

What is Justification in the Plan of Salvation Really - Issues in Romans 6:

Rom 6:4 - Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Parallel

2Cor 5:16, 17: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. 17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Throughout this chapter the Apostle proves, that they who imagine that gratuitous righteousness is given us by him, apart from newness of life, shamefully rend Christ asunder: nay, he goes further, and refers to this objection, — that there seems in this case to be an opportunity for the display of grace, if men continued fixed in sin. We indeed know that nothing is more natural than that the flesh should indulge itself under any excuse, and also that Satan should invent all kinds of slander, in order to discredit the doctrine of grace; which to him is by no means difficult. For since everything that is announced concerning Christ seems very paradoxical to human judgment, it ought not to be deemed a new thing, that the flesh, hearing of justification by faith, should so often strike, as it were, against so many stumbling-stones. Let us, however, go on in our course; nor let Christ be suppressed, because he is to many a stone of offense, and a rock of stumbling; for as he is for ruin to the ungodly, so he is to the godly for a resurrection. We ought, at the same time, ever to obviate unreasonable questions, lest the Christian faith should appear to contain anything absurd.

Who have died to sin

An argument derived from what is of an opposite character. “He who sins certainly lives to sin; we have died to sin through the grace of Christ; then it is false, that what abolishes sin gives vigor to it.” The state of the case is really this, — that the faithful are never reconciled to God without the gift of regeneration; nay, we are for this end justified, — that we may afterwards serve God in holiness of life. Christ indeed does not cleanse us by his blood, nor render God propitious to us by his expiation, in any other way than by making us partakers of his Spirit, who renews us to a holy life. It would then be a most strange inversion of the work of God were sin to gather strength on account of the grace which is offered to us in Christ; for medicine is not a feeder of the disease, which it destroys.

Know ye not

What he intimated in the last verse — that Christ destroys sin in his people, he proves here by mentioning the effect of baptism, by which we are initiated into his faith; for it is beyond any question, that we put on Christ in baptism, and that we are baptized for this end — that we may be one with him. But Paul takes up another principle — that we are then really united to the body of Christ, when his death brings forth in us its fruit; yea, he teaches us, that this fellowship as to death is what is to be mainly regarded in baptism; for not washing alone is set forth in it, but also the putting to death and the dying of the old man. It is hence evident, that when we become partakers of the grace of Christ, immediately the efficacy of his death appears. But the benefit of this fellowship as to the death of Christ is described in what follows.

“Baptized into (εἰς) Christ,” “baptized into (εἰς) Moses,” [1Co 10:2](#), “baptized into (εἰς) one body,” [1Co 12:13](#), are all the same forms of expression, and must mean, that by the rite of baptism a professed union is made, and, in the two first instances, a submission to the authority exercised is avowed. By “baptized into his death,” we are to understand, “baptized,” in order to die with him, or to die as he died; not that the death is the same; for it is a like death, as it is expressed in [Rom 6:5](#), as the resurrection is a like resurrection. His death was natural, ours is spiritual; the same difference holds as to the resurrection. It is the *likeness* that is throughout to be regarded; and this is the key to the whole passage. It is true, that through the efficacy of Christ’s death alone the death of his people takes place, and through the operation of his Spirit; but to teach this is not the design of the Apostle here; his object seems to be merely to show that a change takes place in every true Christian, symbolized by baptism, and that this change bears a likeness to the death and resurrection of our Savior. He speaks of baptism here not merely as a symbol, but as including what it symbolizes; as he does in a similar passage,

[Col 2:11](#), where he refers to this change, first under the symbol of circumcision, and then of baptism; which clearly proves that the same thing is signified by both.

We have then been buried with him

He now begins to indicate the object of our having been baptized into the death of Christ, though he does not yet completely unfold it; and the object is — that we, being dead to ourselves, may become new creatures. He rightly makes a transition from a fellowship in death to a fellowship in life; for these two things are connected together by an indissoluble knot — that the old man is destroyed by the death of Christ, and that his resurrection brings righteousness, and renders us new creatures. And surely, since Christ has been given to us for life, to what purpose is it that we die with him except that we may rise to a better life? And hence for no other reason does he slay what is mortal in us, but that he may give us life again.

Let us know, that the Apostle does not simply exhort us to imitate Christ, as though he had said that the death of Christ is a pattern which all Christians are to follow; for no doubt he ascends higher, as he announces a doctrine, with which he connects, as it is evident, an exhortation; and his doctrine is this — that the death of Christ is efficacious to destroy and demolish the depravity of our flesh, and his resurrection, to effect the renovation of a better nature, and that by baptism we are admitted into a participation of this grace. This foundation being laid, Christians may very suitably be exhorted to strive to respond to their calling. Farther, it is not to the point to say, that this power is not apparent in all the baptized; for Paul, according to his usual manner, where he speaks of the faithful, connects the reality and the effect with the outward sign; for we know that whatever the Lord offers by the visible symbol is confirmed and ratified by their faith. In short, he teaches what is the real character of baptism when rightly received. So he testifies to the Galatians, that all who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. ([Gal 3:27](#).) Thus indeed must we speak, as long as the institution of the Lord and the faith of the godly unite together; for we never have naked and empty symbols, except when our ingratitude and wickedness hinder the working of divine beneficence.

