

POSITION TO PERSON

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Fellowship Bible Church

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Bible Study Guide

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Acknowledgments

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CHAPTER THREE THE PAUSE & THE PROBLEMS

FACTS TO RECKON UPON -- The Lord has been awakening believers in America, causing them to become aware of their need for spiritual growth and maturity. They are coming to realize the struggle of Romans Seven, and their failure has given rise to a heart-hunger for liberty in the life that is Christ.

Many of these struggling believers have discovered that they need not try to conquer, or change, or eradicate the “old man,” but that it may be freely exchanged for the “new man,” the “not I, but Christ” life. They are finding that spiritual growth is not a matter of work, keeping the law, etc., but that it is a rest of faith in the finished work of the Cross--a reckoning upon that which God has already accomplished in Christ on their behalf.

The Father has shown them in the rightly-divided Word that His purpose for them is to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). The “how” of this growth is not that of struggle but of counting upon their crucifixion and ascension with Christ, beholding Him in the Word as their Life, and walking in dependence upon the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:16).

THE PERTURBING PAUSE -- Nevertheless, in the midst of this impressive growth awaking, many believers are beginning to experience a spiritual slackening, a sort of vague vacuum. There appears to be a perplexing pause, an inexplicable lull, producing an intensified hunger and need.

Some feel that ever since they have entered upon the path of growth they are not as aware of the Lord’s presence as formerly. Others suffer from an increased sense of isolation. Reckoning upon their judicial death unto sin that occurred at Calvary some 2,000 years ago, and counting upon their position in the heavenlies, all seems to be so very long ago and far away.

The effect of these feelings is a deepening sense of loneliness and depression, a growing awareness of unaccountable but very real fear and apprehension. This unrest and inner turmoil is intensified by the tormenting surmise that the Lord is not doing anything about it, and that no one seems to understand or be of any real assistance.

PROBLEMS PREDOMINATE -- Personal problems develop, only to be worsened by difficulties in the family and church relationships, and these seem to be aggravated by the

world around having become one gargantuan problem. This combination presses in to become just too much for one's present spiritual resources and development, despite the progress heretofore experienced and enjoyed.

Here, generally speaking, waver an increasing number of awakened believers today. There has been a certain amount of freedom from the reign of sin, coupled with appreciable growth in the life that is Christ via the identification truths. Yet the spiritual capacity does not seem to keep pace with the need for adequate coping, let alone overcoming.

Now to answer this burning question: Are these problems good, or are they bad? Are they of Satan, or are they of the Holy Spirit? C.H. Mackintosh wisely stated:

Many have, through grace and faith, found the Lord Jesus in the divine efficacy of His Blood, between them and their sins; but they are not yet able, in the same simple way, to realize Him as standing, in His divine wisdom and love, between them and their circumstances.

F.W. Grant supplies insight into the Father's process for our spiritual growth:

The forwardness of nature is the failure of youth--our spiritual youth, as well as our natural youth; eagerness to run in God's path, but not yet apprehending just what that path is, or what is required to walk in it.

On the other hand, when the cost is counted, and our weakness known, the energy begotten of self-confidence being gone, we need a stimulating call on God's part, to get out of the persistent occupation with our weakness now, as with our strength before.

J.B. Stoney sums up the situation:

The work of the Spirit in us is to lead us to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and this after we have learned and known that through Christ's death we are freed from all that was against us, that we have passed from death unto life. The practical effect of the grace in which we stand is left out and unknown, hence there is no real enjoyment; real deliverance is not yet realized.

An understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is basic to Christian growth. Spirituality is Christlikeness, and Christlikeness is the fruit of the Spirit. Spiritual power is not the miraculous or the spectacular, but rather the consistent manifestation of the

characteristics of the Lord Jesus in the believer's life. All this is the work of the Spirit, of whom the Lord Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me" (John 16:14).

What are the ingredients of spirituality? First, a spirit of dependence, whatever may be the state of faith and the blessings we may have realized. Secondly, an entire confidence in the goodness of the Father: for He is love. Thirdly, the Lord Jesus as the constant Object of the affections of the heart, for the work of the Spirit in the heart is to fill it with contemplation of and fellowship with the Lord Jesus in glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

Our heavenly position provides proximity and access to the Lord Jesus and the Father. Here--and at the end of succeeding chapters--are quiet studies for getting to know the Lord Jesus, and hence the Father, more fully and intimately.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CAUSE OF THE PAUSE

Dear friend in Christ Jesus -- In order to better achieve our present purpose, we would like to personalize the remainder of this material. If you think that you are not ready for what is shared, or if you are beyond it and have no need for it, you may know of someone for whom it might be beneficial.

But if you do “qualify,” you will be relieved and edified to know that your heavenly Father is the Cause of the pause, which, coupled with the present pressing problems, are meant to precipitate an all-important turning point in your spiritual development.

SIN PERSONIFIED -- In order to best explain this good news, we go back a step or two. During the early years of your Christian life there was a lot of childish self-centeredness, which your Father patiently tolerated and ultimately utilized. Naturally your attitude was: Jesus died for *my* sins, God has saved *me*, the Cross was for *my* sake-- therefore it was *my* joy and *my* relief with which *I* was occupied. Mr. Stoney sheds light upon all of that:

If the need of man were the sole measure of the grace of God, then man only would be thought of, the work of the Lord Jesus would be simply for man, and the power of God expended merely in rescuing man and securing his relief. Man would be the object and end of it all, and not the Father.

Consequently there was a good deal of immature selfishness that extended into your early years as a believer. You prayed for and expected the Father’s blessings, love, fellowship and comfort, as well as His guidance, protection and help along your path. You looked for relief and freedom from the guilt and inconvenience of sin, and desired from Him the peace, joy, and benefits of your life in Christ.

THE WAY UP IS DOWN -- In His own time, and well within the scope of Romans 8:28, your Father applied that very self-centeredness to discover to you something of the sinful malignancy and power of your indwelling Adamic man. Down you went into the extended defeat of Romans Seven, and found yourself to be none other than the “Oh, wretched man that I am!”

THE MODE OF RECKONING -- It was by means of the futile struggle against the overwhelming strength of sin that God brought you to the foremost spiritual advance thus far in your Christian life. It was through the careful sharing of a friend, a conference message, a book, tract, or tape, that you were introduced to the liberating identification truth of the life that is Christ.

After guiding you in a good deal of concentrated study, the Spirit of Truth revealed your identification with the Lord Jesus in His death unto sin and resurrection unto newness of life (Rom. 6:3-5). It was then that you exercised faith in that finished work, reckoning yourself to have died indeed unto sin and to be alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11). As a result you began to enjoy a growing freedom from the power and reign of sin, with your daily life reflecting less of the works of Adamic flesh and more of the fruit of the Spirit--the new-creation life of the Last Adam.

PURPOSE BEHIND THE PURPOSE -- But even while growing in the “deeper truths,” you have been more aware of the benefatee than the *Benefactor*. You have been more occupied with the liberation and growth truths and their results than with the Liberator, the One who is not only the Truth, but your very Christian Life. For you it has been, “that I may know liberty,” and “that I may know growth,” rather than for the very reason of your Christian life: “That I may know *Him* (Phil. 3:10).

It is as you are beginning to experience something of the Father’s purpose of conforming you to the image of His Son that the Spirit reveals the *purpose behind the purpose!* Being conformed to the image of the Son is *foundational* for the Father’s primary purpose of having personal fellowship with you, both now and throughout Eternity.

Mr. Stoney shares this profound truth:

“Where do you dwell? Come and see. They came...and abode with Him.” The highest satisfaction He can have is that we should be at home with Himself. He has removed the distance from His own side.

“He who measured my distance in the One who is the measure of my nearness.” If you believe that, you say, I will approach my Father. That is one thing. The next thing is, His love is so great that He delights to have you there--you are there in all the beauty and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is your Life! (Col. 3:4)

Mr. F.B. Burkitt expressed the same wonderful fact:

The Lord Jesus did not merely die to put away my sin, but to give me the infinite privilege of being positioned before the Father in all His acceptance and loveliness.

If we are to be in heaven at all, the Father must have us there, lovely in all the loveliness of His own Beloved Son: and that, as far as the new man is concerned, He communicates to us here and now (Eph. 2:6-13).

Mr. F.W. Grant, as with all who know and *occupy* their position in Christ, adds to the blessed testimony:

“In Christ” is the language of complete identification, a living union. Henceforth the eye of the Father sees us ever in Christ alone. We are reckoned, and are to reckon ourselves, as with Him dead, buried, quickened, risen, and ascended in Him, seated in the heavenly places before the Father.

Think of the fast embrace with which you find yourself held, right to the heart of the Father Himself, when you discern your position in Christ. He is a heavenly Man, the Last Adam--Head of a new race; beginning of a new creation-- and you and I who believe are “in Him,” seen and accepted before the Father in His Beloved.

Stay for a moment, dear friend. Rejoice in the truth of these early-Brethren statements, and rest in the Son in the very heart of your Father. Sit down where He has positioned you, Blood-bought; it is the only place you have, both now and throughout Eternity.

Tragically, there are those who objectively hold and rejoice in the truth of their position in Christ, but who never in spirit--by faith--realize, assume, take, sit in their place “on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 8:1). The heavenly Mansion is theirs; but alas, they do not live there.

It was the elder prodigal son who “would not go in; therefore came his father out, and entreated him. Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine” (Lu. 15:23,31)).

IMPERATIVE PERSONAL FELLOWSHIP -- Your growth in the image of the Lord Jesus is to foster fellowship with Himself and the Father. “He imparts to us of Himself in order to qualify us *for* Himself.” The thing to realize is that your salvation is not only of God and from God, but that it is *for* God. “All things are of God who hath reconciled us *to Himself* by Jesus Christ.” “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 5:18; I Cor 1:9).

Mr. Stoney shares:

When I rest in the Lord Jesus, then I begin to find all my joy and strength in Him, and I occupy myself with Him. This is the first step, or foundation to true devotedness. I do not become devoted in the true sense until I have found my rest in Him. I am, up to this, rather looking to receive from Him. I am more an object to myself; but when I find

how fully I am an object to Him, then my heart is at liberty to make Him its Object, He having made me His.

It is true that the Lord Jesus went to the Cross for your sake--in order to redeem you--but it was primarily on behalf of His Father. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." "I have glorified Thee on the earth" (Heb. 10:9; John 17:4).

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM" -- The reason the Father saved you is that you may come to know *Him*, and that necessitates intimate, personal fellowship with Him via the Word of God. "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

And it is by knowing the Lord Jesus that you come to know the Father. "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him" (John 14:7). "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (I John 1:3, 4).

In order to teach you how all-essential that fellowship is, He allows you to drift to the point of saying, "I am growing, but I miss His presence with me; I am growing but I am lonely and depressed; I am growing, but I am frightened; I am growing, but I am no longer able to cope with the problems within and without that would seem at times to virtually overwhelm me."

He came down here for your birth; now He would draw you to Himself for your growth. Mr. Stoney ever points upward:

The love of the Lord Jesus culminates in this, that we should be with Him where He is. He died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him (I Thess. 5:10).

I find that the one who is set on usefulness (Martha) does not advance like the one set on personal love for and fellowship with Him (Mary). The Lord give us to be more personally attached to Himself where He is; then we shall be useful according to His good pleasure down here.

The heart that is captivated by an object could never be at rest until it was with the one who had won it; for satisfaction you must be where He is. Love really does not think of anyone but its Object until it is quite sure of its position with Him; and then when at rest about itself it studies the mind and heart of the Object.

Ever depend upon the Spirit of Christ for all! The work of the Holy Spirit is known by His abasing men, and glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:31). When He works in us, Christ is not a mere helper, or a puppet in my hands, but my All in all, occupying my thoughts, filling my heart, and unconsciously influencing and developing my life.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCENTRATED GROWTH TRUTHS

SUMMATION -- Here we have the summation of the whole, constituting a concentrated study of the truth concerning growth. Look up and pore over each verse, dependently, prayerfully, and carefully. Mull!

As a unique person, my Father conceived me in His heart of love back in the eternal counsels of the Trinity. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:4,5).

The Father chose to introduce me into this world via fallen Adam, from whom I received a sinful life and nature. Other terms for that condemned life are: old man, flesh, Adamic nature, old nature, indwelling sin, old life, and principle of sin (Rom. 5:17; I Cor. 15:22).

Now a new creation in Christ Jesus, *the same person* but recreated, re-born into the Lord Jesus, I have been *positionally* stripped of, and separated from, that sinful Adamic life via my identification with Christ in His death unto sin at Calvary. Still the same identity conceived in eternity, but now relieved *judicially* of all the old life received from Adam, I am a *totally* new creation in the ascended Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:3).

I am now living in union with the ascended Lord--His divine-human life has become my new life (2 Pet. 1:4). I am one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17). He is my Head; I am a member of His body (Col. 2:19; Eph. 1:22,23). The Lord Jesus is the True Vine; I am a living branch in that Vine (John 15:5). My heavenly Father is the Vinedresser (John 15:1).

Until I see clearly that I have been cut off from the Adamic life in my death to sin at the Cross (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), I will not fully enough realize that I am now a new creation in Christ ascended (Col. 1:21,22). See Romans Six notes in the New Scofield Reference Bible.

When I do understand that I have been positionally separated from the old life and joined to the new, I am able to say concerning any action of the old life and nature, "Now, then, it is no more I (as a new creation) that do it, but sin (Adamic life and nature) that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:17, 18; 8:7). As a new creation in Christ, I am not responsible for the presence of indwelling sin (Rom. 8:9).

I am very much responsible, however, to reject, and not to yield to, any influence from the sinful indwelling Adamic life (Rom. 6:13; 12:1). My further responsibility is to abide in the Lord Jesus, in order that I may "grow in grace" (2 Pet. 3:18) -- See Scofield note), and thus be progressively conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:28, 29). No improvement for the condemned old (Rom. 8:3, 7), just growth in the acceptable new in which I am already complete (Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10).

This faith responsibility is founded upon my walking in dependence upon the Holy Spirit to minister and develop that life in my spirit (John 16:14; Gal. 5:16, 25; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:11).

There need be no struggle to “put off the old” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Rather, I am to exercise faith in the finished fact (put off) of the Cross (Rom. 6:6; 8:9), as well as the completed fact (put on) of my ascension together with Christ at the Father’s right hand in the Holiest of All (Eph. 2:5, 6; Col. 3:1-3).

Abiding above in Christ, I rest in Him where He is (Col. 1:12). His acceptance by the Father is mine (Eph. 2:13, 18); His access to the Father is also mine (Rom. 8:1, 2). In the Lord Jesus who is my very Christian life I am *there* (Heb. 10:19-22). In Him there, I rest, fellowship, and worship; in me here, He lives and serves (Col. 2:9-13; Phil. 2:13).

This is the **Ground of Growth!** C.A. Coates sums up the summation:

It is not only that our unsuitability as belonging to Adam’s race has been judicially removed in the Lord Jesus’ death to sin, but we are now in association, in life-union, with the One who has removed it. We are of Him; we derive from Him; we are “all of one” with Him.

This is not the flesh sanctified; it is not the Lord Jesus made “all of one” with our flesh; it is not the flesh made “all of one” with Him. It is rather a new creation in which we are altogether apart from the flesh, in life-union with the Lord Jesus; human-divine life above. This is the Christian life! Abide above, and keep looking down!

CHAPTER SIX **WHICH MAN?**

RECIPROCAL INDWELLING -- The Word of God presents the illustrations of circumcision and baptism to depict our being cut off and removed from Adam, in order to be legitimately and spiritually born into living union with the Lord Jesus Christ risen from among the dead.

“Ye are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (on the Cross); buried with Him in baptism, in which also ye are risen with Him...and you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:10).

