

The Sin Nature



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Introduction

SUBJECT

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INTRODUCTION

A couple of days ago (as I dictate these notes), I happened to cross a channel on Television, where a particular Gospel Program was being aired. The young man was ministering to a large crowd. The gist of his message consisted of him telling people how to overcome obstacles in their lives, etc.

Even though he went into great detail, which I will not here take the time to do, the answer he proposed simply consisted of Believers “trying harder.” Even though he flowered up his answer with a plethora of statistics derived from psychological studies, still, the bottom line consisted of Believers just simply “trying harder.” To be frank, whatever direction most Scriptural (so-called) advice takes, it pretty well comes out to the same conclusion—the Believer

must simply “try harder.” Sorry, but the advice is not Scriptural, and is therefore woefully inadequate.

CHOICE

When it comes to sin, and in any form, the Church mostly teaches that “sin is a matter of choice.” In other words, they claim that if a Believer fails the Lord in any capacity, it’s just simply because he chose to do so.

That is patently false.

Let me explain!

THE SIN NATURE

When a person comes to Christ, he has come from a life that has been totally and completely ruled, and in every capacity, by the sin nature. It may take different forms and directions in some than in others; nevertheless, every unbeliever in this world is totally and completely ruled by the sin nature. They may be able to cease and desist as it regards some particulars in their lives; but, in other areas, whatever they might be, they cannot cease and desist, which means that in one way or another, and I’ll say it again, they are totally and completely ruled by the sin nature.

If you, as a Believer, look back on your unsaved existence, you will have to admit that every part of you, in one way or another, was controlled by the sin nature. You did not understand that at the time, but looking back now, you know that was the case. But when you came to the Lord, the Scripture plainly says the following:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

In other words, when you got saved, the old John Doe (or the old Jane Doe) died, and did so by being crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:3-5). In other words, the Lord did not undertake a rehabilitation program for you, because there was nothing there to rehabilitate. In fact, the word “rehabilitation” is not found in the Bible, because, spiritually, it is of no consequence. The modern Church likes to talk about rehabilitation, but the truth is, there is no such thing. The word “rehabilitation” comes from the world of humanistic psychology, and has no Biblical foundation regarding spiritual matters.

When the Believing sinner comes to Christ, he is instantly made “a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Cor. 5:17).

At that moment, the moment of conversion, the sin nature is made completely ineffective. The King James Text uses the word “destroyed” (Rom. 6:6), and that is correct as far as ineffectiveness is concerned. However, it doesn’t mean that it is annihilated or obliterated. The word “destroyed” in the Greek is “katargeo,” which means “to make of no effect.” But yet, it is still there. In fact, the Believer is to be dead to the sin nature; but, as stated, the sin nature itself is not dead (Rom. 6:11).

WILLPOWER

Most in the modern Church have the erroneous conception that once the person comes to Christ, now they can either say “Yes” or “No” to sin, as they so desire. They come to the conclusion that if a person sins, then he has done so willfully, which means he doesn’t have much of an experience with the Lord, or probably he isn’t even saved. Unfortunately, those making those particular judgments are probably in worse spiritual condition than the one they are judging.

How do I know that?

I know that simply because if the Cross is ignored or misunderstood, such people are going to be having acute problems themselves. They may try to hide it, and they may try to compensate for their own problems by lambasting others, but there actually is no victory in their own lives. In fact, it is impossible for there to be victory in one’s life unless one properly understands the Cross of Christ, as it regards Sanctification.

No! It is not a matter of simply saying “Yes” or “No” to sin. The Lord doesn’t suddenly give the Believer a super-willpower after he comes to Christ. That’s not the way victory is won, and it never has been (Rom. 7:18).

THE DIVINE NATURE

When the believing sinner comes to Christ, at the moment of conversion, the Divine Nature becomes a part of the Believer. The person is now “a new creation, with old things having passed away,

and all things becoming new” (II Cor. 5:17). In fact, Believers actually have three natures:

1. The Divine Nature (II Pet. 1:4);
2. The Human Nature (Gen. 1:26-27); and,
3. The Sin Nature (I Jn. 1:8).

Jesus had a human nature and a Divine Nature, but He did not have a sin nature, due to the fact that He was not born according to normal procreation, meaning that Joseph was not actually his father, rather His conception was by the Holy Spirit (Mat. 1:18). Every other human being is born with a “sin nature,” because we are born in the likeness of Adam, who fell because of transgression; consequently, due to the fact that Adam was the Federal Head of the human race, his Fall contaminated every human who would be born into the world, because all, so to speak, were in his loins (Gen. 5:3; I Cor. 15:21-22).

Whenever the believing sinner is born again, the “sin nature,” at that time, becomes dormant, and is meant to remain that way; however, if the Believer doesn’t understand the Cross as it regards Sanctification, regrettably, the Believer will find the sin nature once again springing to life and causing tremendous problems, which is the case with most in the modern Church.

That is the reason for this Study Guide.

Prayerfully, after studying and accepting this truth, “you will be made free” (Jn. 8:32).

THE ANCIENT STRUGGLE

What we will give in these next pages is not, by any means, new; and yet, it will be new to most, simply because it is little taught in most Churches. That is a shame, considering that there is nothing more important.

This struggle is ancient, having begun at the very dawn of time. The saga of Cain and Abel is a perfect example; it is, in fact, meant to serve as an example. God's Way and Manner were given to the first family. That Way was the "slain lamb," serving as a symbol of the Coming Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen., Chpt. 4).

If one looks closely at all the religions of the world, they will find that these religions claim to offer a way to reach God other than Jesus Christ. That is where the great error is. However, this must ever be known and understood: The Way to God is solely through Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6). Other than through Jesus Christ, there is no other way to reach God, to know God, or to understand God. Abel believed that account; his brother, Cain, disregarded the instructions given by the Lord, and devised his own means and way.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Oh, yes! Cain had an altar; however, his sacrifice was not the "slain lamb," but rather the labor of his own hands.

Unfortunately, around Abel's Altar, there are few; around Cain's altar, there are many. To man's eye, Abel's sacrifice was repulsive, but to God's eye, it was beautiful. To man's eye, Cain's altar was beautiful, while to God's eye, it was repulsive.

Cain's offering was rejected; his offering being rejected, likewise, he was rejected. Abel's offering was accepted; his offering being accepted, he likewise was accepted (Gen., Chpt. 4).

DIFFERENT TIME, SAME PROBLEM

From then until now, the situation hasn't changed. Man doesn't desire to accept God's Way, so, being religious, he devises his own way, which God can never accept. Man's ways, as Cain of old, are always religious; because they are religious, they deceive many people.

What we will give you in this Study Guide is not man's way, but rather God's Way. It will not be popular, because the Cross has never been popular. The only thing one can really say about it is, "It works!"

REVELATION

Even though I have been an avid Bible student all of my life, what I will give you in this Study Guide was not derived from men, but rather by Revelation. But yet, as stated, it is not new. It is that which the Lord gave to the Apostle Paul, but which the modern Church has long since ceased to preach. That is tragic! We tell people how to get saved, but then the ways we give them about how to live for God are mostly wrong. Sadly, the modern Church, and I speak of those who are truly saved, is condemned to live the 7th Chapter of Romans on a continuing basis. To be sure, that is not the "more abundant life" of which Jesus spoke (Jn. 10:10).

Jesus said, "You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). I would pray that the following pages would reveal "Truth" to you, and thereby have the desired effect.

Chapter 1

Personal Experience

SUBJECT

THE APOSTLE PAUL
THE PROBLEM IS NOT THEOLOGICAL, BUT RATHER MORAL
LACK OF UNDERSTANDING
THE WORD OF GOD
PRAYER
THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION
THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS
BEING MADE CONFORMABLE UNTO HIS DEATH
PATIENCE!
THE BREAD CORN WILL NOT BE BRUISED
THE VISION
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CHAPTER ONE

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Personal experience is reliable only if it coincides perfectly with the Word of God; otherwise, it is of no benefit. But if it perfectly coincides with the Word of God, it can be, and it is meant to be, a teaching tool. Nothing teaches like personal experience, that is, if we allow the Word of God to have its rightful place in our lives. I'm going to make some statements that, at first, will be shocking, but they are true. I will use Preachers of the Gospel as examples,

but the statements could apply, and do apply, to any Believer. But to illustrate the point, I will use Preachers.

There are thousands of Ministers presently, who truly love the Lord, who are trying to be an example of Righteousness, who are Baptized with the Holy Spirit, who are seeing lives changed and souls saved in their Ministries, but who, at the same time, are living a life of spiritual failure—and that despite the fact that they are trying their hardest to do otherwise. The 7th Chapter of Romans clearly bears this out.

THE APOSTLE PAUL

One can hardly deny that Paul was saved, Baptized with the Holy Spirit, and called to be an Apostle. But yet, Paul found that no matter how hard he tried, no matter how much he used his willpower (Rom. 7:18), he still couldn't live a victorious life, i.e., victory over sin.

And yet, let us quickly state that when Paul wrote the 7th Chapter of Romans, he definitely then knew how to live a victorious life, and definitely was living a victorious life, for the Revelation of this victorious living had been given to him by Christ Jesus (Gal. 1:11–12). However, for a period of time, possibly even several years, Paul, because he did not yet know the Victory of the Cross, tried to live for the Lord in all the wrong ways, which resulted in failure, as it always does!

In Paul's defense, there was no one else in the world at that time who knew of the Revelation of the Cross, because it had not yet been given. As stated, it was first of all given to Paul. Paul actually was given the meaning of the New Covenant, which is the meaning

of the Cross, which he gave to us in his Epistles. Regrettably, the modern Church little understands what he gave us, or else they do not believe what he gave us.

