

EXACTLY WHAT OUR SAVIOR TAUGHT ABOUT SIN

By M. L. DYE

CHAPTER IV

NINE AWFUL FALLACIES

Nine awful fallacies that seek to excuse sin, and which Satan uses to defeat the purpose of Christ in the lives of those who believe them:

There are some men who put in their creed, 'We sin every day, in thought, word, and deed.' Then, ignoring God's laws, they will often proceed to walk with the devil, and live by that creed.

Fallacy No. 1 We Sin Every Day

Those who insist upon teaching that "we sin every day in thought, word, and deed" will often quote Paul's words. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). They insist that this applies to Christians, and many are misled to believe that it does, because their preacher or Sunday School teacher says it does. But does it? Let us see.

Here is the complete passage: "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher. With their tongues they have used deceit. The poison of asps is under their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways and the way of peace have they not known." Can it be truly said of Christians, "The way of peace have they not known." Surely then it is indeed a fallacy or false teaching, to say that this passage applies to Christians, and to use it as proof that Christians sin every day, or that there is "none righteous" among those who have repented of their sins.

Fallacy No. 2 Filthy Rags

might be called "the filthy rags fallacy." Many, many times those who teach that "we sin every day," quote in defense of their statement. "Our righteousness are as filthy rags." And multitudes hear this quotation and are misled to believe that it applies to Christians. Let us see if it does. The only place the passage is found in the Bible is in Isaiah 64:6. Here is the whole passage: "But we are all as an uncleaned thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags. And we do all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon Thy Name that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee. For Thou hast hid Thy face from us and hast consumed us because of our iniquities" (Isaiah 64:6 and 7).

Should this picture of the backslidden Jewish nation be used to describe the normal Christian Life? Surely, only the devil would like to have it so, and some Bible teachers are fooled enough by his Satanic Majesty to teach what he wants them to teach.

Fallacy No. 3 Conscience

Often those who defend the idea that we "sin every day" will tell their hearers that "conscience is not safe as a guide." It is true that the Word of God must be used to enlighten the individual conscience more and more: and true also that some conscience are more enlightened than others. But at the same time it is wrong to say that one should not follow one's conscience. "Conscience," says Webster, "is the moral sense within which urges to right conduct." Conscience will always lead us to follow the Word of God so far as we know it. And conscience will also lead us to

study more of the Word of God. A man can ignore and even “sear” his conscience, but if followed, it will lead him in the right direction.

No one at any time should disregard his conscience. The apostle Paul said’ “Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.” In other words “I always try to keep a clear conscience” (Acts 24:16).

Paul’s exhortation to Timothy leaves no doubt about this matter of conscience. He says, “That thou mightest war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith, have made shipwreck” (I Tim. 1:19). A moral shipwreck, indeed, is any man who disregard his conscience.

Fallacy No. 4 God's Commandments

One of the most absurd of all modern fallacies is to teach that “we cannot keep God’s commandments.” Yet, believe it or not, many teachers are actually teaching this to their congregations. So let us see what God says about it and what Jesus the Son of God from Heaven taught. More than 3000 years before such teachers were born God spoke in an uncertain terms about the imperative necessity of keeping His commandments. Let us note especially whether God really meant that the Jews should keep His commandments.

Through Moses, God said, “Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart that the Lord He is God in Heaven above and upon the earth beneath. There is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore His statutes and His commandments which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth...”

“These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up---ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God--- Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments unto a thousand generations. Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God” (From Deuteronomy 4th to 11th chapters).

Not only was it made unmistakably clear to the Church of the Old Testament that they were expected to keep the commandments of God, but through Moses, God said He expected us to keep the commandments of Christ. “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My Words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My Words which he shall speak in My Name, I will require it of him” (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).

Peter says this prophecy refers especially to Christ, and, in the light of this passage, what infinite folly for any to say we need not keep the commandments of Christ or that we cannot do so. Yet many preachers are actually teaching this today!

Jesus Himself urged, “If ye Love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Again, “He that hath My commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth Me” (John 14:21). And again: “If a man love Me he will keep My Words (John 14:23).”

And again, “If ye continue in My Word, then are ye my disciples indeed and ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free” (John 8:31). And again,” go--teach all nations ... to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” ... (Matt 28:19,20).

