

SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN
THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND ?

THE MIRRORED GLORY.

Copies will be sent free on application to
T. J. LEONARD,
44, Edwards Street, Stockton-on-Tees.

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Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

ROM. vi. 1-11.

TO this question two answers are given. The first is based on the truth that believers have died to sin. How shall they that have died to sin, continue to live in sin? The second answer rests on the evident fact that the baptised are identified with Christ.

Sin in every form is opposed to what baptism *is* as a washing of separation from the world to Christ, and an avowal of discipleship to Him. *Continuing* in sin is opposed to what baptism *effects* in identifying the baptised with Christ, with His death, and with His resurrection.

Verses 3-5 have no possible application to the unbaptised. All the baptised without exception, and they only, have been buried with Christ into identification with death. For all who have been baptised into identification with Him, have been of necessity in that act baptised into identification with His death. This is burial with Him, and the only burial with Him found in Scripture.

Christ died and was buried. The baptised in their baptism into identification with Him are buried with Him. Yet not *together* with Him, nor *at the same time* in any figurative sense. Their baptism, or washing of separation, becomes a burial because it identifies them (as alive in the body) with His death; and their identification with Him begins when they are buried with Him. But in no sense is He buried with them, or identified with them by baptism. He was buried because He had died. They (as alive in the body) are buried with Him into death—into identification with death.

They who are baptised into identification with Christ, and into identification with His death are buried with Him into identification with death in the grave of an external identification with Him that died to sin. Consistently with their

burial they cannot continue in sin. But their burial with Him is "in order that" (Gr. *ina*) their consequent walk in newness of life (in the practical sense) also, may be consistent with His life, when raised up by the glory of the Father, and having no more to do with sin.

Where the gospel of Christ's death and resurrection is professedly believed, there normally follows a baptism into identification with Christ by which the baptised are outwardly, formally, and visibly identified with Him, with His death, and with His resurrection. With these events in His history on earth, the baptised become identified at the same moment by their baptism into identification with Him. In His death *for* sin, He died *to* sin, to have no more to do with it for ever. Shall they continue in sin who by their baptism have become identified with His death which was a death to sin? Yet more. For if identification with His death is opposed to continuing in sin, it is "in order that"—being identified with Him that was raised up into newness of life in which He has no more to do with sin—they also, as no longer continuing in sin, should walk in newness of life.

Walking in newness of life in the practical sense is the simple, sure and natural consequence of non-continuance in sin. The point where walking in sin ends is of course the very point where walking in newness of life begins, no break, or interval, being possible.

Between the blessed Lord's life on earth in which He had to do with sin, and His life in resurrection in which He has no more to do with sin, there was an interval of time filled by His death, burial, and resurrection. But at whatever period in their history as professing Christians the baptised cease to walk in sin, at their baptism, and by their baptism, they are brought into an outward identification with Christ which is inconsistent with walking in sin, and consistent only with walking in newness of life.

A baptism into identification with Christ which is not also a baptism into identification with "the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost " is impossible. A baptism into identification with Christ, even of "an unconscious babe," apart from profession of the faith of Christ is impossible. A baptism with profession of the faith of Christ which does not identify the baptised with Him is impossible. An identification of the baptised with Him which does not identify them with His death is impossible. An identification with His death, yet not with His death to sin is impossible. An identification with Christ's death to sin that is in no sense a burial with Him is inconceivable. A burial with Him that is in no sense a burial into death is not the burial with Him indicated in Rom. vi. 4.

Verses 6, 7 resume the argument based on death to sin. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, 'in order that' the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin: for he that hath died is justified from sin." We "know this" even as we know much that is taught in this chapter and elsewhere. We know that certain relations are, and must be, in accord with certain facts. From such relations and facts we derive the truth that we "died to sin"—that "our old man was crucified," etc.

God has condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. viii. 3). This God did *in principle*, not by an act of judgment upon sin in the flesh, but by sending his own Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and as an offering for sin. The offering for sin whereby atonement was made for the sinner was at the same time the strongest possible condemnation of sin in the flesh, the state of the sinner. When God's condemnation of sin in the flesh was applied to our "sin in the flesh," or state, then, but not until then, was "our old man crucified."