However, despite the fact that no one in the world of that particular time knew of the Victory of the Cross, which was the meaning of the New Covenant, still, the effects of not knowing this Truth were definitely borne out in the lives of the followers of Christ, i.e., spiritual failure, and is evidenced in the 7th Chapter of Romans.

Thank God that great Revelation was given to the Apostle Paul, and he gave it to us in order that we might walk victoriously over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. In Truth, the only way that one can be victorious is by and through what the Lord gave to Paul, which is the Victory of the Cross (Rom. 6:1–14; Col. 2:14-15; Gal. 6:14).

THE PROBLEM IS NOT THEOLOGICAL, BUT RATHER MORAL

In my mind's eye, I go back to October of 1991. The Ministry was in shambles, and I did not know what to do. Despite all of my efforts otherwise, failure was the result—failure, I might quickly add, of which the world took full advantage, and, regrettably, the Church, as well.

The day in question is freeze-framed in my mind. Preachers were calling right and left, all demanding I take the psychological route. When you've tried your hardest and you've still failed, despite all that you could do, and you do not understand why, you then become very vulnerable. Of course, Satan takes full advantage of such! This is the same state that Paul was in before the great Revelation of the Cross was given to him.

Paul said, "For that which I do I allow (understand) not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Rom. 7:15). One would have to conclude that the Apostle was trying with all of his strength to live as he ought to live. Despite that great effort, however, he found he could not come up to the mark. And then, the very thing he did not want to do is that which he found himself doing. It leaves a terrible conclusion, and, I might quickly add, a terrible fear.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

The word "allow," as used by the King James translators in Romans 7:15, actually should have been translated "understand," for that's what it really means. The Apostle is, in effect, saying, "I don't understand what is happening to me. I'm trying so hard; but, despite all my best efforts, I'm still failing!"

Regrettably and sadly, that is the exact position of most modern Christians, and I'm speaking of good Christians! Referring to them as "good Christians" may seem like a contradictory statement, but I am speaking of their efforts to try to live for God, not the results! Coming back to my own personal situation: While I did not know the reason for my failure, still, at the same time, I did know that the world held no answers.

THE WORD OF GOD

That October morning, there were several of us sitting in our living room. I laid my Bible on the coffee table, and I said, "I don't know the answer, but I know the answer is in the Word of God. And by the Grace of God, I'm going to find that answer." It was one of the greatest things I ever did!

I suspect that many Believers, even many Preachers, come to that same place; however, if one turns to any other source but the Bible, tragedy always will be the result. To turn to any way other than the Bible registers unbelief, which will only lead the person deeper into a quagmire of failure. There is no victory at all in that direction.

That's the reason if people refuse the Message of the Cross, it is not on theological grounds. In other words, it is not because it's so difficult to understand. It is because of unbelief, which means that it is a moral problem.

That is the reason for the rejection of the Cross of Christ, and the acceptance by the Church of all type of schemes and devices originating with man. The answer to victorious living, and the only answer to victorious living, is in the Word of God. I expect to give that answer to you in this short Volume.

PRAYER

Despite my commitment of consecration, the Heavens did not immediately open with a grand manifestation of light. But they did open, with the Lord first of all telling me to begin two prayer meetings a day. He said, "Do not seek Me so much for what I can do, but more so for Who I Am." He wanted me to get to know Him

in a way that I had not previously known, and that's exactly what happened.

Paul himself alluded to this when he said, "That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. 3:10). Didn't the great Apostle truly and fully know the Lord? So why did he say, "That I may know Him ..."?

The Apostle meant that he should know Christ in a certain way, which he gives us in this Passage. Let's look at what the Apostle said:

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

First of all, Paul is not speaking here of the Resurrection which is to come, which is outlined in the 15th Chapter of I Corinthians, and which is sometimes referred to as the Rapture (I Thess. 4:13–18). He is rather speaking of the Resurrection of Christ and our being resurrected with Him.

Concerning this, he said:

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? "Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:3–15). Please understand: Paul is not speaking here of Water Baptism, but rather the Crucifixion of Christ, and our being baptized into His death, buried with Him, and raised with Him in newness of life,

which are all done by Faith in Christ and what He has done for us at the Cross.

Many Believers talk about Resurrection Life, but most of the time they are ignoring the Cross. The Apostle plainly stated that if we are to have and enjoy “Resurrection Life,” which we are certainly meant to do, all paid for by Jesus Christ, then we must understand that Resurrection Life is predicated solely on the understanding that “we have been planted together in the likeness of His death.” In other words, Resurrection Life is predicated on a proper understanding of the Cross. If we lack a proper understanding of the Cross, then there will be very little Resurrection Life.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

Some people think that this statement is meant that we are to suffer for Christ. No, that’s not what it means!

To “know the fellowship of His sufferings” means that we are to have the benefits of those sufferings, which speaks of the Cross. Christ went to the Cross, not for Angels, not for the Godhead, not for Himself, but solely for you and me. He paid a terrible price for all that we have, and it certainly should stand to reason that He wants us to have all that for which He has paid such a price. I can only “fellowship His sufferings” by accepting that which He did for me at the Cross, and abiding in it, even on a daily basis (Lk. 9:23). It is an insult of the highest order to our Lord, considering the great price that He paid for us, which included every single thing that we need, for us not to avail ourselves of this opportunity.

How would you feel if you worked and labored and built your son or daughter a very nice house, complete with all of the finest features, and, instead of going to live in that nice house, they instead would pitch a tent a few yards from that house, and go live in that tent? I'm sure it would not set too well with you; and, to be sure, it doesn't set too well with the Lord if we do not avail ourselves of all that He has done for us.

BEING MADE CONFORMABLE UNTO HIS DEATH

I am made "conformable unto His death" by exhibiting faith in that which He has done for me, and faith in that alone! In other words, I am to conform to "His death," understanding that every single thing I receive from the Lord comes to me exclusively from Christ as the Source and the Cross as the Means.

The word "conformable" in the Greek is "summorphos," which means "fashioned like unto." I am to fashion my life and living according to what He did for me at the Cross, which will provide everything I need.

So, when the Lord spoke to me that day and said, "Do not seek Me so much for what I can do, but more so for Who I am," I know that of which He was speaking, although it took me years to learn it. I have always had a strong prayer life, but now the Lord was telling me to increase it. Actually, it's a regimen I hold to even unto this present time. For a little more than ten years, a small group of us met every morning at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., with the exceptions of Wednesday and Sunday evenings, which are Service times.

During these times, the Lord would move upon me greatly, ever leading me closer and closer to Him. And yet, at the same time,

there really was no answer regarding that for which I was so eagerly seeking. Actually, at that time, I really didn't even know that for which I was seeking. I knew that I wanted the Lord's means of Victory, and I speak of perpetual Victory, but that's about as far as it went.

PATIENCE!

At times, I complained to the Lord, "Why is it taking so long?" I desired more results than I was seeing. At one particular time, I went through a bout of discouragement, asking the Lord repeatedly to give me something, but seemingly to no avail.

And then it happened! At least the Lord told me the reason for the delay. It was a Thursday night in the early part of November of 1992. The prayer meeting crowd that night was rather small, perhaps numbering only 10–15 people. As I began to seek the Lord that night, after a short period of time, the Spirit of God came over me, and the Lord began to speak to my heart.

The Lord told me he was being thorough and exact in His working with my life. Every fine detail was being addressed; nothing was to be left undone; even that which seemed to be insignificant was being minutely inspected. Then He said this to me, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10).

At first, I did not properly understand what the Lord was saying to me, especially considering that He was using this obscure Passage from Isaiah. It took several years for me to come to the knowledge of what He was actually saying. Possibly, I don't understand all of it even yet.

That November night in 1992, He was telling me that the way He was doing things was just as important as what He would do. Nothing must be left unaddressed, and everything in my life must be exactly according to the Word of God. Also, it meant that this would not take place instantly, but would be done “here a little, and there a little.”

Some five more years would pass before the Lord would begin to open up to me that for which I had so long sought; however, those five years definitely were not wasted, but were all preparation time.

THE BREAD CORN WILL NOT BE BRUISED

During this period of several years of waiting on the Lord, constantly seeking Him, ever drawing closer and closer, the Lord used another obscure Passage from Isaiah to greatly encourage me. That Passage is:

“Bread corn is bruised; because He will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of His cart, nor bruise it with His horsemen” (Isa. 28:28).

Actually, this Scripture is somewhat a question, “Is bread corn bruised?” And the answer is given in the negative by the rest of the sentence, “No.” The farmer will not always continue threshing it. He will not always be crunching it with the wheels of his cart, nor bruising it with his horses.

Even where the rougher modes of threshing are employed, there is moderation in their employment. Care is taken not to injure the grain. Here the main bearing of the entire Parable appears. The afflictions which God sends upon His people are adapted to their strengths and to their needs. In no case are they used to crush and

injure; only such violence is used that is required to detach the good seed from the husk. Where the process is most severe, still, the "bread corn" is not "bruised."

THE VISION

I believe the year was 1982. We were in Guatemala City, Guatemala, in a city wide crusade. It was to be conducted in the central part of the city, in a stadium which seated about 35,000. Frances and I, along with the rest of the team, had arrived several days early in order to prepare for the meeting. I would use this time to study and pray. The night in question must have been Wednesday, because the meeting was scheduled to begin on Friday night.

