

Inbred Sin and Its Cure

by Bishop W. F. Mallalieu

Bishop W. F. Mallalieu's sermon addresses the concept of inbred sin and emphasizes the necessity of divine grace for sanctification and spiritual renewal.

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:25, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 9:13, Hebrews 12:12

Topics: "Original Sin", "Sanctification"

Description

Bishop W. F. Mallalieu preaches about the deep desire for freedom from sin and the longing for a pure heart, emphasizing the need for God's power to break the yoke of inbred sin and set the spirit free. He highlights the importance of surrendering to Jesus, asking for a clean heart, and seeking God's perfect peace and love. The sermon delves into the doctrine of 'inbred sin' as taught by Methodist theologians, showcasing Charles Wesley's hymns that express the yearning for holiness and the struggle against the remnants of sin within believers. Bishop Mallalieu underscores the continuous need for sanctification and the journey towards perfection in Christ, drawing from John Wesley's teachings on conversion and the ongoing battle against sin in the believer's life.

Transcript

O That my load of sin were gone!

O that I could at last submit

At Jesus' feet to lay it down

To lay my soul at Jesus' feet!

Rest for my soul I long to find:

Savior of all, if mine thou art,

Give me thy meek and lowly mind,

And stamp thine image on my heart.

Break off the yoke of inbred sin,

And fully set my spirit free;

I can not rest till pure within,
Till I am wholly lost in thee.
Fain would I learn of thee, my God,
Thy light and easy burden prove,
The cross all stained with hallowed blood,
The labor of thy dying love.
I would, but thou must give the power;
My heart from every sin release;
Bring near, bring near the joyful hour,
And fill me with thy perfect peace.

-- Charles Wesley.

Jesus, a word, a look from thee,
Can turn my heart and make it clean;
Purge out the inbred leprosy,
And save me from my bosom sin.
Lord, if thou wilt, I do believe
Thou canst the saving grace impart;
Thou canst this instant now forgive,
And stamp thine image on my heart.
My heart, which now to thee I raise,
I know thou canst this moment cleanse;
The deepest stains of sin efface,
And drive the evil spirit hence.
Be it according to thy word;
Accomplish now thy work in me;
And let my soul, to health restored,
Devote its deathless powers to thee.

-- Charles Wesley.

Now, O my Joshua, bring me in!

Cast out my foes; the inbred sin,

The carnal mind, remove;

The purchase of thy death divide!

And O! with all the sanctified

Give me a lot of love.

-- Charles Wesley.

I rest upon thy word;

The promise is for me;

My succor and salvation, Lord,

Shall surely come from thee;

But let me still abide,

Nor from my hope remove,

Till thou my patient spirit guide

Into thy perfect love.

-- Charles Wesley.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. -- Heb. ix, 13, 14.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. -- Heb. iii, 52.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. -- Heb. xii, 12-15.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. -- Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. -- 2 Cor. vii, 1.

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. -- Heb. vi, 1-3.

WE may well thank God that we live in a world of hope. Clouds and darkness may sometimes seem to enwrap the throne of the just and holy Ruler of the universe, but since the days of the first promise made to fallen man there has been a gleam, a ray of light that has fallen along the path of humanity's weary, wayworn feet. The infinite Father has not left himself without a witness.

It is well to notice, in this immediate connection, the frequency and definiteness with which Charles Wesley, in some of the most helpful hymns he ever wrote, emphasizes the doctrine of "inbred sin," or "original sin," as taught by Methodist theologians, from the first to the last. It is true that writers, even in Methodism, have occasionally appeared who have antagonized this doctrine. There have been a few who have denied its truth and reality, and others who may not have gone quite so far, but have, with more or less vigor, insisted that whatever may properly be understood by these terms has been entirely removed at conversion. Certainly the hymns of Charles Wesley are in perfect accord with all the accredited teachings of Methodism. To illustrate and establish this proposition, one only needs reverently to read the subjoined hymns:

Forgive, and make my nature whole,

My inbred malady remove;

To perfect health restore my soul,

To perfect holiness and love.