HEAVENLY UNION -- Nor did our Father stop at circumcision, but went right on to position us in the heavenlies in the ascended Lord Jesus Christ. “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ” (Eph. 2:6; 1:3).

It is our present privilege and responsibility to rest in Him where He is, because that is where we are positioned. Abide above!

At the same time He abides in us here below, by the Spirit. “Abide in Me, and I in you.” “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (John 15:4; Col. 1:27). Reciprocal union, the ultimate oneness! And it is the ministry of the indwelling Spirit of Christ to make these priceless positional possessions progressively practical in our present pilgrimage.

EVER-PRESENT ADAM -- so far so good. We are no longer in the fleshly fallen first Adam, but in spiritual union with the risen and ascended Last Ada. “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8:9).

Yet for all this, there still seems to be something radically wrong--“something rotten in Denmark.” Although we are not in the old Adam, that old man resides in us. Judicially condemned and destroyed in the death of the Cross, yet God has chosen to have that old man experientially abide in our mortal body. Why should such a thing be.?

WHICH ADAM? -- Our Father leaves the Adamic life and nature within for the same reason that He positioned us in the first Adam originally. Then, it was in order that we might have a personal and responsible part in our salvation, enabling us by His grace to choose the Saviour and thereby pass from death unto eternal life.

Now, the indwelling Adamic old-man life plays an essential role concerning our spiritual growth. Satan's worst contributes to God's best. The personal needs generated by the indwelling sinful life are designed by the Father to turn us from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness. We need our needs!

Adam within also provides us with a choice: Which Adam will we respond to and live by, moment by moment? Romans 7 defeat will also teach us the necessity of depending upon the Spirit of Christ. It is He alone who can free us from the domination of the old man, and, in turn, develop within us the growth of the spotless New Man.

But the real issue is not moral goodness or evil, spiritual health or sickness. The scriptural consideration concerning the Christian life is: **Which man?** God can accept nothing that emanates from the old man, no matter how good it may seem to be. John Darby made that all too plain:

What would you do if you wanted to make something of a crab tree? No nurture, and prune, and dig about, and feed it. That God has done with His fig tree (Israel). If you know anything at all about it, you will cut it down and graft it. Until you find out that the old man is utterly bad, and that there is no mending it, you will not give it up. If you cultivate the old crab tree you will have fair blossoms but only bigger and more sour crab apples.

On the other hand, God fully accepts everything that emanates from the righteous source, His Son, our Life. The old man can bring forth nothing acceptable to God. Therefore the issue in spiritual growth consists not in what is being changed, but in *who* is being depended upon. Just who is the source of our daily life?

CIVIL WAR! -- Although the Lord Jesus is the sole source of our Christian life and service, there is a very real and powerful counter-source within. "For me to live is Christ." "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin" (Phil. 1:21; Rom. 7:23). Civil war!

When we discover the strength and sinfulness of the old man and try to subdue and conquer him, we soon find ourselves to be a "wretched man" in the defeat of Romans 7. When we finally realize through bitter experience and utter failure that we can neither change nor oust our malevolent old man, the faithful Spirit refers us to the completed work of the Cross.

"Ye have put off the old man" (col. 3:9). One might ask, *But if he has been put off why does he continue to cover me with shame?* A common enough question. The answer is that he has been *judicially* put off at the Cross in our death unto sin and Adam. How then can we experience the reality of a positional work that was accomplished nearly twenty centuries ago?

COUNT ON THE CROSS -- Think for a moment. Were not your personal sins, past, present, and future, judicially dealt with back there at Calvary, and do you not experientially enjoy the saving results of that finished work today? Of course you do!

Similarly, you are now to apply your faith concerning the principle of sin indwelling the Adamic life. We know that our old man was condemned at the Cross, and there we died *unto* -- out of the realm of--his right to reign over us. "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin" (Rom. 6:11).

The Comforter's present ministry to us is to minister the things of the Lord Jesus (John 16:13-15). He initiates nothing, but rather receives and administers from the Person and finished work of Christ.

As we count upon that work of the Cross, He applies that crucifixion experientially to the old man within. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Life out of death! "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4:11).

Norman Douty gives assurance regarding the indwelling old man:

In the death of the Cross our old man was crucified. It is not annihilated, but it has lost its throne. There is no such view presented as the exclusion of its presence, but the loss of its governing ability in the face of faith. We will feel it there, but we are to reign in life--His life.

It is a greater testimony to the power of the Father to let that old life remain and give us dominion over it, than to remove it to begin with. We want to get clear that the Father does not mean to improve the old man on the one hand, no eradicate it on the other. The fact that it does not improve does not mean that we are not growing. And the fact that it is still within does not mean that we are not growing in Christ.

CHAPTER 7 THE ADAMIC NATURES

I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO MEN -- The question that requires dealing with is, Does the Christian have one, or two natures? Has the old Adamic life been eradicated, or not?

There are two keys that unlock the scriptural answer. The one is *the doctrine of the two men*, and the other is *the doctrine of position*. First, we shall consider the two men--the two Adams who constitute the foundation of all God's dealings with humanity.

THE FIRST MAN -- When "the first man, Adam," sinned, he died positionally--totally dead to God: spirit, soul, and body. Thereafter his position was manifested in his *condition*; he began to die experientially. In God's mercy, it was some 900 years before Adam fully experienced the inevitable outcome of his position of death.

Adam, as head of the human race, took all of humanity into that position of death. "In Adam all die" (I Cor. 15:22). All in Adam have his life and therefore are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). The Adamic life is the *source of sin* in everyone, whether unsaved or saved. "Wherefore, *as by one man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Due to the fall, Adam became "flesh" --not only in body, but in soul and spirit as well. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh" (Gen. 6:3). Hence, the race spawned by Adam and Eve is "flesh." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). It is not only that the natural man has flesh, or is in the condition of flesh, fleshly; he is flesh. Paul wrote, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). Note well that he said "my" flesh. As a believer Paul was indwelt by his Adamic life of flesh, the old man, and he assumed full responsibility for his sinful Adamic words, thoughts, and deeds.

In his *position* Paul was not "in the flesh," but "in the Spirit," "in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:9). Still, in his *condition* his Adamic life was present with him, and he owned full responsibility for its sinful activities. He said, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:7, 8). Furthermore that the believer will, at the Bema, suffer loss for the fleshly deeds done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10).

Because the first Adam sinned and became mortal flesh, he had to be superseded by the spiritual Last Adam, the "New Man." This constituted condemned Adam as the "old man." The fallen Adam is the old man, he is the flesh; he constitutes a sinful life and nature--one complete, living Adamic man.

The Word speaks of the activities of the old man in the unsaved and the saved, as “the will of the flesh,” “the desires of the flesh,” “the workings of the flesh,” “the wisdom of the flesh,” “the purpose of the flesh,” “the warring of the flesh,” and “the glorying of the flesh.”

It also refers to those who “walk according to the flesh, after the flesh, and make a fair show in the flesh.” Here we have the personification of the indwelling old man--*identically* manifested as such both before and after conversion.

THE OLD NATURE -- A man is a substantive entity, a person, a life. The traits, or characteristics, of a man are non-substantive, and comprise his nature. A nature is a composition of attributes, and is not to be considered a substantive entity. A man is a life; he has a nature.

Some of the “*positive*” characteristics of the old Adamic man, aspects of the old nature, are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. However lovely and commendable, these are but unacceptable fleshly facsimilies of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

On the other hand, some of the *negative* fleshly characteristics of the old Adamic man, are “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like” (Gal. 5:19-21).

Beautiful and beneficial as the positive characteristics of the flesh may be, *all* --both the positive and the negative--are totally unacceptable to God. Why? Because their *source* is the condemned Adamic life. For “in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18).

“THE SECOND MAN” (the Last Adam) -- Who can deny that the Lord Jesus has two natures? And if two natures, then two lives: He is the Son of God, and He is the Son of Man. He is perfect God and perfect Man in hypostatic union--the oneness of the God-Man.

Some of the blessed aspects of the Lord Jesus’ divine-human life and nature are His love, His peace, His longsuffering, His gentleness, His goodness, His faithfulness, and His self-control. All positive--none negative. He was, and is, and ever shall be, *impeccable*.

II. THE DOCTRINE OF POSITION -- Consider the believer’s *positional history*. Before anything was brought into being-- the universe, the world, Adam--you, a chosen, elect, and called person were conceived in your Father’s heart and purpose (Eph. 1:4,5; 2 Tim. 1:9; Ps. 139:16).

God call the world into being, created Adam to be head of the human race for that world; hence you were Adamic, he was your life. When Adam sinned and thereby positionally died to God, you died in Adam. When he became flesh because of his sinful disobedience, you became flesh in him. When he was condemned, you were condemned in him.

The rejected old Adam was superseded by the accepted New Man, the Last Adam. When the Father sent His Eternal Son into the world, He subjected Him to the death of the Cross in order to vindicate Himself--and to rescue you from your Adamic death, because He loved you as His chosen one from all eternity.

When the Lamb of God was on the Cross, and not until then, your Father laid all of your as-yet-uncommitted sins upon Him, and His death *for* those sins freed you from their death-penalty. While the Lord Jesus was on that same Cross the Father identified you, in your Adamic sin, with His Son who was made to be sin (2 Cor. 5:21). In Him, you died *unto* sin.

You, the sinful one, were not forgiven--your sins were forgiven, but not the old man, the source of those sins. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). You were not forgiven so that you could start all over again as a first-Adam person!

No, you were "crucified with Christ." You *died* unto sin in Him. In that death you were positionally *separated* from your old Adamic life, the indwelling source of sin. The Lord Jesus' death *for* you redeemed you from the penalty of your sins; your positional death *with* Him freed you from the condemned Adamic life with its penalties, power, and reign.

YOUR ESSENTIAL IDENTITY -- Your Father, in eternity past, formed you *positionally* as an individual in His mind. He formed you *actually* (condition), as a later date, in your mother's womb. The fall did not unmake you as that particular person; neither did your new birth unmake you as that same person. What is intrinsic to your personhood you never lose; your identity is eternally the same.

Whatever alteration you pass through in your new birth as to soul and spirit, whatever change awaits your body at the Rapture, you will never lose your essential identity in which your Father conceived you prior to the foundation of the world.

Our Father "called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

Ere suns and moons could wax and wane,
Ere stars were thunder girt, or piled
The heavens, God thought on me His child,
Ordained a life for me, arranged
Its circumstances every one
To the minutest; aye, God said,
This head this hand shouldest rest upon
Thus, ere He fashioned star or sun.

--E.B. Browning

“ONE-NATURISM” -- Before going on with your positional history, we shall deal briefly with the “one-nature” error. The teaching of the eradication of the “old man” is centered in a misconception of Romans 6:6, mainly through the influence of Covenant theology.

The scriptural context of Romans 6:6 is positional, judicial. The “one-nature” teaching views verse 6 as experiential. Hence, it is maintained that the old man is actually crucified and gone--eradicating.

Yet this view is forced to admit to indwelling sin in the believer. Some say that it is the residual influence from the pre-conversion life, along with accumulated habits. Therefore, some advocate the forming of new righteous habits to counteract and replace the old sinful ones. This is a form of legalistic, humanistic behaviorism.

Other one-nature proponents insist that while the old man is eradicated, sin remains in the body. The “energy force” of sin then works through the soul, with permission of the will. (It seems to be forgotten that the defeated man in Romans 7 was willing with all his might not to sin!). Sin working through the soul and body is referred to as the “condition of flesh.”

But the Word teaches the “flesh” is also a person, not just a condition. “Fathers of our flesh” (Heb. 12:9) produce progeny of flesh. Belief in the eradication of the old man tends to relieve the Christian of much of his responsibility concerning the activity of his fleshly Adamic life. He is wont to shift the blame to Satan, and to tendencies and habits developed prior to salvation.

This is the crux of the matter: it is not possible for the *source* of sin (the old Adamic man) to be eradicated while retaining the manifestation of sin itself. Effect must have a cause! If you have sin, you have its source, i.e., the Adamic old man.

Paul instructs the believer to “put off...the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4:22). He does not exhort the believer to put off that which is not in residence!

“He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). Conversely, he that hath the Adamic old man, hath sin; he that hath not the Adamic old man, hath not sin.”

BACK TO YOUR HISTORY -- When Christ, now Head of the new post-Cross new creation, ascended to the right hand of the Father, He took you with Him. The Father, having recreated you in His Son, raised you up together with Him, and made you sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

You were separated by death (positionally) from the first Adam to be re-created in union with the Last Adam in His crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension. Old Adamic things *positionally* passed away in the death of Calvary. In your *condition*, they are passing away experientially as you grow spiritually. *Actually*, they will totally and eternally pass away at your death or at the Rapture, whichever comes first. Even so, come Lord Jesus!

There you are in your position, “hidden with Christ in God” (Co. 3:3). In the Lord Jesus Christ you are accepted in the Beloved, complete in Him, entirely sanctified in Him, perfect in Him. All of that, and more, has been held in spiritual escrow ever since the One who is your Life ascended to the right hand of the Father. *All* had to be completed positionally before a single Christian existed, because Christianity is founded upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CONDITION FACTOR Born into this world in the life and image of the first Adam, you grew up a condemned sinner, dead in trespasses and sins. In His own time and purpose the Father called you, and by His grace you responded in faith alone, responsibly accepting the Lord Jesus as your Saviour.

At that moment the Holy Spirit, by His indwelling, brought the life of the Lord Jesus to be your Christian life. Then and there you entered into your position as a new creation in the Last Adam, with your old Adamic life still abiding in your body of mortal flesh.

CAME THE DAWN! -- In the Spirit’s time, you came to realize the positional facts in the Word concerning you. You saw that you had died unto sin at the Cross, crucified with Christ. In time you learned not to struggle against the old man within, but to count by faith upon the *positional* truth of the Cross. You, as a new creation, had been taken out of the fleshly Adam, and had been re-created in the ascended Lord Jesus, seated at the Father’s right hand in glory. Abide above!

As you reckon your new self to be positionally dead to sin, the Holy Spirit progressively applies that finished work to your growing *condition*. You experience step by step the freedom from the reign of indwelling Adamic sin, the liberty wrought by the Cross. Your condition begins to conform to its source, your completed position.

Likewise, reckoning upon your position as “alive unto God in Christ Jesus,” the Holy Spirit centers your heart and mind upon the One who is your Christian life. As you behold Him by means of the Word, in personal fellowship and worship, the Spirit develops that completed life with ever-increasing growth, “from glory to glory,” slowly conforming you to the image of the Son.

At the Rapture you will receive your renewed body, like unto His glorious body. Then, but not until then, your body of mortal flesh will be instantly transformed into your glorified spiritual body, “fashioned like His glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). The old man will be finally eradicated, and you will be in eternal death and resurrection with Him at Calvary--yes, ever since your Father formed you in His heart of love in Eternity past.

CHAPTER 8 THE “PRODIGALIC PROCESS”

THE PRODIGALS (Luke 15:11-32) -- If one were to set the parable of the prodigal to music, it would be in a minor key. I am always saddened by the principle of the prodigal. It is true that there is great gladness and merriment in it, but the scene is one of melancholy.

Think of this loving and generous father, burdened with two prodigal sons. No different than our day, is it? The younger a whore-monger, and the elder a “me-monger.” The younger unrighteous and lawless, the elder self-righteous and legal; both far, far from the loving father--with the latter set in his law-bound implacability. Does that not sadden your heart?

If you are already sad because you are a poor prodigal, or the parent of a prodigal or two, you can be sure that the Father of prodigals understands and cares. Yes, and in God the Son we have a High Priest who is touched by the feeling of our infirmities, our burdens, our trials, and heartaches (Heb. 4:15).