If I remember correctly, I awakened about 1 a.m., slipped out of bed, and went into the next room so I would not awaken Frances. There I began to seek the Lord. To be frank, there were many things to pray about. At that very time, the Ministry was being severely attacked, due to the Message that I believe God had told me to deliver to our Catholic friends. The Message of "Justification by Faith" had not been taken lightly. The opposition was intense! But strangely enough, the opposition was far more intense from the Charismatics and my own Pentecostal brethren. In certain areas, they were attempting to get our Telecast taken off the air. Right in the middle of this, we had to leave for the Crusade in Guatemala. As I began to seek the Lord that night, my heart was heavy. As stated, I had much to pray about. As I began to pray, however, walking back and forth in the room, I sensed an unusual Moving of the Holy Spirit. Then the Lord gave me what I believe was a Vision.

THE THRESHINGFLOOR

I saw the threshingfloor that Isaiah described regarding the “bread corn.” In the Vision, I saw the grain being thrown into the air and the wind whipping the husk to side of the threshingfloor. (I do not remember seeing the crushing of the grain on the floor, but only it being thrown into the air.)

After the grain and the husk had been thrown into the air for a certain period of time, it seemed that all of the husk had been separated from the grain. The husk was scattered all around the outside of the threshingfloor. I watched as it was set on fire. It burned until no trace was left.

As I saw this all in a Vision at that early morning hour in Guatemala City, the Spirit of the Lord weighed heavily upon me. It is difficult to describe it. I was weeping uncontrollably and my body was doubled over in wracking sobs. Through the sobs, I remember asking the Lord why the husk had to be burned, especially since it had been separated completely from the grain, even from the threshingfloor.

The Lords spoke to my heart and said:
“The husk represents the flesh and the old life. Nothing of it must remain.”

To be frank, I really didn't know what He was telling me at that time. I knew He was speaking to me of my own life, and the husk that would have to be separated from the grain. I also knew that what God gives us is always of far greater import than we at first realize. Little could I imagine how painful the process would be. Even as severe as the process has been, it has not crushed or injured me. The Lord has only used as much violence as was

absolutely necessary to detach the good seed from the husk. The "bread corn" was not "bruised."

Chapter 2

The Revelation

SUBJECT

WORKS OF THE FLESH

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

THE CROSS

HE TOOK ME TO ROMANS, CHAPTER 6

I CORINTHIANS

THE WORDS OF CHRIST

THE HOLY SPIRIT

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVELATION

And then it happened! After seeking the Lord day and night, so often with tears, for a period of some six years, suddenly and without warning, the Lord began to open up to me that for which I had so long sought. I honestly don't remember the day or the month, but the year was 1997. I had spent some six years in concentrated prayer, seeking the Lord, imploring Him for guidance and direction.

Let me make something clear: The daily vigil of prayer purchased me nothing with God. As stated, it was for the purpose of my getting to know Him in a more personal way. In other words, He was preparing me for this Revelation of the Cross which He would give to me. For years I had known what He could do, but now I

was learning, on a personal basis, Who He was, a description, incidentally, which can never be exhausted.

Very early, probably about 6 a.m., on the morning in question, I was in my office working on the Romans Commentary. In fact, I was working on the 6th Chapter of that great work given to us by the Apostle Paul, which actually is "The Theology of the Church." I was studying some material written by the late Dr. Kenneth Wuest, a noted Greek Scholar and Brother, whose great love for the Lord was obvious in his writings. Dr. Wuest was explaining the "sin nature."

All of a sudden, the Spirit of the Lord came over me, and He began to reveal to my heart the meaning of this aspect of our Christian experience. In a moment's time, I saw it, and I saw it clearly. I can remember getting up from behind my desk and pacing back and forth across my office, tears streaming down my cheeks. The Lord then spoke to my heart and said, "You have asked Me the cause of your problem. It is the sin nature, and your lack of understanding about how it works and how it is to be controlled."

Strangely enough, even though the Lord gave me this information, which was the answer to so many questions, still, at that time, He did not tell me how to control the sin nature. He just simply told me this was what constituted my problem, which also is the problem of every single Believer in the world who does not understand what the Lord gave to Paul, and which Paul gave to us. It is the 6th Chapter of Romans which deals with this extremely important subject, which I will explain momentarily to a greater degree.

Countless times, I had sought the Lord earnestly, asking Him how I could have the help of the Holy Spirit in doing the Work of the

Lord, but not have His help regarding victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. I knew in my heart that this was not the way it was supposed to be, but, at that time, I did not have the knowledge about how perpetual victory could be attained.

I've always had a strong prayer life, and I tried my best to pray the problem away. To be sure, I was greatly blessed in my prayer vigils, which I continue unto this hour, and will ever continue, but I did not there find the victory I so earnestly sought.

For a while, I would pray an hour each day; then it got to the place where I would get up in the middle of the night and pray another hour. The reason I did this was because I did not know what else to do; I was fighting for my very life. The pain is even greater, more than words can even express, when the failure becomes obvious to all, and the Church, and I'm speaking of the Church world in general, claims that you are lying about your prayer life, and even resorts to making jokes at your expense about the whole situation.

Please read carefully the following:

“When a person is down, and can do nothing to defend himself, and anyone can do any negative thing to him they so desire, and will not only not be reprimanded, but rather applauded, then one finds out just how many true Christians there really are. Tragically, there aren't many!”

If the sin nature is not properly understood, and thereby properly controlled, then “works of the flesh” are going to manifest themselves in one's life. It does not matter who that person is, whether he is the Pastor of the largest Church in the world, or whether he is the Evangelist who draws the biggest crowds. If such a person doesn't understand the Cross as it regards Sanctification,

works of the flesh will definitely manifest themselves in some way in such a person's life and living. It is inevitable!

WORKS OF THE FLESH

Paul tells us this in the 5th Chapter of Galatians. The entire Book of Galatians, but especially the 5th Chapter, is a warning from Paul to the Church at Galatia, which is also meant for us. The warning is that if they place their faith in anything except "Christ and Him Crucified," that "Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. 5:2).

The Apostle goes on to say that if the Believer doesn't adhere to the Way of the Spirit, which is the Way of the Cross, then works of the flesh will manifest themselves. He said:

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19–21).

Now let me say it again, because it is so very important: If the Believer doesn't understand the Cross of Christ, as it regards Sanctification, then, in some way, one or more of these "works of the flesh" are going to manifest themselves in his life. As stated, such is inevitable!

The first four, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness," are obvious and easily understood. But the modern

Christian quickly dismisses “idolatry, witchcraft, and heresies,” thinking they do not really apply today.

Let us address that:

First of all, any suggested way of victory other than the Cross of Christ, such as the “Purpose Driven Life,” the “Government of Twelve,” the “Word of Faith,” or “Denominationalism,” etc., constitutes idolatry. In effect, it is the same as Old Testament times, when Israel would begin to worship idols instead of Jehovah. To be sure, Israel actually referred to these idols as Jehovah; but the Lord definitely did not look at it in the same manner! And neither does He look any differently at modern idolatry!

Furthermore, all of this constitutes “heresies,” in which the modern Church abounds.

Let me say it more clearly:

Any doctrine, way, scheme, or direction made up by men, which means it is devised by men and not by God, is constituted by the Lord as “heresy,” which is a “work of the flesh.”

Let me say it again, and because it is so very, very important! Any way other than “Christ and Him Crucified” is, in the eyes of God, “heresy.”

Once one begins to understand these “works of the flesh,” these things become more obvious.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

Inasmuch as the Lord used the 6th Chapter of the Book of Romans to open up to me this great Truth of the Cross, I would think it would be obvious that this Book is very, very dear to me personally.

I also think it ought to be very dear to every Believer on the face of the Earth.

Let me give you a little breakdown of what this great Epistle is all about:

Chapter 1: The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul deals with the Gentile world in this first Chapter, concluding all to be without God. In other words, down through the many centuries, man could not find God by his own machinations, with the Gentile world concluding in utter spiritual tragedy.

Chapters 2 and 3: Paul here deals with the Jewish question, concluding them to be in need of the Redeemer just as much as the Gentiles. To be sure, this didn't set very well with the Jews.

Consequently, this tells us that there is one Salvation for all, and ever has been. We are told what that Salvation is in the next two Chapters.

Chapters 4 and 5: These two Chapters unequivocally tell us that the answer to the dilemma, the solution to the problem, is "Justification by Faith." In these two Chapters, Paul uses both Abraham and David as examples. Abraham is used as an example of the unredeemed individual coming to the Lord, which he can do, not at all by works, rather only by Faith, which refers to Faith in Christ. He uses David as an example of the Believer who has drifted and strayed, who can find his way back only by looking to Christ and the Cross. The solution and the answer for all men, no matter who they are, is "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified." The individual, unredeemed or redeemed, must express Faith in Christ and what Christ has done for us at the Cross. Otherwise, there can be no positive results. It is all "Justification by Faith." That is the answer to the dilemma of the human race.

Chapter 6: Now that the Holy Spirit through Paul has told us the answer for Redemption, He now tells the Believer how to live for God, which is found in this great 6th Chapter of Romans. As someone has well said, "The 6th Chapter of the Book of Romans constitutes 'the mechanics of the Holy Spirit,' as He tells us how to live for God."

If the Believer doesn't understand the 6th Chapter of Romans, such a Believer simply does not know how to live for the Lord. He can still be a Christian and not understand this Chapter, but he definitely cannot walk in victory, which means the "more abundant life" promised to us by Christ cannot be realized. It is certainly true that every Believer in the world has "more abundant life," nevertheless, precious few Believers actually are enjoying "more abundant life." That is the case because they do not understand this 6th Chapter of Romans.

