

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good

Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good - posted by savannah, on: 2013/7/18 3:55

Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good by Thomas Watson

Even the sense of our own sinfulness will be overruled for the good of the godly.

Thus our own sins shall work for good.

This must be understood warily, when I say the sins of the godly work for good — NOT THAT THERE IS THE LEAST GOOD IN SIN.

Sin is like poison, which corrupts the blood, infects the heart, and, without a sovereign antidote, brings death. Such is the venomous nature of sin, it is deadly and damning. Yet, God, by His mighty overruling power, makes sin in the issue turn to the good of his people.

Hence, that golden saying of Augustine, “God would never permit evil, if He could not bring good out of evil.”

The feeling sinfulness in the saints works for good several ways.

I. SIN MAKES THE CHRISTIAN WEARY OF THIS LIFE.

That sin in the godly is sad, but that it is a burden is good. Paul’s afflictions were but a play to him, in comparison of his sin. He rejoiced in tribulation, “I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation” (2 Cor. 7:4). But how did he weep and bemoan himself under his sins! “Who shall deliver me from the body of death?” (Rom. 7:24). A believer carries his sin as a prisoner his shackles; oh, how does he long for the day of release. This sense of sin is good.

II. THIS IN-BEING OF CORRUPTION MAKES THE SAINTS PRIZE CHRIST MORE.

He feels his sin, as a sick man feels his sickness, how welcome is Christ the physician to him! When Paul had cried out of a body of death, how thankful was he for Christ! “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:25). Christ’s blood saves from sin; it is our sacred ointment.

III. THIS SENSE OF SIN WORKS FOR GOOD, AS IT IS AN OCCASION OF PUTTING THE SOUL UPON SIX SPECIAL DUTIES:

1. A sense of sin puts the soul upon self-searching.

A child of God being conscious of sin, takes the candle and lantern of the Word, and searches into his heart. He desires to know the worst of himself; as a man who is diseased in body desires to know the worst of his disease. Though our joy lies in the knowledge of our graces, yet there is some benefit in the knowledge of our corruptions. Therefore Job prays, “Make me to know my transgressions” (Job 13:23).

It is good to know our sins, that we may not flatter ourselves, or take our condition to be better than it is. It is good to find out our sins, lest they find us out.

2. The inherence of sin puts a child of God upon self-abasing.

Sin is left in a godly man, as a cancer, or a hunch upon the back, to keep him from being proud. Gravel and dirt are good to ballast a ship, and keep it from overturning; the sense of sin helps to ballast the soul, that it be not overturned with vain glory.

We read of the “spots of God’s children” in Deuteronomy 3:5. When a godly man beholds himself in the glass of Scripture, and sees the spots of infidelity and hypocrisy, this makes the plumes of pride fall; they are humbling spots. It is a

good use that may be made even of our sins, when they occasion low thoughts of ourselves. Better is that sin which humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud.

3. Sin puts a child of God on self-judging.

He passes a sentence upon himself; I am more brutish than any man (Prov. 30:12). It is dangerous to judge others, but it is good to judge ourselves, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor 11:31). When a man has judged himself, Satan is put out of office. When he lays anything to a saint's charge, he is able to retort and say, "It is true, Satan, I am guilty of these sins, but I have judged myself already for them; and having condemned myself in the lower court of conscience, God will acquit me in the upper court of heaven."

4. Sin puts a child of God upon self-conflicting.

Our spiritual-self conflicts with our carnal-self, "The spirit lusts against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). Our life is a wayfaring life, and a warfaring life. There is a duel fought every day between the two seeds. A believer will not let sin have peaceable possession. If he cannot keep sin out, he will keep sin under; though he cannot quite overcome, yet he is overcoming, "To him that is overcoming" (Rev. 2:7).

5. Sin puts a child of God upon self-observing.

He knows sin is a bosom-traitor, therefore he carefully observes himself. A subtle heart needs a watchful eye. The heart is like a castle that is in danger every hour to be assaulted; this makes a child of God to be always a sentinel, and keep a guard about his heart. A believer has a strict eye over himself, lest he fall into any scandalous enormity, and so open a sluice to let all his comfort run out.

6. Sin puts the soul upon self-reforming.

A child of God not only finds out sin, but drives out sin. One foot he sets upon the neck of his sins, and the other foot he turns to God's testimonies (Psalm 119:59).

Thus the sins of the godly work for good.

God makes the saints' maladies their medicines. But let none abuse this doctrine. Do not say that sin works for good to an impenitent person. No, it works for his damnation, but it works for good to them that love God; and for you that are godly, I know you will not draw a wrong conclusion from this, either to make light of sin, or to make bold with sin. If you should do so, God will make it cost you dear. If any of God's people should be tampering with sin, because God can turn it to good, though the Lord does not damn them, He may send them to hell in this life. He may put them into such bitter agonies and soul-convulsions, as may fill them full of horror, and make them draw nigh to despair. Let this be a flaming sword to keep them from coming near the forbidden tree.

DO NOT THINK LIGHTLY OF SIN.

Re: Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2013/7/18 4:17

With all due respect to the speaker, but this rates up there with one of the most grievous things I've ever read on Sermo nindex.

As I see it this is blasphemous and AntiChrist and makes a mockery of the blood and guts of Calvary.

Re: Temptations work for our good - posted by savannah, on: 2013/7/18 4:30

Temptations work for our good

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

Even temptations are overruled for good, to the children of God. A tree which is shaken by the wind is more settled and rooted. Just so, the blowing of a temptation does but settle a Christian the more in grace.

Temptations are overruled for good in eight ways:

(1.) Temptation sends the soul to prayer. The more furiously Satan tempts, the more fervently the saint prays. The deer being shot with the dart runs faster to the water. When Satan shoots his every darts at the soul, it then runs faster to the throne of grace. When Paul had the messenger of Satan to buffet him, he says, “Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me” (2 Cor. 12:8). That which makes us pray more, works for good.

(2.) Temptation to sin, is a means to keep from the perpetration of sin. The more a child of God is tempted, the more he fights against the temptation. The more Satan tempts to blasphemy, the more a saint trembles at such thoughts, and says, “Away from me, Satan!” When Joseph’s mistress tempted him to lust, the stronger her temptation was, the stronger was his opposition. That temptation which the devil uses as a spur to sin, God makes a bridle to keep back a Christian from sin!

(3.) Temptation works for good, as it abates the swelling of pride. “To keep me from getting puffed up, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from getting proud!” (2 Cor. 12:7). The thorn in the flesh was to puncture the puffing up of pride! Better is that temptation which humbles me than that duty which makes me proud! Rather than a Christian shall be haughty minded, God will let him fall into the devil’s hands awhile, to be cured of his swelling pride!

(4.) Temptation works for good, as it is a touchstone to try what is in the heart. The devil tempts that he may deceive us; but God allows us to be tempted, that He may try us. Temptation is a trial of our sincerity. It argues that our heart is chaste and loyal to Christ when we can look a temptation in the face, and turn our back upon it. Many have no heart to resist temptation. No sooner does Satan come with his bait but they yield; like a coward who, as soon as the thief approaches, gives him his purse. But he is the valorous Christian, who brandishes the sword of the Spirit against Satan, and will rather die than yield. The valor and courage of a saint is never more seen than on a battlefield, when he is fighting the red dragon, and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight. That grace is tried gold, which can stand in the every trial, and withstand Satan’s every darts!

(5.) Temptations work for good, as God makes those who are tempted, fit to comfort others in the same distress. A Christian must himself be under the buffetings of Satan, before he can speak a word in due season to him who is weary. Paul was well-versed in temptations. “We are very familiar with his evil schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11). Thus he was able to acquaint others with Satan’s cursed wiles (1 Cor. 10:13). A man who has ridden over a place where there are bogs and quicksands—is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way. He who has felt the claws of Satan, the roaring lion, and has lain bleeding under those wounds—is the fittest man to deal with one who is tempted. None can better discover Satan’s subtle devices than those who have been long in the fencing school of temptation.

(6.) Temptations work for good, as they stir up fatherly compassion in God to those who are tempted. The child who is sick and bruised—is most looked after. When a saint lies under the bruising of temptations, Christ prays, and God the Father pities. When Satan puts the soul into a fever, God comes with a cordial; which made Luther say, that “temptations are Christ’s embraces,” because He then most sweetly manifests Himself to the soul.

(7.) Temptations work for good, as they make the saints long more for heaven. There they shall be out of gunshot; heaven is a place of rest, no bullets of temptation fly there. The eagle which soars aloft in the air, and sits upon high trees, is not troubled with the stinging of the serpent. Just so, when believers are ascended to heaven, they shall not be molested by the old serpent, the devil. In this life, when one temptation is over, another comes. This makes God’s people wish for death—to call them off the battlefield where the bullets fly so quick—and to receive a victorious crown, where neither the drum nor cannon—but the harp and violin, shall be eternally sounding.