Finally, to John on the Isle of Patmos, Jesus said, “Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the City” (Rev. 22:12-14).

Fallacy No. 5 Grace and Works

Some say that if we keep the commandments of God we would have no need of God’s Grace, but would then be “saved by works”. They stress Paul’s words, “For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

To say that keeping God’s commandments, after one repents of sin, is being saved by works, reveals a total misunderstanding of what “saved by grace” really means. Suppose that I am haled into court to be tried for murder. After due process of law I am found guilty of first degree murder. Can I plead, “but Judge, I’ve learned my lesson. I repent of this sin. I will never do it again, therefore I expect you to set me free.”? Never; the Judge would point out that for my past crime, I am guilty, even though I should henceforth be a model citizen. I must pay the penalty for past crime. My “good works” could not save me. Neither can doing our duty, after repentance, save us from due penalty for our past sins. Only the suffering of Christ in our stead can save us from this due penalty, under the just Government of God. Only the grace of God in Christ---”His unmerited” favor can set us free from our guilt for past sins.

But the grace of God can be applied only to those who stop sinning, or get right with God. It is only, “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

This imperative necessity for repentance is acknowledged wherever mercy is shown by human governments, as well as throughout the Scriptures.

The chief engineer of one of American’s foremost engineering firms, after reading the manuscript of the book, reminded me that any convict appearing before a parole board must:

1. Admit guilt
2. Convince them he is sorry.
- 3 Convince them he won’t continue his criminal practice.

Let us further illustrate this relation of “works” to “grace” by the true story of the crime and imprisonment of Samuel Holmes of Frankfort, Kentucky. While imprisoned for the crime of murder, Mr. Holmes was visited by Lucian Young who was a former schoolmate. When Lucian Young appealed to Governor Blackburn for the pardon of his friend, the governor remembered the bravery of Mr. Young in rescuing several lives from a wrecked vessel and granted the pardon, in recognition of the merits of Young. With this pardon in his pocket Young hastened to the prison to see his friend Holmes. Before revealing that he had power to make him a free man, Young began a conversation with Holmes. After talking on other subjects for a while, Young finally said, “Sam if you were turned loose and fully pardoned what would be the first thing you would do?” The convict quickly responded, “I would go to Lancaster and kill Judge Oursley and a man who was a witness against me.” Young uttered not a word but turned mournfully away went outside the prison walls took the pardon from his pocket, and tore it to bits! (This true story was published in the Richmond Register).

Holmes lost his pardon because he would not forsake the sin from which he was wanting forgiveness. Neither can the infinitely just “Lord of Heaven and earth” pardon a sinner while he continues in sin, even though pardon is offered through the merits of Christ.

Fallacy No. 6 The Sermon on the Mount

A prominent Bible teacher of recent years managed to secure such a following that he finally had a Bible published under his name. Though this Bible contains many constructive helps for Bible students at the same time some terrible fallacies are included against which warning should be sounded in no uncertain terms.

For example on page 1000 in that Bible he says in his notes, “the sermon on the mount, in its ‘primary application’ gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church.” He says in other words that neither the promises nor the commands of the Sermon on the Mount were for believers in general (The promises are the privileges and the commands are the duties). Now let us see what Christ Himself said of His own Sermon on the Mount.

To determine this all we need to do is look at the conclusion of that sermon itself. Here are Jesus words: Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended and the floods came and his winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it” (Matt. 7:24-27).

In the great commission Christ commanded that all of His words be taken “to every creature;” and here He says that everyone who hears these words and does them not is building on the sand. Certainly, therefore both the promises and the commandments of this sermon were intended for all believers. But, obviously the enemy of souls has sought, by human tradition to undermine the commands and promises of Christ.

However those who have courage and faith to trust and act upon these words of Christ, find that our Almighty Father fulfills His promises found in the Sermon on the Mount.

For example, George Mueller fed and clothed and educated more than nine thousand orphans, by looking to God alone, and never asking a man in any case to meet his need.

