The Answer To Our Deficiencies

As believers we wrestle with deficiencies, and inadequacies that can cripple us, and make us feel unworthy of being saved

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find...O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Romans 7:18, 24

The answer to Paul's question is explained in Romans 8 I believe a lot of controversy in the church, and a lot of discouragement in our members could be settled with an understanding of the Bible's teaching on the ministry of the Holy Spirit laid out in Romans 8 and elsewhere. That's what we'll be doing this morning

First of all:

Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as a person

John 14:15-18

John 14:25-26

John 15:26

John 16:7-15

According to Jesus' understanding on the nature of the Holy Spirit, He has personality. He fills the role that a person left. He also mentioned these things in the most important discourse He gives to the disciples before He leaves earth.

There are some in our ranks who have begun to question the role and divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Uriah Smith and other pioneers wrestled with this as well.

To refute the personhood of the Spirit is to claim to know more about the nature of the Spirit than did Jesus. I would caution anyone on that route to cease and desist. It's a deification of our own ideas and surmising, and is a form of idolatry

It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." It is plainly declared regarding the Holy Spirit that, in His work of guiding men into all truth, "He shall not speak of Himself." John 15:26; 16:13.

AA 51.3

The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.

AA 52.1

There are three primary roles that the Scriptures attribute to the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

To Convict
To Confirm
To Conform

To Convict:

John 16:8-11

He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment

So the Holy Spirit's first work is to convict the world of it's sin of unbelief, it's need of Christ's righteousness, and that He has judged satan

To Confirm: Ephesians 1:13-14 After you heard the Gospel—> You believed—> You trusted in Christ—> Then you were sealed

This sealing serves the purpose of a guarantee (down payment, deposit)

From the moment you say yes to Jesus, the Spirit is testifying in heaven that heaven is now your home, until Jesus comes to seal the deal at the second coming

Huge disclaimer:

This is not teaching once saved always saved. This is all dependent upon us walking in that decision to accept Jesus, and to follow the promptings of His Spirit. If we turn from that decision the whole process begins again

This sealing in Ephesians 1 is what is referred to as imputed righteousness, and justification

Impute=attribute something (righteousness, guilt, etc) to someone by virtue of a similar quality in another

Justification=the action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God

The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.—

The Review and Herald, June 4, 1895.

To Confirm:
Romans 8:14-16
When you become a believer the Spirit confirms that you are a child of God

Adoption We are accepted into a new family. Not brought into bondage to fear The Spirit testifies that this is a child of God

When someone is adopted into a family, how much do they know regarding the expectations of the family they are joining? Nothing.

This is what makes the third ministry of the Holy Spirit so amazing

To Conform:

Romans 8:3-8

The law could not save us, because our flesh is incapable of keeping it. So God sent Jesus, in flesh like ours, to overcome sin in the flesh.

Paul said that Jesus did this so that the law could be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit

To Conform: Hebrews 10:15-17

God promises to write His law in our hearts and in our minds. He also promises to remember our sins no more

This is the second time Paul quotes Jeremiah 31 in the book of Hebrews. This passage is the new covenant that many are talking about in Christendom today

So the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin of unbelief, and then seals us when we do believe, thereby confirming that we are children of God and that heaven is our home.

Then He begins to teach us how to live like children of God by writing His law in our hearts and in our minds

Ezekiel 36:24-27 God's extravagant promise to transform our lives through the work of the Spirit

You're dirty? —> I'll cleanse you Got idols? —> I can get rid of them Have a stony heart? —-> I'll give you a new one Cold & indifferent? —> I'll help you feel again Can't obey? —> I'll empower you to obey

By accepting the Gospel, this grants the Holy Spirit access to begin His work of sealing us, and transforming us into Christ's image.

He immediately imputes Christ's righteousness to us, thereby justifying us before the Father.

Then He begins the process of imparting Christ's righteousness to us, by empowering us to receive, and to live Christ's perfect life.

This is sanctification. Every step of the way we stand justified before the Father if we continue to follow the prompting of the Spirit

The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.—

The Review and Herald, June 4, 1895.

The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. COL 65.2

At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges. COL 65.2

Romans 5:8-10 fleshes out the completeness of the life and death of Jesus

Jesus' death cancels out our debt

Jesus' life gives us our fitness for heaven

If all I had was the death of Jesus, I would have no hope of eternal life.

My past debt would be cleared with no hope of living a victorious life going forward.

So God does desire us to have lives that are free from sin. He does intend for us to overcome. If He didn't, why did He send Jesus to suffer, to overcome, to die, and to rise again?

He has provided the means necessary for us to overcome by sending Jesus to live a perfect life that we have not lived, and empowering us to live Christ's life through His Spirit

How does that happen?
1 Corinthians 10:12-13
Philippians 2:13

When tempted, we are to ask for Christ's spirit of surrender to the will of God, Who then enables our will to carry out God's will

The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. It sends down its roots into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the lifegiving properties from the air. So the Christian is to grow by co-operating with the divine agencies. Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience.

COL 66.1

As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. The work is to be done "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6.

If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us "as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3. As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. We shall "grow as the lily." We shall "revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." Hosea 14:5, 7. By constantly relying upon Christ as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is our head. So the Holy Spirit allows us to receive everything that Christ achieved and overcame on our behalf. We can cry out in any moment of need to receive from God what Christ has already procured.

Christ continually yielded His will to His Father, He continually abided in God. We can receive that spirit of surrender

Romans 8:11

The very Spirit that rose Christ from the dead can bring life to our mortal bodies. It can raise us from our spiritual death

Romans 8:32

If God didn't hold back anything, but was willing to give all of heaven in one gift, why wouldn't He supply what is needed in our experience?

Romans 8:26 The Spirit helps us in our weakness. Even if we don't know how to pray He'll provide that too

Every deficiency in our experience has been accounted for in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The question then is what will we do with the pleadings of Jesus through His Spirit?

Revelation 3:20
How is Jesus knocking on the door of our hearts?
Through His Spirit

So we are God's at every step of our growth according to the imputed, and imparted righteousness of Christ. We can have assurance that we are in God and heaven bound when we remain in Christ.

1 John 3:24

1 John 4:13

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4.

But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments.

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. COL 311.4

He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of his good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to

RH July 1, 1890, par. 11

The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation, is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation. RH July 1, 1890, par. 11

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

Walking according to the Spirit is walking in continual obedience to the prompting of the Spirit. So of course this would deliver us from any form of condemnation. And since we are receiving Christ's spirit of surrender we are doing it "in Christ"





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