

# **God's Gift and Our Response.**

ROMANS V.12. to VIII. 13.

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## Preface.

This volume is the continuation of the Study of Romans, begun in a former volume published under the title "God's Gospel and God's Righteousness." \* The ground covered by that volume was Chapter i. to Chapter v.11. The present volume takes up the study at Chapter v. 12 and continues it to Chapter viii. 13, where the threads of teaching concerning Sin, Death, the Law, and Eternal Life seem to end. A new subject begins in the latter part of this section, namely, the present ministry of the Spirit of God. This subject is a connecting link with the remainder of the eighth Chapter, which subject, however, we do not pursue to the end in the present volume.

\* Companion volume to this.

The writer's aim herein is practical rather than doctrinal. He finds in himself, and in others, a natural disposition to give attention to *doctrine* rather than to *walk*. There is in this a great and imminent danger. One may hold the most accurate views regarding the fundamentals of Christian doctrine, may be able to state them in the most precise formulas, may be thoroughly instructed in dispensational and prophetic truth, and may know familiarly the teaching embodied in the types and ordinances, and yet be barren of fruit. There is grave danger lest that which was Philadelphian become Laodicean in character – rich, increased with the best doctrinal goods (handed down from fathers with whom they were living, life-controlling truths), and conscious of no need – but lukewarm. There may be little, life where, there is much light.

These pages are written, therefore, not for the purpose of adding to the reader's stock of doctrine, but with the desire and prayer that they may be graciously used of God to arouse some of His people from the apathy that seems of late to have been stealing upon the household of faith, and to encourage them to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of Faith. For we have need of patience, in order that having done the will of God we may receive the promise. P.M.

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## CHAPTER I.

### **The First Result of the Work of Christ in Its Two Aspects.**

In a former volume we commented upon the teaching gained in the Epistle to the Romans as far as chapter v. verse 11. We purpose now, by the help of God, to continue the study of that Epistle.

The subject of Romans is "the Gospel of God concerning His Son." The Gospel is God's own announcement, in His own words, of that which has been accomplished by His Son, Jesus Christ, who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.

The character of the work accomplished by the Son of God and its consequences to human beings are so blessed that the announcement thereof is "good news" to all who hear and believe that announcement; for the announcement is "unto all," and the accomplished benefit is "upon all *who believe*" (Rom. iii. 22). "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men" (Titus ii. 11).

The work of the Son of God, which the Gospel announces to all men, has two aspects, namely, a Godward aspect and a manward aspect. At the time of the incarnation of the Son of God the earth was, and for some thousands of years had been, occupied by a race of beings who were ungodly, unrighteous, sinners and enemies of God (Rom. v. 6-10). All had gone out of the way of God's holiness, there was none that understood God or sought after Him, none that did good, no, not so much as one (Rom. iii. 10-12). To a carefully selected branch of this race God had given a holy law; but the effect thereof was only to work out wrath and to multiply transgressions (Rom. iv. 15; v. 20).

Nevertheless, God desired to extend mercy to these offenders, to pardon their transgressions, and to reconcile them to Himself. Here arises a difficulty which, in the view of man, would be insuperable. In dealing with sinners the justice or righteousness of God is involved. To pardon a wrongful act would be both unjust and cruel. That it would be unjust is obvious, and that it would be cruel is evident from the fact that a transgression or wrongdoing inflicts injury on others. Therefore, the Governor of the universe *must* adequately punish *every* wrongdoing. If the very smallest transgression were overlooked, a flaw would be found in the righteousness of God. That God could be unjust is inconceivable. His righteousness *must be maintained* at whatever cost. "Let God be just," whatsoever the consequences.

Thus it is clearly seen that God's righteousness stands as a barrier to the forgiveness of sins; and at the same time it is evident that all human beings who have attained the age of responsibility have committed sins. How then *can* God be just and at the same time justify (*i.e.*, clear judicially, or acquit) guilty human beings?

The work of the Son of God in the Godward aspect of that *work maintains the righteousness of God while providing mercy for sinners*. This is, from God's point of view, the most important announcement of the Gospel, and this was pointed out in the former volume in the chapters on the "Mercy-Seat." God has set forth His Son, a Mercy-Seat, in His blood to declare *His Righteousness*, both in remitting the sins of believers who lived before Christ, and also in forgiving in this present time the sins of those who are of the faith of Jesus (Rom. iii. 21-26).

Briefly stated, the proclamation of the Gospel, in respect to this feature of the work of Christ, is to the effect that God Himself has assumed the consequences of the sins of His creatures, to whom He wished to extend mercy and forgiveness. The sins that God forgives have not passed unpunished, for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust (1 Peter iii. 18); "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28); "By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities" (Is. liii. 11); "And the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. liiii. 6). Thus did Christ by His sufferings on the cross maintain the righteousness of God, so that no injustice can be charged to Him when He freely pardons and justifies the sinner who presents himself at the Mercy-Seat, that is to say, the sinner who believes on the crucified and risen Son of God proclaimed by the Gospel. Because of the work of Christ in thus suffering for the sins of men, God can justly forgive the sins of those who by faith receive the gift of His grace. Otherwise He could not justly forgive a single offence. And if He could not do it *justly*, He could not do it at all, for God is a *righteous* God.

The enemies of the truth naturally attack with all their strength and ingenuity this central doctrine of Redemption. With great subtlety they affect to see *injustice* in that very work of Christ whereby the absolute *justice* of God is maintained and vindicated.

"What could be more unjust," they exclaim, "than to punish the innocent for the sins of others?" We do not stop to argue with "men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth;" but we point out, for the help of any child of God who might be confused by such reasoning, that the work of Christ in offering Himself for the sins of men, is not a case of punishing the innocent for the guilty. It is the far different case of God taking upon Himself, and becoming responsible for, the sins committed against Himself

by His own creatures. He can justly remit those sins for the reason that He Himself has suffered the penalty and consequences thereof. For "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*" (2 Cor. v. 19). God did not impute their trespasses to *them*, but they were all imputed to *Him*. He went to the cross charged with all our offences; - "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on [or up to] the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter ii. 24).

The result of the work of Christ in its manward aspect, as set forth in the first part of Romans, is briefly that the believing sinner is "justified" by God as an act of *grace* ("Being justified freely *by His grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," Rom. iii. 24); that is to say, he is judicially cleared of all his sins, and stands before God as if he had never committed sins. His sins, which were the cause of his enmity against God, having been removed, he is "reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). "Therefore, having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

It will be seen, and should be carefully noted, that the result of the work of Christ as thus far announced has to do solely with the *remission of the sins* of the believing sinner. But the results of the work of Christ, both Godward and manward, go far beyond that. A further and most marvellous result is set forth in that portion of Romans which begins at chapter v. 12. Many truths of the greatest importance are dealt with in the remaining verses of chapter v. There is probably no portion of the Word of equal length into which so much vital doctrine is compressed. Both writer and reader will need very much help from the Lord in order that these truths may be apprehended even in a small measure. May the exceeding richness of the treasures in this particular mine of truth provoke us to corresponding diligence in seeking to get possession of them.

## CHAPTER II.

### **The Two Parts of the Gospel: Forgiveness of Sins and Eternal Life.**

In order to give distinctness to what we deem to be the main truth taught in this section of the Romans (chap. v. 12-viii. 13), we shall present by way of introduction, a brief analysis thereof. This portion of the Epistle has to do, not with the results of Christ's work in respect of the believing sinner's wrongful *acts*, but with the results of that work in respect of his (the sinner's) *evil nature*. When the convicted criminal has expiated his crime and is discharged as one upon whom human justice has no further claim, he is precisely the *same man* that he was before, and is just as liable as ever (if not more so) to commit like offences to those for which he suffered the penalties of the law. If the forgiveness of sins were the only result of the sufferings and death of Christ, the justified sinner would be still under the dominion of sin, and, having the *same nature* which before caused him to commit sins, would of necessity continue in the commission of them. Therefore God has to deal, not only with what men have *done*, but with what they *are*; and when we shall have learned how He has dealt with the problem of our hopelessly corrupt *nature* we shall have found still greater occasion to marvel at the wisdom, power, and love of God. For here, certainly, we approach the greatest of all God's mighty works, and our interest in the study of it should be intensified by the fact that we ourselves-pardoned and reconciled sinners-are the subjects of that marvelous work.

The announcement of the Gospel, then, contains two distinct parts, the first having to do with the *acts* of the believing sinner, the second with the *man himself*. Briefly stated the two parts of God's good news to men are (1) the forgiveness of sins, and (2) the gift of eternal life. Or more briefly still, we may, say that the two results of the work of Christ, as announced by the Gospel, are *Pardon* and *Life*, - pardon for the guilty, life for the dead. These two results are set forth in John v. 24, where the announcement is made by the Lord Himself that the believer shall not come into judgment (which is equivalent to saying that his sins are pardoned) and that he has eternal life, having passed out of the sphere or dominion of Death into that of Life.

We have discussed in the former volume, the subject of Pardon, and we come now to that of Life. This is a great word and stands for the greatest fact of our experience. God is a "living God" (1 Th. i. 9; Heb. iii. 12, etc.), and is moreover "the God of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32). The greatest of all His works are the living creatures, and the simplest of those living creatures is to man an insoluble mystery. The earth contains varieties of living

creatures innumerable, and each possesses its own distinct characteristics. In man we reach the highest type of physical life, the most complex in its manifestations, the most wonderful in its powers. Man has attempted to investigate the nature and laws of his own life but as the result of all his researches, studies and observations, he can give no explanation whatever of the very simplest of the processes of physical life.

But, wonderful and mysterious as physical life is, our present study has to do with a type of life which far transcends, in its attributes and powers, the physical life of human beings. Shall we presume to enter upon such a study? If we depended for our conclusions upon the powers of mere human intelligence, and upon the results of human observations, we should say "No." But we may humbly, yet confidently, seek to comprehend, according to the measure of the spiritual intelligence given to us, what God has been pleased to reveal on this subject of transcendent importance. Eternal life has been "freely" given to the believer. "The free-gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23 RV.). And moreover "we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are *freely* given to us of God" (1 Cor ii. 12).

It is evident that, in the subject of eternal life, we have something far higher, grander and more vast in its scope, than the subject of the forgiveness of sins. The latter is strictly an individual matter. It is, moreover, simply an event (of immense importance surely, and yet only an event) in the history of the individual. Life, on the other hand, is the common possession of a family or race, shared by all its members. Life, moreover, comprises innumerable events and experiences, and it reaches out in countless ways and to immeasurable distances, bounded only by infinitude. Life of a particular sort, whatever it may be, appertains to a family or species, the members whereof are all related to one another, and are all sharers of the common life, which life is derived in each case from a single source. We cannot now see with our natural eyes the original sources of the several varieties of creature life; but we do see everywhere that each living creature derives its life from other living creatures, and that it invariably receives life *of the identical sort* that its progenitors possessed. Moreover, every believer on the Word of God knows that God gave to the first of each species, both animal and vegetable, life of a *specific character*, and commanded each species to bring forth "after its kind." Hence the greatest biological falsehood that ever gained currency among men is the Darwinian theory of the origin of species. We shall not, however, speculate with our puny minds upon this vast subject, but will rather use them in the legitimate occupation of noting carefully what the Word of God teaches thereon.

First of all we observe that human life is imparted by God, the Giver of life, to the Headman of a family or race, each member of the family or race receiving his life (which carries with it all its characteristics, powers, and tendencies) from that Headman. The truth that stands out most prominently in the portion of Romans now under our observation is the fact that there are two Headmen, Adam and Christ, and two distinct humanities. Consequently there are *two distinct kinds of human life*. The life of Adam, shared by all his race, is essentially different from the life which Christ imparts to the members of His family, the "sons of God." Scripture has a different word to describe this latter kind of life, as will be pointed out later on. For when Christ said "I am come that they [His sheep] might have life" (John x. 10), He spoke of life of a radically different sort from that originally imparted to Adam; and He used a different word from that which is used to designate ordinary human life. When God created the first man out of the dust of the ground, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of *lives* (Heb.); and man became a "living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). Then and there God imparted to the Headman of our race the life of every member of that race. There has been subsequently no fresh impartation of life to the humanity of Adam; and it is of great importance to note that it is no part of the mission of Christ to impart new life to the humanity of Adam, or to improve that life in any way. On the contrary, He came to be the Beginning or Headman of a new humanity, to all the members of which He imparts His own life, carrying with it to each one who receives it, all its characteristics, powers and tendencies. "The works that I do he shall do also, yea, and greater works than these" (John xiv. 1.2).

Let us note the prominence given in the Scripture now before us to the subject of this new kind of life. In them we read that those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness shall reign IN LIFE by One [man] Jesus Christ" (v. 17) -- also that grace reigns through righteousness unto ETERNAL LIFE by Jesus Christ our Lord (v. 21). Again it is written of those who were "buried with Christ by baptism unto death that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also are to walk in NEWNESS OF LIFE" (vi. 4); and further that they are to reckon themselves "ALIVE UNTO GOD in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vi. 11: Gr.); and to yield themselves "unto God as those who are ALIVE FROM THE DEAD" (vi. 13). Having been made free from sin they have "their fruit unto holiness, and the end EVERLASTING LIFE. For the wages of sin is death; but the free-gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vi. 22, 23 Gr.). Further on in the Epistle we read of the law of the Spirit Of LIFE in Christ Jesus, setting free from the law of sin and death, and learn that "the mind of the Spirit is LIFE and peace" (viii. 2, 6).

All this admits of much amplification; but at this point we wish merely to note the direct connection of Eternal Life with Jesus Christ as the Headman of a new humanity. This important truth is stated in other Scriptures. "In Him was LIFE" (John i. 4)." The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam a LIFE-GIVING Spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45). The first man Adam did not give life to his race, but death. "By man came death." "And this is the record [*i.e.*, the testimony of God], that God hath given to us ETERNAL LIFE, and *this* life is IN His SON" (1 John v. ii). He is the only Source of that particular sort of life. Therefore, "he that hath the Son hath LIFE [the word here used being that which designates the special kind of life that Christ has]; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not [that sort of] life" (1 John v. 12).

Another truth appearing prominently in the portion of Romans beginning at chapter v. 12 is that the new human family, whereof Christ is the Headman, is *composed entirely of those who were by nature members of the race of Adam* and sharers of his corrupted life. It is conceivable that God, in carrying out the purpose of Gen. i. 26, that is in making man in the image and likeness of God, in order that they might have dominion over creation, might have put the humanity of Adam entirely aside, and have created another humanity *ab initio*. But it pleased God to proceed with the accomplishment of His great purpose by the method of REDEMPTION, thereby revealing Himself as the God of *grace*, and thereby manifesting that *love* toward us which He "commends" (v. 8) . The doctrine of "Grace," which we so imperfectly apprehend, begins at Rom. iii. 24, and runs through the section we are now considering. We shall not attempt to trace this line at present. The reader can readily do it for himself. We wish just now only to emphasize the fact that, through the abounding and incomprehensible *grace* of God, the transcendent privileges of a place in the Humanity of Jesus Christ, and a share of the Life that is in Him, are extended to those who had forfeited all claim whatever to the favor of God, and who deserved only condemnation at His hands. "For if through the offence of one man [Adam] many died, much more the GRACE OF GOD, and the gift BY GRACE, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (v. 15); and "they which receive the abundance of GRACE and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ" (v. 17).

