



OROSI  
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QUARTERLY

RIGHTEOUSNESS  
BY FAITH

QUARTER 2

A STUDY OF THE 1888 MESSAGE

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# **RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Salvation is simple. At least it should be. But the reality is that over the course of two thousand years different versions of the gospel have crept into the Christian faith.

Unfortunately, some of these different versions have been promoted by major figures in Christian history and have gained popularity. In fact, most Christians have a false, or at least an incomplete, understanding of the true gospel.

The purpose of this course is to learn the basic elements of the gospel directly from the Bible. The hope is that through this study the process of salvation will once again become clear and simple for the sincere Bible student.

Underlying all the beautiful truths of the Bible is the foundational doctrine of salvation: How God saves a sinner from guilt and condemnation, and how He prepares that sinner for eternal life in a new world where love and righteousness reign, and sin will never rear its ugly head again.

We must not be guessing as to how the true process of salvation works. We dare not take someone's word for how it works, no matter how influential or educated that person may be. We absolutely must know for ourselves what the Bible really teaches about salvation.

This is the Good News that the apostles preached, the Gospel of Jesus Christ! As Christians, we should know it, live it, and share it.

The best Bible text to introduce this study is found in Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

# **TWO DEFINITIONS OF SIN**

## **What is Sin? Part 1**

Before we begin our Bible study on Righteousness by Faith, we need to lay out some basic issues that will guide all the studies to come. The pivotal issue in any study of the gospel is the simple question: What Is Sin?

### **1. What did Jesus come to do? Matthew 1:21**

Through every device possible Satan has sought to make of none effect the sacrifice of the Son of God, to render his expiation useless, and his mission a failure. He has claimed that the death of Christ made obedience to the law unnecessary, and permitted the sinner to come into favor with a holy God without forsaking his sin. He has declared that the Old Testament standard was lowered in the gospel, and that men can come to Christ, not to be saved from their sins but in their sins. ST May 19, 1890

### **2. What is the most basic problem? Romans 3:23**

Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach. While "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:10. And only through Christ can immortality be obtained. Said Jesus: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." John 3:36. The Great Controversy 533

## 3. What is sin? 1 John 3:4

Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government. The Great Controversy 492

Two basic definitions have been given throughout the Christian era. Sin as Nature & Sin as Choice.

### Sin as Nature

Sin as Nature claims our condemnation (guilt) is the result of something called "Original Sin." Original Sin does not refer to the first sinful act committed by Adam in the Garden of Eden. It refers to the idea that the state in which we are born (after Adam's fall) makes us guilty of sin.

## 4. Because Adam sinned, are we born "sinners?" Ezekiel 18:19-20

It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parents' guilt, except as they participate in their sins. It is usually the case, however, that children walk in the steps of their parents. By inheritance and example the sons become partakers of the father's sin. Wrong tendencies, perverted appetites, and debased morals, as well as physical disease and degeneracy, are transmitted as a legacy from father to son, to the third and fourth generation. This fearful truth should have a solemn power to restrain men from following a course of sin. Patriarchs and Prophets 306

## Sin as Nature (Original sin):

- We are guilty or condemned because we have inherited sin from Adam.
- We are guilty or condemned because we are born as sons and daughters of Adam, who was the head of the human race.
- We are guilty or condemned because we are born into a situation in which we are separated from God.
- We are born apart from God, and that separation is our guilt.
- We are not even guilty for any of these things, but that we are born condemned as part of the fallen human race.

## Sin as Choice

With Sin as Choice we do not inherit guilt (no condemnation) for being born with a fallen nature. We inherit everything that Adam could pass on to his children, but we are not born as condemned sinners. Our fallen “sinful” nature does not make us guilty of sin, which must, by definition, be an act of our own choice.

## Sin as Choice:

- We are NOT guilty or condemned because we are born as sons and daughters of Adam, who was the head of the human race.
- We are NOT guilty or condemned because we are born with a fallen nature.
- We receive guilt ONLY when we choose to transgress God’s law

## 5. Does the bible teach is required for baptism? Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38

Repentance, faith, and baptism are the requisite steps in conversion.  
Letter 174, 1909

Sin as Nature comes to us with impressive credentials. It was developed very early in Christian history. From the fourth century it has been the accepted, orthodox belief of most Christians. This was even the accepted belief during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. This belief has become the dominant view of most churches today.