He says, “When I first began to allow God to deal with me, relying on Him, taking Him at His Word, and set out fifty years ago, simply relying on Him for myself, family, taxes, traveling expenses and every other need, I rested on the simple promises I found in the sixth chapter of Matthew (Matt 6:25-34).” For those unfamiliar with it, the sermon on the Mount consists of the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew. What a blessing it is that men like George Mueller have not been influenced by modern teachers, who say that the Sermon on the Mount is not for us today! How often have new converts started out to believe with holy fervor what they found in their Savior’s words, then while going to Bible School or attending some church they were told that such words of Jesus do not apply to us today, and in discouragement and disillusionment they would lose their joy, and fervor, and often finally backslide entirely---all because some teacher or preacher had misrepresented Christ to them.

On the other hand we should thank God and take courage when men like Billy Graham will come out strongly and make it known that living by the Sermon on the Mount would change every evil condition in this nation or any other nation.

Actually, much that passes today for “rightly dividing the word of Truth” when viewed in the celestial Light of the words of Christ, is found to be nothing more nor less than “Making void the commandments of God by your tradition!”

By teaching a spineless “believe-it-and-live-as-you-like” theory and by sitting aside the Savior’s own commands and promises and substituting theological sophistries; the power of Satan has largely hamstrung the Church and in many places made of its professed members a lot of fearful and unbelieving stumble blocks to sinners. The average sinner, looking on, says, “If what these professors have is religion we want no part of it!”

Surely, when the world seems about to be set on fire with hydrogen bombs it is time for Christians of the world to “get in there and pitch,” and forget the very thought of compromising with sin.

Before we are haled before “people’s courts” as Christians are in China and are forced to literally stab to death members of our families who in any wise opposed Communism, as millions have actually been forced to do in China, we’d better go “all out” for Jesus Christ and let Him show the world what true Christianity is!

Fallacy No. 7 The Corpse

Might be called the stinking corpse fallacy.” involving the illustration used by the Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans.

Those Bible teachers who insist that we “sin every day in thought, word, and deed” assume that Paul in the seventh of Romans is describing the normal Christian experience.

Those of us who stand for what Jesus taught about sin believe Paul would be horrified at such misinterpreting of his words.

Let us briefly look at the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters of Romans and seek to interpret the words of Paul in harmony with the words of Christ as Paul would want us to.

In the sixth chapter the apostle points out the absolute necessity of holy living, in the words: “Let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness, unto God” (vs. 11-13).

“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

“For when ye were servants of sin ye were free from righteousness...but now being free from sin, and become servants unto God, ye have fruit unto holiness and the end unto Everlasting life.” (Romans 6:18,22).

Obviously these statements in the sixth chapter make no allowance for serving the devil.

The portion of the letter found in the seventh chapter is where the confusion usually starts. In the ninth verse of chapter seven, Paul speaks of his first experience of encountering the law of God; which was, of course, before his conversion. He says, (quoting the Amplified New Testament) “Once I was alive, but quite apart from and unconscious of the law. But when the commandment came, sin lived again and I died---was sentenced by the law to death” (Romans 7:9, Amp. Ver)

“Did that which is good then prove fatal, bringing death to me? Certainly not. It was sin working death to me by using this good thing (as a weapon) in order that through the commandment sin might be shown up clearly to be sin, that the extreme malignity and immeasurable sinfulness of sin might plainly appear” (Romans 7:13, Amp. Ver).

Note: At the end of the 13th verse Paul continues his description of his past and sinful experience but uses the present tense in describing that experience like we hear many do in their conversation today.

We need to bear in mind he is describing an experience totally different from that pictured in the sixth chapter and also totally different from that presented in the eighth chapter; yet all this is apparently written at one sitting or without his experience actually changing. In other words though at the same time of his writing his experience was that portrayed by the sixth and eighth chapters, he pictures in the seventh chapter his former experience which was totally different. This must be our conclusion if we stay in line with the words of Jesus concerning sin.

Note how his words of the seventh chapter describes the sinner's experience. "I do not understand my own action. I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice, or accomplish what I wish but do the very thing I loathe (which my moral instinct condemns" --vs. 15, Amp. Ver).

"Now if I do habitually what is contrary to my desire (that means that) I acknowledge and agree that the law is good (morally excellent) and that I take sides with it" (vs. 16, Amp. Ver.). Note this is exactly the experience of the sinner, whose conscience tells him what is right and what he ought to do. "However it is no longer I who does the deed, but the sin principle which is at home in me, and has possession of me. I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is in my flesh. I can will what is right but I can not perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out" (vs. 16-18, Amp. Ver.).