Moreover, had God destroyed and put aside the race of Adam altogether, and begun the creation of man anew, it would appear that the creation of the first man had been a failure and a mistake. Every work of God must be worthy of Himself, and must justify Him for making it. Again, to obliterate the first man and begin all over would imply that the calamity which befell Adam and his race had been unforeseen; whereas, on the contrary, the Scriptures reveal that Adam's transgression was foreseen, and

provision made to meet the consequences thereof, before the first act of creation. The Son of God was "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world" as the Lamb who was to be offered without blemish and without spot (1 Peter i. 18-20). It clearly appears, therefore, that *Redemption was included in the original plan of creation*. We may not as yet comprehend the reason for it, nor is it necessary that we should. It is enough for us to know the *fact*, that the transgression and fall of the first Adam, and the sufferings and death of the Last Adam, were needed in order that God might have a race of men, such as He purposed to have, for His own glory, and for the responsibilities of government and service that await them in the ages to come. For the accomplishment of all this "Christ MUST NEEDS have suffered and risen again" (Acts xvii. 3).

God made the first man out of the dust of the ground. That man, *i.e.*, the entire humanity, was ruined by sin and fell under the dominion of death. God, acting in grace, which is possible for Him to do since Christ died to sin, takes the ruined clay - humanity as the material out of which He fashions the new humanity. "The vessel that He made of clay was marred in the hands of the Potter; so He made it again another vessel, as it seemed good to the Potter to make it" (Jer. xviii. 4).

Another truth revealed to us by this portion of the Epistle is the responsibility of the Headman of each of the two humanities for all the members of his family. In fact chapter v. from verse 12 to the end is occupied with a disclosure of the consequences of a *single act* of Adam and a *single act* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam's act was one of disobedience. From it flowed consequences of the most disastrous and calamitous character to all the countless millions of his offspring, who became thereby "the children of disobedience" (Eph. ii. 2). Every one of his family was, as a consequence of that "one offence," brought under the sway of sin and death, being made subject to the law of sin and death (Rom. v. 12, 14; viii. 9,). Furthermore, each member of his race received by inheritance a vitiated life and a corrupted character. All were "made [or constituted] sinners" (v. 19). In other words, the life-stream of the first humanity became polluted at its source, and was of necessity transmitted, in this polluted or corrupted state, to each member of Adam's family.

On the other hand the act of the Lord Jesus Christ was an act of righteousness. As stated, according to the literal rendering of verse 18, it was "by one righteous act" that the specified consequences came upon the members of Christ. That act was, furthermore, an act of "obedience" - "by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (v. 19). Of course, this act of obedience was His obedience unto death, the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 8); for there the righteousness of God was maintained, the power of

death annulled, and the way opened for God's dealings in *grace* with believing sinners, not according to what they deserve, but "according to the good pleasure of His will," "according to the riches of His grace," "according to His good pleasure which He hath Purposed in Himself," even "according to the ETERNAL PURPOSE which He hath purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. i. 5, 7, 9; iii. 11).

From that single act of the Lord Jesus Christ flow out to all the members of His family, the "many sons" whom God is by Him bringing to glory (Heb. ii. 10), consequences of the most blessed and glorious character, such that we can at present form but the faintest conception of them. The result is strictly analogous to the consequences of Adam's "one offence;" but the consequences of the act of obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby He glorified God in the earth, are "much more" blessed than the consequences of Adam's disobedience were disastrous. "But shall it not be as with the offence so also with the free gift? [Surely] for if through the offence of one many died, MUCH MORE the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (v. 15 Gr.).

What we have just noted is in accordance with all that can be learned by observation concerning the laws of life, it being a matter of common knowledge that character is transmitted from parent to child, and that the consequences of the acts of parents are visited upon their offspring.

It is important to note, and we shall call attention to this again, that we have in chapter v. 12-21 no question at all of the *individual* responsibility of human beings. All that is there set forth are the consequences of the one decisive act or deed of the respective Headmen of the two humanities. The question of the *individual* responsibility of those who, by God's grace, become members of Christ, begin at chapter vi., the subject matter of which should be sharply distinguished from that which immediately precedes it.

Perhaps we can assist the reader in apprehending the stupendous consequences-so opposite in their character-of the decisive acts of the two Headsmen by putting the subject in a little different way. From the Scripture before us it appears that the consequences in each case were of two sorts; *First*, an inherited nature or character which passes from the Head of the race to each member thereof, whereby the latter is predisposed to a certain mode of life; and *Second*, a political status (so to speak) that is to say, a position in an existing and organized kingdom, empire, or "dominion," in subjection to the constituted authorities and to the "law" established therein.

We are very familiar with the consequences of what men call "the accident of birth." Every child, without any volition of his own, and hence

*without any responsibility on his part*, receives from his parents a clearly marked nature or character, manifesting itself in various predispositions or inborn tendencies; and also receives from them a political status, in virtue whereof he is subject to the constituted authorities and established laws of the particular State in which his parents reside. He is no more responsible for this political status than for his inherited nature. Both were determined for him before he drew his first breath.

The *Nature or Character*, which every child of Adam receives by his natural birth, is one that is corrupt, unrighteous, or sinful. "By one man's disobedience many were made [*i.e.*, constituted] sinners." It is of the fault of any one that he was born a sinner. Adam's disobedience is alone responsible for that. This is a matter of deep interest, and we purpose to look further into it in a subsequent chapter.

The *Political Status* determined by birth to each child of Adam is one that is under the dominion of those mighty potentates, sin and death. "Death passed upon all men;" "Death reigned from Adam to Moses;" "By one man's offence death reigned;" "Sin hath reigned unto death;" "The law of sin is in my members;" "The law of sin and death" (Rom. v. 12, 14, 17, 21; vii. 23; viii. 2).

On the other hand, the *Nature or Character* which each child of God receives by inheritance from Jesus Christ, the Second Man, is a *righteous nature*. "By the obedience of One shall many be *made* [or constituted] *righteous*" (v. 19). "That we might be *made* the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). This inherited nature, shared by all members of Christ, is just the opposite of that inherited by all members of Adam. For we, believers, have been begotten again "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). This Scripture specifies the seed from which the children of God are begotten, that seed being the Word of God; and it sets forth also the nature of their life as being (1) incorruptible, and (2) abiding for ever. In contrast to this the next verse of the Epistle of Peter presents the characteristics of the life of the natural man; "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass *withereth*, and the flower thereof *falleth away*." One blade of grass may be a little taller than another, and one flower a bit brighter than another; but the end of each blade is that it "withereth," and of each flower that it "falleth away."

The *Political Status* which each justified sinner receives by his birth into the family of God is a position in the Kingdom of God. He is delivered from the service and dominion of sin (vi. 14, 18), and from the law of sin and death, being brought under the operation of "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (viii. 2). His entrance into the Kingdom is immediate, for

God "hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. i. 13). The prominent characteristic at the present time of the new political status thus given "to the members of Christ is that they are subject to a throne of *grace*" (Heb. iv. 16). In Romans v. this character of the Kingdom of God is put in direct contrast to the kingdom of sin and death:—"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might GRACE reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 21). This is the point to which chapter v. brings us; but other characteristics of the present aspect of the Kingdom of God are given in chapter xiv. 17. "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink [which are the chief characteristics of the natural life], but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The justified sinner not only gains a new political status, but he necessarily loses his former political status. He does not any longer look at or strive for betterment of his earthly estate through political reforms or changes of administration. "For our citizenship [Gr. *politeuma*, *i.e.*, political status] exists in heaven; from whence also we *look for* the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20, RV.).

Thus we have presented to our view, by a revelation of God, the two Men, the first Adam, and the last Adam; their respective families or generations (comp. Gen. v. 1 and Matt. i. 1), each member of each of these families deriving his Life and Nature from the Head thereof; and we have also the Kingdom or Dominion introduced into the world by these Headmen; in the one case the kingdom of sin and death, characterized by universal ruin, violence and corruption; and in the other case the Kingdom of God, characterized by grace, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Here is revealed to us the wondrous truth that those who have been born into the family of Adam, thereby acquiring the nature corrupted by Adam, and becoming, through no fault of their own, subject to the dominion of sin and death, may, by God's grace, and as the result of Christ's obedience unto death, be BORN AGAIN into the family of God, receiving the gift of a righteous nature, wherein eternal life inheres, and acquiring a political status in the Kingdom of God.

The privileges of the new political status are *available* to all justified sinners; but it is the responsibility of each one to *avail himself* of those privileges while yet in the mortal body. This is the special lesson of chapters vi. and viii. as will be seen later on.

The doctrine of the Mosaic law also runs through this section of the Epistle, and should be carefully followed. But it does not begin in this section, and its mention in chapter v., verses 13, 14, 20, is incidental. Therefore, it does not call for consideration in this outline.

If we have by this analysis succeeded in bringing prominently into view the leading truths of the section of Romans now under consideration, it will be easier for the reader than it would be without the aid of the foregoing analysis, to study this portion of Scripture in detail.

## CHAPTER III.

### **Sin and Death. A Universal Dominion.**

We have had, in the preceding chapters of Romans, God's description of the *conduct* of men, setting forth what they have *done*. In those chapters God declares that all had gone out of the way, and that there was none that did or practiced good.\* Now, in the chapter before us, we have God's description of the *nature* and *condition* of men, setting forth what they *are*. In it God declares that men are by nature "ungodly," "sinners," "enemies of God," and "without strength."

\* The word "doeth" (Rom iii. 12) signifies doing habitually, or practicing. It does not assert that no unregenerate man ever do good or kind deeds.

How did men come to be what they are? Were they originally created thus? At this point the wisdom of this age sets itself directly in opposition to the Word of God, declaring that man is not a fallen creature, but a rising and progressive creature. The truth of the matter thus at issue between the Word of God and the wisdom of man is of fundamental importance to all human beings. It were fatal to err in regard to it. In a few clear words the Apostle declares the truth which fully explains the condition of humanity:—"By one man [as the agent] sin entered the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men" (v. 12). The condition of humanity as an entirety is here set forth. It is not merely the state of certain individuals, but that of the entire Race. Death has passed upon *all men*. Whatever be the explanation with which the rejecter of God's Word may attempt to satisfy himself, the *fact* is undeniable. However it came about, every child of Adam is certainly subject to the power of death. In this there is no difference between the most moral and the most depraved, between the most gifted and the most stupid, between the strongest and the weakest. God's explanation of this universal fact is that, by the disobedience of Adam, the Head of the Race, sin entered, and that it is *the presence of sin* in the race of Adam that gives death its power over all the members of that race. "For the sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). Certainly this explanation is *sufficient*, as must be admitted even by those who do not accept it as *true*.

The first consequence then of the offence of Adam is that it brought his entire family under the power of death. His race became from that moment a dying race, according to the warning of the faithful Creator, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, *dying* thou shalt die" (Gen. ii. 17, Heb.). Therefore, as we contemplate humanity, we contemplate-not a race of living

beings but-a race of dying beings. The moment an infant begins to live it begins to die. Death silently, relentlessly, irresistibly, asserts and maintains its power over every human being from the moment of his birth. Death's dominion is universal. This is a patent fact; and surely it is the greatest possible folly on the part of those who are under this awful despotism to dispute as to how they got there, instead of seeking Him Who alone offers deliverance out of it.

A glance at the inspired account, contained in Genesis iii., of Adam's transgression, to which the Apostle here refers, reveals the important fact that Adam's offence consisted in a departure from the Word of the living God. Thus, on the first page of the Bible, appears the lesson that the Word of God given to man is a "Word of Life." Observing this we are able to see more meaning than at first appears in the Scripture "that man doth not LIVE by bread only, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Matt. iv. 4). Life is imparted to man by the Word of the Lord, and the maintenance of that life in its virtue and integrity depends upon the Word of the Lord. With this simple and fundamental lesson in our minds we can the better understand the purpose of the mighty Being who has the power of death in tempting the Second Man, the Lord out of Heaven, to do something for His own life-command the stones to become bread apart from the Word of God; in other words to induce Him to place His life upon some other support than the Word of God.

From these Scriptures we also learn why the Lord Jesus Christ was never, as to His humanity, under the power of death until He chose to lay down His human life (psuche) as a sacrifice for sin; for He could say "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18). In this great saying the Incarnate Son of God asserted Himself as the Lord of life, declaring that He had rightful authority over His own human life, and could lawfully lay it down. Inasmuch as He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, and not of the corrupted seed of Adam (Matt. i. 18, 20; Luke i. 35), the sin that entered humanity through Adam was not in Him. Hence death had no claim upon Him as it has upon every one indwelt by sin. Even His human judge was compelled to declare from the judgment seat: "I have found *no cause of death* in Him" (Luke xxiii. 22). Moreover, He lived His life in the flesh by the Word of God, and at the end of His public ministry could declare that, in all His teaching, He had spoken *only* the words given Him of the Father. His last words to the public, according to the Gospel of John, were these: "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent me. He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that His commandment is LIFE EVERLASTING - whatsoever I speak, therefore, *even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak*" (John xii. 49, 50).

It clearly appears, therefore, that there is an intimate connection between the Word of God and the life of man; and although, like everything connected with the mysterious subject of Life, that connection is beyond our present comprehension, it is nevertheless certain that the maintenance of the Life of men depends upon adherence to the Word of God. Thus we find that Adam was tested as to His capacity to maintain and preserve the life entrusted to him. God's ultimate purpose for man can be accomplished only in a man who will *keep His Word*. That purpose is nothing less than "Dominion" over the universe. The man of God's purpose is to occupy a place in His Kingdom next to Himself, and is to be vested with authority above all principality and power and might and dominion, except God Himself (Eph. i. 21, 22; Heb. ii. 7, 8). The man to whom such authority is entrusted *must exercise it strictly according to the Word of God*. Adam was tested as to whether he could be entrusted with such authority, and he failed to meet the test. Hence, instead of securing dominion over God's creation, he himself fell under the dominion of death (compare Heb. ii. 7 with Heb. ii. 15). The words of Gen. i. 26, "And let them have dominion" have never yet been carried into effect. Adam never exercised universal dominion. His authority never extended beyond the garden which the Lord planted eastward in Eden, and his duty there was simply "to dress it and keep it." And as for the Second Man, to whom this dominion is eventually to be given, "we see *not yet* all things put under Him" (Heb. ii. 8). For the administration of God's creation is to be vested, not in a single man, but in a Race of men. Therefore, the purpose is in abeyance, "for the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19). Meanwhile, God, who has eternity at His disposal for the accomplishment of His vast designs, is preparing those who are to be associated with the Lord Jesus in the government of creation by "bringing *many sons* unto glory" (Heb. ii. 10), and conforming them to the image of His Son. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). When these "many sons," or "many brethren" shall have been conformed to the *image* of the Son of God (2 Cor. iii. 18), and shall have been changed into His *likeness* at His coming again (1 John iii. 2; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52), then will the wonderful purpose announced at the beginning of God's revelation be accomplished, and He will have created man in the "*image*" of God and after the "*likeness*" of God. And then to that Man-that Race of men under the Headship of Christ shall be given "Dominion" over the creation of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

### **The Doctrine of Sin.**

Another consequence of the transgression of Adam is that all his race were thereby *made sinners*. "All have sinned" (v. 12). "By one man's disobedience many were *made sinners*" (v. 19). The fact stated in these words is but little understood. Most persons if asked what is it that makes men sinners would say that they become sinners by committing sins. The general idea seems to be that, because a man commits sins, he is, therefore, a sinner; whereas in fact it is just the other way. A man commits sins because he is a sinner. What made him a sinner is, not his own sins, which are the effect, not the cause, but his descent from Adam. Our bad conduct does not make us children of Adam; and no amount of good conduct (were we capable of it) would make us anything else. Man *does* wrong, because he *is* wrong. Humanity may be likened to a tree into the heart of which a deadly disease has penetrated, in consequence whereof every stem, twig and leaf is withering and dying. In fact the dead leaves are dropping off the tree of humanity at the rate of about a hundred thousand every day.

