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## **BEGOTTEN OF GOD – HE CANNOT SIN**

**"He that is begotten of God sinneth not, for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin." – I Jno. 3:9.**

AS in human nature there is an earthly begetting and an earthly birth, so, the Scriptures inform us, the Lord purposes during this Gospel Age to develop creatures of a new nature. These are spoken of as first begotten of the holy Spirit, at the time of their consecration, and subsequently developed and ultimately "born from the dead" as "members of the Body of Christ" – sharers "in his resurrection," "the First Resurrection," the Chief Resurrection.

The begetting power the Scriptures declare to be the Word of Truth. Through this Word God operates in us first of all, and if we respond to the drawing we shall be brought into relationship with Christ through faith, recognizing him as the Sin-Bearer, as the Great Advocate who is willing to appropriate a share of his merit to us and thus to justify us from Adamic sin and the imperfections of the flesh, which we no longer approve. The Word of God having convinced us that all unrighteousness is sin, and we, having reached that place where we desire to be in accord with God and with righteousness, [R4614 : page 165] are informed through his Word that they who would become fully his in the present time, and receive his invitation to become members of the Body of Christ, to join with our Lord in the laying down of earthly life, may "present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, their reasonable service."

When we do this, our Lord Jesus, as Advocate, imputes his merit to us, and we are accepted of the Father, during this "acceptable time of the Lord" – this Gospel Age, while the full number of the "elect" are being chosen. The Father's acceptance

is indicated by the impartation of the holy Spirit, and we are "begotten [this text improperly translates it 'born'] of God." The word for "born" and "begotten," being the same (gennaō) in the Greek, the context must indicate which should be used. In the present case it should be the word "begotten," because the New Creature is at this time but an embryo; it has not a new body; it has merely a new mind, a new will, a new disposition, which has been engendered by the Spirit of Truth and accepted of the Father as a begetting to the spirit nature.

Everything connected with this New Creature is pure and sinless; it has none of the Adamic condemnation nor imperfection. It never had. It cannot agree to sin because it is out of harmony with sin. The desire for sin [R4615 : page 165] which might still lurk in the fallen members of our body, would be called, as the Apostle terms it, "the motions of sin in the flesh," or the struggles of the flesh. The flesh is reckoned dead, but is not actually dead – merely "dying daily." The New Creature thus contending against the flesh and mortifying the flesh, makes progress in proportion to its energy and success in this direction.

### **"HIS SEED REMAINETH IN HIM AND HE CANNOT SIN"**

If this new will, this new mind, that God has accepted and recognized as a New Creature, should ever, knowingly, intentionally, approve of sin and connive at sin, this would prove that the Spirit of the Lord, the new mind, is gone, because it is merely the new will, the new disposition, at the present time that represents this New Creature. It is not the flesh; it is not the gray matter of the brain; it is the will which controls the brain and seeks to regulate the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and, so far as possible, all the actions of the daily life. The new will is the New Creature in the most emphatic sense. If, then, the will has ceased to be in harmony with God's will, it has perished as a new

will and is merely the old will revived. This would indicate that the seed of truth, the seed of this power of God, has died in the individual; for as long as "*his seed remaineth in him he cannot sin.*" He cannot intentionally and knowingly approve sin or practice sin.

The New Will might at times be entrapped, because the will is very particularly identified with the body, with the human brain, and therefore with all the affairs of life. At such times it might become thoughtless respecting its obligations and the propriety of its course, and so the New Creature might be overtaken in a fault; but it could not be a New Creature and yet have a will or intention to do that which is evil – contrary to righteousness and to the Divine will and intention.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (I John 1:8.) How shall we harmonize this text with the preceding one is a question that comes up? The Apostle is not here saying that our *flesh* sins and that *we* do not sin. Nor do we understand him to be saying, "If any man says that his flesh does not sin he is a liar," but we understand him to be saying, "If we [New Creatures] say that we have no sin, the truth is not in us." He is thus saying that we, New Creatures, are responsible for sin. We understand the solution of this to be found in the difference between the will or *intention* of the New Creature, and the *ability* of the New Creature. The New Creature never wilfully sins, never intentionally does wrong, but may be ensnared through the evil propensities of its fallen body of flesh.

