, my high church office and . . . and . . . and . . ." There is not a more fatal mistake to make than this. Too many people have lost their eternal life because they did not have the courage and the honesty to face the truth about themselves when it came to them. The result was that the Spirit of God could do no more for them, and the impressions died away.

The other reaction which you might experience is one of hopeless despair. If you are honest enough to recognize the truth of the Word of God when it plainly reveals that you have fallen short of salvation, it is quite natural to feel overwhelmed by a sense of being lost and condemned. You may feel as though you are eternally separated from God.

If this is the way you feel, then nothing in fact could be better for you. It is only through the working of the Holy Spirit that we can come to this realization. It is essential that we see our true condition and that the spell of false security

is broken before the Spirit of God can do the next work for us. Too many are living in the Laodicean condition, not knowing that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. See *Revelation* 3:14–22. Therefore, you can be grateful that you have come to the place where you see yourself as being completely lost.

You can rejoice too, because God has provided a way of deliverance from the power of sin. You do not need to remain in the *Romans* seven experience; defeated and frustrated in your earnest and sincere desire to serve the living God. The way of deliverance is no secret, and the purpose of this booklet is not only to reveal the problem, but also to show the way of salvation. Therefore, persevere until your faith grasps the power of God, and you will be delivered from this miserable cycle of confessing and sinning again, and be made whole.

We have established that the experience described in *Romans* seven is certainly not that of a Christian. Now we need to understand why such a person is unable to keep the law, even though he desires to do so. This knowledge is an essential part of the solution to the problem.

Human Nature

In order to understand why the *Romans* seven experience is not that of a Christian, we need to understand human nature. We are complex

organisms, it is true, with close interrelationships between all our parts. Yet despite this interrelationship, distinctions must be made between the major parts, so that the roles played by each part can be identified.

To be more specific, each of us has an intelligent, thinking mind in which we receive information through the various senses: the eyes, ears, touch, taste and smell. It is through these senses that God communicates with us to reveal to us our own personal condition, our need, and what He will do for us.

The mind does not accept all that it is offered. For various reasons some things are rejected. It may even reject the very truth we most need if it has been trained to believe a lie, or if the acceptance of the truth would be uncomfortable, inconvenient, or costly.

In order to accept or reject the truth, the mind must reason and draw conclusions. Those conclusions demand the making of decisions, which in turn call for corresponding actions on the part of the individual. This is the setting of the will.

When this work has been accomplished in the mind, the body is called upon to obey and carry out the decisions made. In fact, the body is designed to fulfill the purposes of the mind. However, when we come to study the work of reformation, which succeeds the new birth experience, we will see that the body is also capable of exerting

quite a pressure on the mind in order to satisfy its needs for self-gratification or for self-preservation.

That the body is an instrument is made clear in these words, "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." *Romans 6:13*.

A simple illustration will show that the body is to be the servant of the mind. Let us imagine that you wish to journey from where you are to another place. The information stored in your mind tells you that you must first walk from your present position to the railway station. Your mind cannot go there alone, but it can call upon the members of the body, namely the feet and legs in particular, to take you there. There are many other such instances of this process in our daily lives.

In the case of the man in *Romans seven*, the body does not always do what the mind wills it to do. Let us re-read this clear declaration in verse 15: "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do."

Whatever we do, is done via the instrument of the physical body. But in this case, the body does not do what Paul's mind desires it to do. Instead, it does the very thing he hates doing. Obviously, it is in his reasoning mind that his hatred of this

thing exists. It is in his mind that he decides not to do it. So we have a situation where the mind knows what should be done, desires to do it, sends instructions to the body members to carry it out, but to his utter dismay finds that the body does something else.

Everyone has experienced this at some time or other. In fact, if you can testify that you are still in the *Romans* seven experience, then you are fully aware of what this is like. For example, you may have resolved not to speak hasty or nasty words to others any more. You are really sincere in your intentions. Your will is set to do this, and for a time all may go well. But there comes the day when that unruly instrument, the tongue, lets out those hasty words of bitter recrimination again. And how sorry you feel about it afterwards.

Without a question, the man of *Romans* seven knows what is right. He knows the law of God and delights in the great truths of God's Word. "For to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find." Verse 18.

The question now arises: Why does the body not obey the instructions of the mind? If we can discover the reason for this disobedience we will be much closer to the solution of the problem.

The situation described in *Romans* seven is neither pleasant nor good. God did not create our bodies to rebel against our minds. No! God gave us a

body to carry out the desires of the mind and obey the will. This is not the picture we are given in *Romans* seven, but in *Romans* eight we see Paul suddenly able to do what he knows to be right.

At this point many people conclude that the real problem is simply that the will is too weak to bring the body into subjection. They reason that much more determination and power is needed to bring the body into subjection to the mind. If you try this solution, you will find that no matter how much determination and will-power you exercise, the situation will not improve. That is not the solution to the problem. The answer lies in understanding the existence of a third aspect of human nature.

The Law of Sin

Each of us has a mind and a body, but we also have a third entity which plays a significant role in our life's experience. This third factor is not immediately apparent, and there are many who deny its existence as a separate entity. They assume it is one and the same thing as the human, fleshly nature. This is a serious mistake because, unlike our human nature, this third entity is our enemy. Furthermore, a denial of its separate existence will prevent us from finding deliverance from it.

The identification of this third aspect of our lives is vital to our success in the search for vic-

tory over sin. Therefore, we will now consider its existence, and how it differs from our physical human nature.

Paul refers to all three factors in *Romans* 7:22, 23. “For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

As we consider this verse carefully, we see that Paul delights in the law of God in his inward man. This delight can only be in the intellectual, reasoning mind, which is confirmed in the following verse: “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.” So, while in his mind Paul delights in the law of God, there is another law in his members which wars against that mind. The result is that he is brought into captivity or bondage to this law of sin.

We need to distinguish between the law of sin and the flesh itself—they are not the same thing. Although the law of sin is not the flesh, it is resident within that flesh. Earlier in this chapter Paul stated that “But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” Verse 17. His words “dwells in me” expresses this thought of “residence within.”

Therefore, this “law of sin” in the members of the body is not the flesh and blood human nature of the person. It is something else which resides

in that flesh and rules over it, against the will of the reasoning, educated mind. Other scriptures also confirm this fact, For example, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” *Ezekiel* 36:26.

The entity which Paul calls “the law of sin” in *Romans* is referred to as “the heart of stone” in *Ezekiel*. In *Romans* seven this entity is pictured as dwelling in the flesh, while here in *Ezekiel* the promise is that it will be evicted from the flesh. It will be taken out of, and away from, those to whom the Lord brings salvation. When the stony heart is taken out of us, the flesh is still there, for the flesh itself is not taken out of us. Instead, something is taken out of the flesh. These texts make it clear that there are three separate entities: the mind, the flesh, and the law of sin, or the heart of stone, which dwells in that flesh and rules over it according to its will and against the will of the mind.

In *Romans* 8:7, this same third entity is referred to by yet another name: the carnal mind. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.”

This text provides further, strong evidence for the existence of this third entity in the individual. If we carefully consider what is said in this verse, we can see that it cannot apply to the

fleshly or human nature. For, while it is possible for the sinful, fallen flesh to be an instrument of righteousness, by being subject to the law of God, it is impossible for the carnal mind to be so.

The carnal mind is not merely at enmity against God, it is enmity. Its very constitution, its nature, its essence, and all that composes it, is in itself enmity against God. If it were simply at enmity with God, then it would be possible for it to be reconciled to God. But when the carnal mind is itself the enmity, then it can never come into harmony with God; it can never be subject to the law of God. That is impossible.

