

THE

Old Man and the New.

By J. N. D.

LONDON :
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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WE were speaking last week from Ephesians. There we are *risen* with Christ, here we get the converse of this, a man *dead* with Christ. It may seem the wrong way to begin, first with Ephesians, but it is not so, for we must know what is new before we can judge what is old. For instance, there is christian knowledge in the way the law is spoken of: "we know," that is, *we Christians know* "that the law is spiritual." Also in verse 5, "when we *were* in the flesh," it speaks of a condition that once

existed, but exists no longer; just as a person might say, "When I was at Brighton," that implies that he is no longer there. So Romans vii. is the experience of a soul being *in* a condition described by a person who is *out* of it. The whole of this part of Romans is the doctrine of being dead. We have part in Christ as a dead Christ: "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death?" we died out of the old condition, but we are passed into the new. So in John v. 24, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed*

from death unto life." There are the two things: "shall not come into condemnation," and "is passed from death unto life;" he has not only got the sins cleared away for which he was responsible, but he is passed into the new condition. We never know that we are not in the old thing, until it is measured in our consciences; I mean as in Romans vii. 18, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." It does not say *we* know, but *I* know. "We know that the law is spiritual" is a matter of christian knowledge, but here, in verse 18, it is "*I* know." It is *individual experience*, and there is no real deliverance from bondage

until I can say by personal experience before God, "*I know.*"

The moment I have the new thing, and the delights of heaven and Christ in my soul, I find the old thing a positive hindrance. Before this I did not want to be dead, but after measuring the old nature in my conscience, I say with Paul, "Always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." What is it that associates us with the world? The old man of course (and the law, which is

the rule of God for man, as man, applies to the life of nature, "The law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth"), but man dies out of that condition in which the law had authority over him. As a dead man he has nothing to do with the world. I am not setting aside the *law*, I am setting aside the *man*. A man dying on his way to jail is delivered from the law, but his death does not set it aside. The dead man is beyond its authority. The law deals with man as God's creature, and the law is the representative of God's authority, applying to man as responsible to God and is the rule of his responsibility, but man is lost, and is condemned

by the law; "the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, and those that are in the flesh cannot please God." God does not expect any improvement in the old nature, but He gives a new nature and a second Man — Christ my life, and the pattern of my life. The law was not wrong, but the *man* was wrong. Instead of bringing in that which brought death, He takes me out of the old condition, gives me Christ as my life, pattern, and object, instead of the law. Death, if it had not been for redemption in Christ, would have been condemnation to us, but Christ, having taken the con-

demnation, it makes death a positive gain, because it gives me freedom from the old man, "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." Law not only gives a right rule, and the authority of God with it, but it deals with a nature that is all wrong. We must bring in redemption; through that I am enabled to see where I am in Christ; the new life, short of the redemption, only gives me deeper consciousness of my sinful nature, and makes me miserable. When I have got Christ as redemption and life, I can say, "Thank God, the old man is dead and done with."

In chapter v. we get justification ; in chapter vi. is taught the doctrine, as Christ died to sin—we are dead with Him, we are brought into the death of Christ, we here part with His death, the nature is gone with the sins. In chapter vi. it is this second part that is treated of ; in chapter vii., the effect of this as regards the law. It is not only that I have got a new nature, but I have done with the old—not as to conflict of course, for that we shall have to the end, but I have done with the old nature as before God. I am not dead to the law by the law condemning me, but by the death of Christ, the application of the death bringing power. If the bond of the law had been broken

simply by my dying under it, it would have been *only* condemnation, but Christ had taken that once for all upon Himself. In Him, God condemned sin in the flesh. Being under the law, we brought only bad fruits, no fruit to God—now done with the law, “I am married to another,” Christ risen (not Christ in the flesh), that I should bring forth fruit unto God. If I have to do with law, as being in the flesh, I am cursed, but now I am delivered from the law, and connected with Christ as risen from the dead, according to the power of redemption, as risen from the evil. We are connected with Christ after death, and belong to Christ as risen

