

PREFACE 4 DIFFERENT VIEWS (Of the Christian Walk)

View One

The first view taken from the book Kenneth Wuests wrote Word Studies of Romans. (His **word** studies is taken from the Greek language.) On page 93 he states Christians are dead to sin. Just what does that mean? This paper is his explanation of Romans 6.

View Two

View two is taken from Brother Lee's writings on transformation for the body life. His view is not an exchange life but changed, a transformed life. His main point is the word ... **process** ... a process of metabolism.

View Three

The third view is taken from the footnote of the . . . Open Bible . . . it is a **new nature**. This view is probably the most held view by evangelical Christians and seminaries. According to this view we now have the ability to obey all the commandments and the words of Christ. The old man is still there . . . but the new man must be put on. The new man must continue to grow into this new life.

View Four

View four is by Watchman Nee . . . it is an exchanged life not a changed life. Christ is now living in us. We put off our living (the old man). The Lord was our substitute on the cross. He now lives as our substitute instead of us. "I no longer live but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20).

View I

Death means separation. Physical death is the separation of a person from his body, spiritual death, the separation of a person from God. There is a preposition prefixed to the verb (*apo*) which means "off, away from," and is used with the ablative case whose root meaning is separation. This teaches us that there was a cleavage consummated between the individual and his evil nature. God used His surgical knife to cut the believing sinner loose from his evil nature. This occurred potentially in the mind and purpose of God when that believing sinner, elected to salvation before the universe was created, was identified with the Lord Jesus in His death on the Cross (Romans 6:3-7), and actually, the moment he placed his faith in Him as Saviour. Now, while God separated the believing sinner from the evil nature, yet He did not take it out of him, but left it in his inner being. John in his first letter (1 John 1:8) is most careful to tell us that this evil nature remains in the Christian throughout his earthly

life and is not eradicated until that Christian dies or is glorified. This is what he says in his Greek; “If we say that sin we are not constantly having, ourselves we are deceiving (nobody else), and the truth is not in us.” Sin here is the nature, not the act, and for two reasons; the word is without the article, and such a construction in Greek emphasizes nature, quality, and because the word is singular. The word “ourselves” is in the emphatic position, John’s thought being that any person who holds the theory that the sinful nature is eradicated at a certain point in the Christian’s experience is only deceiving himself. Others are not deceived, for they can see sin sticking out all over his life. Let us therefore hold to this, that while there is a definite cleavage between the believer and the sinful nature, yet that nature remains in him until he dies or is glorified. The tense of the verb is aorist, which speaks of a once for all act. God has wrought a cleavage or separation between the believer and the sinful nature which is a permanent one, a once for all disengagement of the person from the evil nature. This surgical operation is never repeated. So far as God is concerned, He has so thoroughly done His work that that separation could be permanent. But alas, because of the frailty of man, the Christian at infrequent intervals does yield to the evil nature and sin. *But the point is, God has so constituted him, that he need not do so.* He has imparted the divine nature which gives the Christian a hatred of sin and a love for righteousness. In addition to this, the Holy Spirit has been caused to take up His permanent residence in him to aid him in his battle against sin, and in his effort to live a Christian life. So Paul says, “How is it possible for such as we who have died off once for all with respect to sin, any longer to live in it?” Or to-translate and interpret, “How is it possible for such as we, Christians, who have been separated once for all from the sinful nature, any longer to live within its grip?”

Let us use a few illustrations. The Christian has the same power over the evil nature that he has over his radio. When a program suddenly comes over the air unfit for Christian ears, he can shut the radio off with a “There, you cannot bring that smut into my life.” Before salvation, the evil nature had absolute dominion over the sinner. Since salvation has wrought its beneficent work in his inner being, he has absolute dominion over it. Believe this, child of God, and act upon it. The evil nature is a dethroned monarch. Paul personifies it as a king reigning (Romans 5:21, “as sin has reigned as king”). The Holy Spirit at the time of the sinner’s salvation, enthroned the Lord Jesus in the throne room of the believer’s heart. He stays on the throne so long as the believer keeps yielded to the Spirit and rejects the behests of the evil nature. When the believer sins, the dethroned king, the evil nature, mounts to the throne, with the consequent dethronement of the Lord Jesus. These are cold, hard facts, yet, nevertheless true to the Word of God in its teaching on this subject. However, such a procedure cannot go on indefinitely nor often, for God puts a curb upon such a thing by sending suffering, chastening, and the Christian is made most miserable by a guilty conscience and the indwelling Holy Spirit who is grieved at such conduct.