Although the carnal mind cannot be reconciled to God, the flesh can. In fact, in *Romans* 6:13, Paul calls upon the converted person to present "your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

So, we have one nature or power in us which is enmity against God and cannot serve Him, and we have another power, namely the flesh, which can and should serve Him. These two powers cannot be one and the same thing. They must be two different things, for one cannot be yielded as an instrument of service to the law if it is impossible for it to serve the law.

The carnal mind is the law of sin; it is the stony heart and the power of sin which rules in the life of the individual against the will of the mind. The

problem is not that the flesh rules the mind, but that the flesh is subject to another power which it is forced to obey.

Paul sums up the whole problem very well in the closing verse of *Romans* seven when he says, "So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." *Romans* 7:25.

There are two masters working in the life of the man of *Romans* seven. One is the great Master of all truth, to whom the mind is devoted in service; the other is the law of sin, to which the flesh is enslaved. The mind and the flesh are in service to two different powers, and it is for this reason that the flesh does not do what the mind directs it to do. It is in subjection to another master, who is the despotic and deadly enemy of the law of God.

We have now come to the heart of the problem: what we do is but the fruit of what we are. As Jesus says: "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." *Luke* 6:43-45.

Christ here refers to a law of nature which has never been broken, and with which even a child is familiar. It is an utterly reliable principle: If

you wish to have good fruit, you must first of all have good trees—that is, the right kind of trees. After drawing our minds to this familiar principle the Saviour then declares that as it is in nature so it is in the spiritual world. In other words, the same principle is valid there. Therefore, if we wish to have a life filled with good deeds, then first of all we must be good people.

But we cannot be good people while we still have the carnal mind or the stony heart dwelling in us. To have that evil nature and power within us is to be an inherently sinful person, and as such we naturally bring forth evil and not good fruit.

This, then, is the problem: the heart of stone. For the man in *Romans* seven the problem is not the mind, for this has already been converted to the service of God, and to the truths of the Word of God. Neither is the problem the fleshly human nature, for it is simply in bondage to another power. The problem is the heart of stone, or the law of sin—the power that is resident in the members and controls them against the will.

This is not to say that the mind and the flesh cannot be a problem. They can be, but they are not the main problem in the *Romans* seven experience. We come to this experience because we have seen the beauty of the truth and are converted to it. But until our flesh is delivered from the power that dwells within, it cannot possibly escape from the dominion of sin to do what the mind directs it to do.



The law of sin in the members is the big problem. It is the root, the basic cause, the underlying source, of all the trouble. Because this is the problem, then it is obviously here that the solution must be applied. Therefore, we will proceed to seek out and understand how that solution can be applied.

Opposite page:

“Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.” *Matthew* 7:16,17.

Part 2

The Solution

Now that the real problem has been identified, the question is: how can we deal with it?

At the very outset, let us be aware that any attempt made to force the carnal mind to serve the law of God is attempting the impossible. We have but to remember Jesus' illustration of the thorn bush in *Luke 6:44* to realize that no amount of coercion will ever result in the bringing forth of good fruit from an evil heart.

Let us consider the thorn bush. It is by its very nature at enmity against the law of apple production. If we find a thorn bush in our garden, we know that no amount of cultivation, irrigation, fertilizing, pruning, or care will ever bring forth even one apple from that tree. We understand that this simply cannot be done.

When seeking for victory over sin, let us be just as convinced that no amount of effort, intensive study of the Word of God, church attendance, activity in missionary lines, devout prayers, or the liberal giving of offerings, is ever going to cause the carnal mind to bring forth the fruits of the

Spirit. This is not the way, for “the carnal mind . . . is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” *Romans* 8:7. This is as much a fact of life as it is true that the thorn bush is not subject to the law of producing apples, nor indeed can it be.

Therefore, anyone with the carnal mind that attempts to keep the law of God, in order to bring forth the active fruits of the Spirit, is attempting an absolute impossibility. Not until that carnal mind is dealt with can the person begin to keep the law of God. The axe must be laid at the root of the tree. There is no other way. “And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” *Matthew* 3:10.

The Law of God

There are those in the religious world today who think that the solution to the problem is to do away with the law of God. But can this be? If we try to solve the problem of an unbearably hot day by breaking the thermometer, will it change the heat or lessen the problem? Of course not. The problem will still be there, and the heat will be unchanged. All we will have lost will be an accurate means of knowing how hot it really is.

Similarly, if the law is taken away it will make no difference at all to sin. It will still be there. All that happens is that we will lose an accurate indicator of what sin is.

In the first verses of *Romans* seven this truth is well expressed by the illustration of marriage. Here Paul shows that there is no need to change the law. It is already perfect and in no need of change. What needs to be changed is the individual, for that is where the problem lies.

“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.” *Romans* 7:1–3.

Everyone is familiar with this situation that concerns the law of marriage. While the woman is legally married to her husband, the law will condemn any attempt to marry another man as adultery. But if the husband dies, then the very same law which formerly condemned her marriage to another man, will now condone it. A change has taken place, but it has not been in

the law. It has been in the woman. She has changed from being a married woman to being a single woman.

This is equally true in the spiritual realm. In fact, Paul is not giving a dissertation on the marriage question, but he uses it as an illustration of the spiritual marriage with Christ.

“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.” *Romans 7:4*.

There is not the slightest hint in this verse of any change being made in the law, but there is a change in the individual. This means that we must first die before we can be married to another, to Christ, for He is the One who is raised from the dead.

As we have seen, the purpose that Jesus Christ came to this earth for is to save us from sin: “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” *Matthew 1:21*.

To be saved from sin is to be saved from law-breaking, for sin is lawbreaking as it is written, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” *1 John 3:4 (KJV)*. Lawbreaking is disobedience. Therefore, to be saved from lawbreaking means to be delivered to obedience. However, neither a supreme effort of the will, nor the abolition of the law can deliver us from this problem.

Eradication

Now that we know how the problem cannot be solved we turn to the true solution—the eradication of the old nature and filling its place with a new nature. This is clearly taught in the Scriptures, as the following text shows:

“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” *Ezekiel* 11:19, 20.

Here the Lord clearly states that He will take the old, sinful, stony heart out of our flesh and give us a new heart in its place. He does not say that He will give us a new heart along with the old. That would not work, nor is it what the text says. The promise is that God will take the old out of our flesh and put a new spirit and a new heart in its place.

The work of eradication and replacement has a specific purpose, and is intended to achieve certain results. It is done so “that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”

We have already seen that the reason why Paul could not do what he desired was because he had the old carnal mind ruling over him. This is also

our problem when we are in the *Romans* seven experience. Now we need to see that the Lord knows exactly where the problem lies, and that He is ready to provide the only solution to it—the removal of the carnal mind and its replacement with a new heart altogether.

In Christ's illustration of the thorn bush, we find the same solution. The thorn bush stands green and flourishing in the garden, but it cannot produce any fruit. It stands in the way, occupying good soil and tearing the clothes of those who pass by. This is a problem for the gardener. He wants his garden to yield good fruit such as apples and oranges, but he only has this thorn bush. The solution of course is to uproot the thorn bush and replace it with a good tree. When the gardener does this, he knows that in due time he will obtain good fruit, for the very simple reason that he now has a good tree.

Similarly, the man of *Romans* seven desires to produce the good works of the law—the fruits of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, kindness, and so on. However, he has an evil nature within him which cannot produce loving obedience, but only hatred, pride, jealousy and the like. His predicament is the same as that of the gardener with the thorn bush, and the solution to his problem is also the same. The evil nature must be uprooted from the human body and replaced with a nature born from above. And it is only by asking for this



It is not enough to cut the evil tree down.
The axe must be laid to the very root of
the tree, otherwise it will grow again.

to be done that the man of *Romans* seven can become a child of God and subsequently produce the good fruits of the Spirit.