UNSAVED PRODIGAL -- Actually, we can relate to, and are related to the prodigals--both of them. The principle of prodigality applies to all of us. When we were unsaved, by the grace of God we came to realize that we were lost in a far country, “having no hope, and without god in the World” (Eph. 2:12).

When no man gave unto us, we finally came to ourselves, and arose, and went to the Father. It was then that He came to meet us in fulness of love and acceptance. And there was great joy in heaven, in our heart, and in the Father’s heart, over that one sinner who repented (Luke 15:7).

SAVED PRODIGAL -- And yet, long after we are saved, the principle of the prodigal reasserts itself in our lives. Assured of our eternal security and acceptance in the Saviour, we slowly drift into self-confidence and independence. We may be in some type of service for the Lord, but sooner or later we find ourselves once again in the far country; out of fellowship with our Father, and struggling to keep up appearances in our Christian life and work.

We may slave on in this far country for years, slowly learning that the husks of the world and the old man are not fit for swine. Finally, finally, we can struggle no longer and we give up--at least for the time being. Then it is that we whimper, “Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the boy of this death?” (Rom. 7:24).

RESCUED! -- It is then, by the Father’s mercy, that we come to ourselves once again. “I thank God through Jesus Christ” (Rom. 7:25). He is the answer, and back to the Father we go. In His eternal love, He meets us again, this time not with the truth of *justification*, but with the trust of *identification*.

Having subsisted on a far-country starvation diet for so long, we hungrily gorge upon the succulent identification truths. In due time we are fattened up to the liberating fact that we died unto sin, and that our life is now “hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3#).

As a result, Galatians 2:20 becomes our “life verse”: “I have been crucified with Christ: and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.” And we begin to reckon, reckon, reckon: “Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to have died unto sin, but to be alive unto God in Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:11).

We study, study, study, all of the wonderful “deeper life” books. And we share, share, share, the deeper truths--whether the recipient (victim?) is ready or not! We are learning about our position in Christ above, and we are improving in our condition below. Our heart-hungers are being satisfied by more and more freedom from the old man, and more and more liberty in the new Man--Christ, who is our Life. Liberation, at last!

But it is not quite that pat. It is rather freedom at first! In this way our Lord gives us a foretaste of His ultimate triumph in our lives, and assures us that we are on the right path to that maturity in Christ-- “dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ.”

Hence, reckon as we may, our wonderful victorious life and testimony begin to fade. There again is the prodigal principle. Once again it is the far country--maybe not quite as far as before, but too far for continuous fellowship with the Lord Jesus and the Father.

Could that be where you are now? Well, yes, sort of. But I would like to know why. You will be encouraged to know that there are a number of reasons, and that all of them are good (Rom. 8:28, 29).

FOUR GOOD REASONS --

1) Your Father has you right where He wants you, at this time. He is not allowing you to grab the identification truths, run off with them, and reckon upon them. He rather intends for you to become established, clearly and solidly, in those two basic truths--that you died unto sin, and that you are now alive unto God in His Beloved Son.

2) While reckoning will result in gain in your Christian life, that is not the Father’s purpose for it. That is prodigal thinking. The young prodigal reckoned upon his father’s faithfulness, and was finally willing to settle for bread and servanthood. At least that would free him from the pig sty, and give him some of the comforts and benefits of family life. *But the father would never settle for that!* He fitted him for fellowship, and took him into his presence in complete acceptance. And that is the Father’s purpose for *you*. He has freed you from the old man and positioned you in the new, that He may enjoy *fellowship* with you. And if there is to be service, it will be as a son, not as a servant or hired hand. “Thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then heir of God through Christ” (Gal. 4:7).

3) Your Father does not want you to be like the elder prodigal. He served his father faithfully and kept his commandments, all to establish his own self-righteousness. His father humbled

himself and went out into his angry presence, while he refused to go into his father's loving presence.

4) It is true that the Father has made you the object of His eternal love. He has saved you, and thereby judicially freed you from the old sinful Adam-life and positioned you in the life of His perfect Son at His own right hand. Now it is for you to count upon these truths so *that He can be your Object*.

The Lord Jesus gave Himself on the Cross in order to save you, but His primary object in doing so was that His Father might be glorified. "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). Now the Father is in the process of turning you from yourself as an object, to Himself as the Object. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to *Himself*" (2 Cor. 5:18). Mr. Stoney knew:

If the need of man were the sole measure of the grace of god, then man only would be thought of, the work of the Lord Jesus would be simply for man, and the power of God expended merely in rescuing man and securing his relief. Man would be the object and end of it all, and not the Father. "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:1).

THE SPIRIT'S OBJECT -- The Holy Spirit's Object is the Lord Jesus Christ, and He indwells you in order to make Him *your* Object, also. The Lord Jesus said of the Spirit, "He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14).

It is easy to tell when you are not walking in the Spirit, but in the flesh, because then you are an object to yourself, and you seek to make yourself the object of both God and man. But when you are walking in (dependence upon) the Spirit, the Lord Jesus in glory is your blessed Object.

Mr. Coates shares instructive encouragement:

Is that living Person now in heavenly glory really the Object of our hearts? For some time after I knew the Saviour I used to think of Him as One who had lived and died on earth long years ago. But I well remember the day when I knelt down with a dear brother who prayed that we might know the Lord Jesus as a living Person in heavenly glory, and it dawned on me that there was a present Object for my heart in heaven. Our hearts will never be satisfied until that glorified Lord Jesus becomes our Object bright and fair.

Mr. Stoney is in line with the theme of this book: position is primary, but the glorified Lord Jesus Christ is to be *pre-eminent*.

I must not only see my position in glory, but I must come nigh to the One who set me there. Many are disappointed that after hearing with delight and receiving the truth of their position they are not affected by it.

The reason is that they rest too much in their position and have not occupied themselves increasingly with the ascended Lord--have not drawn nearer to Him, and recognized Him as the only One who can make it all experiential in them, by His Spirit.

CHAPTER NINE CALVARY COLLATED

THE EXCHANGED LIFE -- Our Father's principle of exchange is infinitely superior to any attempt to change the unchangeable. How is God to reclaim us in love and righteousness? We, the unique persons whom He "did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them he also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 29, 30). How did He do it?

The changeless One applied His principle of *exchange*. "Not I, but Christ." "God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were ye sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6). Not the old changed, but exchanged for the new.

Note that we "were *by nature* the children of wrath...but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He love us, even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)" (Eph. 2:3-5).

ADAM FOR ADAM -- By means of the death of the Cross, our Father separated us from the first, unchangeable Adam, and recreated us in His Last unchangeable Adam. Our Father's exchange principle is founded upon death to the old, and life in the New. "For as in Adam all die; Even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22).

CROSS QUESTION -- I well remember rejoicing some 50 years ago over a question broached by Dr. Harry Ironside in one of his devotional books. He asked how many died on the Cross of Calvary? In answering his own question he wrote that there was the Saviour, there was I--the Christian reader--and there was the great multitude consisting of every member of the Body of Christ. All were judicially identified with Him on the Cross in His death *unto sin* (Gal. 2:20).

THE TRILOGY OF DEATH -- A similar question can be presented here. We must be able to correctly *collate Calvary!* The answer is, in case you are not sure, three. Let us examine this trilogy of death.

1. There was a *substitutionary* death, wherein the Lord Jesus died *for our sins*. He alone could be our perfect Sacrifice and thereby pay the penalty for sins in full. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father" (I Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4).
2. There was the *condemnatory* death, in which the Lord Jesus was made to be sin itself, which He bore unto death. God did not forgive *sin* as a principle--it was *condemned* and judicially consigned to judgment and death. "For He hath made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us." "God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3).

- a. There is yet another important aspect of this condemnatory death. God neither forgives sin nor reconciles enmity--an absolute enemy will not be reconciled, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7).

The old Adamic man, ever at enmity against God, was taken into death at the Cross for condemnation and judicial destruction. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body (totality) of sin might be destroyed (rendered inoperative, to faith), that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6).

Although our Adamic life and nature, the sin-source--the body of sin--continues to indwell us, we learn in the Word that it was condemned to destruction. The Holy Spirit applies that *judicial* destruction to the old man as we count upon that finished work of the Cross, thereby progressively releasing us from this baneful bondage. It is out faith that appropriates the experiential from the positional, through the ministry of the Spirit of Christ.

3) There was the *identification* death. On the Cross God identified us personally and positionally with the Lord Jesus and we thereby shared His death *unto*, not *for*, sin. "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed *unto* sin" (Rom. 6:11).

At creation God identified us with the first Adam, whereby we subsequently partook of his death-to-God life and nature, and thereby his sin and death. At Calvary God identified each elect believer with the Last Adam, where we partook of His death *unto* sin--and then His alive-to-God ascension new-creation life and nature (2 Cor. 5:17).

Death is the great separator. Our identification with the Lord Jesus in His death separated us, the unique ones of the Father's devising, from the fleshly Adam. We as believers are no longer identified with him, nor he with us; the death of the Cross forever stands between us and the old man. We are eternally in christ; "ye are not in the (Adamic) flesh" (Rom. 8:9).

During the course of our Christian life, as the Holy Spirit patiently convicts us of sin fostered by the indwelling old man, we learn to reckon, to count upon the finished work of the Cross that we positionally shared nearly 2,000 years ago. In response to our faith the Spirit administers that death to the old man within, thereby giving us increased freedom to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

The daily experiential process of the Spirit's application of the Cross in our life is depicted in such verses as Galatians 5:17 and 2 Corinthians 4:10: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,

and the Spirit against the flesh...so that ye may not do the things that ye would.” “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

It might be beneficial to tabulate all that we died to when we were crucified with Christ on the cross:

SIN -- First and foremost, we died unto the principle of sin that brought us to death in Adam. “Reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:11).

ADAM -- Included in our death unto sin was our positional separation from Adam’s sinful life and nature. “Knowing this, that our old (Adamic) man was crucified with Him” (Rom. 6:6).

LAW -- On the Cross we were positionally freed from the principle and demand of the law. Our Christian life does not consist primarily of *doing* (law), but of *being* (grace). “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “For I, through the law’ am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (John 1:17; Gal. 2:19).

WORLD -- Our death on the Cross included positional separation from the world system. “God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).

SATAN -- Finally, our death unto sin in Christ released us from Satan’s authority and power. In the first Adam, we were his; in the Last Adam, we are His. “And, having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15).

In the Word we are admonished to “resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). There is only one way for us to effectively resist the Enemy, and that is by faith, counting upon our death unto him in Christ Jesus on the Cross. He must back off when confronted by the finished work of the Cross--it is there that he was judicially defeated. We are to reckon upon our death-separation there, and Satan will separate from us posthaste. F.G. Patterson knew:

The Lord Jesus entered Satan’s domain and destroyed his power forever, for faith, and for

God. The Enemy cannot bar the *exit* of the people out of the house of bondage; nor, therefore, can he hinder the *entrance* of the people into the land of liberty. If the Lord Jesus died and rose for us and delivered us out of the one, we have died and risen with Him, and entered with Him into the other.

C.A. Coates also knew:

Satan may challenge *my* clearance and *my* acceptance; he may raise all kinds of questions about what *I* am and what *I* have done, but he can never raise a question as to the worthiness and acceptance of the One who is my Life! The redeemed man is aon an altogether hew, heavenly ground with the Father; he is on the ground of grace-- grace which is set forth in the Lord Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. The apprehension of this is redemption, and it puts the soul beyond the reach of the oppression and harassing of the Enemy.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS

POSITIONAL PRIORITY -- As you abide in your position you will come to realize that personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus is foundational to your spiritual growth. You will not be tempted to hurry, or to relegate that quiet communion to a convenient part of the day;. By making the Lord Jesus your Object in life you will be a joy instead of a grief to the Spirit of Christ. His primary activity will be that of conveying your heart to the Son above instead of convicting you of sin here below.

Paul's first and foremost consideration was to know Christ. He said, "Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy...who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:16, 17).

The very first words Paul addressed to the Lord Jesus were, "Who art Thou, Lord?" (Acts 9:5). After 30 years of intimate fellowship with, and knowledge of, Him he could still say, "I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." "That I may know Him" (Phil. 3:8, 10).

As you gaze upon His glory your heart will cry out in ever deepening comprehension and appreciation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and belssing" (Rev. 5:12).

THE WORK OF THE WOUNDS -- Care must be taken as you apprehend and appropriate the glories of His life, not to miss or minimize the equally glorious marks of His death--"the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). It was the Cross by which the Son supremely glorified the Father. "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4).

As for Paul, it was "God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). Because Paul kept the Cross central in his life and ministry he was able to say, "for me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21).

OBSCURED CROSS -- One of the most pressing problems in the growth ministry today (what there is of it) is the minimization, if not actual elimination, of the work of the Cross in the daily life of the believer.

The life of the Lord Jesus is emphasized--at least His indwelling--while His death on the Cross as it pertains to the Christian life is virtually unknown. This sad fact is true of nearly all conference messages today, as well as most all of contemporary literature. The Cross may at times be there, but barely--it is neither central nor foundational. The "tree" is truncated!

CROSS CONTINUITY -- The wondrous depths of the finished work of the Cross will always be adequate to deal with the terrible depths of the unfinished work of the indwelling old Adamic man. As we glory in the Cross, the flesh is denied. The Cross for our cursed strength; the Lord Jesus for our blessed weakness.

Every generation needs an F.J. Huegel:

When we have apprehended our death-position with the Lord Jesus (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20, etc.), we may have failed to see the on-going conformity to His death (2 Cor. 4:11; Phil. 3:10, etc.). The absence of this brings the anomaly of the Cross being preached with little or no marks of the Calvary spirit.

This is the problem of teaching the "identification" truths without the consequent conformity of death which brings forth life. We may rely upon the fact that we "died" with the Lord Jesus, and assume that it is entirely wrought in us at once, not realizing that "the fellowship of His sufferings" follows the apprehension of identification.

We are not to think that our exalted position in the Lord Jesus, seated with Him in the heavenlies, frees us from the need of further application of the Cross. We never reach a point where we can leave the Cross behind. We are invincible, more than conquerors through Him who loved us, only as we are brought into ever deeper conformity to the Lord Jesus' death unto sin. Otherwise the flesh reinstates itself and we once more fall prey to the old Adamic man's reign. There are always remaining, however much we have advanced, hidden realms of the old man which must be rendered inoperative by faith in the finished work of the Cross. "Let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily" (Lu. 9:23).

CROSS - CONFESSION - CHASTENING -- When you find your fellowship with the Father being hindered by sin, you come to appreciate more deeply the necessity and worth of the finished work of the Cross. The more fully you count upon the crucifixion of the old man in the past, the less your communion with the Father is clouded in the present.

It is true that the Father may have to chasten (child-train) you concerning the sins committed even when they have been confessed, but then you are in fellowship with Him during the chastening and able to receive the full benefit of it.

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised by it” (Heb. 12:11). All chastening is not due to our sinning, but all chastening is administered by our Father in love for “our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:10).

Andrew Murray knew the value of the Cross in the life of the believer:

If I know the Cross in its substitution, but not, as Paul gloried in it, in its fellowship, I cannot experience its full effect for my growth. As the blessed truth of its fellowship dawns on me, I see how by faith I enter into and live in spiritual communion with that Lord Jesus, who, as my Head and Life, made and proved the Cross to be the only ladder to the Throne.

This spiritual union becomes a moral one. I have the same mind and disposition that is in Christ Jesus. I regard the old man as sinful and only fit for the death of the Cross. I accept the Cross, with its death to what is flesh, secured to me in Christ, as the only way to become free from the power of sin and the old man, and to walk in newness of life by the Spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER ELEVEN **TRUE CIRCUMCISION**

RITUALISTIC -- God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his natural seed, and He instituted *circumcision* as the token, the outward sign of that Abrahamic Covenant.