For he who has died

This is an argument derived from what belongs to death or from its effect. For if death destroys all the actions of life, we who have died to sin ought to cease from those actions which it exercised during its life. Take *justified* for freed or reclaimed from bondage; for as he is freed from the bond of a charge, who is absolved by the sentence of a judge; so death, by freeing us from this life, sets us free from all its functions. But though among men there is found no such example, there is yet no reason why you should think, that what is said here is a vain speculation, or despond in your minds, because you find not yourselves to be of the number of those who have wholly crucified the flesh; for this work of God is not completed in the day in which it is begun in us; but it gradually goes on, and by daily advances is brought by degrees to its end. So then take this as the sum of the whole, — “If thou art a Christian, there must appear in thee an evidence of a fellowship as to the death of Christ; the fruit of which is, that thy flesh is crucified together with all its lusts; but this fellowship is not to be considered as not existing, because thou findest that the relics of the flesh still live in thee; but its increase ought to be diligently labored for, until thou arrivest at the goal.” It is indeed well with us, if our flesh is continually mortified; nor is it a small attainment, when the reigning power, being taken away from it, is wielded by the Holy Spirit. There is another fellowship as to the death of Christ, of which the Apostle often speaks, as he does in [2Co 4:0](#), that is, the bearing of the cross, which is followed by a joint-participation also of eternal life.

Romans 6:7 has occasioned various explanations. The most obvious meaning of the first clause is, that to “die” here means to die with or in a similar manner with Christ, for in the next verse, where the idea is resumed, “with” or like “Christ,” is expressly stated. The verb, *δεδικαίωται*, “is,” or has been “justified,” has been considered by the early and most of the later commentators in the sense of being *freed* or delivered. This is the view, among others, of [[Chrysostom](#)], [[Basil](#)], [[Ecumenius](#)], [[Beza](#)], [[Pareus](#)], [[Hammond](#)], [[Grotius](#)], [[Doddridge](#)] and [[Macknight](#)]. But it must be added, that it is a meaning of which there is no other clear instance in the New Testament, though the verb occurs often. [[Scott](#)], aware of this, gives it its common meaning, “justified;” and though he does not take the view of [[Venema](#)], [[Chalmers](#)], and [[Haldane](#)], as to the general import of the former part of this chapter, he yet considers that to be “justified from sin” here, is to be justified from its guilt and penalty. Nor is it irrelevant to the subject in hand to refer to justification: for it is a very important truth to declare, that

to die to sin is an evidence of being justified from its guilt but also a regeneration to a new man as we shall see later.

The dead (*νεκροὺς*) in trespasses and sins," are those who have no spiritual life; and to be dead *to* sin is not to have life for sin, to be freed from its ruling power. [Rom 6:18](#). We may hence learn, that we are not freed from the bondage of the law that we may sin; for the law does not lose its dominion, until the grace of God restores us to him, in order to renew us in righteousness: and it is hence impossible that we should be subject to sin, when the grace of God reigns in us: for we have before stated, that under this term grace, is included the spirit of regeneration. Indeed the godly, as soon as they begin to be illuminated by the Spirit of Christ and the preaching of the gospel, do freely acknowledge their past life, which they have lived without Christ, to have been worthy of condemnation; and so far are they from endeavouring to excuse it, that, on the contrary, they feel ashamed of themselves. Yea, further, they call to mind the remembrance of their own disgrace, that being thus ashamed, they may more truly and more readily be humbled before God.

We talk about the cross, however, an inordinate preoccupation with the cross is a distortion of the gospel. The true Christian cross is not a crucifix on which Jesus still hangs. The true Christian cross is empty. He is not there; He is risen. The empty cross is a symbol of the risen Lord. Faith takes us not only to the cross but through the cross to the living Lord, to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given, and against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail. This is the only way we can overcome sin. The nagging question remains--will Jeremiah 50: 20 ever be fulfilled? "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found."

ROMANS 6:1-14

Justification "NEW BIRTH" Experienced

Something to understand about justification by faith is found in Titus 3:5-7. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Look carefully at how God saves us. Does the washing of regeneration refer primarily to the waters of baptism? Or is this the washing of a renewed heart? Did not the thief on the cross experience this washing, even though he could not be baptized?

This is a heart experience--a complete transformation. It happens in the mind. It changes my values and my attitudes. The Holy Spirit renews my mind. No longer am I self-centered; now I am Christ-centered and others-centered. Now I have the mind of Christ. When this washing and renewing have been accomplished by Christ and the Holy Spirit, then I am justified and have eternal life. Is there more to justification than being pardoned from past sins? This is justification experienced in the inward life. Notice that justification follows regeneration and renewing. Jesus put it very simply in John 3:3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." In its most basic expression, justification experienced is the new birth. The new birth does not follow justification; it is justification.

"God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Psalm 51:10." God's forgiveness is declared, but it is more than that. It is reclaiming, transforming, and renewing. It is a clean heart created within us. This is not sanctification; it is part of forgiveness. Justification transforms at the same time it declares. Pardon is an inward transformation.

Rom. 3:26." Christ's Object Lesson(COL 163) Justification is receiving a new heart from God, becoming a new creature. Right now there is a major attempt being made to separate the transforming power of the Holy Spirit from justification, to put it totally within the process of sanctification. But what we are finding in these inspired statements is that transformation and making righteous part of the justifying process, after which God declares us righteous. Justification is simply another name for the new birth, the new creation, the new heart when you accept Christ. A SINFUL HEART DRAWN TO CHRIST AND ACCEPTED CHRIST IS A NEW HEART. FAITH WORKING BEFORE EVEN BAPTISM TAKES PLACE.

“By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.” (6BC 1098) Notice that imputed righteousness comes through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Some today want to say that we are justified by Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Nowhere does inspiration support this separation of the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Both are involved in both justification and sanctification. Thus it is clear that imputed means more than accounting and crediting.

