

Freedom From Sin

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Reading with appreciation the indisputable interpretation of the Scripture "Wretched man that I am" which Brother Henry Michel wrote and which appeared in the November Visitor caused me to be reminded of the supporting words: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Romans 8:37.) Romans 8:39 assures us further that no creature shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ.

But, we may ask, What is this love of Christ? Jesus declares that it consists in the keeping of His commandments, (John 14:15) and not at all in only calling Him, "Lord, Lord!"

Paul commanded in Romans 12:21: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." He would not have said this had he not known that the Spirit of grace, the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, would enable the citizens of that new Covenant to fulfill this command. This was also his own experience for he wrote: "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me."

Peter, likewise, set forth the requirement that "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (given under the dispensation of grace) we should minister as with that ability which God gives. (1 Peter 4:11). It is, therefore, a great error to believe or to teach that in the seventh chapter of the Letter to the Romans Paul had reference to his own state at that time. He described, instead, the condition of man under the dispensation of the Law which was and is intended to lead men to Christ. For by the Law comes the knowledge of the wretchedness of fallen man in Adam. (Romans 3:20).

After a delight for the Law of God has been wrought in a person, he yearns to do the will of God; and thus is led to that self-knowledge which must precede the knowledge of God. That man will then seek a deliverer from that power which is called "another law" and which overrides all his good intentions and resolutions. (Romans 7:22-24).

As one who realizes his wretchedness, such a man will seek the Savior as his Deliverer. All who so seek Christ will find Him, and Christ will then lead them out of the servitude of the flesh into the serving of God in the spirit. Their minds will then be controlled by the mind or will of Christ, for the law or governing power of the Spirit of life comes to the rescue to give victory in every temptation, so that they can renounce or overcome by far the persuasive powers of the serpent. Sin could be made powerless or condemned in the flesh, however, only by the sending of the Son of God and not by the Law. (Romans 8:2-5). Therefore, if we give room to or volunteer to submission to a carnal inclination, we truly flirt with death; for thus we flirt with the enemy of God and man. (Romans 8:6-7). But Paul says: "You are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," and further, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

This explains why Brother Froehlich taught that it is insufficient for us if Christ is only a lamp unto our feet and a light on our path. (Psalm 119:105). For through His word He is able to overpower the spirits of darkness and their temptations also for us if we love Him more than any other thing or being. To all who so love Him the words of Christ are spirit and are life. This is possible, however, only in those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God from all eternity, and who consequently love Him more than anything in this world. All such shall be loved by the Father, and both the Father and Son will make their abode with them. (John 14:21-23 also 24-26).

All those in whom the Father and the Son have taken an abode are such whom the Son has made free. If they continue in His Word, they must no longer be servants of sin, but they shall be freed indeed. (John 8:31-36). All such have no need to complain like the man under the Law (Romans 7) that he is brought into subjection to sin or brought under the power of sin against his will. Rather he can say with Paul: “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” (Romans 8:37-39).

Let us, therefore, never be deceived by a wrong interpretation of the seventh chapter in “Romans.” The sixth and eighth chapters define the seventh chapter clearly. On the other hand the interpretation of some would cause us to be as foolish virgins, for according to their teaching it would not be possible to attain to a better state through the Blood of Christ and the dispensation of the Gospel that it was possible to attain through the blood of animals and the dispensation of the Law.

It is so easy to *underestimate* the gifts of the new Testament by putting them on a level with those of the old Covenant which were only a shadow of the good things that were to come through the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. This pouring out of God’s Spirit was made possible only by the death of the Testator—Christ (Compare John 16:7, 12-15).

The case of David, a man “according to the heart of God,” who with all his good deeds sinned against God and man, (2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12) and the case of the Peter who with all of his love for Christ denied Him—these are both evidences of the necessity of the death, the resurrection and the ascension of Christ which made the sending of the Holy Spirit possible. (Compare John 7:37-39). For after Peter had this gift—the Holy Spirit—we find him confessing Christ before the highest tribunal in Israel, for all fear of death had now vanished, and Peter was no longer in bondage thereto. (Compare Hebrews 2:14-15).

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