Note: Who doesn't know that this is not the experience of the true Christian nor is it Paul's experience when he writes in Eph. 6:13, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. And having done all to stand, stand therefore having your loins girt about with Truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and with your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. And above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:13-16). Thus in Ephesians, and in many other of his writings we see Paul's Christian experience. But in the seventh of Romans he concludes his experience as a sinner in the 23rd verse: "I discern in my bodily members--in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh---a different law (rule of action) at war against the law of my mind (my reason) making me a prisoner to the law of sin that dwells in my bodily organs---in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh" (Romans 7:23, Amp. Ver.).

Now notice carefully what brought him out of his awful condition of slavery to Satanic power. In Paul's day it was the custom, if one was accused of murder to tie a corpse of the murdered one face to face to the body of the accused prisoner. Paul views the awful state he has just described as though a dead and decaying body were bound to his. With this custom in mind he cries, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? Then, exultantly he exclaims, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!!"

He continues: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

Then in unmistakable language, Paul goes in the 8th chapter to clearly show the difference between the sinner and the saint. He says: "for those who are according to the flesh and controlled by its unholy desires, set their mind on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh. But those who are according to the spirit and (controlled by the desires) of the Spirit, set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the (Holy) Spirit. For if you live according to the dictates of the flesh, you will surely die. But if through the powers of the Holy Spirit you put death--make extinct, deaden--the (evil) deeds prompted by the body you shall (really and genuinely) live forever. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God" (Romans 8:5, 13, 14---Amp. Ver.).

The above interpretation of Romans 6, 7, and 8 agree with what Jesus taught, and is surely what would please both Paul and the Lord Jesus. For Paul said, "Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor, 11:1).

In view of the clear teaching of Christ Himself, I submit that, in the sight of the Risen Christ, it is a very serious fallacy to teach that, as Christians, we are to carry this "stinking corpse" of spiritual defeat around with us all our lives.

Fallacy No, 8 Book of John

Those who insist that "we sin every day" will often pick one ambiguous passage in the book of John, to prove it while totally ignoring nine other plain statements in the same epistle, which lead to an opposite conclusion.

Let us briefly line up these ten statements about sin in John's letter and see what he really teaches on the sin question:

1. The passage that "sin every day" teachers quote is 1 John 1:8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us.
2. in the same letter of John reads, "Hereby we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3). We certainly do not sin while keeping His commandments!
3. "He that saith I know Him and keepeth not His commandments is a liar and the Truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4).
4. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself so to walk even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). (If we walk as Jesus walked will we walk in sin?)
5. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure" (1 John 8:8) This is the hope of seeing Jesus when He appears. Are we sinning while we are pure "as He is pure?" (Must we conclude that those who say we are always filled with sin do not have this hope?)
6. This same epistle reads: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1 John 3:6). Jesus taught that we are to "abide in Him" (John 15:7).
7. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4). Certainly to overcome the world is to overcome the evil forces that would lead us to sin.
8. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18).
9. "Whosoever is born of god doth not commit sin for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God (1 John 3:9). This is like the statement, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."
10. "He that committeth sin is of the devil for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil" (In other words, if ever we sin we are cooperating with the devil, and not with Christ.) (1 John 3:8).

In the light of these nine statements from the apostle John, is it not clear that John taught as Jesus did about sin? In view of these many clear statements it is the writer's view that John's meaning in 1 John 1:8 is the same as what he said more clearly in 1 John 1:10 which reads; "If we say that we have not sinned we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." Let the reader compare also verses 6 and 7 in the same chapter.

Obviously it is absurd to base a doctrine on one ambiguous passage and ignore nine plain statements in the same epistle. This is indeed a most harmful fallacy by which the enemy draws many into compromising with sin.

Fallacy No. 9 Security

is "once-in-grace-always-in-grace regardless of-what-we-do."

While holding a tent revival meeting in the south the, writer was preaching what Jesus preached about sin when the pastor of a large denominational church announced a series of sermons on "Once saved, always saved" and he told his Church members that he would prove that we all sin every day.