**6. Does the Bible teach that sin is our nature or a choice that we make? James 4:17**

What does the Lord say to those who have had light, and yet have failed to live in accordance with it? "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." There is a repentance of sin that needeth not to be repented of. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The Youth's Instructor February 15, 1894

**7. Are we held accountable for mistakes of which we are ignorant? Acts 17:30**

Our duties and obligations become more important as we obtain more distinct views of truth. Light makes manifest, and reproveth the errors that were concealed in darkness; and as light comes, the life and character of men must change correspondingly to be in harmony with it. Sins that were once sins of ignorance because of the blindness of the mind, can no more be indulged in without incurring guilt. When light, searched out carefully and prayerfully, is flashed upon the mind from the living oracles, individuals and churches are placed under greater responsibility than before. As increased light is given, men must be reformed, elevated, and refined by it, or they will be more perverse and stubborn than before the light came. RH September 3, 1889

# **RESULT OF SIN OR PENALTY FOR SIN?**

## **What is Sin? Part 2**

Before we can understand what sin really is in our personal experience, we need to look back to what happened when Adam and Eve sinned in the beginning of this world's history. What did God do in that emergency, when all of God's plans for the human race were being altered by the choices of the first beings that He created to populate Earth?

### **1. What was the penalty for Adam & Eve's sin? Genesis 2:17**

This is a puzzling verse, because we know that Adam and Eve did not die "in the day" that they ate the forbidden fruit.

The warning given to our first parents— "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17)—did not imply that they were to die on the very day when they partook of the forbidden fruit. But on that day the irrevocable sentence would be pronounced. Immortality was promised them on condition of obedience; by transgression they would forfeit eternal life. That very day they would be doomed to death. Patriarchs and Prophets 60

### **2. Why didn't Adam and Eve die immediately? Genesis 3:15**

Why was not the death penalty at once enforced in his case? — Because a ransom was found. God's only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race. There could have been no pardon for sin had this atonement not been made. Had God pardoned Adam's sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with a boldness that would have been without restraint. Remember how soon after the transgression of Adam the apostasy of his posterity became so marked



that God repented that He had made man. They followed the imaginations of their evil hearts, and the strivings of the Spirit were not heeded. They refused to be admonished. They had an abundance of blessings for their own enjoyment, and they soon forgot that they had forfeited immortality. RH April 23, 1901

The suffering and later death experienced by Adam and each of us was the result of sin, not the penalty for sin. The penalty for sin was paid at that moment by Jesus Christ through His promise to die in our place. Adam soon offered a lamb sacrifice for his sin, showing that he understood that the death penalty would be paid. But the result of Adam's sin – the curse of sin upon this world – has continued to be a part of the human experience ever since then to this very day.

### **3. Does death (a result of sin) imply guilt? Luke 13:1-5**

Here we see that death was not the direct result of their personal sins. They were not more guilty than others. Their death was not the penalty for their sins, but the result of sin, which has affected all who have lived on this earth.

These startling calamities were designed to lead them to humble their hearts, and to repent of their sins. The storm of vengeance was gathering, which was soon to burst upon all who had not found a refuge in Christ. Christ's Object Lessons 213

### **4. Does suffering (another result of sin) imply guilt? John 9:1-3**

### **5. Which kind of life do we have if we choose to accept Christ as our Lord and Saviour? 1 John 5:12-13**

## LESSON 2

April 6- April 12

6. **Since death and suffering are results of sin, and not the penalty for sin, when can we have everlasting life? John 5:24**

The atonement of Christ covers both of these consequences of sin, but in different ways. The atonement must deal with guilt by forgiving the sin, and it must deal with the evil results of sin by recreating and restoring what the curse of sin has damaged.

## SIN AS CHOICE

### What is Sin? Part 3

Is it really true that guilt is the result of one's personal choice and is not the result of our birth as children of Adam? Does the Bible teach that sin and guilt and condemnation come from choice, not from the fact that we are born into the fallen human family beset with the inherited results of sin?

