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# THE ENEMY WITHIN

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Thomas Cranmer--archbishop of Canterbury during the middle sixteenth century--was noted for promoting the Reformation in England, for disseminating the Coverdale English Bible, and for creating the liturgy of the Anglican Church. He repudiated the rule of the pope in Rome and attempted to bring about a union between the Church of England and the Lutheran church of Germany.

Later, when Mary Tudor--a devout Roman Catholic--became Queen of England, Cranmer was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was convicted of both treason and heresy, and was deprived of sleep and subjected to almost continuous questioning, brow-beating, and haranguing for several weeks. He was often threatened with torture and death. Under this pressure, Cranmer signed a series of confessions, in which he recanted his earlier support for the Reformation, his proclaiming of salvation by grace through faith, and his belief that the Scriptures belonged to all the people, not just the Catholic clergy.

Even though he signed the recantations that were demanded of him, and despite promises made to him that these signed documents would save him from torture and death, the papers were presented as evidence against him in a final trial for treason. The court condemned him to death by burning at the stake--but told him the sentence would not be carried out if he made a public recantation of his former beliefs. He was taken before a large crowd at St. Mary's Church, Oxford, to confess his former errors--but instead of confessing, he declared, "My conscience will not let me deny the truth any longer, even to save my life. I have signed seven recantations of the truth, and I bitterly regret each one. I abhor my right hand for signing those recantations, and when they take me to the flames, I shall hold my right hand steadfastly in the flames."

The authorities stopped him in mid-speech, dragged him out of the church, and took him away to be executed. As the fire was being prepared, he trusted God to give him the strength to keep his promise, and he boldly thrust his right hand into the flames. Then he was bound to the stake, surrounded with wood, and put to a martyr's death.

Boldness! That is the inevitable result of trust in God, trust in the new covenant--everything coming from God, nothing coming from me. Boldness, courage, and confidence, of course, are just what people everywhere are searching for. They instinctively know that effective action must issue from a courageous, confident spirit. They try in a thousand ways to summon up that confidence from within, but they are looking in the wrong place. There is a form of boldness they can find in themselves, but it will end as a fading glory.

But that is not the source of Paul's boldness! He has found the secret of *true* boldness. His basis is different. "Therefore," says Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:12, "since we have such a hope, we are very bold." That is Paul's triumphant conclusion to his discussion of the two covenants at work in humanity. His boldness is rooted in a sure hope, a conviction that God is ready to work in him.

All who trust in this hope become noticeably bold. Because they are not trusting in themselves or in some effort they are making on behalf of God but on God himself, they can be supremely confident. And since success does not depend any longer on their dedication, their zeal, their wisdom, their background or training, then they can be very bold. It is God who will do it, and he can be depended upon not to fail--though he very well may take some unexpected route to accomplish his ends.

When we can trust that God is capable to work in any given situation, He delivers us completely from the fear of failure. At that moment, what else can we be but invincibly bold!

### **When Moses was afraid**

Paul immediately goes on to say, "We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away" (2 Corinthians 3:13). On at least one occasion Moses was not bold. He was, indeed, the very opposite! He was fearful and threatened.

Here we learn something about Moses which the Old Testament does not reveal. In the Old Testament account Moses, was not aware of the shining of his face when he came down from Mt. Sinai. Naturally it didn't take him long to learn that something unusual was happening when people closed their eyes or shielded their faces in his presence. It actually became necessary for Moses to cover his face with a veil when he talked to people. There was nothing wrong with that. It was a perfectly proper action in view of the circumstances. But Moses soon knew something that the people of Israel didn't know: The glory was fading.

At first Moses put the veil on every morning because of the brightness of his face. But as time passed and the brightness faded to nothing more than a dim glow, he still wore the veil each day.

Now Paul raises the question: *Why?* Why did Moses keep the veil on his face after the glory had faded? His answer: Moses was *afraid*. Afraid of what? Afraid that the Israelites would see that the glory had faded! He did not want them to see the end of the fading glory. The mark of his privilege and status before God was disappearing, and Moses did not want anyone to know it. So he did what millions have done ever since, he hid the fact of his faded glory behind a facade, a veil. He did not let anyone see what was really going on inside.