The first part of justification is to be pardoned--forgiven of my sins. The second part of justification -is to be transformed in the new birth experience. Justification is both declarative and experiential. The most current understanding of justification is that it is the first part only. The second part--new birth--is part of sanctification. This means that we can be justified and saved before the new birth happens. And even if the new birth experience is not changing my life as fully as it should, I am still justified and saved. This unbiblical separation between declaring righteous and making righteous is doing more than any other teaching to encourage Christians to tolerate sin in their lives, since they believe that they are justified even when open, unforgiven sin is active in their lives.

These principles are exactly the same in justification by faith. What is the cause of my justification? Is it surrender, or obedience, or even faith? We can obey perfectly for the next fifty years, and we will not be one inch closer to eternal life. The only cause of justification is God's grace expressed in Christ's atoning death on the cross. That is the place of salvation. But if I do not comply with the conditions of salvation--surrender and obedience--I refuse to place myself where salvation happens, at the cross, and salvation (of others) will happen without me. The death of Christ is the meritorious cause of salvation, while surrender and obedience have no merit but make it possible for the cause to save me. Salvation is caused by grace, not by obedience, but obedience places me where the power of the cross can launch me into eternal life. It is not correct to say that first we are justified and saved, and then obedience will naturally follow along. We cannot wait to obey to be saved while also we cannot disobey while claiming to be saved.

You cannot destroy your love of sin by a simple act of extermination. You cannot thus bid away from your bosom one of its dearest and oldest favourites. Our moral nature abhors the vacuum that would thus be formed. But let a man by faith look upon himself as crucified with Christ, and the world is disarmed of its power of sinful temptation. He no longer minds earthly things, just because better things are now within his reach, and “our conversation is in heaven--whence we also look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.” And this is in perfect analogy with familiar exhibitions of our nature in ordinary affairs. Let us just conceive a man embarked, with earnest ambition, on some retail business, whose mind is wholly taken up with the petty fluctuations that are taking place in prices and profits and customers; but who nevertheless is regaled by the annual examination of particulars at the end of it, with the view of some snug addition to his old accumulations. You must see how impossible it were to detach his affections from the objects and the interests of this his favourite course by a simple demonstration of their vanity. But suppose that either some splendid property or some sublime walk of high and hopeful adventure were placed within his attainment, and the visions of a far more glorious affluence were to pour a light into his mind, which greatly overpassed and so eclipsed all the fairness of those homelier prospects that he was wont to indulge in--is it not clear that the old affection which he could never get rid of by simple annihilation, will come to be annihilated, and that simply by giving Place to the new one. (T. Chalmers, D. D.)

The Christian dies to his old sin that he may begin to live to holiness and God. This is the express design God had when He put our sins to death in His dear Son's Cross. Faith in Christ makes us morally incorporate with Him in spirit, as well as legally embraced under Him as our Representative. Christ is our Head in that He represents us before the law, so that in His death all who are His died to sin. Christ is no less our Head to quicken us as His members, and in His living again we all live anew. The will and the power to walk in new moral life are therefore guaranteed to us by our faith. Christian faith is very far from a superficial, or inoperative, or merely intellectual act, such as a man can do without his moral character being seriously affected by it. It is connected with the deep roots of our moral and religious nature. It changes the main current of our ethical life. Those who have been baptised into Christ and say they trust in His death as the ground of their peace with God, are bound to satisfy themselves

that their faith is of a sort to kill sin, and to maintain the life of righteousness. (J. Oswald Dykes, D. D.)

ANOTHER FORM OF THIS ANTINOMIANISM OF THE HEART CONNECTS ITSELF IMMEDIATELY WITH THE DEATH OF CHRIST. Men talk and act frequently as if in Christ's shed blood there was a shelter from the consequence of their sins, even though they remain in their sins. They harbour covetousness, envy, hate, and pride; they stain their hands with dishonesty, and then, with their stained hands uplifted in the face of God, aver that they believe in the death of Christ for their sins, and are saved. This is not the gospel Paul preached. He asks, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer therein?" He who has by faith appropriated the expiatory death of Jesus, in and by that act died to sin. In the apostle's day, baptism was the open signification of the death. It was as the burial of one who had died. It would be a new thing to see a dead man going on as if nothing had happened. So the saved man does not persevere in sin; how should he? He has died to it. Sin has no further claim. Who can claim anything of the dead? He is not sinless. Sin, alas! is not dead, but he is dead to it. He has not got beyond its trouble, but he has got beyond its bondage. Faith in Christ's death as our means of pardon, includes also His life as the principle of our sanctification. As one delightfully said, "The Cross condemns me to be holy." (W. Hubbard.)

Romans 6:21-22

Are We Saved While Sinning?

"Is it possible to sin and to know you are sinning and keep on doing what you're doing wrong, and still be a Christian?"

This is one of the most important questions that we as sinners in need of salvation could possibly ask. In answer, the book refers us back to the experience of the disciples and Christ. "The disciples continued their discussion along the road to Jerusalem, taking care of their unfinished business. But they knew what they were doing was wrong, because they lagged behind Jesus." The unfinished business was their argument about who would be the greatest in Christ's soon-coming kingdom. Now these disciples had been forgiven by Jesus, brought into a special relationship with Jesus, and set apart for a special work by Jesus. They had been justified, but their sanctification was not working very well at the moment. They were not experiencing holiness at the moment. "From this Scripture lesson we see that the disciples were guilty of sin. What sin? The sin of pride... Pride is one of the worst sins in God's eyes... So the sin of which the disciples were guilty was not only sin, it was a bad sin. And they knew it was wrong, and they knew what they were doing, but they kept right on doing it... That qualifies in my definition as known sin, continuing sin, habitual sin, cherished sin, persistent sin... On the basis of this Bible story, we can conclude that it is possible to have a relationship with God going on and to have a known sin going on in your life at the same time." (Morris Venden, How Jesus Treated People. pp. 43-46).