This earthly body is reckoned dead and God has nothing to do with it. God does not judge nor deal with dead things; "ye are dead," so far as the flesh is concerned. Hence God is not judging the body; he is not noting what your body did, what you as a human being did, because you no longer exist as a human being, from the Divine standpoint or records. Your whole standing with

God is as a New Creature; but you have a *responsibility* for your body, your tongue, your hands, your feet, and all that these do. As a steward over these it is for you, as a New Creature, to do the best with them that you can, and you are responsible for them.

To illustrate: If a man owns a dog and knows the dog has a bad temper and will bark and bite and annoy the neighbors, it is his duty to muzzle the dog or chain it. If the dog gets loose at any time and bites somebody, the dog will not be sued in court, because the dog has no responsibility in the matter, but the suit will be brought against the owner of the dog. He is the one that is held responsible for what the dog does.

So in the Divine Court, we as New Creatures are held responsible for our body – for what our hands do, for what our feet do, and for what our tongues do. If, therefore, the body sins, the New Creature is charged with that sin, whatever it may be – whether it be a grievous sin or a less sin; and when we say, "if the body sins," we are merely putting it in an accommodated form, because we know that in the flesh there is no perfection; that there is not a New Creature who has a body that is perfect and that can keep the law of God absolutely.

**"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE  
THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US"**

Thus we see that every New Creature is charged with the defects of his mortal flesh. These, in the Scriptures, are called "trespasses," and in the Lord's Prayer we are instructed what we should do with respect to these trespasses. When we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us," we are not referring to Adamic sin, which God does not forgive, but which is atoned for by the merit of Christ, imputed to us. When we speak here of "trespasses" we are referring to those sins which we as New Creatures commit unintentionally, against the Divine plan or law because entrapped

or ensnared by our infirmities or by the surrounding conditions and temptations of life. These might overcome the New Creature and swerve him from his course, just as the bringing of a magnet into the vicinity of a compass might cause the needle of the compass temporarily to deviate; this would not mean that the compass has been spoiled, nor that it is a bad compass because temporarily it has been turned from its proper course; and so with us. The new mind, the new will, is in harmony with God and anything which might distract it in any degree would be merely a temporary matter and would not necessarily mean our imperfection as New Creatures. In the case of the compass, if the opposing magnet were removed, the needle of the compass would immediately revert to the North; and so with us, if the overpowering temptation were out of the way, our hearts, as New Creatures, would at once revert to loyalty to God. This illustration, of course, is not a perfect one **[R4615 : page 166]** because the compass has no intelligence, no will, no power to improve itself nor to add to its resistance of outside influences.

These trespasses, as we bring them to the throne of grace, would not be forgiven unless we had an Advocate, and then our Advocate could do nothing for us except as he had merit at his command that he could appropriate on our behalf, because God is dealing on lines of strict and absolute justice. Hence when we come to the throne of heavenly grace the basis of our faith and confidence should be that we have a great High Priest who has entered for us into the "Most Holy"; that this Great One is our Advocate with God, and that the basis of his effective advocacy is the merit of his sacrifice – that he has the wherewithal to satisfy Justice on behalf of all of those imperfections that are ours unwittingly, unintentionally.

God might have arranged that the merit of Christ's sacrifice should not only cover or be effective for "all those sins that are past through the forbearance of God" at the time of our

acceptance as New Creatures, but should also be applied for all further imperfections of the flesh to the very end of our lives. But he did not make such an arrangement and evidently he purposed this that it might be to our advantage, so that when we trespass we might have the humiliating experience of being forced to come "to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find help for every time of need." Whoever has had any experience as a child of God in coming to the throne of grace has, doubtless, to some extent, had this very humiliation.

