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# MORTIFICATION.

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**M**ORTIFICATION is not a popular word !  
Mortification is not a popular doctrine !  
Mortification is not understood !  
Mortification is not wanted !  
But most of us know enough to discriminate between what we want, and what we need.  
We require to have the gospel of Mortification sounded in our ears until we learn something of the imperativeness of its divine message ; for be assured that, God has a GOSPEL OF MORTIFICATION FOR HIS PEOPLE, EVEN AS HE HAS A GOSPEL OF SALVATION FOR THE SINNER. Let us here tabulate and discriminate between God's Gospel and the Devil's Gospel.

GOD SAYS :—

- I. MORTIFY.
- II. CRUCIFY.
- III. ATROPHY.
- IV. PETRIFY.
- V. NULLIFY.
- VI. STULTIFY.
- VII. DEADIFY..

SATAN SAYS :—

- I. GRATIFY.
- II. SATISFY.
- III. MAGNIFY.
- IV. GLORIFY.
- V. DEIFY.
- VI. MULTIPLY.
- VII. FRUCTIFY.

There is an antagonism, deep, vital, and eternal between the flesh and spirit, and between the Will of God and the mind of Satan.

And now let us examine our theme in orderly fashion, reminding ourselves of the adage: "That order is heaven's first law." Wherever you find confusion of thought or language, you can rest assured that God is not there; for "God is not the Author of confusion."

The term "mortify" is **only** twice employed in the entire Bible. (See Col. iii. 5 with Rom. viii. 13).

I. **MEANING.**—God's meaning for the word is not the **modern** meaning in the mouth of the many. Nor even does the **Dictionary** meaning now in use give us the entire substance of the word. Neither does the **medical** meaning go anything like deep enough to exhaust the fullness of its essence.

The modern significance indicates that my pride was hurt; and that it was offended by the act or word of some person, or persons. Hence the current phrase: "I never felt so mortified in all my life." The medical explanation is that of gangrene; and even when the dictionary attempts to define it, it falls far short of the thought of God. "The subjugation of the passions and appetites by abstinence" is not sufficient to express the solemnness of the situation. The real meaning is to **CAUSE TO DIE**. "Make dead, therefore your members," (Col. iii., "Dean Alford.")

So much for the meaning.

II. **COMMAND.**—Please, apprehend that we have here a mandate from High Heaven for this severe duty. It is not a thing about which we have an

opinion, or a choice. It is a solemn and a terrible obligation. The handwriting of God is on the scroll of the flesh, and the seal of the Eternal is affixed thereto. To resist God's will is to resist **Himself**.

III. REASON.—God is never unreasonable, nor unseasonable; and when he urges the obligation of mortification on us, he uncovers the reason—and the reason is succinct and sufficient.

“FOR YE ARE DEAD” (v. 3). In other words God says: “Now put to death in practice what I reckon you to be in fact. A dead corpse sees nothing, hears nothing, does nothing, feels nothing, desires nothing, plans nothing, knows nothing. In short, God wishes us to LIVE A DEAD LIFE.

IV. SUBJECTS.—This same portion of Scripture also clearly defines what it is that we are to mortify. “Mortify therefore your members,” (v. 5). God employs no ambiguity of language when revealing His Will. Everything is precise and specific. And so it is the members of our bodies that we are to “cause to die.” I must have a **dead eye** to all sinful sights. A **dead ear** to all enchanting sounds. A **dead tongue** to all irritating words. A **dead foot** to all devious ways. A **dead hand** to all doubtful deeds. A **dead mind** to all unholy thoughts. A **dead will** to all fleshly impulses. A **dead heart** to all unhallowed affections.

“ Pray, what is self control ? but reason,  
Triumphant o'er impulses' fitful fires ;  
'Tis inclination kept from playing treason,  
A sense of duty crushing base desires.”

V. PLACE.—The very place where we are to practice this Gospel of mortification is specifically stated. “YOUR MEMBERS WHICH ARE UPON THE EARTH” (v. 5). Some Christians are waiting till they arrive in heaven to be holy. It will be too late then. If we are not holy when we reach heaven, we will be stopped at the gate. You cannot jump into holiness with the same ease as you plunge into water. Earth is the place where we begin to shed the old man, and put on the new. The honesty and transparency of children is proverbial. A little girl I know, after having received a severe whipping, asked her mother if “we would always be good in heaven?” The mother replied, “Why, yes, child.” “Then why cannot we be naughty here?” That child was uttering what many christians are acting.