This truth is stated again and again in the Scriptures so that the repeated witness of it leaves

no doubt about the way of deliverance from the terrible power of sin. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." *Romans* 8:2-4.

God sent His Son into the world to condemn sin in the flesh. There is an important distinction which needs to be made here. Although the actions of sin can be termed "the sins of the flesh," it is the indwelling power of the stony heart, or carnal mind, that is actually "sin in the flesh." Jesus did not come to do a superficial work of merely condemning the sins of the flesh. He came to condemn sin in the flesh, which is the very root of the problem. This is the cause of the continual defeat experienced by all those who still possess the stony heart.

What is the result of condemning sin in the flesh? "That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." *Romans* 8:4. The carnal mind is condemned, eradicated, and removed for a certain purpose—to give us the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Death of the Old Man

What is the result of this condemnation of sin in the flesh? Did Christ condemn it to be placed under subjugation and control? Did He condemn it to exile? Did He condemn it merely as a declaration of disapproval? No, it is none of these. Jesus condemned sin to death, a death which became effective through the result of His own death and resurrection. This truth is plainly stated in *Romans* 6:1-6:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”

Verse six is the climax of the argument contained in this text. The previous five verses refer to God’s true children who are in Christ Jesus,

and therefore have justification and a title to the kingdom above. It is plainly stated that they have died and been raised, just as He died and was raised. But it is in the final verse that we are specifically told what has died.

Before we turn our attention to what must die before we are set free from sin, let us consider the force of the message of the first five verses. We are told that only those who have died can live. It is another way of saying that the old must go before the new can come. The old is taken away by death and the new is brought in through resurrection. This truth is expressed most strongly in verse 5: "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection."

The first part of this text is a conditional clause: "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death . . ." This expresses the truth that when the condition is fulfilled, the rest will follow. But it is only those who have died with Christ that can live with Him. That is to say, the new can only come in if the old has been taken away. The thorn bush must be removed before the apple tree can take its place. They cannot grow in the same spot.

What is Paul actually saying in these verses? Is he uttering some high-sounding but meaningless rhetoric, or is this a description of a real experience? When he states that we have to die

with Christ, what does he mean? Do we have to really die, or is he talking about a change in our mental attitude?

It seems hard for most people to believe that Paul is talking about an actual death. The reason for this lies in a failure to distinguish between the sinful flesh and the sinful, carnal mind (also called the stony heart, the old husband, and the sin master). We tend to think of the sinful nature as being the flesh, and since we know that a person does not have to terminate this earthly life in order to be born again, it is assumed that only a make-believe death is spoken of here. This death is usually thought of as being a real event in the life of Christ, but only figurative when applied to the person who is born again.

It is true that when we leave behind the experience of *Romans* seven, and become a truly resurrected child of God, we do not die physically. We have the same flesh and blood after our conversion as we had before. There has been no death and no change in our physical body. Sinful flesh is mortal flesh. No one will be delivered from this until the great resurrection morning when Christ descends to call His people to their heavenly home. (See *1 Corinthians* 15:50–54; *1 Thessalonians* 4:13–17; *Matthew* 24:30, 31.)

But still, we have to die in order to be born again, for if we do not we cannot be in Christ. What part of us dies then? The answer lies in

Romans 6:6. “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him . . .” Here is a new term: “our old man.” What does this expression mean? Who or what is the old man? The next part of the verse tells us that the old man was crucified, “that the body of sin might be done away with . . .” Paul could have written: “Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the old man might be done away with . . .”, but rather than repeat the term “the old man” a second time, he uses another name, “the body of sin.” This tells us that the “old man” and “the body of sin” are one and the same thing.

In *Romans* 7:24, we come across yet another term, “this body of death.” This is just another way of expressing what Paul had earlier called the “law of sin” in the same chapter. Therefore, from our study so far, we now know that “the old man,” “the body of sin,” “this body of death,” and “the law of sin” all refer to that third factor, “the carnal mind” which is “not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” *Romans* 8:7.

It is the carnal mind that is crucified in the life of those who are converted. The “old man” must be done away with, by death, before a new life can be resurrected in its place.

Let us be absolutely clear about the fact that there is to be an actual death. Crucifixion is not exile. And death does not mean being placed in prison for lifelong incarceration. It is not being

chained up nor put under the control of someone else. Crucifixion is a form of death. Its purpose is to put to death; and those who crucify are not satisfied until this result is achieved.

Therefore, when Paul says that the old man is crucified, he means that it is put to death. To make certain that we catch this meaning, he says that we are crucified so that the body of sin might be done away with. When something is done away with, it is destroyed and simply ceases to exist. Its life history is ended. It is no more.

In each of the previous texts and illustrations, we saw that this work is accomplished for a definite purpose. It is done so that we might pass from disobedience to obedience, from complaining that we cannot do what we desire to do, to having the righteousness of the law fulfilled in our lives. So in *Romans* 6:6, the old man is crucified, the body of sin is destroyed, "that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

Nature is a God-given illustrator of gospel truth. The truth of verse six will be seen with greater force if we substitute the thorn bush for the old man, and then read the verse as it would apply to the gardener who desires to have good fruit instead of the thorn bush. He tears it out and replaces it with the apple seedling. Then he says:

"Knowing this, that the old tree has been torn out by the roots that the thorn bush might be done away with, that it should no longer produce

thorns." We do not have the least difficulty in seeing how this principle operates in nature. When we apply this principle to the spiritual world, we will understand with similar clarity the work of cleansing the soul as a necessary step in gaining the victory over sin.

Deliverance

We have now looked at the problem of bondage to sin, and seen that the first step to freedom is the death of the old man. We have also seen that what we do is the result of what we are, and not because of the weakness of our will. As long as the law of sin and death lives within us, we are under the control of an evil power which forces our human flesh to carry out its will, no matter what our knowledge, desires, or conscience may be.

Therefore, in order to be delivered from this evil power within, we must have it taken out of, and away from, ourselves, and a new life put into its place. There is no other way of gaining the new birth experience. There is no other way of passing from the bondage of *Romans* seven into the freedom of *Romans* eight.

While this realization is vital to gaining deliverance, the question has yet to be answered as to how we pass from bondage to deliverance.

I well remember presenting this study to one family for the first time. Very carefully I explained

the problem, just as we have done so far in this booklet. After this phase of the study was completed we paused for a rest.

The wife said, "You know, we heard a sermon just like this a few weeks back."

"So we did," said the husband. "The preacher laid out the problem much as you have done here. All the way through I listened, for I wanted to understand the problem and its solution. I knew that my experience was like Paul's in *Romans* seven, and I wanted deliverance from it. But when the preacher had finished setting out the problem, he sat down. In my anxiety to know the answers he had not yet given, I stood up and said, 'Pastor, you have given us the problem. Now please tell us the solution. Tell us how to be delivered from this power.'

"At this the pastor arose again and very sadly said, 'I am sorry. I cannot tell you, for I have not yet found the answer myself.' I was so disappointed that I could say no more and resumed my unhappy seat."

For a moment the man sat thinking back over the experience. Then he turned to me and said, "Are you going to bring us the problem and leave us without the solution to it?"

I was so happy to be able to tell him that we were only taking a break, and that the solution would follow in very clear terms indeed.



“This far you may come, but not farther, and here your proud waves must stop!” *Job 38:11*. Similarly, through His word God puts limits on sin. He has promised a life of complete victory.

Similarly, we will not stop here. We will spell out the solution in clear practical terms.

To put it succinctly, the solution is the gospel. This is the power of God to save from sin.

You may well ask, then, as to why you have not been saved from sin if the gospel is the very power of God given to deliver you. The answer is that the gospel is not the power of God to save everyone.

