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THE "OLD MAN,"

THE "NEW MAN,"

"I."

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"If, as Scripture teaches, our old man is dead and crucified with Christ, what is it in me that needs purifying and cleansing? The old man is dead, and the new man cannot sin, and thus needs no improvement; what then remains?" This was the question of a sincere Christian lately, and, although it may not appear to be a very intelligent inquiry, it is yet a question which exists in many minds.

Without doubt there is much confusion of thought amongst Christians, as to the difference between the "old man," and the "new man." There is a proneness to dissect self; so to divide self into an old man which is to be reckoned dead, and a new man which is God's creation in Christ, complete and perfect, that the individual "I" is lost sight of. Thus the presence of evil, and conflict in the heart, are unaccounted for, and cause difficulty and distress.

But first of all the heart must be established with grace; rooted and grounded in love. A soul really happy in the love of God, will never be much troubled with these questions. Though they may not be able to explain the force of Scripture terms, yet, knowing in whom they have believed, they can afford to leave with

God the questions which they cannot answer, and be content that He, who has bestowed such manner of love upon them, will make good in them, and explain to them, His words and ways, in His own good time and manner. Still some souls are troubled, others perplexed, and many that are true-hearted, mistake and misuse Scripture expressions.

The believer is looked at in the word of God in a triple aspect, in each of which, however, he is spoken of by the personal pronoun "I."

First, as a man — an individual — whether sinner or saint, having an individuality, and responsibilities; the latter of course greatly differing, whether as sinner or saint.

Secondly, as a sinner whose responsibilities have been assumed by, and imputed to, Christ upon the cross, and the punishment of whose sins, and the condemnation of whose self, have been borne in the person of the Lord Jesus, the sinner's substitute.

Thirdly, as the possessor of eternal life, the gift of God, and thus a new creation in Christ Jesus, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and so able, and responsible, to live to God as a saint, and as a son, in the same scene in which he once lived as a sinner.

Man, whether sinner or saint, is an individual being, having an identity of his own. Each man and woman lives, breathes, eats, drinks, loves, hates, sins, and acts for himself or herself, and for no one else. Each then has his or her separate individuality, which cannot be shifted to, or shared by, another; as it is

written: "Every one of *us* must give account of *himself* to God." This then is man's state, and thus each man stands before God. When the soul of man is brought into God's presence, this individuality and the responsibility attaching to it are felt. From fallen Adam downwards, it is the same tale. "*I* was ashamed," was the first expression of the first sinner; and, in every fresh case of a soul brought into the light of God, will there be the same expression, though varying in terms, of this sense of individuality, of responsibility, and of failure.

Man's individuality seems to be so self-evident, as hardly to need dwelling on; but it is important when considered in connection with the Christian's standing and state before God. It is always recognized in Scripture, whether as a person or persons. Thus, "*I*" and "*me*," "*we*" and "*us*," are words repeatedly used to describe both sinner and saint; both what the Christian was, is, and will be. For instance, "*We . . . once children of wrath even as others.*" "*Behold now are we the sons of God.*" "*We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*" Here are the past, present, and future of believers as individuals, once sinners, now saints and sons, and to be inheritors of eternal glory.

There is great reality and comfort, to the believing heart, in this recognition of an identity never to be lost, and to be assured that our transfer to a scene of glory, with spiritual and bodily capacity to enter into and enjoy it, though it must involve unspeakable changes

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in the condition, and circumstances, will not involve a change of personality;—that the "I"—who once was of the world, a sinner—who have been brought to know and taste the grace of God, and love of Christ, and to prove them in the path of the saint and of the servant through the world—shall still live on in the glory, with the full remembrance and experience of the past, to enhance the apprehension of the then glorious and eternal present. Thus the saint's hope is, not to be transformed into an angel, or any other being, but, to be with Christ, a man in the glory of God for eternity.

How the sense of this should incite as to redeem the present time, and to "lay up in store a good foundation for the time to come," that so "an entrance may be ministered to us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Indeed it is a solemn thought, that "I" live for ever; that my individuality, which began at my birth, runs on into the eternity of God.

But then it may be asked who is the "old man," who is the "I" who have been crucified with Christ?

The expression "old man" occurs but three times in Scripture. In Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 22. and Col. iii. 9. Thus: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Again: "That ye (have) put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the

deceitful lusts." And again: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." In each of these cases the old man is only spoken of as in the past; as having been crucified, that is judged in Christ's judgment; or "put off," that is set aside by the Christian, both by faith and in practice.