### **The veil of pride**

It is clear that Paul means this veil over the face of Moses to be a symbol of a further activity of the flesh, for he finds the same veil still around in his own day. The Jews of his time were a continuing example. He writes:

But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

When Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from the mountain, he read them to the people. Their immediate response was: "All that God says, we will do." The confidence and pride of the flesh rose up to say, "We've got what it takes to do everything you say, God. Don't worry about us. We are your faithful people, and whatever you say, we will do." The truth was, of course, that before the day was over they had broken all ten of the commandments. They knew it, but they didn't want anyone else to know. So they put up a facade. They covered over their failure with religious ritual and convinced themselves that the ritual was all God wanted. That pride which would not admit failure was the veil that hid the end of the fading glory. They could not see the death that was waiting at the end. And they could not feel the frustration and defeat that would be theirs when the flesh had finished its fatal work.

Fifteen hundred years after Moses, Paul found the same veil at work in Israel. The Jews of his day made the same response to the demands of the law as their forefathers had made at Mt. Sinai: "All that you say, we will do!" Now, two thousand years after Paul the same phenomenon is occurring. When some demand is made upon the natural life, its response is, "All right, I'll do it," or at least, "I'll try." Even in Christians, the confidence that they can do something for God blinds their eyes to the end of the fading glory. They believe that something good can be accomplished if they just give it the old college try. So today that same veil remains unlifted.

### **False fronts**

Veils come in many forms today, but they are always essentially the same: An image or front we project to others, and behind which we hide our real selves. They are always, therefore, a form of pride and hypocrisy. We don't want people to see our fading glory. Actually, we are reluctant to admit it has happened even to ourselves. And by wearing our veils long enough there is great danger that we will actually begin to believe that we are the kind of people we want everyone to believe we are. Then our hypocrisy becomes unnoticed by us and its perpetuation is assured. This is that subtle deceitfulness of the heart which Jeremiah saw so clearly and lamented: "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Yes, the veils we employ are unbelievably varied. Pride has a thousand faces. It is a master of disguise. C. S. Lewis has rightly said,

There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves. . . . There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others. The vice I am talking of is Pride or Self-Conceit; and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility (*Mere Christianity* , p. 106).

Yet despite the unpopularity which pride creates for us, these innocent-seeming veils are so necessary to our ego support that we invent many clever ways to preserve them. One is to have a "double entry" system of names. When a form of pride appears in others, we have one name for it; when the same thing appears in us, we have a nicer name for it. Others have prejudices; we have convictions. Others are conceited; we have self-respect. Others garishly keep up with the Joneses; we simply try to get ahead. Others blow up, or lose their tempers; we are seized with righteous indignation.

C. S. Lewis suggests that only Christians become aware of pride in themselves. Certainly it is true that most non-Christians, if they see pride in themselves at all, regard it as a virtue rather than a vice. But unfortunately, being a Christian does not guarantee easy recognition of all forms of pride. Christians are particularly susceptible to donning certain veils, especially those which appear to be forms of Christian virtue.

Take false modesty, for example. I have long ago learned that when I hear some Christian say, "I'm only trying to serve the Lord in my own humble way," I'm probably talking to the proudest person in six counties! St. Jerome warned: "Beware of the pride of humility." I once heard of a congregation that gave its pastor a medal for humility--then took it away because he wore it! True humility, of course, is never aware of itself. It is most noteworthy that the greatest saints have been most aware of their pride. And the truly humble person would never see this virtue in himself. Any degree of pious cant is a dead giveaway of the presence of towering pride.

### **Veils Christians wear**

Then there is self-righteousness. This is a particularly noxious form of Christian pride. It seizes upon some biblical standard of conduct and takes pride in its own ability to measure up outwardly while conveniently overlooking any failure of the inner or thought life to conform. The end result is a smug, patronizing, and even nasty attitude toward anyone who does not meet the standard. This is the sin Jesus struck at most forcibly. He exposed it in the Pharisees and said that even the adulterers and the extortioners would enter the kingdom of heaven before them. It is the sin of the crusader who habitually mounts a white horse and rides out to combat any form of evil which he considers reprehensible.

Self-righteousness is also the sin of the person who nags another, for the nagger is focusing upon a single point of conduct and ignores the areas in his or her own life where a similar failure is occurring. Instinctively, we retreat behind this veil whenever failure or weakness is exposed in us. ("I may be weak there, but at least I don't do such-and-such.") We keep self-righteous veils always close at hand so they can be put on quickly to keep others from seeing the end of the fading glory.

Another common Christian veil is sensitivity or touchiness. Persons who are touchy or excessively sensitive are easily hurt by the words or actions of others. They must be handled with kid gloves lest they take offense. And when offended, they suffer agonies of spirit and tend to wallow in a morass of self-pity for hours, or even days, on end. Their explanation of such agony is always the "thoughtlessness" or "rudeness" of others, but in reality it is their own protest at not being given the attention or prominence which they're sure they deserve. Years ago a wise Christian woman summed it up for me in a brief statement I'll never forget. "I've learned," she said, "that sensitivity is nothing but selfishness." That helped greatly to free me from a struggle I was having with touchiness at the time.