Chapter 7: If one doesn't understand Chapter 6, then one is bound to repeat Chapter 7. Tragically and sadly enough, Chapter 7 is where most of the modern Church resides; however, it doesn't have to be that way. Upon properly understanding Chapter 6, the Believer can walk in perpetual victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

Chapter 8: As Chapter 6 is referred to as "The Mechanics of the Holy Spirit," the 8th Chapter of Romans is referred to as "The Dynamics of the Holy Spirit." In other words, after we learn "how" the Holy Spirit works, which is given to us in Chapter 6, then we learn "what" He does, which is given to us in Chapter 8. Unfortunately, many Believers attempt to jump from Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, completely bypassing Chapter 6. Regrettably, they do not land in Chapter 8, but rather in Chapter 7.

Chapters 9–11: In these three Chapters, the Apostle Paul uses Israel as an example. He said of Israel: “For they being ignorant of God’s Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3).

Then he further states that if the Church follows Israel’s example, the Church will also be “cut off” (Rom. 11:22). Regrettably, the Word of God portrays the Church as doing just that—following Israel’s abject example. In the Book of Revelation, the seven Churches of Asia portray the entirety of the Church Age from its beginning to its conclusion (Rev. Chpts. 2–3). The Lord’s last Message is to the Church at Laodicea; there He is pictured as being outside the Church, knocking, endeavoring to get in (Rev. 3:14–22). So, for all practical purposes, the modern Church has followed the example of Israel, and has totally and completely apostatized. Yes, there is a Remnant in the Church who are truly living for God, just as there was a Remnant in Israel—but only a Remnant (Rom. 11:5).

Chapters 12–16: These four Chapters give the practical aspects of Christianity once the Believer knows how to live for the Lord. But unless the Believer properly understands the 6th Chapter of Romans, thereby accruing to himself the blessings of the 8th Chapter of Romans, there is no way that the practical aspects of Christian living can be carried out properly.

Let me say it again:

A person can be saved and make Heaven his or her eternal home, even if they do not understand the 6th Chapter of Romans; however, without understanding that Chapter, they simply cannot live a victorious, overcoming Christian life. Chapter 6 is God’s Prescribed Order of Victory; unless we subscribe to that Prescribed Order, Victory will not be ours, no matter how hard we try otherwise!

THE CROSS

I knew what the Lord had given me regarding the “sin nature,” and that it was the answer to my question “Why?” But, as stated, when He revealed that to me, He didn’t give me the solution to the problem. He told me what the problem was, which was a great Truth, but yet, I didn’t have the solution; however, the Lord never does anything half way.

It was in one of the morning prayer meetings, actually only a few days after the Lord had given to me the Revelation of the sin nature. At that time, I was seeking the Lord, actually asking Him to reveal to me the solution to this problem. How are we to address the sin nature? How can we control it? And then He began to speak to my heart.

“The answer which you seek is found in the Cross! The solution which you seek is found only in the Cross!” I knew it was the Lord; of that I had no doubt. The Spirit of God flowed over my soul for the entire prayer meeting. I knew I had found the answer. I cannot even begin to tell you how I felt. It was like I had been in prison, the doors were now opened, and I was being told, “Go free!”

I had no doubt about what the Lord had told me. He said, “The solution which you seek is found in the Cross!” As the tears rolled down my cheeks and the Presence of the Lord filled my soul, I kept saying those words over and over again. In the days to come, He very speedily began to open up to me the Word of God, showing me exactly how it was, and is, the Cross.

HE TOOK ME TO ROMANS, CHAPTER 6

Paul said: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin (the sin nature), that Grace may abound?

“God forbid. How shall we, who are dead to sin (dead to the sin nature), live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:1–2).

These Passages let us know that sin, i. e., “the sin nature,” is the problem. While Preachers might try to say that this, or that, or something else is the problem, the Holy Spirit tells us that “sin” is the problem. It might be a sin of commission or a sin of omission, but, to be sure, sin is the problem.

He then tells us that the only remedy for sin, the only solution for sin, the only answer to sin, is the Cross of Christ. In other words, the Holy Spirit through Paul takes the Believer straight to the Cross. Remember, Paul is not speaking here to unbelievers, but rather to Believers. As we attempt to live for God, and I mean live for God properly, this tells us that we must ever understand that it is the Cross of Christ where we must begin, and where we must end. There is nothing after the Cross of Christ, because there needs to be nothing after the Cross of Christ.

Paul said, “Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:3–5).

Now let’s examine these same Passages from THE EXPOSITOR’S STUDY BIBLE.

“Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ (plainly says that this Baptism is into Christ and not water [I Cor. 1:17; 12:13; Gal. 3:28–29; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:11–13]) were baptized into His Death? (When Christ died on the Cross, in the Mind of God, we died with Him; in other words, He became our Substitute, and our identification with Him in His Death gives us all the benefits for which He died; the idea is that He did it all for us!) “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death (not only did we die with Him, but we were buried with Him as well, which means that all the sin and transgression of the past were buried; when they put Him in the Tomb, they put all of our sins into that Tomb as well): that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (we died with Him, we were buried with Him, and His Resurrection was our Resurrection to a “Newness of Life”). “For if we have been planted together (with Christ) in the likeness of His death (Paul proclaims the Cross as the instrument through which all Blessings come; consequently, the Cross must ever be the object of our Faith, which gives the Holy Spirit latitude to work within our lives), we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection.” (We can have the “likeness of His Resurrection,” i.e., “live this Resurrection Life,” only as long as we understand the “likeness of His Death,” which refers to the Cross as the means by which all of this is done.)

I CORINTHIANS

The Lord then took me to I Corinthians. Paul said there: “For Christ sent me not to baptize (presents to us a Cardinal Truth), but to Preach the Gospel (the manner in which one may be saved from sin): not with wisdom of words (intellectualism is not the Gospel), lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

(This tells us in no uncertain terms that the Cross of Christ must always be the emphasis of the Message.)

“For the Preaching (Word) of the Cross is to them who perish foolishness (Spiritual things cannot be discerned by unredeemed people, but that doesn’t matter; the Cross must be preached just the same, even as we shall see); but unto us who are saved, it is the Power of God. (The Cross is the Power of God simply because it was there that the total sin debt was paid, giving the Holy Spirit, in Whom the Power resides, latitude to work mightily within our lives.)

“But we preach Christ Crucified (this is the foundation of the Word of God, and thereby of Salvation), unto the Jews a stumblingblock (the Cross was the stumblingblock), and unto the Greeks foolishness (both found it difficult to accept as God a dead Man hanging on a Cross, for such Christ was to them).

“And I, Brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom (means that Paul depended not on oratorical abilities, nor did he delve into philosophy, which was the rage of that particular day), declaring unto you the Testimony of God (which is Christ and Him Crucified).

“For I determined not to know anything among you (with purpose and design, Paul did not resort to the knowledge or philosophy of the world regarding the Preaching of the Gospel), save Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified.” (That, and that alone, is the Message which will save the sinner, set the captive free, and give the Believer perpetual victory [I Cor. 1:17–18, 23; 2:1-2].)

Paul also said, “But God forbid that I should glory (boast) save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (what the opponents of Paul

sought to escape at the price of insincerity is the Apostle's only basis of exultation), by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (The only way we can overcome the world, and I mean the only way, is by placing our Faith exclusively in the Cross of Christ, and keeping it there [Gal. 6:14].)

Seeing all of this, I began to understand that the story of the Bible, in its totality, is the story of "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified." Jesus said as much.

THE WORDS OF CHRIST

After His Resurrection, with His Disciples still not believing that He has risen from the dead, He suddenly appeared to two of His Disciples as they were going to a village called Emmaus. The Disciples did not recognize Who He was; they thought He was merely a stranger.

The Scripture says, "And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that you have one to another, as you walk, and are sad?" (Lk. 24:17). They began to relate to Him all the things which recently had happened.

"Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken:

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?

"And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Lk. 24:25-27).

The Cross of Christ is the foundation principle of all Biblical Doctrine. It is the foundation because it is the first principle of Redemption, brought about in the Mind of God even before the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:18–20). This means that every single doctrine must be built on the foundation of Christ and the Cross, or else, in some way, it will be spurious. And that's the problem with the modern Church; it is building doctrines on other foundations.

Paul addressed this by saying:

“According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder (in essence Paul, under Christ, founded the Church), I have laid the foundation (Jesus Christ and Him Crucified), and another builds thereon (speaks of all Preachers who followed thereafter, even unto this very moment, and have built upon this foundation). But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. (All must preach the same Doctrine Paul preached, in essence, “Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.”)

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid (anything other than the Cross is another foundation, and therefore unacceptable to the Lord), which is Jesus Christ (Who He is, God manifest in the flesh, and what He did, Redemption through the Cross [I Cor. 3:10–11]).

In I Corinthians 1:17, which we have just quoted, the Holy Spirit through the Apostle tells us exactly what the Gospel is. To be brief, it is the “Cross of Christ.” As our Lord said to me, “The answer for which you seek is found in the Cross,” in effect, He actually said, “In the Cross, and only in the Cross.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT

After the Lord gave me the solution to the sin nature, for some days I wondered how the Holy Spirit entered into all of this. I certainly knew that He did, and in a great way, but I didn't know exactly how. Shortly I would find out exactly the part He plays, which was to prove to be a Revelation of outstanding proportions.

The Lord, in fact, had spoken to my heart in March of 1988, saying, "I will show you things about the Holy Spirit you do not now know." The Revelation He gave me regarding the Holy Spirit, i.e., how He works in our hearts and lives as it relates to the Cross, was to be the fulfillment of that Promise.

However, that Revelation covers such a wide span of information that I have dedicated another Study Guide—THE CROSS OF CHRIST: THE HOLY SPIRIT—to that material.

Chapter 3

What Is The Sin Nature?