#### 1. How do we know what sin is? Romans 7:7-9

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly believing and living to Christ, practicing the virtues of Christ. The law shows us the defects in our character, and then God promises that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." [Verse 9.] Ms25-1886

#### 2. What caused sin for the Jews of Christ's day? John 15:22-24

Said the angel: "If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin, for there is no light for them to reject." Testimonies for the Church vol. 1, 116

#### 3. When were the Pharisees guilty of sin? John 9:41

#### 4. What is the difference between sin and temptation? James 1:14-15

# LESSON 3

April 13- April 19

There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men; but if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence. RH, March 27, 1888.

We are not guilty sinners because we have these thoughts and feelings (temptations) as a result of inheriting a fallen nature. We are only contaminated with guilt when we choose to cherish or dwell upon these sinful thoughts.

## 5. For what sins are we held guilty? Ezekiel 18:20

## 6. How does God deal with sins of ignorance? Acts 17:30

Our condemnation in the judgment will not result from the fact that we have been in error, but from the fact that we have neglected heaven-sent opportunities for learning what is truth. Desire of Ages 489

Sin, at its root, is self-love. Thus, sin is always determined by our motives, by the choice to put self first.

- Sin is the choice to separate from God by putting self first.
- Sin is the choice to cherish evil.
- Sin is the choice to remain ignorant of God's will.
- Sin is the choice to misuse our abilities.
- Sin is the choice to neglect our responsibilities.
- Sin is always by choice.

## WHAT ABOUT ORIGINAL SIN?

### What is Sin? Part 4

If the Bible does not teach that we are sinners by nature, condemned and lost because we are born in a world of sin, why has the doctrine of “Original Sin” become the majority belief among Catholic and Protestant Christians?

As is true for most errors in doctrine, there are some texts which seem to support the doctrine of Original Sin. This final Lesson of Section A will look at these texts, to see if they really teach that we are born guilty and condemned.

#### **1. What separates us from God? Isaiah 59:2**

#### **2. How was David born? Does this text say we are born guilty and condemned? Psalm 51:5**

Notice that David does not say that he was a sinner from birth. Some Bible versions say this, but that is a theological misinterpretation, not a correct translation.

The event spoken of is the conception of David and not the birth of David, and David is not saying that he was born as a sinner but possibly that his mother was in sin when she became pregnant. It could very well be that she was sinning when she conceived him, and a case could be made that this verse is talking about the defilement of David’s mother – because she was previously the wife (or concubine) of a heathen king.

Notwithstanding mighty miracles did show forth themselves in him, notwithstanding he opened the eyes of the blind, and raised the dead to life, Christ suffered the hatred and abuse of the people he came to bless. They regarded him as a sinner, and accused him of casting out devils

## LESSON 4

April 20- April 26

through the prince of devils. The circumstances of his birth were mysterious, and were remarked upon by the rulers. They charged him with being born in sin. RH September 5, 1899

### 3. **What does Adam offer UNTO all men? What does Christ offer UNTO all men? Romans 5:18**

**Part A:** "Therefore as by (because of) the offence (sin) of one (Adam) judgment came upon (eis, or offered unto) all men to condemnation;" This portion of the text leads some to believe that all men are condemned (original sin).

**Part B:** "even so by the righteousness of one (Christ) the free gift came upon (eis, or offered unto) all men unto (eis, toward) justification of life (acquittal)." This portion of the text leads some to believe that all men are saved (universal legal justification).

### 4. **For how many did Christ die? 2 Corinthians 5:14**

All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property. All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day. Christ's Object Lessons 326.

### 5. **Are we justified before we believe? Romans 5:1, Galatians 3:24**

# **THE WORD BECAME FLESH**

## **How did Christ Live? Part 1**

Why should we study the subject of Christ coming into our world as a human being at this point? Because just about everything we need to know about salvation and righteousness by faith can be learned by a careful study of the life of Christ.

Most of the misunderstandings about how a person is saved can be cleared up easily by studying:

- How Christ came into our world.
- How He lived on a day-to-day basis.
- How He met the temptations of Satan.

So, we will study the most important subject in the world in the next four lessons.

- What kind of a man was Jesus?
- What nature did Jesus take?
- How was Jesus like us?
- How was Jesus different from us?
- Can we really live like Jesus did?
- Or is that totally impossible for us?

