

August 27

Henceforth know we no man after the flesh. 2 Corinthians 5:16

THE apostle did not mean that we should pay no attention to the shortcomings of the flesh, either in ourselves or in other members of the body. All fleshly weaknesses should be striven against, and they may

R216 "KNOWING AFTER THE FLESH

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away." 2 Cor. 5:16

Would that all God's children could look at this matter as Bro. Paul here expresses it: Once you and I were alive after the flesh. Then we knew and criticized each other from a fleshly standpoint--"after the flesh," but now the conditions are changed, we have become *New Creatures* in Christ. This new creation, new will, new mind, is still connected with the fleshly body and is thereby in continual danger of being overruled and controlled by the fleshly desires, hence there is a continual warfare between the old and the new natures, and the work of the new is, to conquer and put to death the old nature -- to "crucify the flesh."

...From the time the work begins we should "reckon ourselves dead indeed...but alive toward God." And not only so but we should reckon *each other in Christ as dead* to the flesh. If we were to carry this out fully we should "henceforth know no man (in Christ) after the flesh," and how much sympathy and love this would develop one toward another. If I should see you, a brother in Christ, "overtaken in a fault," would I harshly condemn you? No; I should say to myself: Ah, that dear brother's enemy--his old nature--has overcome him, and instead of harsh condemnation, I would seek to restore such an one, remembering that it is not my brother of the *new creation* which has thus sinned, but that his enemy, the flesh, has for the time being, gained the victory over him. And I should seek to "restore such an one," in loving sympathy, remembering myself lest "I also be tempted" and overcome of my enemy--my fleshly nature.

Would that we thus knew each other after the new nature and not after the flesh. It is thus our Father recognizes us--as new creatures in Christ and looks upon us as pure and spotless, covered by Christ's righteousness, "not imputing our iniquities unto us." He does not know us after the flesh, and oh how blessed it is for us that he does not. Let us thus look at each other and it will help us to "bear one another's burdens." And "ye that are strong (spiritually) can bear the infirmities of the weak." You can remember that your brother's spiritual nature may be weaker than yours and that he may have a stronger enemy to fight in the person of his fleshly nature than you have."

frequently demand rigorous treatment in the interest of the New Creature; but nevertheless, we are to distinctly differentiate between the New Creature and his weak mortal body, and are to love and sympathize with the brother, while it may be necessary for us, in his interest, and also in the interest of the church, to reprove or rebuke or oth-

NS417 "As we progress toward the end of this third quarter mark our love for the brethren grows so deep and strong that we learn to sympathize with them as new creatures in their battlings with the weaknesses of their own flesh in a way that we could not do when first we entered this race course. Those who have attained to this degree of love know each other no longer after the flesh, with its weaknesses; but ignoring these they know each other according to the spirit, according to the heart intentions and strivings, even as the Lord knows us."

IT IS NOT THE FLESH THAT WE
PERFECT, BUT THE WILL

R2446 "We may know assuredly that, until the "new creature" gains a thorough victory over the will of the flesh, we will not be winners of the great prize which is promised only "to him that overcometh." The overcoming, however, will be not in the *perfecting of the flesh*, but in the *perfecting of the heart*, -- the will, the intentions. As for the blemishes of the flesh, some of them, undoubtedly, despite every effort on our part to eradicate them, will continue with us so long as we are in the flesh. The perfection which is to be hoped for, and aimed at and expected and gained by the overcomers, is the perfection of the will, heart, intentions. "Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God." Moreover, our physical weaknesses and defects not only vary in kind but in intensity. Some are by nature more inclined to gentleness, kindness, etc.; others, until accepted of Christ, may have very uncouth, coarse, rude, rough earthen vessels: and while the influence of the treasure within, the "new mind," will be sure in any case to exercise a modifying and transforming effect upon the earthen vessel, we cannot expect as much of a change in some as in others...

