The Human Nature of Christ

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The reason I have chosen the above title is because Christ was Divine. He was the Son of God on earth. Jesus on earth did things that no man could do; He read people's thoughts; He spake as never a man spake, power would go out of Him at the touch of a human hand. He spoke as One whose Spirit went with the words and He drew people into His presence - He was the Son of God on earth, and He never ceased to be Divine. But this study is focusing on His humanity; it is a very controversial subject, as most of you would know. There are basically two different views: some brethren believe that Jesus took the nature of Adam before he fell; others believe He took the fallen nature of Adam after sin. More recently there has been a third view that I have come across - Jesus took our fallen nature - but because of the misunderstanding of sin and the nature of man, the brethren believe that our nature is sin; therefore, they cannot accept that Christ truly partook of our nature, otherwise He would have been born a sinner; so they end up forming a kind of hybrid Christ, comprised of a little bit of Adam before he fell and a little bit after he fell. They conclude that in the body He was fallen, He hungered, He thirsted, He wearied, He grew older, but His mind was different. The brethren believe His mind was Divine. Now don't misunderstand. I am not saying that His mind was not Divine (as far as His divinity is concerned) but the reason the brethren say this, is

because they believe human nature is sin, so Christ could not truly partake of our nature, otherwise He would be born a sinner, so they have to split His nature into two. These are the things we are going to examine in this study.

When I talk about temptations, passions, or propensities, people may be thinking: "What is Bill saying?" Am I saying that Christ lusted after women and things like that? Of course not! He was ever pure and undefiled - I want to make that perfectly clear. He experienced the very weaknesses that every human being does; He had to, in order to conquer those weaknesses and be able to impart that victory to us. I want you to think for a moment: If Jesus had a different nature, if His mind was not subject to temptation, to the weaknesses that we have, how can He be our example? How can we look to Him in faith so that He can impart to us the victories that we need over temptation, when He didn't have to go through those same temptations, or experience the same weaknesses or tendencies that we have? This is very important to consider; for example; notice what Christ says in Revelation 3:21, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne"*, (notice the next few words) *"even as I also overcame".* Christ is saying to the one who overcomes there is a reward - to sit as joint heir with Him - and then He makes the comparison with how He Himself overcame. This

word, 'overcame', means to conquer, to subdue, to prevail against. What was it that Jesus had to conquer and subdue? What was it that He had to prevail against in His nature? If I was to ask you what is the greatest enemy that we face in our struggle in this world, what would your answer be? We are told that the warfare against self is the greatest battle that we will have to fight, and this point is the central most important principle in this whole study - the war against self - and we are going to see that this was Christ's greatest battle, which is why He said – "to him that overcometh . . . even as I also overcame." He had to war against self because in His nature, in His sinful fallen nature, self wanted to prevail and we will see that very clearly in this study. *"The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God requires a struggle, but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness."* {SC 43.3}

This is what Christ had to overcome, particularly when we study Gethsemane, where the real climax was when He said *"not My will"* (not myself, but) *"Your will be done".*

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy clearly teach that Jesus had to overcome self, which means He had to overcome the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which every man is subject. He truly is our example, which was the very heart of the 1888 message. Notice

what Brother Waggoner says in 'Christ and His Righteousness' - *"Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of a sinful man, that is, that the flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the statement that He 'was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.'" {1890 EJW, CHR 26.2}*

Does it seem to you that Brother Waggoner is making Christ different to us? He assumed all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject and, of course, that is Biblical. It is shown by the statement that He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. What does according to the flesh mean? That He was different? The Bible goes out of its way to identify Christ with us and we will look at some of these passages in this study. They are so plain that we will clearly see that He took our flesh, that He had our weaknesses and the same tendencies. Brother Waggoner says *"sinful tendencies"* – is this statement supported by inspiration? We know that Sister White clearly supported the message of 1888, as we can see from the following statement - *"The Son of God in His humanity wrestled with the very same fierce, apparently overwhelming temptations that assail men. Temptations to indulgence of appetite, to the presumptuous venturing's where God has not led*

them, and to the worship of the god of this world to sacrifice an eternity of bliss for the fascinating pleasures of this life." {1SM p 95}.

Jesus was tempted with the things of this world; He was tempted to deny His allegiance to His Father and worship the god of this world; He was tempted with appetite, with presumption, the very same fierce, apparently overwhelming temptations that we face which is why He says, *"to him who overcometh even as I also overcame."* Indulgence of appetite, presumptuous venturing where God has not led, worshipping the god of this world - these are sinful tendencies, they are the weaknesses of humanity. Inspiration told us that He wrestled with these very same temptations - overwhelming at times! Christ had sinful tendencies, and He had to war against them; He was made like unto His brethren with the same susceptibilities, mental and physical; He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin - He was not exempt from any of these weaknesses - He was tempted in the same way, both mentally and physically, as all humanity is. The word 'susceptibility' means influences, same influences, same predisposition to sin – this is what we are told in Hebrews 4:15 - *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* I want you to keep noticing with me how plain these statements are,

"tempted in all points like as we are." Do you know what this word, *"infirmities"* means?, (that He was touched with, that He experienced.) It means the want of strength, weakness, infirmity of the body or the mind. You see, the brethren leave His mind out of it, they say, "Yes, He had a human body, yes, He tired, He hungered, He had our weaknesses - but not the mind. The mind was separate." When the Bible says He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are, it means particularly the mind, because that's where the battle is won or lost. Notice this statement - *"The reason He can succour those who are tempted, the reason He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities and be a faithful high priest is that He knows how strong are the inclinations of the natural heart"*.{5T 177.2} What do you think *"the natural heart"* means here? Is Sister White talking about the spiritual nature or His flesh? It is the flesh, the natural heart, the fallen nature of Jesus. He knows how strong the inclinations are in our fallen nature, and He will be able to help in every time of temptation because He has experienced it, and He has conquered it, which is exactly what Brother Waggoner said - Christ assumed all the weaknesses and the sinful tendencies to which fallen man is subject, and realises the strength of our temptations, for He was in all points tempted like as we are.

The Bible says that Jesus was made of the seed of David. He received through Mary, through His ancestors, His humanity with the same weaknesses that we receive and inherit. He had to wrestle against these tendencies, and the Bible says He was made according to the flesh. Everywhere this word 'flesh' (sarx) is used in the book of Romans, bar once, it means fallen human nature; it means the carnal nature with all its frailties, (physically, morally) and its passions. This word 'sarx' is used in reference to Jesus over and over again. Romans 8:3 - God sent His Son *"in the likeness of sinful flesh."* It is the same word in Romans 1:3, made *"according to the flesh"*– fallen nature, with all its weaknesses. It is the same word in Hebrews 2:14. *"For as children partake of the flesh (sarx) and blood He also Himself likewise took part of the same."* Notice this passage. *"They may be wayward, and possess passions like those of humanity but this should not defer us from bringing them to Christ. He blessed children that were possessed of passions like His own." {YRP 137.3}.*

In all these Bible verses and inspired statements, you never see one text trying to make Him different, particularly His mind, in His war against temptation, against the passions and weaknesses of humanity which He wrestled against and He knows by experience how strong the natural heart is. Where were these passions centred? In every passage they are

all centred in the mind. He was tempted with indulgence of appetite, presumption, worshipping the god of this world; the battle originates in the mind. He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities - body and mind - He knows by experience the weaknesses of humanity so how can we leave His mind out of the equation - how can we say His mind was different to ours? He didn't just take our bodily form, notice this statement: *"It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon himself the form* (that's what you see and what else,) *the nature of fallen man."* If the nature of fallen man is sin, therefore you are born a sinner, (which is what is being taught today), then you are born a sinner because your nature is sin. Inspiration is saying here that Christ took the nature of fallen man and His mind also had the weakness of a fallen nature. Jack Sequeira, in his book entitled "Beyond Belief", makes this statement - *"human nature itself is sin",* which is the very epitome of Roman Catholic teaching - the very epitome of the antichrist.