(8.) Temptations work for good, as they engage the strength of Christ. Christ is our Friend, and when we are tempted, He sets all His power working for us. "Since He Himself has gone through suffering and temptation, He is able to help us when we are being tempted" (Heb. 2:18). If a poor soul was to fight alone with the Goliath of hell, he would be sure to be vanquished! But Jesus Christ brings in His auxiliary forces-He gives fresh supplies of grace. "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!" (Romans 7:37). Thus the evil of temptation is overruled for our good.

Question. But sometimes Satan foils a child of God. How does this work for good?

Answer. I grant that, through the suspension of divine grace, and the fury of a temptation, a saint may be overcome; yet this foiling by a temptation shall be overruled for good. By this foil, God makes way for the augmentation of grace. Peter was tempted to self-conceit; he presumed upon his own strength; and Christ let him fall. But this wrought for his good, it cost him many a tear. "He went out, and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75). And now he grows less self-reliant. He dared not say he loved Christ more than the other apostles. "Do you love me more than these?" (John 21:15). He dared not say so-his fall into sin broke the neck of his pride!

The foiling by a temptation causes more circumspection and watchfulness in a child of God. Though Satan did before decoy him into sin, yet for the future he will be the more cautious. He will beware of coming within the lion's chain any more! He is now more vigilant and fearful of the occasions of sin. He never goes out without his spiritual armor, and he girds on his armor by prayer. He knows he walks on slippery ground, therefore he looks wisely to his steps. He keeps close sentinel in his soul, and when he spies the devil coming he grasps his spiritual weapons, and displays the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16).

This is all the hurt the devil does when he foils a saint by temptation, he cures him of his careless neglect; he makes him watch and pray more. When wild beasts get over the hedge and damage the grain-a man will make his fence the stronger. Just so, when the devil gets over the hedge by a temptation, a Christian will be sure to mend his fence; he will become more fearful of sin, and careful of duty. Thus the being worsted by temptation, works for good.

Objection. But if being foiled works for good, this may make Christians careless whether they are overcome by temptations or not.

Answer. There is a great difference between falling into a temptation, and running into a temptation. The falling into a temptation shall work for good, not the running into it. He who falls into a river is not for help and pity-but he who deliberately runs into it, is guilty of his own death. It is madness running into a lion's den! He who runs himself into a temptation is like king Saul-who fell upon his own sword.

Conclusion: From all that has been said, see how God disappoints the old serpent-by making his temptations turn to the good of His people.

Luther once said, "There are three things which make a godly man - prayer, meditation, and temptation."

The wind of temptation is a contrary wind to that of the Spirit; but God makes use of this cross wind, to blow the saints to heaven!

Re: Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good - posted by murrcoir (), on: 2013/7/18 5:03

*****DO NOT THINK LIGHTLY OF SIN*****

Re: Q. - Can a believer live without sin - posted by savannah, on: 2013/7/18 13:58

Can a believer live without sin?

"There is enough sin in my best prayer to send the whole world to Hell." ~ John Bunyan

An answer to this dilemma from Ambrose -

Christ's prayer takes away the sins of our prayers. As a child that is willing to present his father with a posy, goes into the garden, and there gathers some flowers and some weeds together, but coming to his mother, she picks out the weeds and binds the flowers, and so it is presented to the father: thus when we have put up our prayers, Christ comes, and picks away the weeds, the sin of our prayer, and presents nothing but flowers to His Father, which are a sweet-smelling savour.

More from Bunyan -

But I do find many weaknesses in every duty that I do perform, as when I pray, when I read, when I hear, or any other duty, that it maketh me out of conceit with myself, it maketh me think that my duties are nothing worth.

I answer, it may be it is thy mercy that thou art sensible of infirmities in thy best things thou doest; ay, a greater mercy than thou art aware of.

Can it be a mercy for me to be troubled with my corruptions? Can it be a privilege for me to be annoyed with my infirmities, and to have my best duties infected with it? How can it possibly be?

Answ. Verily, thy sins appearing in thy best duties, do work for thy advantage these ways—

1. In that thou findest ground enough thereby to make thee humble; and when thou hast done all, yet to count thyself but an unprofitable servant. And,
2. Thou by this means art taken off from leaning on anything below a naked Jesus for eternal life. It is like, if thou wast not sensible of many by-thoughts and wickednesses in thy best performances, thou wouldst go near to be some proud, a bominable hypocrite, or a silly, proud dissembling wretch at the best, such an one as would send thy soul to the devil in a bundle of thy own righteousness.

But now, thou, through grace, seest that in all and everything thou doest there is sin enough in it to condemn thee. This, in the first place, makes thee have a care of trusting in thy own doings; and, secondly, showeth thee that there is nothing in thyself which will do thee any good by working in thee, as to the meritorious cause of thy salvation. No; but thou must have a share in the birth of Jesus, in the death of Jesus, in the blood, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of a crucified Jesus. And how sayest thou? Doth not thy finding of this in thee cause thee to fly from a depending on thy own doings? And doth it not also make thee more earnestly to groan after the Lord Jesus?

Yea, and let me tell thee also, it will be a cause to make thee admire the freeness and tender heartedness of Christ to thee, when He shall lift up the light of His countenance upon thee, because He hath regarded such an one as thou, sinful thou; and therefore, in this sense, it will be mercy to the saints that they do find the relics of sin still struggling in their hearts. But this is not simply the nature of sin, but the mercy and wisdom of God, who causeth all things to work together for the good of those that love and fear God (Rom 8). And, therefore, whatever thou findest in thy soul, though it be sin of never so black a soul-scarring nature, let it move thee to run the faster to the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt not be ashamed—that is, of thy running to Him.

But when thou dost apprehend that thou art defiled, and also thy best duties annoyed with many weaknesses, let that Scripture come into thy thoughts which saith, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"; and if thou shalt understand that, what thou canst not find in thyself thou shalt find in Christ. Art thou a fool in thyself? then Christ is made of God thy wisdom. Art thou unrighteous in thyself? Christ is made of God thy righteousness. Dost thou find that there is but very little sanctifying grace in thy soul? still here is Christ made thy sanctification; and all this in His own Person without thee, without thy wisdom, without thy righteousness, without thy sanctification, without in His own Person in thy Father's presence, appearing there perfect wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification in His own Person; I say, as a public Person for thee; so that thou mayest believe, and say to thy soul, My soul, though dost find innumerable infirmities in thyself, and in thy actions, yet look upon thy Jesus, the Man Jesus; He is wisdom, and that for thee, to govern thee, to take care for thee, and to order all things for the best for thee.

He is also thy righteousness now at God's right hand, always shining before the eyes of His glory; so that there it is unmoveable, though thou art in never such a sad condition, yet thy righteousness, which is the Son of God, God-man, shines as bright as ever, and is as much accepted of God as ever. O this sometimes hath been life to me; and so, whatever thou, O my soul, findest wanting in thyself, through faith thou shalt see all laid up for thee in Jesus Christ, whether it be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, or redemption.

Nay, not only so, but, as I said before, He is all these in His own Person without thee in the presence of His Father for thee. - John Bunyan

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/7/18 14:33

I thank the Lord for the ever-sense of sinfulness. This is something I never want to lose sight of. A leper loses his sense of touch, sensation - indicative of death occurring to that part of his body which has become senseless. The grace of God is real life to the spiritual man. A sense of sin necessitates grace, the "Life" to overcome; as soon as the sensation of sin ceases, however, grace is no longer needed and/or cheapified to the level of allowance.

This is how men like the Apostle Paul, and luminaries like George Whitefield, D.L. Moody, Newton, Brainerd, Payson, Edwards, Spurgeon and others experienced an ever-growing sense of their own sinfulness the closer they got to God. But as the awareness of sin becomes heightened, so should the corresponding grace of God to overcome. This cycle keeps us humble. This is God's design and why it sometimes hurts so much when He gives us light on certain unmortified areas of our lives. The hurt is good: it tells us we are moving in the right direction, and have not become lepers. It is only when we cannot detect the sense of our own sinfulness where we should become concerned.

Legalism thrives off of taking this healthy sensation of sin and using it as a weapon of fear-control and guilt. But once we know the truth, we can be set free from Satan's devices and really begin to grow in knowledge of grace, humility and love.

Re: , on: 2013/7/18 14:50

Quote:
-----Legalism thrives off of taking this healthy sensation of sin and using it as a weapon of fear-control and guilt. But once we know the truth, we can be set free from Satan's devices and really begin to grow in knowledge of grace, humility and love.

There are two extremes to this "spectrum". LEGALISM is at one end of the spectrum while HYPER-GRACE is at the other end (extreme).

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/7/18 15:04

Quote:
-----There are two extremes to this "spectrum". LEGALISM is at one end of the spectrum while HYPER-GRACE is at the other end (extreme).

Absolutely correct. Both are chasms of destruction around which the Rock of Ages protrudes.