While recognizing this difference of "earthen vessels," we of course must use our best endeavors each to correct his own. We are to remember that our relationship to one another in the Body of Christ is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit; hence, as the Apostle declares, we know one another no longer according to the flesh, with its weaknesses, imperfections and ungainly and ungraceful natural tendencies. We know each other only according to the spirit, according to the intentions, according to the heart,--as "new creatures," not as old creatures. (2 Cor. 5:16.) This will lead us to be very pitiful of one another's imperfec-

erwise correct his wrong course. The apostle's definition as to how we are to know the two classes apart is that the unregenerate will mind the things of the flesh, while the regenerate will mind the things of the Spirit. Z.03-170 R3202:3

tions of the flesh, so long as we have the assurance that the flesh does not represent our brother's real self, his mind, his will. We are, therefore, to be gentle toward all, kindly affectioned one toward another, so that so far from desiring to wound one another, or to injure one another, or to devour one another with our tongues, we shall sympathize with each other, do each other good, and by words of grace and comfort, or of admonition and reproof spoken in love, may build one another up in the most holy faith--in the likeness of our Lord and Master."

R4494 "Our bodies are made holy and acceptable to God, not actually, nor by a covenant, nor by a mediator, but by a Redeemer, *"through faith in his blood."*

The merit in our Lord was that of the willing mind, the obedient heart which delighted to do the Father's will, in the perfect body in which it was tested to "obedience even unto death, even to the death of the cross." With us also, the thing that is meritorious in the sight of the Father is the willing mind, the obedient heart, though in an imperfect body, reckoned perfect through faith in the precious blood. We are assured that our trial, our testing, will not be according to our flesh, but according to our renewed wills, minds, hearts... The Divine tests are not to prove our flesh...which is ignored in this testing and counted dead. It is thus as New Creatures that God is testing, and to us he says, "Ye are [reckonedly] not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8:9) And again, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh." (2 Cor. 5:16) God knows us according to the spirit, the will, the heart, the intent.

It is the New Creature which does acceptable works which will be rewarded in the Kingdom. And the rewards will vary as shown by our Lord's parables of the Pounds and the Talents; and as shown in the Apostle's words, "As star differeth from star in glory, so also will be *The Resurrection*, the Church Resurrection. In conclusion then--as men we cannot commend ourselves to God by any works possible to us, because we are all imperfect and our works would be imperfect. But as new creatures our willing services and sacrifices are "holy and acceptable to God" and our reasonable service."

R5854 "Day by day this heart intention must become more and more crystallized, fixed, in the way of righteousness."

R3200 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

NO CONDEMNATION AND NO SEPARATION

--ROM. 8:1-14.--MAY 31.--

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

THE chapter of which this lesson forms a part is unquestionably one of the most precious in the entire Bible. It begins with the assurance that condemnation has passed, and concludes with logical proofs of everlasting divine favor toward those who become "New Creatures" in Christ Jesus. In the preceding chapter the Apostle specially points out condemnation and imprisonment upon the whole

race of Adam as sinners under the divine Law--and especially upon the Jew, additionally under the Mosaic Law. He points out the utter hopelessness of those who attempt to escape the penalty of death by self-justification through "works of the Law." After thus showing the bondage of all, he points to the door of salvation--the redemption in our Lord Jesus: saying, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our

Lord." It is to this class, which gets the victory through Christ, that there is no condemnation, and can be no separation from the divine love and favor, so long as they abide in him as the branch in the Vine.

This lesson is well fitted in, as giving us a glimpse of the Apostle's spiritual liberty and relationship to God at the time of his imprisonment at Caesarea. Once he had had his liberty according to the flesh, and in his ignorance and blindness had done many things contrary to the Lord, not properly appreciating his liberty nor knowing how to use it aright. Now, although a prisoner and outwardly restrained, he had gained great liberty and blessing, and also freedom from divine condemnation, with assurance of hope toward God, not only respecting the present life, but also the one to come.