They teach that Christ did not really partake of human nature otherwise He is a sinner, which is why they change His nature. But we have seen He took our weaknesses, our passions, the inclinations of the natural heart; He wrestled with fierce, almost overwhelming temptations, indulgence of appetite, etc. Christ took our nature which is confirmed by SOP - *"He took the form and the nature of fallen man."* You

don't need to change Christ's nature nor do you need to bring in contradictions. They conclude your nature is sin therefore they have to change the nature of Christ. What they are doing is just a more subtle form of the Immaculate Conception. The Immaculate Conception was invented to cut Christ off from receiving inheritance, through His human genealogy, because they understand that when you are born, you are a sinner; to them Human nature is sin, so they invented the Immaculate Conception, where Mary never sinned; Christ was born of the Holy Ghost and His mother was immaculate so they have changed His nature. That's what this teaching leads to when you try to teach he had a different mind to us. You cut off His ancestry; you cut off what He inherited. As we have seen already, He had all the weaknesses that we possess, and that was the very thing that He had to overcome. You see, degraded and fallen humanity is not sin. Notice this next statement, and think of Christ's humiliation. *"He took upon himself fallen suffering humanity."* Look how she describes it - *"Suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin",* that's what He took upon Himself. The brethren teach that this human nature is sin. Jesus took the same fallen human nature upon Himself; He was born with it and every moment of His life He had to battle with it, and you will see at the end of this study how He conquered it.

The Bible says He was made in the nature and likeness of sinful flesh, and the 1888 message says the same thing - *"Moreover the fact that Christ took upon himself the flesh not of a sinless being but of a sinful man". {1890 EJW, CHR 26.2}* The Spirit of Prophecy, Elder Waggoner and the Bible are all in perfect harmony; and you must have harmony when you do these studies, you can't have contradictions. If I have a contradiction, I can't rest and will not speak upon it until I can answer that contradiction - everything has to fit. Jesus took upon Himself sinful nature - Waggoner said exactly that, *"He took not the flesh of sinless being but of sinful man",* and Spirit of Prophecy says: *"He took upon him our sinful nature"* - it's very clear. Notice from Inspiration how low He trod and what He received from His ancestors; *"For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity."* {DA 117.2} Now notice why – this is important; *"Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of degradation."* If Jesus is going to rescue man from the degenerate state he is in, He has to partake of that state and conquer it, and impart the victory to man so He can lift him up to His own spotless purity. The ladder (Christ) didn't just reach the earth, it reached far deeper than that; *"the humanity of Christ reached to the very depths of*

human wretchedness and identified itself with the weaknesses and necessities of fallen man". {BEcho, October 20, 1913 par. 16} Again, if man's nature is sin, then how did Christ partake of this nature? All we see over and over again is that He took upon Himself the form and nature of man, fallen man. He took upon Himself fallen suffering humanity, a nature that is degraded and defiled by sin as we are told in SOP - *"Christ took upon himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of sinful man." "He took on him, our sinful nature." "He took upon him the infirmities of the degenerative humanity." "His humanity identified itself with all the weaknesses and necessities of fallen man."* If you believe we are born sinners, you cannot harmonise these statements - it is impossible - nor can you try to apply these statements to the physical body only, because we saw earlier, they predominantly apply to the mind.

Notice what scripture says in Hebrew 2:14-16*, "forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood"* (what sort of flesh did children partake of? fallen, sinful flesh) *"He also himself likewise."* (I think God is trying to tell us something) *"took part of the same"* (and just to make sure you can't possibly get it wrong*) "for verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it be behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren."* Why are people today trying

so desperately to change His nature, when all we see over and over again is that He took our nature*; "the seed of David according to the flesh"; "He came in the likeness of sinful flesh"; "as children are born of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same"* and "*In all things, it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren".* That word *'behoved'* means He was obligated. If He was going to come to save fallen men, He had to come like fallen men - He was obligated. I don't want you to think that we are in some way degrading Christ, for notice this statement; *"in him was no guile, or sinfulness. He was ever pure and undefiled. "Yet He took upon him our sinful nature". {RH, December 15, 1896 par. 7}* Can you see how they go together? Yes, He had our sinful nature yet He was always *"pure and undefiled"* because sinful nature is not sin - you are not condemned because you have a sinful nature, and you have perfect harmony - no contradictions anywhere! Jesus remained pure and undefiled although He possessed a sinful nature like us.

At this point I would like to bring in a caution. A. T. Jones is one of my favourite pioneers; I love to study his writings, particularly on this topic, but sometimes brethren can go a little too far, and I want to bring that out here because as stated earlier, I don't want people to think I am saying that Christ experienced the same evil thoughts etc. that we do. I am not saying that at all. This is what I am saying: He

was ever pure and undefiled, even while possessing our sinful nature.

A. T. Jones, speaking on the Nature of Christ, made this statement once; and it is not one of his better statements - *"then Satan took Jesus upon an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" "the glory, the honour, the dignity. He showed Him all that,"* and notice now *"and there was at that moment, there was stirred up" (talking about Jesus) all the ambition that ever appeared in Napoleon, Caesar or Alexander, or all of them put together". But from Jesus still the answer is written: They shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."* This is where people go too far on the nature of Christ.

A. T. Jones was a very good Historian and he mentions here the three greatest generals, I believe, that have ever lived. These men were truly men of ambition, but they were very violent men, they were men who did not think twice about killing and destroying in order to conquer. They were the most ambitious men that ever lived. You don't put Christ next to people like this and say that in Him was stirred up the same ambition as these wicked people. Even someone like A. T. Jones, as gifted as he was, went too far here.