Just not sure - posted by dohzman (), on: 2013/7/18 15:17

As I read much of the old writings I have to go back to just scripture reading prayerfully in the presence of the Lord alone, because what happens to me anyway, is when I get super introspective I seem to stray off of mercy and grace and it so metimes breeds in me a warped view, very seldom have I strayed the other way but that warped view seems to bring with it many christian abnormalities, if you please. Self examination is good and scriptural, however to live in that state is very harmful, I believe.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2013/7/18 15:23

The Word of God is very plain that "the wages of sin is death." Sin separates us from God, breaks our fellowship and communion with the Lord, steals our peace and joy and if not dealt with makes us ineffective for God's kingdom purposes.

I don't look at any good thing coming from sin, but if we keep a tender conscience and allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sins, then we will quickly run to God to confess and repent of any sin.

The devil wants to use condemnation to keep the child of God focused on his own sinfulness and unworthiness. As long as we are looking within and not to Christ, then we will be paralyzed with condemnation.

We overcome by the blood of the Lamb. If there is sin, it needs to be dealt with. If sin is repented of and put under the blood then there should be no more consciousness of sin. We will always be conscious of our weakness, and this will keep us dependent on the grace of God, not having any confidence in the flesh.

Mike

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/7/18 17:05

Quote:

-----"If any of God's people should be tampering with sin, because God can turn it to good, though the Lord does not damn them, He may send them to hell in this life. He may put them into such bitter agonies and soul-convulsions, as may fill them full of horror, and make them draw nigh to despair. Let this be a flaming sword to keep them from coming near the forbidden tree."

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2013/7/18 17:09

I agree with the author of this--mostly. However, he only presented one side of the coin, which makes it look very much like he is being lenient on sin. Take it from the perspective of a lost person: sin doesn't cause any reaction from them spiritually. Nothing. No remorse. No examination of their soul. No turning to the Lord. Again, nothing.

The author said our SENSE of sinfulness is good. He did not say "our sinfulness is good." In fact, he clearly expressed that sinfulness in a believer is awful.

I don't agree with everything that he said; however, I understand what he is saying, because when I sin, although it is ALWAYS better not to have sinned, God does work in me an effort to convict, correct, and restore me. Again, it is always better not to sin and remain steadfastly seeking the Lord. Always. No exceptions.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2013/7/18 17:26

At least to a brother that wants to be free from sin but finds himself doing those things that he does not want to, and not doing what he knows to do, there is hope. This has been the case of many Christians, myself included, and what a deliverance it was to discover that through Christ alone we are delivered from this body of death.

Perhaps the greatest peril of a Christian is to think that you are all right, and be blind to the sin that you are in. Pride will blind us to our sin and cause us to see the faults in others while justifying ourselves.

Mike

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2013/7/18 17:33

Exactly

Re: Just not sure, on: 2013/7/18 17:44

Quote:
-----As I read much of the old writings I have to go back to just scripture reading prayerfully in the presence of the Lord alone, because what happens to me anyway, is when I get super introspective I seem to stray off of mercy and grace and it sometimes breeds in me a warped view, very seldom have I strayed the other way but that warped view seems to bring with it many christian abnormalities, if you please. Self examination is good and scriptural, however to live in that state is very harmful, I believe.

Yeah, someone once told me that our eyes were given to us to look outward and not to look inward.

Self-examination can only be effective if the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit is involved. Otherwise, you could fall into the "slough of despond".

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/7/18 17:58

For me the "sense" of sinfulness is found in the ever-present attraction to sin through my flesh nature. The temptation to get angry, impatient, lust. I find these impulses very real and omnipresent, forever keeping me in check in the spirit of my mind. This fosters a perpetual reliance upon the Life of Jesus Christ to keep me in a victorious position of overcoming through Him.

I've found that when the "sense" of sinfulness fades, I begin to slack off and grow careless, spiritually. I begin to assume a delusion that I've "arrived" and passed some sort of sanctified threshold where I don't need to be so fervent in faith anymore. I start to take a breather, relax my grip on the sword, loosen the breastplate, lower the shield, adjust the helmet. The "sense" of sinful danger is no longer at emergency-level.

And this is when I am suddenly taken down. One dart, strategically placed. Satan is opportunistic and very clever. As long as the "sense" of sinfulness is present, I am humble and full of faith in the spirit. But by nature I am proud and selfish and easily fatigued by my intransigent flesh. King David took to Bathsheba when the "sense" of war was of no threat and he was relaxing in his palace. When I begin relaxing in the "palace" of my triumphant vessel I start looking at different Bathshebas too!

This was the "good" principle of the sense of sinfulness I think the author was expressing in the article, as opposed to committing actual acts of sin.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2013/7/18 19:10

"For me the "sense" of sinfulness is found in the ever-present attraction to sin through my flesh nature. The temptation to get angry, impatient, lust. I find these impulses very real and omnipresent, forever keeping me in check in the spirit of my mind. This fosters a perpetual reliance upon the Life of Jesus Christ to keep me in a victorious position of overcoming through Him."

Well said brother! When we know our weakness we will walk in faith and watchfulness trusting the Lord to keep us.

When we think that we have arrived we become very vulnerable to a big fall because we forget that without Him we can do nothing. Instead of being watchful, we become careless.

Mike

Re: Our sense of Christ in us, works better., on: 2013/7/18 21:45

Yet, we should not lose sight of the fact that it is our sense of being a son of God, a co-heir with Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit that enables us to rise up in faith and overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil.

This "sense" should resonate stronger in you than the flesh.

Does it?

Quote:

-----Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good

Our sense of "Christ in us the hope of glory", works better.

Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/7/18 22:59

Something to consider,

As I am reading through the various post and comments from everyone, I am noticing that their are very few Scriptures being given.

I can not exactly place it, but something feels off.

Re: Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2013/7/19 6:52

Why did Christ shed his blood, but to redeem us from an 'empty way of life'? 1 Peter 1:18 19.

Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own Titus 2:14.

Christ shed his blood--to wash off our filth! The cross was both an altar and a laver. Jesus died not only to save us from wrath 1 Thessalonians 1:10 — but to save us from sin Matthew 1:21.

Out of his side came water which signifies our cleansing, as well as blood which signifies our justifying 1 John 5:6.

The truth is, it would make Christ monstrous, if the head should be pure and not the members.

Re: Our Sense of Sinfulness Works for Good , on: 2013/7/19 7:23

Quote:

-----by proudpapa on 2013/7/18 19:59:41

Something to consider,

As I am reading through the various post and comments from everyone, I am noticing that their are very few Scriptures being given.

I can not exactly place it, but something feels off.

Very much agree.

Re: , on: 2013/7/19 8:29

I agree that 'something is off'. The sense of sin has its place in bringing us to Christ, the law being our teacher thereof, but once we are in Christ, then the purpose has been served and it is purity and the sense of being pleasing to God which dominates when His righteousness becomes ours..

It is a mistake to think that a sense of sin is needed to stop us from becoming proud. No man who has been through the wilderness with God and has suffered the dark night of the soul, being brought down to the dust, can ever think that there is anything good in himself. He learns very well that he is nothing as he determines that he will never again depend on his flesh. This man can never forget his weakness and knows how prone he was to wander.

This is the way to freedom, not a constant fight against the evil desires of the flesh. Once it is in death, a man can concentrate on serving His Lord, knowing peace and joy, but the man who thinks he needs his sinfulness for good, is deceiving himself, as he accommodates it as a good thing and gives up the desire for holiness thinking it is not possible in this life.

What it boils down to is, that the flesh has not been dealt with in a Biblical way. Crucified.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/7/19 10:04

Quote:

-----What it boils down to is, that the flesh has not been dealt with in a Biblical way. Crucified

What has been crucified scripturally is the "old man", not the flesh. The flesh's influence can be put down through walking in the Spirit, but it is never truly removed - only conditionally nullified through the law of the Spirit of life in Christ to them who do not walk after the flesh. The flesh's practical strength over the spirit (and vice-versa) is moment-by-moment dictated by our "provisional" decisions. This daily, provisional motivation and responsibility to not feed the flesh but rather mortify its lusts through our collaboration with the Holy Spirit is entirely scriptural and I can provide dozens of verses if anyone would like.

Those who are seeking a one-time experiential death blow to the flesh thinking it will solve all their sin problems, will be sorely disappointed. It doesn't exist, apart from the teachings of gnosticism. According to plain Scripture the disciple of Christ must daily take up his cross of self-denial, make no provision for the flesh, gird up the loins of his mind, put on the armor of God and walk in the Spirit while ever-appropriating the grace of the very life of Jesus Christ, which comes through humility. The "lusts of the flesh" are crucified via spirit-led mortification, but the flesh itself cannot be done away with, for its definitive eradication will not occur until we become as Christ Himself is at glorification. But while on earth, such is the scriptural way to overcome the flesh and win a constant victory over the fulfilling of its lusts. There are no short-cuts over the flesh apart from our collaborative effort with God in fleeing temptation and putting the "lusts in our members" to death through the winning of the exchanged Life and Power of Christ, which comes to us by way of faith.

Re: , on: 2013/7/19 10:20

Good contributions Krautfrau and Paul.

Yes, Krautfrau it is our sense of God in the person of Jesus Christ and what He did for us and is still doing that keeps us humble.