In the *first verse* the word "therefore" carries us back to the preceding argument, and shows us that our freedom from present condemnation is the result of our Lord's sacrifice on our behalf. (Rom. 7:25.) It is because we appreciate the fact that justice provided a redemption price for our sins, and because we have availed ourselves of the terms offered its beneficiaries, that we realize that the condemnation of the divine Law no longer holds as against us. In his preceding argument the Apostle had clearly shown that the difficulty did not lie in the Law itself; that God could not give an imperfect or, in any sense, an evil Law. The Law was just, perfect and good; the difficulty was in us, that through the inheritance of sin and its weaknesses we were unable fully to comply with the requirements of the divine Law. How, then, do we escape its condemnation? The Apostle answers that we reached the present standpoint of release--freedom from condemnation--when we came into Christ. Others, out of Christ, are still under the condemnation. It is an important question, therefore, for each to decide for himself, whether or not he has taken the step which alone can bring him into this happy condition. The Apostle, in a previous chapter (5:1), marks the first step out of condemnation and into Christ as being justification, which brought peace with God, the covering of the sins that were past; but this was not enough, for if all the sins that were past were cancelled, and no arrangement was made for our daily imperfections of word and deed, we would quickly be again condemned. Hence, to those who would be entirely freed from condemnation, another step was necessary--a step into Christ. These two steps should not be confounded; it is one thing to get out of responsibility for past sins, and quite another step to get into Christ, and under the full covering of his merits as respects all the remainder of life. The two steps are mentioned in Rom. 5:1,2: faith in the redemption brings justification from past sins and peace with God; but by it *also*, as the Apostle explains, we have *access into this grace* (the favor of sonship, membership in the body of Christ) wherein we stand, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God (because glory and honor and immortality are promised to every member of the New Creation--every member of the body of Christ).

The last clause of this verse, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit," is properly omitted by the Revised Version, because not found in ancient MSS. The thought, however, is correct enough, and these very words are found in the conclusion of *verse 4*. The words do not properly apply in *verse 1*, for that describes those who are in Christ, as members of his body, and none are counted as in him except those who are walking after the spirit--not after the flesh.

The Apostle calls our attention (vs. 2) to two laws in operation. We were under one of these, which sentenced us, as sinners, to death. We got out from under that law entirely when we got into Christ Jesus, as members of his body. Our Redeemer kept the Law, was blameless; then gave his blameless life as a redemption price to purchase us who had been the slaves of sin and death from that slavery. We were redeemed by his precious blood. As he was raised to a new nature by the Father's power, we now are invited to become associates with him in that new nature--to be counted in as members of his body, under him as the Head. The whole transaction is one of faith; faith first in his sacrifice, and God's acceptance of it, and our justification thereby. Secondly, faith in our call to membership in his body; faith that our consecration in response to that call made us acceptable with the Father and recorded our names in the Lamb's book of life as children of God upon this new plane. All who can realize that they have taken these two steps may, therefore, realize that from God's standpoint they are no longer thought of nor treated as members of the human family, but as members of the new order--members of the body of Christ.

Hence, they may realize themselves as entirely freed from the condemnation that was against them as human beings, and as having come under a new law, a new arrangement, which in Christ guarantees them life everlasting. The new law judges us as new creatures in Christ, according to the spirit, the mind, the intention, in righteous-

ness, and not as human beings, according to the flesh and its weaknesses and imperfections.

The Law of God--strict justice without mercy--represented in the Mosaic Law and its covenant, could not help the weak, fallen race, because the easiest requirement it could make would be perfection toward God and toward men, and our race being fallen was unable to comply with its demands. It was, therefore, "weak" (powerless) for our deliverance, because we were weak on account of the imperfect, fallen flesh. But God, through Christ, made an arrangement for us which does not violate his own Law--sending his Son to accomplish our redemption--the payment of our penalty. God's Son was not sent in sinful flesh, but "in the likeness," or nature of our flesh, which had become sinful--he, the while, being holy, harmless, separate from sinners. The object of his coming in our likeness is set forth; viz., as an offering for sin--a sin-offering and atonement-sacrifice on our behalf.