The concept here is that since the disciples had been justified, and since they were following after Christ, the fact that they were willfully sinning did not invalidate their relationship with Christ. In this gospel, the only way one can lose his or her salvation is to reject Christ and justification. As long as one is professedly following Christ and has been justified, the state of one's sanctification is irrelevant to one's saved status. Since the disciples had not denied Christ or justification, they were just not exhibiting the fruits of salvation very well. The absence of a sanctified heart, with pride and jealousy controlling the life, did not disqualify them for heaven. (Do we remember that Lucifer was cast out of heaven for holding pride and jealousy in his heart?) This is the result of the gospel teaching that says that only justification is necessary for salvation, while sanctification comes along later as the fruit of salvation.

The abuse of Divine mercy

A certain member of that parliament wherein a statute for the relief of the poor was passed was an ardent promoter of that Act. He asked his steward when he returned to the country, what the people said of that statute. The steward answered, that he heard a labouring man say, that whereas formerly he worked six days in the week, now he would work but four; which abuse of that good provision so affected the pious statesman that he could not refrain from weeping. Lord, Thou hast made many provisions in Thy Word for my support and comfort, and hast promised in my necessities Thy supply and protection; but let not my

presumption of help from Thee cause my neglect of any of those means for my spiritual and temporal preservation which Thou hast enjoined. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Converted men dislike sin

An Armenian arguing with a Calvinist remarked, "If I believed your doctrine, and was sure that I was a converted man, I would take my fill of sin." "How much sin," replied the godly Calvinist, "do you think it would take to fill a true Christian to his own satisfaction?" Here he hit the nail on the head. "How can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" A truly converted man hates sin with all his heart, and even if he could sin without suffering for it, it would be misery enough to him to sin at all. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

THE CONTRASTED LIVES: "Life in sin," and "being alive unto God." The contrast is such that the unspiritual can perceive it, though unable to understand it. The ungodly may say,

We neither know nor care whether a man is justified or not, but we do know whether he keeps the law of conscience, whether he acts up to his professed principles, whether he does that which, apart from his profession, we know to be right.

But how is it that the world is able to form these judgments? Was the civilised world qualified to do this in the days of Cicero or of Pericles? Was there to be found then, or is there to be found now, where Christianity is not, anything approximating the same jealousy of conscience, etc., which those who now boast that they are men of the world often exhibit? Surely not. If worldly men are competent judges of Christian principle, it is because the atmosphere breathed by true Christians has stimulated its life and awakened its conscience. The world is indebted to the Christianity it is ready to revile for its power to call Christians to its bar.

In His life and resurrection. The new life of the soul is a resurrection life, charged with all the associations and aspirations which would be possessed by one who had passed, through dying, from death to life. The life unto God flows out of the life of God in the soul. (H. R. Reynolds, D. D.)

Christ's legislative glory to be preached

The following curious incident once happened to a clergyman. One day, after preaching, a gentleman followed him into the vestry, and, putting a £10 note into his hand, thanked him most energetically for the great comfort he had derived from his sermon. The clergyman was very much surprised at this, but still more so when shortly afterwards the same thing again took place; and he determined to sift the affair to the bottom, and find out who this man was that was so comforted by his discourse. He discovered that he was a person at that very time living in the most abominable wickedness and in the very depths of sin. "Certainly," said he to himself, "there must be something essentially wrong in my preaching when it can afford comfort to such a profligate as this!" He accordingly examined into the matter closely, and he discovered that, whilst he had been preaching Christ's sovereignty, he had quite forgotten his legislative glories. He immediately altered the style of his sermons, and he soon lost his munificent friend. I am told that, by preaching Christ's legislative glory, I also have driven some from my chapel. Pray for me, my brethren, that I may still preach doctrine, and that Longacre may become too hot for error in principle or sin in practice; pray for me that with a giant's arm I may lash both. (Howells, of Longacre.)

Our representative union with Christ as a truth to be believed; baptism as a burial with Christ signifies:

1. Acceptance of the death and burial of Christ as being for us. We are not baptized into His example, or His life, but into His death. We hereby confess that all our salvation lies in that which we accept as having been incurred on our account.
2. An acknowledgment of our own death in Christ. My burial with Christ means not only that He died for me, but that I died in Him, so that my death with Him needs a burial with Him. Suppose that a man has actually died for a certain crime, and now, by some wonderful work

of God, he has been made to live again. Will he commit that crime again? But you reply, "We never did die so." But that which Christ did for you comes to, and the Lord looks upon it as, the same thing. You have died in Christ's death, and now by grace you are brought up again into newness of life. Can you, after that, turn back to the accursed thing which God hates?