SUBJECT

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SIN NATURE LACK OF SCRIPTURAL TEACHING PRIVILEGES IN CHRIST

CHAPTER THREE *WHAT IS THE SIN NATURE?*

In simple terminology, the sin nature is the bent of the human being toward sin. When Adam and Eve fell, they fell from the level of total God-consciousness down to the far, far lower level of sin-consciousness. As a result of the Fall, their entire nature became one of sin. In other words, they were controlled by the sin nature, even as every single unredeemed person in the world is controlled by the sin nature.

Before you, as a Believer, gave your heart to Christ, you were totally and completely controlled by the sin nature, and in every capacity, which refers to every aspect of life and living. In other words, your whole bent or persuasion was altogether toward sin.

Paul said:

“And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
“Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:

“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph. 2:1–3).

Let us look now at these same Verses from THE EXPOSITOR’S NEW TESTAMENT:

“And you has He quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins (total depravity due to the Fall and original sin); “Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world (refers to the fact that the unredeemed order their behavior and regulate their lives within this sphere of trespasses and sins), according to the prince of the power of the air (pertains to the fact that Satan heads up the system of this world), the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (the spirit of Satan, which fills all unbelievers, thereby working disobedience):

“Among whom (the children of disobedience) also we all had our conversation (manner of life) in times past in the lusts of our flesh (evil cravings), fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (the minds of the unredeemed are the laboratory of perverted thoughts, impressions, imaginations, etc.); and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (God’s Wrath is unalterably opposed to sin, and the only solution is the Cross.)

All of this tells us that the sin nature totally and completely controls the unredeemed individual, whoever that person might be, despite their education or lack thereof! Born in original sin, mankind is controlled by the sin nature, which is the cause of all war, strife, and man’s inhumanity to man.

As we have stated, this thing can be ameliorated only by one's acceptance of Christ and what Christ has done for us at the Cross.

At the Cross alone was sin addressed.

Paul said: "But this Man (this Priest, Christ Jesus), after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever (speaks of the Cross), sat down on the Right Hand of God (refers to the great contrast with the Priests under the Levitical System, who never sat down, because their work was never completed; the work of Christ on the Cross was a "Finished Work," and needed no repetition [Heb. 10:12]).

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SIN NATURE

When you came to Christ, you were born again, thereby becoming a "new creation in Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 5:17). At that time, the Holy Spirit, in His regenerating process in your heart and life, also gave you the "Divine Nature" (II Pet. 1:4). When you were born again, the sin nature became dormant in your life. It was not taken out, but, as we have already addressed, it was made ineffective.

However, if you, as a Believer, do not know how to properly exercise your Faith, which must always be in the Cross of Christ, you will find yourself depending on self, even though you may not understand that's what you are doing.

When this happens, and I'm speaking of trusting in "self" instead of the Cross, you will fail the Lord. When this takes place, it is like throwing gasoline on the fire. The sin nature, which had been dormant in your life, will suddenly come alive because it is sin which fuels this nature. It will then start to control you, exactly as it did before you were saved.

As we've already stated several times, if the Believer doesn't understand the Cross as it regards Sanctification, he will not understand how to address the sin nature, and will not be able to obey the Lord, no matter how hard he may try otherwise.

Paul said:

"Let not sin therefore reign (rule) in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12).

While the sin nature is to remain in your mortal body, it is not to "reign" in your mortal body. Tragically, it is ruling and reigning in the hearts and lives of most Christians, and they don't even understand what is happening to them. The cause is either ignorance of the Word or unbelief of the Word.

Remember what Paul said:

"For that which I do I allow (understand) not" (Rom. 7:15).

LACK OF SCRIPTURAL TEACHING

This which I am teaching you is seldom taught in the modern Church. Coming up in Church as a young boy, actually being in Church most of my life, I don't recall ever hearing, or reading, one single sermon on the subject of the sin nature.

Over the years, I've read hundreds, maybe thousands, of sermons. I did occasionally come across the phrase, "sin nature," but, until I read the information given by Kenneth Wuest, no one had ever explained in their Messages exactly what the sin nature was and how dangerous it actually was.

To be sure, Scriptural ignorance can cause one just as much problem as unbelief. Unfortunately, almost all of the modern Church is ignorant regarding the "sin nature." As a result, failure

among Believers is of tragic proportions. And, please believe me, the failure of which we speak results in broken hearts, broken lives, twisted dreams, and pain and suffering of such magnitude as to defy all description.

The Reader should carefully notice in the Word of God how frequently the Apostle Paul says, “Now I would not have you ignorant ...” (Rom. 1:13; 10:3; 11:25; I Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 14:38; II Cor. 1:8; 2:11; I Thess. 4:13). Considering that the word “ignorant” was used that many times in Paul’s writings, don’t you think the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us something?

The sad truth is that the sin nature is ruling, in some way, the hearts and lives of most Christians, exactly as it did before they got saved. This is tragic, but true!

And how do I know that?

I know that simply because the modern Church understands the Cross not at all as it regards Sanctification. That being the case, and it most definitely is, the sin nature will most definitely rule and reign. That makes for a miserable existence for the Child of God. The following illustration is, I’m told, a true story. Most of you have heard it, but it is so indicative of what I say that I feel it is worth repeating.

PRIVILEGES IN CHRIST

A young couple had long desired to emigrate from Ireland to the United States. They had labored long and hard, and saved all the money they possibly could in order to purchase tickets for the ocean voyage. Even then, they had to purchase the lowest fare there was on the ship. In spite of having passage in the lowest class,

they were elated at the prospect of coming to America. They were looking forward to a new way and a new life.

About a day before reaching New York harbor, one of the ship's stewards was walking down the hall past their small room. Their door was open, so the steward stopped to speak to the man and his wife. He asked them where they were from, where they were going, and made other small talk. He noticed some crumbs on the bed and casually asked the young couple what those crumbs were. The man answered, "We just had our lunch."

After a short pause, the young man continued, "We had enough money to purchase tickets for the ship, but we didn't have any money left over to afford to buy restaurant meals. So we packed sandwiches and other snacks, such as bread and crackers, as best we could. By now," he said, "it's getting very stale and musty, and difficult to eat."

The steward stood looking at the young couple and said, "You mean that you have been eating your own sandwiches, stale bread, and crackers, all the time since the ship left London?"

"Yes," answered the young husband, "that's all we had!"

"But sir," replied the steward, "even though you are in the lowest class cabin on the ship, your tickets still include all your meals in any one of several restaurants."

The young man responded, "You mean our ticket also included all our meals?"

"Yes," said the steward, "all the meals, in fact, as much as you would want to eat. And our food is excellent!"

Many Believers are functioning in the same manner as this young man and his wife of so long ago. They have a ticket, bought and paid for by Jesus Christ, but yet they are not functioning according to the total worth of that ticket. To be sure, the ticket provided to us by our Lord guarantees all that we need, and as much as we need for this journey.

That means that we can be victorious in any and every capacity. Exactly as the Scripture has said, "Sin shall not have dominion over us" (Rom. 6:14). It's all bought and paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ. And if we do without anything, as it regards this victorious life, it is our fault and not the fault of the One Who has paid for the ticket. I would hope and pray that the Lord would use this Study Guide to bring each of you up to the place and position in Christ that you ought to enjoy.

To be sure, living for Jesus is the most exciting, the most wonderful, the most fulfilling life there is. In fact, Satan has absolutely nothing to compare with this which is given by our Lord. But this life is possible only if we order our life and living according to God's Prescribed Order, which is "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified."

Chapter 4

The Sin Nature and Ignorance

SUBJECT

**WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS IGNORANCE?
FAILURE AMONG CHRISTIANS
HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY
MANIFESTATIONS
CHRISTIANS AND DEMONS
THE CONFESSION PRINCIPLE
PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE**

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SIN NATURE AND IGNORANCE

It is tragic when the far greater majority of the modern Church world little knows or understands anything about the sin nature, especially considering that there is very little that is more important. This means that the modern Church is, for all practical purposes, totally ignorant regarding the sin nature. This means that most Preachers do not understand what it means, do not understand how it works, and do not understand the answer to this problem. And if the Preachers do not understand the problem or the answer, it is for certain that the people who sit under them have no understanding in this capacity.

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS IGNORANCE?

I dare say that most of you who hold this Study Guide in your hands knew virtually nothing about the sin nature before you learned about it from us.

The modern Church doesn't understand the sin nature, because it doesn't understand the Cross. Even as I've already related, when the Lord began to open up to me the Message of the Cross, the very first thing he told me was the meaning of the sin nature.

After studying the Word of God for a period of time in this respect, I learned that this was the very first thing the Lord gave to Paul, which he then gave to us in the 6th Chapter of Romans, which I will address to a greater degree a little later. The understanding of the sin nature and the Cross actually go hand in hand. To look at the entire picture, the sin nature, the Cross of Christ, and the Holy Spirit all are in the same package, so to speak, at least as far as understanding is concerned.

To lack understanding regarding the Cross automatically means that the Believer does not understand the sin nature, and also does not know how the Holy Spirit works. Even many Pentecostal Believers, who have truly been Baptized with the Holy Spirit, do not know or understand how the Holy Spirit works within their lives.

FAILURE AMONG CHRISTIANS

When one does not understand how the Holy Spirit works, which is caused by a lack of understanding of the Cross, this results in so much failure in hearts and lives. Most Spirit-filled Believers think that the Holy Spirit just works automatically within their lives. He

doesn't! If He did, then there wouldn't be a single failure in the hearts and lives of any Christian. But due to the fact that failure is rampant, especially at this present time, we must come to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit simply is not able to do the things He desires to do.

There are some of you who are holding this Study Guide in your hands right now, who are truly born again and seeking to please the Lord with everything in you, but who are being totally overrun by the powers of darkness, and you just don't know the reason why. In fact, the harder you try to live a Godly, holy life, the more, it seems, you fail. You know that you are saved and Spirit-filled, and you can't understand this terrible dichotomy that prevails in your life. You simply don't know why you are failing, especially considering that you are trying so hard to do otherwise.