-- Charles Wesley.

I want the spirit of power within,

Of love, and of a healthful mind;

Of power to conquer inbred sin;

Of love to thee and all mankind;

Of health, that pain and death defies,

Most vigorous when the body dies.

-- Charles Wesley.

Lord, if thou from me hast broke

The power of outward sin,

Burst this Babylonish yoke,
And make me free within:
Bid my inbred sin depart,
And I thy utmost word shall prove,
Upright both in life and heart,
And perfected in love.

-- Charles Wesley.

Sin in me, the inbred foe,
Awhile subsists in chains;
But thou all thy power shalt show,
And slay its last remains:
Thou hast conquered my desire,
Thou shalt quench it with thy blood,
Fill me with a purer fire,
And make me all like God.

-- Charles Wesley.

Jesus, to thee we look,
Till saved from sin's remains;
Reject the inbred tyrant's yoke,
And cast away his chains.
Our nature shall no more
O'er us dominion have;
By faith we apprehend the power
Which shall forever save!

-- Charles Wesley.

O Jesus, at thy feet we wait,
Till thou shalt bid us rise,

Restored to our unsinning state,
To love's sweet paradise.
Savior from sin, we thee receive,
From all indwelling sin;
Thy blood, we steadfastly believe,
Shall make us thoroughly clean.
Since thou wouldst have us free from sin.
And pure as those above,
Make haste to bring thy nature in,
And perfect us in love.

-- Charles Wesley.

I right early shall awake,
And see the perfect day;
Soon the Lamb of God shall take
My inbred sin away;
When to me my Lord shall come,
Sin forever shall depart;
Jesus takes up all the room
In a believing heart.
Son of God, arise, arise,
And to thy temple come!
Look, and with thy flaming eyes
The man of sin consume;
Slay him with thy Spirit, Lord;
Reign thou in my heart alone;
Speak the sanctifying word,
And seal me all thine own.

-- Charles Wesley.

He wills that I should holy be;
That holiness I long to feel;
That full divine conformity
To all my Savior's righteous will.
No more I stagger at thy power,
Or doubt thy truth, which can not move:
Hasten the long-expected hour,
And bless me with thy perfect love.
Now let thy Spirit bring me in;
And give thy servant to possess
The land of rest from inbred sin,
The land of perfect holiness.
Lord, I believe thy power the same;
The same thy truth and grace endure;
And in thy blessed hands I am,
And trust thee for a perfect cure.
Come, Savior, come, and make me whole;
Entirely all my sins remove;
To perfect health restore my soul,
To perfect holiness and love.

-- Charles Wesley.

It will also be seen that John Wesley in his prose writings is quite as pronounced in his views on this doctrine as Charles Wesley is in his poetry:

In Adam all died, all human kind, all the children of men who were then in Adam's loins. The natural consequence of this is, that every one descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God; wholly dead in sin; entirely void of the life of God; void of the image of God, of all that righteousness and holiness in which Adam was created ... Hence it is, that being born in sin, we must be born again. -- Wesley's Works, Vol. I, p. 401.

In Adam all die; that is, (1) Our bodies then became mortal; (2) Our souls died; that is, were disunited from God; and hence, (3) We are all born with a sinful, devilish nature; by reason whereof, (4) We are children of wrath, liable to eternal death. "Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. v, 18.) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. ii, 3.) -- Wesley's Works, Vol. V, p. 196.

There is constantly manifest in the writings of John Wesley a tendency to magnify the experience of conversion. But this does not mean that he unduly magnifies it. Pardon, justification, and regeneration are not counted by him of small importance. His example in this respect ought to be followed, not only by those who are numbered among his disciples, but by all evangelical Christians. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to overestimate the scope and significance of the work and results involved in the conversion of a sinner. No one can state the case more clearly, and possibly no stronger, than Wesley. He says, "At the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins." And it may well be noted that he does not say that the person is entirely sanctified, but that sanctification begins. Then he goes on to say:

In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit; there is a real as well as a relative change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel the love of God shed abroad in our heart, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honor, of money; together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind into the mind that was in Christ Jesus. -- Wesley's Works, Vol. I, p. 385.