It is important, in order that we may understand and profit by the teaching to which we are here delivered, to notice the great difference between *sins* and *sin*. Only one letter distinguishes those words to the eye, but the difference in meaning is enormous. Sins are the *wrongful actions* of an individual human being, and are strictly personal to himself. Sin, however, is a *state or condition of being* which is common to all men. In this portion of the Epistle we have not to do with sins, but with sin. We have now to do, not with the evil fruits of the tree, the crimes of humanity, but with the corrupted tree itself. For example, it may be seen that, in chapter vi. sin is mentioned sixteen times, while sins are not spoken of at all. In this connection the first truth that is impressed upon us is that the death of the individual human being is not the penalty of the sins he has committed, and for which he is individually responsible, but is the consequence of the sinful nature inherited from Adam. The "one offence" of Adam is responsible for the power that death exerts over all Adam's offspring. If any further proof of this statement were needed it might be found in the fact that innocent infants, who have committed no sins, die by the millions. "Death reigned even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" (v. 14). The penalty of *sins* is *wrath* (i. 18; ii. 5). The consequence of *sin* is *death*. For "sin entered and death by sin" (v. 12). "Sin hath reigned unto death" (v. 21). Ye are servants "to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death" (vi. 16). "The wages of sin is death" (vi. 23). "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). So of the death of Christ it is written "In that He died He died unto sin" (vi. 10). Christ's *sufferings* were

endured for the *sins* of His people. "Who His own self bare our *sins* in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24). "For Christ also hath once suffered for *sins* the just for the unjust" (1 Peter iii. 18). "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, that remission of *sins* should be preached in His name" (Luke xxiv. 46, 47). "Christ was once offered to bear the *sins* of many" (Heb. ix. 28). But after His sufferings for the iniquities that were laid upon Him, culminating in the three hours of darkness when He was forsaken of God, were completed, that is to say, after He had endured the consequences of our *sins*, He had yet to *die* unto *sin*. He had actually to yield Himself to the power of death, His Spirit being separated from His Body, the latter becoming a corpse and being buried. To this last dread enemy, Death, He submitted, trusting to the promise that God would not leave His Soul in Hades, nor suffer His Holy One to see corruption (Ps. xvi.). Here we see that, by the awful power of death the human being is disintegrated. The *Spirit* of the Man Christ Jesus went to God, His conscious Soul went to Hades or paradise (but was not left there), and His physical *Body* went into the tomb. Here we have a clear and conclusive answer to the question what becomes of the soul at death.

The careful reader will have observed that Christ's *death* (*i.e.*, His actual departure from the body) is not spoken of in Romans in connection with the sins which men have committed. The first mention of the "death" of Christ is in connection with what men *are*. "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). On the other hand, for our "offences" or sins, He was "delivered up" (Rom. iv. 25). All that He suffered from the moment He was delivered into the hands of His enemies was the penalty of our iniquities which were imputed to or laid upon Him.

The doctrine that death, as a state or condition awaiting all human beings, is the result of Adam's single departure from God's Word, is important enough even when considered independently; but its chief importance is due to the fact that it serves to explain the corresponding consequences of the single act of obedience of Jesus Christ the last Adam. We are called upon to contemplate the appalling results of Adam's disobedience in order that thereby we may be aided to an understanding of the unspeakably blessed and glorious consequences of Christ's obedience unto the death that He died unto sin. By Adam's disobedience sin entered, and death by sin. But Jesus Christ, in whom was no cause of death, because "in Him was no sin" (1 John iii. 5), died to sin, and thus "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). "By one man *sin* entered the *world* But the Second Man is "the Lamb of God that beareth away the *sin* of the *world*" (John i. 29).

It is to be observed that sin is viewed in Romans as a potent Principle of evil which, having once gained admission into the human race, assumed complete mastery thereof. Sin is personified, as if it were a mighty Being. It is said that sin "entered" the world, that it "reigned" as a monarch, that it "dwells" in human nature,-the "flesh." But this figure of an evil Personality does not give a complete idea of what sin is, for it is also referred to as a state or condition in which human beings exist. Thus the question is asked "Shall we continue in sin?" (vi. 1). Here the thought is not of sin being in men, but of men being, dwelling, and living in sin.

Sin, however, was not recognized as an active principle or power dwelling and working in the flesh until the law was given. Then those who were under the law (Israelites) were taught, by their vain efforts to keep God's holy law, that there was a mysterious something *in themselves* which was utterly contrary and antagonistic to the law of God, and which was, moreover, so powerful as to nullify their utmost endeavours to live by the law. Thus one of the great purposes accomplished by the law was that it detected the presence of sin in the flesh. Not only so, but it was only by means of the law that the presence, overmastering power, and exceedingly evil character of sin, became known. "For by the law is [or came] the knowledge of sin" (iii. 20). "Nay, I had not known sin but by the law" (vii- 7) "that sin by [means of] the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (vii. 13). These statements are transparently clear. It is to be noted that "the law is spiritual," though but few Israelites apprehended its spiritual character. The spirit of the law was something very different from the mere keeping of a carnal commandment. That which chiefly characterizes the flesh, regardless of its activities, is "lusts," that is to say desires of all sorts for things pleasing to self. The characteristic of the spirit, or new nature derived from Christ is just the opposite of this. It is described by the one word "love," which seeks *not* her own welfare but that of others. "I had not known lust," says the Apostle, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (or lust, for it is the same word in the original). Here we are taught the spiritual character of the law - for it not only detects the *wrongful act* of the transgressor, but detects and exposes to his consciousness his *spiritual condition*. And here we may learn also the real nature of sin as being, not a wicked deed, but an evil principle in human nature. The Apostle does not say that he learned by means of the law that it was wrong to kill, or steal, or slander one's neighbour. It needed no God-given law to reveal that. What the law taught him was that all evil deeds proceed from *desires* (lusts) dwelling and deeply rooted in the human heart-desires which, when permitted to manifest themselves in unrestrained actions, will stop at no injury to *others* in order to secure gratification for *self*. By the law the Apostle learned that sin is not the outward act, but the hidden source of selfish desires. (Compare Matt. v. 27, 28).

Such is sin, which, by Adam's offence, entered human nature, which secured permanent lodgment therein, which is the prolific breeder of "lusts," and which has filled the world with numberless crimes, cruelties, and immoralities, and with incalculable misery, bitterness, and woe.

Such is the nature of the disease that has smitten the race of Adam. -And here we are confronted by a fact, incontrovertible and of stupendous importance, a fact which one must apprehend in order to understand the salvation of God. In order to form a right conception of the work that the Son of God undertook to accomplish when He came "to put away sin," one must realize that the nature which has produced, and is daily adding to the countless, diversified, and oftentimes unnameable crimes and immoralities of human beings, is *in every one of us*. None can deny that he is the kinsman, and shares the nature of the murderer, the thief, the perjurer, the adulterer, the wife-killer. Whether that nature has produced, in a particular person, the foulest crimes, or only the most venial sins, is immaterial in connection with the truth we are now considering. *The nature itself is the same in all men*. That is the important point. This truth puts all men upon the same level as regards their need of a *new nature*. That is just as much the need of the moral religionist as of the habitual criminal.

God rightly judges our common human nature by what it is capable of; and we have only to turn to the daily newspaper and read therein the chronicle of one day's doings of human beings in the centers of our modern civilization, in order to learn what that nature is capable of, despite all the restraints of education and all the terrors of the law. No imagination can conceive what human nature would produce, were *all* restraints withdrawn. It should, therefore, furnish to every man food for sober thought when he faces the fact that the nature that is in himself is capable of the worst things ever done by human beings, and that God judges that nature accordingly.

But God has undertaken to deal with the disease of humanity, sin in the flesh. How will He treat it?

We who know something of the truth of Redemption are usually too much occupied with the benefits that accrue to ourselves to give thought to God's side of it. We can readily conceive of sin as a misfortune, and of salvation as a corresponding benefit, *to ourselves*; but it does not often occur to us to consider what they are to God. Suppose we had in the garden we delighted in a tree that was intended to be its chief ornament and glory, but which had become so corrupted that it strewed the ground with foul, decaying fruit, and filled the air with poisonous and pestilential odors; what would we do with such a tree? How long would we refrain from cutting it down and casting it into the fire?

But God, from motives originating in His own heart, has purposed to deal with corrupt humanity, not in judgment, but in grace. When humanity was lost, whose loss was it; Our thoughts seldom get beyond ourselves. If we have learned that we were lost (and happy are they who have learned it), we think only of how it affected us. But when we were lost we *were lost to God*. When property is lost, it is the owner's misfortune that is of first importance; and when it is restored it is the owner's joy that is chiefly to be noted. In the three-part parable of Luke xv. we read not of the feelings of the lost property when restored to its owner ., but great prominence is given to the joy of the man who found the lost sheep, that of the woman who found the lost coin, and that of the father who found the son that was lost.

So it is first of all for His own sake that God provides redemption for sinful humanity, and that His Son came "to seek and to save that which was lost" to Him. The words of the sixty-ninth Psalm describe how this was to be accomplished. We quote verse 4: "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: THEN I restored that which I took not away." What did He restore, and how, and to whom? Surely it was the property which sin had taken away from God which, in that awful hour, and by means of that mighty sacrifice of the Spotless Offering, was restored to Him.

This, then, is the Godward aspect of the result of Christ's death unto sin and His consequent resurrection from the dead. It restores human beings to God. In the ruined race of Adam God perceived an asset of great value; and so His Son came to seek and to save that which was lost. And such is the wonderful effect of that work of Christ that the restored humanity will be "much more" glorious than that which the Devil took away. Thus through the overruling power and unfathomable wisdom of God, working through the incomprehensible love that prompted Him to spare not His Son but to give Him up for us all (Rom. viii. 32), and because of the incalculable merit of His death, even sin itself is made to contribute, both to the display of God's wisdom, power, grace and love, and also to the furtherance of His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. We may, then, briefly sum up the doctrine of sin as taught in Romans by saying: By means of Adam's offence sin entered human nature; it secured permanent lodgment and dwelt therein; its characteristic operation is the production of desires or "lusts," having for their object the gratification of self; its presence in the human heart, and its evil nature were detected by the law; the law, however, could not remove it (for that was what "the law could not do" viii. 3); therefore God sent His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, Who offered Himself a sacrifice for sin, whereby sin in the flesh was condemned.

Thus, instead of the condemnation of the sinner, God effects the condemnation of sin in the flesh. The immediate effect as to those who were once in the service of sin forms the subject of Rom. vi. which will be considered later on.

Careful study of the following passages will acquaint the reader with the chief characteristics of sin in the flesh.

Rom. v. 12.-Sin is an active principle of evil operating in a manner similar to a disease. Once sin was not in "the world." By Adam sin "entered."

Rom. vii. 17, 18, 20.-Sin is a powerful, overmastering agent, now domiciled in human nature (the flesh). It is much stronger than the human will. The good resolutions of the most moral and earnest men are utterly ineffective against it.

Rom. vii. 8.-Sin acting upon human nature produces every sort of desire or lust.

Rom. v. 21; Rom. vi. 17, 20; John viii. 34.-It exercises over men the absolute authority of a despot, making them its slaves.

Rom. vii. 23; Rom. viii. 2.-Sin imposes its own laws upon its subjects, and against these the law of the human mind is powerless.

Rom. iii. 20; Rom. vii. 7, 13.-Sin's presence in the flesh, even after education and culture have done their best for the man, is detected by the Mosaic law, and its character and strength are thereby revealed.

Rom. iv. 15; viii. 3 - 1 Cor. xv. 57; Gal. iii. 19

Heb. vii. 19.-The law did not check transgressions. It "could not" overcome and remove sin. It was too "weak" (powerless) to do so because of the (condition of) the flesh. It brought nothing to perfection (full-growth). On the contrary it added to the sum of the iniquities of man. In fact it became "the strength of sin."

Rom. v. 12, 21; vi. 16, 21, 23; vii. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 56, James i. 15; John viii. 36; Heb. ii. 15.-Sin is attended by death. Death inevitably follows sin. So that the power of death over a man proves the presence of sin in him. The One, and the only One, who is able to deliver the captives of sin is He Who has overcome death.

Rom. viii. 2; John i. 29; John viii. 36.-The bondslaves of sin are set free from the law of sin and death by the operation of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

## CHAPTER V.

### **God's Remedy for Sin in Man.**

That God's ways are not our ways is forcibly exemplified by God's method of dealing with "sin in the flesh," that is with sin as having found lodgment in human nature. His method is not to reform the sinner, nor to purify the flesh into which sin has entered and which it has corrupted. God does not eradicate the disease by means of some powerful curative agent. Nor is it His plan to place the patient amid healthy surroundings-to give him a better "environment," improved social conditions, etc.-in order that he may have an opportunity to throw off the disease and recover from its effects. No idea is more deeply rooted in the mind of the average man than the notion that all that humanity needs, in order to right itself completely and abolish all crimes, injustice, and wretchedness, is a better social environment. The great deceiver of men has succeeded in making his deluded victims believe that the trouble with humanity lies in man's environment, instead of in man himself. It should, however, be plain to all who take the trouble to think about the matter, that the environment does not make the man, but that, on the contrary, the man makes the environment. The world is what it is-a welter of corruption and misery because man is what *he* is. A corrupt man cannot produce other than a corrupt society. To assert that it is society that has corrupted the individual is to reverse cause and effect, and to assert what is palpably and absurdly false. In order that the fruit may be good it is necessary to "make the tree good."

But God understands the case fully. He knows what treatment it requires, and His remedy meets perfectly the necessities of the situation. God's remedy for sin in the flesh is not an *improved* humanity, or a *reformed* humanity, but a New humanity. To that end He brought into the world a New Man, the "Second Man" who is "the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47).

Verse 14 of Rom. v. introduces the subject of the Second Man, and does so in words that call for close attention. The Second Man is there spoken of as the Coming One-"Him that was to come"-showing that God's method of dealing with sin in man, and with man under sin, was in His mind from the beginning. He who, in the ends of the ages, came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, was the One who was from eternity "the Coming One" the Subject of all promise and all prophecy, the only hope of perishing humanity (Gen. iii. 15). He "was foreordained before the foundation of the world" as the Lamb of God "without blemish and without spot," Whose precious blood was to pay the price of redemption (1 Peter i. 18-20).

He is also spoken of in this Scripture as the Anti-type of Adam. Adam was "the figure [type] of Him that was to come" (Rom. v. 14). The succeeding verses throw light upon this statement, showing (as we have already pointed out with sufficient detail) that Adam was the type of Christ

in that he was the responsible Headman of a human family, all the members whereof received from him Life and Character of the same sort that he had himself. This truth is still, more clearly presented in 1 Cor. xv. where the Lord Jesus Christ is called the "last Adam" (v. 45), showing that there is not to be another race of human beings; and where it is expressly stated that the members of the family of the Heavenly Man shall bear His image (v. 49). We have already cited Rom. viii. 29 as declaring the same truth of family resemblance in character between Christ and His members; and 2 Cor. iii. 18 reveals that this work of changing believers into His image is a present operation of the Spirit of God. In yet other Scriptures this operation is referred to as "putting on the new man" or "putting on Christ" (Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10, 12; Gal. iii. 27). In Heb. ii. which speaks of God's great work of "bringing many sons unto glory," it is expressly said that "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [nature or character]." They do not, of course, get that nature until they have been "sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ" (Heb. x. 10).

The justifying of a sinner from his sins is a mighty work of God; but the creation of a new human race, bearing the image and likeness of the incarnate Son of God, Who is now also the glorified Son of Man, is a work far mightier, and far more glorifying to Him Who is great in counsel and mighty in work.

