

Death Or Glory, Which?

~Other Speakers G-L: Aaron Hills:

TEXT: Rom. 8:5-14. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace." -- Rom. 8:5, 6.

On the previous Section, verses 1-4, Lange tells us: "Christ by becoming man in the flesh and yet having a sinless, fleshly nature, so maintained this sinlessness and holiness . . . that He made it manifest:

1. That sin does not belong to the flesh in itself, but is inherent in it as a foreign, unnatural, condemnable, separable, alienable element.
2. That sin in the flesh is condemned and rejected in its carnal appearance;
3. That sin in the flesh should be separated from the entire human nature by means of the Spirit proceeding from Christ."

We say, Amen! That is precisely what we are always teaching and it is absolutely contradictory to Keswick teaching.

Now the verses before us tell why God wishes us to be rid of this carnal principle. "For those who are under the power of the carnal, rebellious principle" "think of, care for," "relish," "Strive after" "the things of the flesh," having no relish for spiritual and eternal things; "but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." "After" here means "in accordance with" "in harmony with" the Spirit. Augustus Meyer, the great German exegete, says, "After the Spirit designates only the sanctifying divine principle, and not the human spirit. We must choose between these two ruling principles. There is no avoiding it. And in the next verse the Apostle urges us by the most awful motives that can be named to make a right choice:-- v. 6. "For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace."

In other words, to live under the influence of the carnal mind -- the depraved tendencies of our fallen nature -- and to yield to them is to be headed for destruction and to be liable any hour to be numbered among the damned. Yea, it is already moral death. But he who has the mind of the Spirit has already the life and peace of God in his soul and has heaven full in view. And he has peace the soul of life. "Peace with God is connection with the source of life; peace with one's self, a blessed sense of life; peace with the government of God, and His world, an infinitely richer life" (Lange) . Sanctified people need nobody's pity, especially the pity of carnal worldlings. They already have heaven begun in their hearts.

In the next verse the Apostle explains why the indwelling sin is so dangerous. Verse 7: "Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be." The word "flesh" here means the "sin-principle," or depravity. The word for "enmity" means a principle or state of enmity -- the essence of hatred. "Because it is a carnal mind and relishes earthly things and sinful things and lives in opposition to the pure and holy law of God, therefore it is enmity against God; it is irreconcilable and implacable hatred. "It is not subject to the law of God." It will come under no obedience, for it is the very principle of rebellion; and it cannot be subject nor subjected. It is essential to the sin principle to show itself in rebellion: and when it ceases to rebel it ceases to be the sin. It dies." So Clarke observes: "From this we learn that the design of God in the economy of the gospel is not to weaken, curtail, nor lay the carnal principle in bonds (repress), but to destroy it. As it is not subject and cannot be subject to the law of God, it must be destroyed else it will continue to rebel against God. It cannot be mended nor rendered less offensive in its nature even by the operations of God. It is ever sin, and sin is ever enmity: and enmity wherever it has opportunity will invariably show itself in acts of hostility and rebellion against God." Absolutely the only thing God can do with it consistently with His holiness is to destroy it.

For (verse 8.) "They that are in the flesh, (that is in this carnal state) cannot please God." This word "flesh" here cannot mean the human body; for Enoch dwelt in a human body, "and before his translation he had this witness borne to him that he had been well-pleasing to God." Jesus dwelt in a human body, and the Father said: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased. No; "in the flesh" like the phrase "after the flesh," means to be in subjection to this sin principle which perverts and deranges all our sensibilities prompting obedience to them rather than obedience to right reason illuminated by the Holy Spirit. "Cannot please God!" That settles it. The sin-principle that infests our being must be condemned and executed so that we may be wholly loyal and wholly pleasing to God.

I was preaching from these verses in a Holiness Convention in Manchester, England. A noble Baptist minister was there who had come more than a hundred miles to be present. I pictured how awful it would be if across the forehead and breast and back of every unsanctified Christian God should write in ineffaceable letters the words, "Cannot please God!" But I Said, it was just as true as if God had written it there. That minister started for the altar saying, "I will not live longer in a state in which I 'cannot wholly please God.'" Soon he was gloriously sanctified, and went home to shine for God.

People may talk about taming and subduing and repressing and baptizing into respectability this inbred sin, this child of the devil, all they like. No such idea is scriptural. It is not to be "repressed," nor "suppressed" nor "oppressed," but "expressed" out of our being. The Bible terms are "take away," "purge away," "destroy," "consume by fire," "cleanse from," "eliminate," "mortify," or "kill." And the real blood-bought, truly-saved children of God who really love Him will be so anxious to please Him that they will earnestly plead for the sin-consuming cleansing baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire to burn out this sinful dross from their hearts and make them wholly pleasing to God.