If we read *Romans* 1:16 carefully, we will see this. Paul did not just say: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone.” While he used these words in this exact order, he did not stop there. What he actually said was that the gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone “who believes.” These two additional words make all the difference. The gospel is just so many nice words to the unbeliever, but to the believer, it is the power of God unto salvation from sin.

The apostle John echoed the same truth in the words, “this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” *1 John* 5:4.

Faith

Ask yourself, “Do I have faith?” You might promptly answer that you feel assured you do have faith. You have faith in the Bible as the Word of God; you have faith in God Himself as the Su-

preme Being; you have faith to believe that sin will meet its punishment; and that salvation can only be found in Jesus. You can have faith in all of these things, but do you have the faith to grasp the gospel as the living power of God to save you from sin, from a sad round of sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing, again and again?

It is safe to say that anyone who is still in the experience described in *Romans* seven does not have the faith which is the victory that overcomes the world. Faith does not merely bring the victory. Faith is the victory. Therefore, if you have the faith of which Paul speaks in *Romans*, and which John speaks of in his epistle, then it is certain that you will not be in the experience of *Romans* seven, but in the deliverance of *Romans* eight.

It is this faith that Jesus spoke of when He said, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" *Luke* 18:8. The living faith which brings deliverance from the bondage of sin is not readily found in the world today. Jesus knew that this would be so, and it is for this reason that He asked the question. It implied that He did not expect to find much saving faith at His second advent.

Yet without this faith, victory is impossible. Therefore, we need to learn how to exercise this faith. It is made plain in the story of the nobleman who came to Jesus from Capernaum to ask Him to heal his son.

“So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’ The nobleman said to Him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your son lives.’ So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, ‘Your son lives!’ Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’ And he himself believed, and his whole household. This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.” *John 4:46–54.*

The nobleman wanted physical healing for his son, who was so sick that he was not expected to live many more hours. Obviously the earthly physicians, having done all they could to save him, had given him up to die.

Although this story illustrates the exercise of faith in relation to physical healing, it also has valuable lessons in respect to healing from spirit-

ual sickness. In fact, the deeper purpose in Christ's work of healing physical maladies was to reveal His power to save from sin. In His medical ministry He showed the way of deliverance from spiritual maladies. If we see Christ only as One who had power to heal leprosy, palsy, and such like, then we have failed to read the real message of His ministry of healing. In the Word of God, sickness is a symbol for sin (see *Isaiah* 1:4–6), and it is a very fitting symbol, as we shall soon see.

Sickness and Sin

If we compare what we have already studied about the sin problem, with the problem of disease, we shall see a number of parallels. The sick son had a mind and a body. In his mind he desired to do certain things, but the sickness was a power residing in his flesh that took command of it, so that he could not do the things he wanted. Not until the disease had been eradicated could he hope to do the things he desired to do. What better picture could we find to illustrate the nature of the sin problem, than this problem of disease?

As the nobleman journeyed from Capernaum to Cana to seek the help of Christ, he went seeking a solution to a problem which is identical to the sin problem. He needed the removal of the

disease master from the body of his son, just as we need the removal of the sin master from our bodies.

Without question, the nobleman went to the only Person who could help him, and that was Jesus. He came asking for exactly what the Lord desired him to have. Therefore, he came to the right Person and asked for the right thing. So why did Jesus refuse to answer his request? It was not because Christ arbitrarily chose not to, nor because the nobleman was out of favor with God. The only reason Christ did not heal the boy was because the nobleman's way of approach made it impossible for Christ to do so.

How many times have we knelt in prayer to ask forgiveness for a sin, and pled with the Lord to give us the victory over it, and yet found that the sin was there as if we had never prayed at all? We have gone our way puzzled and perplexed by this, unable to understand why the Lord has not answered our prayer. We failed to understand that while we had asked for what the Lord desired to give us, we had not asked in true faith. Similarly, if the nobleman had not come to see his error in the way he approached Christ he would have found a dead child on his return home. But the nobleman discovered his mistake and changed his approach, according to the true science of prayer. When he came believing, his prayer was heard and answered.

Jesus did not leave the nobleman in ignorance of his lack of faith. He said to him sadly, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.” *John* 4:48. To say to this man, “you will by no means believe,” is to say in the plainest possible language, you do not believe as yet; you are still an unbeliever.

But let us not overlook the fact that the nobleman knew he had a great need. If you are honest with yourself, you will know this too. The man knew that no earthly power could heal his son. Likewise you know that no power on earth can save you from sin. This man came to Christ with his request. So you also come to Christ with your plea to be saved from your sins. In effect, the nobleman prayed to Christ, for the placing of a request before Christ is prayer. In the same way, you have also prayed to Christ.

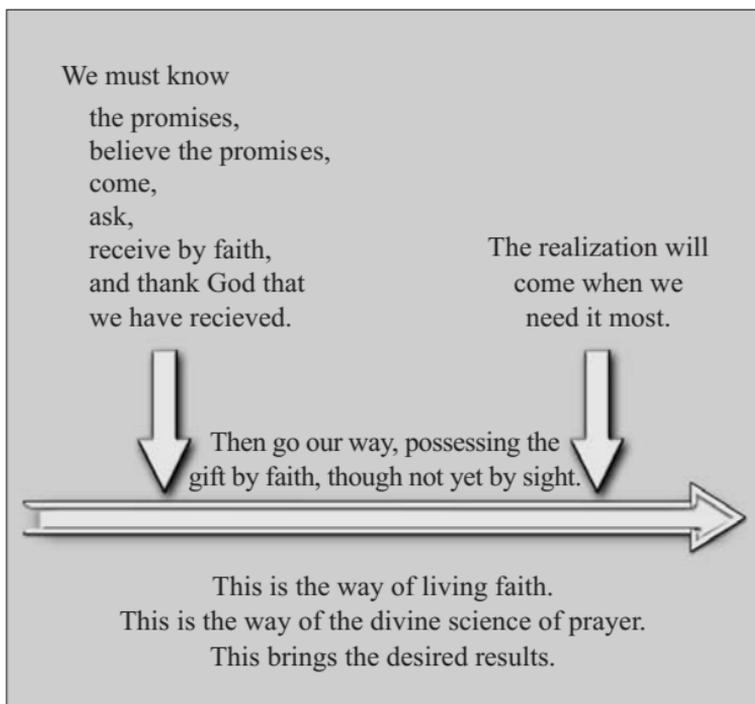
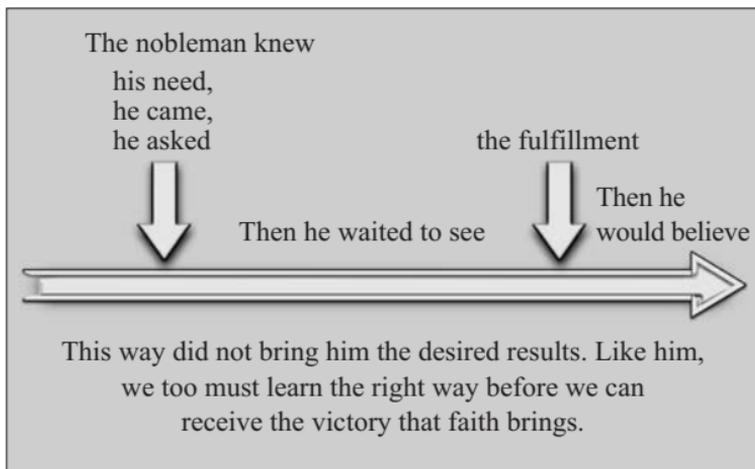
Yet Christ told the nobleman quite plainly that in spite of his request he was an unbeliever. Christ could do nothing for him under those circumstances. Similarly, if you still find yourself in the *Romans* seven experience, after having done all that you can to acquire victory over your sins, then you are an unbeliever too. And if you are an unbeliever, you need to understand the way of faith—the faith which works by love and purifies the soul.