“I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

“And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a sojourner, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you” (Gen. 17:7, 8, 11).

Through the centuries Israel proudly relied upon her outward fleshly circumcision as her godly pledge. But there was little or no true inner circumcision--her heart was far from God.

The epitome of this problem was pointed out by the Lord Jesus. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done” (Matt. 23:23).

Paul wrote to the Jews, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter” (Rom. 2:28, 29).

FLESHLY - SPIRITUAL -- Before he became a Christian Paul’s pride and reliance centered in his fleshly circumcision and his self-righteous law-keeping:

“If any other man thinketh that he hath reasons for which he might trust in the flehs, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phil. 3:4-6).

Early in his Christian life Paul began to see beyond the fleshly externals, to the heart and spiritual reality of circumcision and law. He found nothing but death:

“I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of coveting. For apart from the law sin is dead. For I was alive apart from the law once; but when the (spiritual) commandment came, sin revived, and I died” (Rom. 7:7-9).

Paul found all of the old, both inward and outward, to be death. “Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24). Not until then could he say from his heart, “I thank God through Jesus Christ” (Rom. 7:25)>

The external law and circumcision had to do strictly with fleshly Israel--all was type and shadow of the coming reality in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross. . . .Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col. 2:14, 17).

CROSS-CIRCUMCISION -- Now Paul writes to all who are new creations in Christ: “Ye are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision *not made with hands*, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 2:10, 11). The believer’s circumcision was not a fleshly ritual, but rather a spiritual reality. Not a part of the flesh cut away, but all--and that not with hands, but by the Spirit through the Cross.

“PUT OFF” - “PUT ON” – Our crucifixion with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross was our circumcision from fleshly Adam--“putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision (death) of Christ” (Col. 2:11). His death unto sin cut the Lord Jesus free from both the penalty and the power of sin. “For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. *Likewise*, reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin, but to be alive unto God in Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:10, 11).

On the basis of His Calvary circumcision, the believer is to exercise his faith in that fact, and thereby “put off concerning the former manner of life the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4:22).

Positionally cut off from the old Adamic man, he no longer has to depend upon or walk in the flesh--he is free to abide above in the Lord Jesus, to walk in dependence upon Him, in the Spirit. That abiding above by faith consists of putting on “the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

“Putting off,” turning from the fleshly first Adam, and thereby “putting on,” turning to the spiritual Last Adam, the believer learns to abide in and fellowship with Christ for both his growth and his service.

“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). Hence he can say from his heart, “We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). Concerning the flesh, Dr. Chafer wrote:

Any aspect of life or conduct which is undertaken in dependence upon the energy and ability of the flesh is, to that extent, purely legal in character, whether it be the whole revealed will of God, the actual written commandments contained in the Law, the exhortations of grace, or any activity whatsoever in which the believer may engage. Dependence upon the arm of flesh is consistent with pure law; dependence upon the power of the Spirit is necessary under pure grace. Since there is no provision for the flesh in the plan of God for a life under grace, the Law is done away for the Church.

CHAPTER TWELVE **LIBERATION FROM LAW**

DOCTRINAL ANSWER - - You might ask about Paul's relationship to the law, in light of his statement in Romans 7:22 "*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.*"

Dr. Newell put his doctrinal foot down:

Nearly all theological teaching since the Reformation has failed to set forth clearly our judicial end in death with Christ on the Cross. The fatal result of this drastic error is to leave the law as claimant over those in Christ: "for the law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth" (Rom. 7:1).

Unless you are able to believe in your heart that you died unto sin and the law in Christ, that you were buried, and that your history before God in Adam the first came to an utter end at Calvary, you will not get free from the claims of the law upon your life and conscience (Romans, Verse by Verse, p. 155).

Like all else, the law question must be settled *doctrinally*. In Romans 7 Paul is talking about the Christian's relationship to law in general, including the Mosaic. Be sure to see the Scofield note on verse 21—the different types of law. In looking at this text (7:22), we will briefly consider its context:

Romans 7:1 – "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them who know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives?"

Paul's "brethren" here are Jews who have become Christians, those who have grown up under the law. He is giving them truth to free them from that bondage (John 8:32). Death alone frees from the law. Unless one knows that he has judicially died to the law, he will remain in bondage to it. Paul did *not* tell them that they were to rely upon the Spirit to enable them to keep the law.

(vss. 2,3) – Paul gives the illustration of husband and wife, to show that death alone separates one from the authority of the law.

(vss. 4-6) – "...ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." Christ died *for* sins, and He died *unto* sin and the law—and the believer died with Him on the Cross (Gal. 2:20). "For

in that He died, He died unto sin once...likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin..." (Rom. 6:10, 11).

"...now we are delivered from the law, having died to that (margin) in which we were held." The Jew was under the law; the Gentile never was (Eph. 22:12). But, human nature being naturally legal, most Gentile believers are put under the law by false or ignorant shepherds, or they just simply put themselves under it (to keep it with the help of the Holy Spirit, of course!).

"...that we should serve in newness of spirit (Spirit) and not in oldness of the letter (law)."
"...not of the letter, but of the spirit (Spirit); for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

"The letter (law) killeth." When Paul became a new creation in Christ, he began to realize the *spiritual* aspects of the law. "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died...the commandment which was ordained to life (if perfectly kept), I found to be unto death" (Rom. 7:9, 10).

"For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might *live* unto God" (Gal. 2:19). The law's claim upon Paul was satisfied in the Cross, when Paul died in Christ. "...but the Spirit giveth life." The Spirit does not enable the believer to keep the law—that which is the ministration of death, that which he has died to.

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4). Paul does not say that the law might be fulfilled in us, but the *righteousness* of the law—and that not *by* us, but *in* us.

Christ said that when the Spirit of truth came (Pentecost) He (the Spirit) would glorify Him (not the law). "He shall take of *Mine*, and show it unto you" (John 16:13, 15).

The culmination of Romans 7 is Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of *life* in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do..." (Rom. 8:2,3).

Because of the flesh, the law ministered *death*. But the "law of the Spirit of *life* in Christ Jesus" brings forth "the *fruit* of the Spirit" (not the *works* of the law). The fruit of the Spirit is the life and nature of the One who is the believer's life, and against that fruit there is no law (Gal. 5:23).

Once you become *doctrinally* established—that you have died to the law, and that you are to reckon yourself as having died to sin and the law—you do not allow verses that seem to say otherwise to put you back under law.

Paul delighted in God's law after the inward man, the new man. He honored the eternal law, it being "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). But he was no longer under the law as his rule of life--*Christ* was now his rule, his nature his life!

As a new Christian Paul was defeated in Romans 7 by two laws. The external law of Moses condemned him to death. The second law that defeated him was the indwelling law of Adamic sin (Rom. 7:23).

The Lord Jesus Christ--Paul's life of grace--was the answer to all law: "I thank God through Jesus Christ" (Rom. 7:25); "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ" (Rom. 8:2).

Romans 7:25 -- NOW! Paul is not going to establish the truth in the entire seventh chapter (and elsewhere) that he died to the law of Moses and the Adamic law of sin within, and then sum up the chapter by saying what he seems to say: "I serve the law of God."

(vs. 23) -- Paul says the indwelling Adamic sin was against the law of his mind, "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Hence if Paul with his mind served the law of God (mosaic), he has shown above that he fails--it slew him. And if he walks in the flesh, he serves the indwelling law of sin, and is defeated.

Paul did not serve the law by seeking to keep that which he died to. He served the law of God by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"..."that the *righteousness* of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:4).

As a Christian Paul came to reckon himself dead to sin and the law, and "alive unto God in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:11). He rested in his position in Christ above. "If ye, then, be risen with Christ (Eph. 2:6), seek those things (centered in His Person) which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. *Set your mind* on things above, not on things (including the law) on the earth. For ye died (unto the law), and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3).

Dr. Newell provides us with a summary:

Paul's great endeavor, in all his Romans Seven struggle, was to make the "flesh," his old man, consent to do that holy law in which he as a new man delighted. He had not yet despaired of *himself*. When he understood this conflict, he thought he had in his own will the power to do the things that since his conversion he delighted in.

The fact is, he had not yet realized that absolute distinction between the old and the new creations. And it was through this heart-rending experience that he found the new, or "inward" man to be distinct from that of the "flesh"; that the old man, with all its life and energy, was to be *despaired of*, not sanctified.

The discovery that was new to Paul was: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a *different* law in my members" (vss. 22,23). When he realized the real situation, he no longer sought how to make the flesh serve God, but how to get clear away from the old man.

He cried not, "Who shall help me subdue this body of death?" but, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" When he said, "Who shall deliver me *from*?" he showed that at last he recognized himself as the *new* creation, and all else as condemned and corrupt. And when he said, "Who shall *deliver* me from?" he confessed at last his *utter* weakness, even in his new depending life, to war against sin and self. That is the work of the Spirit (Gal. 5:17).

In Galatians 2:19, 20, the law is seen taking out its prisoner to *execution*, and becoming itself the executioner: "I through the law died...I have been crucified." At the end of his efforts, slain by the law he had sought so desperately to overcome, betrayed by the old man in which he had so determinedly trusted, Paul gets a glimpse of Whom? (Vs. 25).

The answer to all has come from another realm altogether, from a new creation, from an Almighty One who had Himself died unto sin forever on Calvary; having been made to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Those powers with which Paul was struggling--the law, the flesh, sin, condemnation, death--were not conquered by the Lord Jesus Christ; and the spirit of Christ will reveal the victory of it in Paul, in Romans Eight.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FELLOWSHIP OF LOVE

IN CHRIST ASCENDED -- The Holy Spirit established you in your realization of close proximity to the Father before He cultivates you for close fellowship with Him. You are before the Father in the Lord Jesus eternally, and that position is immutable. Your “citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20)--you not only have the right to live there, but you have the life and nature for your position. And, “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mat. 6:21).

You are not there on the basis of your condition or merit, you are not there in the flesh, but in your spirit in the Spirit, “that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 cor. 1:29). Neither are you there in your body, but you are there in the One who is your Life. “Of God are ye in Christ Jesus (where He is), who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:20).

Mr. Stoney speaks of His love, and of our suitability:

I find that the Lord Jesus loved me, and gave Himself for me when I was in a most unattractive state; but He makes me suitable to Himself, and I am assured of the permanency of His love and of my association with Him, so that my heart is free to study Him. The more I am in His company, the more I acquire the tastes and characteristics which answer to His heart and mind (2 Cor. 3:18).

INTENSIVE CARE -- You will soon find that the Father’s presence above is the element, the normal environment and habitat, of your new life and nature. The Lord Jesus has always been at home in heaven, and since He is your life, you too are at home there.

Mr. C. A. Coates gives encouragement to abide at Home with the Father and the Son:

There are two basic things that the believer has to learn. One is, that you are not to have the man here and the place where he is; the other is, you do have another Man, and the place where He is.

Boldness to enter the Father’s presence and abide there is due to the shed Blood of the Saviour. The only hindrance is unbelief. It is a new and living way which He dedicated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh; we honor Him by abiding there in the fullest confidence that pleases the Father.

Being re-born of the Father we are abidingly His own. As such we have the right to take our position before Him. It is our privilege to think of ourselves according to what we are, as being one spirit with the Lord Jesus; and this is ever maintained by Him.

What we are by grace, as in Him before the Father, is unchangeable, and our interests are in His hands. Beloved, do our failures, our sins, in anywise alter what He is there before the face of our Father? What He is there is what we are, not of course in ourselves, but as being in the Lord Jesus who is our Christian life.

LOVE'S DUALITY -- You may say that you know He loves you, and what He did for you on the Cross is the proof of it. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). There can be no question concerning God's Calvary love, and yet there are times of need when His giving love seems somewhat impersonal and far removed--as you may have felt during the pause.

It is the Father's drawing love that is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 5:5) It is when you begin to realize the Father's personal interest in you as an individual, in His drawing you to Himself in His Beloved Son so as to morally conform you to His image, that you begin to know the love that is personalized.

It is the love of God that brings you to His Son at the Cross; it is the love of the Father that brings you to Himself at the Throne. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10).

JOSEPH'S LOVE -- Prior to the pause, you may have been somewhat like Joseph's brethren. As governor of Egypt, Joseph fully provided for his brothers for 17 years as they served under him. When their father, Jacob, finally died they were afraid that Joseph would seek revenge, so they acknowledged their sin against him and how undeserving they were of his kindness to them.

"And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil; and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spoke unto him: (Gen. 50:16, 17).

Joseph broke down and wept, as if to say,

After 17 long years under my care and in my service, is that all you know about me? And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are thy servants. And Joseph said unto them...Now therefore fear not; I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spoke kindly unto them" (Gen. 50:18,19,21).

“ARISE, MY LOVE” -- It may be that you have known the Father’s care and have served Him faithfully for seven, seventeen, or twenty-seven years while still not knowing Him in a truly personal way.

Be that as it may, Love will have you for Himself—and He is using the pause and its related problems to draw you into His presence. It is there that He will tell you to fear not, that He will nourish you and comfort you, and speak kindly to your heart.

Your Father loves you too much to allow you to grow away from His presence and independently inhabit the far country. In His love and constant care He has allowed you to discover that there is “a mighty famine in the land.” whereby you have experienced what it is “to be in want” (Lu. 15:14).

In that blessed want, with its hunger, fear, and loneliness, you have found that no man is able to give unto you. It is in such conditions of dire need, right in the midst of your growth, that you have been brought to yourself and caused to say, “I will arise and go to my father” (Lu. 15:18).

Mr. Stoney explains the outworking of the Father’s love for us:

Many look for favors from the Father, in their daily circumstances, who do not observe the way He takes to wean them from things here. They like to interpret His providences as if they were thereby given leave to bind their hearts to His mercies here.

But the more closely and spiritually you follow the Father’s ways with you, the more you will find it is to Himself He would bind you. Hence His ordering for you here is either to sever you from attachments in this scene, or to set you free from distractions, in order that there should be no interruption for your enjoyment of Himself.

We cannot be in the presence of the Father in innocence, for we are guilty; so that we must be there in His righteousness, and that place which used to repel us now forms me into likeness to itself. I am not tolerated there, I am at home; and where the distance was, there is now nearness and attraction.

PRESENT PRESENCE – It is there, in the presence of the Father, abiding above by faith, that you will come to know personal love and life. It was the Lord Jesus' prayer that you might be loved of the Father as He is. "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love with which Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

Andrew Murray strengthens the heart concerning the Father's love for us:

I cannot conceive anything more satisfying or cheering to the heart than the consciousness that I may not only draw near, but that I draw nigh in answer to the love and interest the Lord Jesus has for me, and that I draw nigh to enjoy myself in His presence. It is there that my heart goes out in acknowledgement of Him in answer to His deep, gracious, and everlasting love.

Mr. Stoney shares more concerning His love for us:

How strengthening it is, to know that He is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love and grace towards me as when He died upon the Cross for me.

I have gotten away from grace if I have the slightest doubt about the Father's love for me. I shall then be saying, I am not happy, because I am not what I should like to be. But, dear friend, this is not the question: the real question is whether the Father is what we should like Him to be, whether the Lord Jesus is all we could wish.

May our hearts get such a lesson in the love of the Father that, instead of being depressed by trying circumstances, or elated by what we call providential interpositions, we may know that we are the objects of the only One who knew it in all its power as He walked here below through this wilderness world.

We only touch the positive blessings of Christianity when we reach the Lord Jesus:

Our Father would thus connect our every thought of blessing and life with His Beloved Son, and would lead us into the wondrous thought that we are bound up with Him in

love. And the blessings we have in union with Him infinitely transcend everything in this world.