One sincere believer related to me the following incident. This pastor conducted a branch Sunday School in another section of town where one of his deacons was the superintendent. One Sunday morning a young woman stepped into the room whose life the whole town knew was that of a prostitute; but who had formally been a Christian and was baptized in the church. The deacon called on her to pray. The girl replied, "I don't feel fit to pray in public." The deacon urged. "Why you were baptized were you not?" "Yes." "Well, if you were once saved you are always saved so go ahead and pray." (The sincere people in the audience were of course, disgusted).

But this true story illustrates how far this modern fallacy has gone. The writer has since found there are many other ministers in the north, the south, the east and the west of this apostate nation that teach the same destructive doctrine; though most of them do not carry it to the same logical conclusion as did this deacon. One pastor of a very large church in Detroit stated to his radio audience that even though a person commit murder, he still could not be lost, if he was once born again. (!)

Surely a doctrine that bears such fruit needs to be re-examined!

The two strongest props that are used to brace this false doctrine are: 1--"No man can pluck you out of my Father's hands," and 2--"You can't be spiritually unborn."

Let us briefly examine these props. True the first one consists of Christ's own words. But let us be sure we do not read into them what is not there. When Jesus said, "No man can pluck you out of my Father's hand." He did not say, "You cannot get out if you try," but only that "you are secure against all attacks from without."

Our safety in the Father's hands is like the safety of a man in a fort or castle where the windows and doors are all barred securely against any intruder who might come to forcibly take him out.

One important factor is too often forgotten. This man inside the castle still possesses the key.

The Christian is not made a prisoner in the Father's hands, against his will. He still possesses the key (his free moral agency---his free will to choose).

God does not destroy our will when He saves us. He wants us to love Him enough to walk with Jesus voluntarily. He will not make a machine of us when we are saved. Hence, He leaves the key in our hands and *we can walk out* any time we choose, if we become foolish enough to be so---and tragic though it is many do.

Now, let us examine the second prop the claim that we cannot be "spiritually unborn."

The Lord Jesus likens the spiritual birth to the natural birth. All informed people will agree that the term "born again" is used here by the Lord Jesus as a metaphor. Using it as a metaphor does not mean that the new birth and the natural birth are in all points alike, though it does mean they are alike in some points.

Webster defines a metaphor as "a figure of speech by which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is applied to another by way of suggesting a likeness or analogy between them."

Nicodemus inquired whether this metaphor would apply by a man entering the womb again and being born in the natural. It is a fact that no metaphor ever applies in all details to that which it simulates. The new birth is like the natural birth in some respects but quite unlike it in other respects. When a person repents of sin, evil forces are no longer in control. In the act of repentance they have been rejected; for when we resist the devil, "he will flee from us", the Scriptures declare. As long as we obey God, the Spirit life that controls and energizes us is God's Spirit. For "as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). Those who are not led by the Spirit of God are led by the devil. Jesus said to the hypocritical Pharisees. "Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father will ye do" (John 8:44).

Paul says: “To whom ye *yield yourselves* servants to obey his servants ye are whom ye obey whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:16).

John says: “Whosoever is born of God sinneth not” (I John 5:18).

And Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

By obeying the Word of God in genuine repentance, we come into God’s Kingdom and family and it is a “new birth” in the fact that a new Spirit life is taking possession of us as we give consent.

This view of the matter is clearly confirmed by other Scriptures related to the new birth. For example, Peter says we are “born again not by corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (I Peter 1:23).

Paul says, “Tho ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ yet have ye not many Fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel” (I Cor. 4:15).

The Greek word translated “begotten” which Paul here uses is exactly the same Greek word which Jesus used in the term born again. Born and begotten are from the same identical word. Any Greek concordance will prove this.

A sincere and careful study of all Scriptures related to the “new birth” reveals that the Spirit of God, by divine persuasion, produces the change known as the “new birth” whereby a sinner becomes a saint--a child of the devil becomes a child of God. Thus the Spirit is truly the agent of the “new birth; while the Word of God and the one who preaches the word are the instruments of the “new birth”. Paul was the instrument and therefore he says he “begot” the Corinthians “through the Gospel.” Using Paul and the Word, the Spirit of God wrought the change called the “new birth”. Thus as Peter says, they were “born again by the Word of God.”

The Holy Spirit, at conversion begins a cleansing process to clean up selfish motives that have been inspired by Satan. Thus (through conviction) He leads the convert to hate and turn from all sin.

