

## Free From Sin

Dr. J. L. Brasher

Such is the Scriptural phrase with which St. Paul sums up the sixth chapter of Romans. But is it not the most audacious statement that ever mortals have heard? No philosophy or cult or so-called ethnic religion proposes freedom from sin. But the Gospel with a boldness that is startling proposes that very thing. Sin is two-fold. In a sense it is manifold. But it can be included under two heads. Actual sin, and inbred sin. Actual sin is that which involves the will. It is something one wilfully, knowingly omits which the law requires. In the last analysis all actual sin is a sin of commission. It gets the consent of the will to disobey God. Such sin incurs guilt. Since man has freedom of choice and the power of the will to select and adopt his choice, his sinning is not compulsory, but volitional. If he could not avoid sinning he could not be justly held accountable for sinning, but he can avoid it. He can refuse it by the grace so freely offered, and the law acts upon that presumption, and divine justice proceeds upon that basis. Divine mercy rejected, divine law intelligently and wilfully violated, is the ground and reason of punishment. God's method of dealing with our guilty past is to forgive it. When the sinner, assisted by the Holy Spirit, both sees and loaths his wicked conduct in the pursuit of his sins, and when he so far repents of his sins as to take the same attitude toward them that God takes, and then believes in Christ alone for salvation from his sins, God freely forgives him all his sins that are past and justifies him from their penal consequences and he stands before God as though he has never sinned, through the merit of Jesus blood. He is saved from guilt and condemnation, and the dominion of sin is broken, a new life imparted by which he becomes partaker of the divine nature and is saved from the fearful fact of sin.

But all that has been wrought above is preparatory to the main objective, namely salvation of freedom from sin itself. Charles Wesley wrote, "Take away our bent to sinning, not our love of sinning as some would change it, for repentance takes away our love of sinning. That inward bias or bent to sinning is a symptom of a nature that is entirely and unmixed in its sin nature. It is not subject to the Law of God—neither indeed can it be. Wherever and in whomsoever found it is unmixed and unmitigated sin. Wounded, suppressed and denied its clamor by the renewed self and will it nevertheless remains unchanged in its nature or attitude toward God and holiness. It is unthinkable that the atonement can only reach sin after it becomes an act, and pardon it, and leave the root of the matter in us a constant menace to our moral safety. The atonement goes deeper than that. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. There is not only pardon for our guiltiness but cleansing for our depravity, our sin itself. The blood not only has merit to pardon the guilty, but it has power to cleanse the most inward realm of our selfhood from the presence and inbeing of sin. To pause at pardon in the process and progress of salvation is to stop at a half-way house on the way to full deliverance from sin. My text supposes not freedom only

## CAN YOU HEAR HIS VOICE?

How long has it been since God has spoken to your inner consciousness? How about the silence of God in your heart?

You know how it used to be when you prayed, when you testified, when you worshipped, when you went to secret prayer. You remember those days of your first love and how it burned with affection for Jesus. You remember how God led and burdened you in the revival for the lost.

How long has it been since you heard that Voice? How long since you felt that inner Presence, since you had a definite answer from heaven?

Life's crises will break in upon us some of these days and how dark and foreboding it will be if God answers no more. When distress and anguish rush in upon us; when loss and bereavement come; when the noonday has turned to midnight and when death is reaching for its prey. Oh, the distress if God is silent through it all.

In these days when everything is uncertain and there are dark forebodings of the tomorrow, does God speak? Can you hear His voice? Do you have that inward witness of the Spirit that all is well? If not, what will you do when the end comes and God is silent? Return to the Lord while you can. Never stop in your seeking after Him until He answers.

The dark and terrible days of the closing of his dispensation are upon us, but we will have peace if God speaks, directs and gives us an inward assurance that all is well. Mr. Wesley said in the final moments of his life, "Best of all, God is with us." Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." What a horrible and tragic climax to life to have come to its end with God silent.—Selected.

from sinning, but freedom from sin. Nothing short of that is full salvation. Nothing short of that gives us fitness for heaven. Nothing short of that releases the power of our selfhood to the full exercise of all our godlike powers and gives us freedom and enablement to love our God with all the soul, heart, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. Nothing else satisfies the Law or meets the requirements of divine justice, or brings us to the normality of our humanhood, or unifies our inward being, or measures up to God's standard for our hearts and life. It is the heart of the gospel, the brightest hope of humanity and the consummation of the purpose of an infinite God. Only when men's hearts are free from sin in this fashion shall Jesus see the travail of His soul in their case and be satisfied. Not heaven itself is the objective of this infinite scheme, but freedom from sin. Heaven is a result.

There is no where else for a holy soul to go, but heaven, and freedom from sin is holiness negatively stated. But the sin-free soul has the enablements of grace, the fulness of divine love, and the residency of the Holy Spirit as the positive side of its holiness. Freedom from sin! Let earth and heaven strike up their harps and shout their glad hallelujahs. The atoning blood is not shed in vain for men may be free from sin, and become servants to God and have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

## The Minimum Christian

Dr. J. B. Chapman

The idea that being a Christian is an exacting, sacrificing business, persists, no matter how urgently well-saved people say that grace abounds above the demands. When Dr. J. G. Morrison was pastor in North Dakota, he had an official member, a small town merchant, who always seemed to want to take his religion as one might a life insurance policy—maximum benefits for minimum premium. One cold winter day when Dr. Morrison was in the store and there were customers, the merchant said: "Pastor, I am not greatly concerned with our preaching of the high state of grace one may obtain by fullest effort. Here is the question I want you to answer for me: Just how much religion will one have to have to go to heaven?" Dr. Morrison, always quick on response, replied: "He will have to have enough to enable him to be happy in the company of Jesus on earth or in heaven."

None of us can conceive of one's being in heaven and yet being miserable because of his unfitness for the company he finds there. Acceptance of Dr. Morrison's minimum therefore seems inescapable. The idea that heaven is a city in which one can be happy just because of its appointments is too crass for any to entertain. It is the companionship of God and angels and holy men that makes heaven heaven, and going there makes heavier draft on transformation than upon transportation.

Professing Christianity and yet being unchristian in heart and in life is to bring reproach upon the Author of our faith. John put it this way: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." This is like saying we are wrong and yet are fellows in the same ship with Christ. But this is impossible. If we live in the company and favor of Christ we must be holy within and righteous without. This is not alone from the demands He makes, but from the fact that, like Peter of old, the unrenewed must inescapably say, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

But since judgment time will be too late for change in preparation and destiny, let us ask ourselves today, Do I maintain a state of grace that makes me happy in the presence and fellowship of the Holy Christ? When He looks upon me, do I weep like the backslidden Peter or do I rejoice like the holy Stephen? Is there anything I desire that He disapproves? Do I find fulness of joy in His presence and pleasures everlasting at His right hand?—American Holiness Journal.

### THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Some years ago a little church on the coast of England was ruined in a hurricane. Members of the congregation thought themselves unable to rebuild.

Then one day a representative of the British Admiralty came to the clergyman to ask if they intended to reconstruct the church. The clergyman explained why they could not do it. "Well" said the representative of the British Navy, "if you do not rebuild the church, we will. That spire is on all our charts and maps. It is the landmark by which the ships of the seven seas steer their course."

A true parable, that! Never more than now, when the souls of men need divine guidance, was the church's message needed.—Selected.