

Indwelling Sin.

by Andrew Bonar

Andrew Bonar's sermon on indwelling sin explores its presence in believers and how to navigate it through reliance on the Holy Spirit and faith in Christ.

Scripture: Revelation 22:8

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "Indwelling Sin"

Description

Andrew Bonar emphasizes the reality of indwelling sin in the life of a believer, using the example of John, who despite his close walk with God, still fell into the temptation of worshiping an angel instead of God. He explains that while believers are free from guilt and the dominion of sin, the presence of sin remains until we see Christ. Bonar encourages believers to rely on the indwelling Spirit for strength and to continually look to Christ for victory over sin. He reassures that despite our struggles with indwelling sin, we will ultimately be presented faultless before God.

Transcript

And I John saw these things and heard them.

And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book ; worship God.

Rev. 22: 8, 9

'I, John ' -- I, who was just a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, called to follow Christ-- 'I saw all these great things.' Then we may see great things yet, as John did! It is interesting how many traits of John's character we find in this wonderful Book of Revelation. He tells us that when he saw his Master after so many years, he fell at His feet as dead, as much with delight as with fear. Then he tells us he 'wept much' when no one was found worthy to open the book; and how honestly he tells things about himself that are not to his credit. It is a great proof of grace when a man can do this--not only say he is a sinner, but tell things he did that were wrong. Our text tells us of the second time that John did this. The angel peremptorily commands him to rise: 'Why worship the servant when the Master is here?' From this incident let us learn the doctrine of indwelling sin in a believer's heart.

I. Indwelling sin as a doctrine.--A believer is entirely free from guilt. God cannot point to a spot of sin on a soul that has believed on Jesus. The believer is also free from the dominion of sin; but he is not free from the existence of sin in the heart. Never till we see Christ as He is shall we be free from the presence of sin.

'One look of Jesus as He is

Will strike all sin for ever dead.'

'If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves.' If we say the root of sin is out of us we deceive ourselves. In Rom. 7:21 Paul says, 'I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.' 'Law' means a powerful tendency, like a law. There are always remains of the old nature, and in the old nature there is always deceit. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' We are only on the way to complete deliverance.

II. Indwelling sin illustrated by our text.--John was now about ninety years old. For seventy years he had walked close with God. We should have thought that indwelling sin was dead in him. But indwelling sin is often benumbed, but not dead. Paul had no sooner come down from Paradise and the third heavens than God says, 'It will be needful to send him a messenger of Satan, lest he be exalted above measure.' God did not say, 'I will strike his sin dead,' but 'I will keep it down.' There was indwelling sin still in Paul's heart. This disciple John, who had got on so far in the divine life, tells us that when he had been allowed to listen to and see, all that is recorded, and had heard the invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, he fell at the angel's feet to worship him. Soon after this, John was walking through the New Jerusalem and saw its wondrous walls, its gates of pearl, the redeemed in their robes of white. Would you not have thought that his indwelling sin would be withered up now? 'When I heard these things, I fell down at the feet of the angel,' etc. He had forgotten for a time the glory of the Master, wondering at the glory of the servant. We need to watch to the very end. Satan knows there is tinder in your heart, and he tries to throw in a spark. The beloved John is not perfect yet, though he has been through New Jerusalem.

III. Why does God leave a root of sin in our heart.-- He does not take away the existence of sin, but He does take away its dominion. It is like Psalm 110:2: 'Rule . . . in the midst of thine enemies.' The consequences of indwelling sin being left in us are--

(1) To keep us from leaning on our personal holiness. We cannot point to one day of perfect obedience, to one work of perfect holiness. Till the last moment we have to stand upon the blood.

(2) To make us press onward to the day of Christ. 'When He shall appear, we shall be like Him.'

IV. How we are to deal in the meantime with this indwelling sin.--Sin in a believer is as really sin as in any other. I do not know that indwelling sin waxes weaker and weaker. But here is what we are to do.

We are to think of the indwelling Spirit; for as surely as we have indwelling sin we have the indwelling Spirit. Then we have help always at hand. It is like Christ in the ship. We think often we must meet trouble or temptation alone, forgetting the indwelling Spirit. He is not asleep, He is there in the ship, but He waits till we come to Him, and, as it were, awake Him. It is thus we get the victory over indwelling sin.

Another way is to feed faith. 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of His testimony.' Nothing startles the devil like holding up the blood. He flees from it. Give every now and then a look to Christ, and if you look to Him He will look to you. Be of good cheer, believer! In spite of indwelling sin we shall not be shut out of heaven, and at length He will present us 'without fault before the throne of God!'

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