I am sure that if we esteem the blessings and love of our Father greater than anything on earth, the One who ministers that favor to us must acquire supremacy in our affections. We bow before Him in affection—He becomes our heart’s “Object, bright and fair.”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN **THE FELLOWSHIP OF LIFE**

“HIS EXCELLENT GLORY” – As you quietly occupy your position before the Father and assimilate His personal love for you, the Holy Spirit is preparing you to contemplate the Father’s glory. What is His glory? God’s glory is the sum total of His divine attributes and His infinite perfections. And how is His glory manifested?:

“God...hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son...who, being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person...” “For God who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (Heb. 1:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:6).

The Word directs you to meditate – to behold – the Lord Jesus. “Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of your profession, Christ Jesus.” “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher (perfecter) of our faith” (Heb. 3:1; 12:2).

Mr. Coates ever turns attention to Him:

It is a wonderful moment for the believer when we by faith occupy our position in the favor of the Father--when we know that we are received by Him in all the acceptance of His Beloved Son.

We do not think of ourselves, of our worthiness or unworthiness, at all. We think of the Lord Jesus--His perfections, His suitability to divine favor, His infinite acceptance with the Father--and by faith we have access into the favor of which He is so worthy.

HEAVEN RECKONING – As you by faith abide in your position, in Christ, you are occupied with His Person. The Spirit of Christ sees to that: “He (the Spirit) shall glorify Me” (John 16:14). “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17).

It is essential as you are in your place in the heavenlies that you reckon yourself dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11). “And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, except Jesus only” (Matt. 17:8).

THE FELLOWSHIP OF GROWTH -- Studying the glory of the Father as manifested in the earthly and heavenly life of the Lord Jesus via the Word is not only an aspect of fellowship, but it is the major means of growth. “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror

the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

As you contemplate the different facets of the Lord Jesus’ character, the Spirit of Christ, in conjunction with all that He takes you through day by day, causes His very characteristics to develop in your life--“from glory to glory.” “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22,23).

The fellowship of growth is highly personal--a oneness of nature. As you behold, He bestows. You look upon Him in “faith that worketh by love” (Gal. 5:5), and the Lord Jesus develops His life within by the Spirit--you grow. “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:22).

THE FELLOWSHIP OF LIFE -- It is to the fellowship of life that you have been called. “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ” (1 cor. 1:9). It is thus that you are progressively conformed to the image of the Son, and that you will become more than conqueror through Him that loves you. (Rom. 8:37).

Mr. C. H. Mackintosh inserts this important counsel:

We want to find the Lord Jesus in the Word; and, having found Him, to feed on Him by faith. This imparts a freshness, vitality, and energy, all of which we deeply stand in need of in this day of freezing formalism (as well as wildfire informalism).

What is the value of a chilling orthodoxy without a living Christ, known in all His personal attractions? No doubt, sound doctrine is immensely important--every faithful servant of God will feel himself imperatively called upon to “hold fast the form of sound words”, but, after all, a living Christ is the very soul and life of sound doctrine. May we, by the Spirit, see more beauty and preciousness in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Coates adds his sage observations:

Do we think of, and rejoice in, our blessings more than in the Person in whom we have them? Even as to our doctrinal blessings, there is a wonderful charm about them when they are new to us, and they sustain the soul for a certain time; but when the first joy of them fades, a settling-down process commences. Every new bit of blessing may seem to put a new bit of life into us, but it gradually loses its lustre and effectiveness, and we make very little progress.

It is as we take the Lord Jesus by faith into the affections of our hearts that we make spiritual progress. It is as He occupies an enlarged place in our affections that we go on. The head may be filled with general theological information without producing one spark of heart-affection for the Lord Jesus, and the soul remains in a state of spiritual emaciation.

Many have been misled by thinking that by reading the Bible you become Christ-like--transformed; but you will find diligent students of the Word, who may never say anything incorrect in doctrine, yet who never seem to grow in grace and walk in spiritual reality.

All blessings of this dispensation of grace are wrapped up in a Person, and, by means of the Word of God, we make spiritual progress as our hearts learn to find everything in Him--the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

INTRODUCTION – This section will present the Pause from a somewhat different aspect, in order to include a broader scope of needs among those who are growing. For this purpose we will center upon that incomparable composite for growth, Philippians 3:10.

HEAD AHEAD – As a growing believer, it is essential that you come to a clear understanding of the all-important and extensive stage of your spiritual growth. We refer to your balance of faith: that of counting upon your death to the old, and your growth in the new.

No doubt it is true that an entirely new and wonderful vista of your Christian life opened up when you realized your identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also certainly true that there were blessed spiritual changes in your daily condition when you began to count upon the fact that you died unto sin in Christ on the Cross, and that you are now alive unto God in Him.

However, as you avidly study the spiritual growth principles of the Word, and devour “deeper life” books, you find that your head knowledge develops faster than your practical experience. Even as you rejoice in the liberating truths, and in Christ as your life, your indwelling old Adamic man (who has an old nature) relentlessly seeks to assert itself and regain control of your life.

BACK AND FORWARD – You not only hunger for more practical righteousness, but you have a drastic need for it in your daily walk and relationships. Alas! Although you know your position, and you know your Father’s purpose for you, and you have His promises concerning you, there is still too much retrogression and too little progression. Mr. Stoney comments on this common concern:

One often has the doctrine of the end of the old man’s reign within before he really rejoices that he is fully freed from it by the Cross. Then he can heartily thank the Father through the Son. It is a terrible experience to be so disgusted with the old man that we are glad to be set free from that sinful power by the finished work of the Cross.

I do not believe that anyone has really valued freedom from the law of sin and death until he has felt that corruption in himself. Then he hails with joy the liberty from its power. It is then the doctrine of it is truly valued and relied upon.

Most of us learn it through experience, by seeing and feeling the precipices to which the flesh carries us. Were it not for the Hand that ever holds us, we should have tumbled down! Surely then we are not only glad to be in Christ, and free, but we dread the flesh even more than before.

THE IMMUTABLE WORD – Still, the Word has not changed! “We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). You have your Father’s Word for it that He will conform you to the image of His Son. He has given you the very life and nature for that growing conformation, and the need and hunger necessary for it—but there just doesn’t seem to be adequate progress in it.

As a matter of paradoxical fact, the more fully you come to know the Lord Jesus, the more keenly you are aware of your unlikeness to Him. You have a God-given desire to be like Him, based upon the finished work of the Cross, but the Spirit of God just does not seem to be making it a sustained reality within you. It has been said concerning this matter:

In actual experience, when we have apprehended our deliverance through our death with Christ, the old man often appears to be more alive than ever. Just there the Father would have us stand firm upon His written Word of truth.

The increasing revelation of sinful self proves the surrender to the Cross to be real, because the Holy Spirit takes us at our word of reckoning, and reveals what He knows to be lurking within—He reveals it that it may be dealt with with the finished work of the Cross.

Our part is to take the Father’s side against our old man, while the Spirit applies the death of the Cross to all that is contrary to the Lord Jesus, that it may become increasingly true in our experience that we who are in Christ have crucified the flesh with its desires (Gal. 5:24).

KEEP ON KEEPING ON! – There is no necessity for you to be discouraged or to take things into your own hands. The truth upon which you have been relying has been doing its work all along. It is to be remembered that “the way up is down.” There are many in these days who are promoting “experiences” to those who are not doctrinally established. But you know the truth, and it is the truth which shall make you free (John 8:32).

Nothing can be more blessed than the position of hanging in childlike dependence upon the Father, and being entirely content to wait for His time. True, it will involve trial; but the renewed mind learns some of its deepest lessons, and enjoys some of its sweetest experiences, while waiting on the Lord; and the more pressing the temptation to take ourselves out of His hands, so to speak, the richer will be the blessing of leaving ourselves safely therein.

Your responsibility is to continue to count upon the work of the Cross to deal with the old man, and to abide in the Lord Jesus in the Father's presence for your growth into his image. John Darby said:

Our growth is wrought out in our lives down here; but it is formed up there in fellowship with the Lord Jesus and the Father, where our affections and minds get into the condition to be manifested down here.

Dr. Wm. R. Newell shares encouragement concerning the work of the Spirit on our behalf:

As great as the work of the Father, so great is the work of the Son; and so great is the work of the Spirit. There is not a particle of the work completed by the Son for us that will not be completed by the Spirit in us. All the fulness of spiritual reality that is in the Lord Jesus Christ will be imparted to us by the Spirit of Christ, to be culminated at the Rapture. "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He Is" (1 John 3:2).

The question of coming into the fulness of true spiritual reality rests, not with us, but with the Spirit. "He shall guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). It is not question of our capacity, or of our ability, but of the absolute faithfulness of the Spirit of Christ.

Can He be depended upon to do all the work committed to Him by the Son? We must learn to trust Him. We must learn to count upon His two-fold work: first of revealing to us the nature and dimensions of divine reality, and secondly of bringing us into the reality which He has revealed in the Word of God.

TRUTH TRIUMPHS! – From the very beginning of time, truth has always been the issue. Scriptural truth is the most important factor in your life today—and it always will be. If the doctrine you hold and are held by is correct, your resultant growth will prove to be right. But

if the Word is not rightly-divided, or if experiences are the issue of your life, then both your doctrine and your life will surely be wrong.

The Word makes it plain that scriptural doctrine is of primary importance in your Christian life and service. “All s\Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine...”(2 Tim. 3:16). In speaking of his Christian life, Paul put doctrine first and foremost: “Thou has fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions” (2 Tim. 3:10, 11).

Newell elaborates on the primary place of doctrine:\

Paul does not ask a thing of the saints in Ephesians 1-3 but just to listen while he proclaims that wondrous series of great and eternal facts concerning them; and not until he has completed this catalogue of heavenly realities about them does he ask them to do anything at all!

And when he does open his plea for their high walk as saints, everything is based upon the revelation before given of the truths of their high character and destiny as saints: I therefore...beseech you that you walk worthy of the high calling to which you are called (Eph. 4:1).

Let us cease laying down to the saints long lists of “conditions” for entering into the blessed life of the Lord Jesus; and instead, as the primal preparation for leading them into the experience of this life, show them what their position, possession, and privileges in Christ already are! Thus we shall truly work with the Holy Spirit; and thus shall we have more, and much more abiding fruit of our labors of love among the people of God.

PAULINE PREDOMINANCE – Paul admonishes Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself and unto doctrine; continue in them.” “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:3). Something of that time is upon us now, and this experience-tide that would wash away all sound doctrine is something for you to brace yourself against immediately and finally.

What Mr. Stoney said over 100 years ago concerning Paul’s Church doctrine is even more sadly true today:

The great failure of the Church was in giving up Paul. “All...in Asia” did not give up evangelical truth but they gave up Paul; anything popular you may have, but not Paul. Why? Because Paul is heavenly.

Now let us consider the four progressive realms of Philippians 3:10:

- 1) “That I may know him”
- 2) “And the power of His resurrection”
- 3) “and the fellowship of His sufferings”
- 4) “Being made conformable unto His death.”

CHAPTER SIXTEEN **“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM”**

PRIMARY PRIORITY – In these first five wonderful words Paul not only expresses the all-encompassing burden of his heart, but also that of the Father’s. It is to enable us to know Him that He both save us and conforms us to the image of His Beloved Son. “This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ” (John 17:3).

Although essential, it is no easy matter to keep track of your primary priority in life. When you are first saved you don’t even know that there is a priority, much less know what it is. Your first concern is the assurance of salvation, then your acceptance with the Father, followed by your eternal security.

THE GREAT AWAKENINGS – Next you are taken up with trying to be a good Christian, and working for the Lord. In time you become intensely aware of the old man within, and you are soon entangled in the struggle to free yourself from the power of indwelling sin, the old man, the law, the world, and the devil.

By means of these downward steps the Holy Spirit brings you into the liberating truth of the identification truths. Hence your new priorities become those of reckoning yourself to have died unto sin on the one hand, and reckoning yourself alive unto God in Christ on the other hand. Now your two priorities are freedom from the old, and growth in the new.

Even so, you are still falling short. Yet these progressive steps are necessary in order to bring you to the Father’s prime purpose for you: “That I may know Him.” When that becomes the priority of your heart, you are in the very center of the Father’s will for you.

KNOWLEDGE – It might be said that knowledge about the Father is derived from study, and revelation as a result of that study. Wisdom is based upon that knowledge, and is developed into knowing the Father through long-range spiritual growth in Christ. And we do mean long, i.e., throughout all eternity!

We are to “grow in grace, and (grow) in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” “That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” (2 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 1:17).

We study to know Him, and that knowledge is developed into wisdom which is manifested in a worthy walk and fruitful work. “We...do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9,10).

THE LONG COUNT-DOWN – There is no other option for you. There must be a continual counting upon the growth truths—the Cross, and the Life—for the priority-purpose of knowing the Lord Jesus and the Father. It is best to just simply settle down to the Father’s long-term purposes, because that is what it is going to take.

A great mystery surrounds that spiritual growth of the believer. The Father always gives a foretaste of the outline of the deeper life before He leads him into the establishment and maturity of it. Many believers mistake their foretaste for the fulness, not realizing that the Lord is just beginning to lead them in.

T. Austin-Sparks elaborates upon this important principle:

We are not to think that by our reckoning upon a position in our minds and hearts means that we have come into that position experientially. We may have some way to go before that which we have counted upon becomes a reality in our life. All the practical implications of that may yet have to be wrought in us by the Spirit.

The difficult thing with so many is that they see the truth clearly, it is so patent. There is no argument, there is no question. It is true, it is final. Then they go on, thinking that because they are convinced, even overwhelmed with the truth of it, that they are necessarily in the good of it; and they begin to talk about it, and preach about it.

They have seen something, but often things break down in their lives. They find that, while they embrace it with all their heart, the thing is not yet true in their experience.

And because they go through the experiences which, from the Divine standpoint, are intended to bring them actually into that position—but for the time being are contrary to it—they often say, “Well, this thing does not work.”

“I was certain that it was right; there is no question in my mind about it, and even now I do not see anything else; but as far as I am concerned, it does not work.” And they get

into confusion and contradiction, and some abandon the whole thing. Others hold on in the midst of the mystery, and go through with the Father into a clear place.

EVER THE CROSS! – It is time that we share the answer to your dilemma as to why your faith toward the Son has only seemed to take you farther away from Him. It is because of your Father’s ongoing paradox: as you “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14), He takes you upward downward—by way of the Cross!

DEATH FIRST – Remember the growth principles! The Holy Spirit hasn’t forgotten them, nor has He ceased to work the, into your life since the time you began to count upon them. The life to which you hunger to be conformed has death as its foundation, hence the growth of your new resurrection life is from the grave of the old.

In dealing with the old man, the Spirit brings the seeming endless works of that sinful source to light. Innumerable situations, temptations, failures—and even self-centered triumphs—all surface in your daily life to give you an understanding of, and hatred for, sinful self. This is necessary in order to enable you to turn from that old source to abide in the glorified Lord for your growth.

DEATH FOUNDATION – When you fret about the activity and dominion of the sinful old man, you are worrying about that which is a very important factor in your new life and growth. Knowledge of the old man provides wisdom for growing, and for serving.

It takes a deep hatred of the old man, coupled with a deep hunger for the new, to be able to “glory” in the daily Cross that crucifies (Gal. 6:14).

TIME OUT OF HAND – And then there is the time—“endless”time. The Holy Spirit seems to be so slow, and at times outright inactive. But that is never the case, even when He is sadly grieved, or quenched. If you but knew the depths of craven self, you would not wonder at His thoroughness; if you knew the eternal heights of the resurrection and ascension life, you would not wonder at the extent of His preparation and transformation.