This course in no sense of the word justified sin-- in no degree made sin right, or declared it proper. On the contrary, the very means which God adopted for our relief, at the same time "condemned sin in the flesh." Thus at the same time that the door of salvation was opened to us we were most emphatically assured that there was no hope in any other direction.

Notwithstanding the great clearness and explicitness with which this doctrine of the necessity for a sacrifice for sins is set forth in the Scriptures--in the Old Testament as well as in the New--it seems remarkable that some still stumble over it. There is no avoiding the conviction that there is something wrong with their hearts, else their heads would not thus become confused respecting a matter which is so explicitly set forth in the Word. The Apostle points out that it was so with the Jews as a nation. They stumbled over the cross of Christ;--they then admitted and still acknowledge that Jesus was a great Teacher. Rabbis all over the world today are claiming Jesus as a great Jew, whose teachings have blessed the world in great measure. Their dispute is with the cross of Christ;--that they were sinners who have no way of escape except through an atonement on their behalf, and that Christ's death constituted the sin-offering, through faith in which alone any may become acceptable to God--justified. The same objection exists in the heart of the natural man who is not a Jew. He prefers to climb up some other way, rather than to go through the door; he would use the teachings of Jesus as a ladder to get into the sheepfold; but declines to enter through him as a door, and to acknowledge himself condemned of God and irretrievably lost, except as the great sacrifice for sins and the merit of the Redeemer are applied on his behalf. Nevertheless, those who refuse God's way will find that it is unalterable, and that "there is none other name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved." Those who will not enter by this door, those who will not accept the forgiveness of their sins through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, cannot have the divine favor, cannot be considered members of the body of Christ nor heirs with him--they are not *in* Christ Jesus--they are yet in their sins, because they believe not God's testimony. Some are now in this attitude who were once in the light of truth on this subject; who once had on the wedding garment, but took it off--rejected the robe of Christ's righteousness, and are attempting to stand before God in their own righteousness, merely accepting Jesus as a Teacher and not as a Redeemer. We consider the condition of such to be most dangerous. We cannot feel sure that they will ever have an opportunity to accept again the merit of the precious blood which they once enjoyed and spurned, "counting the blood of the covenant [the death of Jesus] wherewith they were [once] sanctified an unholy [common] thing," thus doing despite unto the spirit of grace--despising, disdaining, repudiating the favor of divine forgiveness through the blood. So rejecting the Redeemer, they take their cases out of the hands of the Mediator of the ^(*)New Covenant. Thus they fall at once into the hands of the living God, and are subject to the full requirements of the absolute Law without mercy--because all of God's mercy extended to sinners is in and through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood. We do not say that all who reject the blood of the covenant do so thus to their everlasting loss, but are glad to believe, on the contrary, that many of them have been so blinded by the god of this world that they have never seen clearly and, hence, never rejected entirely the blood-bought robe of righteousness. For all such we shall expect that the light of the new dispensation will show them the divine plan clearly, and we shall trust that many of them will be ready humbly to accept God's grace upon his own terms.

The Apostle points out (vs. 4) that this Law of the spirit of life in which we as new creatures in Christ rejoice is really the same

^(*) Please see an important clarification on the New Covenant in the Volume 6 Forward of "STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES"