An impatient spirit can be a veil to hide the reality of what we are. It is often manifested to indicate importance or busyness. It frequently appears as a mark of zeal or dedication. But to be easily irritated, to frown readily, or reply sharply is a form of pride usually used to cover insecurity or a deep sense of inferiority. A self-justifying habit reveals something similar. Those people who can't stand to be misunderstood but are forever explaining their actions are really saying, "I want you to think I'm perfect. Of course, I know that the present situation does not let me appear so, but if you will just let me explain..." It is no wonder this habit is frequently associated with what is called perfectionism,

But perhaps the most common veil employed by Christians is remoteness: the practice of keeping feelings and attitudes completely to oneself, even with friends or close relatives. Remoteness arises primarily from fear--the fear of being known for what one is. Often, though, it is described defensively as "reserve," "privacy," or "reticence." It is clearly a veil to keep others from seeing a fading glory and is a direct violation of such biblical commands as "confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16) and "carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). After all, how can another bear your burden if you don't share it?

All of these commands are summed up in the direct and repeated command of Jesus, "Love each other" (John 15:12), which he goes on to define as including, among other elements, the sharing of secrets (see John 15:15). Paul tells the Corinthian believers (in 2 Corinthians 6:11) that he has opened his heart fully to them and exhorts them: "As a fair exchange-- I speak as to my children--open wide your hearts also." (2 Corinthians 6:13).

## **The big lie**

It is apparent from the above examples that the flesh, or natural life, likes nothing better than to hide or disguise itself. We all tend to fear rejection if we are seen for what we are. The satanic lie is that in order to be liked or accepted we must appear capable or successful. Therefore we either project capability (the extrovert) or we seek to hide our failure (the introvert). The new covenant offers the opposite. If we will admit our inadequacy, we can have God's adequacy, and all we have sought vainly to produce (confidence, success, impact, integrity, and reality) is given to us at the point of our inability. The key is to take away the veil.

A modern songwriter, John Fischer, has captured, with delicious humor, the tendency of evangelical Christians to wear veils. Enjoy a good laugh at your own expense.

### **Evangelical Veil Productions**

Evangelical Veil Productions!  
Pick one up at quite a reduction;  
Got all kinds of shapes and sizes;  
Introductory bonus prizes!

Special quality, one-way see through;  
You can see them but they can't see you.  
Never have to show yourself again!

Just released--A Moses model;  
Comes with shine in a plastic bottle,

It makes you look like you've just seen the Lord!

Just one daily application  
And you'll fool the congregation,  
Guaranteed to last a whole week through.

Got a Back-from-the-Summer-Camp veil,  
With a Mountain-top look that'll never fail,  
As long as you renew it every year.

Lots of special Jesus freak files,  
every one comes with a permanent smile,  
One-way button, and a sticker for your car.

*(Repeat first verse--then shout:)*

**YOU'RE PROTECTED!**

(Used by permission of author)

## **The great unveiling**

How can these veils be removed? The answer is clearly stated by Paul in the Scripture passage we are considering:

But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because *only in Christ is it taken away*. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, *the veil is taken away* (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

Only in Christ is the veil taken away! And as the apostle goes on to tell us, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (v. 17). Here is our first real key in moving from the old covenant to the new. The key is the Spirit. Some may be confused by Paul's word that only through Christ can the veil be taken away. They may wonder, "Are we to turn to the Spirit or to Christ to have the veil removed?" The answer, of course, is that it makes no difference.

In Scripture, the Holy Spirit is frequently called the Spirit of Christ. It is His divine task and joy to enter the life of those who believe in Jesus and continually unleash in them the very life of Jesus himself. Thus, to turn to the Spirit is also to turn to Christ. It is by means of the Spirit that we turn to Christ.

We must further see that in practical terms "to turn to the Spirit" means to have faith in the promise of the Spirit, to trust the word of God. It is to expect the Spirit to act in line with what he has said he will do. Specifically, the promise is to apply to our practical, daily lives the full value of both the death and the resurrection of Jesus. His death has cut us off from our old, natural life, as Paul tells us in Romans 6:6--"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

When we agree with this word concerning the specific form of pride we are at the moment experiencing (that is, the particular veil we are hiding behind), we are immediately freed by the Spirit from its control. We have called the veil what God calls it, which is usually also what we call it when we find it in someone else. It can no longer be excused or justified--we repudiate it, and the fleeting pleasure it offers us. That is what it means to turn to the Spirit. As Paul describes it, ". . . if *by the Spirit* you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:13, emphasis added). Remember, we turn to the Lord, the veil is removed--and the Lord is the Spirit.