3. *Burial with a view to rising. If you are one with Christ at all, you must be one with Him all through. Since I am one with Christ I am what Christ is: as He is a living Christ, I am a living spirit. So far the doctrine: is it not a precious one? Shall the members of a generous, gracious Head be covetous and grasping? Shall the members of a glorious, pure, and perfect Head be defiled with the lusts of the flesh and the follies of a vain life? If believers are indeed so identified with Christ that they are His fulness, should they not be holiness itself?*

A healthy Christian is one of the liveliest creatures on earth. Newness of life means a soul aglow with love to God, and therefore earnest, zealous, happy. Come, my soul, if Christ has raised thee from the dead, do not live after the fashion of the dark grave which thou hast quitted. Live a God-like life; let the divine in thee sit on the throne, and tread the animal beneath its feet. "It is easier said than done," cries one. That depends upon the life within. Life is full of power. I have seen an iron bar bent by the growth of a tree. Have you never heard of great paving stones being lifted by fungi, which had pushed up beneath them? If you choose to contract your souls by a sort of spiritual tight lacing, or if you choose to bend yourselves down in a sorrow which never looks up, you may hinder your life and its walk; but give your life full scope, and what a walk you may have! Conclusion: I have seen boys bathing in a river in the morning. One of them has just dipped his toes in the water, and he cries out, as he shivers, "Oh, it's so cold!" Another has gone in up to his ankles, and he also declares that it is fearfully chilly. But see! another runs to the bank and takes a header. He rises all in a glow. You Christian people are paddling about in the shallows of religion, and just dipping your toes into it. Oh, that you would plunge into the river of life! How it would brace you! What tone it would give you! In for it. Be a Christian, out and out. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Death and life with Christ

To be dead with Christ is to hate and turn from sin; and to live with Him is to have our hearts and minds turned towards God and heaven. To be dead with sin is to feel a disgust at it. We know what is meant by disgust. Take the case of a sick man, when food of a certain kind is presented to him; consider how certain scents, or tastes, affect certain persons, and you will be at no loss to determine what is meant by disgust at, or deadness to, sin. On the other hand, consider how pleasant a meal is to the hungry, or some enlivening odour to the faint; how refreshing the air is to the languid, or the brook to the weary and thirsty; and you will understand what is implied in being alive with Christ. Our animal powers cannot exist in all atmospheres; certain airs are poisonous, others life giving. So is it with spirits and souls: an unrenewed spirit could not live in heaven, he would die; an angel could not live in hell. The natural man cannot live in heavenly company, and the angelic soul would pine and waste away in the company of sinners, unless God's presence were continued to it. To be dead to sin is to be so minded that the atmosphere of sin oppresses, distresses, and stifles us--that it is painful and unnatural to us to remain in it. To be alive with Christ is to be so minded that the atmosphere of heaven refreshes, enlivens, stimulates, invigorates us. To be alive is not merely to bear the thought of religion, to assent to its truth, to wish to be religious; but to be drawn towards it, to love it, to delight in it, to obey it.

Christ's resurrection not a return to the former life

No one who has studied St. Paul's Epistles can have failed to observe the distinction which they draw between the result of Christ's death and the effect of His resurrection. The death destroys death, the resurrection gives life. THE EFFECT OF HIS DEATH ON HUMAN NATURE WAS INSTANTANEOUS, ONCE AND FOREVER, AS DEATH ITSELF IS, THE FLEETING OF A BREATH IN A MOMENT, AND A PASSING OUT OF THIS WORLD FOREVER. But in His resurrection is the gift of life, eternal life, always to be enjoyed, and of infinite extension; not the mere extinction of darkness by a sudden gleam, but the dispersion of an equable, serene, and constant light. Christ's resurrection imparts a new life. Why? This I will try to answer.

WHEN HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, IT WAS NOT TO RETURN TO HIS FORMER LIFE. His nature entered into new relations with God and man; His body experienced a mighty change; it became a spiritual, glorified

body. This thought of Christ's onward passage to a new and more glorious life will add another sense to the words already so full of meaning, "Christ our Passover." Israel, saved by grace, rescued from Egypt, was cut off from his enemies, passed over the Red Sea, and onward to the promised land, fulfilling the prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called My son." Had the Jews, on the other hand, passed over the Red Sea, and on seeing their enemies perish in its waters, returned in safety to Egypt, would that have been a fulfilment of the promise? No more would our Lord's resurrection have satisfied God's design of mercy, had He merely risen to return to His former state. It would have been, according to the homely but lively image of an old divine, "As when a prisoner escapes from prison with a chain still hanging from his wrist, by which death, that hath still dominion over him, shall draw him back into his own hands."

Some reasons, founded on Scripture, why our blessed Saviour at his resurrection did not come back, but went onward to a new and glorified state. For instance, the scheme of redemption through Christ is this:--Man was created in a body free from pain, and not destined to die; but he sinned, and with sin came death; his body became liable to pain and death, as his soul to sin; and his condition of body and soul descended to his family. Christ Jesus came to restore man to his first estate; an estate in which originally death had no part. So He overcame death by giving up His life of His own will to it, instead of suffering it to be taken from Him by force; and while in the arms of death, of His own will He rose again; thence He became a new creature, the first of a new race, the second Adam, the spiritual forefather of another family, which He could not have been had He merely risen from death to come back to His former life. Death was instantaneous and for a moment, even while He drew His last breath and gave up the ghost. The resurrection is permanent, continuous, of infinite extension. Death is an interval in the economy of the world, as sin; life is eternal, as God. An army retreating before overwhelming numbers flies over a bridge, already mined: it is their means of rescue, their passage to a safe frontier: but they do not linger on it; their eyes are set upon the road beyond. Now it has saved them in their extremity, and they regard it forever with thankfulness and emotion; even its ruin and havoc is dear to their sight, for by it alone have they been saved--saved for victory and peace in the happy land, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

WHAT PRACTICAL EFFECT HAS THIS DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION UPON OURSELVES?