But we must never lose sight of what is, for us, the most important feature of this mighty work, namely, that this new and "glorified" race of human beings (Rom. viii. 30; Col. iii. 4) is to be composed of those who once were members of the first and corrupt humanity. This is what should challenge our highest admiration and evoke our loudest praises. God has undertaken to deal with sin in man in such a way as not only to vindicate His own holiness and abhorrence of sin, but also to deliver the individual sinner from the dominion of sin, and to make him a member of the glorified humanity of the Heavenly Man. As bearing on this feature of the work of Christ we would call attention to the statements of Rom. v. 13, 14. (Verse 13 begins a long parenthesis which ends with verse 17, the unfinished thought of verse 12 being taken up at verse 18.) Before the law was given sin was already in the world, for Adam brought it in; but sin, though actually present in every human being, *is not imputed to him*, that is to say, is not charged to his account when there is no law. The justice of this is apparent. Sin's presence was not known and its nature was not understood until the law was given (vii. 7). Therefore, men who had not the law were not held accountable for the sin which, unknown to themselves, was in them, and for whose presence in them they were not responsible. Men were not to be judged for their inherited *sin*, but for their individual *sins*. For God "will

render unto every man according to his *deeds*" (Rom. ii. 6). "The dead were judged according to their *works*" (Rev. xx. 12).

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses," that is to say, during all the period antecedent to the giving of the law; and moreover, it reigned "even over them who had not sinned according to the similitude of Adam's transgression," such as infants, for example. This proves conclusively that physical death is not the penalty of the sins of the individual human being, but is the common destiny of all the offspring of Adam, the inheritors of his sin-infected nature. The sinner (that is the child of Adam) who has *died* has no further answer to make, because of inherited sin. "For he that died is justified from *sin*" (Rom. vi. 7, Gr.). What he will have to face at the judgment of the last day, unless he has been justified by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, will be his own evil works. "The dead were judged according to their works" (Rev. xx. 12).

The teaching of these Scriptures is important because, among other reasons, it reveals clearly the ground for the salvation of those dying in infancy, and of those who were otherwise irresponsible. Having committed no *sins*, they do not require justification by personal faith in Christ; and since *sin* is not imputed to them (they not being under the Mosaic law), God can justly deal with them in grace by bestowing upon them the free-gift of eternal life, purchased by the death that Christ died unto sin. In this sense again the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath *much more* abounded unto many (irresponsible sinners) than did the consequence of the offence of Adam, through which many died (v. 15).

Not many of the Lord's people have grasped clearly the truth that it is His purpose to bring into existence a new human race, under the headship of the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven, a race whose members partake of His life and nature, and who are to share His glories, dignities and responsibilities in the coming Kingdom of God. The knowledge which the majority have of God's Salvation does not extend beyond the fact that it includes the forgiveness of sins and eternal future happiness of some sort. There is need, therefore, of clear teaching concerning the new race of human beings who are to "reign in life by One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 17). For this is to be a race of Kings, exercising "dominion" according to the Divine purpose recorded in Gen. i. 26. The other passage of Scripture that speaks of the Second Man and His race, namely, 1 Cor. xv., speaks also of the Kingdom (1 Cor. xv. 22-25).

God's wondrous *grace* is displayed in the bringing of this new human family into existence in that its members are those who once were members of that old humanity, over which sin has for so long a time reigned unto

death. For "as we have borne the image of the earthly [man] we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 49). But in order to have part in that humanity which is to reign with Christ, one must be detached from the humanity of Adam. For "this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50).

In pursuing this subject of the transformation of some of those who were by nature members of Adam into members of Christ, we may advantageously use again the simile of a tree. The Lord Jesus Himself said that any tree that produced corrupt fruit was a corrupt tree, and that the only remedy was to "make the tree good" (Matt. xii. 33). Accordingly, God has now brought into His creation a "good" Tree, a *living* Tree. Not in this world is that tree planted, for there was no place found for it here a but in resurrection-ground it is established. And God permits the corrupt, decaying tree of the first humanity to remain until He shall have removed from it, and grafted into the stock of the Good Tree, every branch that has been ordained by Him unto eternal life (Acts xiii. 48). This is why God permits the corrupt tree of the first humanity to cumber the ground for so long a time, and to fill the earth with its evil fruit and noxious odours. This patience and longsuffering of our God is *salvation*. Thus the Apostle Peter testifies that "the longsuffering of our Lord is SALVATION -even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written you" (2 Peter iii. 15).

But what is the foundation of this dealing of God in infinite grace? It is the death of the Lord of Glory on the cross of shame, where the rulers of this world put Him (1 Cor. ii. 8). Let our hearts be bowed here, and let our words be few. The new humanity that is to receive and exercise dominion is not a humanity of flesh and blood. "Now, this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood CANNOT inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50). Yet the members of that new humanity, the heirs of salvation and of glory, are by nature partakers of flesh and blood; and there *is no exit from the flesh and blood humanity save through death*. Death is the way out of the old humanity, and resurrection is the way into the new humanity. Therefore, the members of that new family are "the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx. 36), who have been begotten again unto a living hope "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter i. 3). Now, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [nature] for which cause He is not ashamed to call them, brethren." And again He says of them "Behold I and THE CHILDREN which God hath given Me. Forasmuch then as the children are *partakers of flesh and blood*, He also Himself likewise *took part of the same*; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 11, 13, 14, 15).

Here is the manner of our deliverance from the flesh-and-blood humanity, and from the bondage of sin and death. The Son of God Himself took part of the same (flesh and blood). He came "in the likeness of flesh of sin." As a man of flesh and blood, in Whom was no sin and Who did no sin, "He was MADE SIN for us." Thus He destroyed, through His death, the power of death over the children whom God has given Him. His death delivered them out of the body of sin and death; and His resurrection brings them into the family of God.

Precisely as the transgressions of Adam carried all his family into the sphere of sin and death, so did the righteous act of Jesus Christ bring all His family out of that region into the sphere of righteousness and eternal life. "For as by one man's disobedience many were *made* sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be *made* righteous" (v. 19).

Such is the grace of God, and such is the fruit of the wondrous cross of Christ.

Christ brings everything in this scene to an end. This necessarily follows because there was "no place" here for Him. Christ proved the character of the world by coming into it. His presence so lighted it up that its true character was revealed. He is light, and every person and thing that comes in contact with Him is made manifest of what sort it is. Christ and "this present evil world" (Gal. i 4) *cannot* go on together. One or the other must give way. The rulers of this world acted with blind instinct for the preservation of their world when they put Him to death.

Hence no man can go on with Christ and with the world at the same time. If he hates not his life in this world he cannot be the disciple of Christ. The cross has made it an impossibility for a man to go on with the world, as a participator in its plans, aims, gratifications, hopes, politics, etc., and at the same time to be a disciple of Christ. The world, by the act of its own rulers, cast Him out. "His life is taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 33). His word "Follow Me" takes all those who obey that word completely out of the present scheme of things. It brings their life here also to an end. It connects them with an entirely different scheme of things—"the world to come." This separating power of the Cross of Christ must be realized, as the Red Sea separated the Israelites from Egypt I but in addition the wilderness must be crossed. To the true follower of Christ the world has become a wilderness, that is a place incapable of furnishing anything either to *sustain life* or to *afford satisfaction*.

For both, he is dependent upon Christ. His song is

"Nothing but Christ as on we tread."

The wilderness is the place where God's faithfulness and sufficiency are proved, and where the old man, the flesh, is gotten rid of.

The two men, the first man and the Second Man, met at the cross, and there the character of each was fully displayed. At the cross is revealed God's love toward man, and there also is revealed man's enmity towards God; for the rulers of this world denied the Holy One and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them. They had their choice, for the Devil, who is a murderer from the beginning, and whose agents they became by killing the Prince of Life, became "the God of this age."

There are only these two human families, namely, the family of the Man on the Cross, and the family of the man who put Him there. Every human being must share the destiny of the One or the other. This is separating truth indeed. Every reader of these words belongs, at this moment, to one or the other of these two families.

## CHAPTER VI.

### **The True Sin-Offering.**

The statements of Scripture concerning Christ's connection and dealing with sin in the flesh of the Adam humanity are, that "He died to sin," "He came as an offering for sin," "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," "He, Who knew no sin was made sin for us," He is "the Lamb of God that bears away the sin of the world." Thus, while the Scriptures reveal that our individual *sins*, great and small, varying in kind and number, and degree, were laid *upon* Him and were borne by Him in His own body on the tree It they also reveal the deeper truth that He Who was without sin was *made sin for us*, and that He died to sin once for all. Our *sins* He bore in His *body*; but for our *sin* He poured out His *soul*.

Human explanations of these mighty statements would be useless, and it would be presumptuous even to offer them. Only by the Spirit of God can their profound meaning be apprehended in any measure. But by them we can clearly understand that Christ's death to sin has broken the power of death, so that no child of Adam need any longer remain under the dominion of death. Christ is "the Way" out of death's dominion. That dominion extended over all men. And when the Man Who was "without sin" succumbed to the power of death, the case of humanity seemed hopelessly lost. "But God raised Him from the dead" (Acts xiii. 30). Hence the resurrection is the sole hope of humanity, and is the fundamental *fact* of the gospel-proclamation. Without the actual physical resurrection of the Man, Jesus Christ, there would be no hope, and no gospel. That upon which everything rests is the great fact that THERE IS NOW A MAN OVER WHOM DEATH'S DOMINION DOES NOT EXTEND, for "*Death hath no more dominion over Him* (Rom. vi. 9).

Along with this fact is to be put the other great fact of the *identification* with the Headman of all the members of His race. When Christ died to sin His members died with Him. They were thus disconnected from the stock of the old humanity that is under death's dominion; "Because we thus judge that One died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor. v. 14). "So many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death" (Rom. vi. 3). It follows that, for those who have become members of Christ, His death to sin not only meets for them the penalty of sin, but it removes them wholly from that place over which sin and death exercise dominion. Because death has no more (*i.e.*, no longer) dominion over Him, it has no more dominion over them - and sin has no further claim upon their service, and no more authority to exact obedience from them.

No child of Adam need now die in consequence of the sin of Adam. The death of Christ cancels that debt, and His resurrection opens up a new Source of Life to perishing human beings. Those who remain in the state and under the dominion of death are those who *will not* come unto Him that they might have life (John v. 40). The Holy Spirit has come to witness to the Risen Christ, exalted to the right hand of God, and to impart His life to those who will receive it by faith. "The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. viii. 10). The "sin" whereof the Spirit is come to convict "the world" is not the sin which entered the world through Adam; for that "sin of the world" was borne away by the Lamb of God, the true Sin-offering. The sin which now keeps men under the dominion of death is the sin of *not believing on the Son of God*. "And when He [the Spirit] is come, He will reprove [convict] the *world of sin*, because they *believe not on Me*" (John xvi. 8, 9).

The counterpart of this truth of the believer's identification with Christ in His *death unto sin* is identification with Him in His *life unto God*. This identification in life is "true in Him;" for God, Who sees the end from the beginning, sees all of Christ's members as already "in Him." The frequent occurrence of the expression "in Christ" as in Eph. i., bears repeated testimony to this. God Himself has "set the members in the body, every one of them, as it has pleased Him" (1 Cor. xii. 18). Christ's life, however, is no longer here. Earth, while in the hands of the first man, had no place for the Second Man. The manner of life of "the Man Christ Jesus" was intolerable to the man of earth wherefore "the leaders of this age crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8). So "His life was taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 33). It was necessary, therefore, that a place should be provided for Him until the time when dominion over the earth shall be delivered into His hands. What shall that place be? What place is suitable for His occupancy in the meantime, until His enemies be made His footstool? "What shall be done unto the Man whom the King delighteth to honour?" (Esther vi. 6). God has answered that question in the words of the 110th Psalm, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." "He came to His own, and His own *received Him not*" (John i. 11). Therefore He is now the Man whom "*the heavens must receive* until the times of restitution" (Acts iii. 21).

This wonderful truth is revealed to the children of God now, in order that they may apprehend it, and may live, while here below, in the power of it. Their attention is directed to the place where Christ, "Who is our Life," now is, to the end that they may "seek those things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God" (Col. iii. 1-4). Such should be the effect, according to the purpose of God, of the teaching here presented to us. The objective truth is first put before the soul, and then God discloses the subjective effect which that truth should exert upon those to whom it is

imparted; and it will have the intended effect upon those who obey from the heart , that form of doctrine to which (*i.e.*, to the influence of which) they are delivered (Rom. vi. 17, Gr.).

This subjective side of the doctrine meets us in the sixth chapter of Romans. We may clearly distinguish the subject of chapter six from that of chapter five by noting that Romans v. treats of the *responsibility of each Headman* for the members of his race; whereas Romans vi. treats of the *individual responsibility of the members of Christ*.

## CHAPTER VII.

### **Abounding Sin, Superabounding Grace.**

**Rom. v. 20, 21.**

One of the purposes which God wills to accomplish in the salvation of sinners is the display of His grace. Of all those to whom God gives eternal life it is said "by grace are ye saved through faith." That however, is but the beginning of the manifestation of God's grace; for He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that "in the ages to come He might show *the exceeding riches of His grace*" (Eph. ii. 6-8).

In order that there may be opportunity for the display of the grace of God, there must needs be some who have forfeited all claim upon His goodness; for grace is favour extended to those who are absolutely undeserving. Thus it will be understood that sin produced conditions which made possible the display of God's grace - for without those conditions God could not have exhibited the riches of His grace. God has a reason for permitting the full effects of sin to be manifested, for thereby opportunity is made for the complete revelation of His grace. Only in those who have been ruined by sin can God's grace be fully made known.

But it must never be forgotten that, while sin produced the conditions that have made possible the display of God's marvellous grace, *sin itself* was a barrier to God's *actings* in grace; and it must also be remembered that what made it possible for God to *act* in grace towards those who had been made, through the effects of sin, fit objects for His grace, was the sacrifice of the Son of God as the Sin-Offering. That one righteous act of obedience unto death, whereby many were "made righteous," was what opened the way for God to act in grace towards believing sinners. For grace can only reign "through righteousness," and that righteousness, whereby grace reigns, has been accomplished "by Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 21).

Grace, then, is that which, in this dispensation, preeminently characterizes the actings of God with sinners; and grace is placed in direct contrast with the law. "The *law* was given by Moses, but *grace* and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17). "By works of *law* shall no flesh be justified;" "justified freely by His *grace*" (Rom. iii 20, 24). "Ye are not under *law*, but under *grace*" (Rom. vi. 14). "I do not frustrate [make void] the

*grace* of God , for if righteousness come by the *law*, then Christ is dead in vain [died for nought]" (Gal. ii. 21). "Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the *law*; ye are fallen from *grace*" (Gal. v. 4).