So what was wrong with the nobleman’s original approach to Jesus? The words of Christ to

him reveal the answer: "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." In other words, the man came to Jesus with his request, placed his request before Him, and then waited to see if He could fulfill it. If Jesus would heal his son, then he would believe in Him.

This is not the way of saving faith, and never can be. Yet if each of us were to honestly re-examine the way we have approached God in prayer, we would find that we have come just as that nobleman did. We have come to the Lord and asked Him to bless us. Then we have gone away, waiting to see the blessing poured out before we were prepared to believe that we had the gift. In fact, it would be safe to say that if the Lord had given us the blessing for which we asked, we would have been rather surprised to see it.

The great moment of truth arrived for the nobleman, as it must also arrive for us if we are to experience saving faith. When the Saviour speaks words of reproof to us, the Spirit of God convicts us of sin. He takes those words deep into our conscience and reveals the defects in our character. So it was that the words of Christ were sufficient, under the Spirit's ministry, to reveal to the nobleman the unbelief of his heart. As he saw what the Saviour revealed to him he accepted the reproof. He saw Christ's power, and his faith laid hold upon that power. We know this because of the Saviour's response to his next request.



The man's prayer to Jesus was now, "Sir, come down before my child dies!" *John* 4:49. There was a big difference in this prayer. There may be no obvious difference in the wording of the prayer itself, but we know from Jesus' response to it that there was a difference. The first request brought only a sad rebuke, while the second brought healing. So what was different? The difference was that the man was now a believer. We know this because the Scriptures tell us so: "So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way." *John* 4:50.

Cana was not a great distance from Capernaum—no more than twenty-five kilometers. Christ spoke the words to the father at the seventh hour, which is about one p.m., so that the father could easily have walked home that afternoon. But he did not do this. Had he needed to see with his own eyes that the boy was indeed healed he would have done so. But he already knew that his son was well. Shortly before he reached home the next day, his servants told him what faith had told him the day before. No doubt they were puzzled by the absence of any surprise from the father when they told him that his son was alive.

The Prayer of Faith

Let us now compare the nobleman's first prayer, which was one of unbelief, to his second prayer,

which was full of faith. While in a state of unbelief, he prayed and caught a glimpse of the power which dwells in the Son of God. As his faith laid hold upon that power, he saw in it the complete answer to his need. So he asked for that gift, and grasped it by faith, aware that it was already his. Then he went his way knowing that the blessing, which he already possessed, would be realized when he needed it most.

This process reveals the formula for the successful way of faith for us too:

Firstly, we must have an accurate knowledge of the problem which we face. How often in the past have you come to God pleading forgiveness for what you have done, without acknowledging the real problem and asking for the removal of that law of sin from within you? There was a lack of understanding of the real nature of the sin problem. This is a serious deficiency which must be supplied before we can pray intelligently and successfully.

Secondly, we must know the promises of God until they are not just mere words in the Bible, but the very power of God speaking to us. To do this we need to study the promises until they are absorbed into our thinking to the point where they become a part of us.

We need to search for and learn the great Bible promises of personal victory over sin, so that we know them by heart. If we wish to have and maintain a personal victory over sin, these promises

must be a living part of us. They must be right there, ready to spring from the lips in response to any attack by the enemy, or any suggestion to doubt the power of God to save from sin.

The great promises in the Bible are as numerous as they are powerfully effective to save from the law of sin and death. Each of us should search them out for ourselves. The following are a few examples for those who wish to start collecting these promises of victory over sin.

“Sin shall not have dominion over you.” *Romans* 6:14. Study these words until you realize that they are the personal promise of God that sin shall not have mastery, power, or control over you.

“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. Just as parents will never permit their child to face dangers too great for its tender years, so the Lord will never permit a temptation to come to you which is too strong for you to bear. For every temptation which does come to you, He has provided the way of deliverance. When such tremendous power is devoted to the salvation of every human being, then how can there be any excuse for sin in the life of any person? We “can do all things through Christ who strengthens” us. *Philippians* 4:13.

Here are some more references: *Matthew* 1:21; *John* 8:36; *1 Corinthians* 15:34, 57; *2 Corinthians* 2:14; *Philippians* 1:6; *1 Thessalonians* 4:3; 5:23, 24; *1 Peter* 1:5; *2 Peter* 1:4; and *Jude* 24. In the Old Testament, *Psalms* 23 and 46 are particularly good promises of power for deliverance. Absorb also the might in *Ezekiel* 11:19, 20; and 36:26.

The great objective in knowing the promises is to build faith—faith that will work the purifying of the soul. The more the promises are read and studied and made your very own, the more they will build up your faith. Finally, the time will come when you find yourself laying hold upon the power, and experiencing the deliverance which it alone can bring. Living faith in God's saving power is not something which naturally grows within us. It is not something which we can generate in ourselves. This is impossible. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." *Romans* 10:17.

When we come to the point where living faith lays hold on and believes the promises of God, then it is time to take the third step. This is to come to Christ and ask for the blessing. Do not pray the old prayer which has failed to bring success for so long.

In the past the pattern of prayer has been, "Lord, I have sinned. Please forgive me for what I have done." You may have promised not to commit the same sin again, or asked for help not to

do it again. This approach has not brought you victory in the past, and it will not in the future. There must be a change, just as the nobleman had to change his approach to Christ.

You need to pray along the following lines: "Lord, I have come to the place where I see that the real problem is this evil nature which is inside me. It is the 'power of sin,' the 'law of sin and death,' the 'body of death,' the 'carnal mind,' and the 'stony heart.' While that is still there, I am an evil tree and can bear only evil fruit, for my body is under the control of that power. Lord, you have promised to take away the stony heart and give me a new heart altogether. I absolutely believe that you will do this, and accordingly I give you this old heart. Take it from me. I do not want it. Put a new heart in its place and make me a partaker of your own divine nature. By faith, and therefore in fact, I receive this blessed gift and I thank you for it. In Jesus' saving name, Amen."

If you are possessed with living faith, then you will not wait to see the blessing before you know that you have it. At that moment you will know that you have been delivered, that sin has no more dominion over you, and that you have become a true child of God at last. Of course, it will still be necessary to resist the tendency of human nature to wait to see the results before you believe. Do not expect to feel that you have



A view of earth from a spaceship. Man has made tremendous conquests over his environment, but the real victory which he needs to gain is the conquest of himself.

been transformed. Believe it just because the Word of God says so, and very soon you will find that it is so.

The nobleman did not wait to see his son alive and well before he believed that he was completely healed. He did not need to see it, for he had the Word of God through Christ that it was so and that was enough. Faith rests on the Word of God, not on sight and feeling, which can change so quickly. Therefore, in order to understand our relationship to God, we should look to the Word of God and let that, rather than our feelings, be our guide.

A Personal Witness

The apostle John states, "That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us." *1 John* 1:3. Those who can best help their fellow human beings are those who can witness from their own personal experience. They can tell what they know, rather than a mere theory. As an assurance to others that this is a tried and proven path to success, I will relate how this worked in my life. There are many other people around the world who have heard this message and they can similarly testify of victory over sin in their own lives as well.

Back in 1953, I joined the staff of a missionary college as a teacher. The following year I was

elected a church elder. I loved the church and was actively involved in its activities. I understood and loved the doctrines and preached them with earnestness and enthusiasm. I believed that I was as sure of salvation as anyone could be and rested day by day in the hope of eternal life.