To use an illustration that will show the definite cleavage between the Christian and the evil nature, the disengagement that took place when God performed that major surgical operation. A floor lamp is connected to a wall outlet. It derives its power to give light from the electric outlet in the wall. Just so, a sinner is connected to the evil nature, and derives his incentive and energy to sin, from the evil nature. Remove the connecting plug from the wall outlet, and the light ceases to function. Its source

of power has been cut off. Cut the connection between the sinner and the evil nature, and he ceases to function as a sinner. His source of power has been cut off. Upon no other basis can one explain the instantaneous and radical change in the outlook and actions of a sinner saved in a rescue mission, this change more apparent because of the life of gross sin he has lived. Connect the floor lamp with the wall outlet, and it starts to give light again. Connect the Christian with the evil nature still in him, and he sins again. But the point is, he is under no compulsion to put himself back into the control of the evil nature again, nor can he do it habitually, nor frequently. God has so adjusted things in the Christian's life, that, while he remains a free moral agent capable of choosing between obeying the divine nature or the evil nature, yet, the preponderance of his choices are Godward. Thus does Paul declare the mechanical impossibility of a Christian habitually sustaining the same relationship to the evil nature which he sustained before he was saved.

Romans – In the Greek New Testament by Kenneth S. Wuest L.L.D. Pages 93-95

View II

I. TRANSFORMATION FOR THE BODY LIFE

A. Transformation

Before we consider 12:1-2 I want to give a definition of transformation. Transformation is a good word. In Greek this word includes the meaning of change, to have a change. Thus, the King James Version rendered this word in 2 Corinthians 3:18 as “changed” instead of “transformed.” However, the King James Version translated the same Greek word as “transformed” in Romans 12:2. To render the Greek as “changed” is very inadequate. Transformation does not merely denote a change; it means that a substance is changed both in nature and in form. In English the words transformed or transformation also mean a change in both nature and form. This type of change is a metabolic change. It is not just an outward change, but a change in inward constitution as well as in external form. This change occurs by the **process of metabolism**. In the process of metabolism an organic element filled with vitamins comes into our being and produces a chemical change in our organic life. This chemical reaction changes the constitution of our being from one form into another. This is transformation.

Dispensation, Not Exchange

We have seen that when the divine life enters into the human life, the divine life becomes the content and the human life becomes the container and the expression. But there is no exchange, or trade, of lives. This means that we do not exchange the human life for the divine life. Instead of exchange, there is a dispensation. The empty glove is filled with the hand. Using another figure of speech, we may say that man is like a tire that needs to be filled with air. The air is dispensed into the tire and fills it, but the air is not exchanged for the tire. In like manner, the divine air, the heavenly *pneuma*, is dispensed into us, but it is not exchanged for our human life. Rather, as we shall see, it is dispensed into us and mingled with us.

Some Christian teachers regard the Christian life as an exchanged life. According to this concept, our life is poor and Christ's life is superior. Therefore, the Lord asks us to give up our life in exchange for His. We yield our life to Him, and He replaces it with His own life. However, our Christian life is not an exchanged life. It is altogether a matter of the divine life dispensed, infused, into our human life. This is a basic concept in the Scriptures.

Swallowing Up Our Defects and Shortages

We have pointed out that the better life swallows up the defects and shortages of the inferior life. This means that the divine life will swallow up the defects and shortages of our human life. This is possible because in Christ's life there is the killing power of His crucifixion. Remember, Christ's life has been processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. Now His life includes all these ingredients. We may use antibiotics as an illustration of this. Just as antibiotics kill disease germs, so the killing element in the life of Christ terminates the negative things in us.

We may prefer simply to yield up our human life and have it be replaced with Christ's life. We may feel that our life is full of "germs" and would therefore like it replaced by the divine life. This may be our way, but it is not God's way in His economy. His way is for Christ's life to swallow up all the defects, shortages, and "germs" within us. The more we tell the Lord Jesus that we love Him and that we want to be one with Him, the more we shall experience the killing power in the spiritual antibiotics.

View III

New Nature

The term "new nature" refers to the spiritual transformation that occurs within the individual when a person believes in Christ as Savior. The Christian becomes a "new man" (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 2:15; 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10). This concept of newness may be traced to an important choice between two Greek words, both meaning "new." One word means "new" in the sense of renovation (to repair), the other in the sense of fresh existence. The latter is used to describe the Christian. The Christian is not a renovated or refreshed version of the old; rather, the Christian is brand-new with a new family, a new set of values, new motivations, and new possessions.