Come with me to Romans 8:3 - this verse, I believe, is the most powerful verse in the Bible regarding the nature of Christ. Before we read it, I

want to bring out something about *"law"* because we are going to look at this word in Romans 7 and 8. When we talk about law, we are talking about a rule or a regulation. We have civil laws, natural laws, health laws, laws of physics. One thing they all have in common is that they are absolute. They are non-negotiable; they are binding upon us. You can disagree with them, you can break them, but there are penalties imposed and there are consequences. You may not like the health law that says you need to drink water - you may disagree with it - but stop drinking water for enough time and you will dehydrate and eventually you will die. It's a law and you can't fight it. You may not like the speed laws on our roads, so you drive at whatever speed you like; then you get caught and there is a penalty. You may disagree with the law of gravity, but step off a high mountain and you know what is going to happen? All these laws are binding, they are absolute and they are non-negotiable. We are governed by laws every moment of our life from the moment you wake in the morning. Laws are part of our life, they are enforced by an authority, e.g., you break a civil law; it is enforced by the state and there are penalties imposed. Laws govern and control our lives - the law of gravity governs your actions; the law of the road governs how you drive; the laws of health governs how you eat and drink and how you live.

In the same way the law of God governs every aspect of our lives, and you have no say in these laws, they impact on your life whether you like them or not. These laws demand a response from every one of us, and depending upon your response to these laws, there are repercussions, good or bad. For example there is a law in the state which forbids robbery or stealing. You have two citizens; one man steals, he breaks the law, he gets caught, he is condemned, he is penalised and he is labelled a thief – he now has a bad reputation in society. The other citizen obeys that law, he lives an honest life, and he is respected in society and is looked upon as an upstanding citizen. How they responded to this law impacted upon their character, both personally and their reputation - one became a thief while the other is an honest person. Their characters, the penalty, reward and recognition they receive is dependent upon how they respond to the law. It may not be a good law; it may be an inhumane law which may violate your conscience - none the less the way you respond to it will impact upon your character and that will also impact upon others.

When the Bible uses the word *"law"* we need to pay careful attention to what is being said. Paul is bringing this out here, and it's crucial to the nature of Christ to understand this principle. So come now to Romans 7:19, *"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."* He wants to do

good, he has a desire to do good, but instead the evil that he doesn't want to do, is what he is doing. So what is controlling him? Evil. Now read verse 20; *"Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."* So the evil which he mentioned in the previous verse, he now calls sin and is the reason he can't do good - this evil/sin dwells within him. Now look at v.21 and what he calls that sin which dwells in him; that is the controlling power, *"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."* He calls this sin that dwells in him a law which is preventing him from doing good. Now remember, it is how you respond to a law that results in actions, and therefore your character. Notice what he says now in v.22: *"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."* The following point is extremely important - this is an unconverted man, this man is struggling with sin he can't overcome and he says the evil is present with him; he wants to do good but he does evil and it is this sin, this law of sin, that is dwelling in him. He says he delights in the law of God. Where is his battle? In the inward man, it is in his mind. This is a sinner speaking – an unconverted man but he says that in his mind there is a knowledge to do good, there is a desire to do good, there is an understanding of good, of moral virtue and that is what he wants to do, but the law of sin is holding him captive. How many laws have we read about now?

We have heard about the law of sin, and the law of God. Where is the law of God? It is in his mind. The Bible is saying in the inward man (some translations refer to this as; in the inner being). The law of God is in him; it is in every man. He says *"I delight in the law of God after the inward man. My inner being delights in the law of God."* Although he delights in the law of God and wants to do good, wants to follow his conscience, (follow God's leading) look at what he says now in v.23. *"I see another law in my members,"* look what it's doing -*"it's warring against the law of my mind,"* See where the battle is going on? In His mind! The law of God is there and it's demanding a response, it wants to bring glory and virtue; but the law in his members is warring against another law. Look at which one is winning: *"warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."* The law of sin is controlling him; the law in the flesh is controlling him and it is bringing him into captivity. What are the wages of sin? Death! He understands his condition and says in v.24, *"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* He realises that if he keeps going on the way he is, he has a death sentence over his head. There is this struggle going on, he is held captive to the law of sin - he calls it the body of this death and he doesn't see any hope - but then something happens. In v.25 he is no longer in

captivity. Why? He found this higher law and he started to respond to it, *"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God;"* Which one is controlling him now? It is the law of God, and he gives thanks to God because he now has deliverance - he is free! What does it mean to serve? It means to obey. Now he is obeying the law of God. What happened to the law of sin? Did it disappear? What does Scripture say? *"but with the flesh the law of sin".* They are both still there; they were there before he was converted; they are still there after he is converted. They were both part of his nature but now he has responded to the higher power that God placed in him, and he is experiencing victory. He is delighting now, because the death sentence is removed. Look at the very next verse in Rom.8:1 (don't take note of the new chapter – Paul is continuing his argument in this verse) *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."* Why? *"Who walk in not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* He had this death sentence over him but now he is delivered, he is thanking God, and serving Him - he is obeying His law. What made the difference? He started to obey the law of his mind which God placed in him, to walk after the Spirit and deny the flesh that was previously warring and holding him captive. Both laws are there – the one we respond to determines our character. To be in Christ

Jesus means to walk after the Spirit, and to walk means to serve, these are the actions of the will, they are your response to either one of these two laws. In every man's nature, there are two laws operating, there is the law of sin and there is the law of the Spirit. You are not a sinner because the law of sin is in your flesh, for we are told Paul is delivered in v.25, he is converted and thanking God, but the law of sin is still in his flesh. That is why, when the brethren teach that you are a sinner because of your sinful nature, they haven't understood this principle, which is all the way through the Bible. Your nature does not change after conversion, it only changes at the second coming. You still have to contend with that law of sin, but it is like the evil man and his deeds, it has been crucified, and so it doesn't rise up any more. Your mind now serves the higher power which God placed there from the beginning - which is part of your nature. The law of sin is still in his flesh but he is not serving it, not responding to it, so it is not a sin. We are told in SOP - *"The animal part of our nature should never be left to govern the moral and intellectual" {CD 47.2.}* You are endowed with moral powers – high and noble powers – and the animal part, which is the lower nature - the law of sin, should never be left to govern and when Paul understood this he started to experience victory.

That is exactly how Jesus came into this world but he never responded to the lower nature, He killed it, He crucified it, and He conquered it. The law of sin has been in every man since Adam fell - and it has held every man captive; even men like Moses and Paul. It is the consequence that we received from Adam when he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and he passes that consequence onto us. As we saw earlier, Jesus is called the Son of David - the gospels record His genealogy all the way through His ancestors, and when the Bible says that He was born according to the flesh – that is exactly what it means. He was subject to the law of sin like every other man. The only way that Christ could free humanity from this law that has held everybody captive was to come as one of us, to be made subject to this same law - but never to respond to it, and therefore He could condemn this law in His flesh. We are told in Romans 8:2 - *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* Once again you see both the laws here, and as we saw earlier these laws have non-negotiable principles, whether we like them or not, they are there, they are part of our nature, and we have to respond to them. Paul is responding to the law of God and he says that the Spirit of life in Christ (or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus), made him free from the law of sin and death that he was previously in bondage to. By

the way, which of the two laws is more powerful now? The law of the Spirit! Before he was held in captivity by the law of sin, but the law of sin was never more powerful, it was his will that was giving into it. The will is the governing power in the life, which every person is born with, including Christ, but He never exercised His will towards self, which is why He was able to conquer this principle. The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is the more powerful of the two laws!