Well might one almost suppose that such an experience as this would leave nothing further that needed to be wrought in a soul thus gloriously saved. But Wesley in the very next paragraph goes on to say:

How naturally do those who experience such a change, imagine that all sin is gone; that it is utterly rooted out of their heart, and has no more any place therein! How easily do they draw that inference, I feel no sin, therefore I have none; it does not stir, therefore it does not exist; it has no motion, therefore it has no being! But it is seldom long before they are undeceived, finding sin was only suspended, not destroyed. Temptations return, and sin revives, showing it was but stunned before, not dead. They now feel two principles in themselves plainly contrary to each other; the flesh lusting against the spirit, nature opposing the grace of God. They can not deny that, although they still feel power to believe in Christ, and to love God; and although his Spirit [still] witnesses with their spirits that they are the children of God; yet they feel in themselves sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief. They find one or more of these frequently stirring in their heart, though not conquering; yea, perhaps, thrusting sore at them that they may fall; but the Lord is their help. -- Wesley's Works, Vol. I, p. 385.

Again observe he still further says:

The question is not concerning outward sin; whether a child of God commit sin or no. We all agree and earnestly maintain, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." We agree, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Neither do we now inquire whether inward sin will always remain in the children of God; whether sin will continue in the soul as long as it continues in the body; nor yet do we inquire whether a justified person may relapse either into inward or outward sin; but simply this: Is a justified or regenerate

man freed from all sin as soon as he is justified? Is there, then, no sin in his heart? -- nor ever after, unless he fall from grace? -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, p. 109.

And he continues:

I can not, therefore, by any means, receive this assertion, that there is no sin in a believer from the moment he is justified; first, because it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture; secondly, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God; thirdly, because it is absolutely new, never heard of in the world till yesterday; and, lastly, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequence, not only grieving those whom God hath not grieved, but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition.-- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, pp. 110, 111.

Undoubtedly in this last quotation Wesley refers to involuntary transgressions. The sin that he finds in believers is not the violation of known law in the intelligent exercise of free will. It will be well if we let Wesley explain himself as he does in the following quotations. He says:

By sin, I here understand outward sin, according to the plain, common acceptation of the word; an actual, voluntary transgression of the law; of the revealed, written law of God; of any commandment of God, acknowledged to be such at the time that it is transgressed. But, "whosoever is born of God," while he abides in faith and love, and in the spirit of prayer and thanksgiving, not only doth not, but can not thus commit sin. So long as he thus believeth in God through Christ and loves him, and is pouring out his heart before him, he can not voluntarily transgress any command of God, either by speaking or acting what he knows God hath forbidden; so long that seed which remaineth in him, that loving, praying, thankful faith, compels him to refrain from whatsoever he knows to be an abomination in the sight of God." -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. VI, p. 164.

He that is by faith born of God sinneth not; (1) By any habitual sin, for all habitual sin is reigning, but sin can not reign in any that believeth; nor (2) By any willful sin, for his will while he abideth in that faith is utterly set against all sin, and abhorreth it as deadly poison; nor (3) By any sinful desire, for he continually desireth the holy and perfect will of God, and any tendency to an unholy desire, he, by the grace of God, stiflenth in the birth; nor (4) Doth he sin by infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought, for his infirmities have no concurrence of his will, and without this they are not properly sins. Thus, "he that is born of God doth not commit sin." And though he can not say he hath not sinned, yet now he sinneth not. -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, p. 16.