In respect to this, the Church comes up with all type of supposed panaceas. Let's look a few of them:

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Beginning in the 1970's, and coming into full bloom in the 1980's, the watchword of the modern Church for Christians with problems was, and is, "You need professional help." They were speaking of humanistic psychology, because they had embraced this nefarious system in totality.

There is no help in humanistic psychology. In fact, humanistic psychology is the religion of humanism. Humanism doesn't believe in God, and doesn't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did at the Cross, so it had to devise means and ways for supposed help. That way is the psychological way.

It not only will not help, it will actually bring harm to those who participate in its schemes. This thing was birthed by Satan, and has been adopted by the world because it comes from the world. It is a shame that the Church has adopted the ways of the world to try to meet the problems of humanity.

There is absolutely no hope whatsoever in the realm of psychology. Let that be understood once and for all. It's twelve-step programs are steps into spiritual oblivion! The answer is found totally and completely in the Cross, and in the Cross alone. Tragically, the modern Church little believes in the Cross, hence the failures become more and more pronounced.

MANIFESTATIONS

Many, especially in the Pentecostal and Charismatic worlds, believe that if a person has a manifestation from the Lord, such provides the answer. It doesn't! While some manifestations definitely are of the Lord and definitely will provide a blessing for those who are privileged to participate, still, that's not the answer for sin.

How do I know that?

"Falling out under the power" is one of the greatest manifestations of all. To be sure, this is, at times, definitely of the Lord. It also will definitely bring a blessing; however, virtually all who are accordingly blessed find that a short time after the blessing has come, they are faced with the same old problem all over again, and find themselves failing all over again. That leaves nothing but confusion!

Were they not touched by the Lord?

Yes, they were (if, in fact, they really were).

Concerning this very thing, let's look at what Jesus said:

"You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32).

So, this means that if a person experiences a manifestation, even though it is truly from the Lord, if he doesn't know the truth of his problem and how to face that problem, which is the Cross, he is going to find that the problem is still with him. It is with him because he does not know the Truth!

CHRISTIANS AND DEMONS

Another proposed panacea is the claim that Christians who, in whatever capacity, are very troubled, are that way because they are demon-possessed. In other words, if the Christian has a temper problem, or a problem with lust, then he has a temper demon, or a demon of lust, etc., which need to be cast out. While demon spirits definitely do get involved any time there is sin, if a person is truly born again, he cannot be demon-possessed. That is absurd!

Every born-again Believer is "a temple of God," and, as such, the "Spirit of God dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16). To be sure, the Holy Spirit will not dwell in the same house as demon spirits. But when a Christian is trying his hardest to live right, and then still fails, such a Christian becomes very vulnerable; it becomes very easy for such a Believer to believe that demon possession is actually the problem.

Let me say it again. "It isn't!"

Some Christians with problems are going to Preachers, seeking the laying on of hands for the purpose of having certain demons cast

out of them. This has gone on down through the years, but it is especially prevalent at the current moment. These same Christians find that despite all of these efforts, the problem is still with them. It is with them and will remain with them, because they don't know the real answer, the Truth. The sin nature is ruling such a person, and does so in many and various ways. It gets more and more wicked as time goes on. So it's very easy to believe that it is a "demon possession" problem.

Let me say it even one more time. "It isn't!"

The problem is that such a Believer doesn't have his faith in Christ and the Cross, but rather in something else. That being the case, i.e., having something else as the object of his faith, the sin nature is going to rule and reign in such a life, and the problem will get worse and worse. As stated, all of this is because of Scriptural ignorance!

THE CONFESSION PRINCIPLE

With the advent of the "Word of Faith" Doctrine, which took the world by storm in a manner similar to "The Purpose Driven Church," Christians have been taught that the answer to their problem is to memorize two or three Scriptures which pertain to their problem, and then quote them over and over and over. This is supposed to bring the person into line with God, and move God into action in connection with meeting the person's need.

Now, it is very good to memorize and quote Scriptures; still, there is nothing in the Bible that even remotely suggests that this is the answer to the ills and problems of mankind. It isn't!

People who do such are using the Scriptures as some type of magic talisman—in other words, white magic.

Let me say that again!

It's great to memorize and quote Scriptures, but only if the person understands what he's doing. If someone selects some Scriptures from the Bible, and then thinks that by quoting them over and over, this will force God into action on his behalf, that person is a fool indeed! You will look in vain for such examples in the Gospels, the Book of Acts, or any of the Epistles. They don't exist! Once again, the answer is the Cross—the Cross alone!

PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

Just a moment ago I mentioned the "Purpose Driven Life," i.e., "Church." This is supposed to begin with forty days of some type of spiritual regimen, which is supposed to prepare the person for this new purpose in life. The entire scheme is that which has been conceived by men, devised by men, and carried out by men, which means it is not of God. Let me be plain and simple, even blunt: The "Purpose Driven Life" scheme is not of the Lord. It is law; as such, it cannot be Scriptural. The same can be said for the "Government of Twelve," and many other things one might name. Any scheme that eliminates the Cross, even as the "Purpose Driven Life" does, is not of God. Plain and simple, it is not of the Lord! As a result, it will not bring about any positive effects in one's life, because it is not Scriptural. Even after the forty-days regimen, one will find that their sin problem is still with them.

Let us say it even once again: The only answer is the Cross of Christ!

Many of these things named, and a score we haven't named, all come under the heading of "ignorance" or "unbelief." The Lord does not reward ignorance!

Chapter 5

The Sin Nature and Denial

SUBJECT

THE PRINCIPLE OF SIN

THE COMING CHANGE

DID ADAM AND EVE HAVE A SIN NATURE BEFORE THE FALL?

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SIN NATURE AND DENIAL

There are, unfortunately, many Preachers who claim the Believer doesn't have a sin nature. Some of them will agree that the Believer had a sin nature before he was saved, but, they say, the sin nature, now that he is saved, no longer exists. They are deriving this opinion from II Corinthians 5:17–18:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. “And all things are of God, Who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation.” It is certainly true that every Believer is a “new creation”; but still, we do not yet have all for which Jesus paid such a price on Calvary's Cross. We only have a down payment, so to speak, actually, as Paul said, “the firstfruits” (Rom. 8:23).

Our physical bodies are not yet redeemed, and will not be redeemed until the Resurrection, when we will be given Glorified Bodies. As such, the sin nature works through the physical body,

hence Paul dealing with the physical body as he did in the 6th and 8th Chapters of Romans.

In the 6th Chapter, Paul uses the word “sin” seventeen times. In the original Greek language of the Text, in fifteen of those times, the definite article is placed before the word “sin,” making it read “the sin.” It is only in Verses 14–15 that the word “sin” is used without the definite article. In Verse 14, even though the definite article is not present, the word “sin” is used as a noun, which means that Paul is continuing to refer to the principle of sin, i.e., “the sin nature.” Only in Verse 15 is the word “sin” used in the sense of acts of sin.

What does this all mean?

THE PRINCIPLE OF SIN

Whenever the word “sin” has the definite article, meaning “the sin,” it is not speaking of acts of sin, but rather the principle of sin, or the sin nature (evil nature). If one would substitute the phrase, “sin nature” or “evil nature,” for the word “sin” every time that word is used in the 6th Chapter of Romans, it would come closer to the correct rendering. When the word has the definite article, it is speaking of the sin nature. I suppose the reason the King James translators (for that’s the Version I always use) did not use the definite article is because it seems clumsy in the English language.

Now, if the Believer doesn’t have a sin nature, as some claim (in other words, they deny the existence of the sin nature), then the Holy Spirit went to an awful lot of trouble explaining something that doesn’t exist. But, truthfully, the sin nature most definitely does exist. It is supposed to be dormant, and it will remain dormant, but only if the Believer exercises proper faith in the Cross. Otherwise, it

will come to life, will do so quickly, and will begin to rule and reign in the mortal body, exactly as it did before the person was converted, which, as should be understood, causes all types of problems (Rom. 6:12).

If there is no such thing as a sin nature in the life of the Believer, then why did Paul say, "Let not the sin therefore reign in your mortal body"? It would be useless to demand something that never could be. So, to deny that one has a sin nature is overlooking the obvious.

John the Beloved addresses this subject by saying, "If we say we have no sin (the word "sin" is used here as a noun, so it also refers to the sin nature), we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I Jn. 1:8).

So, the Apostle is very clear and very strong in this Passage, going so far as to say that any Believer who denies that he has a sin nature is only deceiving himself.

THE COMING CHANGE

When the Trump of God sounds, we will then be changed. Paul said:

"For this corruptible (the sin nature) must put on incorruption (the Glorified Body won't have a sin nature), and this mortal (body of flesh and blood) must put on immortality" (will be given the Glorified Body [I Cor. 15:53]). Then, at that coming day, there will be no more sin nature.

DID ADAM AND EVE HAVE A SIN NATURE BEFORE THE FALL?

No! As should be obvious, they did not have a sin nature. No sin had been committed by them, meaning they were in perfect union with God; however, when the Fall took place, the sin nature then became a part of the human being, and continues to be a part of such unto this hour, due to the fact that all are born in original sin.

When we are born again, many things change, but the physical body doesn't. And it is the physical body through which the acts of sin are committed, even though they begin in the heart. In truth, the physical body is neutral. Within itself, it is not holy or unholy, righteous or unrighteous. Its state depends on how it is used.

Concerning this, Paul said:

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

“Neither yield you your members as instruments or unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of Righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:12–13).