The same question may be, and by persons of a certain disposition is, often asked concerning every doctrine of the gospel. The great practical result of this teaching I believe to be, that Christians are made aware of the unspeakable blessings of their present communion with Christ. Their eyes are opened to the glory of the estate into which they have been translated. They cease to regard their religion as belonging to the past, and to the future, but learn to live upon its blessings in the present. Go to St. Paul: hear him, how he pours out of his abundant heart the utterance of his joy in the blessings shed by Christ upon His own. Do his words refer only to heaven to come? or are they not rather a description, for the most part, of the privileges of the Christian upon earth? Go to St. Peter, and mark the nobleness of his demeanour, the resolute will, the clear conviction, the happy assurance of his faith, as he appears in his later history, and in his own letters to the Church. How did this change of character arise? By his spiritual communion with Christ, and the sense of present enjoyment and power which the possession of such blessings ensures. Go to St. John: you see a Divine peace, a heavenly love that lies like moonlight upon the waves of a restless world. Is the expression of his face the look of one who merely lingers in the past, or looks to expected joy in a distant day to come? Is it not rather the peace of present joy, a reflection of the thought which his own pen has translated from the words of Christ, signifying the present sunshine of the Christian's life--"He is passed from death unto life"? "Forward!" is the Christian motto, founded on the Master's history. He went on through death to life, not backward, no, not even back to the life so pure and lovely as that which He lived on earth before He died; but forward to a more glorious estate, and in His glory we see the earnest of our inheritance. (Canon Furse.)

Christ dying for our sin, and living for our salvation

With the consciousness of past transgression must ever be associated in man's mind the anticipation of future punishment. Conscience almost forestalls the declaration of Holy Writ, "that he which doeth wrong shall suffer for the wrong." And reason, by itself, would tell us that as we cannot undo the error committed, so neither can we escape the penalty deserved. To be awakened, therefore, only under a dispensation of natural religion, would set before us judgment without mercy; but, happily for us, the awakening is under a dispensation of love that goes back to cancel the record of past sin, and goes forward to insure the constant communication of grace. Accordingly we have a Saviour who died once, and who ever lives. His death is adequate to the necessities of all who believe. Not only does the apostle declare that there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," but he asks the question, "Who is he that condemneth?" only that he may answer it by another, Is it not "Christ that died?"

Points to note:

1. *Life is a series of fresh beginnings. We cannot really undo the past, but still we have to do as much towards it as we can. Nothing is more natural than to say to ourselves, "Let me begin again; all this has been a very foolish mistake; I am very sorry that I took the turn I did." The beginning again is made impossible by the indelible character of what we have done. Besides the reputation we have acquired, there is the memory of our past life. If we could but wipe out the past, and retain the experience that we have gained without the pain and sin through which we gained it, that would, as it seems, wholly satisfy our need, and we could really commence afresh. We do not quite ask to be put on the same level as we might have reached if we had been more careful, more in earnest. What we ask for is to be enabled to fight the next battle without the burden of the past on us. We want, in short, to bury a great deal of the past, and not have its presence haunt us any more.*
2. *You are at full liberty to do all you ask. Let not the memory of sin haunt you with any such daunting terrors or shames. Bury the dead past with all its sins; on this one condition, that you are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." If you can learn from the past your weak points, your besetting sins; if you can gather out of it that which came from God, and that which you can use in the service of God, then, by all means, bury the rest, and defy its power; and live in the power of the Son of God.*
3. *It is true that every deed passes into the substance of our being, and we can never be after it what we were before. But for all that, the sins that we have committed must not be allowed to work upon us beyond the measure that God has assigned to them. You have sinned, and you cannot be what you were, nor what you might have been. But you still can be a servant of God, and even your past sins can become in His hands instruments of His will. The fall of David gave us the thirty-second Psalm; the fall of St. Peter fitted him to strengthen his brethren. The weakness of St. Paul taught us the lesson, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." There is even in evil a good element; and out of sin we may draw strength; and when we have drawn out all that may help us for the future, we need not fear to bury all the rest. Christ has expressly taken all that on Himself. We have, in the death and resurrection of Christ, the certain assurance that they who live unto Him need fear no condemnation.*
4. *Not with the past is our chief business, but with the present and the future. Let me then give a few cautions to those who really desire to reckon themselves to be dead unto past sins, but alive unto God. It is not at all uncommon to find that a high festival like Easter gives us a sense of recovered freedom, and a sort of confidence in our strength to win the battle. And then this excitement wears off, and we are not only back where we were before, but have the additional weakness caused by an additional defeat.*

You will not acquire a virtuous character by imagining that you have it. But there is another way in which it may be acquired. Not by any false reckoning about your actual character; but by a true reckoning about your actual condition. It is not by imagining I am a saint that I will become so; but by reflecting on the condemnation due to me as a sinner--on the way in which it has been averted from my person--on the passage by which, without suffering to myself, I have been borne across the region of vindictive justice, and conclusively placed on the fair and favoured shore of acceptance with God. The sense and the reckoning of all this may transform me from the sinner that I am into the saint that I am not. How shall I, now that I have been made alive again, continue in that hateful thing, of whose malignant tendencies in itself, and of whose utter irreconcilableness to the will and character of God, I have, in the death of my Representative and my Surety, obtained so striking a demonstration?

