

IT IS THE SECOND CRISIS

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Now let us face it. We have seen plainly, from Paul's detailed explanation in the Romans letter, that Christ our last Adam completed a total redemption for us, the first Adam's family, in His death, resurrection, and ascension. But it can only become a living fact in our lives by us having a personal inner experience of Him. First there has to be a new birth of the Spirit, and then the Spirit bears witness to our human spirits that we are now the children of God. This witness is vital because we become operative persons in our spirit-selves only by an inner recognition of fact as fact. This is also why Christ's resurrection and ascension had to be confirmed inwardly to His disciples by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost: it gave them an unshakable inward confirmation regarding the One whom they'd outwardly seen and touched, but who had now disappeared from their sight. From then on no questions arose, even to the point of their dying for Him whom they knew. For faith was now knowledge. They knew what they knew! Outer facts had inner confirmation, and only by the inner confirmation, and only by the inner was the outer established.

So now, by our new birth experience, we know what we know of our salvation and Savior. But we have gone on to recognize that knowing Christ as Savior from past sins must be accomplished by an equally certain knowing of Him as our personal sufficiency for our daily living, and for our sharing of such knowledge with others. Here is a second stage of knowing! We have seen in Romans how Paul had to go into great detail, as he moved from chapters 3-5 on to 6-8, to complete for us, as for himself, this second stage of inner knowing. He has made it plain that there are travailing, searching, negative condemning and failures to condition us for this second, equally certain, knowing. We have to go through our Romans 7 experience. There's no shortcut for us on our "wilderness way," any more than there was for the children of Israel in their painful sojourn in that "waste and howling wilderness."

So we are now confronting this together. Let's not fool ourselves. We shan't get there any more quickly and easily than Paul (although we may have more head knowledge because of pioneering route-map he has drawn for us.) Any close look at the great biographies of the Bible presents us with the same fact.

Abraham, our father of faith, that total follower of the God of glory who had appeared to him, had many achievements of faith en route. But he did not reach his fixed inner knowing until he had been through many years of frustration with Hagar and Sarah and the flesh birth of Ishmael...for he was not yet able to discern between the mind of the flesh and the pure word of the Spirit: His fixed inner knowing came by the crisis of faith--faith in the impossible--at the firth of Isaac. After that he could hear ever so plainly, even when later called by God to the further impossible and most ridiculous offering of his son as a burnt sacrifice.

Moses, that dedicated servant of God, had to go beyond his initial commitment, even through a had forth years at the backside of the desert, before he was fixed in his inner total sufficiency and adequacy at the burning bush. And from then on he *inwardly* knew the One with whom the children of Israel had only an outer relationship of faith.

Jacob, during his years of frustrating service with Laban, had become true-hearted and intense in his pursuit of the living God. But it was only through a final night of struggle (Gen. 32:24-32), in which the angel of the Lord brought him to a physically broken place, with his thigh out of joint, so there could be no running away from his threatening meeting with Esau- only through that experience did he know himself by inner revelation as "a prince who has power with God and man."

Joshua, splendidly gifted as a military leader, had to reach the desperate end of his self-confidence by a near collapse into cowardice, by being one of the twelve spies who brought back such a defeatist report to Moses. That night Joshua "inwardly died" and rose the next morning to side with Moses and Caleb and risk the stoning that threatened them. Form then onward he became a man "in whom is the Spirit of God," and Moses' trusted successor.

David, after his youthful nation-stirring triumph of faith over Goliath, and his shepherd years as the sweet psalmist of Israel, had to spend eight years as a fugitive from Saul. While living in caves, he and his band of the "the disappointed and disgruntled" were being trained together as God's men, until at the fiery trial at Ziklag, even his loved men turned on him. There he took a personal stand of faith which brought him into his inner knowing, when he 'encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (I Sam. 30:6).

Elisha, the wealthy young farmer who gladly sold all to follow the Lord with Elijah, spent eight years "pouring water" on the hands of his tough old leader; and even then he had to follow him in persistent pursuit to the moment of his ascent to heaven in a whirlwind, until he could himself inwardly receive and know that double portion of the Spirit which made him the successor of that mighty prophet.

Even the Savior Himself, the Son of God, taking flesh as Son of man, was intently studying the Scriptures all those years in the carpenter's shop, knowing from the Scriptures who He was. But only at His baptism, by the dove and the word of His Father from heaven, did He have the total inner confirmation, which established Him as the one who could declare with Isaiah's prophetic words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," and "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

So also Paul did not "know" until his three years in Arabia; and even Peter, thought the leader at Pentecost, until confronted by Paul in Antioch (which we shall refer to later in more detail).