Now let's examine these two Verses from the perspective of THE EXPOSITOR'S NEW TESTAMENT:

“Let not sin (the sin nature) therefore reign (rule) in your mortal body (showing that the sin nature can once again rule in the heart and life of the Believer, if the Believer doesn't constantly look to Christ and the Cross; the “mortal body” is neutral, which means it can be used for Righteousness or unrighteousness), that you should obey it in the lusts thereof (ungodly lusts are carried out through the mortal body, if Faith is not maintained in the Cross [I Cor. 1:17–18]).

“Neither yield you your members (of your mortal body) as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin (the sin nature): but yield yourselves unto God (we are to yield ourselves to Christ and the Cross; that alone guarantees victory over the sin nature), as those who are alive from the dead (we have been raised with Christ in “Newness of Life”), and your members as instruments of Righteousness unto God” (this can be done only by virtue of the Cross and our Faith in that Finished Work, and Faith which continues in that Finished Work from day-to-day [Lk. 9:23–24]).

Many, in centuries past, knowing that the physical body was used for evil acts, whatever they may have been, thought to torture the body, thinking that would solve the problem. It didn't, and it won't! In fact, the problem actually is not in the physical body; the body is just an instrument which can be used either for Righteousness or unrighteousness.

If the Believer doesn't express faith entirely in Christ and the Cross, making the Cross the object of his faith in every capacity, such a Believer will not be able, no matter how hard he tries, to yield the members of his body to Righteousness. It simply cannot be done that way, no matter how hard the Believer may try.

When the Believer places his faith entirely in Christ and the Cross, the Holy Spirit, Who is God, and Who has the Power to do anything, can easily control the sin nature, making it possible for the Believer to then yield the members of his body exclusively to Righteousness. This is God's Way, and His only Way!

Chapter 6

The Sin Nature And License

SUBJECT

SAVED?

CHRISTIANS TRYING TO SANCTIFY SELF BY SELF ERRONEOUS DIRECTION

CHAPTER SIX

THE SIN NATURE AND LICENSE

There are some Christians who do know that the Believer has a sin nature. Because of that, they use such as an excuse to sin and keep sinning. In other words, they say, "I have a sin nature, so I can't help but sin." Most fall back on the Verse written by Paul, "For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Rom. 7:15).

Such people are guilty of the sin of "antinomianism." The prefix "anti" comes from a Greek word that means exactly what it says, i.e., "to be opposed, to be against." "Nomi" in the Greek means "law." Such people, in other words, live a lawless existence, meaning that they look at sin very lightly.

They also fall back on another statement made by Paul, "Moreover the Law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). They argue that inasmuch as Grace is more powerful than sin, why worry about sin? As stated, they use the sin nature as a license to sin.

Paul addressed this mindset by asking the question:
 “Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound?”
 His answer was instant and blunt: “God forbid. How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:1-2).

So, to try to use the fact that one has a sin nature, claiming that one therefore cannot help but sin, to use some street terminology, won't wash! Those who think such things, and many do, in the first place, don't know much about the sin nature; in the second place, they don't know anything about the Cross. The Lord doesn't save us “in sin,” but rather “from sin”!

SAVED?

I would seriously doubt that such a person is actually saved. For anyone who truly knows Christ, and who has truly accepted Christ as his Saviour, the last thing he wants to do is sin. Such a Believer has the Divine Nature in his heart and life, placed there by the Holy Spirit, and sin is abhorrent to him. Such a person is not looking for an excuse to sin, but rather for ways not to sin.

Because this is so very, very important, please allow me to say it again:

When a person comes to Christ, that person is truly a “new creation,” all “in Christ Jesus.” As such, “old things” have truly “passed away,” and “all things have become new” (II Cor. 5:17). The sin and the debauchery he, as an unredeemed individual, once loved, he now hates. The things he once hated, namely living for God, he now loves. In fact, the “human nature” of such a person has changed, because he is “born again” (Jn. 3:3, 16). But unfortunately, most people, when they come to Christ, are little

taught God's Prescribed Order of Victory, so they set out to live for the Lord in all the wrong ways.

Back to the original subject, if a person wants to sin, that person is not really saved. In respect to this, John the Beloved said, "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I Jn. 3:9).

Let's look at this Verse in THE EXPOSITOR'S NEW TESTAMENT: "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin (does not practice sin); for his seed remains in him (refers to the Word of God): and he cannot sin (cannot continue to practice sin), because he is born of God." (This refers to the repugnancy of sin in the heart of the true Christian.)

John also said,

"And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins. (He did so at the Cross; the Christian cannot practice what Christ came to take away and destroy.)

"Whosoever abides in Him sins not (does not practice sin): whosoever sins (practices sin) has not seen Him, neither known Him. (As stated, Jesus saves "from" sin, not "in" sin. If we look to the Cross, "sin will not have dominion over us" [Rom. 6:14; I Jn. 3:5-6].)

CHRISTIANS TRYING TO SANCTIFY SELF BY SELF

Most Christians, tragically, although saved, simply do not know how to live for God. This means that almost all the ways they are taught boil down to the fact that those ways are wrong. What one ought to be, what one in fact must be, can be brought about only

by the Power of the Holy Spirit. What we need to be, we cannot make of ourselves. Unfortunately, almost all the teaching and preaching on this subject is just that—self trying to sanctify self.

Concerning that, Paul said:

“Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3).

Self cannot sanctify self, no matter how religious the efforts may be, as flesh cannot sanctify flesh. This can only be done, as stated, by the Holy Spirit, Who works exclusively within the framework of the Finished Work of Christ, which requires the Believer to evidence Faith exclusively in Christ and the Cross. It is always a matter of Faith, but it must be Faith in the correct object, which is ever the Cross of Christ (Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 1:17-18, 23; 2:2; Gal. 6:14).

ERRONEOUS DIRECTION

When the Preacher attempts to tell Believers how to live for God, almost invariably he introduces some type of law, generally made up either by himself or by others. As I watch all the material being offered by Preachers over Television, etc., I know in my heart that no matter how cleverly packaged it might be, still, it is worthless!

How do I know that?

I know it because these Preachers aren't preaching the Cross. The Believer must understand that it is not nearly so much what we “do,” as it is what we “believe.” In fact, it's not “doing” at all! It is always “believing”!

Paul said: “But to him who works not (doesn't trust in works for Salvation or Victory), but believes on Him Who justifies the

ungodly (through Christ and the Cross), his faith is counted for Righteousness" (God awards Righteousness only on the basis of Faith in Christ and His Finished Work [Rom. 4:5]).

Chapter 7

The Sin Nature And Struggle

SUBJECT

ERRONEOUS THINKING

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SIN NATURE AND STRUGGLE

Strangely enough, the “struggle” with the sin nature applies, more than all, to Believers who are the most consecrated. They love the Lord supremely; therefore, to fail the Lord is a burden almost too heavy to bear. And yet, not knowing the Victory of the Cross, they are constantly failing the Lord, hence the constant struggle. In fact, most of these people are led to believe that this is what the Christian experience is—a daily struggle.

Christians are definitely to “fight the good fight of faith” (I Tim. 6:12), but that should be the extent of our struggle. If the Christian is, in fact, struggling with sin, he is trying to fight a battle which he cannot hope to win. The Lord Jesus went to the Cross in order that the sin debt may be paid and sin may be defeated.

Concerning this, the Scripture plainly says: “But this Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the Right Hand of God;
“From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

“For by one Offering, He has perfected forever them who are sanctified” (Heb. 10:12-14).

In other words, our Lord totally and completely defeated sin at the Cross of Calvary. His Sacrifice of Himself was so perfect, so total, so complete, so absolute, and so final that it will never have to be repeated. Hence, Paul refers to this great Covenant as “The Everlasting Covenant,” meaning that, because it was, and is, perfect, it will never have to be repeated, or even amended (Heb. 13:20).

So, if I’m struggling with sin, then Satan has duped me into believing something which isn’t true. A Christian might definitely struggle with his faith, but he is never to struggle with his sin, that having already been addressed totally and completely at Calvary, meaning there is no sin which Jesus did not address in the Atonement.

So, to struggle with sin is to endeavor to function on the Devil’s terms instead of the terms of the New Covenant; only the latter is Victory.

ERRONEOUS THINKING

Many good Christians, as stated, actually think this, i.e., struggling with sin on a daily basis, is the lot of the Christian experience. If you are such a Christian, have you ever noticed that you are not winning this fight, but you are rather losing this fight? You are losing simply because you are trying to do something that, in the first place, you cannot do, and, in the second place, Jesus has already done it, doing it totally and completely at the Cross.

In other words, He was our Substitute; our identification with Him gives us total and complete Victory. That, in fact, is what the Cross is all about. Paul addressed this by saying, “If Righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal. 2:21). Whether such a Believer understands it or not, in his struggle with sin, he is functioning in law, a position which the Lord cannot honor.

Anything we Believers do in trying to live an overcoming life, outside of simple faith in Christ and the Cross, is constituted, in some way, as Law. In effect, our struggle with sin says that Jesus didn’t quite perform the task, and we’ve got to add our gigantic struggle to what He has already done to complete the Atonement. Such is a gross insult to our Lord. Such a position is actually one of “spiritual adultery,” which God can never honor (Rom. 7:1-4).

Please consider this:

If we are fighting and winning, after a while we are going to fight and lose. Such a conclusion is inevitable. As stated, we are to fight only “the good fight of faith.” The battle against sin has already been won at Calvary’s Cross.

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

Some will counter by saying that Jesus was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

Yes, Jesus suffered temptation, and so will every Believer. But what kind of temptation did Jesus suffer? Was Jesus tempted to commit adultery? To steal? To lie?

Emphatically, no!