If you go back to Romans 7:22, and notice what Paul says, *"I delight in the law of God after the inward man."* This is the same law he is speaking about in Romans 8:2, it is not a different law – it is the law of God - the law of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus. Now Paul is responding to it and it has converted him, it has changed him. John 1:9 and Titus 2:11-12 says that *"Christ is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"* - this is part of your nature, from when? From the very beginning! Jesus is helping us to do what is right, lighting us with these moral and intellectual powers – therefore you are not totally depraved and incapable of doing anything good. This is telling us that even gentiles, even people who don't

know God, have in their nature knowledge of God and knowledge of His law. Notice what Scripture says in Rom.2:14 - *"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law into themselves:"* "*The things contained in the law"* is righteousness - to do righteousness. The Bible says that these are a people who have never known God, who have never known of His law, yet by their nature they do the things contained in God's law - they obey God, they keep His commandments. Notice v.15 - *"which show* (they prove) *the work of the law written in their hearts…."* The Bible says that every man has God's law written in his heart – which is why Paul said, "I delight after the law of God in the inward man" - because it was there and it was speaking to him. It was convicting him, saying, *"this is the way, walk ye in it"* - which is what the previous verses are saying - they prove the way of the law written in their hearts. Even in people who do not know God, their conscience also bears witness, and this is why every mouth will be stopped. No-one could say, 'I didn't know right from wrong.' Regardless of whether you heard a minister or not, or whether you had a Bible or not - your thoughts will accuse or excuse you in the day of the judgement, but the point is that they show God's law as written in their hearts, it is written in their nature.

The law of the Spirit is part of your nature - it is that still, small voice - it is the moral powers we are endowed with, it is called a spark of God's own life. Your nature is not sin. Inspiration says, *"The nature of man is threefold……it comprehends the right development of the physical, intellectual, and moral powers." {CG 39.1},* this is why those gentiles, who do not know God or His law, do the things contained in the law - they live moral lives because they are endowed with moral powers - it is part of their human nature. What are those moral powers? The SOP says, *"The great moral powers of the soul are faith, hope, and love." {GW92 91.2} 1 Corinthians 13: "faith, hope and love".* Inspiration says this is part of a human being's nature – a fallen human being; *faith, hope and love.* They are moral powers that speak to them - and these powers are supposed to dominate. It is not true that you come into the world a child of Satan – this is blasphemy of the worst kind. These moral powers, *faith, hope and love,* actually strongly predominate in some children - any parent would know this, especially the mother. Notice this statement from SOP*, "They have power of will to control their minds and actions" {RC 175.4}.* That's why Paul says in Rom.7:22, *"for I delight in the law of God, after the inward man."* It is always striving in us, seeking to lead us in the way of righteousness, it speaks to our conscience. Whenever you ponder eternal things, every noble

deed, and every right motive - it is the law of the Spirit that is fighting for you against the law of sin, and that war is going on in every human being. God has given us a free will that we might respond to this law that He has placed in every man. Listen to this beautiful statement -*"Every faculty that we possess has been provided for us in Christ; for when God gave his Son to our world, he included all heaven in his gift. And God would have men value their powers as a sacred gift from him. A spark of God's own life has been breathed into the human body, making man a living soul, the possessor (of what?) of moral endowments, and a will to direct his own course of action." {ST, August 26, 1897 par. 8}*

We have opportunity when we come into this world, even if we don't have the blessing of having faithful parents; God is your Father and He speaks to you. His law is written in your heart and He is trying to call you - a spark of His own life is in every living person and you have moral endowments. You can exercise this free will and respond to His law, which will empower you and make you children of honour. Here is another beautiful statement - *"Those who train their pupils to feel that the power lies in themselves to become men and women of honor and usefulness will be the most permanently successful". {CG 223.3}.* We are to teach our children and our students that they have a power within themselves – and this is not a

New Age teaching, this is Spirit of Prophecy. They have a power in themselves to do what? *"To become men and women of honour ….and be the most permanently successful."* The reason she can say this is because you are a possessor of moral endowments, and planted in you is *faith, hope and love* which will transform your life. It is a gift from God and He included all heaven in His gift; He would have men value the powers of the sacred gifts, these beautiful truths - you don't have to be subject to the law of sin.

Paul was struggling in Rom.7, then he receives deliverance, he delights and he thanks God, now he is walking after the Spirit of life. Now look at Romans 8:3, where Paul closes His argument, *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh:"* In the first part Paul says, *"For what the law could not do, because it was weak through the flesh."* Why was the law weak through the flesh? What was the problem? No man in sinful flesh has ever been able to keep the law all the time - you only need to break the law once and you are a sinner, condemned. No man in history has ever been able to keep the law (until Jesus came) and so the law was weak through the flesh, it was always being defeated by the law of sin; it always conquered throughout man's history. Remember Romans 7:22-23 where Paul says *"I see another law in*

my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." What does it want to produce that is always weak through the flesh? Romans 8:4*: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled. "* The law wants to produce righteousness but it wasn't happening. We are told in Romans 8:3 that it was *"weak through the flesh."* So Paul is saying the law was weak through the flesh, it was never able to produce any righteousness. Why? Because the law of sin would always have dominion. So what is it that has to be conquered in order that the law can produce righteousness? The law of sin, which has held every man captive, it is in every man's nature, no man has ever been able to defeat it and no man could produce righteousness – and so every man stands condemned before God. What does God do about it - does God send His Son with different flesh to us, without the law of sin in His nature? What is that going to achieve? It will achieve what Satan has accused God of – that no man can keep His law. Then what does God do? God sends His Son, exactly like every other human being, subject to the same law of sin, but He was never conquered by it. That is exactly what this text is saying, and it is the only thing God can do.

The follow statement is my comment (not inspired) - God must send His Son to this earth as a human being, subject to the law of sin in His nature.

The Born Sinner's believers say 'that nature is sin' (fallen human nature is the consequence of sin, but this nature is not sin). Jesus has to conquer the law of sin every moment of His life, and that is exactly what Romans 8:3 is saying - *"What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh".* Every man failed but God sent His own Son 'in the likeness of sinful flesh', the same flesh as we have, (the word flesh here is *"sarx"* by the way), *'and for sin'*, means for a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in that flesh. This is exactly what the verse is saying and it had to be done that way. Remember this statement from Brother Waggoner: *"the flesh which He had assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject"* - he is actually quoting Romans 8:3 when He says that. The Son of God wrestled with the very same fierce, overwhelming temptations, indulgence to appetite, presumption, and worship of the gods of this world as every human being has to wrestle with. Jesus had the same susceptibilities, mentally and physically, and He knows how strong the inclinations of the natural heart are because He experienced them, (and He blessed children with passions like His own). He took the form and nature of man; He took upon Himself our sinful nature; He took upon Himself fallen suffering human nature - degraded and defiled. Christ took upon Himself the infirmities of degenerate humanity,

and in this humanity Christ reached to the very depths of human wretchedness and identified Himself with the weaknesses and the necessities of fallen man. That is what Romans 8:3 is saying - God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and that is exactly what all these statements are saying, all harmonising perfectly.