Law that once condemned us-- that the change from condemnation to death to justification to life signifies no change in the Law, but a change in our position. It is a law of life to us, because, by God's grace through Christ, we have come into a place where we are able to comply with the requirements of the Law and to *fulfill* them. It is not our flesh that has been changed, so that it is perfect and able to obey the Law, but that as New Creatures the flesh is *reckoned* dead, and we are *reckoned* according to the spirit or mind; and with our minds, or spirits, or wills, we are able to keep God's Law perfectly--that is to say, we can will to do right, we can endeavor to do right, we can strive to please God, and so long as God accepts the will, the intention, the endeavor, and ignores our flesh and its uncontrollable weaknesses, that long we can realize that the divine Law approves us; and that will be just so long as we abide in our present position as members of the body of Christ, and we are privileged to remain members of the body of Christ just so long as our desires are for righteousness and in opposition to sin. The New Creature does not love sin, but, instead, loves righteousness, the very reverse. If the will, the heart, should turn again, so as to love unrighteousness, so as to desire to do the things that are contrary to the Lord's will, it would mean that we had died as New Creatures, and become alive again as fleshly creatures, to mind the things of the flesh, to have its hopes, its aims and its objects. In that case we should come again under the law of sin and death, and be judged again according to the flesh, the sentence, as before, being, "The wages of sin is death." Moreover, such a turning, as a sow to wallowing in the mire, and as a dog to his vomit, would, in the case of those who have become New Creatures in Christ and so passed out of Adamic death, mean the Second Death--the result of their own wilful rejection of God's favor through Christ, which they spurn after having once enjoyed. It will be seen, then, that there are two ways of rejecting God's grace; one by turning to sin (not merely by being overcome of the weaknesses of the flesh temporarily, but by a deliberate choosing of sin, and intentional abandonment of righteousness); the other by a mental rejection of the conditions of favor--a mental repudiation of the blood of the (*)New Covenant. These two forms of committing the sin unto death--unto Second Death--are clearly set before us by the Apostle in Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31.

There is force, then, in the Apostle's explicit definition of the class justified under the Law of the spirit of life--that it is those who are in Christ, and who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit--who are not seeking to satisfy the cravings, appetites and desires of the flesh, but are seeking to control these, and to keep them in subjection to the new mind, to their utmost ability. Walking after the spirit does not necessarily mean walking *up to* the spirit. Only the Lord Jesus could walk *up to* the spirit of the perfect Law of God; but all the members of his body, all who are in Christ Jesus, may walk *after* the spirit--as nearly up to it as may be possible for them to do. Such a walk is acceptable to God, in the case of all those who are abiding in Christ, through faith in his blood. If, by reason of weaknesses of the flesh, through an unfavorable heredity, they be very degraded and weak, and able merely to hobble along with difficulty and slowness after the spirit, they are nevertheless counted as though they walked up to the spirit perfectly. In other words, God's arrangement for accepting the will, the intention, of the members of the body of Christ, instead of their actual performances, meets every requirement, and justifies freely, fully, completely, all who are in Christ-- not one of whom could have been justified by the Law under the Jewish covenant or otherwise.

The Apostle answers a supposed question as to how we may know those who are New Creatures in Christ and walking after the spirit, from others. This is a difficult question. There are some not in Christ whose flesh is much less depraved than that of some who are in Christ; hence, if they were measured by the deeds of the flesh, the one in Christ might appear to less advantage than the one out of Christ. The Lord, therefore, exhorts his people to judge not by outward appearance merely, assuring them that some are hypocritical, and that God looketh on the heart, the intention. So again the Apostle enjoins us, saying, ⁽¹⁾"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh." He did not mean that we should pay no attention to the shortcomings of the flesh, either in ourselves or in other members of the body. All fleshly weaknesses should be striven against, and they may frequently demand rigorous treatment in the interest of the New Creature; but, nevertheless, we are to distinctly differentiate between the New Creature and his weak mortal body, and are to love and sympathize with the brother, while it may be necessary for us, in his interest, and also in the interest of the Church, to reprove or rebuke