The "old man" is still present in the new life and expresses himself in corrupting deeds such as lying (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9). The "new man," to be visible, must be *put on* as one would put on a new suit of clothes (Colossians 3:10). In other words, the new nature must be cultivated or nurtured by spiritual decisiveness to grow in Christ. We must not revert to putting on the old suit of the former life; rather, we must continue to grow in this new life (Ephesians 5:8).

The message of the new nature is a message of supreme hope: the Spirit of God can accomplish a life-changing transformation for all who will only believe in Christ.

View IV

Exchanged Life (Watchman Nee)

The Meaning of This Life—Not a Changed Life, but an Exchanged One

First of all, please notice that victory is an exchanged life, not a changed life. Victory is not that I have changed, but rather that I have been exchanged. One verse which is most familiar to us is Galatians 2.20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God.” What is meant by this verse? It has only one meaning: the life spoken of is an exchanged life. Basically, it is no longer I, for it has absolutely nothing to do with me. It is not that the bad I has become the good I, or the unclean I has changed to be the clean I. It is simply “not I” Today people make a serious mistake in thinking that victory is progressive and defeat is retrogressive—that if a person is able to control his temper or maintain an intimate fellowship with God, then he is victorious. Not so. Let us ever keep in mind that victory has basically no relation to one’s own self.

Even in the Old Testament time of Bible history we find that God’s way was never to repair, nor to change, but to exchange. Note this passage, for example: “to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified” (Is. 61.3). To substitute is God’s way. He does not change ashes but instead gives a garland for ashes. Neither does He change sorrow in the slightest; He instead gives the oil of gladness for sorrow. Nor does He change the heaviness into praise, but gives the garment of praise in exchange for the spirit of heaviness. “Change” is never God’s way; His way is always “exchange.”

All these years I have not been able to change myself, yet God has exchanged me. This is holiness, this is perfection, this is victory, and this is the life of God’s Son! Hallelujah! Henceforth the gentleness of Christ is my gentleness: the holiness of Christ is my holiness: the prayer life of Christ is my prayer life: the communion of Christ with God is now my communion with God. No sin is too big that I cannot overcome. No temptation is too severe that I cannot prevail. For the life that wins is Christ, not I. Will Christ ever be fearful of a big sin? Will He be afraid of great temptation? Praise God, I no longer fear because hereafter it is Christ and not I.

I want you to know that I have encountered many temptations in my life. Many difficult problems have come my way; and many hard words have fallen upon my ears. Do I ask God to give me strength that I may overcome? On the contrary, I say, “O Lord, I praise and thank You, for You are my victory! O Lord, You overcome for me, and I praise and thank You. You resist for me, and I praise and thank You! O Lord, You are my head, I am Your member. You are the trunk, and I am a branch. You supply me with all I need.” And I have found that He is already supplying all my needs according to His own word.

Do not look at me as though to find a most energetic person, for the truth of the matter is that I feel tired every day. Never is there a morning that I get up but what I feel frigid; never a day passes that I feel elated. Satan has come to me many times, accusing me: "You do not feel happy and you are so cold emotionally every day; is this Christ living in you? In days past you were frigid and without feeling; now you are still frigid and without feeling. Is this the victory of Christ?" When this happens, God gives me an answer at once: "If I feel, then I am living; but if I believe, then it is the Son of God who is living. I feel with my flesh, but I believe in the Son of God. I feel with physical senses, but I believe in the word of God." God says if you fulfill His conditions of yielding and believing, then Christ will live out His victory in you. Hence you should pray: "O God, I praise and thank You that what I feel is nothing, for in this matter the biggest lie of Satan is feeling; it is a close ally of the enemy himself. O God, I thank You that I can believe Your word instead of my feeling. For only Your word is true, whereas feeling is undependable." When you confront temptation in the form of feeling, boldly declare that you live by the faith of the Son of God.

1. Our Victory Does Not Mean We Have Changed.

Having crossed the threshold of victory, we may think we have changed and improved when afterwards we did not sin for a few weeks. We begin to be elated, even to boast of our achievement. Whereupon God decides to test us, allowing us to fail so as to make us realize that we have not changed one iota for the better. The reason for our newly-found patience is not because we have changed, but because Christ is patient for us. If we consider ourselves changed, we will undoubtedly fall. We ought to know that we can be patient only because Christ is our patience, we can only be gentle because Christ is our gentleness, we can only be holy because He is our holiness. Even after we have overcome for many days, we remain the same, we are forever ourselves, and we have not changed one whit. Watchman Nee is forever Watchman Nee. After fifty years, he will still be Watchman Nee. Take away grace, and Watchman Nee remains Watchman Nee. I thank and praise the Lord! Victory is Christ; it has nothing to do with me. I am still able to sin; I have not changed at all.