### **1. Who is Jesus? John 3:16-17**

Christ brought men and women power to overcome. He came to this world in human form, to live a man amongst men. He assumed the liabilities of human nature, to be proved and tried. In His humanity He was a partaker of the divine nature. In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." While the Son

of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense. Thus He stood in our world – the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race. ST August 2, 1905

## **2 How did the Son of God come into this world? Philippians 2:5-8**

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners. ST April 18, 1892

## **3 What did Jesus do on His own? John 5:30:**

## **4 How did Jesus do His miracles? John 14:10-12**

All the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, through the ministration of angels. Christ condescended to take humanity, and thus he unites his interests with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam here below, while his divinity grasps the throne of God. RH January 21, 1873

## **5 Did Jesus remember or know what He did in His previous existence? Luke 2:52**

The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from



such sources; for God was His instructor. The Desire of Ages 70

## 6. Did Jesus know the future? Mark 13:32:

But the Son of God was surrendered to the Father's will, and dependent upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. The Desire of Ages 208

## 7. What else did Jesus leave behind? Isaiah 53:2

When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or look, for no fear was in His heart. But He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the "Master of earth and sea and sky" that He reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, "I can of Mine own self do nothing." John 5:30. He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith—faith in God's love and care—that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God. The Desire of Ages 336

Jesus truly did "empty Himself," so that He could be just like you and me! He experienced our weakness and natural limitations. The great Creator became a limited human being, having to depend totally on His Father for everything He did. Not just in performing miracles, but also in living His sinless life.

## CHRIST TOOK OUR NATURE

### How did Christ Live? Part 2

Much debate has centered on whether Jesus took our fallen nature or Adam's nature before the fall. Even though this may seem like an unimportant point, it really has tremendous implications for the kind of life we can live today – day by day. We will be asking:

- What kind of human being was Jesus?
- What kind of inheritance did Jesus receive from Mary?
- Was He exempt from the laws of inheritance by which we are born?
- Did His nature pull Him toward sin like ours does?

#### 1. What flesh (nature) did Jesus take? Romans 8:3

It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life. The Desire of Ages 48

#### 2. In what "likeness" was Jesus made? Philippians 2:7

He was not only made flesh, but He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Lt 106, 1896

The same Greek word for "likeness" is used in both Romans and Philippians. Was Jesus made similar to human beings or did He become a real human being? We would agree that when Jesus came down to this

earth He became a real human being. If we are to interpret likeness in Philippians 2:7 as actually being human, then we must interpret likeness in Romans 8:3 as actually having our sinful flesh, our fallen nature.

“The emphasis is on Christ's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; What [Paul] means by it is that “God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin.” The Expositors Greek Testament, Vol. 2, pp. 645-646, Comments on Philippians 2:7

### **3. How did Jesus come to earth? 1 John 4:2-3**

### **4. In what did Jesus partake? Hebrews 2:14**

Christ did not make believe take human nature; he did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. “As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” RH April 5, 1906

### **5. How much like us was Jesus made? Hebrews 2:16-17**

Christ was not in as favorable a position in the desolate wilderness to endure the temptations of Satan as was Adam when he was tempted in Eden. The Son of God humbled himself and took man's nature after the race had wandered four thousand years from Eden, and from their original state of purity and uprightness. Sin had been making its terrible marks upon the race for ages; and physical, mental, and moral degeneracy prevailed throughout the human family. RH July 28, 1874

Christ knows by experience what it means to be tempted from within. We can rejoice that Jesus did not sidestep the ugliness of being born into a fallen world to fallen parents with a fallen nature.

## **NO SINFUL HABITS**

### **How did Christ Live? Part 3**

As important and comforting as it is to understand that Jesus took our fallen nature in His Incarnation, there is another aspect that we must study, if we are to correctly understand how He lived.

Jesus really was different from us in several ways, and we must understand these differences if we are to have a balanced picture of His Incarnation. Modern errors in the study of the Incarnation have usually been the result of overemphasizing either the ways in which Christ was like us, or the ways in which He was different from us.

The Son of God pre-existed His Incarnation long before the creation of Earth. God sent His only begotten Son from Heaven into this world to make known His love for fallen man.