or otherwise correct his wrong course. The Apostle's definition of how we are to know the two classes apart is (vs. 5) that the unregenerate will mind the things of the flesh, while the regenerate will mind the things of the spirit. There is a great gulf fixed between these two classes, and there should be no need that any one should long be in doubt on the subject of whether he is or is not a member of the Church, the body of Christ. If he is in Christ he has the new ambitions, the new hopes, the new aims, and however short he may at times come of realizing these aims and ambitions, his heart being right it will always revert to the divine standard. His affections are for the things that are just and pure and good, however he may find the law of sin and death assailing him, through the weaknesses of his mortal body. He is not to be content with merely this condition of mental preference for the right and having his heart solicitous for righteousness, experiencing grief if he finds himself overcome by temptation; but, as the Apostle elsewhere enjoins, he is to be so deeply in earnest about the matter that he will not only do his best to right every wrong, but will continue seeking for grace at the heavenly throne, that he may be more and more able to overcome, that he may grow stronger and stronger in spirit, and that the power of his flesh may be correspondingly weakened. The Apostle exhorts such to make straight paths for their feet, for their weaknesses, for their lameness, according to the flesh--to avoid the ways of temptation and weakness as they discover them, and thus show their hearts' desires for righteousness. He urges again that all keep continually setting their affections on things above, so that the things of the earth may have less and less influence and control over them to hinder them in their course. He urges that the heart, the mind, the lips, the conduct, that are filled with the Lord's truth and service, will be thus sanctified and separated so that the Wicked One will find less and less opportunity to take the advantage.

The matter is set forth in still different terms in vs. 6, 7. We are to distinguish the mind of the flesh from the mind that is in accord with God, for the one is at enmity with God and the other in harmony with him. The mind that is in harmony with God finds delight in his Law, in righteousness, purity, goodness, peace, faith, through the promises of God, and looks forward with joy to the glorious realization of all the wonderful hopes inspired through those promises. The fleshly mind (however polite or polished or well educated and decorous and under control of the mortal body) is not in accord with God; it has its own ambitions, its own plans, and takes pleasure in these, and is grieved if they are thwarted; builds its hopes and aims chiefly upon what can be attained in this present life; is not in accord with God, nor disposed to accept with gratitude whatever he may be pleased to send; but rather is full of choice and self-will--not subject to divine control, nor can it be, because it is fleshly, and because, at the present time, all mankind is in a state of sin, alienation from God, etc. These two conditions of mind are contrasted, and the Apostle assures us that the one is death; that it means death; means that the person who has that mind is still in the death condition, has not received Christ as the Life-giver. "He that hath the Son hath life," and may have, too, a joy and peace of the new mind in Christ; but he who has not the Son, he who has not surrendered his will, is still in death, still under condemnation, still an alien from God.

This does not mean that those whom we are unable to bring now under the scope of the gospel of Christ may never become amenable to it. It does not mean, either, that the flesh itself is opposed to God, and God opposed to the flesh. The word "flesh" here is used in the sense of sinful flesh, because all mankind, through the fall, has become sinful. Originally, however, as represented in Father Adam before the fall, the flesh was pronounced very good, and God's own workmanship, in his own image, was not opposed to the Law of God, but in full accord with it. The divine Law was written in the very organism of our first parents; the difficulty is that through the fall this divine Law has been very considerably obliterated, and instead the law of selfishness--which includes all evil --has been engraven upon the hearts of their posterity. Hence the proposition of the Lord for the world is that he will restore all mankind to that primeval condition, for which times of restitution have been provided and promised by the mouth of all the holy prophets. (Acts 3:19-21.) It is in full accord with this that the Lord, speaking of the operation of the New Covenant, declares that under it (Christ being the minister of that New Covenant and its administrator during the time of its operation) he will take away the stony heart of selfishness, and will make a new heart of flesh, tender, sympathetic, generous, God-like. In other words, he will re-write in the organism of mankind, by the processes of the Millennial age,--the times of restitution,--all the original character and God-likeness and law which he possessed as originally created. When perfection shall have thus been accomplished for so many as will receive the Lord's favor on his terms of love and hearty obedience, it will no longer be

(*) Please see an important clarification on the New Covenant in the Volume 6 Forward of "STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES"

(1) Aug 27 Manna, 2Cor. 5:16

true that the mind of the flesh will be at enmity with God, as it was not true originally, when Adam was in accord with God.