We don't have to believe in the Immaculate Conception or in the hereditary chain being broken somewhere along the way. We don't have to believe that Christ's humanity was different to ours because we have learned that He came subject to the same law of sin in His flesh that we have in ours. We believe what God's word declares. Scripture says He was made of the *"seed of David according to the flesh."* Scripture says *"as children are partakers of the flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same."* Scripture says He took the seed of Abraham and that He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. And once again I would repeat – please don't think that we are in any way depreciating the character of Christ here. There should be not the faintest misgivings in regard to the perfect freedom from sinfulness in the human nature of Christ, because sinful nature is not sin, you don't have to change His nature. He was subject to the law of sin but He never responded to it, it had no impact upon His character. That's why Sister White can say – *"In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our sinful*

nature" {7 ABC.452.6}. Jesus never responded to the sinful nature - it never touched His character.

We are going to show from scripture that Christ clearly was made subject to this law of sin in His nature - and He conquered it, He defeated it. Notice again in Romans 8:3 - where was it condemned? God *"sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, [He] condemned sin in the flesh."* It was condemned in His flesh. God sent His Son exactly like every other human being, with the same weaknesses, the same passions, the same tendencies, but He never responded to them. He developed a perfect, righteous character, and in so doing, the law of sin that has held every man captive throughout history will be condemned. It will be destroyed. It will lose its power. Man will be free. Jesus lived a perfect life and never once submitted to this law of sin, and what was the result? The law was able to produce righteousness. When it says *"God condemned sin in the flesh",* that word 'condemned' means that He passed judgment, it is a legal term. God actually passed judgment upon the law of sin, it was condemned and it could no longer hold people captive.

Notice these points, this is the order of Romans 8:3, *"the law of sin is prevailing through the flesh therefore there is none that can produce righteousness"* - the law was weak through the flesh and the law of sin was always prevailing; so God sent

His Son, subject to the same weakness that had prevailed against every man - the law of sin. The Son, through faith, lives a perfect life in obedience to the law; produces the righteousness of the law in sinful flesh and for sin, (which means a sacrifice for sin) and then brings that perfect life to the cross, where He offers it as a sacrifice for our sins. It is after the cross that God the Father passes judgement upon this law of sin that had held everyone captive and the law of sin is condemned. It is sentenced. It has been judged. God did not condemn this law until the cross, because at any time; even on the cross, we are going to see that He could have sinned. But there is a particular order and we need to take note of that in Romans 8:3.

Another thing to take note of in this verse which is very interesting is that the folk who say *"sinful nature is sin"* do not realise what they are saying, because in this text it is telling us that the offering made for you and I, and for all humanity, was made in sinful flesh. It was the life lived out in sinful nature that went to the cross, and we are going to see what life came out of the tomb. Sinful nature went into the tomb - glorified humanity came out. Christ lived a life in sinful nature – a perfect life. That is what was offered for you and me. If you call sinful nature sin, you do not have much of a sacrifice on your behalf.

We are going to look at some temptations now. We need to give evidence that Christ was truly subject

to this law of sin in His flesh, but before we do, we need to look at what temptation is. Holy angels were tempted in heaven to draw their allegiance away from God, and some fell to that temptation. Adam was tempted when he was unfallen - so you don't have to be fallen to receive temptation. The difference is this; in a fallen being the temptation to sin is drawn from inside, there is something in him, in his nature, that is bent, that has a strong pull to sin; Adam didn't have that, yet he sinned. Romans 5:14 says; *"even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adams transgression".* Adam had nothing whatsoever within him to respond to sin, but that's not the case with fallen human beings. We need to understand this when we look at Christ and His temptations. Notice this statement in Signs of the Times, where Sister White is speaking about Adam and she says *"Adam was tempted by the enemy, and he fell. It was not indwelling sin which caused him to yield; for God made him pure and upright, in His own image. He was as faultless as the angels before the throne. There were in him no corrupt principles, no tendencies to evil. But when Christ came to meet the temptations of Satan, He bore 'the likeness of sinful flesh'." {BEcho, September 3, 1900 par. 12}.*

This statement is contrasting Adam and Christ, and it tells us that Christ was not like Adam. Adam didn't have those things in him; Christ did have them.

This statement is not referring to character, it is referring to nature - there is a big difference. Spirit of Prophecy is clearly teaching that Jesus was different to Adam. He certainly did not take Adam's nature before the fall, and not only that, there were principles and tendencies that Jesus bore when He took the likeness of sinful flesh. That is exactly what Romans 8:3 is teaching. If you change the word *"flesh"* in the above statement to *"character",* you change the whole statement. His character was always pure, but in His nature He had the same things to deal with that we have to.

Where do temptations originate; where is its foundation, the heart of it? What is the source of all sin, whether it be propensities or consequences of sin, like lust, greed, envy? Self - sin comes from self! When you put self first, before the will of God, that is when sin comes and that is exactly what Lucifer did in heaven. And self is exactly what Jesus had to deal with - this is what He had to conquer and that's what the law of sin is – self - putting yourself first. Every sin you commit is to protect or to please self, to gratify self. A person lies to protect themselves from certain punishment; they are protecting self. Stealing, lust, pride and stubbornness all originate in the desire to please or gratify self. This is where Jesus was tempted when He assumed humanity with all its weaknesses and tendencies, and we read that Brother Waggoner

said His weakness was to protect self. Things like lust, greed or pride are evil, sinful propensities which Jesus never had, because He never allowed them to develop; therefore people think He had a different nature.

Whenever you sin you don't only hurt yourself, others are affected by it also, and it causes harm and suffering to the ones you love. That is what the sacrificial offerings were designed to teach - when you sin, you hurt innocents. Take the example of greed. Before I was a Christian I had a gambling habit, which is a consequence of greed, and if it gets the better of you it can lead to stealing, a bad temper, and loss of income or your job. Then you can't buy food, you can't pay your bills, you end up broke and in debt, you lose your house, you are estranged from your wife and your family and you end up sleeping on a park bench. What started this entire downward slide that destroyed your life and that of your loved ones? It was greed, and what triggered the greed? To please self! Self is the source of sin which Jesus had to battle His entire life - and Satan knew. It is putting self first that leads to these corruptions, whatever they may be. Christ was tempted continually to put self first and it was almost overwhelming at times. So just because the Spirit of Prophecy rightly says He did not possess propensities of sin, it doesn't mean that you have to change His nature or give him a different mind. Christ did not have propensities of sin because He never

allowed them to develop, He never responded to self, He resisted them at the source and He would not place self before God's will; therefore, He could not be corrupted. Look at this beautiful statement, *"We must not become in our ideas common and earthy, and in our perverted ideas, we must not think that the liability of Christ to yield to Satan's temptations degraded His humanity and He possessed the same sinful corrupt propensities as man. The divine nature combined with the human made him capable of yielding to Satan's temptations. Here the test of Christ was far greater than that of Adam." {16MR 182.2}.*

Christ took our fallen nature but He could not be corrupted unless He received the words of Satan in place of the words of God. When you respond to the law of sin that is when fallen nature becomes corrupted - not before. When you put self first in place of God then your fallen nature becomes corrupted and unrighteous, and that's when you develop the propensities of sin which is different from propensities to sin. Jesus had propensities to sin but He never had the propensities of sin.