But even babes in Christ are in such a sense perfect, or born of God (an expression taken also in divers senses) as, first, not to commit sin ... Now, the Word of God plainly declares that even those who are justified, who are born again in the lowest sense, do not continue in sin; that they can not "live any longer therein" (Rom. iv; 1, 2); that they are "planted together in the likeness of the death" of Christ (verse 5) that their "old man is crucified with him," the body of sin being destroyed, so that henceforth they do not serve sin; that being dead with Christ, they are free from sin (verses 6 and 7); that they are "dead unto sin and alive unto God" (verse ii); that "sin hath no more dominion over them, who are not under the law, but under grace;" but that these, "being free from sin," are become the servants of righteousness (verses 14 and 18) -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, p. 359.

It has been observed before, that the opposite doctrine, that there is no sin in believers, is quite new in the Church of Christ; that it was never heard of for seventeen hundred years; never till it was discovered by Count Zinzendorf. I do not remember to have seen the least intimation of it, either in any ancient or

modern writer; unless perhaps in some of the wild, ranting Antinomians. And these likewise say and unsay, acknowledging there is sin in their flesh, although no sin in the heart. -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, p. 111.

Two things are manifest from these quotations. The first is, that a justified and regenerated soul does not commit willful violations of the known law of God; and hence it may be said of all such that they continue in a justified state, and enjoy the witness of the Spirit, that they are indeed the children of God and joint heirs with Christ to a heavenly inheritance. At the same time it is equally clear, from Wesley's teachings and the hymns quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and also from the Scripture passages adduced, that there are evidences and manifestations of a condition of the inner life that needs an additional and special manifestation of the grace of God. This condition is recognized by a great variety of names and terms. It is well to know these various names and terms, which, while they practically mean the same thing, yet each one may possibly contain some variant shadow of meaning.

The "seed of sin" implies that there is still remaining in the heart of the convert some germ that may develop life. It is said that wheat three thousand years old, taken from the wrappings of an Egyptian mummy, was found to possess life, and under proper conditions speedily germinated and grew. The long-buried "seed of sin" may show signs of life. The "roots of bitterness," of which it may be said, "though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant," -- these "roots of bitterness" are only safe when they are plucked out of the human heart, and are consigned to a triple death.

The "carnal mind" is the mind that is dominated to a greater or less degree, by the lusts of the eye, and the unholy ambitions of life, and the incitements of the senses. It needs to be changed for the mind that is in Christ Jesus. The "indwelling sin" is the sin that inheres in the regenerated soul, and is a constant menace to the work of grace. It is a foe in ambush. It surprises and sometimes overpowers the convert. The "inbred sin" is the taint of heredity that establishes the fact that we come of a corrupt ancestry. The sin is in bone, and brawn, and brain. It demands a renewing of the nature, a real recreation. The "original sin" is not a voluntary transgression, but the fallen condition in which we find ourselves at the very outset of our earthly career. It is a condition for which we are not responsible, yet it would be ruinous but for the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The "depravity" is not total, for no one is as bad in his present condition as he might be, or as he may be in the future; but the depravity is universal. All are gone astray; all come short of the glory of God; all are earthly and sensual by nature; all are defiled in the innermost depths of their being.

The "birth sin:" We may trace our family lineage along any line we please, and we shall find that all who have gone before us were born into the world of a sinful parentage. All have had evil hearts of unbelief. Adam and Eve were the only sinless pair among all our progenitors, and we are the descendants, not of the sinless, but the fallen and sinful.

It is altogether a worthless expenditure of time to quarrel with these words and terms that express a known and well-established condition of the human race and of human hearts. It is easy to raise objections, and discuss definitions, and quibble about non-essentials, when all the time it is perfectly evident that the difficulty and the disease indicated are deplorable realities. The all-important question is, Has a full, sufficient, and complete remedy been provided?

There can be no reasonable doubt that the abounding grace of God has made ample provision to remedy the ruin incident to the fall. It only needs that the simple and reasonable conditions of the Gospel should be embraced in order that the remedy may be effectually applied.

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