Paul, good stuff, it is daily overcoming and apprehending Christ. We can never believe we have arrived.

But we must behold Him not ourselves. "Looking unto Jesus..." Heb 12:1

A "sense of sinfulness" works condemnation but our "sense of Christ" brings freedom from every encumbrance.

Re: Often times we flee - posted by dohzman (), on: 2013/7/19 11:01

Here is something I get sent from Chuck Swindol via e-mail, hope it blesses you guys:
As a pastor, it doesn't take very long before you understand that the ministry is not a job.

It's a calling.

I love Paul's first letter to his younger friend, Timothy. It is full of great reminders for us as pastors.

Over the next few posts, drawing from this essential epistle, I'll be challenging all of us in three areas related to our calling, specifically:

What do we flee from?

What do we follow after?

What do we fight for?

By the way, I see our calling as pastors as a responsibility that comes from God . . . without any expectations of pastoral perks on our part. Here's what that means:

We don't do it for the money.

We don't do it because the hours are good.

We don't do it because everybody will love us.

We don't do it because of where we get to choose to live.

Why do we do it? Because we cannot be satisfied doing anything other than our calling.

Honestly, can you think of any greater privilege?

Our calling as pastors includes running. Lots of it.

I'm thinking in particular of Paul's words in his first letter to Timothy: "You, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from . . ." (1 Timothy 6:11 NLT).

The word run comes from the Greek term pheugo. We get our word fugitive from it. It may sound strange at first, but we who are called to minister are like a fugitive. We should be constantly fleeing from evil.

Paul's letters contain certain things that the man of God is to run from. In fact, you and I will be running from these for the rest of our days:

Immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18).

Idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14).

Arrogance and conceit (1 Timothy 6:3-4).

Covetousness (1 Timothy 6:6-10). Guard against every temptation to covet your parishioners' salaries (you will rarely make as much as they do) or longing for the things they own.

Youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22).

Quarrelsomeness (2:24). I urge you to be known as a person who keeps the unity of the Spirit, rather than one who disturbs the peace of God's saints.

An older man in ministry once shared with me four common things that cause a minister to fall: silver, sloth, sex, and self.

Flee from those things as they relate to evil. That's right. Run!

May the things God calls us to flee from never be associated with you . . . or with me.

Next week, I'll write about what we should follow after.

—Chuck

I wrote you the last two weeks that the ministry is not our job. It's our calling.

That calling requires that we flee from certain things.

However, along with fleeing from those things, we need to follow after other things.

I love the double action stated here. While we are fleeing from certain things, we are at the same time following after other things. The word that appears in my Bible is pursue (1 Timothy 6:11). The tense of the original term indicates that we should keep on pursuing these things.

Paul lists five pursuits for Timothy—and for us:

Pursue righteousness—another word for integrity.

Pursue godliness—a reverence for God and a hatred for sin. May that always be true of us! Don't hold loosely your relationship with God. Samson did that and we all know what happened to him as a result. Hold very closely your relationship with Christ.

Pursue faith—a deliberate refusal to walk by sight. You will be tempted repeatedly to let your sight guide you. You'll be surrounded by others who will choose to do that. Don't go there. Trust God . . . lean on Him . . . rely on Him. Have Him fight your battles for you. Have Him clear your mind of things that are disturbing you and distracting you from your calling.

Pursue love—"seek the highest good of others" (the best definition of love I've ever read). Be affectionate in season and out of season. When you feel like it and when you don't. When you're younger or when you're older. When it's early or when it's late. When they like you or when they don't like you. When the church is growing or when your ranks have plateaued. Perseverance in love should mark your life.

Pursue gentleness—another word for meekness. May you be known as a humble man of God, giving others the credit they deserve and always pushing that credit away from yourself.

Keep on pursuing these things. As you do, you'll honor God.

Next week, I'll talk about the right kind of fighting.

—Chuck

- See more at: <http://insightforliving.org>

As one who has stumbled , on: 2013/7/19 12:01

Proverbs 24:14-20

"Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous, spoil not his resting place: for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; lest the Lord see it and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; for there shall be no reward for the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out".

The Lord knows we, as believers and followers of Christ, given his Holy Spirit will stumble and fall even though the price has been paid for our sin. It is painful, but it keeps us in the cleft of the Rock and ever acknowledging the price it cost Jesus. He does restore and we need not wallow in past sins, but the fact that there were and are consequences is a reality. If I don't thank him daily for forgiveness of sins, my heart gets hard and proud as some here have said so eloquently.

It is the wicked or unsaved man or woman who is not chastened and goes on in their sin. These are those we continue to witness to and pray for that they might know this priceless gift of forgiveness for their sins by our Precious Lord Jesus.

A continually chastened, yet loved daughter of the King,
Sister Leslie

Re: , on: 2013/7/19 13:07

Quote from PaulWest: Those who are seeking a one-time experiential death blow to the flesh thinking it will solve all their sin problems, will be sorely disappointed. It doesn't exist, apart from the teachings of gnosticism.

On the contrary, many of the greatest saints attest to an entire sanctification experience and went on to be great preachers of holiness and leaders of evangelism in the history of the church including Finney and Fox, many of them being leaders of new denominations where thousands were saved, when they were ousted from traditional churches who would not accept this work of the Holy Spirit and their witness proving that the flesh fights against the Spirit.

There is a long tradition of these men going back to the patristic period which has nothing to do with gnosticism as they never preached a salvation of inner cleansing allowing for outward sin. When men fight against this doctrine, it merely means that they have never come to this place of crucifixion.

They preached a one time death blow but also a moment by moment dependence on the Blood to remain in purity.

Re: , on: 2013/7/19 15:30

Quote:

-----They preached a one time death blow but also a moment by moment dependence on the Blood to remain in purity.

I believe I can agree with that. It would be much better if we were all talking in person because we would accomplish much more. I sense "in the spirit" I understand the context that Krautfrau is speaking of and will give her the benefit. Mainly because I have experienced that death blow but in addition (and glad Krautfrau included it), much dependence on the blood (daily) to remain in purity.

Rom_6:6 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 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Re: declaring the whole counsel of God - posted by savannah, on: 2013/7/19 16:16

Let a woman be learning in quietness with all submission.

But I do not permit a woman to be teaching, nor to be exerting dominance over a man, but to be in quietness.

For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, having been deceived, has come to be in transgression.

But she will be saved through the bearing of children, if they remain in faith and love and holiness with sanity. 1 Timothy 2:11-15

God has spoken above to one here who is contrary.

"If error is harmless then truth is useless." - CHS

Error is lurking at the door but Truth has answered her.

But she does not flee because she is as Proverbs 7:11 says.

SHE KNOWS NEITHER HUMILITY NOR FEAR.

"God sets Himself against proud ones, but He gives grace to humble ones."

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

May God through His Word do all of the above to whom He sees fit to do so..."For as the rain and the snow comes down from the heavens and do not return there, except it waters the earth and make it bring forth and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be, which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in what I sent it to do!" Isaiah 55:10-11

Re: , on: 2013/7/19 18:13

Savannah,

This is a fellowship forum and male and female can share their views. If the moderators thought it was not appropriate for women to share their view then they would have shut them down a long time ago. Paul West has been dialoging with Brenda for quite some time, now.

I don't witness any men being dominated by women, though I do notice some domineering men.

Please show some grace to your brethren.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/7/19 20:00

It is true that I am human and have an unregenerate flesh. so, I am prone to temptation and from time to time find myself desiring what I should not do. This condition is common to all believers, and I know that we are all very aware of this fact. if this is what is meant by a sense of sinfulness, then I am on the same page. But I am afraid this is not what is meant and I think I am not on the same page.

the writer of Hebrews says this. 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. note 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

The remembrance of sin was not a good thing. The continual shedding of blood served only to remind the people that they were sinful, but never made them righteous. But the blood of a new and better covenant did. As such we have been purged to the degree that we should have no more conscience of sin. This is, to me, the state of realization and conscience of righteousness, not that of sinfulness.

Paul tells us that Jesus, who knew no sin, was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ. I have experienced that revelation and acknowledgement of this righteousness serves to revive in me the sense of God's love and grace and compel me to do that which righteous men do. An ever present sense of sinfulness does not compel me to holiness. In fact, according to the writer of Hebrews, that sense of sinfulness should be gone altogether.

However, an acknowledgement that my flesh still awaits its salvation compels me to be aware that I too can fall off I give in to the flesh, and that knowledge is healthy. Thinking that I am still sinful is, to me, very counter productive to my spiritual life as I am no longer a sinner, nor am I sinful. I am a man made righteous by the blood of the lamb who still lives in a body of flesh and am susceptible to temptation.

sorry for the spelling errors, but I did not catch all of three wrong words my phone inserted.

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/7/19 21:14

twayneb,

very well said. That is it.

Re: - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2013/7/19 21:34

Quote by Paul West: What has been crucified scripturally is the "old man", not the flesh. The flesh's influence can be put down through walking in the Spirit, but it is never truly removed - only conditionally nullified through the law of the Spirit of life in Christ to them who do not walk after the flesh.