Notice this illustration. There are two men; they both have a fallen nature. The first man drinks, smokes and enjoys worldly entertainment and if this man was to try and give these things up, would he still have a propensity to these things - absolutely. The second man is a temperate man, cigarettes and alcohol have

never touched his lips and he is a stranger to worldly entertainment. Does this man have a propensity to cigarettes and alcohol? Of course not, he has never touched them, he hates them. Both men have a fallen nature, both are able to be tempted and both have a propensity to sin. The second man is like Jesus, he has a propensity to sin, he has weaknesses which he has never responded to, therefore they have never developed - he actually hates these things. These two men are both fallen. They both have a propensity to sin but only the first man has propensity of sin. They both have that weakness to put self first, which will never leave these two men this side of heaven. They are both fallen and they are both subject to the law of sin, but the first man responds to this weakness and develops wrong habits and propensities. The second man resists them in the same nature and develops no propensities of sin.

Once again this is my statement, it is not inspired. When a temptation comes to a man, whether it is great or small, it will require a response. The tempted one must choose to ignore and reject, or accept and indulge. It is his will that governs. Christ, as our example, always turned away from wrong inducement; and this is how character is formed. Jesus repulsed any temptation contrary to God's will, thus He never possessed a propensity of sin, He hated sin with a perfect hatred. Inspiration clearly reveals Jesus

inherited weaknesses like the rest of us, but He never entertained one of them, Gethsemane is an example of this. Inherited weaknesses of humanity do not constitute sin but rather how we respond to these infirmities is what defines whether we sin or not.

In another temptation – when Satan presented the kingdoms before Him. SOP says - *"The eye of Jesus for a moment rested upon the glory presented before Him; but He turned away and refused to look upon the entrancing spectacle. He would not endanger His steadfast integrity by dallying with the tempter."{1SM 286.2}.*

Look at what Jesus did – He turned away and this is how we should meet sin also, we shouldn't dally with it, we should immediately turn away, because we lose many a battle when we start to dally upon something that we shouldn't. Jesus turned away and refused to look upon the entrancing spectacle, He would not endanger His steadfast integrity by dallying with the tempter. Even as a child, when urged by His companions to do wrong, divinity flashed through humanity. He distinguished between right and wrong and placed sin in the light of God's commandments, and He refused decidedly, in a moment. That's where the battle was – in His mind - He always had to make a decision; He wasn't protected in any way, in fact He was exposed more than anybody but He never put self first.

We see in Matthew 16:21 Christ being tempted and how He was subject to this law of sin to put self first, which was truly part of His humanity. Remember sin impacts on others, for whenever you put your will before the will of God it not only hurts you but it will cause suffering to others also. What is the law of heaven? It is self-sacrificing love. Remember what the angels said to Jesus when He told them that He was going to come to Earth to be a sacrifice – to die in our place. They said, "We will go." They volunteered and there was no hesitation, they didn't even think about it. Self-sacrificing love is what rules an unfallen being. Self is sacrificed and you become a blessing to others (that is why heaven is going to be so special), and this law is also supposed to be the law on earth. Both these laws apply to us, and they applied to Jesus also. Whenever you see someone sacrificing their time, means or effort in giving up personal opportunities for the benefit of others, you see the law of heaven at work. We are told in Isaiah 64:6 *"all our righteousness's are as filthy rags"* - this is referring to the working of righteousness for reward, reputation or some type of legalistic motive; this is what constitutes filthy rags. Every moment of every day there are people in the world giving up their time and effort for others - that is self-sacrifice, and it's placed in the heart from the Spirit of God - from Christ Himself. Every good deed prompted from Christ is not

filthy rags; many misunderstand this text. Every moment there are people who are sacrificing their time and means to help others and these people may not necessarily be Christians. This is not filthy rags but the law of heaven in operation in the soul.

Remember we saw in Romans 8:3 that Christ conquered sin in the flesh; He defeated the law of sin; the principle that puts self first. We see in Matthew 16:21 how Satan tempted Jesus; *"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."* Jesus was telling His disciples what is going to happen to Him; His suffering and His death. Do you think Jesus, who has a nature like ours, was looking forward to that? Now look how Satan used Peter, because he knew where Jesus' weakness was - *"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee."* Peter was saying that He didn't have to go through with this, which is exactly what Christ's nature wanted to hear - what His weakness wanted to hear. Jesus replies - *"He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou, art an offence unto me;"* This word *"offence"* means a stumbling block - you are an occasion of stumbling, a thing that offends, a trap and a snare. Satan is trying to ensnare Christ, he is trying to get Him to sin because

Christ just told His disciples what He had to do; what He was committed to doing, what He gave His word to do. Yet here Peter said to Jesus, "You don't have to do it." But Jesus turns and says to Peter (who is being used by Satan) to get away from Him because he is a stumbling block. Look what He says now. Remember the two laws: self and self sacrifice - one is from God and the other one is from self. *"Get thee behind me, Satan;"* Why? *"for thou savoriest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."* The things that be of God were that He would sacrifice Himself for the good of others. The things that be of man are to put self first and let others perish. Satan knew this and that is where he is tempting Jesus - that is the weakness that Waggoner is talking about in 'Christ and His Righteousness' and which Sister White is talking about – self wanting to protect self. It was designed by Satan to cause Jesus to fall because He was not looking forward to that trial –but Jesus said; *"thou savoriest not the things that be of God, but of men."* Jesus had to choose between self and self-sacrifice – that's where the battle was.

In Luke 12:50 He said a similar thing, speaking about the same trial - *"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."* That word 'straitened' means perplexed, afflicted and preoccupied. Jesus was suffering, He wasn't looking forward to that trial,

which Satan knew, and he was trying to get him to renege. Notice how Christ was tempted to put self first in every one of these temptations - the wilderness temptation is no different. SOP says -*"Temptations where He wrestled with the very same fears; apparently overwhelming temptations that assail us. Temptations to indulgence of appetite. Presumptuous venturing where God had not led men, to worship the God of this world and sacrifice an eternity of bliss for the fascinating pleasures of this life." {1SM 95.3}.* He was tempted to put His needs before the good of others - love for self before the love of your neighbour. Indulgence of appetite; what is the source of that? He also would have broken the covenant with His Father - referring to when Satan commanded Him to turn the stones into bread, at which point He could have relieved His hunger, and He would have proved who He was. But He would have sinned and we would have perished. Jesus would have committed the sin of presumption by forcing God's hand in working a miracle to prove who He was; and He would be tempting God, showing a lack of faith or trust in His Father, and of course, to worship the god of this world. Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of this world, trying to bring out covetousness or self-preservation in Him, but the first commandment says -*"Thou shalt have no other gods before me".* If Jesus had responded to any of these temptations He would have sinned by

pleasing or protecting self, the source of which is a sinful nature with tendencies to sin, exactly like ours - the infirmities of which Christ was clearly subject to.