To understand the Apostle it must be kept clearly in mind that he is writing these words, not to the world nor about the world, but to the saints and about the saints. He is describing the condition of those who have passed from death unto life, who have become New Creatures, contrasting them with the world, still in sin and divine disfavor. They that are in the flesh, living according to their own wills, who have not heard, or, hearing, have not accepted God's grace in Christ, cannot please God, cannot be said to be acquitted, cannot be considered as under divine favor.

Turning to the Church, the Apostle points out, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you." The Apostle here indicates what it is that constitutes us New Creatures. We are New Creatures because begotten again; because begotten of the spirit of God. We were not thus begotten until first we had been justified by faith in the blood of Christ, and then had heard the invitation to present our bodies living sacrifices, and then had complied with that invitation and consecrated our all upon the Lord's altar. *Then* we received the spirit of God; *then* we were recognized as New Creatures in Christ--as no longer flesh beings, but as spirit beings.

Here, then, is the test. Those who have the spirit of Christ must have been begotten to it; those who have not the spirit of Christ are not his. Thus we are to judge ourselves, and thus we are to judge of the brethren--by the spirit, the intention, the will, and not by the success, not by the flesh. Oh, how generous this would make us in our judging of the brethren! If they profess and give any evidence of loving the Lord, trusting in the precious blood, loving holy things, loving the brethren, loving the word of grace and truth, and of seeking to develop the fruits of the spirit, they are surely brethren, surely "in Christ." If they have not this spirit, love the world, prefer worldly company, give themselves wholly to worldly ambitions, pride of life and self-gratification, we have strong reason to doubt their relationship to the Lord, no matter what they may profess. And this feature of the matter should be especially applied by each one of us to himself, as an individual test of his relationship to the Lord, and each one who finds the spirit of worldliness growing upon him should feel that he is losing ground, should seek afresh to set his affection on things above and to grow in grace.

"THE BODY IS DEAD."

The Apostle explains that in the case of these New Creatures in Christ, from the divine standpoint the body is treated as dead, but the spirit, or mind, is treated as alive. It is the New Creature which God recognizes, to which he purposes to give a new spirit-body in due time--in the first resurrection. It is necessary that this thought be clearly fixed in our minds, in order that we may continually realize our peace toward God and his favor and sympathy toward us in Christ. If we lose sight of the fact that God regards us from the standpoint of the will, if we get to thinking of ourselves and God's estimate of us as according to the flesh, we are sure to get proportionately into darkness and confusion and discouragement. But let us not forget, on the other hand, that the spirit, or will, is counted alive because of its righteousness, because it is in harmony with God. Let us, therefore, never be slack in respect to the will, or intention, governing the conduct of our lives, but remember that any laxity will mean the proportionate loss of spiritual life. To will right is always possible to us, and nothing less than an absolutely loyal will could be acceptable to God in Christ.

However, as the Apostle explains in vs. 11, if God's spirit animates us, the result will surely be that these bodies which we reckon dead, and which God graciously reckons dead, will be so quickened, so energized, so controlled by the new mind, the holy mind, the spirit of our new nature, that they will become actively "quickened"--toward righteousness, toward the service of the Lord, the service of the truth--in doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith. This is only what we should expect, too, for the spirit of God is powerful in whatever way it be applied. As an illustration of its power, the Apostle points us to our Lord Jesus and his literal death, and how God's holy spirit raised Jesus from the dead in his resurrection. The thought is that this power of God thus exercised on behalf of the Lord Jesus, and which he promises so to exercise in the close of this age on behalf of all the faithful members of the body of Christ, indicates a power of God by which, if we avail ourselves of it, the new nature will find strength to conquer, to keep the flesh under, and, more than this, to make it active, energetic in the service of righteousness. The Apostle is not here speaking of the future resurrection of the just--the completion of the first resurrection as spirit beings. He is speaking of the figurative resurrection, which the Lord's consecrated people experience in this present time. As he elsewhere expresses it, "If ye then be risen with

Christ, seek those things which are above;" and again, "You hath he quickened [made alive, resurrected figuratively] who were dead in trespasses and sins,...and hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."--Col. 3:1; Eph. 2:1,6.