VI. POWER.—And now we come to the power house from whence mortification is possible. “If ye THROUGH THE SPIRIT do mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom. viii. 13). Please observe that in Colossians, it is the members we are to mortify. But in Romans it is the deeds. There is no contradiction here, but there is elaboration. If we can succeed in the mortification of the members, the deeds can never be produced. No fruit can proceed from a dead root. Now the power for the mortification of our members is the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit solely, and only. No human austerities, however severe, will ever succeed in mortifying in us that which is so displeasing and distasteful to God. The most rigorous punishments will effect no improvements in the nature and practice of men. Ritualists have their rules by which they reduce

the body to exhaustion. But they fail to distinguish and differentiate between the flesh the body, and the flesh the nature. Hair waistcoats, lead-tipped whips, and vows of silence, are all human expedients through which men hope hopelessly to accomplish what only can be done "through the Spirit."

VII. COMPENSATION.—Yea, verily, there are priceless recompenses for those who practice the Gospel of mortification. The one indicated here is most precious. "YE SHALL LIVE" (Rom. viii. 13). Does this mean that we shall "live in heaven?" Nay, verily, but live here on earth, a decent, christian life. This generation has scarcely yet set its eyes on a proper Christian according to God. And the reason why we do not live is because we will not die. Grain must die before it can live. Oh! my brethren, when are we going to begin to live? To "live according to God in the Spirit" (1 Peter iv. 6). The Japanese are masters in the science of horticulture. They can perform magical feats with flowers, and shrubs, and trees. They can prepare a perfect tree, with trunk, branches, twigs and leaves, only one foot high. Is that the natural height of the tree? Nay, verily, that tree if permitted to grow would stretch upwards many feet in height. The pot in which the shrub is planted is bottomless. Its roots are uncovered, and therefore exposed. The gardener nibbles off with his fingers every fresh rootlet as it sprouts. He allows just enough sap to enter the trunk to keep it alive and green; but no sap for strength or growth. Therein lies the secret of this stunted, dwarfed plant.

Do we require to press the moral, brethren? If the roots of our Christian life are not covered with prayer, and our hearts strengthened with the sap of God's word, need we wonder that there is no growth, and scant development in things divine? Let us conceal the roots of our life with the armour of prayer; or else Satan with his infernal fingers will nibble, nibble, nibble at them, and just permit enough life to keep us out of hell, but "no oil in our vessels with our lamps" to keep the flame of testimony ablaze.

"YE SHALL LIVE."

"YE SHALL LIVE."

"YE SHALL LIVE."

"O, Mortify this flesh in me,  
That I may die indeed to sin;  
My darkest passions atrophy,  
Subdue these hellish sparks within.  
Whatever subtle form it takes,  
Crush it, O God, until it breaks."

T. BAIRD,

# TWO NATURES.

---

CLOSELY akin to our former treatise on Mortification lies the subject of the Two Natures. This profound theme is not so much discoursed upon as the importance of it demands.

Suppose we arrange our material in the form of seven points of interrogation ?

I.—IS THERE SUCH A THING AS TWO NATURES ? One sentence taken from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ should be sufficient to settle this question fully and finally. “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit ” (John iii. 6.). Here then we have two natures. The flesh nature, and the spirit nature. So then we need not pursue this point any farther.

II.—WHO POSSESS THESE TWO NATURES ? Christians, and Christians only (Rom. vii. 22–23). Sinners have only one nature, and it is incorrigibly and ir-remediably fallen, depraved and corrupt. In our natural state we were born in sin and conceived in iniquity (Psm. 51, 5). This nature is so unutterably bad that even God does not propose to do anything with it, or to it. No sinner therefore is in possession of the new Nature.

III.—WHEN ARE THESE NATURES OBTAINED ? One at Natural birth, and the other at Spiritual birth. The teaching of our Lord is again per-

continent on this point: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit" (see John iii. 6, again). We obtain natural life at natural birth and spiritual life at spiritual birth. If we were never naturally born we never could possess natural life, and if we never have been spiritually born, we never can expect to possess spiritual life. All human beings who have lived here, or may yet live here, have been born naturally, except Adam and Eve—they were created and not born.

IV.—IN WHAT ORDER DO THESE TWO NATURES COME? This question is more important and goes deeper than many people imagine. The Romanist and the Anglican Ritualist will affirm that if they get the new-born babe into their hands at birth and sprinkle or immerse it the two natures begin their course at the same time. Now let us be unmercifully strong on this point, as millions have been deceived on this very ground. "FIRST THAT WHICH IS NATURAL AND AFTERWARD THAT WHICH IS SPIRITUAL" (1 Cor. xv. 46), and the word "afterward" surely indicates an interval of some duration, whether long or short. Of course, we admit that this primarily applies to the body in resurrection, but a great, broad, deep principle couches beneath it which is capable of wider application.