Notwithstanding, however, that the dispensation of law is sharply contrasted with that of grace, the giving of the law, nevertheless, contributed much to the display of God's grace, which was the object He had in view for His own glory. God's dealing with man under law was upon the basis of *man's estimate of himself*. God's dealing with man in grace is upon the basis of what man *really is in truth*. "Grace and *truth* came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17). Man has implicit and unquenchable confidence in himself, and in his own ability to achieve every desirable end, whether political, social, moral or other, if he be but given a fair opportunity to put forth his powers. And when he fails (as he invariably does) he has always an explanation satisfactory to himself, and which puts the blame for the failure elsewhere than upon himself. He is certain that, if the conditions had only been a *little* different, if it had not been for this or that, the result would have been a great success. All that the man of the twentieth century demands, in order to conquer every obstacle to human progress, and to solve all the social problems of the day – poverty, disease, crime, war, etc., etc., - is just a "fair chance" to develop freely his own innate resources. The self-confidence of the natural man has not diminished since the day the law was given to man in the flesh on Mount Sinai. When the ten commandments were spoken in the ears of the people by the Voice of Jehovah – which Voice was so dreadful that they entreated that the word should not be *spoken* to them any more (Deut. xviii. 16; Heb. xii. 19), "All the people answered together, and said, ALL that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Ex. xix. 8). And again, when Moses brought to the people "the words of the LORD and all the judgments" (which were given in addition to the ten commandments), all the people answered with one voice, and said, "ALL the words which the LORD hath said will we do" (Ex. xxiv. 3). And again, when the book of the covenant, which had been sprinkled with the blood of the burnt-offering and peace-offering, was read in the hearing of the people, they said, "ALL that the LORD hath said will we do and be obedient" (Ex. xxiv. 7). The people were, no doubt, sincere in making these pledges, believing fully in their purpose and ability to fulfil them - for man in the flesh, who doubts and disbelieves God, does sincerely believe *in himself* and in his own capacity to do what is required of him. So the law was given in order that mankind might learn his impotency to produce righteousness. Man needed to learn that "the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*" (Rom. viii. 7). Such was the condition to which indwelling sin had brought the humanity of Adam that the effect of the law was not to increase the amount of righteousness in the world, but – to increase enormously the

amount of unrighteousness. When the law was given, those to whom it was given opened their mouths and protested their ability and purpose to do all that the Lord required; for "all the people answered with one voice" to that effect. But now, as the result of the test of the Israelites under law, every mouth is *stopped*, and all the world, Israelites as well as Gentiles, have come under sentence before God (Rom. iii. 19).

This (to us) surprising result of the giving of the law of God was not unforeseen by Him. On the contrary, the law was given in order to produce that very result. "The law entered [in order] that the offence might abound" (v. 20). The sequence of events was this: First, "sin entered" and death by sin; and then, several thousand years later, "the law entered." The offence of Adam, by means of which sin entered had already, *i.e.*, before the giving of the law, abounded to an incalculable total of evil deeds. Then, at a later date, the law entered in order that the effects of the offence might *still further abound*. In this way the law, instead of opposing a check to sin, became "the strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). By means of the law the power of sin and its complete mastery of humanity became evident. The law "was added [to what went before] on account of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). And it completely served the purpose for which it was given. It contributed to the conditions that were needed for the showing forth of the grace of God. For "where sin abounded, grace did *much more* abound."

The sphere where sin abounded in its effects is the race of Adam. Where is the mind that can conceive a millioneth part of the evil effects that sin has wrought in human kind! The consequences of sin in the flesh are beyond all computation. And it is in the race of Adam that *all* these consequences have been produced. Hence it is in the race of Adam that God's grace has superabounded. The sphere in which sin has worked out all its awful results is the same sphere in which God's grace has wrought results that reach much farther. And the immediate purpose of God is that, in like manner as sin has reigned unto death, -pulling down all its helpless subjects into the waters of death, *EVEN* so Grace might reign (through righteousness), raising its subjects into the sphere of eternal life, by Jesus Christ our LORD.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### **“And This is Life Eternal.”**

It seems needful, notwithstanding the difficulty of discussing such a subject, to say something about that special kind of life which God bestows as a “free-gift” (Rom. vi. 23) upon all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have seen that what distinguishes each species, or race, or family of living creatures - whether vegetable or animal - is the possession of a certain kind of *life* which is common to all the members of that species, race, or family, and which is different in some respects, more or less important, from the life of every other. We have seen also that the life of every member of a particular species of beings is transmitted to it from the first of that species, through intervening members thereof.

Thus far, God's laws of life are universal and apply to the life which is shared by all members of Christ. This life, for which Scripture has a special name, is “in Christ.” “*In Him* was life” (John i. 4). “God hath given to us eternal life, and THIS [special kind of] LIFE is *in His Son*” (1 John v. 11). Several passages in that section of Romans which we are now studying speak of “this life” as being “in Christ,” but the meaning of those passages is obscured in our A.V. by the rendering “through Jesus Christ.” Thus Rom. vi. 11 should read “alive unto God IN CHRIST JESUS our Lord,” and Rom. vi. 23 should read “the free-gift of God is eternal life IN CHRIST JESUS our Lord.”

Christ then, is the Source of that kind of life whereof we are now speaking. All who receive it, receive it from Him.

As to the means whereby this life is imparted to those who already have the corrupted life derived from Adam, it is only necessary to remind our readers of the familiar truth that eternal life is communicated by means of the living Word of God. “He that heareth MY WORD, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life” (John v. 24). “The seed is the WORD OF GOD” (Luke viii. 11). Begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible BY THE WORD OF GOD” (1 Peter i. 23). The message which the angel brought to Cornelius was to send for Simon Peter, “Who shall tell thee WORDS whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts xi. 14).

The processes whereby life is imparted to, and becomes localized in, the individual members of a family, are so inscrutable that the foregoing statements are just as far beyond the comprehension of the most learned,

as they are beyond that of the least learned. There is no difficulty, however, in grasping the principal facts revealed to us in the foregoing Scriptures, namely, that the Son of God is the Source of this eternal life, and that human beings of the family of Adam receive it by hearing and believing the Word of God, *i.e.*, the Gospel of the Risen Christ. The Apostle Peter, after stating that we are begotten of incorruptible seed by the Word of God, adds, "And this is the Word, which BY THE GOSPEL is preached unto you." (1 Peter i. 25).

We come now to speak of the nature or character of this particular sort of life. We need hardly say that it is incapable of definition. The attempts of our biologists to define even physical life have completely failed. Hence the impossibility of finding words to define that life which is in the Risen Man, Jesus Christ, is apparent. Nevertheless we may obtain from the Scriptures some ideas about it.

Let it be noted first of all that "eternal life," God's free-gift, is not merely the prolongation through endless ages of the human life such as Adam possessed prior to the fall. The Scriptures make it clear that the life which the Lord Jesus Christ imparts to as many as receive Him, and whereby they become "Sons of God," is radically different *in kind* from the life which God breathed into the man made of earth. So great is this difference that these two kinds of life are distinguished in the New Testament by different names. The ordinary human life is the "*psuche*," also translated in many passages by the English word "soul." This is the natural life or soul of man. From it is derived the adjective *psuchikos*, rendered "natural," and which is specially applied to the race of Adam as distinguished from the "spiritual" man, or man of the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it is written "The *natural* (*psuchikos*) man [or man of soul] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. But he that is *spiritual* judgeth all things." (1 Cor. ii. 14, 16). "The first man Adam was made a *living soul* (*psuche*); the last Adam a quickening [life-giving] spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which was *spiritual*, but that which is *natural* (*psuchikos*)" (1 Cor. xv. 45, 46).

On the other hand, the word for the life that pertains to the Second Man, Jesus Christ, and which He imparts to all His race is *zoe*. This is the word that is found in all the passages quoted above (John i. 4, etc.), and in many others where eternal life is the subject. It is the same word as used to describe the divine life in passages such as 1 Th. i. 9, where God is spoken of as the "Living God."

The distinction between these two kinds of life comes out very clearly in certain passages in John's Gospel. Thus in John x. 10 the Lord says, "I am come that they [His sheep] might have LIFE." Here the word *zoe*, which tells us that He came to impart to the sheep a life different from that which they

had before - life of a sort that was new in the earth. But in the very next verse He says, "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth His LIFE for the sheep." Here the word is *psuche*, not *zoe*.

The lesson of these two verses is very important, for by it we are taught that the life which the Lord gave *for* our redemption is not the same that He gives to His redeemed ones. The life He surrendered as a sacrifice for sin was His natural, or flesh - and - blood life. To that end He became a partaker of flesh and blood (Heb. ii. 14, 15). That natural life or soul (*psuche*) is of a sort that the Devil, who has the power of death, can take away. But the *zoe*, or eternal life, which distinguishes the Second Man, the last Adam, from the first Adam, is a life over which death has no power. So, in verses 17 and 18 of John x., where the Lord says, "I lay down My LIFE that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again," the word for "life" is *psuche*. That natural life or soul He offered as a sacrifice for sin. But when, in verse 28, He says, "I give unto them eternal LIFE, and they shall never perish," the word is *zoe*. Those who receive that sort of life cannot perish. Other familiar passages in which the Lord speaks of His natural life, or *psuche*, are:- "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His *life (psuche)* a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). "My *soul (psuche)* is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). On the other hand, in the passages "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John xi. 25); "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John xiv. 6) Christ who is our life," etc., the word is *zoe*.

In John xii. we again have the two words in close contrast, and much of the meaning of the passage is missed if the difference be not understood. Verse 24 contains the parable of the kernel of wheat which, unless it fall into the ground and die, abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. There is no difficulty in recognizing in the words "much fruit" the new human family, the children of the resurrection," the "many brethren" among whom Christ is the First-born, the "many sons" whom God is bringing unto glory. These, when God's purpose with reference to them shall have been accomplished (Rom. viii. 29, 30), will be of the same nature as the kernel that fell into the ground and died, for they shall all be "conformed to the image of His Son," and be "glorified" as He is glorified. Then follow the words, "He that loveth his life (*psuche*) shall lose it; and he that hateth his life (*psuche*) in this world, shall keep it unto LIFE (*zoe*) eternal. If any man serve Me let him follow Me." Here is a great and precious promise for those who are willing to take the place of being crucified with Christ to the world, thus "hating" and forsaking their "life in this world;" and with this great saying of the Lord Jesus we may profitably compare and ponder the words of Rom. viii. 13, "If ye through the Spirit do put to death the deeds of the body

ye shall live." But that is not our subject at present. The foregoing passages are brought to the attention of the reader in order to show that the Scriptures make, and carefully maintain, a clear distinction between the life of the first man and his race, and the life of the Second Man and His race; and to show also that God's free-gift, "eternal life in Christ Jesus" is something very different from that life which He imparted to the first Adam.

In connection with the foregoing passages, the reader should know that, in 1 Cor. xv. 45, where the two men are contrasted - "The first man Adam was made a living soul (*psuche*); the last Adam a *quicken*ing [*life-giving*] Spirit" - the word rendered "quicken

## CHAPTER IX. "And This is Life Eternal"

(Continued).

Having now learned that the two humanities, the "earthly" and the "heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 48, 49) are radically different in regard to the kind of life which they respectively possess, we may ask whether Scripture teaches any thing concerning the attributes, powers, experiences, and other characteristics of "that Eternal Life (*zoe*), which," says the Apostle John, "was with the Father, and was manifested unto us?" (1 John i. 2). Undoubtedly the Scriptures have much to impart to the diligent learner (if he have "spiritual understanding") on this important subject; and a few of the chief items of this teaching will be noted here.

In the first place, "that eternal life," brought into the world by Jesus Christ, is imperishable. Those who receive it "shall never perish" (John x. 28). It is incorruptible, being the product of "incorruptible seed," namely, "the Word of God which *liveth* (*zoe*) and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). It is in direct contrast with the life of the natural man, which is "as grass," which "withereth" (verse 24). Thus we see that the Gospel announces (in the second division which is the subject of the present volume) in addition to the announcement of the forgiveness of sins, the imparting of a life, bestowed as a free gift upon the believer, which life is imperishable and incorruptible. For, says the Apostle Peter, in confirmation of the teaching given by Paul, "this is the Word which *by the Gospel* is preached unto you" (1 Peter i. 25).

To the same effect writes the Apostle John: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His [God's] seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9). The lodging place of sin is "the flesh," or old nature derived from Adam (Rom. vii. 17-19). The new nature derived from Jesus Christ cannot be entered or corrupted by sin. Those who have received this nature are bidden to reckon themselves dead to sin, and live unto God, and not to permit sin to reign in their mortal bodies to obey it in the desires thereof, for they have been made free from sin (Rom. vi. 11, 12, 18, 22).

The attributes, powers and characteristics inherent in "that eternal life" can best be studied by studying the records given us in the Gospels of Him who is its Source. The activities of the Man Christ Jesus are the spontaneous expressions of that life; but even there its full manifestation was hindered by the natural life and by the limitations of the physical body, which had been "prepared" for Him for the purposes of a sin-offering (Heb. x. 5). He said

that He was "straitened," that is cramped or limited, so that He could not do all He wished to do, until He should have accomplished the "baptism" wherewith He was to be baptised (Luke xii. 50). All the powers of that marvellous life could not be exhibited by Him in the days of His flesh. Nevertheless, we see shining forth from Him the qualities of that life, among which are holiness, goodness, dependence upon God and His Word, entire consecration to the Father's business, a single eye to the Father's glory, obedience, and utter forgetfulness of self. In a word, there was in Him everything in which God could take pleasure. "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17).

There is one word which, if all its depth and breadth of meaning could be sounded and grasped, would define for us the qualities of that Eternal Life, and that word is LOVE. It has been often noticed that the words "life" and "love" are frequently coupled together in the writings of the Apostle John. It is from the ministry of that Apostle that the nature and outward manifestations of Eternal Life are to be learned. But the ministry of Paul is a preparation for this; and in the exhortations contained in His Epistles, and addressed to those who are in Christ, we find many details of the characteristics of the "life in Christ." Thus, in Col. iii., following the statement "Christ our Life," comes the exhortation to mortify the deeds of the old nature, which in other words is "putting off the old man," and to put on the new man "which is [being] renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (verse 10). Then follows a recital of the things to be "put on," which are the appropriate expressions of the new life and the crowning quality, that which is "above all" the rest, is LOVE. "And *above all* these things put on LOVE, which is the bond of perfectness" (verse 14). Love is the perfect bond that unites those who receive this eternal life in Christ. Hence the Apostle's concern that they should be "knit together in love" (Col. ii. 2).

The same teaching appears in the first Epistle of Peter, in the context of the passage cited above, which tells us that the Word of God is the seed, of the new birth. Note the words: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned *love* of the brethren, see that ye *love one another* with a pure heart, fervently; having been begotten again," etc. (1 Peter i. 22, 23). The reason given us why we should love one another is that we have been begotten again of the living Word of God.

The same lesson comes strongly into view in the last teaching given by our Lord to His disciples, the chief burden of which was that they should love one another. That teaching is also the burden of the Epistles of the last of the Apostles.

From all of this we may draw the conclusion that the appropriate expressions of the life imparted by Jesus Christ to those who believe on Him are the activities of love, which seeketh not her own, but seeks incessantly the well-being of others. "God *is* Love," and hence the Divine activities are those of love. To the extent then, that the doings of our lives are made up of the ministrations of love, to that extent are we manifesting the characteristics of eternal life; to that extent are we giving outward expression to the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us (Rom. v. 5); to that extent are we showing forth the excellencies of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter ii. 9).

But the subject of Eternal Life presents many aspects. The life of every species exhibits not only certain habitual *modes of conduct* - vital activities - peculiar to itself; but it also includes certain *powers or capacities*. The powers and capacities of Life Eternal are not as yet fully revealed to us. We obtain, however, a glimpse of them in the works of power performed by the Lord Jesus. These were not the powers which pertain to Him individually in virtue of His Deity, for He assured His disciples that *they* should do the same works (John xiv. 12). We know, moreover, the place in the creation of God which the new humanity is to occupy. That place is next to God Himself in authority and dignity, the pledge of it being that the Head of that new humanity is now sharing God's throne. The future administrators of the universe will, of course, be invested with powers suitable to the dignity and responsibilities of their high station. A hint of the powers of the new man is given in the sudden appearances and disappearances of the Lord Jesus after His resurrection; and in His ascension into the clouds when His bodily sojourn was ended. In like manner will those who are raised with His likeness, or changed thereto at His coming, rise to meet Him in the air in response to the assembling shout, the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God (1 Th. iv.).