If, for instance, the New Creature found that he was overtaken in the same fault a second time, it would produce special humiliation, and every additional humiliation should make that New Creature more and more earnest in his endeavors that this particular lesson should be well learned – that never again need he make application along the same line to the Lord for forgiveness. Thus we see in this arrangement of the Lord a great blessing – a blessing in that it will keep us humble and also keep us continually coming to the throne of grace and cognizant of the fact that we are imperfect according to the flesh; keep us looking at the standard which God has set, to see to what extent we are still imperfect; and will lead us to watch ourselves daily that we may grow as New Creatures. In harmony with this the Apostle Paul, addressing New Creatures, says: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."

We must understand the Apostle here to mean that if any man sin because of his not having a perfect body, if he sin because of the imperfection of the flesh and surrounding temptations, but who as a New Creature desires to do God's will, let him "come boldly to the throne of Heavenly grace." Let him have courage to come. Let him not delay to come. As a matter of fact, however, we know that many do delay to come to the throne of grace; they feel ashamed to go to the Heavenly Father to acknowledge that

they have made another failure; and thus hindered by their shame, or by their pride, or by discouragement, they are in great danger, because the longer they remain away the more serious will their condition become, the colder will be their heart and the more numerous will be the spots upon their "robe of righteousness."

### **GREAT COMPANY MUST WASH THEIR ROBES AND MAKE THEM WHITE**

And so it is that those who are most fervent in spirit and most fully in accord with the Lord are very careful that not even a single spot shall soil their robe of righteousness; but if a spot should appear they hasten at once to have it cleansed with the blood of Christ; while others who take a different course grow gradually more and more careless until their robe becomes very much spotted and the cloud between them and the Lord becomes darker and darker, and they may perhaps be engulfed in worldliness, and eventually incur the penalty of the Second Death. Even in the case of those with whom it does not eventuate so seriously, we see the picture given us in the Scriptures of how deplorable is their condition; that they will not be accounted worthy to be of the "Little Flock"; they [R4616 : page 166] will not be accounted worthy to be of the Royal Priesthood; they must suffer many stripes; and the very highest position possible for them to attain is a place in the antitypical Levite company, the "Great Company," servants of the Royal Priesthood.

This picture is given us, we remember, in Revelation, 7th chapter, where the "Great Company" is shown as washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. There would be no need of washing the entire robe unless the entire robe were spotted. Those who keep their garments unspotted from the world by noting every spot which might appear, and go to the throne of grace immediately that they, as New Creatures, may

"walk in white" – these are the ones who are pleasing in the Lord's sight. It is to this class that we all wish to belong.

### **WHEN THE NEW CREATURE CEASES TO EXIST**

It might be asked, at this time, how does Christ act as Advocate for the sins of the New Creature and apply his merit for their sins? We answer that all the sins that are charged to the New Creature are the earthly weaknesses and imperfections, and Christ's merit is all of an earthly kind. He has nothing to give away of a heavenly kind. The sacrifice he made was an earthly sacrifice, the merit of which has been imputed to those who come to the Father through him; so it is merely for the earthly sins, and the unwilling sins, so far as the New Creature is concerned, that his merit is applied.

If the New Creature is unfaithful in the sense of agreeing to sin then the New Creature *ceases to be* – there is no New Creature there. But the New Creature might be asleep and might be entrapped in that way; as for example: There might be a servant who is at heart loyal to his master in that he would not wish to connive with robbers that they might enter the house; but if that servant were careless with respect to the locks on the doors and a thief should break in through that carelessness, he is unfaithful, and is a transgressor to that extent. But if he had connived with the marauders and robbers and had opened the door to let them in, he would be no longer a servant; he would be no longer a member of that household, but an enemy. He would be a robber himself.