The old man thus expresses the believer in his past state as a responsible sinner, which state has been met and judged in the death of Christ upon the cross. It is, in fact, me in my state and responsibility as a sinner, for whom Christ died, and which state and responsibility the blessed Lord assumed, and was condemned for in death. It is therefore of the past, and not of the present, and it is the "old man" because it is of the past; and the state and responsibility attaching to it have in the counsel of God, passed away, as it is written: "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God." It is not me, the person, in my individuality, for in that sense I have not died; but it is in that state and character of responsibility which have been met and answered by the death and cross of Christ. It is a figure of speech, if we may so say, expressing that Christ has so fully accomplished deliverance for me by His death, that I can identify myself, *by faith*, with Him upon the cross, and see, in His death, my own death as a responsible sinner before God. In the same sense it can be said, "I am crucified with Christ." "The world is crucified

unto me, and I unto the world." That is "I" and "me," in my responsible character as a sinner for whom Christ died. So also: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh;" that is, by faith, they see and acknowledge the execution of God's judgment and sentence upon them as men in the flesh, in the cross of Christ.

But it is by faith, and not in fact, that the believer has died. Actually, it is Christ who has died under judgment, and not the believer; and the believer, "I," lives in very deed, in the very body, the very scene, and generally in the very outward circumstances in all of which he was as a sinner. Yet by faith he can look back to the cross, and say: "Our old man has been crucified with Him.

This gives not only rest of heart, but a true sense of power against sin and the fear of death. It is not that I am as yet out of the scene and circumstances of sin and conflict, but that, by faith, I have learned in this scene the value before God of the death of Christ for me as a sinner, and thus know, not only peace with God, but the moral power, and victory, which the identification of myself, as a responsible sinner, with Him in death, can alone give to the soul. Therefore when sin is presented, the question and answer are: "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" for the "I"—the sinner who sinned—I may reckon dead. If the fear of death, as the penalty of sin, be pressed upon the soul, and the heart ask: "Who shall deliver me?" it can also reply: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," for

I know that the bitterness of death, as the penalty of sin, passed on Him.

Again, we repeat, it is not that there is no present suffering, no conflict, no sin, no death, but that, through faith in the death of Christ, the believer is morally superior to all these things, and can with joy revert to the great fact, that "our old man has been crucified with him." God says so, and faith lets God be true, and adds its "Amen."

Now while the term "old man" thus expresses faith's apprehension of the manner in which God has dealt with us in our state and responsibility as sinners, the expression "new man" shews what we have received as newly created in Christ.

Directly that He, in whom was life, came into this world, and took up His service amongst men, so soon did He declare, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It was the will of the Father who sent Him, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have everlasting life, and be raised up at the last day. That as Adam brought in death through sin, so Christ should bring in life, and a life not liable to sin or death.

Man's life having been forfeited by sin, he needs a new creation, an everlasting life not liable to forfeit, if he is to see and enter the kingdom of God. Though Christ by His death has delivered the believing man from his state as a responsible sinner before God, and its consequence in death and judgment, and as identi-

fied with Christ, he has been freed from sin, and death in its full sense, yet does man need a new creation—to be born anew—that he may be fitted to dwell in, and enjoy the glory of God. "Whosoever believeth on the Son of God, hath (this) everlasting life." It is the gift of God to the believing sinner. "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Wherefore," it is written, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." Not merely that he believes that he is so, or that he is morally changed, but he *has* life, a new spiritual life, bestowed as really as he had natural life bestowed at his birth into this world.

As of old, the question is still asked: "How can these things be?" But why should it be thought strange or impossible with God, in the exercise of His grace and power, to give life from a new source, even as He gave the old. As possessors of life, of which God is the giver, and Christ raised and glorified the source, the believer is a "new creation;" as "having put on the new man which according to God is created in righteousness and true holiness," he is to walk, not merely according to the measure of a justified and forgiven man of the old creation, but according to the measure and standard of Christ, the Head of the new creation, in whom that life is, at the right hand of God. Its source and its proper circumstances are heavenly, and suited to the highest glory of God, and, as having it and knowing it, the

believer is called to live and act down here, an imitator of God as a dear child, walking "in love, even as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

Now it will thus be seen, that neither the crucifixion of our old man, nor the putting on of the new man, abolishes our own constant individuality, nor our present responsibility. The believer dwells in the same body, and moves in the same world, as before his conversion. Faith, and faith alone, makes good to him through the word of God, the blessings and the wonders of God's grace. He looks back to the scene of judgment where the just One was made sin for us the unjust. He looks up, and he knows that the same One now lives for Him at God's right hand. He looks on with the conviction and confidence that He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, and that He will take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. He knows that God has given to him eternal life, and more, the earnest of the Spirit, that he may know the things so freely given to him of God. Thus walking by faith, he is conscious of the power of the divine life within, drawing out his heart to God, and towards His people, and so can say: "We love him because he first loved us." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The Spirit of God in him and with him makes him a temple of God, and leads him in God's ways. Now he walks in the Spirit he does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, for as the flesh lusts against the Spirit,

so the Spirit also against the flesh.