His temptation, as is all true temptation, was Satan attempting to get Him to step outside of the revealed Will of God. That’s what all true

temptation actually is: to get the Believer to attempt to function outside of the Will of God, which is the Word of God, which will then bring on acts of sin. That's what Satan was doing when He tempted Jesus to turn the stones to bread (Mat. 4:3). Satan was trying to get Christ to use His Power for Himself instead of for others. Had the Father told Jesus to turn the stones to bread, that He would have done, and should have done; but that's not what the Father told Him to do, at least not at this time and place.

Whenever the Believer gets to the place that He is tempted to commit specific acts of sin, that's a sign that the sin nature, in some way, is in control. As stated, while there is definitely a "struggle" attached to this Christian experience, it is, without exception, a struggle of faith.

Years ago, I heard the great Preacher A. N. Trotter say, *"Every attack by Satan against us, no matter the direction it takes, is for but one purpose, and that is to destroy our faith, or at least seriously weaken our faith."* He was right!

No! It's not the Will of God for us to struggle against sin. That's not "more abundant life," but rather, "O wretched man that I am!..." (Rom. 7:24).

Chapter 8

The Sin Nature And Grace

SUBJECT

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE FLESH

TAKE UP THE CROSS DAILY

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

FALSE WAYS

THE BIBLE

WHY IS THE CROSS AN OFFENSE?

TO SUM UP

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SIN NATURE AND GRACE

Of all the things we have briefly addressed, i.e., ignorance, denial, license, and struggle, the “Grace of God” is the only Biblical solution to the problem. The standard definition of “Grace” is “unmerited favor.” That certainly is correct; however, to say it in a little different way, the Grace of God is simply the Goodness of God extended to undeserving Believers.

We are now living in the Dispensation of Grace, but that doesn’t mean that Grace comes automatically. In fact, Grace can be

frustrated (Gal. 2:21), and Believers can fall from Grace (Gal. 5:4). Relative to the Grace of God, the Lord has no more Grace presently than He did 3,000 years ago. The difference is the Cross.

Christ is the Source of all good things, and the Cross is the means. In other words, the Cross of Christ made it possible for God to give us a veritable river of Grace, and to do so in a constant quantity. To receive such Grace, and on a continuing basis, which is actually derived from the Holy Spirit, Who superintends all that Christ has done, the Believer simply has to register Faith in Christ and the Cross, and do so on a constant basis (Rom. 6:3-14; 8:1-2, 11; Col. 2:14-15).

That's the reason Paul said:

“For the preaching of the Cross is to them who perish foolishness, but to us who are saved it is the Power of God” (I Cor. 1:18).

The idea is this:

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Everything that Jesus did at the Cross is, without exception, and as stated, dispensed to us by and through the Office and Person of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the Dispenser, so to speak, of the Grace of God, i.e., the Goodness of God.

Paul also said:

“For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2). The Holy Spirit works exclusively within the parameters of the Atonement. It is the Cross which makes it possible for Him to live permanently within our hearts and lives, and to carry out His Ministry as the Dispenser of

Grace on our behalf. He only requires of us that we ever evidence Faith in Christ and what Christ did at the Cross.

However, when the Believer places his faith in something else other than the Cross, i.e., he makes other things the object of his faith, then, even though the Holy Spirit definitely remains in the heart and life of such a person, He will not help that person function on that basis. That leaves such a Believer attempting to live this life by his own means and ingenuity, which quickly will reveal itself as woefully insufficient.

Paul referred to this as the “flesh,” saying:
“So then they who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8).

THE FLESH

The “flesh” refers to the personal strength and ability of the individual. It is woefully inadequate! To say it in another way, what needs to be done in our Christian experience cannot be accomplished by the flesh. It can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit. We must ever realize this! His doing such, i.e., carrying out in our lives that which He Alone can do, is the Goodness of God exhibited on our behalf, which is “Grace.”

To sum up, therefore, all the Believer has to do in order to live an overcoming Christian life is to first of all understand that everything that comes to us from God has all been made possible, in totality, through Christ and what Christ did at the Cross. That’s why Jesus said:

TAKE UP THE CROSS DAILY

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself (deny his own ability and strength, i.e., “the flesh”), and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it” (Lk. 9:23-24).

The “Cross” is so important that Jesus said we must take it up, and do so on a daily basis. This is the only way that one can successfully follow Christ. When we do this, the Holy Spirit, Who Alone can make of us what we ought to be, then works magnificently within our hearts and lives. To be sure, the sin nature will then remain dormant, causing the Believer no problem whatsoever!

But if “works of the flesh” are beginning to manifest themselves in some way (Gal. 5:19-21), that is a sure sign that our faith is misplaced.

Let us say it again:

“It is all a matter of faith, but faith in the correct object, which always is the Cross of Christ.”

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

When we place our faith exclusively in the Cross of Christ, as Paul stated:

“Sin (the sin nature) shall not have dominion over you” (Rom. 6:14).

Admittedly, in this Passage, sin is not prefaced by the definite article; but still, it is used a noun; therefore, it refers to the sin nature.

That is God's Way; if we function accordingly, that is, by God's Way, which is the Way of the Cross, instead of the sin nature dominating us, we will dominate it, which is the intention of the Holy Spirit.

FALSE WAYS

Some time ago, I received a letter from a dear Brother, incidentally, whom I did not know, explaining to me how he had most definitely found the secret of victory over sin, etc. Even though he did not say so in his letter, he was speaking of the "Government of Twelve" scheme! He related how he and his wife went to this Preachers' meeting, which was hosted by a Pastor who is very well-known all over the United States. The meeting was for Preachers only, and several hundreds were present.

The host told them to bring a pad and a pencil. For over an hour, he presented to them the details of this "new method" of obtaining victory over sin, etc. To be sure, he was not proclaiming the Cross. Regrettably and sadly, had he been proclaiming the Cross, I doubt there would have been a dozen Preachers in attendance.

At any rate, as the host finished his presentation, he then told all these Preachers and their wives to write down on their pad all their sins in their lives, whatever they might be, no matter how ugly they might be. After this was finished, the men were told to find another man, and the women were to find another woman; they were to

stand facing each other and read aloud these sins in their lives and minds and hearts, which they had written on their pads.

The Brother who wrote to me commented that his sins were not nearly as bad as the sins of some of the other Preachers there. (?). After each pair had read the lists of sins out loud to each other, they then were instructed to tear the sheets of paper into little pieces, and then drop the pieces onto the floor. They then were instructed to stomp on the pieces of paper, shouting loudly how they were now delivered.

This was his prescription for victory.

THE BIBLE

One will look in vain for any such type of foolishness in the Word of God. It simply isn't there. And if it's not in the Word, then it is useless, and it won't do anyone any good whatsoever.

It is so unfortunate that individuals who are supposed to be Spirit-filled would fall for such idiocy. Such is an indication that they definitely are not Spirit-led. But this is the type of nonsense that is making the rounds and being accepted by untold numbers of Preachers.

The reason?

They have left the Word of God!

I wrote back to the Brother and thanked him for writing to me, but I also wrote these words to him: "My Brother! The only answer to sin is the Cross." I didn't hear from him again, so I have to assume that he was not in sympathy with my conclusion.

It is regrettable when Preachers who claim to be Spirit-filled will reject the Cross in favor of such absurdities. Unfortunately, the Cross has never had widespread appeal; actually, the Cross is an offense (Gal. 5:11).

WHY IS THE CROSS AN OFFENSE?

It is an offense because it shows man what he really is, meaning that, within himself, he has no answer to the dilemma of sin. Man doesn't like to admit that he is helpless in this respect. He keeps thinking that he can accomplish the task.

Moreover, the Cross tells us how awful sin really is. Actually, sin is so bad that it took the Cross of Christ to address this monster. Man also does not want to admit that sin is that bad, i.e., so bad that he cannot handle it himself. He wants to think that he is equal to the task. He isn't, but he is loathe to admit such.

The Cross is an offense because it tells us how wonderful the Lord actually is, Who would do what He did, which refers to going to the Cross in order to save the fallen sons of Adam's lost race. So, the Cross proclaims the inability of man, and it proclaims the ability of God, which, unfortunately does not set well with man.

Nevertheless, it is true.

Regarding the sin nature and victory over this problem, perhaps the following short formula might be of help:

FOCUS: The Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6).

OBJECT OF FAITH: The Cross of Christ (Rom. 6:3-5).

POWER SOURCE: The Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1-2, 11).

RESULTS: Victory! (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 2:20).

Now, let's invert this little formula, which is what most Christians presently are doing:

FOCUS: Works (Rom. 4:2).

OBJECT OF FAITH: Performance (Gal. 2:21).

POWER SOURCE: Self (Gal. 5:2).

RESULTS: Failure! (Gal. 5:4)

TO SUM UP

Due to the Fall, man is born with a sin nature. This refers to a bent toward wrongdoing and sin. The sin nature totally and completely controls every unbeliever, and in every capacity.

When the believing sinner comes to Christ, the sin nature is then made absolutely dormant. If the Believer, however, makes something other than the Cross of Christ the object of his faith, failure will be the result, which will occasion a resurrection, so to speak, of the sin nature, and it will then begin to rule in the Believer's life.

The only way to victory, and I speak of perpetual victory over the sin nature, is for the Believer to register his faith totally and completely in Christ and the Cross, and then maintain it accordingly. If the Believer does that, and continues to do that, then the Holy Spirit will work mightily in the heart and life of such a Believer, bringing about Righteousness, Holiness, Christlikeness, and the Fruit of the Spirit. As we have repeatedly stated: CHRIST IS THE SOURCE, AND THE CROSS IS THE MEANS (Lk. 9:23-24; Rom. 6:1-14; 8:1-2, 11; I Cor. 1:17-18, 23; 2:2; Gal. 6:14; Col. 2:14-15).