The battle in Gethsemane was between self and self-sacrifice; the law of sin versus the law of the Spirit; the things that be of God or the things that be of men; and Jesus had to overcome this battle solely in His fallen human nature. *"He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape."* {DA 686.3} Sister White says that – *"As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression". {DA 686.3}* In the battle in Gethsemane, the salvation of mankind rested upon one man – the man Christ Jesus. His Divine power had nothing to do with it because Jesus couldn't use it to escape in any way, and this is what was crushing Him - He must endure in His human nature, He must suffer as a man. As Christ felt His unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. But He gained the victory in our sinful human nature. He received no help, only that of Gabriel, who was sent to strengthen Him to drink of the cup. The following passage is such an encouragement to us because it is telling us that even Christ shrank from such an ordeal,

He didn't think He would be able to get through it, the temptation was so great to protect self, as we are told in SOP, *"Terrible was the temptation to let the human race bear the consequences of its own guilt." {DA 687.3}* Satan was tempting Christ to let go, to go back to heaven and let humanity perish - terrible was the temptation. What was the source of the temptation? Self, to protect self; self-preservation; and it was a terrible temptation for Him. How can anyone say He had a different nature to us? That's why He went through Gethsemane, and that's why He can give us the victory, as Sister White says here, *"The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. He prayed now not for His disciples that their faith might not fail but for His own tempted agonised soul. The awful moment had come, the moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance; Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup appointed to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow and leave man to perish in His iniquity." {DA 690.3}* See the temptation; see the thoughts. Only a man who has a sinful nature where the law of sin is abiding could think this way. So don't leave His mind out of it. Jesus could have said, 'let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin – I will go back to my Father.' This is what He was struggling with because He had our nature, with all its weaknesses, all its

passions, all its frailties, all its tendencies to protect self, and that is where Satan was aiming the temptation. Again we see here the law of sin verses the law of self-sacrificing love. Consider for a moment the consequences if Jesus had gone back to His Father and left man to perish. He would not have honoured the hundreds of promises of prophecy in the Old Testament, for example - Isaiah 9:6-7; *"there shall be no end, upon the throne of David…..and to establish it with judgment and with justice".* 2 Samuel 7:13 – *"I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever".* He would not have honoured His prophecies regarding the second coming and His kingdom, given in Job 19:25 - *"I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand upon the earth in the latter days."* None of the above could have happened if He had gone back to His Father. The millions who died in faith all through the Old Testament; the sacrificial offerings and the millions who died slaying the lamb, in faith that one day the true lamb would come to take their sin – they would have died without a Saviour. What about the Father Himself? He would be implicated as well because all these promises in the Old Testament were the Father's words. God said *"I will make man more precious than fine gold."* Christ was contemplating leaving man in his iniquity. Even in Christ's ministry here on earth, how often did He promise and talk about the kingdom of heaven. In John 14:3 Jesus said,

"And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." A few days earlier, when about to raise Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha in John 11:25-26 - *"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die".* He is asking Martha to believe; do you believe in the resurrection of life and that Jesus is going to come again to raise the dead? Jesus is contemplating not fulfilling the very things that He had promised throughout Scripture - that is how strong the temptation was; He was struggling as a man, and as a man He must endure, as a man He must pass the test – He could not use His Divine power, He had to conquer in His sinful fallen human nature. To teach that Jesus did not come in the same nature as man, takes Christ away as your example, and destroys His victory in that very same nature. Satan really pressed the temptations upon this point – *"How hopeless appeared the guilt and ingratitude of men! In its hardest features Satan pressed the situation upon the Redeemer: The people who claim to be above all others in temporal and spiritual advantages have rejected You. They are seeking to destroy You, the foundation, the center and seal of the promises made to them as a peculiar people. One of Your own disciples, who has listened to Your instruction, and has been among the foremost in church activities, will*

betray You. One of Your most zealous followers will deny You. All will forsake You. Christ's whole being abhorred the thought. That those whom He had undertaken to save, those whom He loved so much, should unite in the plots of Satan, this pierced His soul. The conflict was terrible." {DA 687.1} Satan knew what He was doing then and he knows what he is doing today in teaching that Jesus has a different nature. He knew where to attack Jesus; he knew where Christ's weakness was; he knew that in Christ's fallen human nature there was the weakness that every human being possesses, the weakness to put self first, to protect self at any cost; and in Gethsemane that's where the battle was. Self or self-sacrifice? Would Christ decide to sacrifice Himself no matter the cost? Would the law of heaven prevail against the law of sin and self? Look at the words Sister White uses – *"three times His humanity shrunk."* Notice she is always emphasising His humanity in Gethsemane - *"Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer." {DA 690.3} "His humanity shrunk with that last crowning sacrifice but now the history of the human race comes up before the world's redeemer."* Notice now how the law of love is motivating Him. *"He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the*

power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. (The battle is over, self was self-sacrificed when he saw our destiny, and He makes a decision) He will save man at any cost to Himself." {DA 690.3} Thank God, the Lord never surrendered to the temptation. That is where self was sacrificed. That is where the law of sin was condemned that had held man captive, (Romans 8:3). The law of sin, previously in the flesh, had kept every man captive, God sends His Son in the likeness of that same flesh. His Son lives a perfect life. He brings that life to the cross and God passes judgement upon the law of sin and it is condemned. The law of sin was not condemned until after the cross, after Christ had died. Even on the cross, Christ could have sinned. They were crying out to him*, "if thou be the Son of God come down."*

We are told that Satan, with His fierce temptations, wrung the heart of Christ, that hope did not present itself, Him coming forth a conqueror. He could not see through the portals of the tomb and He felt that His separation from God would be eternal. His tortured, agonised soul cries out in the very heart of the battle on the *cross, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?"* The Bible says in Romans 14:23, *"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"* - so if Jesus died in that condition, believing He was forsaken of God after having lived a perfect life, He would die without faith

and Satan knew it. Even on the cross, He could have sinned; the tendency is still there in that fallen nature. Jesus had to die a victor; He cannot die without faith, because He cannot impart faith to us if He died without it, and if He died not trusting His Father's promises, He died not believing what He himself had promised - resurrection and life. That's why Gabriel was sent to Gethsemane with this message (this statement has got to be one of the most powerfully inspired statements I have ever, ever read). It's found in the Desire of Ages, and it really shows how powerful the battle was in Gethsemane -*"He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved." {DA 693.3}* This shows how the life was being crushed out of the soul of Jesus, because He had to endure as man. Just as we have to be told, 'Have faith, brother, God is in control', so too Jesus is being told that His Father is greater and stronger than Satan. During those dark hours when God darkened the earth around the cross, Jesus contemplates His life, especially the 16th Psalm – and suddenly the gloom is lifted from the cross. In the gospel of Matthew 27:46 Jesus cried out with a loud