The believer thus, in his own person, is the scene of a conflict, in which the divine nature, and the spiritual, is overcoming, and does overcome the natural and sensual. His individuality remains unchanged, and his humanity in all its aspects, whether good or bad, remains with him; but it is his privilege to look back to the time past of his life with all its sins, as of the past indeed. He can by faith reckon himself as a sinner to be dead with Christ. and that all his sins and responsibility as a man before God, were ended at the cross. He knows also the presence and power of the Spirit of God, as the strengthener of that new and eternal life which God has given him in Christ. By this Spirit he mortifies the deeds of the body. He presents his body a living sacrifice, He has purified his soul by obeying the truth. His heart has been purified by faith. Abiding in Christ he purifies himself. Thus his own very body, soul, and heart are brought under the present influence of the Spirit of God.

It is sometimes asked, is it the old heart that is spoken of? But, we reply, Scripture never speaks of the Christian as having two hearts. What it does teach is, that the energy and fruit of the divine nature are to be expressed by the believer, in and through the very capacities, and in the very person, in which he formerly lived and walked as a sinner, for "the body is for the Lord." So the mouth which was full of cursing and bitterness, is now filled with the sacrifice of praise; the

heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, is now the dwelling place of Christ by faith; the feet once swift to shed blood, are now shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; the hands which stole, now steal no more, but labour, working the things that are good, that the believer may have to give to him that needs it. Christ is to be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. The new power is put into the old vessel, there to work in the overcoming and destruction of all evil lusts, and in the subjugation of the will of the man, so as to bring the whole spirit, and soul, and body of the believer into subjection, and preserve them blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. His power to overcome is by faith in these truths of the death of the old man, and the existence of the new man before God. Because God says he is "dead," he mortifies, that is, he puts to death practically, everything that is inconsistent with the death and cross of Christ. Because his life is hid with Christ in God, he seeks the things which are above, and lives on the earth as a heavenly man, bringing God's thoughts and principles to bear on every detail of his daily life. He remembers that death passed upon the blessed Lord, when He took the sinner's place in judgment, and so by faith he passes the same judgment on himself, and on all his past state and circumstances as a sinner, and on every present movement of, or appeal to, the flesh.

This, and nothing short of this, is Christianity, and it is in the individual, personal, Christian,

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as indwelt and led by the Holy Ghost, that God is to be glorified in this world. In resurrection glory the believer will receive a body like unto Christ's glorious body, but, for the present, God's purpose is to have a people so living in the power of the divine life, as that He may be glorified in their bodies, which are God's. Such an one can say: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Here then are the three "I's." "I," the old man crucified with Christ; "I," the new man, Christ who lives in me. "I," the individual who lives in the flesh, but lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*. Mark, He loved *me*, not the old man, nor the new man, but *me*, the individual, once a sinner, but now, by His love, constrained to live not to myself, but to Him who died for me and rose again.

There are two truths connected with the new man which must be distinguished: firstly, the fact that the believer has eternal life in Christ, the gift of God; secondly, the moral effect of this truth upon his existence in the world. So, firstly: "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" and then, next, says Paul: "To me to live is Christ." He lived not his own selfish life down here, but was for another, even Christ, who was raised from the dead. So also John: "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he

walked."

Finally then, the individual Christian is thus responsible, and has power conferred in order, to reckon himself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God. As in Adam he has died, so in Christ has he been made alive. Yet it is himself who to faith is dead, and himself who, through grace, is alive to God. Nothing is more mischievous than to attribute all evil found within to the old man, as though the believer himself were not responsible to maintain holiness within or without. Moral responsibility is thus lowered, and there is a danger of accepting with more or less complacency, and as an inevitable evil, the working and fruit of sin in the members, instead of judging and mortifying it in the power of the Spirit of God.

Strictly speaking, the old man has no present existence. It is a term, as we have before said, to express the past state of responsibility met in the death of Christ. It is the believer, "I," who lives still; and the believer in Christ, not merely his "old man," can sin, but is *not* to do so. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not." Christ's grace, and the power of the Holy Ghost, if counted on, are the believer's sufficiency. "Sin shall not have dominion over" him, and he is not to let it "reign in his mortal body." But, if he find sin there, he must not plead for it in excuse that it is his "old man," but must honestly confess that it is *himself*; and, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and

just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But, as we have before said, he may as a resource and motive against its admission, by faith turn back to this blessed fact, that "our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

The answer then to the original question is, that "I" remain. I, who once identified with Adam, was under sin and under judgment, now am identified with Christ, and, through His death and resurrection, delivered from the past state and responsibility, and brought into a new state to which neither sin, nor death, nor judgment pertain. In the path down here I must act according to one relationship or the other, either as a child of Adam, or a man in Christ and son of God; and by faith it is my power and privilege, through death and resurrection, to dissociate myself from the first man Adam, and associate myself with Christ, the last Adam, "the second man, the Lord from heaven." Thus, "I," the individual, the believer in Christ, redeemed, justified, quickened, and waiting for the glory of Christ, am left in God's purpose here on the earth, a responsible being, for a little while to show forth the praises of Him who has called me out of darkness into His marvelous light; and to live out in the world all the truth revealed by the Spirit in the word, and prove its sufficiency, not only for the glory to come, but for the victory in and over this "present evil world."

H. C. G. B.