Again, each different kind of life is characterised by the *experiences* which it is possible for its possessor to enjoy. The higher we go in the scale of life, the greater is the variety and the nobler is the character of the experiences and sensations which the living creature enjoys. The life of a mollusc is very uneventful, and is composed of few and simple experiences. It knows something of the movement of tidal waters, perhaps, and it opens and closes its shell in the act of feeding. Beyond this its vital capacities do not extend. Its means of communication with its surroundings are such as restrict its experiences and sensations to the narrowest limits.

When, however, we rise in the scale of life to human beings, we find a life capable of a wide range of conscious experiences and sensations; for we

come to a being endowed with superior means of communication with its surroundings, as well as with mysterious intellectual faculties, whereby it can weave the results of those communications with its surroundings, into a more or less coherent system of experiences. Man's relations with the persons and things external to himself, and his consciousness of those relations, are characteristics peculiar to the life of the human species, and they serve to distinguish it from the life of all other creatures.

Man is, in one word, capable of *Knowledge*. Each individual man's accumulated store of the results of his experiences and relations with external persons and things constitutes his own personal *knowledge*. And this knowledge in turn constitutes, in a very real sense, his life. The details of one's knowledge are what occupy his mind, control his affections, and guide his actions. The fuller one's knowledge of external things, the richer is his life. Moreover, acquaintance and relationships with what is good and pure elevate the life of a man; while acquaintance and relations with what is evil degrade it.

Bearing these facts in mind, we may be able to apprehend to some extent, that one of the chief distinguishing characteristics of Eternal Life is that its possession is endowed with the capacity to know *God*. This is not merely the capacity to know *about* God; but to know Him in the sense referred to above - to have actual acquaintance with Him, to hold communications with Him, to learn His ways, to have conscious experiences of His presence, His care, His deliverances, His goodness, His wisdom, His power, His faithfulness, and His actings in various ways. If a man live in the world, his relations are with the world, which constitutes his "environment," and all his conscious experience, in one word His *knowledge*, is therefore worldly. But if any man be *in Christ*, having died with Him and risen with Him, he is in a "new creation." Being "in Christ," Christ is his environment, and all the relations that he forms, all the experiences he enjoys, all his knowledge, are Divine. He can say with Paul, "for me to live is Christ," and "the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Phil. i. 21; Gal. ii. 20).

This, then, is the definition of eternal life, namely, *the knowledge of God*. That life *begins* by a revelation of God through His Word to the soul of a sinful man. The entrance of God's Word gives light, where before all was the darkness of nature; and "God *is* Light." By that light the state of the man is discovered and he comes to the knowledge of Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, as the Saviour of sinners, and as his own Saviour. From that starting point all true living of the divine or eternal life begins, and its continuance is but the further knowing of God in Christ.

"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might *know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*" (John xvii. 2, 3).

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may *know Him that is true*, and we are in Him that is true even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and Eternal Life" (1 John v. 20).

The Scriptures we have already cited tell us that this capacity to know God is not an endowment of the natural man. The spirit of man is capable of knowing "the things of a man" - human things; but "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Such were the things whereof the Apostle spoke, and he spoke them, "not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, communicating spiritual things to spiritual persons."\* "But the natural man [man of soul] receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them." He has not the capacity for knowing them, "because they are discerned spiritually" (1 Cor. ii. 12-14).

\*This we believe to be the best reading of 1 Cor. ii. 13.

These Scriptures make it plain that the capacity for knowing God, who is Spirit, and spiritual things, is not an endowment of the natural man. It is one of the inherent powers of Eternal Life; and one of the most vivid experiences of a man who has passed from death into life is the awakening in himself of a consciousness of spiritual things.

Spiritual growth consists in growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and the means of that growth is feeding on the Word of God. The Apostle Peter urges those who have been born of the Word to desire the sincere milk of that Word, that they may grow thereby (1 Peter ii. 1, 2), and his last exhortation is to "grow in grace, and in the *knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter iii. 18). Those who have a limited knowledge of Christ are babes; and the Apostle urges such to go on to maturity, or full-growth (Heb. v.12-14; vi.1). Gifts have been bestowed by the Risen Christ upon His Church to the end that we might all come, in the unity of the faith and of *the knowledge of the Son of God*, unto the perfect [full-grown] man; that we henceforth be no more *children* (Eph. iv. 13, 14). The fathers in Christ whom the aged Apostle John addresses are those who "have known Him that is from the beginning" (1 John ii. 13). Paul counted all things but loss for "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ" (Phil. iii. 8); and the desire of His heart was expressed in the words "That I may know Him" (Phil. iii. 10). This is a knowledge whereof its possessor may boast, as

it is written: "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he *understandeth and knoweth Me*, that I am the LORD which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jer. ix. 24).

How comforting then to those who hunger for the excellency of this knowledge of Christ are these words of the disciple whom Jesus loved: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may KNOW HIM THAT IS TRUE" (1 John v. 20).

## CHAPTER X.

### **Our Response and Our Responsibility.**

“What shall we say then?” (Rom. vi. 1). This abrupt and pointed question marks another decided change in the Epistle, and challenges our closest attention. Up to this time God has been speaking, and has been making known, to those whose ears are opened to His voice, the marvellous dealings of His Grace with believing children of Adam, who “were by nature the children of wrath” (Eph. ii. 3). Now, we are suddenly made aware that He who has been speaking to us requires a response from us. “What shall we say then,” in response to all that God has declared to us? When we were in our sins our mouth was “stopped;” but now, being made free from sin, our mouth is opened.

This abrupt question is put to us as a test to prove whether or not we have received all that God has been saying to us, and to prove also the sincerity of our belief in His Word, as on one occasion the Lord, after imparting instruction to His disciples, asked, “Have ye understood all these things?” (Matt. xiii. 51).

What shall be our response? God has been saying wonderful things to us. He has declared His “Good News,” the remission of sins to all who believe on the crucified and risen Son of God, and also has made known “the gift of righteousness,” a new and righteous nature derived from the Second Man, and imparted to all who, through faith in Him, become the Sons of God. Now we learn that God expects something from those to whom His grace has abounded; and we do well to note carefully just what He requires.

It would not be possible, we think, to exaggerate the importance of the Sixth Chapter of Romans. It is intensely practical, and its *entire application is* to our present circumstances while yet in the mortal body. Failure or neglect on the part of a child of God at this point means failure at the very first step of the Christian life and walk. Let us then look closely at the contents of this chapter, seeking intelligence wherewith to understand, and grace whereby to do, the things here written for our guidance.

It will be helpful, perhaps, before taking up the details of the chapter, to survey the ground it covers, and to take note of the prominent points therein. Looking thus over the field it is easy to see that the most conspicuous fact declared in the chapter is *the deliverance of the believer from the servitude sin*. Sin had reigned over all men. The subjects of sin obeyed it for the same reason that all slaves obey their own masters, namely, because they *must* do so. They cannot do otherwise. However much

the sinner may struggle to escape from "the law of sin and death," and to live a righteous and holy life, he cannot succeed. The Lord Himself declared this in the strongest terms: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant [bond-slave] of sin" (John viii. 34). But at the same time He gave an intimation of deliverance, saying: "And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (verses 35, 36). The freedom here spoken of by the Lord is the prominent subject of Rom. vi. The Son of God had come "to proclaim liberty to the captives [of sin], and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Is. lxi. 1). And now we, who once were bound by sin, have heard the proclamation that the bars are broken, the chains have fallen from our limbs, and the ponderous doors of our prison-house are open. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in the place where once we were held? Shall we continue in sin? "If so, it is now by our own choice, for now we "have been made free from sin" (Rom. vi. 18). We are free to depart or to remain. We are "free indeed."

Freedom from the servitude of sin is mentioned in the following passages in Rom. vi.:-

"That henceforth we should not serve sin" (ver. 6).

"He that died is freed from sin" (ver. 7).

"Reckon ye yourselves to be dead in sin" (ver. 11).

"Let not sin reign in your mortal body to obey it in the desires thereof" (ver. 12).

"For sin shall not have dominion over you" (ver. 14).

"Ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart" (ver. 17).

"Being then made free from sin" (ver. 18).

"For when ye were the servants of sin" (ver. 20).

"But now being made free from sin" (ver. 22).

Doubtless these many repetitions of the same truth in slightly different words are needed to impress our minds, in order that the truth may be driven home. Those who have long been habituated to the same conditions, however onerous, are hard to convince of a change. Scarcely had the Israelites escaped out of Egypt, with its hard bondage and its grievous

plagues, than they clamoured to return, Prisoners become dull and listless, and need to be thoroughly aroused from their hopeless state.

Our chapter tells us also the manner of our deliverance from the slavery of sin. It is by death. And here is a strange thing. It is not the death of the master that puts an end to the slavery, but the death of the slave. "For he that is dead [*lit.*, that died] is free from sin" (v. 7). We have no difficulty in understanding that the death of the captive brings his captivity to an end; but we never should have thought of that way of deliverance for ourselves from the servitude of sin. Here, then, is a surprise for us—one of the many instances that remind us that God's ways are not our ways. Therefore, realizing our need of enlightenment on this point, we should listen with close attention to what our Divine Teacher has graciously imparted to us with reference thereto.

Inquiring further into the manner of our deliverance from the bondage of sin, we learn that the death which has set us free is not a death that each of us dies individually, but a death into which we are brought in virtue of the death of Christ, the Headman of our race. It is *His* death, and it becomes *ours* by reason of our identification with Him. The actual dying—with all that it involves of weakness, humiliation and horror was *His*. He "tasted death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9). The results are *ours*. "So many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death" (Rom. vi. 3). We have been conjoined in the likeness of His death (ver. 5). "Knowing this, that our old man is [has been] crucified with Him" (ver. 6). "Now, if we died WITH CHRIST" (ver. 8).

Manifestly, the teaching contained in these passages is the carrying forward of the great lesson taught in chapter v. concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, and concerning the consequences to all His family of His one act of obedience unto death. God tells us that, when the Lord Jesus departed through the gateway of death from the humanity of flesh and blood (whereof He became a partaker because "the children" were partakers thereof—Heb. ii. 4, He *took all the children with Him*. In this manner He delivered those who were "subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 15).

It is not to be expected that we should understand this great transaction. What is needful for the moment is that we *believe* it, because God has said it; and then that we should act upon the basis of the truth revealed to us, namely, that we have been, by the death of Christ for us, as by our own death with Him, set free from the slavery of sin. Thus believing and acting we do reckon ourselves to be "dead indeed unto sin."

We realize in a very special way that these truths are among the deep things of God (1 Cor. ii. 10), known only to the Spirit of God, and hence to

be learned only of Him (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11). But, on the other hand, we find this plain command, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin;" and this we find to be the very first practical exercise given to the justified man. Therefore, we confidently count upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit to impart the truth to those who are willing to walk in it; and we are persuaded that, until this command be carried out in the Spirit, there can be no real progress in Christian *living*, however much one may be able to accumulate of correct *doctrine*, prophetic and dispensational truth, and the like. Let us then give diligent heed to this commandment, and rest not until we have "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which we have been delivered" (v. 17).\*

\*The reader should note the correct rendering of this verse. The doctrine has not been delivered to us to be shaped and moulded according to our ideas; but we have been delivered over to the doctrine that it may shape and mould us. Our part is to obey it from the heart.

Lastly, for the purpose of this preliminary survey, we would refer again to the subject which the opening words of the chapter bring so forcibly to our attention, namely, our response, and our responsibility. This is indeed most solemn and important. We are deeply impressed with the thought that, even in the very best and soundest teaching of the day, far too little attention is paid to the *grave responsibilities* resting upon those who have received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.

It is quite possible so to teach the grace of God as to make those who have received the benefits thereof lose sight of their responsibilities. But the Scriptures do not so teach the doctrine of Divine Grace. Very clearly do they teach the blessed fact that *all* who believe on the crucified and risen Son of God are "justified freely by His grace" (Rom. iii. 24), "and by Him *all that believe* are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39); and furthermore that the gift of God's free grace abounds unto eternal life (Rom. v. 21; vi. 23). But with equal clearness do the Scriptures teach that, after our sins have been remitted by grace, and eternal life has been given by grace, we are required to depart instantly from, our old ways. So complete a change of conduct is required of us that it is described as walking "in newness of life." Not only are our ways of living to be changed, but the very place of residence is to be changed also.

What shall we say then, after having listened to God's announcement of what infinite grace has made ours through the Cross of Christ? Shall we continue living in the old ways and in the old place? Shall we continue in sin? After we have truly learned, by the Word and Spirit of God, our association with Christ in His death, the only possible reply to this question will be "may it not be. How shall we, who *died* to sin, *live* any longer therein?"

It is a very serious matter to receive light and not to walk in it. There is a certain carnal satisfaction in acquiring a stock of Scripture-knowledge, and its possession may foster carnal pride, and produce a pleasing sense of superiority over those saints who have less of that knowledge. It is dangerous in the extreme to lose sight of the fact that our responsibility is in proportion to our light. The Lord did not say "if ye know these things, happy are ye;" but "if ye know these things happy are ye *if ye do them*" (John xiii. 17). Again, He said to those who boasted they were the children of Abraham, "If ye were Abraham's children ye would *do the works of Abraham*" (John viii. 39). If then we have the faith of Abraham, it is incumbent upon us to walk in the steps of the faith which Abraham had (Rom. iv. 12).

Indeed it is better not to have the light wherein some are disposed to pride themselves if we do not walk in that light. It is written of some who had a certain knowledge of Christ that "if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter ii. 20, 21).

There is, of course, no question of the believer's losing the gift of Eternal Life; but the Scriptures contain numerous and most solemn warnings of damage and loss which the saint may sustain through disobedience, perversity, heedlessness, or neglect. There is a disposition on our part to pass lightly over such warnings. We do so at our peril; and the command is laid upon all of us to exhort one another daily, so long as it is called "Today," lest "any *of you*" ["holy brethren"] be hardened by the deceivableness of sin; and so much the more should we do so as we "see the day approaching" (Heb. iii. 13; x. 25). Surely now is the time for giving and receiving these exhortations. In "a little while" it will be *too late*. Awake, therefore, ye children of light and of the day. "Let us not sleep, as do others But let us watch and be sober" (1 Th. v. 6).

## CHAPTER XI

### **Deliverance From the Servitude of Sin.**

Now we take up in detail some of the lessons of chapter vi., beginning with that of the freedom of the believer. In chapter v. we find the words "made righteous." In chapter vi. we have the words "made free." How shall we use this freedom? Having been delivered from the bitter servitude of sin, our own *wills* must now act. God does not treat the liberated captives as if they were irresponsible creatures, horses or mules, to be held and guided by bit and bridle. This is unhappily the idea of some who, having asked for guidance perhaps, go blundering on without making any serious effort to ascertain the will of God. But the idea that the children of God are to be guided forcibly like horses and mules, or automatically like machines, is an idea born of ignorance and fostered by spiritual laziness. It often takes time and effort to ascertain the mind of God; but He certainly will make it known to those who diligently seek Him. The throne of Grace is accessible to all saints, and grace there is for every need. God's mind for His children is revealed in His Word, and His Spirit is given to guide them in searching His Word. To be filled with His Word, therefore, is to be "filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col. i. 9). Therefore, ignorance of the will of God is often due to neglect of the Word of God. It is most needful we should understand that, up to the point we have now reached, *everything has been done for us*. "BUT Now, having been made free from sin" (Rom. vi. 22) everything from this point on - that is to say, all testimony and service for God, and all blessing to ourselves and others - depends upon the use we ourselves make of this freedom, for which our Saviour paid so dearly.