My life appeared to be "good" on the outside, but inwardly I had problems over which I could not gain the victory. I was a teacher of woodwork and it seemed that boys who failed in the theoretical subjects were assigned to my class. Some of these boys had developed such a strong resistance to learning that the classroom became the scene of daily battles between my efforts to teach them, and theirs to resist learning.

I found that my patience was tried beyond its limits, and I became furious towards them. There were times when I could cheerfully have banged their heads against the wall. But there was a constraining influence which kept me from doing that. I had a good reputation to preserve. I did not want the censure of the principal or the board, so I suppressed my rage and kept it under control so that it hardly showed on the outside.

If you take a steam boiler and light a fire beneath it, with all the outlets sealed off, it will hold for a time. But the pressure will mount and mount. Should the fire be put out for a time the pressure will drop without there being the outburst of an explosion, but when the fire is heated

again the time will come when the boiler will blow. The longer it holds against the mounting pressure, the greater the explosion in the end.

So it was with me. As the pressure of temptation upon me during the week heated my anger day by day, I shut off all the outlets so that the anger within me could not escape. But it was there nonetheless, and the time had to come when it would explode. The longer I held out, the worse was the outburst when it finally came. Usually it came during the weekend when I was home. Then my undeserving wife and children were the recipients of the wrath that others had generated.

When all the harsh words had been spoken, and all the pent-up pressure spent, I would then feel guilty and remorseful. I would go to the Lord and beg His forgiveness and promise ever so earnestly that I would never do it again. With firm, courageous determination I would return to the classroom, to find the whole procedure repeated. Again, the attitude of the boys would stir my anger. Again, I would close off all the outlets. Again, there would be the build-up and the explosion. Again, there would be the repentance and the plea for forgiveness. Then this would be followed by yet another failure.

I was trying and failing, sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, over and over again. It was a *Romans* seven experience without a doubt. I could not understand myself and the book of *Ro-*

mans seemed the hardest book in the Bible to comprehend. I searched for the answer. I listened to other preachers to see what they could say about the matter, but everywhere it was apparent that even the most able leaders in the church were experiencing the same frustration as I was myself.

So I settled down to a protective philosophy which rationalized my behavior as a common experience for those who are saved. I reasoned that I was earnest and sincere, that I was doing the very best I could, and that in the great judgment day the Saviour would say, "This man did his best even though he did live a sinful life upon the earth. So We will forgive him and give him a place in the kingdom."

Then came the day when I met a young man who was really filled with the glow of a new experience in deliverance. There was nothing he desired to speak of more than this. At first his conversation with me seemed like a foreign language, for he was talking of an experience and a life of which I knew nothing.

Then quite suddenly he addressed himself to me in a most direct way. "Do you know what it means to have the victory over every known sin, every day?" he asked.

I laughed in reply. "Why," I said to him incredulously, "I have sought for ten solid years for that kind of experience. There is no one who has

prayed more earnestly or tried harder than I have to obtain it. I have never met a person who has it. Look, I try my best every day. At the end of the day I plead for the forgiveness of my sins. I believe that God pardons me, and in the resurrection day God will accept my behavior as the best I could do, and I believe I will be saved.”

I shall never forget his response. It was not in words but in a look. The expression on his face clearly said, “Brother you need help, and you need it badly and quickly.” That unspoken message made a profound impression on me so that when he asked if he could come and give me a Bible study on the subject I was quick to arrange it.

I suppose that I have never been given a stranger study than that one. He would read to me a scripture text. Then he would make an effort to comment on it and give an explanation of it, but he seemed to be lost for words and so he turned to the next text to save himself. In this way the study progressed, so that it amounted to nothing more than the reading of one Bible text after another. I faithfully copied them all down on a piece of paper.

After he had finished I disputed with him using all the arguments I could think of, and then I watched him leave. He must have left me feeling quite discouraged, fully persuaded that I was a poor subject for his message of deliverance.

Several days went by during which the power of those scriptures worked on my mind. There

was nothing definite or well-defined. It reminded me of the blind man who began to see. "And he looked up and said, 'I see men like trees, walking.'" *Mark* 8:24.

Four days passed. It was a Wednesday afternoon and I came home for a short while during a work break and sat down with the list of scriptures. One by one I began to read them again. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." *Romans* 6:14. "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." *1 Corinthians* 15:57. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling." *Jude* 24.

As I read each text, I did so very thoughtfully and slowly, letting the meaning sink into my mind, and the Holy Spirit illuminated the Word of Truth. I progressed down one-third of the texts on the list when suddenly a tremendous conviction came over me. Up until that point I had believed that I could not live without sin. Suddenly the fearful implications of this belief came home to my mind with striking force. I saw that believing I would sin every day, was to believe that Satan was stronger than Christ, and that sin was stronger than righteousness. The moment I understood this fact, I saw that my life had not been a witness to the power of God but to the power of Satan. What made that witness so much the more telling for Satan was the fact that I held the position and maintained the profession I did.

Now the Spirit of God was really able to work in me. I saw all I had ever trusted in as an evidence that I was a child of God swept away from me—my knowledge, my zeal, my position, my love for the truth as I understood it. All this now gave me no assurance at all. I saw myself as God saw me—hopeless, lost, eternally condemned. There rolled over me the blackness of terrible despair; the darkness of the awful realization that I would not come up in the resurrection of the just. I have never known a blacker or more terrible moment in my whole life.

Somehow, and up to this day I do not know how, the Lord gave me the naked honesty to admit that this was all too true. I did not back off and argue that I was a church elder, a college teacher, a man well versed in the Scriptures, a preacher, a man of good reputation and of earnest, sacrificing zeal for the cause of truth. I thank the Lord for this, and I pray that when the awful moment of truth comes, you will face it and accept it as it is. If you stifle the convictions which the Holy Spirit brings, you will eventually close the door against any further work of grace being done for you, and that would be eternally disastrous.

The Lord never wounds but to heal. In that self-same moment that I saw myself as the hopelessly-lost sinner and accepted the truth of it, the Lord opened the promises to my understanding as I had never seen them before. It was as if they

had been written for me personally. Living faith sprang up in my heart as I saw the power in God's Word. I dropped beside the chair and prayed for the first time in my life. "Lord, I see now that the trouble is not what I have done, but what I am. This evil life in me is the source of the problem. Like a disease, it is the master of my body so that I cannot do the things which I want to do and know I should do. Here is my old life; take it away and give me Your new life in its place. Lord, I thank You for it in Jesus' saving name, Amen."

I arose from my knees. Throughout my entire being was a consciousness that I had been born again. It was not a feeling, for I did not feel any different. It was a conviction. It was the witness of faith based upon the word of God. It was the same consciousness which led the nobleman to take a very leisurely return trip home, for he knew his son was healed. There was no need for him to hurry home to see if it was so. He knew it already, and so did I. The witness of sight would come later, as it did for the nobleman.

In those days we owned a temperamental Model A Ford. My wife drove it to the city quite often, but she did not always make it back again. There would be times when I would get a phone call from her to say she was stuck. To leave my work and help her was most inconvenient at times, and I used to become very annoyed about it. In

angry and impatient words I would tell her so, too. Through all of these problems, our marriage was headed for destruction. I would feel very badly about my behavior after it was all over, and I would confess it and determine that it would not happen again. I recall the day when the phone rang once again and I reminded myself that I had determined to behave patiently and sweetly. All went well for a few minutes. Then the spanner slipped. I skinned my knuckles. Anger rose and soon there followed the torrent of words again. A sad feeling of "What's the use" came over me. I drove home, silent and defeated and unable to understand myself.

When my day of deliverance came, I did not feel any differently inside myself. There were no particular pressures upon me just then. The boiler fire was out, it being vacation time and I lived quite happily from day to day. Then there came a Friday afternoon when once again my wife had taken the car out and I received the call for help from the town some four kilometers away.