Here is the scripture reference you talking about

Roman 6:6 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.

Let's amplify the verse to see if we can gain a deeper understanding:

Rom 6:6 We know that our old (unrenewed) self was nailed to the cross with Him in order that body of sin might be made ineffective and inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin.

So you say it can it never truly can be removed meaning to me always active always ready to spring forth while the amplification of this scripture say that our body can be made ineffective and inactive for evil, so that's we will no longer be slaves to sin.

Quote by Paul West: Those who are seeking a one-time experimental death blow to the flesh thinking it will solve all their sin problems, will be sorely disappointed.

Paul I am one of these who is seeking sanctification why simply because I heard God voice on the subject and I believe him... I believe that the old self was nailed to the cross so that our body (the instrument of sin) might be made ineffective and inactive for evil and that our body can then be made effective and active for righteousness and have fruits unto holiness.

Next Scripture you say "the flesh influence can't be removed but rather put down".

Gal 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

So the flesh can be crucified but what does mean by the flesh..

Let's amplify the verse:

Gal 5:24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.

So we get a definition of what the flesh is (the godless human nature) and it can be crucified which takes us back to Romans 6:6.

So "the flesh" the godless human nature can be crucified and the body can be made inactive to sin as we have found out from Rom 6:6 AMP that the old (unrenewed) self "was nailed to the cross in order that our body (the instrument) of sin might be made ineffective and inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin.

There a point you say "only conditionally nullified through the law of the Spirit of life in Christ to them who do not walk after the flesh" I am always skeptical of conditions other than faith. Here is my reasoning the "condition" you're placing on nullification is not walking after the flesh, which sound like suppression to me a constant struggle to keep in down.

I would also say that you cannot walk in the Spirit unless you're crucified so that the body is made ineffective and inactive for evil and until that point you can't but help walk after the flesh... What I am getting at is the body obeys it does what it's told the issue is not with body so the problem comes from another source...

Quote by Paul West: The "lusts of the flesh" are crucified via spirit-led mortification, but the flesh itself cannot be crucified, for its definitive eradication will not occur until we become as Christ Himself at glorification.

Lust what is it and where does it come from?

Christ says: Matt 15:18-19 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Christ says out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, but we could also call it the Soul here is an example showing the areas of the soul or you could say heart.

Lust starts with a thought (mind), then it becomes a desire (emotion), which leads to action (will)

Now that I have established where lust comes from would you say that this source of defilement the heart (or soul) is a part of the "old man", "old (unrenewed) self", "the godless human nature" The answer is yes as it's the very source of the defilement.

When Christ was crucified would the heart the very source of the Adamic defilement, where all evil thoughts and desires lurk and proceed out of been crucified with him of course it would.

What have we seen the body is not the source of the problems it's an instrument a tool that used for sin or for righteousness, it's the slave to another master either sin or righteousness, but for it to become ineffective and inactive for evil something else needs to be dealt with.

So the issue stems from the somewhere else Christ told us the Heart is the source of defilement, this what is called the Old man, the unrenewed self, the flesh the godless human nature it we have found has been nailed to the cross it is dead, it is finished, there is no resurrection for the old life after it has been dealt with on the cross.

Jumping straight into the Amplified here

1 Peter 4:1 So, since Christ suffered in the flesh for us, for you, arm yourselves with the same thought and **purpose** . **For whoever has suffered in the flesh the mind of Christ is done with sin** .

What do you read what can you see 1. "arm yourselves with the same thought" thought were in the heart(the mind) but whats the motive is it lust or is it love. Its love you're being encouraged to suffer because you love God.

2. "having the mind of Christ" you could write here having the heart of Christ but the next bit is even more interesting "is done (or finished) with intentional sin" powerful stuff but there is more "has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God"

So let's go over that last bit with my amplification added For whoever has suffered in the flesh having the heart of Christ is done with intentional sin has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God.

All I see is Love, the heart of Christ the new heart, is a heart that loves God, it doesn't sin intentionally, it suffers in the flesh, it stops you from pleasing self and the world, as it only wants to please Gods motivated by love.

King James 1 Peter 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Using the Amplified 1 Peter 4:2 So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by human appetites and desires, but for what God wills.

Let's remind ourselves about the Quote by Paul West: The "lusts of the flesh" are crucified via spirit-led mortification, but the flesh itself cannot be crucified, for its definitive eradication will not occur until we become as Christ Himself at glorification.

The King James says we should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men ("lusts of the flesh") the Amplified deepens the meaning by saying the rest of his natural life living by human appetites and desires but again it means ("lusts of the flesh")

It's not that we have to mortify the lusts of the flesh, by sheer will power and proclaiming it's "spirit-led mortification" that's nonsense why because we should have the mind of Christ or as I have shown the heart of Christ.

In that heart it only longs to please Christ, it longs to the Father's will it won't intentionally sin as it would break the heart, but if they do they will be quick to repent with much tears and weeping until restored as they won't want to please themselves but only the Father in heaven.

Look at the last bit of the scripture "but he lives for what God wills" is this not Christ, did not Christ say this think about John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

But I am going a bit of track here "lusts of the flesh" lust resides in the uncrucified heart of man, it's the heart that is the source of defilement, it is this defilement that causes us to be called flesh as we were ruled by our naturally fleshly desires but thank God it has been crucified with Christ and we can know have the mind of Christ so that we don't live the rest of our lives in the flesh following the lusts of men.

I don't really care if I am called a Gnostic, I have heard my Father's voice on this matter, there is a second work of grace for the believer, it has been a long time studying, reading but it's getting clearer and clearer for me and it's all based around Roman 6:6 and truly knowing, I mean really, really knowing as in a revelation from God the Father what Christ did on the Cross and when that revelation comes you'll believe and step into a new walk in Christian life truly led by Gods Holy Spirit...

* Remember this that the body becomes inactive or ineffective to sin once the old man has been dealt with why, it's a instrument something that does what it's told.

** If your body is still an instrument for sin then there is something wrong, fast and pray God will show you the truth, just like he showed me..

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/7/19 22:42

PW wrote: ///Those who are seeking a one-time experiential death blow to the flesh thinking it will solve all their sin problems, will be sorely disappointed. It doesn't exist, apart from the teachings of gnosticism. ///

Would you please show evidence for this teaching being a gnostic teaching.

Re: , on: 2013/7/20 2:36

And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, From the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.

American Standard Version (1995) (Heb 8:11-13)

For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, But a body didst thou prepare for me; In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God. Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

American Standard Version (1995) (Heb 10:1-10)

A careful reading of these two passages of scripture makes it clear what is being spoken of. It is not a claim that a person cannot sin, or that the sacrifice spoken herein rendered a person incapable of sin, or even that a person cannot after believing into this sacrifice...christ' own body...will have no more awareness of their sins when they do sin...it is all before God in the sight of men. It is all Godward for the benefit of men. None of it has to do with the man per se it is all to do with the man in relation to God. The "being sanctified" is before God, the sanctifier is God and the means of sanctification is the shed blood of Christ intentionally given...being a physical sacrifice in His own body...it is none to do with a day to day walk by faith save in that this wonderful reality which the Spirit has borne witness to in our own consciences now makes it possible for the one who has lass hold of it to come before the Father in heaven with confidence. This coming before the Father speaks of reality and not theology. It is not a dead thing it is a living reality or else it is vanity. Those who are pressing this error which is again at the heart of some posts and polite rebellion ought to know that to do so will in the end cost them. It will be pressed and it will have its outcome. That too is real and not theology.

To say that one is prone to temptation is a euphemism. It ought to read I am a sinner.

Re: , on: 2013/7/20 2:41

Quote:

-----Would you please show evidence for this teaching being a gnostic teaching.

If you have such authority to ask then why do you not tell us what gnosticism itself is. Before you can ask such a question you ought to be able to comprehend what the thing is. Not its particular manifestations, whether in those who take the name of Christ, or less, in occultist who are caught up in the same deceiving spirit, but rather its true and real meaning.

Re: - posted by davidc (), on: 2013/7/20 4:00

Quote

Roman 6:6 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.

Let's amplify the verse to see if we can gain a deeper understanding:

Rom 6:6 We know that our old (unrenewed) self was nailed to the cross with Him in order that body of sin might be made ineffective and inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin.

Scripture says "the body of sin might be destroyed". I do not think that this is referring to "our body which is the instrument of sin". but rather to Christ Himself taking the body of Sin to the cross in His own body and triumphing over it. It is not speaking of our individual physical bodies.

As for gnosticism, that started in the garden, where the adversary said "ye shall be as gods". He is still pushing this today, and many are listening to his lies

David

Re: , on: 2013/7/20 4:43

I have found this definition of Gnosticism :

<http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Gnosticism>

"The word gnosticism comes from the Greek word for knowledge, gnosis (γνῶσις), referring to the idea that there is special, hidden mysticism (esoteric knowledge) that only a few possess. The occult nature of Gnostic teaching and the fact that much of the evidence for that teaching comes from attacks by orthodox Christians makes it difficult to be precise about Gnostic systems.