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1.—The flesh comes before<br>the Spirit. | 4.—Ishmael before Isaac. |
| 2.—Cain came before Abel.                | 5.—Esau before Jacob.    |
| 3.—Adam came before<br>Christ.           | 6.—Saul before David.    |
|  | 7.—Judas before Paul.    |

And not only does the natural and the flesh come first, but they bitterly resent the coming of the spirit and the spiritual.

V.—WHAT ARE THESE TWO NATURES COMPOSED OF? One is composed of flesh, and the other is composed of spirit (see John iii. 6). “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” That is what they each are composed of, and no religious manipulation of any kind, however ingenious, can change this composition. You cannot unflesh the flesh. You can not disflesh the flesh. You may ritualize it, but it is still flesh. You can catachize it but it remains flesh. You can baptize it, but flesh it still abides. You may legalize it, but you still have the same flesh on your hands. You may canonize it, and discover that you have only canonized flesh.

You cannot unspirit the Spirit. “That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.” Christians are partakers of divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4). We are born again, because born before. We are born from above, because born from beneath. We are born of the Spirit, because born of the flesh. We are born of God, because born of man. We are born in righteousness, because born in sin.

VI.—HOW DO THESE TWO NATURES MANIFEST THEMSELVES? In direct, continuous, bitter and deadly antagonism. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other. (Gal. v. 17). Note the flesh is the aggressor. Being the first-born, it resents

the introduction of the new nature. No truce. No Armistice. No surrender, No cessation of conflict. No suspension of hostilities. Ishmael, the flesh man, mocks at Isaac, the spirit man. (Gen. xxi, 9). Esau, the flesh man determines to slay Jacob the spirit man (Gen. xxvii. 4-1). Nothing but **unbending hatred and unending conflict.**

**VII.—HOW ARE WE TO DEAL WITH THESE TWO NATURES?** “This I say walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh” (Gal. v. 16).

Much acrimonious controversy has raged around this great subject.

- 1.—Some teach **Eradication.**
- 2.—Some advocate **Suppression.**
- 3.—Some favour **Counteraction.**

In our simple, humble judgment, the latter course is the better course. Just as the glowing fire counteracts the dampness of the cellar, so does the indwelling Holy Spirit counteract and countermand the unholy activities of the flesh. Beloved, “if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. v. 25). You cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit on the root of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit can only be produced through the **life of the Spirit.**

P.S.—Kindly let it be observed that the word “ye” is twice introduced into Gal. V. 17, for while the conflict is ever between the flesh and the spirit, yet, we personally are responsible as to which force within us is to be victorious. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.” (Rom. VI. 16.) Upon which side we throw our will-power and influence, to that side the victory goes, it may be only temporarily. The christian is a strange composition, a complex being.

“ I’m **sinful** yet I have **no sin** ;  
All **spotted** o’er, still wholly **clean** :  
**Blackness** and **beauty** both I share,  
A HELLISH BLACK, A HEAVENLY FAIR.  
T. BAIRD.

## Nothing Killed That Is Not Better Dead.

God's ways with saints are painful,  
 The heart must be laid bare ;  
 His hand sifts out the baneful,  
 He ploughs with sharpened share.  
 He wills from sin to win us,  
 For this Christ's blood was shed ;  
 "God will kill nothing in us  
 That is not better dead."

All gold must be subjected  
 To God's consuming test ;  
 The dross will be rejected,  
 He will conserve the best.  
 Our hearts may melt within us  
 Beneath His fiery tread ;  
 "God will kill nothing in us  
 That is not better dead."

The vine demands strong purging  
 If fruit is to be seen ;  
 The Husbandman is urging  
 That branches be kept clean.  
 He to the wall may pin us,  
 The Vine may oft be bled ;  
 "God will kill nothing in us  
 That is not better dead."

Have courage then my brother,  
 Though sharp may be the knife ;  
 The flesh may shrink and quiver,  
 And thou despair of life.  
 God is at work within thee,  
 He will lift up thy head ;  
 "God will kill nothing in thee  
 That is not better dead."