from the dead. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit (not merely the flesh in me, that is always true), if so be the Spirit of God dwells in us. I *was* in the flesh; what then was the effect, supposing the law was applied to me? The passions worked, and brought forth fruit unto death; the flesh is not subject to the law of God, and its only effect is to condemn. Saul was righteous as to the law, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." He had been worshipping God—sincere, but all dark—dark as a Pharisee; there were no gross sins—natural conscience is reached by gross sins—but Paul could say with the rich young man, "All these things

have I kept from my youth up." He was not a criminal, but when the law came and said, "you must not have a lust," sin wrought in him all manner of concupiscence.

There are two things that characterise sin—self will and lust. Suppose you have a child with a determined self-will, put a barrier by some command, and it only brings it out the worse. So if I say, "You must not look under this or that," lust or desire is excited at once. Here was this evil flesh with its will, and with its lusts—God's law comes in, the flesh is provoked to lust by it, and it condemns him. But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held (the marginal

reading is the correct one,) it is not killing the policeman, but the prisoner; having died, the law is at an end as regards me. I have died away from under it altogether, that I should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Nay, but I had not known sin but by the law. He does not say sins, but *sin*—he had spoken of sins already, but now he is speaking of sin, of the nature. If a man is a murderer he knows by natural conscience he is a sinner; but with Paul there were no crimes, his conscience condemned him with no outward acts of transgression, but the law comes and says, "thou shalt not lust;" until

then he had no sense of the nature that prompted him to lust. Without the law sin was dead, it comes and says I must not lust, but I *do* lust; very well, then you are under the curse—there is the working of this first husband. You cannot have two husbands at the same time as having authority over you; it is not merely that you cannot be justified by law, that is quite true, and spoken of in chapter iii., but here the point is that you cannot have two authorities, the law and Christ at the same time. The thing that hinders the dominion of sin is just this, that he is not under the law. He cannot come under one authority, without being dead to the other. He found law experi-

mentally to be death. The moment he set about seriously to deal with sin, on the ground of law, he found it to be death, "sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid, but sin that it might appear sin, [it is not *sins*], working death in me by that which is good, that sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful." Now I get the nature, it appears sin; not only that, but the sin that did appear, appeared exceeding sinful. Sin takes a new character, it becomes a positive transgression; and all that

I thought very fair, is all self-will, it may be amiable self-will, but it is sin. *We* know the law is spiritual as a matter of christian knowledge, not merely dealing with outward actions, such as murder and the like, but I *know*, as a matter of individual experience, that the law comes and forbids the lusts of the inner man, and here am I, carnal, sold under sin. He takes first conscience, "that which I do, I allow not," that is conscience; the man judges the evil which he does—he coincides with the law; the conscience, under a renewed will, consents to the law. It is a great thing to learn, that in me dwells no good thing. *I know* that in me—he does not say that *we*

know we have done a great many things—he knows, not only what *he has done*, but oh, far deeper, he knows what *he is*. He is a good gardener that does not merely get sour apples and not like them, but he judges the tree that produces them. Whenever the will acts it is sin, it does not recognise God's presence and authority. You own it as a doctrine, beloved friends, but do you *know* it, know that in the will of the old man you are nothing but sin?

When we get into the blessed liberty, if I am bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, we are occupied with Christ, but when we come into His presence, if I do not keep the old man

locked up, it will shew out, and I have to be occupied with, and judge myself. I must distrust myself every instant, by the grace of God bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. I have got now the positive good will, "to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." I have no power to carry it out; now I have got powerlessness, powerlessness when I have the good will. "I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me; I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into cap-

tivity to the law of sin which is in my members. "O wretched man that I am!" He has learned himself.