Mark, then, the apostle's receipt for holiness. It is not that you reckon yourself pure, but that you reckon yourself pardoned. And how it should fall with the efficacy of a charm on a sinner's ear, when told that the first stepping stone towards that character of heaven after which he has been so hopelessly labouring, is to assure himself that all the guilt of his past ungodliness is now done away--that the ransom of iniquity is paid, and that by Christ's death the penalties of that law he so oft has broken shall never reach him. It is this which brings home to the believer's heart the malignity of sin; it is this which opens to him the gate of heaven, and, disclosing to his view the glories of that upper region, teaches him that it is indeed a land of sacredness; it is this which inclines his footsteps along the path to immortality, which the death of Christ alone has rendered accessible; it is this which conforms his character to that of the celestial spirits who are there before him; for the will of Christ, whom he now loves, is that he should be like unto him; and the grateful wish and grateful endeavour of the disciple, draw forth from his labouring bosom that prayer of faith, which is sure to rise with acceptance, and is sure to be answered with power. (T. Chalmers, D. D.)

The benefit which we gain by thus reckoning ourselves

1. To believe that we can do a thing goes a long way in enabling us to do it. We may have the power, yet if we do not believe that we have it, we lose all its benefits. This belief does not make the power, but it makes it operative. In like manner, to reckon ourselves to be anything is a great help towards being it. No doubt if we reckon ourselves to be what we are not we are guilty of self-deceit and vanity. But in seeking to avoid this mistake we must not fall into its opposite by refusing to claim what it is our right and duty to claim.
2. As Christians we have a right to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, and the fact that we can claim it will go far to make the claim a reality. When we realise that our true position is that we are dead to sin we can face temptation with certainty of success. When we are assured that we are alive to God we can feel more confidence that He is living in us, and that His life will be perfected in us. Many a battle has been lost through fear which would have been won if the defeated army had only "reckoned themselves" equal to the conflict.

The unconverted man reasons--"Don't sin, because you may be found out." The devil strikes him down to the ground, and he says, "There is no life in him now." But how is it with the Christian when Satan endeavours to overcome him? He has God's armour on, and the sword of the Spirit, and he stands, because he is alive unto God.

In the days of King John of England the dignity of the English crown was brought to its lowest. King John submitting to the Pope as a vassal, and before the Pope's legate, taking off his crown, he handed it to the legate, who took it, put it down for a moment to show his possession of it, then handed it back to John to be held by him as a vassal of Rome. But this incident illustrates how we Christians can die to ourselves, yet be living for Christ. We take our life in our hands, and hand it over to God. But see, He lifts it again and holds it out towards us, saying, "Take this life and use it for Me, as My vassal, My servant." (J. Hamilton.)

Yielding to God

In 1845 Hugh Miller, as he tells us in his "First Impressions of England," visited Olney, the home of the poet Cowper. It was then a Babel of blackguards. He thought that all the bad-looking fellows in England had been drawn together there. Two prize fighters, named Bendigo and Caunt, were about to fight for the championship and three hundred guineas. After ninety-three rounds Bendigo beat. Hugh Miller saw him after the fight standing at the door of a whisky shop, with his face all bruised. What would Hugh have said if anyone had prophesied that that battered pugilist should be "born again" in his old age, and become an earnest student of the Bible, and worker for Christ? The idea of that man taking to the Bible! Not very likely. Like Sarah, he might have laughed at the prophecy. The scene changes. Thirty years have passed, and Bendigo is now about sixty years of age, and is in gaol for the twenty-seventh time. One Sabbath he hears in prison an address on David and Goliath. Bendigo listened, as the subject was just in his line. He understood it all: Goliath was just another Caunt. He forgot where he was, so interested was he; and at the close bawled out, "Bravo, I'm glad the little 'un won." He kept thinking about it in his cell, and decided that somebody must have helped the little one to kill the big giant. Next Sabbath the sermon was on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He fancied that the name of the third was Bendigo and said to himself, "If one Bendigo may be saved, why not another?" The subject for the following day was "The Twelve Fishermen"; again he was thoroughly interested, as he was a keen fisher himself. The next sermon was about the seven hundred left-handed men in the twentieth chapter of Judges; once more he is all ear, being himself a left-handed man. The Bible seemed to him a very strange book; it was all written for himself! Upon getting out of gaol he found his old companions waiting for him; but he declared that he would never enter another public house. He went to a mission meeting; and that very night, on his way home, he fell on his knees in the snow, and yielded himself to the Saviour. He had been in twenty-one matched fights, and had not been beaten in one; "but," said he, "when I came to the Cross of Christ, I was quite beat at the first round." He was then doing his desperate utmost to master the A B C, that he might be able to read God's blessed book; and he wound up, the reporter said, by declaring, "If God could save Bendy, He could save anybody." (J. Wells, M. A.)

As, then, Lazarus, or the son of the poor widow of Nain, or the saints which arose after the crucifixion of Christ, must have conceived, and felt, and acted, under impressions peculiarly their own; so those who are spiritually alive from the dead, who are quickened by the Divine Spirit, have conceptions, and feelings, and impressions, which distinguish them from the rest of mankind. "The law of the Spirit of Life" is imparted to us. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Sin may exist, but it cannot reign in the heart of a Christian. (See preceding context.) Christ has promised that this Spirit shall quicken life in us. Let us escape from the slavery of sin, and become the servants of righteousness, and "yield ourselves" unto Christ. "The love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you." A sense of the unspeakable mercy which our Lord has shown us begets such lively feelings of gratitude and love that to delight in that which God abhors becomes a thing impossible. Our heart burns, on the other hand, with holy fervour to render our redeemed life unto the Lord ([2Co 5:15](#)). Grace is the soul of the gospel: without it the gospel is dead. Grace is the music of the gospel; without it the gospel is silent as to all comfort. From the "A" to the "Z" in the heavenly alphabet everything in salvation is all of free favour, nothing of merit. "By grace are ye saved through faith,"