So then, the new birth is like the natural birth, in that a new life takes possession of the one who is “born again”; but not quite unlike the natural birth in the fact that it is voluntary---while the natural birth is wholly involuntary.

The infant, arriving in this world by natural birth certainly has no choice in the matter; whereas to obtain the spiritual birth there must be personal response to the invitation, “whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

In the new birth it is a matter of “God now commands all men everywhere to repent” and some will do so and some refuse. Freedom to choose is the possession of all.

Now certainly the new birth does not deprive a man of his free moral agency. For this reason he can, of course, later, turn his back on God and Christ if he chooses and it is a matter of history that thousands do exactly that. Because God never cancels man’s power of choice, he can of course, be “spiritually unborn”.

Because the new birth is conditioned on repentance (or obedience) and the new birth does not destroy an individual’s freedom of will, it can be revoked or canceled by the will of that individual. The new birth is thus annulled, or becomes spiritually “dead” again “in trespasses in sin” (Eph. 2: 1-2).

Both Jesus and all the apostles clearly taught repentance is essential to Salvation. Even the prophet Isaiah, 700 years

before Christ understood this fact. He said, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

Since God requires forsaking all sin today to get saved, can anyone dare to suppose that He will require less tomorrow than He does today? If it is necessary to stay right with God to get saved, is it not equally necessary to stay right with God to stay saved?

How absurd--how utterly preposterous is the view that sin indulged in the second time is not as ruinous as it was the first, or that God requires less of a saint than He does of a sinner! This sophistry of Satan leads some to believe that because we are not under the law of Moses we have escaped entirely all responsibility of God's laws.

Certainly one is just as filthy and dirty when dragged through the mire of sin the second time as he was after leaving childhood innocence and becoming filthy the first time. The fact is one is more filthy, morally and in Heaven's sight with the second trip into sin than he was the first---because by that time one has gained more light than he had at the start. For it is ever true that the greater the light rejected, the deeper is the guilt of sin.

If sin put a child outside of God's Kingdom---when it comes to the age of accountability, it will certainly do as much to an adult!!!

The teaching that sin does not separate us from God is indeed an absurd fallacy. Such religious sophistry is but one more lie of the devil and by this lie the ranks of Christendom are filled with men and women who profess the Name of Christ, but live in sin.

It fills the ranks of the army of the Lord with traitors and hypocrites who actually neither enter the Kingdom themselves nor permit others to go in, because their lives are stumbling blocks.

Thus today, many preachers who too often themselves are living in sin, and hiding behind this false doctrine, will stand behind the sacred desk and call "the doors of the church are now open. If there is anyone who doesn't have a church home come now while the invitation is extended."

Often not a word is said about repentance, or getting right with God, to say nothing of saying right with God. Thus, sinners are invited to become hypocrites! Later, these hypocrites are invited to be baptized (thereby transforming them from dry hypocrites to wet hypocrites)! Their damnation will be worse because of their hypocrisy! "These shall receive the greater damnation" Mark 12:38-40).

When Jesus saw Pharisees inviting sinners to be church members, without leading them first to repentance, He said, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt.23:15).

The prophet Ezekiel, 600 years before Christ, understood the righteous principles of God's Heavenly Government and taught exactly what Jesus taught about the necessity of getting right and staying right with God. Here are his words: "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live. He shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed they shall not be mentioned unto him. In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Here I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God; and not that he should turn from his ways and live? ...

"But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live. He shall not die" (Ezekiel 18:21-28).

Peter, James and John were the closest to Christ of all His disciples. We have noted how the large majority of John's statements about sin coincide perfectly with Christ's own teachings. Now look at these words of the apostle James: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth and one convert him, let him know that he that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20)

Note: James said if a backsliding "brother" becomes a "sinner" his restoration is, saving a soul, from 'death'." Does this look like "once in grace always in grace---regardless of what we do?"

The apostle Peter puts his thoughts about this matter in these words: "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning -but it happened unto them according to the true proverb, 'the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire'" (II Peter 2:20,22).

Instead of telling hypocrites they are saved even in prostitution and murder, ministers who truly represent Christ will exhort members of their church, as Jesus Christ Himself did in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." True pastors will warn them to stay right with God, to be ready for the coming of their Savior. "Watch ye, therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