So if we as New Creatures connive at sin and make provision for the flesh and watch for opportunities to get into relationship with sinful things, the New Creature in that case has ceased to be a New Creature. He is an old creature, merely masquerading, and there would be no further hope for such a one. He has passed beyond hope. But if he has been careless and the robbers (we

speak of these sinful propensities as robbers) have insidiously engaged him in conversation, and one is enticing him to hold open the door for conversation, while another goes around in some other way and thus breaks in, he is responsible to the extent that he has communed at all with any of these influences. He has no right to have anything whatever to do with sin. He has no right to have any fellowship with sinful things. He should have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness, nor be in **[R4616 : page 167]** harmony with them in any sense of the word, but should turn from them as from an enemy. We have no right to have any fellowship or sympathy with that which the master of the house has prohibited. The Master of our house is Christ the Lord, and his will and his rule are to be respected, not only in the outward letter, of apparently trying to keep the house secure, but to the full extent of resisting and treating as enemies everything that is not in accord with him. The more firmly we get this thought fixed in our minds the greater will be the power that we shall find supporting our new wills in this resistance of sin.

### **"MY SOUL, BE ON THY GUARD"**

According to the Scriptures, as well as according to our own experience and that of many others of which we have knowledge, all sin which comes in upon a New Creature, comes very insidiously and generally in some soft way. An outward attack, like throwing stones, is never made. One would shut the door promptly against such an attack; but it is the smooth-spoken sins, the smooth-tongued sins, that come in, the sins that appear to be right. Going back to the illustration of the dog: It is when we feel that there is some provocation for letting down the chain, so that the dog can do some good with his teeth – that there is somebody that ought to be bitten – that is the time when we throw ourselves open to danger. We are slow to learn to fully appreciate the fact that the dog is not to bite *anybody*; he is not to bite the friends of the family, nor the enemies of the family. He is to be kept chained

all the time. Then, as to how much the dog may bark: You can readily see what that would mean. That is evil speaking. If the dog keeps on barking he will annoy not only the family, but also the neighbors and friends and even the enemies. The New Creature has no right to allow this. His tongue may speak that which is good and that only. This is an absolute command: "*Speak evil of no man*" – not only of no man in the Church, but of no man outside of the Church; and in this case, the *man* includes the *woman*.

We might ask if our Lord Jesus, when he ascended up on high, "there to appear in the presence of God for us," applied the whole of his merit; and if so, what has he now to apply for these daily trespasses that we unwittingly and unwillingly commit and on account of which we are bidden to come with courage to the throne of Heavenly grace and remember that we have an Advocate? We answer that our Lord, when he died, gave into the Father's hands the entire merit of his earthly life, but he did not apply it to any specific use or purpose. He merely said, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit" – my all is given up to the Father. When he ascended up on high all those earthly life-rights were in the Father's hands, were in bank, so to speak. But it is one thing to have something in bank and another thing to appropriate money to others. Our Lord deposited his merit in the heavenly bank, so to speak, and it was there for him when he ascended up on high to make appropriation of it.

What appropriation did he make? He did not appropriate his entire merit to one individual and as soon as that individual was through using it, appropriate the whole to another individual; but all this merit of his, in every particular and in the widest scope it could possibly cover, was left in the hands of God, and he did not appropriate it all at one time, but merely drew against it. As we would say if we were speaking financially; he drew many drafts against that deposit; he imputed a share of that merit to each one

who would believe in him and turn from sin and make a consecration such as he has made, and would seek to walk in his steps to the end of the journey.

So, then, our Lord's merit was not merely for believers living at the time of his death, but for us who are now living and for all consecrated believers of the obedient class, and for all of their interests. But while it was all put into God's hands for that purpose and left there as security for all that class, nevertheless it went out or was individually applied as each one needed it. At that time there was only a small number of disciples, about five hundred brethren, and the merit, or imputation of merit, to cover their Adamic sin and render them acceptable as sacrifices, was granted instantaneously, and as a result the holy Spirit came upon all those in that waiting attitude at Pentecost. The Lord has since been appropriating his merit to all those who come to the Father by him; this merit is applied to no others, and it flows from that same source and fountain of grace. It is not only sufficient to apply for all the sins, imperfections and blemishes of the past, but is sufficient for all the imperfections and blemishes as long as we remain in the flesh, because it has not been given wholly at any time, but remains as a continual fountain of supply, from which we may daily draw.

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