Then too, what of your Christian service? The old man’s efforts are unacceptable to God; it is to be held by the Cross in death so that the new may be freely developed for fruitful use. That process requires long lessons, and many “crucifiers” and “trainers.” “The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the appointed time of the Father” (Gal. 4:1,2).

Many of God's children chafe over the long years of training, they know not for what cause. They are weary of the "instruction" in all the "wisdom of the Egyptians" and long to throw themselves into the service of God. But the pattern Son waited thirty years in the village of Nazareth, ere He went forth for the brief service of three short years.

The souls who are under "tutors and governors" need sorely to learn how to wait for God and rest in His will. Let us remember that circumstances are planned of the Father to fit us for the calling He has in view for us, in the economy of His grace. Let us wait until we know the patterns for our life, lest, in our impatience, we throw aside the very things permitted of Him to fit us for some special service in His vineyard.

HEAVENLY CADENCE -- It is of vital importance to know that the Father never does anything hurriedly. If in one case He seems to move quickly, it is only because all was prepared beforehand beneath the surface of the situation. There is just too much involved in the application of death to the old man and the ministrations of life to the new man, for anything to be done quickly or superficially. What is time to "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity?" (Isa. 57:15).

Our greatest weakness is that we always want results now. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Perhaps the "weeping" is not only the costliness of sowing but the painfulness of waiting. Whatever it be, the divine assurance is that those concerned will doubtless come again with joy, bringing their sheaves with them (Ps. 126:6).

You have no question as to your "beginning" and "ending"--your assurance of salvation and eternal security. And you are just as definitely in your sovereign Father's hands for your spiritual growth and service as for your new birth and heavenly position. C. H. Mackintosh assures us of that assurance:

The Father will perfect that which concerneth His own; and even where there are mistakes and failure, as alas! There are in abundance with all of us, the Lord's rich grace abounds over all, and actually takes occasion from our mistakes to shine out all the more brightly--though, assuredly, the mistakes and failures produce their own painful and humiliating results.

It is the remembrance of this that alone can give repose in the midst of the most discouraging circumstances. If we take the eye of faith off the Father, our souls must soon be overwhelmed. It is our privilege to be able, in our small measure, to thank our Father in view of everything, and take refuge in His eternal counsels, which must be made good despite all the unbelief of man, and all the malice of Satan.

GROUND GAINED -- It will give you peace to realize that the predominance of the Spirit's work in your life during the early years of reckoning is the crucifixion of the old man. All of this dying develops the foundation for the growing of your new life.

The knowledge of sinful self prepares for the knowledge of the Father. First the negative, which then produces the positive. As you reckon yourself to have died unto sin, you are gaining ground to reckon yourself alive unto God--the perfect position for knowing Him.

May the Father give us increasingly to know His Son! If we have only learned what we are in the flesh, we should surely be cast down, and sink into despondency; but His object in giving us a knowledge of our old man and of His grace is to give us an expected end: "That I may know Him!"

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN **“AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION”**

THE PRINCIPLE OF UNION -- “That I may know...the power of His resurrection.” You are to know, and to reckon upon, the power of His resurrection by means of the principle of union: that which is true of Christ is positionally true of you. Note the all-important “likewise” in Romans 6:10, 11: “For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin, but to be alive unto God in Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Therefore Paul’s prayer for you is:

“...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened [by the Spirit via the Word]; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:18-20).

Is it not in the fact that you are to live? It is there in your heavenly position, “hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3), that you are to rest while the faithful Spirit deals with your old man and develops you as a new creation. Like Son, like saint; like fact, like faith.

His death unto sin, your death unto sin; His life unto God, your life unto God. Knowing the power of His resurrection, and therefore your resurrection, gives the peace of your position above in the midst of all the exigencies of your condition below.

THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE -- Note the emphasis Paul places upon knowing, upon knowledge! “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus, our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:2,3)

The knowledge of the Lord Jesus is the basis of the whole life of the child of God, and underlies every phase and aspect of that life. That is, it underlies our very relationship with the Father; it underlies all our growth in grace; it underlies every fragment of our service. There is nothing which comes within the scope of the life of the believer which does not depend upon knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who is our life is “the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:24), and only to the degree that we know Him do we grow in His resurrection power. The growth is not so much the power to do as it is the power to be--it is the power of springtime, of life out of death, of resurrection, of growth.

It is not difficult to identify the power of His resurrection life: it is the almighty power of love, the power of gentleness, the power of goodness, the power of faithfulness, the power of meekness, and the power of self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23).

POWER PARADOX -- Remember the mighty Paul’s testimony! “He [the resurrected Lord] said unto me...My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness.” To his Paul replied, “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the [resurrection] power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong [in His resurrection power]” (2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

C.H. Mackintosh provides something to think about concerning this present Church dispensation:

It is well to bear in mind that this is not the dispensation of the Lord’s outward power; but it is the day of His sympathy. When passing through the deep waters of affliction, the heart may, at times, feel disposed to ask,

“Why does not the Lord display His power, and deliver me?” The answer is, this is not the day of His outward power. He could avert that illness--He could remove the difficulty--He could prevent that catastrophe--He could preserve that beloved and fondly cherished object from the cold grasp of death.

But, instead of putting forth His power to deliver, He more often allows things to run their [His] course, and pours His own sympathy into the oppressed and riven heart, in such a way as to elicit the acknowledgment that we would not, for worlds, have missed the trial, because of the abundance of the consolation (2 Cor. 1: 4-6).

Such is the manner of the Lord Jesus just now. By and by He will display His might power; He will come forth as the Rider on the white horse; He will unsheath His sword; He will make bare His omnipotent arm; He will avenge His people (Israel), and make right their wrongs forever.

But now His sword is sheathed, His arm covered. This is the time for making known the deep love of His heart, not the power of His arm, nor the sharpness of His sword. Are you satisfied to have it so? Is the Lord Jesus' sympathy sufficient for your heart, even amid the keenest sorrow and the most intense affliction?

The restless heart, the impatient spirit, the unsubdued will, would lead one to long to escape the trial, the difficulty, or the pressure; but this would never do. It would involve incalculable loss. We must pass from form to form in the school; but the Master accompanies us, and the light of His countenance, and the tender mercy of His heart, sustain us under the most severe circumstances.

What remains? Just this: live unto the Lord Jesus Christ! Seek to be faithful to the One who is your very Christian life. Be not discouraged by the fragmentary state of everything around you. It is your privilege to enjoy as much if not more, of companionship with the Lord Jesus, as if you were cast amid the best days of apostolic testimony.

There is much for you to rejoice in. The power of the Cross is the very groundwork from which the power of His resurrection life emerges. As the Holy Spirit applies that crucifixion to the old man, the very roots of your resurrection life are being established. You may be all too aware of your dying, but the Lord Jesus is the Lord of the living. Study Him, fellowship with Him, in order that you "may know Him, and the power of His resurrection."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
‘AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THIS SUFFERINGS,
BEING MADE CONFORMABLE UNTO HIS DEATH’

While the four components of Philippians 3:10 comprise a tight-knit unit, the last two have a special oneness, hence they will be combined here. We come now to the more personal part, and we shall proceed with the utmost caution and compassion.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTINUITY – A brief look at the principle of continuity will provide a proper perspective. Your present growth and training always constitute preparation for His next phase of your development.

The early exercise of faith is foundational, as you count upon the finished work of Christ on the Cross for your justification, acceptance, and security. This is preparatory to your reckoning upon the growth truths, where extended time and depth are important factors. Dr. Newell explains:

Many receive “blessing” and temporary “deliverances,” in answer to prayer; for the Father is merciful to His saints, and His blessed Spirit refreshes and blesses us even apart from the real walk of faith. But it is a greater blessing finally to us, and much more glory to the Father, if we accept His Word, and learn to walk in the strength of it by a naked faith; which asks no longer for certain experiences, but being sure of the Father’s truth just because it is His truth, maintains the attitude of faith therein; attitude, a fixed attitude.

For faith, when once we see the truth, consists of a believing attitude toward the Father. This involves a negative attitude toward all doubt of His promises or anything that would raise a doubt; and it also involves a continual refusal to rest upon appearances or feelings, even though these may come in great abundance. It is God’s written Word that the Spirit of Truth uses to strengthen the heart of faith.

DEATH-RECKONING – No longer is the faith issue limited to the positives, such as acceptance and life; now there are negatives requiring faith, such as rejection and death. Enter the Cross!

Enter the special care and patience of the Holy Spirit. On the basis of faith-reckoning in which He has trained you from the beginning of your new life, He leads you into this more difficult realm of death-reckoning. Slowly, ever so slowly and persistently, he guides you along in the process of reckoning. J.C. Metcalfe describes some of the Spirit's work:

We do not seek an experience, nor are we allotted a power, which we can wield at will; we are ministered to by a Sovereign Person, the Spirit of Christ. He works with us as He breaks down stubbornness and enables us to be willing.

There is often ignorance to dissipate, prejudice to deal with, self-confidence to destroy, and mistrust to combat, before He takes over the control for which He yearns--the control of spirit, soul, and body in order to use us to the glory of the Father as He sees fit. Grasp this fact, and the way is prepared for us to apprehend much concerning the work of the Spirit which has previously evaded us.

BALANCED RECKONING -- The principle of continuity still applies. The training and growth you gain in learning to reckon against your old man is ground for the even more difficult counting of yourself a new creation "hidden with Christ in God." On and on the faithful Spirit carries you, through thick and thin faith, through full and empty reckoning, until you are mature enough to settle down to the consistent faith-balance of Romans 6:11.

Concurrently, the resultant needs generated by the death-throes of the old man provide opportunities for new heights of faith as to your life and growth in Christ ascended--the joy of abiding above. Crucifixion-death unto resurrection-life; ever in balance, ever in the rest of faith in the facts.

Then, too, there is the faith-balance of knowing Him in His pre-Cross humiliation, as well as in His post-Cross glorification:

If I only think of my position in Him above and do not study Him and His ways while here below, though there be a sense of power, there is no direction to it. It is in the combination of both that there can be true study of the Lord Jesus, and conformity to Him. The eye of the soul must be open and receptive to learn of His ways and walk here.

The Holy Spirit is training you to "run with patience the race that is set before us." He keeps you "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." As you learn to behold Him you are increasingly conformed to the image of the One "who for the joy that was set before

Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1,2).

ALL THINGS -- During the Spirit’s process of bringing your reckoning and resultant condition into the life-out-of-death balance, there is far more death to the old man than there is life in the new. However, since resurrection life emerges from crucifixion death, there is ever growth toward the proper balance. The Spirit uses all and wastes nothing in producing this balance of death unto life. All consists of crucifying the old man, and sanctifying the new man. Mr. Stoney affirms this process:

I think we are sometimes ready to say to the Lord, “Could You not have taught me without subjecting me to so much sorrow and humiliation?” The answer I have had is, “You could not be effectually taught in any other way!” The Lord knows the nature of the obstacle in me which He has to overcome; a less efficient hand might think it could be dealt with in some easier way.

All becomes the joy of knowing Him more fully in the fires, plus the Spirit’s regulated and interspersed deliverances and victories--answers to faith and prayer, continual progress in knowing the Lord Jesus, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.

CONSEQUENTIAL SEQUENCE -- The continuity continues. And now we enter the crucial area. The usual yearning is to get beyond the working of the Cross and to know more fully the rest and benefits of the victorious life hidden with Christ in God. As Peter states: “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect [mature], establish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pet. 5:10).

But being matured, established, strengthened and settled does not imply elimination of the Cross and its effects. “Always delivered unto death, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:11). Hear Lillias Trotter:

As with the seed that is buried once for all, but then disintegrated through a gradual process that sets free the new life, even so does the Father deal with our old man by delivering it to death with Christ once for all on the Cross, and then bringing about its mortification in detail through the circumstances of life.

John Darby knew this same principle:

When a certain breaking down of the indwelling old man occurs in a believer's life, it produces a marked change in him; but afterwards he has to learn it all in detail.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS -- The crux of this material is that the Spirit's ministration of the Cross to the old man is preparing you for the truth that that same Cross is central in the resurrection life! Being the focal point of the universe, the Cross not only crucified the old life, but the spirit of the Cross is the characteristic of your new life.

The marks of the Cross extend into Glory. The ascended and glorified Lord Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, bears them still--and forever will. "I beheld and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6).

The lovely Lamb-likeness of the Lamb of God will be wrought in us by the daily and hourly choosing of the Father's will in the disciplines of sacrificial life and service for others. "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross...He saved others, Himself He cannot save" (Matt. 27:40, 42).

THE GROWTH FOURSOME -- "That I may know Him." The Lamb is your Life! The very nature of your new-creation life is sacrificial! That I may know "the power of His resurrection."

Although walking on this earth, you are a son of God "who is in heaven." You were included when the Father "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (eph. 2:6).

That I may know "the fellowship of His sufferings." Positionally "hidden with Christ in God," down here you can say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death [ever the Cross], I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Col. 3:3; Ps. 23:4).

In all this you are "being made conformable unto His death." Becoming like the Lamb, being conformed to His image? You had better believe it! The Spirit's work cannot be in vain, since He is fashioning your condition from your completed position. "Ye are complete in Him." "Forasmuch as ye are declared to be the epistle of Christ" (Col. 2:10; 2 Cor. 3:3).

THE SPIRIT AND THE CROSS -- The Holy Spirit does not develop the believer apart from the Cross. There will be ample "time" in Glory for the distribution of crowns. But now He applies the Cross to the old, and embodies it in the new. "Hath not the Potter power over the

clay...that He might make known the riches of glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called” (Rom. 9:21,23,24).

There are different ideas among Christians as to what constitutes “the fulness of the Spirit,” some of them strange and unbalanced. Of one thing we may be quite sure; if you and I are filled with the Spirit we shall unquestionably be taught, guided, and enabled to walk the way of the Cross!

If Christ “through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself” (Heb. 9:14), we shall offer ourselves when the same Holy Spirit fills and enables us. It will not then make any difference if our protection is removed and we find ourselves utterly alone for the sake of sacrificially sharing with others. The Spirit of Christ whose intention is to conform us to the image of Christ will finish the work He has begun.

EYES RIGHT! – Eyes only for the Lamb! The Spirit will do the internal work of death unto life. As John Darby said, “one does not feel the pain of the Cross when his mind is on heavenly things.” Paul manifested the sacrificial life of the Lamb when he said, “But God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal. 6:14). The beloved Apostle John also manifested the Lamb-life:

Adam might defy the will of God, Elijah might doubt it, but John would glory in it—even on Patmos. This is the way of certain triumph; to accept the Father’s will, however painful it may be, and to trust Him in the certain faith that His will must triumph in the end. John stood his ground, maintaining his testimony in the face of every foe, and as a consequence has exercised a might ministry of life down through the centuries.

THE LAMB AND THE CROSS – “That I may know Him.” Has that been your prayer? Is it the purpose of your life? It is your Father’s will and purpose for you, and you cannot know the crucified Lamb apart from the crucifying Cross. The Cross and the Christ must be central in your life, that your life might be Lamb-like. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “I determined not to know any thing among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2)

Can you not now see what the Cross has been doing in your life, and will continue to do for you? You can trust the Holy Spirit with His ministry on your behalf. He is applying the finished work of the Cross to free you from the power of the lion-life of the old man, and He is

applying the present working of the Cross to mature you in the resurrection power of the Lamb-life.

Most would say, “The work of the Holy Spirit is to save souls.” Yes, but why? Just to have them saved? No; but in order that the Lord Jesus might have His place. These souls are the “residence” of Christ. The Spirit may instruct believers and build them up—for what purpose? Just that they should be mature Christians? Not at all; but so that the Lamb of God shall have larger place.

