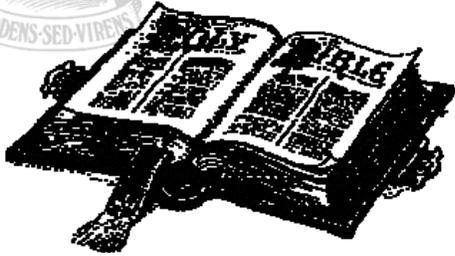




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The Problem of Sin in the Church No. 4 (part 2) - "The dire consequences"

"Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you," Joshua 7:11-12.

In our last study, we considered how that it is our duty to stand against our enemies.

1. We must face our enemies.
2. We must fight our enemies.
3. We must maintain war against them.

Today, we consider how that :

WE CANNOT STAND WITHOUT THE LORD'S HELP!

"Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

As physical disease tends to get worse as it is neglected, so when sin is not dealt with in accordance with the Word of God it can only get worse. It will cost us the presence and help of God. This is one of the dire consequences of sin in the church.

Many despise the minister or the elder who speaks out against sin and the neglect of the means of dealing with it. But the matter is very serious.

There was an immediate clampdown on any farm where disease amongst animals was lately discovered in England. Cattle were slaughtered and a cordon thrown up around infected areas. Farmers did not oppose these measures for they knew the necessity of them.

Would that Christian were as well acquainted with the measures God commands us to take in order to curtail the spread of sin and as ready to implement them.

Every empty church building in the United Kingdom is invariably a victim to sin. Sin destroyed the witness that was once housed there and drove the people away from its doors. Sin will do the same with our buildings if we do not do as God commands about worldliness and sinfulness amongst our people.

1. How helpless is the believer of himself. "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies," verse 12. We are as helpless without God as a man would be without a spine! Think on these words: "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I



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will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you," Isaiah 46:4. So many read this verse as if it says "when you are old, I will carry you." It does not say that. It says: "I will carry you all your days right up to your grave. "For this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death," Psalm 48:14. The final phrase of that verse may be read: "He will be our guide *even beyond death.*" He guides not only to the brink of Jordan's river, but through the deep waters of it, and never leaves till He has landed us safe on the shores of eternity.

We are always in need of being carried. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost," Luke 15:4-6. Christ carries us all the way home for we are unable to walk of ourselves. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," 1 Peter 1:5.

2. It is through Christ that we gain strength to stand. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," Ephesians 6:11. This is armour unlike any other armour. The armour that was worn long ago was heavy and weighed the soldier down and was a burden to carry. But Christ supplies not just armour but armour which enables and strengthens us to stand. The graces found in Christ alone will strengthen us to stand.

The more we know of Christ and are acquainted intimately with Him the more we partake of His strength. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," Ephesians 3:16. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen," 2 Peter 3:18. Growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ is like putting on armour. It is a process whereby we put on or step into Christ more and more until we are clothed with His might and power. "*It is* God that girdeth me with strength," Psalm 18:32. "I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust," Psalm 91:2.

It is said of Saul after his conversion that, ". . . when he had received meat, he was strengthened," Acts 9:19. Meat strengthens. Christ is our food by which we are spiritually refreshed and renewed. He is the Bread of Life by which our souls are nourished. It is as we lean on Him in fellowship and communion that we partake of His mighty strength. Sin will rob us of fellowship and communion with God and so shall we lose our ability to stand. It is clear for all to see that the stand taken in past generations is not being taken today and that because we have not the strength of former generations of believers. The Lord is not amongst us as He once was. This is a terrifying fact and should make us all to tremble.

3. To stand we need continual renewal. Consider these passages of Holy Scripture. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint," Isaiah 40:31.

"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD," Psalm 27:14.



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"The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him. *It is* good that *a man* should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD," Lamentations 3:25-26.

"In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, *and* strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul," Psalm 138:3.

To continue strong so that we are able constantly to stand requires a continual, unbroken fellowship and communion with Christ.

May the Lord grant us such fellowship.

This is the second part of our fourth study in a short series of messages on "The problem of sin in the church". [Click here](#) to listen to/download a recording of each of the messages in the series.