

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XIV

Issue 22

*Published occasionally for Zion's mourners*

*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

---

## THE PRINCIPLES OF DEATH AND DYING

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.*

*How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Romans 6:1-2*

There are various errors of doctrine which arise out of faulty principles of philosophy which have their appeal to the religiosity which is rooted in the sinful flesh of men. These errors become so entrenched in the thinking of men, that to oppose them (even with the plain scriptural truth) is to be thought (by that religious flesh) as to be propagators of false doctrine.

One of the most egregious of those errors that has wrought untold heartache to those who would claim to be the followers of CHRIST; is a doctrine which is called by some, "progressive sanctification" or in its fullest (and foulest) form, "entire sanctification." This doctrine has its roots in the notion that man's service and obedience to GOD arises out of his own free will, and that he has the ability (in his flesh) to improve himself even to the point of ceasing from sin.

Thus the proponents of this doctrine (and they are multitude) begin their error, by supposing that a man is "born again", when he "chooses" to become a follower of CHRIST. This is often called, "making a decision" or "letting the LORD into your heart." If one begins with this notion it is impossible that he could have a true understanding of the depraved nature of man in his natural state or of his absolute deadness in trespasses and sins.

In fact such a notion denies the very description and illustration of the "new birth" which is set forth by our LORD, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:6-8) John had begun his epistle with this plain truth, as he describes the origin of this "new birth" of those who believe, "*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (John 1:13)

It is absolutely necessary that a man have an understanding of the SOURCE of this "birth" if he is ever to have any understanding of the "results" of it. If a man is "born again" by his own free will choice, then he must be its author and all power which might arise out of it must of necessity be subservient to the "will" of the one doing the choosing. This is the foundation for the errors which follow and result in the error of the Galatians, "*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*" (Gal 3:3)

Thus those who think this power resides in the free will of man, must also believe that it is up to him to either bring about a "progression" of "spirituality" (as they might describe it) or to flounder around in mediocrity, backsliding, and/or disobedience. One of the most common forms of expression by those who promote this idea is to say we must "die to ourselves", or "die daily".

Paul did say that he did "die daily", (1 Cor.15:31) but he is not talking about some "progressive death", rather he is speaking of the fact that physical death is not that big of a deal when one considers the hope of the resurrection. He often recounts the many brushes with death that he endured gladly for the cause of CHRIST. "*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*" (Acts 20:24)

Paul understood that death is not something that comes by “degrees” or something that one can experience partially or be more dedicated to one day than the next. There is finality in death. Death is an end of something, not simply a description of how committed one may be to obtaining a particular goal. One cannot continue to “die”.

We read of this in Paul’s arguments concerning the standing of the LORD’s people as a result of that which CHRIST has performed in their behalf. *“For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.(i.e.; forever)” (Rom 6:10)* Death cannot be repeated, and in the particular case of HIS redemptive work, shall not.

The sanctification of the LORD’s people is not a “progressive work” but is rather an accomplished work that is imputed to them through no effort of their own. *“That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (1Cor 1:29-31)*

Paul anticipated the arguments of those (who are intent on going about to establish their own righteousness), when they hear the gospel of grace proclaimed. *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom 6:1-2)* Those who are made free from sin by the blood (i.e.; death) of CHRIST are not the servants of sin nor can they in any wise be condemned by any activity arising from a broken law.

How can we be sure that this is the case? Because CHRIST has died. HE has not left us some unfinished work yet to do nor does HE expect that we could perfect something which is already perfect. *“For he that is dead is freed from sin.” (Rom 6:7)* We know that CHRIST has submitted HIMSELF to the condemnation of sin (i.e.; ours) once. *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:12)* If HE has brought finality to condemnation, standing in the room and stead of HIS elect, how can any charge be laid against them? Most especially since HE has now made them righteous. *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2Co 5:21)*

To the same degree that we were guilty sinners, worthy of death and destruction, we are now made to inherit the essence of GOD’s righteousness in CHRIST, according to the same power of imputation. *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Rom 6:11-14)*

Now once again Paul anticipates the very arguments of those who think they can perfect something which is already perfect, *“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” (Rom 6:15)* Only those who are still alive unto sin could possibly think that it is fitting, proper, and/or desirable to approve the wickedness of their own flesh. Thus he says, *“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” (Rom 6:20)* Yet we are not now the “servants of sin”, for we are dead and our life is hid with CHRIST in GOD, and the deeds of our sinful flesh which we once embraced we now hate. We are no longer “free from righteousness” but are alive in CHRIST and as Paul says, *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” (Rom 7:22)* *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom 8:1-4)* Dead to sin. Alive in CHRIST. mam