We are precisely in the position of the Israelites after the crossing of the Red Sea. Chapters xii., xiii., xiv. of Exodus present typically the same truths that are set forth doctrinally in Romans iii. 21; v. 21. Until God had brought His people across the Red Sea and had overwhelmed their enemies, so that they were manifestly delivered from the servitude of Egypt (for He destroyed the powers that sought to draw them back into slavery), He did everything for them. Indeed, He even disregarded their fears and their murmurings when, panic - stricken, they would have returned to serve their old masters (Ex. xiv. 10 - 12). But, after they had been "baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. x. 2), and were brought up out of the sea into a new place, God immediately began to deal with them as *intelligent* and *responsible* beings, who possessed freedom of will, and who, moreover, had a perfect knowledge of the Salvation that God had wrought for them. For "Israel saw *the great work* which the LORD did upon the

Egyptians" (Ex. xiv. 30, 31). Thereupon the LORD made for them a statute and an ordinance to prove them; and the test was for the purpose of showing "Whether they *will walk in my law or no*" (Ex. xv. 25; xvi. 4). Their "will" was to be tested, and the proof was to be *walking* in a new manner of life.

This is precisely the position in which we find ourselves upon reaching the sixth chapter of Romans. Redemption by the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins (in one word, "justification") has been accomplished for us, and also deliverance by the death of Christ from the dominion of sin, for "so many of us as have been baptised into Christ" have been "baptised *into His death.*" And thereupon comes the test of our *will*. God's declared purpose being that we should *walk* in newness of life."

Verses 1 to 10 of chapter vi. declare the great fact of the believer's identification with Christ in His death and resurrection - a fact which faith accepts without waiting to understand the manner of it - and the passage states also *God's purpose for us* in view of that fact. The rest of the chapter contains the expression of God's will in the form of commands or exhortations addressed to those who, by the death of Christ, have been made free from sin.

God's present purpose for us, to whom these great truths have been revealed, is stated in verse 4, namely, "that we should walk in newness of life." The time of this walk is *now*. In fact, Romans does not look, except incidentally, to the age to come (*e.g.*, viii. 18, 19). It is very closely confined to the *present effects* of the death and resurrection of Christ. It does not contemplate the individual resurrection of the believer himself, which is yet future, but his present participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. The teaching has reference to the family of the Second Man as a whole (and as bound up indissolubly with Him) rather than to the individual members thereof. The teaching is addressed "to faith," for it is not supported by any evidence that is cognisable by the physical senses. Faith receives it and acts upon it; and of those who do so it may be said that they "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had, being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. iv. 12). When Abraham came out of his native land, in obedience to the call of God, he forsook all his old ways of living, all his old associations, occupations, and interests - in a word, everything that made up his life - and became a pilgrim in the very land which God had given him by promise. He was called upon to "walk in newness of life."

If we have learned what is meant by being "baptised into the death of Christ," and being "planted together [conjoined] in the likeness of His death," we shall not find great difficulty in apprehending the purpose of God for us as expressed in the words "walk in newness of life." The emphasis of

this passage seems to be not on water-baptism, but on that which water-baptism so impressively represents. The Lord Jesus as a man of flesh and blood, went down into the dark waters of death (Ps. lxxix. 1, 2; Ps. cxlii. 7; Lam. iii. 54; Jonah ii. 1-5). He disappeared from the view of the natural eye. No longer was He to be an object of *sight* during this age. Henceforth He was to be preached, as raised from the dead, "for the obedience of *faith*." "His life was taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 33). What then became of it? Unbelief does not know; but faith accepts the testimony of God that "He rose from the dead the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 4). His life, then, is not what it was in the days of His flesh. It is vastly different; and, moreover, is lived in another place. It is hid in God (Col. iii. 3). It is not associated in any way with the affairs, enterprises, progress, civilisation, or other great things of this present evil age. His interests, His occupations, and all that go to make up the "Life" of a man, have nothing in common with the things that make up the life of "the man of earth." We know what some of His interests and occupations are. We know His incessant activities as the High Priest on behalf of those who come to God by Him, and as the Mediator and Advocate of His people. We know that He ceaselessly watches over His own, guiding, protecting, and supplying their needs as they journey through this great and terrible wilderness, feeding His flock like a Shepherd, gathering the lambs with His arm, carrying them in His bosom, and gently leading those that are with young. He was raised up from the dead *in newness of life*; and God purposes that "LIK F AS Christ was raised up from the dead, EVEN so we also should walk." For we are now set free from the servitude of sin and from the life we were once *compelled* to live. Therefore, we may even now share the interests and occupations that make up His life. By His death on the Cross "His life (zoe) was taken from the earth." We, who were "baptised into Christ Jesus were *baptised into His death*." If that be true in us, as it is true in Him, then there is an end to the necessity of living as we once lived when in the bondage of sin, "serving divers lusts and pleasures." A tremendous change occurred in the experience of the Man Christ Jesus when He expired on the Cross. God brings that mighty event to our notice in the Scripture we are now studying, and tells us that it was an event in the history of the Second Humanity, including each member thereof. God presents this truth to us for the express purpose that the *corresponding change* may be effected in our manner of life while yet in the mortal body.

The principal thing to be understood is that, by the death of Christ, and because of our association with Him, sin's power and authority over us are broken. Our old man was crucified with Christ to the end that we should not any longer serve sin. After the Israelites had been brought out of Egypt, there was no power that could compel them to return. But they were free to return in heart, and they did so to their great damage and loss (Numb. xiv.

4, 30, 35). In like manner is the justified man free to continue in his old ways, if he chooses to do so; but, if he does, he is without excuse, for when Christ died to sin, its hold upon the believer was relaxed, and he became "free indeed" (John viii. 36).

Surely we should be deeply concerned as to the use we make of a freedom that has been purchased at so great a price. The chief captain prized highly his privileges as a free Roman citizen, saying, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom" (Acts xxii. 28). But what was the price of his freedom compared with that paid for our freedom from the servitude of sin! And if he was zealous to exercise the privileges of his freedom as a Roman citizen, shall we be indifferent as to ours as free men in Christ?

Yet at this point most of us would confess failure and unbelief. We rejoice, doubtless, in the knowledge that our sins are forgiven, and that we have been accepted of God in all the merit of Him who died for us. And more than that, we have found delight in the study of the Word of God, and in the light we have received therefrom. Perhaps we have prided ourselves in having so much light, and have pitied and looked down upon those who have less. But the question that God puts to our consciences is, not as to the amount of light we have, but as to the use we are making of it. Light is given us not that we may admire its wondrous properties, or that we may make a spectrum-analysis thereof. Neither is it given merely to qualify us as teachers and lecturers. Light is given to us chiefly in order that we may walk therein to the glory of God amid the darkness of this world. It is quite possible for one to know all about the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free, so that he could explain it with lucidity, and could give instructive Bible - readings about it. But the question is, what use is he making of that freedom? Have we then reckoned ourselves to be *dead* indeed unto sin? Have we ceased from the old ways of living, and from seeking the things that were formerly the objects of our life? Have we yielded ourselves wholly and unreservedly to God, as those that are alive from the dead? If not, of what avail is it that we enjoy the light whereof we boast? Of what profit is it to have the light in our heads if it does not get down into our feet? It is written "Thy Word is a lamp"-not unto my head, but "unto my *feet*" (Ps. cxix. 105).

It was charged against the Jew that he *rested in* the law and made the possession of it his boast (Rom. ii. 17, 23), instead of *keeping* it. Let us take heed that it be not recorded of us, to be published at the judgment Seat of Christ, that we made a boast of having the light, and therein felt ourselves superior to less - instructed brethren, but failed to walk in it. Let us, therefore, "walk as children of light," and have *no fellowship* with the unfruitful works of darkness

(Eph. v. 8, 11). "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you" (John xii. 35).

The union of Christ's members with Himself in the death He died to sin, which is set forth in verses 3, 4, and 5 of Romans vi. is reiterated in verse 6. The statement of verse 6, however, presents additional truth. "Knowing this, that our old man is [has been] crucified with him [in order] that the body of sin might be destroyed [to the end] that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead [*lit.*, that died] is freed from sin."

This verse again distinctly states that the end or purpose of the crucifixion of Christ is that we should not any longer serve sin. So far the passage needs no further explanation. But other statements therein call for comment.

This verse declares even more forcibly than the preceding verses that the believer in Jesus Christ is identified with Him in His death. Here it is said that our old man himself has been crucified; and this statement is repeated in verse 8 in the words, "Now if we be dead [*lit.*, if we died] with Christ."

It is quite clear in the light of other Scriptures that by the expression "our old man" is meant the man that we were individually as members of the first Adam. It designates the natural self, composed of all our individual traits of character, habits, inclinations, likes and dislikes, etc. The Cross, therefore, brought to an end, not only what we would acknowledge as our faults and evil characteristics, but *our very selves* including all our habits and ways. The Scripture before us makes it very clear that the result of the work of the Cross in each member of Christ is, not the improvement of the old man by the removal of his bad habits, but the removal of the man himself, in order to make room for a new man, created in the image of Christ.

In Eph. iv. 22 it is said of our "old man" that he was "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (desires that deceive and lead to harm). God sees no good in that old man. He bids us, therefore, to put him off; and this is with a view to putting on the new man who is "being renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him" (Col. iii. 10). The great purpose before the heart and mind of God is to bring into existence, for His own glory and endless delight, a family of sons, each of whom shall be conformed to the image of His own Son, to the end that He might be the First-born among many brethren (Rom. viii. 29).

It is not meant, of course, that the *personality* of the individual believer is brought to an end through his identification with Christ in His death, and that a new personality is created in his stead. The justified sinner

to whom eternal life has been given does not lose his identity on being transplanted from the family of Adam into that of Jesus Christ. Man is a complex being, whereof the Scriptures distinguish at least five elements, namely, Spirit, soul, mind or will (*nous*), nature or character ("the flesh"), and body. In the natural man the flesh, wherein sin dwells (Rom. vii. 18, 25), and which sin has utterly corrupted, has become the dominant element, so much so that even though the will or mind (*nous*) be determined to do what is right according to the law of God, it is absolutely overmastered by the corrupt flesh. Chapter vii. is occupied mainly with setting forth the utter corruption of "the flesh," and the impotence of the will or mind, even when thoroughly instructed in the law of God, to control the lawless tendencies of the flesh.

It is the flesh or old nature in us that is brought to an end, according to the purpose of God, in the Cross of Christ; and because this flesh had become the dominant element of the man it is said the man himself died. The meaning is clear from the words, "They that are Christ's *have crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). The other elements of our complete being, viz., spirit, soul, mind, and mortal body, survive the death of the Cross, and are associated thereafter with a new nature derived from Christ.

The reason why "our old man" was crucified with Him is in order that "the body of sin might be destroyed." Some question has been raised as to just what is meant by "the body of sin;" but we think the Scriptures furnish a clear answer to that question. There is a "body" into which sin entered and of which it took such complete possession as to "reign" over it. That body was the first humanity. It is also called "the body of death" (Rom. vii. 24); because sin entered it and *death* by sin, and so it became the possession and prey of sin and death. It is "the body of flesh," which passed into the possession of sin, so that it is also called "the flesh of sin," *i.e.*, sin's flesh (Rom. viii. 3). This explanation is confirmed by Col. ii. 11, where we learn that the members of Christ were circumcised (completely cut off from the old humanity) in Him, "with the circumcision made without hands, in *putting off the body of the flesh* by the circumcision of Christ" (R.V.). The circumcision of Christ here spoken of is a figurative expression for His crucifixion, as clearly appears from the context. Hence, "the body of the flesh" is evidently the same as "the body of sin" and "the flesh of sin."

But in what sense is the body of sin "destroyed;"

Misunderstanding arises here because the meaning of the word "destroy" has undergone a change since the translation of the AN. That word carries now, to most minds, the idea of bringing a thing utterly to an end, putting it out of existence, annihilating it. But its former significance was to

mar, or to render unfit for use. A clearer idea of the meaning of the verse would be obtained by substituting the word "annulled" or "abolished." When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross, the only man of flesh and blood whom God would accept, passed away from the earth, and ceased to exist as such. God, therefore, has judicially annulled, or abolished, the humanity of flesh and blood, of which sin had taken possession. As stated in Rom. viii. 3, He, by sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, "condemned sin in the flesh." The body of sin must be "abolished," in order that those members thereof who have become the recipients through faith of the grace of God, might be detached from it, and be made members of another "body." That other body is referred to in chapter xii. verses 4 and 5: "For as we have many members in one body, so we being many are *one body in Christ*, and every one members one of another."

## CHAPTER XII.

### **Walking in Newness of Life.**

In our last chapter we dwelt mainly upon the believer's union with Christ in His death, and the consequent freedom which the former obtains from the servitude of sin. We come now to consider more particularly the counterpart of this truth, namely, the believer's participation with Christ in His resurrection from the dead, And most earnestly do we pray that both writer and readers may seek and obtain an understanding of the important truth here disclosed, not merely for the purpose of adding to their knowledge of the things of God, but in order that the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, through our walking, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

We have seen that, in the contemplation of God, the believer has been cut off, by the baptismal waters of death, from the things which formerly constituted his life, and that he is called upon to contemplate his old life as ended. But this cutting off from the old life was with a view to the taking up of another life. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. vi. 5). "Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also LIVE with Him [that is, as being not any longer under the dominion of death] knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 5, 8, 9).

Here is an announcement of the very highest importance. Chapter v. declared (what our every day experience too sadly confirms), the universality of the dominion of death. "Death passed upon all men." Seemingly the power of death is irresistible; and when at Golgotha death apparently triumphed over Him Who was without sin, the case of humanity was, to all appearance, hopelessly lost. But after three days came the announcement of the resurrection of the Crucified One. That historic fact constitutes, as already stated, the basis of the Gospel. Without it there is no Gospel, no remission of sins, no way out of the dominion of sin and death. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17). But we have the testimony of the Word of God and of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (Acts ii. 24-36), that there is now a Man, Who is not only beyond the dominion of death, but is exalted far above *all* principality and power and might and dominion (Eph. i. 21; 1 Peter iii. 22). Death's dominion over human beings is *no longer universal*. There is now a Man,

concerning Whom the Gospel of God declares that "DEATH HATH NO LONGER DOMINION OVER HIM." And along with this comes the proclamation that those who believe the Gospel are not any longer members of the man that is dying in the earth, but have been made members of the Man Who is living in the heavens.

Such is the announcement of the Gospel. But this announcement is accompanied by a statement of what God requires of those who have received the benefits of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; namely, that they should no longer remain in the old state of *death*, but should walk in newness of *life*.

The word "walk" is frequently used in Scripture to express the entire round of a man's behaviour or conduct; and since all Scripture readers are familiar with this usage of the word, we need not take the time to explain it, or to cite illustrative passages.

Walking implies the possession of vigour or energy and capacity for sustained and continuous effort. It also implies freedom of action; for the walker is able to choose the direction in which he will go. In all this, the act of walking is an apt figure of the effect produced by the Gospel on one who rightly hears and receives it.

Moreover, one who walks is a passenger or pilgrim. He is passing through the land towards a destination that he desires to reach. He does not remain long enough in one place to become associated with those who dwell there, or to become interested in their doings. So it is with the hearer of the Gospel. Once he, too, had a dwelling - place on earth, where all his interests, desires, and expectations were located. But now he has lost and abandoned his former residence and citizenship. His life has been taken from the earth. It is now hid with Christ in God, and the earth has become to him a wilderness to be traversed.