No matter what the Holy Spirit does, He has one all-inclusive object and end—the glorifying of the Lord Jesus Christ: that is, giving Him His place, and then filling all things with Him. Do not think of the “Being filled with the Spirit,” or the “fulness of the Spirit,” in any other way than this: the Holy Spirit’s filling of all things with the Lord Jesus—He is “all, and in all” (Col. 3:11).

SERVICE AND THE CROSS – The quiet course of the two-fold work of the Spirit and the Cross—the “not I” [death], and the “but Christ” [Lamb-life]—is what your home needs, your school, your work, your world.

The cross is not only involved in your life, but in your ministry, your outreach. Whether you are utterly “alone” in this world, or “restricted” to raising your little ones, or “burdened” with shepherding a flock, the Lamb-life will flow, and feed. You will know with whom to share, how, and when—Cross and all.

There is a joy in the suffering of the Cross when you are assured of its fruit in your life, and in the lives of others. “For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you [others]” (2. Cor. 4:11, 12). Newell comments on this spiritual paradox of life out of death:

The Body of Christ is ministered to, not first of all by preaching and working, but by inward reality. The Holy Spirit is concerned with what is real and true, and will never witness to that which is false.

What you communicate by words is what you are already bringing of the Lamb of the flock, for the Body is ministered to by a communication of life. And life is communicated to others, quite simply and spontaneously, as death operates in us. So

the question is not, How much are you doing or saying? But, How much are you going through under the hand of God?

Press on, dear friend, If it is the Cross, it is the Lamb. The Father will hold you to nothing for which the Spirit has not prepared you. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:6, 7).

Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?

"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,

I am He whom thou seekest!"

–Francis Thompson

SORROW'S SOLACE – When it comes to Knowing Him, it is to know the best. Don't settle for anything less—He won't!

"The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" This was a greater thing to say than to calm the seas or raise the dead. Prophets and apostles could work wondrous miracles, but they could not always do and suffer the will of God. To do and suffer the Father's will is still the highest form of faith and devotion, the most sublime Christian achievement.

To have the bright aspiration of a young life forever blighted; to bear a daily burden never congenial and to see no relief; to be fettered by some incurable physical disability; to be stripped bare of loved ones, until you stand alone to meet the shocks of life; to be able to say in such a school of discipline, "The Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?—this is faith at its highest, the spiritual achievement at its crowning point.

Great suffering is exhibited not so much in ability to do, as to suffer. To have a sympathizing Father we must have a suffering Saviour, and there is not true fellowship with another save in the heart of him who has been afflicted likewise.

We cannot do good to others save at the cost to ourselves, and our afflictions are the price we pay for our ability to sympathize. He who would be a helper must first be a sufferer. We cannot have the highest happiness of life in succoring others without

tasting the cup which the Lord Jesus drank. The school of suffering graduates rare scholars. –The Treasury

PRESSURES PLUS – Pressure and trial make both the life, and the service, fruitful. Mr. Stoney shares concerning this:

It is a blessed thing to be able to go on with the Lord Jesus, apart from any human friend, and to be here in all the calm dignity that the realization of His sympathy imparts.

I have often to say that there are trials which everyone can see and sympathize with, while there are others which no one can see, and consequently cannot sympathize with. The latter must be borne in secret with the Lord Jesus. It is here we learn when truly with the Lord what it is to cross our Jordan—alone with Him, enjoying Him in the scene where He is, by the enablement of the Spirit of Christ.

Now, in this dispensation, it is not deliverance from trial, but superiority to it which He gives. The old way was to put people in the furnace and they were not burnt; they were put into the lion's den and they were never touched.

But now they go into the furnace and they are burnt to a cinder, the lions eat them up, and they never give in; for it is not the power for them now, but the power in them. That power is the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. When sorrow, or trial, or weakness comes, the thing is to look for grace to be above it all.

Wonderful, life-giving Philippians 3:10 is based upon death.

We shall err if we think that life in the Sanctuary, hidden with Christ in God, means freedom from suffering, sorrow, and trial. Rather will the soul be strengthened inwardly to be trusted more and more with the “fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformable to His death.”

“Be anxious for nothing”
–not even your growth!

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).

CHAPTER NINETEEN

PERMANENT POSITION & PRACTICAL PROGRESS

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE – It may have taken a long time for you to become assured concerning the birth truths; it took a long time for you to become established in the growth truths; and it will take an even longer time for you to be mature in the fellowship truths. The progression is carried out by the Spirit in the midst of your everyday life with its multitudinous activities and responsibilities as you “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

ALL-ESSENTIAL TRUTH – As to your position, the Father has made you complete and perfect in His Son and seated you in His heavenly presence for fellowship and worship. As to your condition, the Father has sealed you in the Spirit here on earth for your day-by-day growth into that completed completeness. In growing you progress toward what you already are in Christ positionally. As to this, C.H. Mackintosh affirms:

The more clearly you enter, by faith, into objective truth, or what is already true of you in Christ, the deeper, more experiential and practical will be the Spirit’s subjective work in you, and the more complete will be the true manifestation of the moral effect in your life and character.

C.A. Coates adds to this thought:

If we approach the Father it is entirely apart from all the imperfections of the flesh (condition). We approach in all the savor and perfection of Christ (position). It is as we are identified in that affection with the perfections and acceptance of Christ that we can approach and worship.

HEAVEN ON EARTH – In the midst of this growth in your condition the Father caused you to more definitely occupy your heavenly position via the needs created during the pause. He did this in order to establish you in His personal fellowship, and that you might resume your walk and service, in and by means of that fellowship—now from above, not beneath the daily circumstances and pressures. Abide above, and keep looking down!

Spiritually, you do not leave your position in the Father’s presence. Practically, that fellowship is maintained in the midst of your down-to-earth everyday growth and service. “For in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts. 17:28). In ministering to

Nicodemus the Lord referred to Himself as “He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13).

Mr. T. Austin-Sparks knew the heavenly from the earthly:

It is essential that the believer have a clear understanding of his position before the Father—his place in the ascended Lord Jesus Christ. This alone will give true peace of mind, joy and comfort of heart, strength for conflict and power for service. We will not be able to properly understand or fill our place for God on earth if we do not realize our God-given standing before Him in heaven.

And never forget that our place before the Father is His gift, and a gift worthy of the Giver; not a gift according to the measure of our worth, but a gift intended to display the exceeding riches of the grace of the Giver. The greatness of the Giver, then, is the measure of the blessings that are mine in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, not what I am or what I deserve.

When you see and stand upon your heavenly ground, you come to rest, just as the Father rests. You need not worry—only keep on that ground by your attitude of faith and heart. If you are going to worry—if you must worry—worry lest you get down on earthly ground, for that is the ground of worry. Heavenly things are in safe keeping—in the keeping of One who is “far above all.”

HE “CALLETH FOR THEE” – The Father in His mercy has been teaching you that there is no solid advance in growth apart from personal fellowship with Himself. It is not only His intimate love that you need, but it is your own heart-love that He longs for. Think of it, the Creator yearning for the love and companionship of the re-created!

Ponder the infinite pathos of the Lord Jesus’ plea to the Twelve, as many of His disciples were forsaking Him: “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67). Does not your heart all but break as He asks the same of you? Surely your loving response can be no less than that of Peter’s: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

COMMONALITY – Your fellowship with the Lord Jesus, and His with you, is an interpenetrating union of life. “I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

As you abide in Him where He is, He is progressively manifested in you where you are. There is a bond of common life and nature—"for me to live is Christ." "Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by in every place" (Phil.1:21; 2 Cor.2:14)>

The Father has restrained you via the pause so as to establish you in a fellowship of death unto life. You are identified with His Son in His death unto sin, and resurrection unto newness of new-creation life; He is identified with you so that the truth of your position may become increasingly the experience of your condition. As a result it become for you, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. 3:10).

THE LAMB LIFE – Your spiritual growth will be manifested as a Cross-centered, Christ-centered, and therefore sacrificial, life. So then death worketh in you, but life in others (2 Cor. 4:12). In the process of your growth for His glory, your sacrifice for His saints, and your labor of love for the lost, there is still your participation in His primary purpose for you—personal fellowship with Him.

Now, post-0pause, your growth is founded upon communion, a common mind and heart with Him, "who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own." Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who...made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and...humbled Himself" (Phil. 2:5,7,8)>

SUMMATION – Consider this statement by Mr. Stoney:

Your Father, in His grace, has come in and ended your history in the flesh, by the Cross; and now by the Spirit you are brought into association with His Son at His own right hand in heaven.

The Lord Jesus wins your heart in His humiliation; He satisfies your heart in His glory. A won heart is not necessarily a satisfied heart. But if a heart is truly won by the Lord it will never be satisfied without Him. No heart that is won is ever satisfied but in the company of the one who won it. Absence does not make the heart grow fonder! You only discover in absence what you gained in presence.

SAY IT WITH SCRIPTURE – Yes, our fellowship is with the Father, and His Son, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him

who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:11, 12).

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen” (Jude 24,25).

CHAPTER TWENTY **POSITION PERSONALIZED**

THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP – Identifying you with His Son on the Cross, the Father not only raised you from the dead to walk in newness of new-creation life, but He also positioned you in the Lord Jesus at His right hand–“the right hand of fellowship.” “Hath made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5,6).

The Father has finished the Cross-work required to bring you into His very presence. You “are made nigh by the Blood of Christ.” “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” “Who hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 2:13; 1:6; Col. 1:12; Eph. 1:3).

Andrew Murray inserts an assertion:

The great work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross was to bring us to the Father: His death and His Blood, His ascension and sitting at the Father’s right hand, all mean one thing–our being brought nigh to dwell in the Father’s presence.

Not He in ours, but we in His! And with what purpose? That the Father may have us, to develop in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight. Let no one think that the entrance into the Holiest is the end; it but the beginning of the growing Christian life. It brings us into the right place and position, in which the Father can work the likeness of His Beloved Son in us.

ASSUME YOUR POSITION! – Through the pause and its pressures, the Father is motivating you to assume by faith the position in which He has already placed you. In the midst of your growth He has allowed you to encounter needs that prove the necessity for sustained fellowship with Him. “Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16). You are discovering that the time of need is all the time. We need our needs!

Mr. Stoney gives this much-needed exhortation:

We are not according to our Father's pleasure, nor are we in simple restfulness as to our acceptance, if we do not enter by faith into the new position to which He in His grace has placed us.

A further fact is, that we have no place but that; and when we get even a glimpse of it, it alters immensely this place; this world through which we are passing, and all things in it; appear in another color altogether.

Can anything affect the heart so much as the way the believer is received in the new position? What I press now is the right that we have to be in the place, and it is not only that I delight to be there, but the ineffable thought is the God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ delights to have me there in His place, sharing His Joys.

KEEPING COMPANY-- But, needy faith is not presumptuous; it honors the Father and responds to His will that "whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. 5:10). It is now that he wants your company, because it is now that He has you in his blessed company. "If [since] ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3).

There is nothing left for you to do but acknowledge what the Lord Jesus has already accomplished: His shed Blood has cleared the way into the Holiest for you, and He Himself has traversed the way with you. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:19-22).

REST IN YOUR RESIDENCY -- There is no time like the present for you to begin resting in your Father's presence. He has you there, in His Beloved Son. It is a simple, scriptural matter of seeing yourself there "in full assurance of faith." You are there in glory before the Father, not in the flesh, not in the body, but in spirit, positionally, as a "new creation" in Christ Jesus.

This is not the time to visualize, nor even to verbalize; and certainly not to fantasize. It is time, by faith in the facts, to actualize. It is the time to rest in your residency, your citizenship, to personalize your position. The Father has had you There before His face ever since the day you were saved, reborn into His glorious Son. In eternity past He chose you for that position, "according as He hath chosen us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

REVERSES RESIDENCY -- As you by faith in the positional facts realize that you are in the Father's presence, you will not try to depend upon any sense of His presence. Adulthood supersedes childhood. Now you know His presence because you know that your position in the Christian life is a life of faith in the facts--nothing else. Thus the Father enables you to live by faith so as to draw you into His presence There; not you, by sense, seeking to draw Him into your presence here.

Fellowship between you and your Father involves oneness, a commonality. As you in faith occupy your position you find yourself not only in His presence, but in his nature--the human-divine nature of your re-birth.

You are in the full acceptance of His Beloved Son. And that is what you are: beloved of the Father. "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation" (2 Thess. 2:13).

J.B. Stoney shares this conclusion from his death-bed:

In pondering over my life, I can now see how much happier a time I should have had, and how many sorrows I should have been spared, if heaven had been more definitely my resting place. One is apt to look for something in this place on earth while passing through it. I feel now that it is marvelous grace that I am as much entitled to be with the Lord Jesus in the heavenlies, as I am to be saved by His work on the Cross.

KNOW TO GROW -- As you rest, abiding in your Source, in "Christ, who is your life" (Col. 3:3), you will gain a new appreciation for a sound doctrinal foundation and superstructure. Without regeneration, of course, you would not be where you are; without assurance and security, you would not be sure of where you are; and without acceptance, you would not be at rest where you are. Abide above!

Further, without knowledge of your identification with the Lord Jesus in His death unto sin and life unto god, you would not know of your position before the Father, nor of your privilege to abide there in His Son. And these same truths assure you that you have been judicially freed from the indwelling old man and made possessor of the life of the New Man, thereby being made "fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12).

And let it never be forgotten that those with whom you share and nurture must come to know the same, step by step. “In all things commending ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience...” (2 Cor. 6:4).

FORGET NOT! -- I am not to surrender my light because of another’s twilight, but I am not, on the other hand, to press them beyond what they are able to understand and bear. True teaching and help must reach souls where they are. --J.B.S

There are two things that have to be taken into account in communicating truth. Not merely should there be certainty that it is the truth from God, but it must also be suited truth to those with whom you share.

They may need it all, but they may not be in condition to receive it; and the more precious the truth, the greater the injury, in a certain sense, if it is presented to those who are not in a state to profit by it. --Wm. Kelly

When one’s ministry or outreach flows from close fellowship with the Father, one’s influence and moral authority will be recognized. Moreover, such a workman is not carried beyond what he has received from the Lord, so that this ministry finds sanction in hearts without any pressure. --J.N.D.

It has been well stated that:

The basis upon which the Holy Spirit carries on the subjective work in the believer, is the objective truth of his completeness in the Lord Jesus Christ: crucified, buried, risen and ascended (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3-5; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:3,4).

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE **POSITION TO PERSON**

For the record, for the present, as well for your edification and guidance, for posterity, we share statements by the original Plymouth Brethren leaders--who, to a man, were Paul-centered. Hence heaven was their ground of growth, and the glorified Lord Jesus Christ was their positional and practical Christian Life. Paul spoke to them, as he would speak to us:

THE APOSTLE PAUL -- “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:3; 2:6).

“If [since] ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things [in Christ] which are above, where Christ {and you} sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above pin Christ], not on things on the earth. For ye died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1-3).

J. N. DARBY -- To abide in heaven in the Lord Jesus is my position. My faith is exercised here, and the suffering may be prolonged and continued; but I abide there, and while abiding I engage myself with everything connected with my Father, and with reference to the place H has set me in.

In that blessed region where He has positioned me, and where He alone can keep me, and where I am simply depending upon Him, it is His interests alone which occupy me, and thus it is that I minister to the saints.

WILLIAM KELLY -- All depends upon this--the simplicity with which I receive the great truth that, as to all that I am, it was judged on the Cross. And now there is a new man before the Father, and a new Man before me--Christ risen from the dead; and I am entitled to say, That is the One in whom I stand before the Father. We are now by grace in Another, even the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, in order to give us our position in the very presence of our Father.

C.H. MACKINTOSH -- We are to look down from our position in heaven upon the ruins of earth. To realize our position in heaven, and to be occupied in heart and soul with Him, is the secret of enablement to carry ourselves here as men of God.