## **Free to live**

The second function of the Spirit is to make real to us in practical terms the resurrection of Jesus, as well as His death. This is the second part of "turning to the Lord." The first act of the Spirit ends the reign of the old life over us. The second act releases to us the resurrected life of Jesus. That is what the Scripture calls freedom. "Now the Lord is the Spirit," says verse 17, "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

When by faith in that promise we have turned from the flesh with its lying promise of success and have trusted in the Lord Jesus, dwelling within us by His Spirit, to be ready to work the moment we choose to act, we have in very practical terms passed from the old covenant to the new. Nothing coming from us, everything coming from God! That is freedom!

The apostle goes on to describe this freedom in glorious terms: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 2:18). Note the term unveiled faces. By faith in the promise of God (that is, by the Spirit) we have ceased to look at the face of Moses and are now beholding with full vision "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The veil is removed. Moses and the law are gone; only Jesus Christ fills the horizon of our life--for that precise moment. It is altogether possible that a minute or two later we may, like Peter walking on the water, take our eyes off the face of Jesus and begin to look once again at our circumstances and our limited resources. At that moment, of course, Moses and the law return. The temptation to do this is not the act, and we can find our faith sorely tested while still having it fixed upon the face of Jesus. But when we succumb to these pressures and begin to trust ourselves or others, we are back in the old covenant, wearing a veil over our faces, and must repeat the whole process for deliverance.

### **God is not angry**

But let us not despair or feel condemned when this happens. Remember that God has already made full provision for failure in learning to live by the Spirit. He anticipates our struggles and our defeats and only expects us to recognize them as well and return immediately to the principle of the new covenant. God is not angry with us or upset because we have fallen. We are angry at ourselves, perhaps, but that only shows us more fully how much we were expecting something to come from us. We need but to thank God for letting us see what we were unwittingly trusting in and then resume our confidence that Jesus is at work in us as we take up the task at hand again.

This continual return to beholding the glory of the Lord is doing something to us, says Paul. More and more areas of our conscious experience (our soul) are coming under the full control of the Spirit, and we are therefore reflecting an increasing likeness to Jesus; we are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another. This is what we often call "Christian growth" or "growing in grace." Because of constant practice of the principle of the new covenant, it is increasingly easy to keep the eyes of the heart fixed on the face of Jesus. Gradually it feels more and more "natural" to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. The writer of Hebrews speaks of those "who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:14). It is still possible, under sufficient provocation or allurements, to act in the flesh in any given relationship of life, but it is increasingly unlikely, for the heart is being "strengthened by grace" (Hebrews 13:9).

Though this gracious effect is occurring in certain areas of the conscious life, it has not yet conquered all the areas in which we live. "Glory," the glory of the life of Jesus, is becoming dominant in some areas, but in others the flesh still reigns triumphant and must be attacked and subdued by the Spirit so that another degree of glory may become evident. What is happening has often been pictured as a throne room in the heart, where at first Ego (symbolized by the letter E) is seated upon the throne, and Christ (symbolized by the cross) is waiting to be given his rightful place of rule, as in the illustration below.

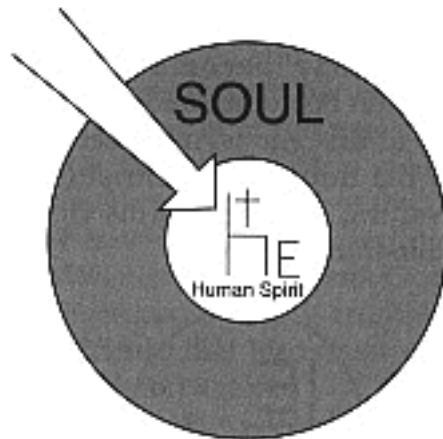


When the human will (the throne) is submitted to the authority of Christ, the Ego is cast off the throne and Christ rules as Lord in the heart, as illustrated below:



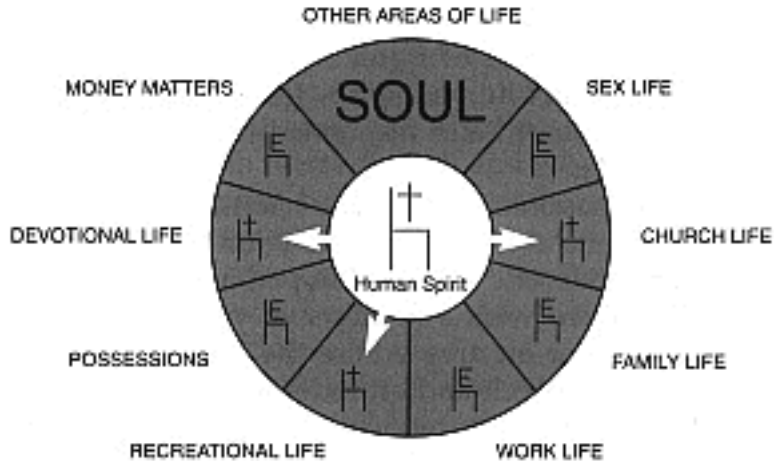
### Growth is a process

These diagrams have been helpful to many, but are inadequate, for they represents the human heart as a single entity and the will as a single factor governing the whole of the inner life at one time. I believe it is more accurate to recognize the word *heart*, commonly employed in Scripture, as referring to the soul and spirit combined, as below:



### THE SPIRIT OF GOD PENETRATES THE HUMAN SPIRIT: EGO IS DETHRONED

Note in this illustration that at the conversion of the individual, the Spirit of God penetrates the human spirit, dethrones the Ego (or the flesh), and replaces it with the Cross, depicting the life of Jesus. But that is *only* within the human *spirit*. The *soul* is still under the control of the flesh and remains so until the Spirit



THE HOLY SPIRIT INVADES AREAS OF THE SOUL  
 Ü = THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST  
 E = EGO, OR FLESH, IN CONTROL

### The up-and-down life

This would explain why it is possible for an individual Christian to be in the Spirit one moment and in the flesh the next. A good biblical example of this is in Matthew 16:16 where Peter confesses to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." To this, Jesus replies, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven." It is clear here that Peter spoke in the Spirit when he made his confession of the identity of Jesus.

However, in verse 22 of the same account, Peter actually rebukes Jesus for suggesting that he will be crucified and resurrected again. To this rebuke Jesus says, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Here Peter speaks from the flesh in ignorant opposition to the will and purpose of God.

It is evident that when it was a question of Peter's rational acceptance or rejection of the *identity* of Jesus, the Spirit had already successfully enthroned Jesus as Lord in that area of Peter's life. But when it came to the matter of Peter's *involvement* with the program of crucifixion and resurrection which that identity made necessary, the flesh was still very much on the throne and Jesus was not yet Lord of that area. But that was all in the realm of Peter's soul (his conscious experience). In his human spirit, Jesus was Lord and had been ever since Peter responded to Jesus' call and entered into life.

It is quite possible then for you habitually to walk in the Spirit in one area of life--say, your relations with Christian brothers and sisters--but perhaps the moment you are involved with a member of your immediate family, you enter an area where the flesh is still unconquered and speech and attitudes are fleshly instead of Spirit-governed. This frequently happens with young Christians. From his vantage point in your human spirit the Spirit of God exerts steady and unyielding pressure upon the area of family relationships, often precipitating several crises, until the will submits in that area and Jesus is enthroned as Lord there too. Thus another degree of likeness to Christ is achieved and another degree of glory manifested.

Perhaps it is the sex life which holds out against the control of the Spirit. Or it may be the vocational life. Many a businessman has learned to live in the Spirit on Sundays, but on Monday morning when he steps across the threshold of his office, he says, in effect, "Here I am in control. I have been trained to handle affairs here, and I don't need God's help. I know what is expected of me and I can handle things on my own." That, of course, is the old covenant in its purest form, and such a procedure will guarantee the presence in that businessman of many forms of death: depression, boredom, resentment, anxiety, tension, and so on.

## **Fighting a battle already won**

Since we can live only in one area of relationships of our life at any given moment, it is evident that we can be in a Spirit-controlled area one moment and in a flesh-dominated area the next. This is why we can be a great person to live with one minute (delightful, because we are in the Spirit) and then a moment later some old habit pattern of the flesh reasserts itself and we are right back in our old covenant behavior--harsh, nasty, or cruel. When we become aware of those feelings within, we know we will lose our Christian reputation if they are allowed to show, so we snatch an evangelical veil and hide the fading glory.

But how encouraging to know that the Spirit will never give up the battle. He seeks in a thousand ways to invade each separate relationship of the soul, and gradually He is doing so--sometimes faster, as we yield to him; sometimes very slowly, as we resist and cling to our veils. The more we work and live with the face of Jesus clearly in view, the more quickly we find each area of our life being changed into His likeness. We cannot do that work. It is, as Paul says, all "from the Lord who is the Spirit." He will never cease the work he has begun.

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