The word Gnosticism is also used to describe many modern sects. However, their doctrines have sometimes little to do with ancient Gnosticism, and there has always been a great deal of diversity with gnosticism."

It would be useful to know exactly, which type is being referred to.

Re: , on: 2013/7/20 4:55

"The Wesleyan Church is a Protestant, evangelical, holiness denomination with a rich heritage. We see it as our special mission to emphasize the message of "full salvation from all sin." We teach that a victorious Christian life is possible for all believers through the experience of both forgiveness of sins and the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Around the world Wesleyan churches and missions are now found in over 90 nations. In 2012, worldwide Sunday morning worship attendance was 475,000 persons in more than 5,000 congregations. Worldwide total membership was 370,000. There were more than 1,700 local churches in the United States and Canada, with 122,000 total members and an average of 221,335 in Sunday morning services.

Five colleges and universities are supported by the denomination in the United States and Canada: Houghton College (New York), Indiana Wesleyan University (Indiana), Southern Wesleyan University (South Carolina), Oklahoma Wesleyan University (Oklahoma), and Kingswood University (New Brunswick, Canada)."

<http://www.wesleyan.org/history>

All are Gnostic? And this is only one branch. Included is the Church of the Nazarene and many others.

Re: , on: 2013/7/20 6:49

Here is the first gnostic words recorded in human history. The first terrible thing to understand about this gnostic statement is that it is true.

“For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

The first terrible thing to understand about this gnostic statement is that in its form it is a true saying.

Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil... ..”

Gnosis linguistically may well mean knowledge. Or if you prefer gnosis may well mean "to know". However it is not the knowing which carries the precise danger, if that knowing is according to obedience to God, it is the belief that in knowing one is changed. It is a devilish trap into which anyone can easily step. From whence does knowledge come?

In the ancient world of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon gnosis is called wisdom. In ancient Greece wisdom is synonymous with all acquired knowledge and this includes material knowledge. Pythagoras who was educated by his own determination for nearly 40 years in the ancient world of Egypt, Assyria and Chaldea, made a rational and uniquely western link between sorceric knowledge, previously called wisdom or sophos, and laid a foundation for Philosophy. He is the first to use the term philosophy and he used it in specific meaning, to equate to a love of sophos (wisdom) for its own sake and not for gain, commercially or politically but for self development. The pinnacle of this development of oneself for neither good nor evil (moral) approbation is the same in meaning as the first usage of the Greek term logos. It means to become a god. To possess all knowledge and to be therefore like the gods.

The ancient (Egyptian, Assyrian and Chaldean) term sophos which previously meant wisdom could be equally applied to evil as well as good intentions regardless as to the validity and source of the knowledge acquired by means of esoteric and physical means. This whole process of the merging of material knowledge for gain and profit in the ancient world of Egypt, Assyria and Chaldea, finds in Greek philosophy a schism or an effect which presses the individual so inclined to labour esoterically and thereby seemingly selflessly, making of its adherents a person to be admired and cherished. Hence why Greek philosophy is always so appealing because of its seeming nobility of purpose. This is also why we have the spurious distinction between so-called black and white occult arts.

In the New Testament the Apostle John, writing in the last years of the first century identified several realities which taken together defeat of themselves the consequence of gnosis held for personal development. These are:

Christ Himself is the Logos of God.

He who is born again of Christ cannot sin.

Nevertheless We sin daily.

If we walk in the light as He is in the light then the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.

If we do sin, we can confess our sins and He {the Father} is just and righteous to forgive us our sins.

"I write these things in order that you might know that you have eternal life"

"That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have handled, concerning the word of life" The physical reality of Christ.

Separate any of these sayings or believe any one of them and not all of them and you have the basis for gnostic heresy.

It stands to reason therefore that we have to ask from whence did we come to believe any one of these precious truths.

Gnosticism at its heart carries in its folds a realisation that much of the knowledge which is derived from gnostic practise comes by way of lesser gods, rather than directly from the God. Amongst these lesser gods is a female spirit called Sophia who is worshiped by reason of adoration of her imparted fruits and this adoration, when it is expressed without reservation produces a clear blasphemous and idolatrous outcome. The modern as well as ancient usage of this knowledge is expressed as the spirit of Sophia. It is sophistication it is just one more open development of gnosis pressed into a more sophisticated delusion but in reality is no more than all of the ancient men who sought to be like God Himself, but by transaction with the sons of God. .

“If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? ‘If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.’”

New American Standard Bible: 1995 update. (1995). (Jn 10:35–38).

Every reality of God is counterfeited by the enemy of our souls. Very few men can hold a pure understanding of what gnosis means intuitively without falling into its trap. It is far better to set our sights on Christ and believe the whole of scriptures and not those parts which we select according to how we are led by the prince of the power of the air.

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/7/20 7:45

I asked PW : "Would you please show evidence for this teaching being a gnostic teaching."

p1118 Niv Student Bible 1 John commentary Zondervan 1992

//Gnostics balked at the Christian concept of Gods becoming human.because they believed a physical body was intrinsically evil,they denied a pure God could take on a body. Some dealt with the problem by claiming that Jesus was never a human being,but a phantom,a temporary appearance of God who looked human....

The apostle John debated in person with gnostics of his day,and had Gnostic thinking in mind when he wrote this letter...

..
throughout the letter especially in 4:2-3,the author lambastes those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh.//

p1118 Niv Student Bible 1 John commentary Zondervan 1992

//Live as you please

To Gnostics all matter was evil . Only the Spirit was pure,and Gnostics sought to rise to a higher more spiritual plane.This teaching produced side effect:people who strove to rise above matter didn't care about personal ethics.Their pure spirits could not be tainted by "earthly" sin Thus,they could act any way they wanted.//

So from this it would appear that gnostics taught personal ethics did not matter, and that earthly sinning did not matter, because the physical body was intrinsically evil and that it would be impossible for some one in a intrinsically evil body to stop sinning.

Edit add: Paul W, I would still ask that you show clear evidence for this teaching being a gnostic teaching.

Re: , on: 2013/7/20 9:09

Here is some nice light reading for you brother. If you do go through it I would suggest that you do it with a mind to separate the term esoteric from the notion of moral approbation. In short don't assume that gnosticism was a proven moral state of degeneracy or that those who held to it were not aesthetically determined to live moral lives.This is because gnosticism whilst it has mostly been understood historically through the ante-nicene fathers, especially Irenaeus, it has changed it's meaning so profoundly since 1945 since the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library in Egypt 1945. This is the most comprehensive and virtually the only gnostic writings extant (Apart from the Bruce Codex) and has done a great deal to shape recent perceptions of what gnosticism itself means. This has led some intellectuals

to question whether scriptures even alludes to gnosticism at all. Intellectual theologians have lost sight of the fact that theosophy existed in its fullness in British and US Society 80 years before the Nag Hammadi discovery and if they made a through study of theosophy they would realise that at its root are the very same precepts and ideas. This could be said for all occult knowledge regardless of the period of time one looks into. It all has the very same centrality of meaning, although it was in ancient times more fully concerned with the physical world. Where the more harmful occult knowledge came from, beyond this physical enquiry has to do with necromancy with fallen familiar spirits. These two things, man's enquiry into the cosmos and fallen spirits together give rise to occult thinking and practise. The predominant culture which gave these two activities continuity is Hellenistic philosophy which was the dominant cultural framework into which Christ Himself was born and lived.

Gnosticism. (J. D. Barry & L. Wentz, Eds.)The Lexham Bible Dictionary.

GNOSTICISM

A variety of second-century AD religions whose participants believed that people could only be saved through revealed knowledge, or gnosis (from the Greek *gnosis*). Gnostics held a negative view of the physical or material world.

Introduction

Gnosticism shared many characteristics with Judaism and Christianity but remained markedly distinct from either. Traditionally, Gnosticism was thought to have emerged from within Christianity (Smith, *No Longer Jews*, 18–25). Recent scholarship, however, has acknowledged Gnosticism as an existing belief that only later came into contact with Christianity (Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 11; Smalley, 1, 2, 3 John, 44). The New Testament identifies many similarities between Christian and gnostic belief, particularly in Acts, 1 Timothy, 1–3 John, and Revelation (Perkins, *Gnosticism*, 29–38).

Origins and Definitions

Origins of the Term. The earliest example of a group being described as “gnostic” comes from the work of Irenaeus, a second-century Greek church father (Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 9), who described certain groups of heretics as the “gnostic heresy.” At that time, the term “heresy” (from the Greek *hairesis*) did not have the contemporary connotation of opposition to orthodoxy, but merely meant “opinion,” “sect,” or “school of thought.” Henry More coined the modern term “Gnosticism” in the 17th century to describe the heresy of the church in Thyatira (Rev 2:18–29; Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 9).

Definition of the Term.