The slavery of sin unlawful--a ground of hope to the sinner

Luther's domestic, Elizabeth, in a fit of displeasure, left his service without notice. She subsequently fell into sin and became dangerously ill. Luther visited her, and, taking his seat by her bedside, she said, "I have given my soul to Satan." "Why," rejoined Luther, "that's of no consequence. What else?" "I have," continued she, "done many wicked things; but this is what most oppresses me, that I have deliberately sold my poor soul to the devil, and how can such a crime ever find mercy?" "Elizabeth, listen to me," rejoined the man of God. "Suppose, while you lived in my house, you had sold and transferred all my children to a stranger, would the sale or transfer have been lawful and binding?" "Oh no," said the deeply humbled girl, "for I had no right to do that." "Very well, you had still less right to give your soul

to the arch enemy; it no more belongs to you than my children do. It is the exclusive property of the Lord Jesus Christ; He made it, and when lost also redeemed it; it is His, with all its powers and faculties, and you can't giveaway and sell what is not yours; if you have attempted it, the whole transaction was unlawful, and entirely void. Now, do you go to the Lord, confess your guilt with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and entreat Him to pardon you, and take back again what is wholly His own. And as for the sin of attempting to alienate His rightful property, throw that back upon the devil, for that, and that alone is his." The girl obeyed, was converted, and died full of hope.

Poor, lost, unworthy sinners may have eternal life in Christ, and that as a gift from God, and not as something which is to be had in another world, but something which may be had in this. See you not what a grand, brave, and noble thing it is to live in this world knowing that we belong to God, that our bodies are His, our minds His, our souls His, and that, by His grace, we are using them to His glory? Then choose ye this day whom ye will serve. (J. Burbidge.)

Conclusion

It is not that you reckon yourself pure, but that you reckon yourself pardoned. And how it should fall with the efficacy of a charm on a sinner's ear, when told that the first stepping stone towards that character of heaven after which he has been so hopelessly labouring, is to assure himself that all the guilt of his past ungodliness is now done away--that the ransom of iniquity is paid, and that by Christ's death the penalties of that law he so oft has broken shall never reach him. It is this which brings home to the believer's heart the malignity of sin; it is this which opens to him the gate of heaven, and, disclosing to his view the glories of that upper region, teaches him that it is indeed a land of sacredness; it is this which inclines his footsteps along the path to immortality, which the death of Christ alone has rendered accessible; it is this which conforms his character to that of the celestial spirits who are there before him; for the will of Christ, whom he now loves, is that he should be like unto him; and the grateful wish and grateful endeavour of the disciple, draw forth from his labouring bosom that prayer of faith, which is sure to rise with acceptance, and is sure to be answered with power.

Acts 19:18-30: And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19: Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. :20: So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Such an instantaneous response is a grasp of faith. Not what we can do but what Christ can do. Romans Chapter 6 alone entirely justifies the expectation of living without sin through all-abounding grace. To teach that such an expectation is a dangerous error is to teach unbelief. Dangerous to expect salvation from sin? If so, what is the gospel worth? Some expect to have to count themselves not dead indeed unto sin, but somewhat alive to it, and in part alive to God through all their mortal life. It follows as quite a thing of course that expecting no complete victory over sin they will use no appropriate means, since faith stands foremost among those means, and faith must include at least a confidence that the thing sought is possible to be attained. An elder I knew rose in a meeting and told the Lord he had been living in sin thus far, and expected to go on in sin as long as he lived; he had sinned today and should doubtless sin tomorrow, and so on--and he talked as calmly about it all as if it were foolish to make any ado, as well as impossible to attempt any change for the better. How horrible! Suppose a wife should say to her husband, "I love you some, but you know I love many other men too." And yet this is not to be compared in shocking guilt and treason with the case of the Christian who says, "I expect to sin every day I live," with unmoved carelessness. You expect to be a traitor to Jesus each day of your life; to crucify Him afresh each day; and yet you talk about having a good hope through grace!

Improving the root of virtue

I will mention a very striking illustration of the difference between men's striving to improve one or another individual good quality, and the improving the common root of all of them, and thereby improving them all at once. The former is the way in which a human artificer works--a statuary, for instance, sometimes making a finger, sometimes a leg, and so on--while the latter, the workmanship of the Divine Artificer, is like the growth of a plant or a tree, in which

all the various parts are swelling out and increasing, or, as we term it, growing at the same time. (William Wilberforce.)

REPEAT:

"God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Psalm 51:10." God's forgiveness is declared, but it is more than that. It is reclaiming, transforming, and renewing. It is a clean heart created within us. This is not sanctification; it is part of forgiveness. Justification transforms at the same time it declares. Pardon is an inward transformation.

Speculations About Righteousness by Faith.--Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? Why try to work out every minute point, as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter? All cannot see in the same line of vision (MS 21, 1891). {6BC 1072.2-4}

Separating justification from sanctification is like separating the hint wheels from the front ones. The error good works will follow new birth and that's salvation is the greatest error to be ever met. This is like postponing salvation. While many will talk about sanctification being a lifetime matter which I agree 100%, I will readily admit that justification and sanctification has the same beginning. It's only a sanctified mind that consciously decides to plunge into the waters of baptism and declare to the world that Christ's grace is sufficient to save them there and then, yet this step is part of making just or new birth. This is just the beginning of a NEW LIFE.

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BLESSINGS