Verse 9. "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

The Holy Spirit sustains three relations to believers: "para" with us, "en" in us, and "epi" upon us. He was with the disciples before the crucifixion (John 14:17). Jesus then promised that He should be in them, which was fulfilled at Pentecost. Also He was "upon" them for power (Acts 1:8). Here then the apostle set forth the experience of sanctification. "Eiper" "provided that" if only "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." The flesh -- the sinful principle possesses men, ruling sinners, and tormenting unsanctified believers, opposing every good within them. But Jesus proposes to cleanse the temple and make man again "a habitation of God through the Spirit." When Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit for cleansing He comes in and puts out the sin-principle, His enemy and ours, and fills the vacated nature with Himself to abide in us forever. This is absolutely necessary to our final salvation.

Verse 9. "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."

If any man has not this Holy Spirit in some degree of power either with him or in him, either to subdue or to put out this sin-principle, he is none of His. "The Apostle does not regard a merely external belonging to Christ as of any value. Where the Christianity of the inward life is extinct there the Christianity of the whole man is extinct." -- Lange. This is one of the great perils of believers. Like the Church of Sardis, they may have a name to live when Christ knows they are already dead. -- Rev. 3:1.

Verse 10. "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of THE SIN; but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

Verse 11. "But if the Spirit of him that raiseth up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Alford says: "The righteousness of verse 10 is not imputed righteousness but the **IMPLANTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT.**" Amen! This is the exact teaching of the orthodox holiness churches. Honest Christian scholars are compelled to endorse our teaching.

The meaning of this passage seems to be this as most in harmony with the context.

"The sin-principle" brought "the death principle" upon the race (Rom. 5:12), and the sentence of physical death must be fulfilled on every human being until the judgment. No doubt this spiritual life of sanctification will not prevent our bodies from dying; but it is the earnest of its participation in the glorious resurrection of Christ. He who receives the Spirit of Christ in sanctifying fullness, and continues to live a life of obedience to the divine will shall have a glorious resurrection to life eternal.

Sanctification removes the artificial and abnormal appetites from the body and leaves the necessary and innocent natural appetites in a normal degree of strength to be henceforth controlled by the sanctified reason. But still, death being a judgment on humanity as a race, the body must die, even though sanctified. Godet says: "Dead here means irrevocably smitten with death."

We mention in passing that Chrysostom, Grotius, and others explain the term "dead" as "dead unto sin." This if correct would make the doctrine of sanctification all the stronger. The indwelling Spirit purifies the whole man

even the body and restores all to God.

Verses 12 and 13. "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh (depraved nature) to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh ye must die: but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." .

"The natural man," Hofman observes, "imagines that he owes it to his flesh to satisfy it." "The flesh here," says Whedon and Miley, "is a depravity not confined to the body but including the entire tendency to sin." Barnes says: "Sarx (flesh) here is the corrupt propensities and passions." "The Apostle then says that we do not owe these corrupt propensities any gratification. We are not bound to indulge them, because the end is death and ruin, (eternal ruin) . "But if ye mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live" (life eternal) . Lange says: "Mortify means to exhaust or abnegate to the very root." Barnes says it means "to put to death destroy." "Deeds of the body consists in the predominance of illegal impulses." -- Lange. "The corrupt inclinations and passions are called the deeds of the body because they are supposed to have their origin in the fleshly appetites" -- Barnes. . . . "Either your sins and evil propensities must die, or you must. If they are suffered to live, you will die. If they are put to death you will be saved. No man can be saved in his sins."

Verse 14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." "This," says Lange, "gives the reason why they shall live." By the indwelling, sanctifying Spirit the propensities of the carnal nature are mortified and they are continually led in the way of holiness and so are the sons of God. "One evidence of piety is a willingness to yield to that influence and submit to the Spirit. One decided evidence of a want of piety is an unwillingness to submit to that influence, but where the Holy Spirit is grieved and resisted." (Barnes.)

The influence of the Spirit if followed would lead every man into the experience of entire sanctification and finally to Heaven. But when neglected, rejected, or despised, man, driven on by his own carnality, makes his final home in hell.

Thus closes St. Paul's greatest and most unanswerable argument. It has proved that what the law could not do the gospel, revealing Christ and the infinite Spirit of God, accomplishes; viz, the sanctification of the soul, the destruction of the depraved tendencies of our nature and the recovery in man of the image of God. Blessed is the man who accepts the whole gospel and gains regeneration, sanctification and a glorious heaven!