There are three things one notices here. 1st. There is no good thing in me (that is, in my flesh). There I am, the new life in me; but this judgment brought in by the law claiming good and I discover evil—"no good in me." 2nd. Another thing most helpful to a soul, that it is not I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me. I would give anything not to do it. 3rd. When *I* (the new man) would do good there is no power—the *I* hates the sin, but the sin is stronger than the *I*—the sin is too strong for him—it is a terrible thing, but I learn the

I. I have now the experimental consciousness that the evil is too strong for me.

I am looking back now and seeing the effect of being under the old husband. I cannot succeed, never can succeed, because the evil thing is not subject; then I give up the thought and look to another.

If I get my boy in the bottom of a ditch he may think he has power and will try to get out, having confidence in himself—he tries, but at last he says *I cannot*. He now knows himself and I can then take him out; for though life be there, it is *redemption* and not mere help: “I am married to another” and in another, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is learning self, and the law is

used for it, not as the means of salvation, that would be cruel, for the result is failure, but we must know ourselves and we are put through this process for that purpose.

Are you in the flesh? No; I get a positive deliverance from the whole thing through redemption, which meets this full and experimental discovery of myself. We cannot have the power unless we are in communion to combat the vanity and lust and all the various things that spring up. You never get a truly humble man until he has gone through Romans vii.; you may get a man that knows forgiveness, but never a humble man, a man who thoroughly distrusts him-

self. I may forget that I have the bad man in the house and not keep the key on him; there is, alas! carelessness, and we suffer for it; but if we are always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus we shall be safe, and God helps us in this. I may say to God, "now I hold myself dead." And God says, as it were, "I cannot trust you, I am going to hold you there." He helps us by delivering us to death. (2 Cor. iv.) I am not in the flesh the moment I have got Christ. It is through redemption, and if it were not for redemption, death to the flesh would not only be death, but condemnation, and in truth only death in the flesh; it is not merely a question of forgive-

ness, that we get elsewhere, but here it is getting rid of the *nature*. It is not only true that Christ is my life, and I am forgiven, but I have died with Christ. It is an individual experience, this measuring of the old nature in the conscience; it will not do to say, "*we* know," but "*I* know," I am carnal, I am dead.

Wherever the flesh works, and it may work in a believer, it serves the law of sin; but we are not in the flesh; verse 5 says, "when we *were* in the flesh," which implies that we are there no longer—when I am out I can explain what it is when I am in. The man here is under the law, we know that the law is spiritual—we consent to the

law, we delight in the law, not a word of Christ in it.

Beloved friends, I have dwelt on this because I do not believe we can safely know and enjoy privileges until we have got through this. We may know forgiveness, but do I know my standing before God, and that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit—that I have got redemption out of a state that I was in, and know myself practically ?

The law never treats us as dead in sin, the law deals with our responsibility : "Do this and live." In paradise it was, Do not do this or you will die ; but always responsibility, it deals with us as doers on probation.

If we set aside treating of the gross sins, you may make Christ law. We may say, I ought to be holy; quite true, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But there is another question, are you on the right path to have it? He is on the scent, but when he has got Christ, that is grace—he has power then. Ought I not to be holy? Yes; but you are really looking for righteousness in yourself, for the question with you is one of acceptance. The desire after holiness is right, but without the knowledge of redemption, it immediately brings a man under claims he cannot meet. What a comfort to think I am made partaker of God's holiness. Even the love of Christ can

be turned into law—it may come in in a thousand shapes in a man. I may say I ought to love Him more! quite true, but what I want to know is His love to me.

Every motive that God could give could never get love out of the flesh. If I could get a child that told me he loved his mother enough, I should say he never loved her at all; but if on the other hand he said, “if you only knew my mother, her unwearied kindness, I do not love her half enough,” I should say, “You love her.” We are never satisfied with the love of the heart to Him, because we have a sense of the depth of that love of His. Now, beloved, what I desire with my heart is, that where it is not

the case you may be put through this experience, for we never get confidence in self broken through till then. May the blessed Lord give us to know day by day what He is for us, and how He spends all His pains to make us know Himself.



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