- 1. How do we know that Jesus pre-existed his birth as a human? Hebrews 10:5-7, Psalm 40:8, John 17:3,5**
- 2. Who did God choose to be Jesus' mother? Luke 1:31**
- 3. Who was Jesus' Father? Luke 1:35**
- 4. Did Jesus ever sin? 2 Corinthians 5:21**

Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our

example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, "in all points tempted like as we are;" but as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer. Steps to Christ 93

## 5. How was Christ different than us?

Those who claim to know Jesus, if the claim is true, will reveal that they do know Him, that they have learned of Jesus to be meek and lowly of heart, pure, uncorrupted by sinful habits. When affliction comes upon them, they will think of Jesus, that the Captain of their salvation was made perfect through suffering (temptation). Lt 10, 1886

## 6. Did Jesus have an unfair advantage?

At every step it was a course of overcoming. Christ did not come to the earth as a king, to rule the nations. He came as a humble man, to be tempted, and to overcome temptation, to follow on, as we must, to know the Lord. In the study of His life we shall learn how much God through Him will do for His children. And we shall learn that, however great our trials may be, they cannot exceed what Christ endured that we might know the way, the truth, and the life. By a life of conformity to His example, we are to show our appreciation of His sacrifice in our behalf. Messages to Young People 16

We are not asked to live a sinless life from birth to death, as Jesus did. We are only asked to believe in Jesus, who He was, what He did, and what He can do for us. If we truly believe, we will demonstrate that faith by being born again of the Holy Spirit and allowing Jesus to be the Lord of our life in all that we do.

# **HOW WAS JESUS TEMPTED?**

## **How did Christ Live? Part 4**

On the basis of the previous three lessons, we can now come to some practical conclusions. We want to know what difference all of this makes for our daily lives. We are all tempted constantly, both by outward and inward temptations.

How does Jesus' life help us with our daily struggles? Here is where we can apply this study to the overall concept of Righteousness by Faith - how it really works.

### **1. How was Jesus tempted? Hebrews 4:15**

The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord "tellethe the number of the stars;" and yet "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:4, 3. "Come unto Me," is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer. The rest that Christ offers depends upon conditions, but these conditions are plainly specified. They are those with which all can comply. He tells us just how His rest is to be found. The Desire of Ages 329

**2. Was Jesus' will always the same as His Father's? Luke 22:42**

**3. Did He always do His Father's will? John 5:30, John 6:38**

Did Jesus Christ, the Majesty of heaven, have His way? Behold Him in travail of soul in Gethsemane, praying to His Father. What forces these blood drops of agony from His holy brow? O, the sins of the whole world are upon Him <because the human agents wanted to [do] as Satan proposed for them to do, and Jesus suffered for their sins.> It was separation from the Father's love that forced from His pale and quivering lips the cry, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." [Matthew 26:39.] Three times was the prayer offered, but followed by: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." [Luke 22:42.] This must be our attitude: "Not my will, but thine, O God, be done." This is true conversion. Lt 27, 1892

Jesus went through the depths of temptation to show us a way out of failure and despair – how to overcome sin and live a victorious life. He came to live at our level to give us hope. Because of His victory over His own nature and will, He can help us with our identical struggles.

**4. How are the just or righteous to live? Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38**

**5. Should we be fearful or timid when we practice the gospel? Hebrews 4:16, 2 Timothy 1:7**

After pointing to Christ, the compassionate intercessor who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," the apostle says: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace." Hebrews 4:15, 16. The throne of grace represents the kingdom of grace; for the existence of a throne implies the existence of a kingdom. In many of His parables Christ uses the expression "the kingdom of heaven"

to designate the work of divine grace upon the hearts of men. The Great Controversy 346

Because Christ took our fallen nature, and was tempted in all points as we are, all fear is gone, and we can know that there is power (the indwelling Spirit of Christ) for us to overcome all of our seemingly impossible problems.

## **6. What powers did Jesus exercise to which we have no access? John 14:11-12**

He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us.  
Desire of Ages 24

The power of a perfect (sinless) nature is not offered to us (in this life). For Adam (before his fall) it was natural to do right. For us it is natural to do wrong. If the power of Adam's unfallen nature had been possessed by Jesus, that would have been a mighty power that we do not possess.

If Jesus had lived a sinless life on any level other than our fallen level, Satan's accusations would never have been proven false.