T. BAIRD.

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CONTENTS. Page

THOUGHTS THAT NEVER HAPPEN	41
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCRIPTURES	43
THE SECRET OF YERUBBALETH'S	45
HEAVEN'S ACCOUNT WITH US	47
TRAINING IN MANY FIELDS	49
ADDRESS TO CONTRIBUTORS	51

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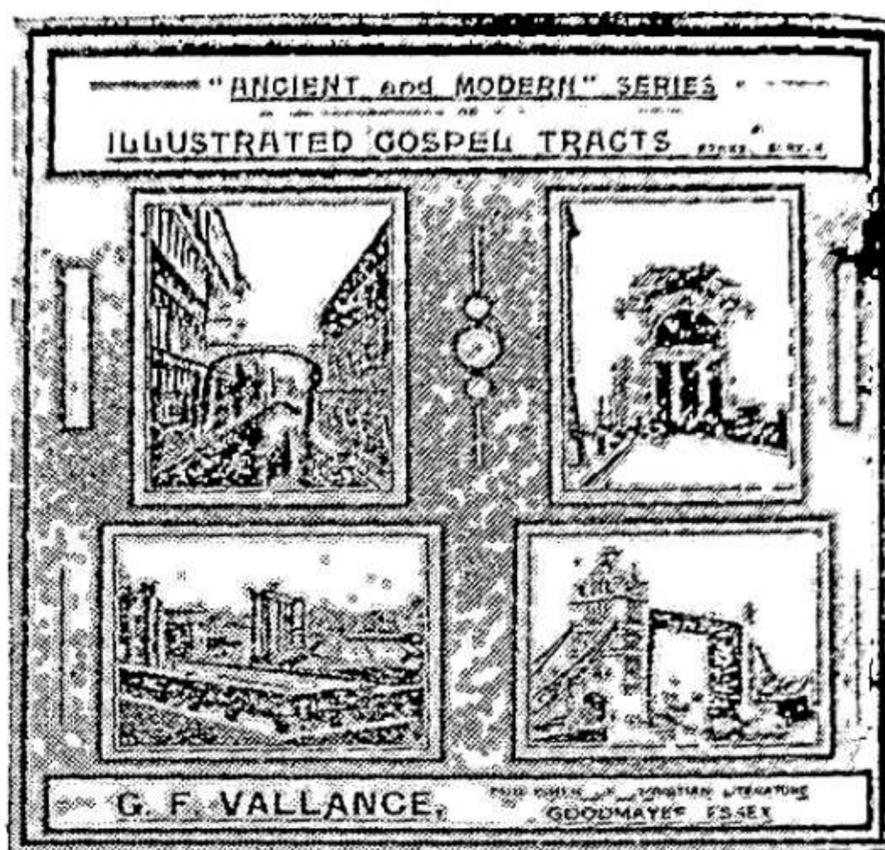
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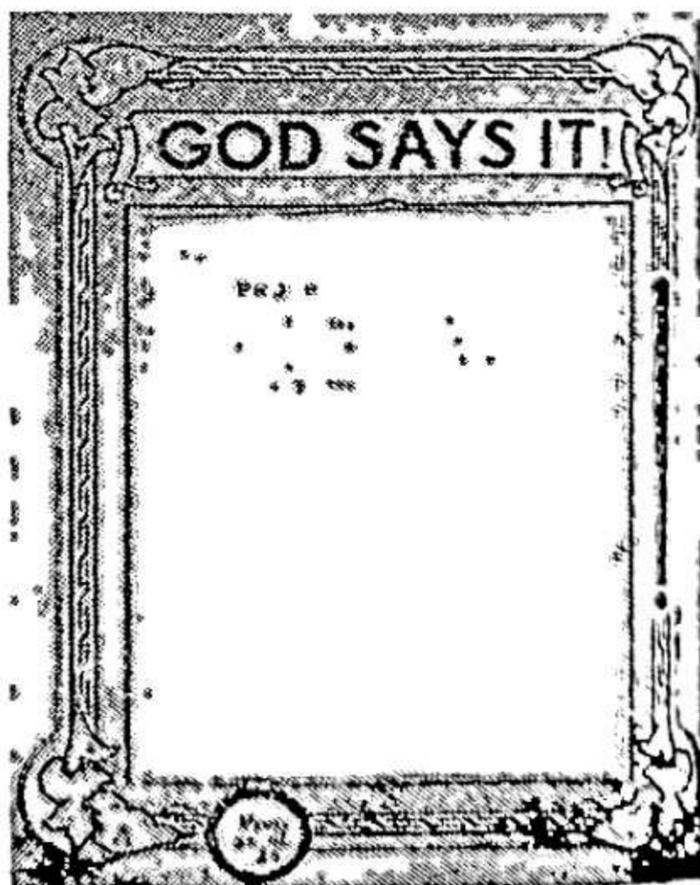
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