The term “Gnosticism” may be an inadequate description of “the great variety of phenomena attributed to it” (Logan, *The Gnostics*, 1) because it elicits “misleading generalizations and unwarranted stereotypes” (Smith, *No Longer Jews*, 8). Williams has argued that the term reflects a “dubious category” which should be dismantled and abandoned (Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*). Pearson has likewise acknowledged that there is a “bewildering degree of variety” in the historical expressions of Gnosticism (Pearson, “Gnosticism as a Religion,” 89).

Pearson argues that Gnosticism is purely a historical term used to classify religious features that are “clearly distinguishable from anything that is found in Christianity, Judaism, or other religions of antiquity” (Pearson, “Gnosticism as a Religion,” 95–96). However, many strands of gnostic thought share common characteristics with both Christianity and Judaism. Therefore, Gnosticism should be defined as a descriptive category arising from historical observations rather than a prescriptive system of unilateral belief.

Common Gnostic Beliefs

The second-century church fathers identified a set of common characteristics of gnostics. These characteristics differ by region or school of thought but provide a general picture of gnostic belief (Smith, *No Longer Jews*, 8–10). Our understanding of Gnosticism has grown exponentially through a close study of the Nag Hammadi Library of gnostic texts, discovered in 1945 (see Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*). Acknowledging the multiplicity of gnostic beliefs represented in the Nag Hammadi Library, the following examples are merely representative of a prominent strand of gnostic belief.

God.

Gnostic texts often describe God as incomprehensible, unknowable, and transcendent. For example, one text describes God as: “God and father of the all, the holy, the invisible... existing as pure light into which it is not possible for any

light of the eye to gaze" (Apocryphon, 22:17–19). The Apocryphon of John demonstrates the gnostic view the nature of God, stating it is not "fitting to think of as divine or as something of the sort, for is superior to deity" (Apocryphon, 33–36). Thus, Gnosticism holds that God cannot be observed with our senses nor easily grasped with our understanding. Gnostic texts commonly speak of God only in negative terms, such as "the unknown God," "the unknown Father," "ineffable," "unspeakable"; God is even described as "nonexistent" because He does not exist in the usual manner of being (Foerster, Gnosis, 4). Additionally, gnostic texts commonly address God as the "Ultimate Ground of Being" (Foerster, Gnosis, 4).

Dualism and Dichotomy.

For gnostics, the world was divided into the physical and spiritual realms. Gnostics held that the world was not created by the "Ultimate Ground of Being" (God), but by a lesser deity resulting from the fall of the divine personification of Wisdom (Perkins, Gnosticism, 15). This lesser deity or demiurge created the material world, which is entirely isolated from the divine realm in which the Ultimate Ground of Being exists (Pearson, Ancient Gnosticism, 16).

Likewise, gnostics believed that humans are split between the physical and spiritual world: "the true human self is as alien to the world as is the transcendent God" (Pearson, Ancient Gnosticism, 13). They asserted that the true human self or soul is naturally divine, belonging to the same realm as the Ultimate Ground of Being, but is trapped and imprisoned by the material world. They viewed the physical body as a prison which malevolently trapped the "divine spark" within humanity (Pearson, Ancient Gnosticism, 12–14). Because of this imprisonment, Gnosticism incorporates an active hatred of the physical body, similar to Docetism. This dualistic split between the body and the soul means that the divine spark of the human soul must be freed from the material constraints of the world in order to attain salvation and unity with the Ultimate Ground of Being.

Gnosis and Salvation.

Gnostics advocated gnosis, or "revealed knowledge," as the basis for salvation (Pearson, Gnosticism, Judaism, 7). Rather than being a philosophy, gnosis is a single revelation of the true nature of human and divine selves (Foerster, Gnosis, 1). The gnostics' goal is to attain salvation from the fallen physical world in which they are trapped through obtaining the secret knowledge, or gnosis (Logan, The Gnostics, 63). Gnostics believed that gnosis frees the divine spark within humans, allowing it to return to the divine realm of light (Pearson, Ancient Gnosticism, 13). When all elect gnostics have been restored through gnosis, the physical world will be destroyed, and the chosen humans will return to their divine state (Pearson, Ancient Gnosticism, 13–14). Salvation is thus initially brought about by gnosis, but ultimately constitutes a return of the human soul to the divine realm in which it belongs.

The gnosis which brings about salvation varies greatly within the different gnostic schools, as each group of gnostics claimed to exclusively possess the necessary knowledge (Foerster, Gnosis, 8). However, the gnosis generally took the form of a special revelation of the divine, transcendent realm to a mediatory figure who was required to spread the true knowledge of God among humanity (Pearson, Ancient Gnosticism, 12). Thus, gnosis was both a revealed knowledge of the transcendent God as the Ultimate Ground of Being and a revealed knowledge that the human soul ultimately belongs to the divine transcendent realm. This revealed knowledge frequently took the highly complex and spiritualized form of mythopoeic revelation in which gnosis involves understanding the true nature of God and the human soul as immanently divine.

Myth.

The elaborate gnostic myths function to reveal gnosis through a complex series of cosmological, anthropological, and soteriological developments. While features of gnostic mythology vary among sects, the Apocryphon of John is typical of the elaborate mythopoeic formulation. It indicates that the divine mother, Pronoia-Barbelo ("Thought" or "Foreknowledge"), was the first of the transcendent God's created beings (Apocryphon 4:26–5:6). From the divine mother, the self-generated Christ appeared and produced four great Lights with three pairs of Aeons who embody abstract esoteric principles—Life, Grace, and Wisdom (Sophia) (King, The Secret Revelation of John, 3; Apocryphon, 5:10–10:4). Sophia wished to create a being with her own likeness, but instead produced an evil being known as the "Chief Ruler." According to gnostic belief, the evil "Chief Ruler" was the creator God of Genesis, whose true name was Yaldabaoth (King, The Secret Revelation of John, 3–4). Yaldabaoth then stole some of the Spirit from Sophia, which he used to create Adam. The mythological system in the Apocryphon develops further in what Pearson describes as "extended commentary" on several texts in the book of Genesis to account for sin, sexual lust, and human ignorance of their divine spirit (Pearson, Ancient Gnosticism, 66). Finally, the "Spirit of Life" descends to earth to teach humans of the power of gnosis to save humanity through recognition of the divine spirit humans unknowingly possess (King, Secret Revelation of John, 4–6; Apocryphon, 27:31–28:29).

The New Testament and Gnosticism

Simon Magus. According to Irenaeus, Simon Magus was the one “from whom all the heresies take their origin” (Irenaeus, Haer., 1.23.2). Simon Magus, a sorcerer found in Samaria by Phillip, worked wonders among the people before Phillip converted him to Christianity (Acts 8:13). Following his conversion, Simon attempted to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit from Peter before being rebuked (Acts 8:9–24). Perhaps because the New Testament claims that Simon assumed the divine title of “the Great Power of God” (Acts 8:10, NAS), Irenaeus records that Simon actually believed himself to be God (Irenaeus, Haer., 1.23.2). In Irenaeus’ account, Simon preached himself as the god who first created “Thought, the mother of all”—his female companion (Irenaeus, Haer., 1.23.2). From thought, the angels and human beings were created. But because “the angels were governing the world badly,” Simon descended into human form “to bring things to order” (Irenaeus, Haer., 1.23.3).

Simon promised that when “order” came, his followers would be saved, and “the world will be dissolved” (Irenaeus, Haer., 1.23.3). Although the account of Simon’s religious beliefs includes no reference to a saving gnosis, Irenaeus concludes that Simon gave the “falsely so-called gnosis” its beginnings (Irenaeus, Haer., 1.23.4).

Hymenaeus and Philetus (1 Tim 1:20; 6:20).

Hymenaeus and Philetus provide the framework for the beginning and conclusion of 1 Timothy and have traditionally been identified as gnostic teachers. The author of 1 Timothy begins with an admonition to keep “certain men” from teaching “strange doctrines” centering on “fruitless discussion” (1 Tim 4). The author then warns that teachers of the strange doctrines, including “Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Tim 1:20). 1 Timothy concludes with an exhortation to avoid “worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘(‘)knowledge’” (1 Tim 6:20). Irenaeus picked up the concept of “falsely called knowledge” when he undertook his heresiology, which, though generally known as *Against Heresies*, is formally titled, *On the Detection and Overthrow of the Falsely Called Knowledge*.

However, Johnson argues that the use of gnosis in 1 Timothy should be interpreted broadly, asserting, “there is no need to take as referring to a second century Christian elitist movement” (Johnson, *First and Second Letters*, 312). By contrast, Wisse argues that the author of 1 Timothy deliberately placed Hymenaeus and Philetus “in the context of the despised gnostics” (Wisse, “Prolegomena”, 143).

The Nicolaitans (Acts 6:5; Revelation 2:6, 15, 18–29).