voice saying, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* that is a very lamentable cry, the cry of desperation. In John 19:30 Jesus said *"It is finished".* He then cries out a second time in a loud voice, as we read in the Gospel of Luke 23:46, a beautiful cry - and this is where the victory is, between those two periods when the gloom is suddenly lifted from the cross. *"Suddenly the gloom lifted from the cross, and in clear, trumpetlike tones, that seemed to resound throughout creation, Jesus cried, "It is finished." "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." A light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like the sun. He then bowed His head upon His breast, and died."* {DA 756.2} He died in victory. SOP says, *"Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him" {DA 756.3}* This is what the saints will go through in the last days; they will also feel cut off and forsaken, which is why Jesus can be our example. He relied in those last hours on the evidence of His Father's acceptance; He was acquainted with the character of His Father, just as we need to be acquainted with God our Father, and never let any trial or temptation come in the way of that, no matter what is taken from us, or where we find ourselves. *"He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He*

understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor." {DA 756.3} Remember Romans 8:3 - Jesus had to bring a perfect life to the cross; He had to condemn the law of sin, which is putting self first. We have seen in this study that is exactly what Jesus did in Gethsemane and in the wilderness temptations. At the cross Christ was able to pass judgement on the law of sin, and it was condemned. Jesus lived out this life in a nature like ours; He suffered being tempted more than we will ever understand. He had to overcome self. We saw in Gethsemane that He would save man at any cost to Himself.

When He died and they laid Him in the tomb, it was fallen humanity that went into the tomb, but Jesus condemned sin in the flesh, so fallen humanity is not going to come out of the tomb - a glorified humanity is what has to came out of the tomb. If you read Matthew 27:51-53 you will see that at the death of Jesus a lot of graves were opened, and at the resurrection of Jesus these saints rose with Him. Jesus went to the cross with the law of sin in His nature but He condemned it; He killed it; He never once responded to it; He conquered it - and He came out glorified. The saints came out of the tomb bearing

glorified humanity also, raised to everlasting life; they were no longer subject to the law of sin because it was no longer part of them. When they died they went into their tomb with that law of sin still in their nature, but they didn't come out with it. Praise God! That is what Romans 8:3 is saying, the law was always weak because the law of sin was too powerful and the flesh always gave in to it. So God sent His Son in that same flesh and that Son lived a perfect life, and for sin He offered it at the cross, and then God condemned it.

We have a fallen nature; it is sinful, and within this fallen nature you have corruption, mortality and the law of sin which is condemned. God was able to pass judgement on it, because one Man was able to take that life and offer it a ransom for all, having never submitted to the law of sin. On the other side of the cross you have incorruption, holiness, immortality because God was rightly able to condemn the law of sin.

Again the following is my comment. If you believe human nature is sin you have to change Christ's nature and say, "He did not come in sinful flesh subject to the law of sin," plus, "He could not condemn sin in the flesh – He never had it – therefore, it was never conquered, and you will never overcome because you don't have an example. In which case you can never come forth from the grave glorified because the law of sin was never conquered in any man, and

Satan can rightly claim no fallen human being can keep the law of God." This is effectively what everyone who is teaching 'you are born a sinner' has to conclude - they have no choice – Jesus never conquered sin in our fallen nature, and if He didn't conquer it, then no man has a right to come forth glorified because the law of sin still holds them captive. The law of sin means that you are mortal. It means that you are subject to sin; but praise God it was conquered at the cross through the life Jesus lived. That is what Romans 8:3 says; God sent His Son in the same flesh we have (Sarx) and He destroyed it in that flesh, and God passed judgement upon it.

You have in your nature two laws operating as we saw earlier. You have the law of sin and the law of Spirit - the law of God after the inward man as Paul said. As we saw in Romans 2:14 *"the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, having not the law, are a law unto themselves."* The law is written in their conscience, in their hearts.

God's law wants to lead you to righteousness and the law of sin wants to lead you to unrighteousness. We saw in the previous study how we possess higher, nobler, moral powers, and how our character and our actions are formed by how we respond to these two laws. If you respond to the moral powers, the higher powers of the soul - they bring out moral virtues and a

noble character, which is righteous. If you respond to the law of sin in the flesh, your character will be unrighteous. Jesus only ever responded to these higher powers and so He grew in stature with God and men etc.

I want to encourage you that you don't have to be held captive to the law of sin; Christ has conquered it and He can give you the victory. In Romans 8:2 it says: *"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* If you think of the law of sin as the law of gravity, the law of gravity is a powerful law; you can't fight it - it holds you down. If you fall or step off a building you can't argue with the law of gravity - there is only one way to go! That is like the law of sin which seems almost unbreakable; it seems too powerful for us. Can you think of a law that's more powerful than the law of gravity? What about the law of aerodynamics? Every time you get in a plane you defy a powerful, physical law. Every time you look at a bird flying you see that law being defied. Look at the eagle - the Bible says some beautiful things about eagles. In Isaiah 40:31 it says, *"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles."* In Exodus 19:4 God said to Israel - *"I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself"* When you see an eagle soaring in the sky, it conjures up the most beautiful thoughts of freedom, of safety and

independence; the Bible uses it many times in reference to victory. The eagle is a proud, beautiful bird, and one of the worst things you can see is that beautiful bird in a cage, imprisoned, when it was designed to fly freely and hover over the highest mountains; we are just like that eagle in a cage when we can't resist the law of sin. People are telling you today that we are hopeless, lost and depraved and can't do anything good, when this is simply not true.

Do you know who the cage is for? Revelation 18:2 gives us the answer - for *"every unclean and hateful bird"* – that's who the cage is for. It is for Babylon and Babylon's doctrines, which is what the Original Sin doctrine is - the doctrine of antichrist – which takes Christ away as your example, destroys Christ's victory over sinful nature, and it destroys Gethsemane and the cross. The law of the Spirit is much more powerful, just like the law of aerodynamics is so much more powerful than the law of gravity. When you begin to respond to this law, which God has already placed in your mind, then it is going to rule in your heart and transform your life. You will be able to say with Paul - *"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"* - and it has made me free because Jesus conquered it.

The following is a powerful statement from Brother Waggoner – *"Some may have thought, while reading thus far, that we were depreciating the*

character of Jesus by bringing Him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary, we are simply exalting the "Divine power" of our blessed Saviour, who Himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man in order that He might exalt man to His own spotless purity, which He retained under the most adverse circumstances. His humanity only veiled His Divine nature, by which He was inseparably connected with the invisible God and which was more than able successfully to resist the weaknesses of the flesh. There was in His whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet His Divine nature never for a moment harbored an evil desire nor did His Divine power for a moment waver. Having suffered in the flesh all that men can possibly suffer, He returned to the throne of the Father as spotless as when He left the courts of glory. When He lay in the tomb, under the power of death, ***"it was impossible that he should be holden of it," because he "knew no sin."*** *{1890 EJW,CHR 28.1}*

Earlier we read Waggoner's statement which said, that Christ assumed all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies that we are subject to. We now close our study with Waggoner's statement above, saying, "Jesus went into the tomb but it could not hold Him, because:

- He knew no sin."

Why?

- Because sinful nature, with all its tendencies, is not sin.
- Sister White taught it.
- Our pioneers taught it.
- The Advent message taught it.

But it is not what is being taught today.

I pray that you will study this for yourselves and be blessed by it.

Amen.

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