To have Christ ever before us--His work for the conscience, His person for the heart, His Word for the path, is the one grand sovereign, divine remedy for a ruined self, a ruined world, and a ruined Church.

C.A. COATES -- It is a great thing to have the consciousness that we are ground up with the Lord Jesus there at the Father's right hand, and to know that we can participate in all that constitutes His life in that blessed circle of love and glory where He lives unto the Father. If we apprehend that, we should not be deceived and influenced by what goes on here in this world.

J.B. STONEY -- In pondering over my life [from his death bed], I can now see how much happier a time I should have had, and how many sorrows I should have been spared, if heaven had been more definitely my resting place.

One is apt to look for something in this place on earth while passing through it. I feel now that it is marvelous grace that I am as much entitled to be with the Lord Jesus in the heavenlies, as I am to be saved by His work on the Cross.

If we were more attached in heart to the Lord Jesus, we should long to be with him where He is. We often look for Him to help us in our circumstances down here; but having learned His help down here, we should seek Him in His own place--dwelling in heart and spirit with Him There. Do not be too ready to lend yourself to the sorrows around you without first entering into the joys which are yours in His presence There.

I often contemplate as I lie here, how little we really apprehend the magnificence of the Father's grace in transferring us from the man who dishonored Him to the Man who glorified Him. What rays of divine light shine in upon the soul as one answers practically in our ways and words, to being in Christ and not in Adam.

G.V. WIGRAM -- Have you ever thought of the Father dealing with you not as to what you are in yourself, but as to where He has positioned you in His Son? What we were in the old man is not the thing to scan, but what we are, and where we are, in the Son where He Is; and what there is in the living affections of the Father, who has raised us up together with His Beloved and has given us all heavenly blessings in Him.

J.G. BELLETT -- Where do you see victory over the world? In those who are happiest in Christ. Why are so many miserable down in the traffic of the world? Because they are not happy in Christ as they ought to be. Give me a soul that has boldness to joy in the Father's

presence in the Holiest of All, and I will show you one who has victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

We are never called outside the camp till we are inside the veil. We have title to our home in the Father's very presence; and we are to come forth from that home to let the world know that we are strangers to it.

H. F. WHITHERBY -- Being perfectly cleansed by the Blood of Christ, the Holiest of All is our position before the Father, and it is so simply upon the ground of what the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus has effected. It is the believer's position by virtue of His finished work on the Cross.

Our dwelling place now is in the light in the Holiest of All, not by reason of our subjective condition of soul, but because the Lord Jesus has made the position ours by putting away our sins, and bringing us to the Father. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19,20).

F.G. PATTERSON -- There is no place for learning the tender sympathy of the Lord Jesus, and the blessings of the Father's love and patience and care, as in the wilderness journey. But we must first have reached by faith the position to which we have already come in Christ. Then we find that this world is not the sphere in which our Father can bless us fully.

We have been introduced into a life on the other side of death and judgment. He has introduced us into a position on high with the Father--a fitting sphere for the life to grow and flourish.

F.G. BURKITT -- The Lord Jesus did not die merely to put away my sin, but to give me the infinite privilege of being positioned before the Father in all His own acceptance and loveliness.

If we are to be in heaven at all, the Father must have us there, lovely in all the loveliness of His own Beloved Son; and that, as far as the new man is concerned, He communicates to us here and now. (Eph. 2:6).

J.E. BATTEN -- "In Christ" is in this way the language of complete identification. Henceforth the eye of the Father sees us ever in Christ alone. We are reckoned, and are to reckon

ourselves, as with Him dead, buried, quickened, risen, and in Him seated in the heavenly places before the Father.

Think of the fast embrace with which I find myself held, right in the heart of the Father Himself, when I discern my position in Christ. He is a heavenly Man, the Last Adam--Head of a new race; beginning of a new creation--and you and I who believe are "in Him," seen and accepted before the Father as His beloved in His Beloved.

C.E. STUART -- A holy priesthood is the designation of all believers (1 Pet. 2:5). To draw nigh unto the Father, having access through the Lord Jesus Christ by one Spirit unto the Father, is our privilege now (Heb. 4:16; 7:25; Eph. 2:18),. To enter the Holiest is a favor granted to us now (Eph. 2:6; Heb. 10:19).

W.W. FEREDAY -- Walking in the Spirit, He leads up our hearts to where we are in Christ. The new man finds delight in the Lord Jesus where He is, nowhere else. He causes us to gaze upon Him, and become changed into the same image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18). This is true Christianity--the heart drawn off from things here, and lovingly occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ, our Object and Life in glory.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

H.H. SMITH -- Believers are "made nigh by the Blood of Christ," the Gentile believers being brought from the place of distances in which sin put them, into the position of nearness set forth in Christ.

This is not mere outward nearness by means of ordinances and ceremonies, but a vital living nearness that is seen in Christ Himself, risen from the dead and appearing before the face of the Father. Thus it is said, "In Christ Jesus ye...are made nigh by the Blood of Christ." It is not only that the believer can draw nigh to God, but that in Christ he is "made nigh" now.

R. BEACON -- "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). We must be in the land to know this fully. But to be in the land, seated with Christ in the heavenlies, does not take out of the wilderness as to the body.

On the other hand, those who by grace know their position in the Lord Jesus above can bear without murmuring the trials of the wilderness. And thus it is that the Christian as to circumstances and condition, is yet in the wilderness; and as to his position, in the heavenly places, with and in the Lord Jesus Christ before the Father.

H.H. SNELL -- This is surely where the Father began with us: "When we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

This is the beginning of our history as saints, and is the starting point of true devotedness. A person cannot be said to be intelligently on the ground of devotedness till he enters, by faith, upon his new heavenly position, which the Father has given him as a new creation in Christ Jesus.

G. GARDINER -- We have the liberty of heaven, while we are on the earth. We have passed in the person of the Lord Jesus outside this world--dead to it (Gal. 6:14). We have taken our position in heaven, we have been made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. We have been put at ease There. All thought of pilgrimage is lost sight of in this range of truth. Our being pilgrims and strangers, though most true and blessed, is not so blessed a place as being seated together in heavenly places in Christ.

E. DENNETT -- We are also to reckon ourselves as alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:11). This implies our resurrection with Christ, because it is only as being in the ascended Lord that we can be alive unto the Father.

In the Colossians we find this aspect fully developed, Paul making the fact of our being ascended with Christ the ground of practical appeal: "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3). It is not only therefore that we have been crucified with Christ, but in Christ we passed through death; for "God hath raised us up together" with Christ (Eph. 2:6).

J.L. HARRIS -- In Christ we have already entered on our everlasting nearness to our Father, and are now privileged to know the peace and rest proper to the heavenly Sanctuary. The true Tabernacle is free to us--as free now as it will be when we stand bodily amongst its glories.

We belong to that priestly family anointed for its holies, not limited to a holy place, nor serving before a veiled mercy seat, not having brief access into the Holiest; but we are made meet for heaven itself, and worshipping with purged consciences in the immediate presence of our Father.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
AN OPEN LETTER RE “ DEEPER LIFE”

October 1995

Dear Dr.

It is heartwarming to be able to sit down and have a quiet bit of correspondence with you in a completely positive vein. Much of my writing these days necessitates a plethora of the polemic.

Not being a listener of tapes, mine bride takes care of that end of things. In that you are one of her favorite speakers, your message on **Colossians 3:1-4** was recommended to me. I was edified by your arrow-straight doctrine concerning that vital portion of the Word of truth.

For the past 50 years I have had the privilege of full-time ministry to believers concerning spiritual growth. If I may, let me share some personal observations regarding “deeper life,” and you can draw your own conclusions therefrom.

The original Plymouth Brethren leaders all held the growth truths (identification and position) scripturally. The majority of all others who minister identification include error, and/or misapply the truth. Many of these present only the positive aspects, eliminating the essential negative either through ignorance, or fear of jeopardizing their ministry.

With very few exceptions, Christians, including leaders in the sound Bible churches, understand little or nothing of their identification with and position in Christ. They know and love the Lord, seek to serve Him, and are awaiting the Rapture.

When they are aware of having sinned, they confess, and seek to improve--with the Lord's help, of course.

They want to sin less, to be consistent in their walk, and to learn to love Him more fully. Sometimes they seek the Lord's help in these matters, but for the most part they want everything to go their way, and to experience the Lord's enabling when they feel the situation warrants it.

The only life that they are aware of is the one they have always had, but now they consider it to be Christian. They are unaware that there are two Adams involved, and for them Romans 5,6, and 7 might as well not be in their Bible.

If they should encounter a deeper life meeting, book, or tape, and discover the truths of Colossians 3:1-4, for instance, it sounds just great to them--the good news of the Good News. When they are informed that they were crucified and that now their life is hidden with Christ in God, that is fine, too. And since they are now free from the power of sin and can set their affection on things above, that is even better.

Therefore, they enthusiastically step aboard the deeper life bandwagon, only to have the wheels fall off down the block a ways. And that not because of any doctrinal error--they have just heard and responded to the scriptural truth of identification. But their failure often results in frustration and disillusionment. They say in essence just what Roy Hession said to me some 45 years ago: "Romans Six didn't work for me."

The problem here is not what they know but do not respond to, and do. The problem is what they do not know--what has been omitted.

The Plymouth Brethren, repository of identification and dispensational truth, is in a dying condition while it yet liveth--because an aspect of truth has been practically ignored. The Keswick movement is dead while it yet exists, for the same reason. And just what might that be? It is the omission of the experience of the Cross in the life of the believer.

While stressing the positive aspects of Romans 8, believers are not taught the necessity of reckoning, and the cross-content of Romans 6 and 7. Hence the Adamic self-life is not a factor in their seeking "victory" in Christ.

Only when the indwelling old man is dealt with by the work of the Cross, is there freedom to consistently grow in Christ. First of all, the Holy Spirit, according to His time and purpose for the individual, who convicts the believer concerning himself as a sinner, in order to bring him to the One who is his Life, for his sanctification and spiritual growth.

The equally important conviction--the awareness of his sinful self--sets him on the weary path of struggling to rectify, to control, or to avoid, that sinful inner Adamic life and nature. Enter Romans 7.

This hopeless struggle is designed to bring him to the place of utter defeat, until his cry becomes, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). It is not until he gives up trying to keep the law in order to govern self, that he can intelligently exclaim, "I thank God through Jesus Christ!" (vs. 25)

He knows now that self is so incorrigibly sinful that it could not be forgiven, but had to be taken into judgment by the crucifixion (Rom. 8:3). Now Romans 6 becomes his haven of rest. He begins to count upon the fact that the indwelling old man was positionally crucified in Christ on the Cross (Rom. 6:6). He learns to reckon instead of struggle, to count upon the fact that he died to sin as personified in his indwelling Adamic life (Rom. 6:11).

Upon the basis of the believer's faith and reckoning, the Holy Spirit deals with the old man, applying progressively the finished work of the Cross. This brings increased experiential liberty from the dominion and power of the old Adamic man.

In time he is more free to turn his attention to the One in glory who is his Christian life. He begins to count upon the second half of Romans 6:11, i.e., reckon yourself to be "alive unto God in Jesus Christ." He is learning something of the benefits of Colossians 3:1-4.

Without the Holy Spirit's conviction of the depravity and power of self, the believer will not resort to reckoning upon the finished work of the Cross. His attempt to center upon Christ via Colossians 3 will prove to be futile. He will not only be unable to, but for the most part he won't even want to, center upon Christ in glory. Self-centeredness nullifies Christ-centeredness.

For him, self will be like the wife who said to her husband, "If you ever leave me, I'm going with you!" Being apprised of truth objectively, and entering into that truth subjectively, and two vastly different things.

Adamic self, like Satan, submits only to that which has already been accomplished concerning it at Calvary. The Holy Spirit applies that positional destruction via the believer's reckoning upon that fact. Both redemption and sanctification are matters of faith.

But it is not to the "faith" of the charismatic movement: "Believe it, and you have it." Faith in, reckoning upon, the truth is coupled with the dependence upon the Holy Spirit to make it all experiential. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." "...changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (Gal. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:18).

There are many today who pick up on identification truth without the necessary conviction re self, and its Cross-repudiation. Some of the demon-deliverance people point to the believer's position in Christ, but do not have the scriptural answer to indwelling Adam.

They maintain that the old man has been conveniently eradicated, and no longer exists. In place of that element they substitute Satan and his demons. For them it is not even "Satan made me do it"; but rather, "Satan and the demons did it!" Cast them out, and you are free for Colossians 3! In the meantime, good ol' self remains at liberty as spoiler.

Others take on identification in order to bolster a failing ministry, or to enhance a growing one. David Wilkerson adds identification to his charismatic cupboard already well stocked with tongues, healing, demon-deliverance, etc. Gothard has included identification along with his law and demonism. But identification truth is incompatible with, and nullified by, these errors.

Ian Thomas, in his speaking, writing, and Torch Bearer's ministry, is welcomed everywhere and by all. This is accomplished by emphasizing the positive, while by-passing the necessary negative. The work of the Cross in the life of the believer is skirted. Hence self remains the ruling factor, regardless of how well the truths of Romans 6 and Colossians 3 are presented and advocated.

It is quite another story when the Cross and the daily crucifixion of the self-life are presented as the basis for centering upon Christ above. Who--especially in this doctrineless, self-centered day--will tolerate hearing of the Cross for cherished self?

Only those who have become Spirit-convicted concerning the old man for what it is, will be able, and want to hear, the truth concerning the daily death of the Cross. The Cross/Christ-centered message reduces one's "hearing" audience down to about two percent in any given "deeper life" conference, seminar, or church meeting.

Paul, from whom alone in all Scripture the doctrine of identification and position can be discovered and learned, maintained a two-fold emphasis: The Cross, and the Christ. "For I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Andrew Murray complies:

With Christ, the believer has died to sin; he is one with Him, in the likeness of His death. And as the knowledge that Christ died for sins as our atonement is

indispensable for our justification, so the knowledge that Christ and we with Him on the Cross have died to sin, is indispensable to our growth, our sanctification.

Our procedure through the years has been to share the identification truths primarily with those who are earnestly seeking to be freed from the dominion of sin and self, so as to be at liberty to center and rest in Christ as their very Life. None but the hungry heart!

A few closing thoughts from others, who were able to say it much better than I:

** The N.T. teaches that the flesh, the old man, is judicially dead in virtue of the Cross, but it nowhere says that it will become actually dead by standing on that fact. What it does say is, that when standing (reckoning) on that fact the flesh will lose its governing power. In Romans 6 we find that through Christ's death unto sin, sin shall not have dominion over you--the thought is of bondage, reigning. There is no such view presented in the Word as the eradication of the old man. --N. Douty

** If the difference between "Christ dying for us," and "our dying with Him," has not been recognized, acknowledged, and counted upon, it may safely be affirmed that the old man is still the dominating factor in the life. --Selected

** I have found it very difficult, and I perceive it in others, to realize practically as an absolute fact that my old man is gone in the judgment of the Cross from the eye of God.

If we accept this simply we should we should neither look for good or evil from that which has been judicially crucified; and then, as this is realized and counted upon, the Lord Jesus glorified will be our entire and consistent Object and occupation; the Spirit of Christ will lead to nothing else. --J.B.S.

** Many who are most enthusiastic about the aspect of the Gospel which proclaims the Saviour's being offered for us, are most resentful when the Gospel message is pressed on the issue of the need for an inward working of the Cross, setting aside all that is of Adam and not of Christ.

They love the hymns and Gospel message concerning the Saviour's bearing the judgment of our sins, but are not prepared to accept the need for that judgment to be applied to the fleshly Adam within. --H. Farraday

With you, resting in Him, dear brother,

(Signature)