As sealed with the Spirit we are "in Christ," and no longer "in Adam." Being in Christ we have "died to sin," "died with Christ" to sin, and are therefore "dead to sin" *in Christ* (vers. 2, 8, 11). These phrases are descriptive of *negative* relations. But they denote at the same time true and holy *positive* relations which came into being with

them, and into which all believers have been brought. For entrance into the *negative* relation of being dead to sin must be concurrent with entrance into the *positive* relation of being alive to God (ver. 11). Yet while holiness of walk, and the intelligence with which these positive relations are apprehended necessarily determine the extent of their power and enjoyment in the soul—and they may be practically denied by an inconsistent walk—these things in no way affect their fixedness and stability as spiritual and true relations.

We who were the servants (slaves) of sin have died in that relation. But this does not mean that we have died in all our life relations, or that we must be buried and raised again in order to live in a new relation to righteousness. From our relation to sin, our old master, we have been freed by our death to sin, to become the servants of righteousness, our new master (ver. 18). Christ's death *for* our sins measures the extent and completeness of His death *to* sin. We are brought into our death relation to sin by His death *for* our sins. Therefore we conclude, or "reckon," that *we* died to sin "with Him," *i.e.*, we also died.

An imputed death and resurrection of believers commonly expressed by the phrase "dead and risen with Christ" is doctrine made up of garbled quotation and supposed inference from Scripture. When dead in offences we were quickened by the communication of spiritual life to our souls. When quickened we were raised up out of our fallen state "in offences and in the uncircumcision of our flesh" (Eph. ii. 5; Col. ii. 13). When raised up and in our new state in Christ, we were sealed in Him. We received the Spirit, not *before*, nor *after*, but *when* we entered into our new state in Him (Rom. viii. 9). We were chosen of God "in Christ" from eternity. It is a perversion and corruption of this great truth to teach that God saw us "in Christ," in any sense, before we were sealed in Him; as also it is to maintain that we died to sin with Christ before we were quickened with Christ and raised up with Him.

The doctrine of the risen state in Christ of the Christian has been clouded in part by a rendering of the Greek phrase "*en ō*" in Col. ii. 12 not in harmony with the context. In our Versions the substitution of "in whom" for "wherein" is required because "wherein" limits the application of the whole truth in verse 12 to the baptised. Whereas in the "you" of the following verse the *same* persons are addressed as representative of their class—Christian Gentiles; as in the "us" also—Christian Jews.

In the Greek N.T. there are 52 occurrences of the phrase "*en ō*." In the R.V. it is rendered "in whom" 14 times; "wherein" 17 times; and variously 21 times. Where "in whom" occurs in the R.V. no alternative rendering is possible. Out of a total of 10 occurrences of "*en ō*" in Ephesians, it is rendered "in whom" 8 times. Out of a total of 4 in Colossians, it is rendered "in whom" 3 times. As the paramount subject of these Epistles is the Christian state "in Christ" we must conclude that on this ground also "in Christ, in whom" rather than "in baptism, in which" (or "wherein") reflects the truth taught in Col. ii. 12.

By *grace* we are saved. Quickening, raising, and sealing are individual blessings, and are the work of God. They form the Christian state. To be in this state is to be "in Christ." We are in Christ individually (2 Cor. v. 17). We are in Christ—in the Christian state now, having been circumcised "in the (completeness of the) circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11). For circumcision is the putting off of our state in the flesh—a negative blessing. Death by circumcision is a foolish, false, and injurious notion. Our Lord was circumcised by His death. But it would be utter error to affirm that He died by circumcision. By the work of God that brought us out of our state in the flesh, and into our new state in Christ we were circumcised.

In Col. ii. 11, 12, 13 reference is made to four things of which normally we have been subjects in our history as professing Christians. These are: circumcision, burial (in baptism), raising up (with Christ), and quickening (with

Christ). In an Epistle written to warn against a lapse into worldly religion we see the moral suitability of naming first our circumcision as a reason for refusing "the tradition of men" (ver. 8). To this baptism is added as covering the broad ground of Christian profession, and being a sign of separation from the world to Christ, and a burial identification with Him. We must carefully note that the circumcised are said to be "in Christ," and that the "buried in baptism" are said to be "with Him." But we come into the sphere of *positive* blessing in the raising up with Him, and in the quickening with Him (Who was raised up from the dead) of those who are now in the Christian state.