Without giving a second thought as to how I should behave, I got to her as quickly as possible and worked on the car. As I was unable to start it I sent her home with a neighbor who happened to pass by. Finally I had to have the car towed back. Then I went home to supper. After this we attended an evening service in the chapel and then came home to rest for the night.

I was almost asleep. My wife was lying very quietly beside me, wrapped in thought. I paid little attention to her until she suddenly asked, "What has happened to you?"

I did not have the least idea what she was referring to and so I asked her to explain what she meant. In reply, she said, "Something has happened to you and I want to know what it is." Again I told her that I did not know what she was talking about and requested an explanation.

"This afternoon I waited at the car all braced for the usual angry accusations when you arrived. But instead, you simply did what you could and then sent me home. I was glad to get away, but I said to myself that when you got home I would catch it then. But when you arrived you still said nothing. So I thought, it will surely come when supper is over. Again you went on your way, peaceful and undisturbed. I finally concluded that you had it well bottled up this time, but when you came home tired after the end of the meeting and we got to bed, then at last it would come. But still it has not, even now. Something has happened to you and I want to know what it is."

It was then that the visible evidence was before me of the great change which had taken place within. I suddenly realized that during the whole performance I had acted out the person I now was, just as previously I had acted out the person I had been. Whereas previously, my natural reaction

was one of impatience and anger, now it was one of peace and patience. The wonder of it all so overwhelmed me that I found myself unable to answer, while in my heart there arose the testimony of my soul, "This was the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." *Psalm 118:23*.

When you too come to that place where you experience this marvelous transformation within, and see the outworking of it in an altogether new and different reaction to the pressures of life, then you will know and understand how I felt at that moment. It was a wonderful and blessed experience indeed.

Throughout the following forty years the power of this truth has been tested in the battlegrounds of my life. Unfortunately, I cannot testify to never having sinned in that time, but I do rejoice that I can witness to the precious fact that the message still works in my life exactly as it did when I first experienced it. When I have sinned it has always been my fault—either I lacked faith, or was careless in maintaining my connection with God, or such like. It has never been because of a lack in the power of the gospel.

Life has been so different since those days of defeat. Back then it was a continual repetition of the same struggles against the same sins, without ever getting out of the circle of sinning and confessing the same problem year after year. That discouraging cycle was left behind while the

work of victory moved into new areas as more and more light came through. The book of *Romans* was no longer a mystery to me. It became a delight to read it, for I could now understand what Paul was saying.

Part 3

After the Rebirth

Not from Bondage to Bondage

Once we have been reborn, a whole new process begins. In fact, the rebirth experience is not the end of a road but the beginning of a new life. We stress this point because there is a real danger of misunderstanding what actually happens at the rebirth. It is true that the old nature has been removed and a brand new nature has taken its place. But does this mean that once we are reborn we can never sin anymore?

No, it does not mean any such thing. We do not pass from one bondage to another kind of bondage, but from bondage to freedom. When we are under the control of the evil nature we are forced to sin, but after we become a true Christian we have the choice of following Christ or Satan. A brief study of the differences between these two masters will make this clear.

When we are in the *Romans* seven situation, we have within us the carnal mind, which is a despotic slave master whose power far outweighs that of our own will. This master rules over the will to serve all the desires of the sinful flesh and

to use that flesh as an instrument of unrighteousness. This truth is illustrated in the following diagram.

THE MAN OF ROMANS SEVEN

The carnal mind:

A cruel, despotic master who overrules the will to control weak, fallen, sinful, human flesh.



THE MAN OF ROMANS EIGHT

The divine mind:

A power which cooperates with the will to subdue the same weak, fallen, sinful, human flesh.



After we are born again into the experience described in *Romans* eight, we do not have the carnal mind any more. In its place we have the divine mind of Christ. We have been created anew and have a new master in the place of the old one. But there is a vital difference between the characters of these two masters. The carnal mind is a despotic master who rules by force. But God never rules by force. He always rules by love. God never compels us to serve Him. He calls, He invites, He offers; but He never uses force. Therefore, we need to make a personal and definite choice to serve God every day. We are free to choose to sin at any point in time. How different this is from Satan's way of ruling. Once Satan has you under his power then you have to serve him, whether you like it or not.

When Jesus came to this earth He said, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." *Matthew* 20:28. This is the great principle in the life of Christ and God. The divine mind is a servant who serves the will to subdue and control the fallen, sinful, human nature of the Christian.

This does not mean that the newly born again Christian can use the divine mind to do whatever he wants, for God will never serve sin. But when we choose to obey God's righteous commandments then He serves the will and gives us

the power to obey. However, God does not force us to obey Him, we are always free to disobey if we choose to do so.

In Practical Terms

To make the situation clearer we have but to trace this process, firstly in the case of *Romans* seven, and then in *Romans* eight. To the man in *Romans* seven comes the temptation of the devil, which appeals to the desires or weaknesses of the flesh. In his mind, the man knows that this is wrong. He makes a very definite decision not to do the wrong thing and sends to the body instrument the instructions as to how to behave.

But in *Romans* seven, it is the carnal mind that is the real master. This power in him dominates the scene and makes his will absolutely ineffective. As a result, the desires of the flesh are not kept under control but break out into open sin. Therefore in the *Romans* seven experience the carnal mind is the center of control.

In *Romans* eight the situation is different. The same temptations come to the same flesh, and the mind is still called upon to make a decision as to what it will do. But now, if he decides that he will not yield to the temptation, and provided he has absolute faith that the power of God in him, combined with the power of God from above, will make his decision effective, then those mighty

powers will serve the will to make it positively victorious. The flesh will be kept under perfect control and the evils of sin will not appear.

For the outcome to be successful, we can see that faith is the essential thing which gives the victory. The center of control has been moved from the carnal mind to the will, but the will can only be effective in its efforts if there is faith that the Lord will make the decision a reality. In other words, we must have the confidence in the power and the will of God to carry it out. If we think that we are now strong enough in ourselves to resist the power of sin, we will fall under temptation—nothing is surer than that. “The just shall live by faith.” *Romans* 1:17.

Maintaining the Victory

It therefore follows that we constantly need to maintain the living experience which we have gained. Although “The just shall live by faith,” *Romans* 1:17, that faith can die away and be lost. To avoid this, our faith not only needs to be maintained, but must be developed and strengthened. Faith is a living thing and unless living things are continually growing they begin dying.

To nurture our faith, we must feed daily upon the Word of God. Deliverance from the old master is referred to as being “born again” in the Word of God. (See *John* 3:3, 7; *1 Peter* 1:23.) And Peter refers to

new Christians as “newborn babes” *1 Peter* 2:2. A newly-born baby has only just begun the long journey of life and needs constant nourishment in order to develop to the full maturity of an adult. Newborn babies need milk for their nourishment. So after you enter the *Romans* eight experience, you too should, “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” *1 Peter* 2:2.

It is not just the newly born Christian who needs to feed on the Word of God daily. The more mature Christian must also study the Word every day to gain strength for that day. Without this spiritual nourishment our faith will grow weaker and weaker, until we fall under the powerful temptations of the enemy.

The question naturally arises as to how we could possibly fall since the power of God is the greatest power in existence, and it is certainly much greater than the power of sin. If that divine power is within us, then how can sin gain the mastery over us?

The following illustration clearly shows how the presence of the power of God in our lives does not automatically guarantee that we will never sin again.