The Nicolaitans of Rev 2 were identified as an early gnostic heresy. According to Irenaeus, the Nicolaitans originated from Nicolaus, the proselyte of Antioch who was given church leadership in Act 6:5 (Irenaeus, Haer., 1.26.3). Although Irenaeus did not initially identify Nicolaus as gnostic, he later referred to the Nicolaitans as an offshoot of the “falsely called knowledge” (Irenaeus, Haer., 3.11.1). However, Pearson argues that there is no explicit reason other than the testimony of Irenaeus to relate either Nicolaus or the Nicolaitans to Gnosticism (Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 36–37). Likewise, Fitzmyer points out that no substantial evidence has been found associating the Nicolaitans with Gnosticism since the second century AD (Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 350).

1–3 John. Individuals such as Smalley have examined potential gnostic influence in the Gospel and letters of John (Smalley, 1, 2, 3 John, 44). Although the noun gnosis is entirely absent from the Johannine literature, the verb “to know” (γινώσκω) appears over 80 times. Additionally, the idea of the knowledge of God is an important motif throughout John’s works (e.g., John 17:3; 1 John 2:13; Smalley, 1, 2, 3 John, 44). Smalley contends, however, that this knowledge of God is markedly different than the gnosis of the gnostic sects, for it is, “not intellectual and speculative, but experimental and dynamic” (Smalley, 1, 2, 3 John, 45).

Bultmann and Marshall have traditionally acknowledged the gnostic themes in the Johannine letters by concluding that the secessionist opponents of 1 John were themselves gnostics (Bultmann, *The Johannine Epistles*, 11; Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 14–18). In this reading, 1 John may be seen as a deliberate polemic against Gnosticism that appropriates gnostic elements into the Christian faith. Bultmann contended that the author of 1 John used specific verbs of knowing and sense perception in order to counter the “Gnosticizing Christians against whom the letter is directed” (Bultmann, *The Johannine Epistles*, 11). Marshall believed that the Johannine opponents were “forerunners” of the later gnostic sects (Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 15).

In recent years, however, the idea that the Johannine letters were written against any strand of Gnosticism has been largely abandoned. Thompson notes that, “While the secessionists may have held beliefs that lent themselves to Gnostic

interpretation, it is doubtful that they ought to be called Gnostic¹ (Thompson, 1st–3rd John, 17; see also Perkins, ¹“Gnostic Revelation¹”). This approach has largely coincided with the rise in understanding of Gnosticism in its own right during the latter half of the 20th century.

Contemporary scholarship still affirms the existence of gnostic themes and influence in the Johannine letters. For example, Brown has identified substantial parallels between the author of 1st–3rd John and early gnostic belief (Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 59[–]65), including the nature of knowledge of God and the dualism between light and darkness (e.g., 1 John 1:6[–]7; Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 60[–]62). However, Brown cautioned that ¹“at most, similarity is suggested,¹” (Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 60). Likewise, commentator Yarbrough addressed 1st–3rd John without restricting the Johannine letters to a monolithic gnostic or protognostic belief, and he relegated discussion of any gnostic parallels primarily to footnotes (Yarbrough, 1st–3rd John). In commentaries such as Yarbrough¹s, the parallels between gnostic belief and the Johannine letters are left to be examined with their unique differences triumphing over any thematic similarities.

Problems for Further Study of the New Testament and Gnosticism

A major problem with connecting the New Testament and Gnosticism is the prominent use of the word ¹“gnosis¹” throughout the Gospels and the Pauline letters. Johnson maintained that the use of the word was ¹“non-technical¹” and referred only to a generalized knowledge throughout the New Testament (Johnson, *First and Second Letters*, 311[–]12). Perkins, though, demonstrates that a closer correlation between the New Testament and Gnosticism is plausible¹—particularly in light of the absence of an early fixed canon (Perkins, *Gnosticism*, 29[–]38). Smith advocated extreme caution: ¹“Although it must be admitted that Paul addressed issues similar to those of Gnosticism, it also must be emphasized that he came to radically different conclusions regarding them¹” (Smith, *No Longer Jews*, 157). Further study of Gnosticism must be careful to recognize both the similarities and the differences between gnostic writings and the New Testament.

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ZACHARY G. SMITH

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Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2013/7/20 15:07

Christianity vs Gnosticism

TRUTH

God's Word

God's unchanging Word. Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" John 14:6

NT manuscripts: over 5,000 2nd century manuscripts affirm the New Testament. Recognized and used by Christians since the birth of the church.

Constantine had nothing to do with it.

God' Word is false. Truth is based on mythical, secret knowledge (gnosis).

Gnostic

Å“The Bible is a product of man... not of God. ... Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. ... The Bible, as we know it today, was collected by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.Å” 231

Christian
Divinity

of Jesus

The omnipotent and all-knowing Creator and Lord, who came to earth to die as our Redeemer and Savior. After resurrection, returned to His throne where He reigns as King.

"Who do you say I am?" Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt 16:15-16

"...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:10-11

Gnostic Revealer (kabbalah)

An ordinary man -- adept in gnosis -- who marries Mary Magdalene.

"Compare me to someone and tell Me whom I am like." Peter: "You are like a righteous angel." Matthew: "You are like a wise philosopher." (Thomas)

God our Father

Omnipotent, sovereign Ruler of all.

Â"I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless." Genesis 17:1

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.'" Isaiah 55:8-9

Gnostic;

Aeon: "In early Gnosticism, the Absolute Being, or, in later Gnosticism, successive emanations from the Supreme Deity, which form the Pleroma, the world of light or higher reality..."

"Plotinus taught that there is a supreme, totally transcendent "One", containing no division, multiplicity or distinction..."

"Plotinus offers an alternative to the orthodox Christian notion of creation ex nihilo ('out of nothing')... Emanation ex deo ('out of God')..."

The existence of both a transcendent God and a lower God (the CreatorÂ–Demiurge), whom Gnostics equated with Yahweh of the Old Testament...

Two gods, a father god and a mother goddess (wisdom/Sophia, shekinah). Some see the Holy Spirit as the mother goddess.

Human condition

Sin

Man's physical body is neutral, but his soul (especially will and emotions) is fallen (wicked) until regeneration.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of GodÂ..." Romans 3:23

Gnostic;

Two parts: spirit (good) and matter or body (evil)

Two options: asceticism or reckless licentiousness

The problem is ignorance, not sin.

Faith

In Christ, the Living Word

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil." Proverbs 3:5-7

Our faith is based on God's revelation of Himself in His Word. Historical evidence, not irrational imagination. 1 Peter 3:13-15.

Gnostic:

In "The Teachings of Silvanus" Jesus teaches salvation by enlightenment: "Bring in your guide and your teacher. The mind is the guide, but reason is the teacher. They will bring you out of destruction and dangers Enlighten your mind.... Light the lamp within you."

Brown: "..."the acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove." P341

Salvation

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." John 11:25

"Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." John 3:18

"Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life...." John 6:40

Gnostic:

Man's spirit is imprisoned in the material body but will escape this imprisonment at death; and

* SALVATION -- redemption through gnosis, by secret knowledge

The Teachings of Silvanus, another Gnostic document, portrays Jesus as teaching salvation by enlightenment:

"Bring in your guide and your teacher. The mind is the guide, but reason is the teacher. They will bring you out of destruction and dangers Enlighten your mind.... Light the lamp within you."²⁴

Resur-

rection

Physical resurrection, not just immortality of the soul.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." John 11:25-26

Gnostic:

No physical resurrection of the body. Instead, reincarnation.

Gospel

contain an orderly account of the birth, life, deeds, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Ignorance is said to be the primary culprit of man's condition, not sin.²⁸ Therefore, in no sense of the word can these documents be properly referred to as gospels.

Who do you say

I Am? Christian:

Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you say I am?" Peter rightly responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." Matt. 16:15-17

Gnostic:

Jesus: "Compare me to someone and tell Me whom I am like." Peter: "You are like a righteous angel." Matthew: "You are like a wise philosopher." Thomas: "Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom You are like."

Jesus: "I am not your master."... When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?" Thomas: "If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up." (Thomas)

<http://www.crossroad.to/charts/gnosticism.html>

See also America's Spiritual Slide

* Mikhail Gorbachev, "New World Order: Consensus," The Cape Cod Times, January 28, 1993.

In Christ: Phillip

Re: , on: 2013/7/20 15:29

Gnosis linguistically may well mean knowledge. Or if you prefer gnosis may well mean "to know". However it is not the knowing which carries the precise danger, if that knowing is according to obedience to God, it is the belief that in knowing one is changed. It is a devilish trap into which anyone can easily step.....

.....an inoculation against the desire to sin by a one time experience but it is also a moment by moment thing to stay in that one moment experience by trusting in the Blood.....After the crisis sin is rare, and there is no desire for it as that was burnt out by the 'fire', and never comes from temptation to sin but through failing to depend on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.....Some men go on to never sin again but it is common for others to fall into a sin once but get restored after that. Brenda Jackson 2013/7/20 10:05

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2013/7/20 15:46

Saints,

We encourage the further discussion and considerations on Gnosticism be done in a new thread. The original post itself and initial thoughts is mostly on a different subject and this new discussion has come up from questions from the latter. So I feel it would be better to start a new thread discussing specifics of Gnosticism. Thank you brethren.

This thread is being locked.