Verse 8. The "if" in this verse supposes the fact of our entrance with Christ into a negative death relation to sin. This is expressed in the phrase "died with Christ." With this negative death relation to sin is associated a positive relation to God. So that if we are in the one relation, we "shall also" of necessity be in the other. In the former we "died with Christ." In the latter we "live with Him." But "died with Christ" no more means that we died with Him *when* He died, than "*shall* live with Him" means that we were made to live with Him *when* He rose from the dead, or, that we shall live with Him in a time to come. The whole of verse 8 is an abstract statement of truth in which there is no reference to time, or place. It affirms that as we are with Christ in our death relation to sin, so in truth, and as a matter of faith, we must be with Him in our life relation to God.

Verses 9, 10. "Knowing that Christ (being raised from the dead) dieth no more." It is the surest conceivable inference, or reckoning, that in His death *for* sin, Christ died *unto* sin once for all. For sin He dies no more. Being raised from the dead the life that He now lives, therefore, He lives unto God, in accord with His death to sin—having done with sin.

Verse 11. "Even so," as "*we* died with Christ," and "*we* believe that we shall also live with Him" (ver. 8), *even so*,

“reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.” In the Greek original there is no connective word, or adversative “but” between the phrases, “dead unto sin” and “alive unto God.” Yet there can be no true conception of their meaning by those who in their thoughts separate them, or view them as expressive of consecutive relations.

The Christian is established and instructed in true and divine *relations*, and his *character* is formed thereby. But the Holy Spirit is the *power* by which he walks in practical holiness before God.

The Mirrored Glory.

(2 COR. iii. 18).

BY the ministry of “a new covenant” of which Paul was made a minister, those converted to God at Corinth had become a testimony to others, an epistle of Christ, expressive and representative of Him, “written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh” (2 Cor. iii. 3). The ministration of “the old covenant” which was “engraven on stones,” being a demand for righteousness, proved to be a “ministration of death” to those who were under it. The covenant spoken of here points not to an outward and formal claim “in letters” under penalty of death presented to men, but to a ministration of “spirit” which “giveth life” (vers. 4-9).

The term “spirit” is here used to describe a covenant and its ministry in contrast with the outward character of that given from mount Sinai. Further on in this chapter we are told that “the Lord is the spirit.” He is the inward meaning and spiritual substance of the new ministry—the “spirit” which “giveth life;” and where “the Lord is the spirit,” there, too, “the Spirit of the Lord (the Holy Ghost) is,” and “there is liberty”—*life* and *power*.

The legal covenant, which became the ministration of

death, "came with glory," in witness that it came from God. That glory shone upon the face of Moses, and "passed away." But the "ministration of the spirit"—which is the "ministration of righteousness" in contrast with the "ministration of condemnation"—"remaineth" abidingly "in" glory. No veil, then, is needed, as at Sinai, to cover an "end," or "passing away," of this glory. The veil, which marked the imperfection of the system connected with "the letter," is "done away in (what is connected with) Christ" (ver. 14).

The ministry in this chapter is the preaching of the gospel. It is maintained by all who "with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the spirit" (ver. 18). As reflectors of the glory we "are transformed into the same image," the image of Him in Whom the glory shines, and from Whom it shines unto us "from glory (in Him) to glory" (reflected by us), even as from the Lord the spirit." In the last sentence we are again reminded that this glory is not material and visible like that which was seen of old.

The "sufficiency" in this ministry is "from God" (ver. 5); and the transforming power that qualifies for it, is "from the Lord" (ver. 18). For the glory that shines in His face (iv. 6) is that very glory reflected in, and by, all who "with unveiled face" are transformed by it into the same image from the glory in Him to the glory reflected in, and by, them.

The "glory of the Lord" in this scripture is the light of the gospel that proceeds from Himself with demonstrative power, and of which He, in the perfection of His Person, and in the efficaciousness of His work, is the source and the substance. Its reflection is in the ministry of those that receive it.

The *moral* glory of the Lord Jesus is once named (x. 1), but nowhere in this Epistle is it the apostle's theme. Neither iv. 11, nor viii. 9 form an exception.

T.J.L.