A mighty army, such as that commanded by Caesar, or Alexander the Great, goes forth to battle. The armies which these generals commanded were the mightiest on the earth for a time, and no enemy was able to defeat them. In such an army

there are two major elements—the general in command, and the soldiers with all their weapons. Naturally, the general has no power of himself to match the smallest enemy force that might come against him. The general's power is in his army, and only when it is in his service can he expect to march on victoriously. Conversely, the army must have the skill and direction of the general if it is to operate efficiently and effectively. The general is the will of the army and everything depends on the right action of his will if victory is to be assured.

Let it be supposed that a mighty army has marched on and on and has known nothing but victory all the way. Now there remains only one more battle to fight before the conquest of the whole area is achieved. An enemy with a relatively small army is holding out in the foothills and a confrontation is necessary to achieve full control of the country.

But by this time the general and his aides have become over-confident of their skills and power. They decide that before going into battle they will have a great celebration involving feasting and drinking the whole night through. So the general and his chief aides, the sub-commanders, and the officers, all leave the army to its encampment and devote the night hours to their festivities. The result is of course, that by the morning they are all still suffering from the effects of intoxication and are virtually unconscious.

At this very moment the enemy chooses to make an unexpected attack upon the army. Suddenly aroused by the guards, the army faces the enemy, but they need the commands of the general to organize and deploy their forces effectively, for the enemy is cunning and fierce even though small. But because of his inebriated state, the general is unable to make a decision and cannot give a single order to the waiting forces under his command.

Suddenly the army finds itself without a commander, without a will, without a directing intelligence. It is the mightiest and most powerful army on the earth facing an enemy considerably smaller and weaker than itself, and it would normally have a quick and signal victory. But it has no leader, so who will gain the victory? Obviously, the smaller and weaker enemy will be the victor in the field.

The spiritual counterparts of this illustration are as follows: The mighty power of the army represents the power of God in the life. This power is the mightiest power in existence and there is nothing which can stand against it. The general is the intelligent and educated will of the man in *Romans* eight. The enemy is the flesh, unholy and sinful, through which the devil works to overthrow and destroy the entire person.

Although an earthly army may be able to do something without the will and direction of its

commander, the power of God in us cannot do anything without the right action of our will. Therefore, when temptation comes and we fail to make the right decisions and say “No!” to the enemy, then we shall fall victim to the devil through our fallen flesh.

Unless this danger is understood, we will find ourselves falling under the power of the enemy, when our lives should be a continual song of victory over sin. Special attention must be given to the role of the will on the one hand, and the sinfulness and deceitfulness of the fallen flesh on the other. We need to confess the sinfulness of our fleshly nature and to place no trust in it whatsoever. Defeat is certain when faith has grown dim, but this need never happen. It is quite possible for our faith to be kept alive, and indeed we must keep it alive if we are to live as Christians.

When the new life is given it is perfect, just as a newborn baby is perfect. But for the baby to grow in that perfection, it must be fed and cared for. Although the Lord provides the food, the parent has to feed it to the baby. God does not automatically nourish the child from day to day, for He has given this task to the human parent. Similarly in the spiritual sphere, God provides all the necessary food in the Bible to nourish the baby, but it is our responsibility to feed it. God will not do that for us. A closed Bible is like a locked food store, it does not feed anyone.

Watch and Pray

Jesus said, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” *Matthew* 26:41.

Entering into the Christian life means being enlisted in the army of the Lord. The spiritual journey from that point onwards is a march and a battle every day—it is not a picnic. We are at war, and our enemy is always in the field searching for the weak spots in our character so that he can overthrow and destroy us. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” *1 Peter* 5:8.

No army ever enters into a war without setting watches to see that the enemy does not come upon it unexpectedly. Similarly, as Christians we must set our prayer watches every day. The Bible clearly reveals all the tactics of the evil one, so that we can know where and how to watch for him, and meet him with the Word of God before he can gain an advantage.

The Battle is the Lord’s

The most important principle we need to understand is that no attempt should be made to fight the devil ourselves. The great controversy is between Christ and Satan. If we attempt to fight

Christ's battles for Him we will be defeated. When the devil comes to us, we must hand him immediately over to the Saviour and let Him deal with the matter. Whenever we do this the devil flees from us, for he knows that Christ has already defeated him.

Another illustration may help to explain this principle:

You are on a safari in the jungles of central Africa and you have to cross a particularly dense and dangerous area. You are unfamiliar with the country and the wild animals to be found there, but a competent and experienced guide offers you his services. This guide is quite familiar with the territory. He understands the country and how to deal with the beasts of prey. He comes armed with all the weapons needed for any eventuality.

As you follow your guide, you come face to face with a terrible gorilla who rushes to the attack as soon as it sees you. Now, suppose that you start to fight the beast single-handed with your bare hands. Then you remember the guide you have commissioned, and as you fight the great giant, you call out to the guide, "Quick, help me!"

But how can the guide help? In desperate anxiety he will cry out, "Get back! I cannot shoot at the gorilla unless you are out of the way!" You would frustrate the work of the experienced guide and make certain your own defeat unless you moved aside and let him take over. Likewise,

we must leave Christ to do His work, and not get in the way. When the enemy comes, we must not try to fight him, for “the battle is the Lord’s.” *1 Samuel* 17:47. “The battle is not yours, but God’s.” *2 Chronicles* 20:15.

We are weaker than Satan, but Christ is stronger. We cannot hold an argument with the devil. Only God can do that. Therefore, let us always remember to resist the devil with the power of the Word and never attempt to use our own power. When Satan comes to you, tell him simply and flatly that he is mistaken. The person who used to respond to those temptations no longer dwells within you. Times have changed and the new life in you does not do those things anymore. As soon as the devil hears the voice of faith declaring these truths, he flees, and the temptation dies away into nothing.

In Conclusion

Those who apply the principles and follow the procedures outlined above, will be delivered from the power of sin and become part of the body of Christ.

Once we are born again, we enter into a new life. The completion of one work is the beginning of the next. A process of education must then follow, the purpose of which is to deliver the soul from the wrong ideas and theories learned in the school of Satan. The erroneous concepts and habits we have unwittingly gained in our lives, before we were born again, have to be recognized and cleansed from us, one by one. In their place the righteous ideas and practices that God gives us have to be developed. Once implanted, the good seed must grow to full maturity. Day by day there will be steady growth if the believer feeds prayerfully and diligently on the living Word.

Satan will continually seek to divert the born again soul away from Christ, and, sadly, he may succeed at times. But this does not mean that our marriage with Christ is broken up. A speedy repentance, forgiveness, and cleansing will renew the fellowship with God; and when we learn valuable lessons from our mistakes we will be more secure in the future.

This booklet is not the last word on deliverance from sin. It only deals with the initial entry into the family of Christ. The first guidelines have been offered on how to maintain the precious, new, Christian experience, but the work of reformation has not been described in any depth or detail. A companion work, *Revival and Reformation*, covers this aspect more fully and is available from the Sabbath Rest Advent Church.

God's way for every one of His children is victory and peace, not defeat and misery. Let each of us shake off the shackles of sin and live as God designs we shall. We will then enjoy His many blessings and be fitted as vessels for Him to work through us to bless others.

Write to us for other books on this and related subjects, for example:

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Sooner or later every person reaches the point where he realizes that he is not his own master. He is a prisoner, bound in a situation which he cannot fully explain.

From Bondage to Freedom describes the problem from a biblical point of view. This presentation is not a difficult, theological dissertation, but a practical explanation of the subject. First the bondage itself is described, and then the way to true freedom is shown.

Those who have experienced God's living power—the gospel of Jesus Christ—know that the darkness has been dispelled from their lives, and a great new day has begun. Freedom from sin has replaced bondage and despair. The believer has become a part of Christ's body, and every day is a happy fellowship with the newly found Deliverer. For those who experience it, this transition marks a great dividing point in life. Nothing is ever the same again, for all things have truly become new.



From Bondage to Freedom