In Christ, divinity and humanity were combined. Divinity was not degraded to humanity; divinity held its place, but humanity by being united to divinity withstood the fiercest test of temptation in the wilderness. The prince of this world came to Christ after His long fast, when He was an hungered, and suggested to Him to command the stones to become bread. But the plan of God, devised for the salvation of man, provided that Christ should know hunger, and poverty, and every phase of man's experience. He withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. Man may become a partaker of the divine nature; not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the source of His power, that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities. Selected Messages Book 1, 408



## LESSON 8

May 18-May 24

### 7. Are there temptations, habits, or sins too difficult to overcome? Mark 10:27, 1 Corinthians 10:13

But with every temptation, we have the promise of God that there shall be a way of escape. Why, then, are so many overcome? – It is because they do not put their trust in God. They do not avail themselves of the means provided for their safety. The excuses offered for the gratification of perverted appetite are therefore of no weight with God. ST August 10, 1915

Our Saviour and Lord is both our Substitute and our Example. He gives us the assurance of salvation by providing both the forgiveness of our sins (past) and the power to overcome sin (now). He has demonstrated how we can overcome our tendency to rebel against God's will and live a sinless life in harmony with God by surrendering our will to Him. Jesus proved that with God the impossible is possible.

# **IS PERFECTION REALLY POSSIBLE?**

## **What is Biblical Perfection? Part 1**

Perfection can be a troublesome word. What does it really mean? What doesn't it mean? Some believe that it is spiritually unhealthy to emphasize the subject of perfection. But perhaps part of the problem is that we have not defined our terms carefully.

Let us take a close look at this much-avoided subject to see if it is as fearful as it seems. Perfection has four different meanings, which may be part of the reason it is misunderstood.

### **1. How consistent is God? Malachi 3:6**

I say in the name of the Lord, Give your attention to this Word. The Lord has ever existed in perfection from all eternity. He has been ever what He now is, "I am that I am;" "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." [Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 57:15.] This is His title. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Psalm 90:2. "I am the Lord, I change not." Malachi 3:6. With Him is no variableness or shadow of turning. Ms180-1897

### **ABSOLUTE PERFECTION**

### **2. How is Jesus described? Hebrews 13:8**

Jesus never changes. Since Jesus is described in the same way as God, it is clear that He shares in this unique attribute of God.

This is ABSOLUTE PERFECTION. It means they will never make a mistake or a misjudgment. Absolute perfection describes God the Father

and His Son, Jesus Christ, alone. Absolute perfection is never possible for created beings – not for human beings and not for angels.

Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Our only hope is perfect trust in the blood of Him who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. ST December 30, 1889

## NATURE PERFECTION

### 3. How was man created? Genesis 1:27, 31

Adam listened to the specious sophistry of Satan, and received it as truth. He had originally the wonderful gift of a sinless nature. But he listened to the falsehoods of the one who fell from his first estate. Satan exercised his hypnotism upon him, and Adam, listening to him, sinned, and thus opened the door through which the enemy could ever gain access to human beings. Adam and Eve lost the spiritual life that would have been theirs by continual endowment. Letter 83, 1905

This is NATURE PERFECTION. Man's very nature was in complete harmony with God and the rest of creation. His mind and body worked perfectly together. He did not have to fight discordant feelings and emotions. His impulses and drives were in balance and in complete agreement with God's laws. Everything worked properly, perfectly!

### 4. What will happen to us at the resurrection? 1 Corinthians 15

At His coming the righteous dead will be raised, and the righteous living will be changed. "We shall not all sleep," says Paul, "but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and

this mortal must put on immortality." The Great Controversy 322

## CHARACTER SURRENDER

### 5. How much of our heart does God ask for? Matthew 22:37

But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Selected Messages Book 1, 366

### 6. How does the Bible describe this process? Mark 4:28-29

The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges. Christ's Object Lessons 65

## CHARACTER MATURITY

### 7. What potential does God see in us? Ephesians 4:13

None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian

character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory. Acts of the Apostles 531

CHARACTER MATURITY is simply the process of the gospel seed planted in our hearts that germinates, develops, and ripens in our individual lives. We are becoming mature in Christ when we are no longer choosing to sin against God.

If Jesus lives within us - accomplishing the work of justification and sanctification - then He controls our lives, and we no longer sin, because Christ "in you" does not sin.