Bible biographies give plenty of evidence that we move on from a relationship-knowing at our new birth to a total inner knowing. Paul gives us the transforming details in Romans 7 and 8, as we follow on from his penetrating understand of the true facts about himself to his agonized cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and to his glorious liberation shout of inner recognition in 8:1-2, "Now I see! There is no more self-condemnation, no more beating my head against the brick wall of failure and defeat! I am set free from the law of sin and death" (RSV)--has, not might, may or will. The Spirit was inwardly confirming what Paul had believed as a fact of history - that

by Christ's body-death on Calvary, indwelling Satan was out and indwelling Christ was in; and Paul was underlining for us in this shout of victory that he was a liberated person, not only because Jesus had died and risen in history, but also because the Spirit inwardly confirmed it to him. It was the inner confirmation of the Spirit that set him free. No hearing of given facts, not even a reckoning on them, could do this for him; only the actual confirmation within him had finally "fixed him" in who he really was. I am free! I am free! Yes, I am! I am! I am!

So whether by sudden crisis-as it was for those Bible men and has been for most of us--bore by some other means, no matter what-we do know. And we are now going to find out how we can know.

Knowing is not mental understanding, or external believing, or reckoning. It is something beyond words, because it is spirit. It is the reality of the spirit realm, beyond natural reasoning. We recognize this already on the new-birth level: How did we come to know we were born of the Spirit? Can you say? Can I? We cannot. Likewise now: we simply say to the outer, inquiring world - and indeed to thousands of church believers, who so often want to know but have never been shown the Biblical way of faith- that we just inwardly know.

We can use an example from the human level - that we become competent in our profession only by an inner knowing of it. First we give ourselves to training and study, which is our first step of faith into acquiring this body of knowledge wholly outside us. As we persist in our strivings to attain, somewhere along the line what was beyond our reach just becomes part of us. We know it! We know our stuff, and have moved over from leaning to being, and we boldly call ourselves by the name of our competency - doctor, cook, teacher. And we operate not by the outer tools of our trade, but by our inner know-how.

In the same way, in our new birth the Spirit has made us inner-knowers of the outer historic facts of our salvation. Actually, on our new-birth level, the confirmation of the Spirit is usually immediate, or appears so - though in actual fact it was not. We first had our gestation period. It went on maybe for years - the work of

the law bringing conviction, honest facing of sin and guilt, repentance, and finally a crisis moment of faith and open confession. But all that could not establish us as *confident* Christians, who know and love to share what we know. The inner knowing did that.

So now let us face this. We are about to find out how we enter into this second inner knowing. It also comes naturally and effortlessly, and with a certainty that we never lose again. I now know that not only do I have Christ as my Savior from sin, but that I have passed through an inner experience of death to my former striving, sin-dominated, and self-condemning self. I now know that I am dead to sin, the world, flesh-dominion, and law; and now I equally know that I am no longer a lonely, dependent "I," or still worse, have sin and Satan living in me. I know that in place of "I" is now Christ living His life in me. And this I now know - actually know - without ever again having to reckon on it, or trying to reassure myself about it, or refreshing my recognition of it.

This does not mean that we are like two people separate within myself. No, we are one. I am "joined to the Lord - one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17); we are two, yet we are one. He is the One living in me, yet not as separate from me, but reproducing Himself by me - as vine through branch, head through body, husband through wife.

In that union relationship I can say that it is Christ who is manifested in my human form - just as it is when He says that both He and I are "the light of the world" (John 8:12, Matt. 5:14). In actual fact, we are two - light and lamp, and He is the light shining through the lamp. Yet we so forget the existence of the lamp that when we come into a room we don't say "Turn on the lamp" but "Turn on the light!" So in our conscious union relationship: though each Christian really is the two united in one, we don't see ourselves as thinking, speaking, acting, but it is He expressed through our forms doing the thinking, speaking and acting.

It was in the glory of this inner consciousness that Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; no, not I, is Christ living in me." That paradoxical contradiction was the experience in words. "I live in His resurrection life...No, I must contradict that - is

not I, but He living in me.” that is the union duality! We are two, but no, we are one - and so much one that I speak of His doing the living in place of me. “Not I, but Christ living in me.” That is the nearest in third-dimensional human words that he can put a fourth dimensional union truth. It is Christ in his Paul form, Christ in even my human form. And from the moment that the light or this inner knowing is “turned on” in me, it becomes real to my consciousness that it is not I thinking, speaking, acting, but it is He. And so it is!

Yet all this hangs, in the end, on personal experience...and we are now going to find out how we may have this experience. Union is no good being a fact for me unless I know it to be so and thus can “use” it. The fact that in Christ I already was given total deliverance from both sins and sin is meaningless for me until I know it by experience. a carpenter can only use the tools he knows how to use. That was why sin could laugh at me and deceive me during those long years of struggle in my Christian living. I didn’t inwardly know I was totally delivered from its indwelling presence, so it continued to mock me with a false claim of swelling in me. Again I repeat, we are always controlled by our inner believings...which become knowing. All depends on how I am seeing things. When, therefore, I don’t know by an inner knowing (even though I might have an outer reckoning) that it is Christ living in my human self, and not sin or Satan, then I continue under the delusion of sin dwelling in me, and I mistakenly think I am an independent self with my own responsibilities and responses...and thus, I am consciously under the power of the god of independent-self.