The sum of the matter, then, is that we who are New Creatures find that we do not owe anything as New Creatures to the flesh; that all of our advantages and blessings have come to us along other lines. We ought, therefore, to ignore the flesh and its desires and appetites, and ought to walk as strictly after the spirit as possible in all of our affairs. Do we ask why? One answer is here given (vs. 13), "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." We who have received the grace of God, who have heard of his mercy and love, and have been accepted in the Beloved, have counted all our earthly interests as sacrifices, that we might have share with Christ in the sufferings of this present time and in the glory that shall follow. For us to live after the flesh would mean to die in the most absolute sense --the Second Death--because we have had the full benefit of the ransom already imputed to us. There is hope for the world, which knows, as yet, comparatively little or nothing of the grace of God, which has not tasted, has not seen, etc.--there is hope for the members of this class that under the Kingdom rule they will be caused to see clearly, and may then respond obediently to the divine arrangement; but if we sin *willfully* after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins for us--therefore, there would remain no future hope for us. But, on the other hand, let us hope that few of those who have accepted the grace of God are disposed to draw back unto perdition; but are rather disposed to go on and to secure the end of their faith,--glory, honor and immortality, joint heirship in the Kingdom. To us who are thus minded the Apostle's words are encouraging, when he says, "If ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."⁽²⁾ The condition upon which we may continue our relationship to the Lord, and our hope for a share in the glories of the first resurrection are thus definitely stated to include mortification of the deeds of the body--restraining the fleshly inclinations, putting them to death, crucifying them, using them up in the service of the Lord and his cause. Such mortification of the deeds of the body, such a battle against the weaknesses of the flesh, is what the Apostle elsewhere speaks of as the "warfare," when he tells us that the flesh warreth against the spirit, and the spirit in turn warreth against the flesh, for the two are contrary, and will be opponents to the end of life; and if the spirit has been willing, and has fought to the best of its ability against the weaknesses of the flesh, the Lord will count the victory complete, through the merit of the Redeemer.

We are not to think of this as being the warfare of a fleshly will against a spiritual will, nor the battling of the old nature against the new nature. These are erroneous conceptions, not in accord with the Scriptural delineations. We cannot have two wills and yet be in Christ. We cannot serve two masters. The matter must be decided--it must be settled before we are accepted to membership in the body of Christ. Hence it is, that a full consecration of all that we have and are is necessary to membership in Christ. Henceforth there is only the one will, the will of Christ. As for the will of the flesh, we do not own it to be ours; we ignore it, we oppose it--we are the New Creatures; the will of the flesh and, in general, the flesh, are contrary, and thus reckoned by the Lord as well as by us as dead; we must keep the body under--keep it dead; we must not allow a fleshly will to assert itself in us. This does not mean that we can hinder a fleshly desire, but there is a vast difference between a desire and a will. Our flesh may desire various things which we believe the will of God would oppose, but our wills will not consent. Even though through weakness of the flesh an error might have been committed, the will could not have consented so long as it was loyal to the Lord. The new will may have fallen temporarily into a stupor and so have come under the power of the flesh for a time, but as surely as it was the new will it never consented to sin and never *approved* of it.

⁽³⁾This, then, is the guide by which we may know our true position, not only at the beginning of the race, but to the end of it; viz., if we are led by the spirit of God--if that is the direction in which we are following, if that is what we are seeking--then we are sons of God; he owns and accepts all who have come unto him through Christ, and who are trusting in the merit of the wedding garment, and who continue in this attitude of heart. These will continue to be owned of the Lord as sons to the end of the present journey, to the end of the present time of sacrifice; and beyond he will own them as his sons in the first resurrection, giving them the suitable spirit bodies he has promised them.--Rom. 8:14; 2 Tim. 2:11,12; 1 John 3:2.

⁽²⁾ May 5 Manna, Rom. 8:13

⁽³⁾ May 6 Manna, Rom. 8:14