### **8. What can God accomplish in us? 1 John 3:9, Philippians 1:6**

If a man is born of God, he will respect the principles of the divine government, and will not wilfully transgress the law of God in thought, or word, or action. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." Jesus prayed that his disciples might be sanctified through the truth, and added, "Thy word is truth." ST April 30, 1896

God's plan is that we do not sin, and the new birth makes it possible for us to stop sinning. This concept can be expressed in a clear and simple way: Christ in -- sin out. Sin in -- Christ out. We cannot have both Christ and sin reigning on the throne of our life at the same time. Christ will not accept a divided heart.

Christ overcame the promptings of His fallen nature by depending on the Holy Spirit of God. Since the same power is available to us, PERFECTION in Christ is possible for us here and now.

# **THE PROMISE OF VICTORY OVER SIN**

## **What is Biblical Perfection? Part 2**

It is at this point that we need to have that faith, that complete trust in God that will believe what God says even though it sounds impossible. We know enough about our weakness and our failures. We want to know more about God's promises and His power and faithfulness to keep them.

### **1. What can Christ keep you from doing? Jude 1:24**

He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that he can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him an entrance into the kingdom of God. RH March 10, 1904

### **2. How much can we really do? Philippians 4:13**

### **3. What else does God promise? 2 Peter 2:9**

### **4. What has God promised when we are tempted? 1 Corinthians 10:13**

Means are provided by which temptation may be resisted and overcome. The Word of God is an educating power. My brethren and sisters, Gain a knowledge of the Word, and learn why God would have you resist temptation. The promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. He is faithful that hath promised. He will not suffer any obedient soul to seek His help in vain. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and He will effectually restrain the power of the enemy that may come upon us through human agencies. Lt 86, 1907.

## 5. In whose steps are we called to follow? 1 Peter 2:21-22

The heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action. To everyone engaged in this work Christ says, I am at your right hand to help you.

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. Christ's Object Lessons 333

## 6. Is overcoming sin really possible? Revelation 3:21

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." These words are true. **Exact obedience** is required, and those who say that it is not possible to live a perfect life throw upon God the imputation of injustice and untruth. RH February 7, 1957

Only overcomers will be in heaven. The model of overcoming is Christ, and we can overcome sin just as He overcame it, because He does it for us when He is abiding in us. The Bible is full of these promises, and we must not ignore them in an attempt to defend some remaining sins in our lives.

# **PRACTICAL VICTORY OVER SIN**

## **What is Biblical Perfection? Part 3**

While definitions are very important in understanding perfection, it may be even more important to search the Bible for realistic, practical ways of experiencing what the Bible promises.

### **1. Where must we abide to avoid sin? 1 John 3:6**

Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." "The just shall live by faith." Colossians 2:6; Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him—by giving and taking. You are to give all,—your heart, your will, your service,—give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all,—Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper,—to give you power to obey. Steps to Christ 69

### **2. What must we do with our thoughts? 2 Corinthians 10:5**

God wishes us to have the mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and faculties given to man. Of ourselves, we are not able to bring the purposes and desires and inclinations into harmony with the will of God; but if we are "willing to be made willing," the Saviour will accomplish this for us, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5. Acts of the Apostles 482



### 3. What happens when we walk in the Spirit? Galatians 5:16

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Galatians 5:16-26. The Watchman December 4, 1906

### 4. How does the Old Testament describe the work of Christ's Spirit in us? Ezekiel 36:25-27

The work presented in these words of the prophet is full of comfort to those who are laden with sin, and describe the very work that must be done for every soul who will enter the kingdom of heaven. This will be done for all who sincerely seek after God. Without this special work, we cannot keep the commandments of God, and since the promises of God are so abundant, there is no excuse for any of us if we continue in sin. The promises are, "A new heart will I give you;" "I will put my Spirit within you." This provision is made for us through the merit of Christ's righteousness: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." Those who experience the change spoken of in these words will find that their restlessness and disquietude are all taken away, and they will find rest unto their souls in Christ. His merit, his righteousness, are imputed to the believing soul, and the believer has inward peace and joy in the Holy

Ghost. Trusting in Christ, he dwells upon pleasant things of a spiritual character, and his great desire is to keep the heart right with God. Through this new motive, he will by faith in Christ “keep the heart with all diligence,” realizing that “out of it are the issues of life.” The divine excellences of the promises of God will furnish a continual feast to his soul, and by faith he looks up, exclaiming with joy, “The Lord, my righteousness.” *The Youth’s Instructor* May 18, 1893

