

~Other Speakers M-R: Thomas Reade:

28. INDWELLING SIN

"But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin dwelling within me is doing it."
Romans 7:20

Sin, in all its forms, is hateful to God. He beholds it with abhorrence, and has declared that "the soul that sins, it shall die." All men are dead under the Law, because all have sinned. And had not God graciously sent his dear Son into the world to pay the penalty due to sin, and to die the just for the unjust, the whole human race must have perished everlastingly. Even now, none shall be saved, who have the blessing of a preached Gospel, and of the Scriptures of Truth vouchsafed to them, except they repent and believe in Jesus, are born from above, and walk before God in newness of life. The state of the heathen, who have never heard the joyful sound, and to whom Christ is unknown, will be righteously determined by Him, all of whose ways are just, and whose paths are equity and truth. Enough is revealed, to awaken our fears respecting them, and to quicken our endeavors, to make known unto those that Savior, who so graciously said to Saul of Tarsus, "I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

How clearly is the state of the heathen described by the Savior of the world. In unison with this message to Saul, was that given to all the Apostles just before the ascension of our Lord. "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." "Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Had the ignorance of the Gentiles been their security, this message need not to have been delivered. The very words of Christ convey the strongest expression of danger, and the necessity for his being declared the Only Savior of Sinners, to the ends of the earth.

It is not uncommon to hear people speak of the comparative safety of the heathen, since the heathen cannot reject what is not offered, nor disbelieve what is not made known unto them. Thus, many excuse themselves from aiding Missionary Societies, as if we were carrying a curse instead of a blessing to the Gentiles, inasmuch as their guilt will be greater by refusing the offered Savior. This reason would equally have operated against the coming of Christ into our world, because all men have not faith, and millions, to whom the Gospel is preached in vain, will perish! Unbelief lies at the bottom of these objections. How different were the feelings of the angelic host on their announcement of the Savior's birth to the shepherds, when they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." How different were those of Paul when he wrote to the Ephesians, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Oh! that my heart may be warmed with love to the Savior, and with a tender concern for the perishing millions of mankind. Blessed Lord, let me never desire to be wise above what is written, or to set my reason against your Wisdom, or my will, against your Sovereignty. May I receive the Gospel by a loving faith, and labor to make it known with a loving heart. You have said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Enable me to offer up this prayer, for the extension of your kingdom, and for the increase of faithful ministers, in reliance on your grace, and in dependence on your power. Oh! hasten your kingdom, accomplish the number of your elect, and fill the earth with your glory.

Those who believe the Gospel, who receive Christ into their hearts by faith, ascribe all their salvation to sovereign grace. They are made the temples of the Holy Spirit, and serve God with delight in the Gospel of his Son. But while they remain in the body, they must struggle against the remainders of sin. Sickness, adversity, unkind treatment, persecution, with various other ills of life, are not joyous, but grievous; yet, God, is often pleased to bring his children into these furnaces, to purify them from the dross of sin, and to make them instrumental in producing the peaceful fruits of righteousness to the glory of his grace.

But sin is ever abhorrent to a holy God, and distressing to a renewed mind. Can the believer, then, derive any benefit from the sin which he hates, and against which he hourly combats? These Canaanites in the land, though grievous to the spirit of a true Israelite, as thorns are to his flesh, may be overruled by Infinite Love to

teach him many lessons.

These Canaanites remind him of his former condition, of the rock from where he was hewn, and of the hole of the pit from where he was dug; of his natural depravity, wretchedness, and misery, that so, he may loathe himself in his own sight.

These Canaanites constrain him to acknowledge the grace of God in saving him, when he had nothing to expect but fiery indignation and judgment without mercy.

These Canaanites make him distrust him self, through the constant experience of his own weakness in resisting the world, the flesh, and the devil.

These Canaanites cause him to trust altogether in the divine power of his Savior, from the repeated victories which he obtains over indwelling sin, by looking with a single eye to Jesus, the Captain of his salvation.

These Canaanites bring into exercise the graces of faith and patience, courage and self-denial, watchfulness and prayer. The weapons of his warfare are not suffered to rust, having daily to fight the good fight of faith.

These Canaanites make him value the blood and righteousness of Christ, which rise in value, in proportion to the true and saving knowledge which he acquires of himself. Thus, the more he is convinced of his sins and imperfections, the more earnestly does he seek after a better righteousness to justify him in the sight of God, even the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ.

These Canaanites make him long more ardently for the rest which remains for the people of God; for that pure world, where sorrow cannot enter, where indwelling sin will never harass the soul, but where he will forever behold his adorable Redeemer, and be made like him, when he shall see him as he is.

Indwelling sin, thus uniformly opposed, hated, and watched against, and more and more overcome and rooted out of the soul, shall not be allowed to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The promise is most precious to every true believer; "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

Blessed Jesus! grant that sin may be increasingly hateful to my soul, as it is hurtful to my peace. Enable me to grow in all the graces of the Spirit, resisting the motions of sin in my flesh, and crucifying every evil affection and lust, until I lay my body in the grave, and ascend to You, my life and my all, my treasure, and my eternal home!