

Chapter 28. The Daily Renewal – Its Cost

"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." – 2 Corinthians 4:16

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
– **Romans 12:2**

It is not a little thing or easy to be a mature strong Christian. On God's side, it meant that it cost the Son of God His life, that it needs the mighty power of God to create a new man or woman, and nothing less than the unceasing daily care of the Holy Spirit to maintain that life.

From man's side, it demands that when the new man is put on, the old man must be put off. All the temperaments, habits, and pleasures of our own nature, that formed the life we have lived, are to be put away. Everything we inherited from Adam by our birth, is to be sold, if we want to possess the pearl of great price. If a person wants to follow Christ, he is to deny himself, take up his cross, forsake all and follow Christ in the path in which He walked. Such a person has to cast away not only all sin, but everything, however needful and legitimate and precious, that may become an opportunity to sin. Pluck out the eye or cut off the hand. He is to hate his own life, to lose it, if he wants to live in *"the power of an endless life."* (**Heb.7:16**) It is a solemn thing to be a true Christian. Far more solemn than most people think.

This is especially true of the daily renewing of the inward man. Paul speaks of it as being accompanied and conditioned by the *"decaying of the outward man."* (**2Cor.4:16**). The whole epistle to the Corinthians shows us how the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, even conforming to His death, was the secret of His life-giving power and blessing to the Churches. *"For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So, then death is working in us, but life in you."* (**2 Corinthians 4:11-12**). The full experience of the life of Christ in our person, our body, our work for others, depends upon our **fellowship with His suffering and death**. There can be no large measure of the renewal of the inward man without the sacrifice, the decaying of the outward.

To be filled with heaven, the life must be emptied of earth. We have the same truth in our second text, *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* (**Rom.12:2**). An old house may be renewed, and yet keep very much of its old appearance; or the renewal may be so complete that people are astonished at the transformation! The renewing of the mind by the Holy Spirit means a complete transformation, an entirely different way of thinking, judging, decision-making. The fleshly mind makes way for a *"spiritual understanding."* (**Col.1:9; 1 John 2:20**). This transformation cannot be obtained except at the cost of giving up everything that is of the old nature. *"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed..."* By nature, we are of this world. When renewed by grace, we are still in the world, subject to the subtle all-pervading influence from which we cannot withdraw ourselves. And what is more, the world is still in us. The leaven of the earthly nature can only be purged out by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, filling us with the life of heaven.

Let us allow these truths to take deep hold and master us. The Divine transformation, by the daily renewing of our mind into the image of Him who is far above, cannot proceed faster or further in us, unless we are seeking to be freed from every vestige of conformity to this world. The negative, *"Do not be conformed to this world,"* needs to be emphasised as strongly as the positive, *"but be transformed."* The spirit of this world and the Spirit of God contend for the possession of our being. It is only when the former is known, renounced, and cast out, that the heavenly Spirit can enter in, and do His blessed work of renewing and transforming. The whole world and whatever is of the worldly spirit, must be given up. The whole life and whatever is of self must be lost. This daily renewal of the inward man costs much, as long as we are hesitating, or trying to do it in our own strength. Once we really learn that the Holy Spirit does all, and by faith in the strength of the Lord Jesus, give up everything, then the renewing becomes the simple, natural, healthy, joyous growth of the heavenly life in us.

Then the inner chamber becomes the place which we long for daily, to praise God for what He has done, and is doing, and what we know He will do. Day by day, we yield ourselves afresh to the blessed Lord Who has said, *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* (**John 7:38**). The **renewing of the Holy Spirit** then becomes one of the most blessed truths of our daily Christian life.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, search me and reveal to me what it is that I still need to put off. What is there in my life that continually tempts me to sin? I want to participate in the suffering and death of Christ. Renew my mind, my attitudes, and my behaviour, so that I can be transformed to do Your will. Amen.