**5. How is it that we can be separated from God? Isaiah 59:2**

**6. Is there still hope if we choose to sin? 1 John 2:1**

Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 9:24; 7:25. *The Great Controversy* 482

**7. What was King David called in the Bible? 1 Samuel 13:14**

But the history of David furnishes no countenance to sin. It was when he was walking in the counsel of God that he was called a man after God’s own heart. When he sinned, this ceased to be true of him until by repentance he had returned to the Lord. The word of God plainly declares, “The thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the Lord.” 2 Samuel 11:27, margin. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 722

## **THE FINAL GENERATION**

### **What is Biblical Perfection? Part 4**

If we are alive when these final events happen, then it is important to know what the characteristics of the final generation will be, and most importantly, how we can be on God's side when the world, as we know it, comes to its tragic end.

#### **1. What happens before Jesus comes? Revelation 22:11-12**

When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12. The Great Controversy 490

#### **2. What happens just before the coming of Christ? Daniel 12:1**

#### **3. What else happens during this time? Revelation 15:8**

Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and men, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath on those who have rejected His truth. I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other; also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting

angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out. Life Sketches 116

## **4. What else does Michael do at the close of probation? Revelation 8:3-5**

I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, "It is done." And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Early Writings 279

## **5. What is preventing all this from happening immediately? Revelation 7:1**

## **6. Why are the angels holding back the winds? Revelation 7:2-4**

Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God who sat on the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, "Hold, Hold, Hold, Hold until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads." Revelation 7:3.

I asked my attending angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth, and that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go, and while they had

started to let the four winds go the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant who were not all sealed, then He raised His hands to the Father, and plead with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels, and bid them hold until the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads. Ms 2, 1849

### **7. How does God describe this group? Revelation 14:1**

### **8. What is their spiritual experience? Revelation 14:5**

Let every one who has indulged in this sin repent of it, confess it before God, and put it far from him. In speaking foolish words you have dishonored the name of Christ, for you have misrepresented Him in character. No word of guile was found in His lips, no word of prevarication or falsehood. The people that are described as making up the 144,000 have the Father's name written in their foreheads, and of them it is said, "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." [Revelation 14:5.] If they had been speaking foolish, senseless, false words, they would not have been found without guile, and without fault before the throne of God. Lt2-1895

If God is really waiting for a special group of people before He initiates the final events of earth's history, shouldn't we be spending all of our time and energy learning how to be a part of that special group? This needs to be our number one priority, with all the other issues a distant second in our lives. Let us strive with all our hearts to be part of God's 144,000.

## **WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?**

### **What is Biblical Perfection? Part 5**

Sin is not just about you and your salvation. Your sin dishonors God and supports Satan in his accusations against God – against His character, against His law of love, and against His mercy, justice, and the power to save you from sin.

We play a critical part in the great struggle between Christ and Satan. Satan has claimed that God's law is unfair: angels should not have to obey it, and beings with fallen natures are not able to obey it.

Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus, charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Signs of the Times, Jan. 16, 1896

- 1. Can God be trusted? Romans 3:4**
- 2. How will the remnant and its sanctification vindicate name of God? Ezekiel 36:23-28**

Of the Spirit Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me." The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people. Desire of Ages 671

If there ever was a people in need of constantly increasing light from heaven, it is the people that, in this time of peril, God has called to be the depositaries of His holy law and to vindicate His character before the world. Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 746

## 3. What are the characteristics of the final generation? Revelation 12:17

In this day, when we are bidden to call attention to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, we see the same enmity as was manifested in the days of Christ. Of the remnant people of God it is written, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. Desire of Ages 398

## 4. What does God ask or require of His Remnant? Romans 12:1-2

Our Saviour does not require impossibilities of any soul. He expects nothing of His disciples that He is not willing to give them grace and strength to perform. He would not call upon them to be perfect, even as His Father is perfect, if He had not at His command every perfection of grace to bestow on the ones upon whom He would confer so high and holy a privilege. Ms 148, 1902

## 5. How powerful is God's transforming grace? Colossians 1:27-28

## 6. Will perfection of character happen on its own or will it require effort on our part? Philippians 3:13-15

But Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected. Christ's Object Lessons 331



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