We should greatly err as to the lesson now before us if we supposed that our dying with Christ involved only the turning away from those things which are recognised (even according to the world's standards) as evil. This is a common mistake. The lesson is that the old manner of life in its totality is brought to an end, and that another life, new in all its characteristics, is to be taken up. This means the end of many things which are, from the ordinary ethical point of view, quite innocent, and the end even of some things that are respectable and commendable. For the believer is called to live in the likeness of Christ's resurrection to live *with* Him, to live unto God *in* Him (Rom. vi. 5, 8, 11), to live no longer unto self, but *unto* Him Who died for us, and rose again (2, Cor. v. 5). That is to say, the manner of life here on earth of one who has been raised up with Christ is not to be

determined by consideration merely of what is moral, honest, truthful, etc. That is not the test at all. The believer's life - meaning all that is embraced in his conscious experiences - is to be determined by consideration of what Christ's life is; "because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

The point is not merely that Christians should be honest, truthful, upright, kind, etc. (as of course they should be), but that their lives should be made up only of such associations, interests, affections, and occupations of heart and mind, as Christ Himself, if dwelling in them, could take part in.

We are now taking the word "life," not in the sense of the *vital energy* in which the actions peculiar to living beings are performed, but in the sense of the various interests and occupations of heart which, compose the life of the conscious individual. Christ is undoubtedly "our life" in both these senses. But we are not considering now the new source of vital energy available to the members of Christ, for their responsibility is not connected with that, but with the *contents, or make-up* of their lives, with what they exclude from them and what they include in them. Christ's interests in the world are with His people, and with those to whom the message of the Gospel is to be taken; and His interests should make up the lives of His members who are in the world. To be taken up with those interests, to be engrossed in them, to give oneself wholly to them, to devote one's energies, means, time, and prayers to them, is to walk in newness of life, by sharing the life of the Risen Christ. Thus to live is to live "no longer unto themselves but unto Him Who died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15). Manifestly to transfer the centre and object of one's life from oneself to "Him Who died and rose again" is to take that life out of the world entirely. And this change should take place regardless of whether the old life was moral, virtuous, etc., or the reverse. The believer's outward conduct, his truthfulness, kindness, etc., should be, not the result of conformity to a code of rules, but the fruit of the new life imparted to him by the Spirit of God.

On the other hand, the things that have no place in Christ's life should have none in ours. This rule positively forbids the members of Christ from participating in those enterprises of the people of the world which have for their object the betterment of the world and the improvement of the temporal conditions of those who dwell therein. Many of those who are Christians, in name at least, think it narrow - mindedness and fanaticism to say that the members of Christ should not take part with the leaders of this world in their philanthropic and other world - enterprises. But they lose sight of the fact that the rulers of this world *crucified the Lord of Glory* (1 Cor. ii. 8), and that their interests in the world are diametrically opposed to His. The natural man is well satisfied with the world, and is proud of its great institutions. Moreover, the prince of this world still points to "all the

kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," calling special attention to the numerous libraries, hospitals, asylums, universities, and the like, as evidences of the great progress of the world in goodness. But our Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, "testified of the world that the works thereof are evil" (John vii. 7). And those who accept His testimony and judge not by the outward appearance, understand clearly that the great works referred to above are but the result of man's efforts to make the world a healthy, safe, and pleasant place to dwell in apart from God. This is the object of all the great world - enterprises; and the natural man is still confident of his ability to accomplish that object. Christ has said "Without Me ye can do *NOTHING*" (John xv. 5), but the men of earth accept not His testimony. They are quite certain that by means of their own schemes, political reforms, legislative experiments, inventions, sciences, etc., they can do many things, even to the establishment of righteousness, peace, and contentment on earth. That the rebellious men of earth, the enemies of God, should thus set themselves to the accomplishment of results that are in contradiction and defiance of His Word is not to be wondered at; but it is sad and serious indeed to behold children of God associated with them in their rebellious doings, utterly disregarding the fact that "the whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19), and that it is soon to be utterly destroyed for ever.

Of course there is nothing, in the teaching of Rom. vi., or of any other Scripture that requires the believer to desist from his earthly business or calling, assuming it to be such as a Christian may properly engage in. But his business should not constitute his *life*. That is to say, it should not engross him and occupy his affections and his thoughts. In these days many of the Lord's people need to guard against permitting business to become their life. One's life is really what he *gives himself to*. The musician makes music his life. It absorbs his energies and occupies his thoughts. He could say, "For me to live is music." Another could say, "For me to live is art;" another, "For me to live is literature;" another, "For me to live is sport;" another, "For me to live is dress," and so on. In like manner the believer, if he has yielded himself to God as one who is alive from the dead, should be able to say, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. i. 21). Realizing his oneness with Christ in life he will seek to give himself to the objects to which Christ is devoting Himself; he will make Christ's interests his interests; and he will cut off from his life every thread that does not begin and end in Christ.

Attention should be paid to the force of the word "like" in Romans vi. 4 - 11, as indicating the pattern upon which our lives should be modelled. "That *like* as Christ was raised up, *even so* we also should walk;" "In the *likeness* of His death" and "of His resurrection" (Rom. vi. 5); "*Likewise* reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in

Christ" (Rom. vi. 11). His death and life are thus kept before us as patterns to which we should be conformed. We should reckon ourselves to have died to everything to which He died, and ourselves to be alive in Him to whatever He is alive to. For God would have us both to be made conformable to His death, and also to know, in the experience of our lives here below, the power of His resurrection (Phil. iii. 10).

The Acts of the Apostles contains the record of two incidents that seem to be given us for the special purpose of illustrating the effect that should follow in every one's experience, the hearing and believing of the Gospel. For we must bear in mind that the Gospel is preached not only for the *hearing* of faith, but also for the "*obedience* of faith" (Rom. xvi. 26). The truth of God is given to us, not for the passive assent of our minds thereto, but that our whole course of action may be shaped and directed by it. We are to *walk* by faith, and to *live* by faith.

The first of the incidents referred to is recorded in the third chapter of Acts. It is the case of the lame man, whose healing by Peter and John caused such great commotion in Jerusalem. The physical state of this cripple, "lame from his mother's womb," is an apt illustration of the spiritual condition of the natural man. He could do nothing for himself, and, of course, could not help others. On the contrary, he was a charge and burden to society. Moreover, he had no hope of anything different as long as he lived. All he sought or expected was some gift that would make his hard and dreary lot a little more tolerable. He, however, made an appeal for alms to two men who had never achieved, and never would have achieved anything for the betterment of the world (for they were poor fishermen), but who had knowledge of the Gospel of God. Many and important lessons may be drawn from what happened to that impotent man. The special lesson to which we now call attention is that the Gospel of God is not sent to the world in order to ameliorate the condition of the natural man. Its mission is not to improve the man of earth and relieve the hardship of his state, but to call him out of that state and enable him to "walk in newness of life." Peter, in response to the lame man's appeal for alms, said, "Silver and gold have I none" - imagine any of the great works of the world - betterment, or any of the great religious works of our day being accomplished without the potent agency of silver and gold ! - "but such as I have GIVE I thee. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and WALK." The immediate effect was that the impotent man "leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God."

This was something vastly different from an improvement in the man's old way of living. It was the beginning for him of a new life. In like manner the salvation of God brings the believing sinner into a new sphere of being -

the sphere of resurrection - there to lead a new life. The effect of hearing the Gospel of the Risen Christ should be similar to the effect of Peter's words on the lame man. No longer did his occupation consist in begging outside the temple for something to ameliorate his old condition; he was lifted out of that condition for ever. No longer would his life be spent sitting inert and helpless, but in walking, and even "leaping." No longer would his voice be used in begging alms of the passersby, but in "praising" God. He was a "new man," acting in the energy of a new life. Moreover, he became at once an associate of the Apostles, entering with them into the temple of God. It was a complete transformation.

This impressive incident stands at the beginning of the ministry of Peter, "the Apostle of the circumcision," among the Jews at Jerusalem. But, in order to impress the lesson upon our minds, and to show that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, a like incident stands at the beginning of the ministry of Paul, "the Apostle to the Gentiles." The account of this parallel case is given in Acts xiv. 7-10: "And there they preached the Gospel. And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent from his mother's womb [the words in the Greek are identical with those used to describe the state of the man in Acts iii.] who never had walked. The same heard Paul speak; who stedfastly beholding him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet, and he leaped and WALKED."

These occurrences illustrate the lesson of Romans vi. The effect of the Gospel upon those who are "without strength," as it were, impotent from their mother's womb, is to set them free from the infirmity which had heretofore bound them fast. The Gospel is to them a message of liberty and life. Christ makes them free from the bondage of sin, and gives them power to "walk in newness of life." The lame men could, of course, have continued in the old way of life had they willed so to do. In like manner we may continue in our old ways. The Son has made us free, and with freedom comes responsibility. "What shall we say then to these things? Shall we continue in sin?"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### **The Believer's Choice of Service.**

"Let My people go, that they may serve Me" (Ex. viii. 1). The pardoned and justified sinner is called to a new life. He is also called to a new service. Man is made for service. God's people should serve Him; for clearly he is entitled to the service of His creatures. God's people in Egypt were serving Pharaoh. "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour; and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage: all their service, wherein they made them serve was with rigour" (Ex. i. 13, 14). Yet even in that state God calls them "My people;" and He "comes down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Ex. iii. 7, 8). God's purpose in delivering His people out of the hands of the Egyptians was not only to relieve them from oppression, and to confer benefits and blessings upon them, but that they might serve Him. The message God sent to Pharaoh was this: "Let My people go that they may serve Me. "The salvation of the Lord" (Ex. xiv. 13) contemplates therefore a change of service.

The sixth chapter of Romans contains two important practical lessons which, stated concisely, are, *first*, that we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, and, *second*, that we yield ourselves and our physical members to God for His service. We have considered the first of these lessons, and now we turn to the second. That God deems the matter of service to be of great importance is evident from the space given to it in chapter vi., where it occupies verses 12-23 inclusive.

The first point to be noticed in reading verses 12 and 13 is that the service which the believer renders to God must be voluntary. The service of sin was compulsory; but God will not accept any but a free-will offering. The Lord said to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of *every man that giveth it willingly with his heart* ye shall take My offering" (Ex. xxv. 1, 2).

In the same sense God speaks to the redeemed people of this age; "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye [be yielding] your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness unto God."

It very clearly appears from this passage, *first*, that the believer is free to choose either the service of God or the service of sin; and, *second*, that

the particular property with which God desires the believer to serve Him is the mortal body and its members.

The believer's freedom of choice in the matter of service is emphasized by repetition in verse 16. "Know ye not, that to whom *ye yield yourselves servants* for obedience, servants ye are to him whom ye obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?" (*lit. trans.*). And the exhortation to believers to yield their members servants to righteousness unto holiness is repeated in verse 19.

We would naturally suppose that the pardoned sinner who has been set free from the miserable and bitter servitude of sin would need no second admonition to offer himself for the service of God; but these verses forbid that supposition, and admonish us of the danger of preferring and choosing the service of sin. The history of the Israelites, which is written for our admonition, warns us of the same danger; so that we should take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God and missing the great privilege of serving Him with our physical members. The difficulty is that the believer has yet in him a nature that is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7).

Several inducements are mentioned to aid us make a right choice in this matter of service. There was no fruit, no satisfying outcome, of the service of sin. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" But having been "made free from sin and become servants to God ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (verses 21, 22).

Another strong inducement to choosing the service of God is that the service of sin incurs the penalty of death. This, be it noted, is said to believers;—"to whom *ye yield yourselves, his servants ye are, whether of sin unto death*" (verse 16). "For the wages of sin is death;" and if the believer chooses to serve sin with his physical body he exposes himself to the power of death. The entire chapter is addressed to those who have received the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of eternal life. This subject is brought to our attention again in Rom. viii. 13, so we shall not dwell longer upon it at this time.

The first conflict then, in which the believer finds himself engaged, is with reference to the use of his mortal body and its members. The old man of sin has had the full possession and undisputed use of them, and he will not surrender them without a struggle. He requires and demands the use of the eyes to see and the ears to hear the things that afford him pleasure and gratification. He wishes the service of the brain to think his thoughts and to scheme for his advantage, that of the hands to do his bidding, and of the

feet to walk in the way of his desires. This control and use of the physical members by the old man must be brought to an end. Sin must not any longer be allowed to reign in the believer's mortal body, to be obeyed in its desires. The new man must exercise ownership and control of the mortal body, and place it at the disposal of God for His service. But that involves a sharp conflict. It is as if the tenant of a house had been lawfully dispossessed of his tenancy, but refused to quit the premises, although the new and lawful tenant had entered in order to take possession. A struggle would thereupon ensue for the use of the conveniences of the house. The old man will not relinquish their use without a struggle. The controversy for the use of the members of the mortal body will not wholly cease until that body is laid aside. This is the conflict with Amalek, which must continue "until the going down of the sun" (Ex. xvii. 8-12). God has sworn to have "war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Ex. xvii. 16).

God graciously wills to be served with these our "bodies of humiliation." Poor crumbling vessels of clay they are, subject to decay and decrepitude, to deformity, disfigurement, accident and infirmity, and requiring for decency's sake to be covered with rags of some sort. Bodies of humiliation indeed are they. In all the realm of nature the bodies of fallen men are the only ones that are unfit to be exposed to the light of day, and need an artificial covering to hide their shame. Moreover, those bodies have been grievously damaged and misused in the service of sin. That old man had no regard for the welfare of the body and its members, so long as they could be used for his pleasure. They were not his by right, and so he freely abused them. Nevertheless, God is pleased to receive them, if freely offered to Him as "living sacrifices" (Rom. xii. 1), and to make them the objects of His tender care during the brief time we may be called upon to abide therein. The covenant of grace fully and explicitly covers all physical needs; and those saints may dismiss all care concerning the welfare of their bodies who have truly yielded them to God for His service.

And not only does God condescend to accept for His service, and promise to care for, these bodies of humiliation; but they are the physical instruments which He uses in the work of the Gospel, and in the ministry of His Word. We have here another instance wherein God chooses and makes use of the weak and base things of the world for the accomplishment of His mighty purposes. There is no service of God in the world, no proclamation of the Word of Life to dying sinners, no ministry to the saints, no fellowship in Christ, no worship or service of any sort, that does not require the use of the mortal body of God's redeemed people. Is the Word of God halted; Is it delayed or hindered? If so, is it through failure of His people to yield to Him the service of their members. Have you and I yielded our bodies and its members to Him Who both created and redeemed us; Is He using them by

our free will, or are we using them for our own pleasure? Let us learn from Him the true state of the case; and if we have held back our bodies from His service, let us make haste to present them to Him, living sacrifices; for this is our "reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1).

## CHAPTER XIV.

### **Deliverance from the Law.**

#### **Preliminary Survey of Romans vii.**

The seventh chapter of Romans has presented difficulty to readers and commentators. There is a lack of agreement among the latter as to the real nature of the personal experience so vividly portrayed therein. Some expositors regard it as the experience of an unconverted man struggling vainly with the passions of sin. Others regard it as the experience of a regenerate soul endeavouring vainly to keep the law of Moses, and becoming "wretched," because of his complete failure to do so. According to this latter view the unhappy man's wretchedness is only ended when he learns that through the death of Christ he has deliverance from the yoke of the law. This latter explanation has in its favour the undoubted fact that the "wretched man" of Romans vii. was well acquainted with the law of Moses, that he had endeavoured to meet its requirements, and that he had consciously and ignominiously failed. We believe, however, that both the foregoing explanations are partly right and partly wrong.

Let us begin our study of this important chapter by taking a preliminary survey of its contents.

Manifestly the subject of the chapter is *Deliverance from the yoke of the law*. This clearly appears from the contents of the chapter as a whole, and it is, moreover, explicitly stated in the words: "*But now we are DELIVERED FROM THE LAW*" (verse 6).

This at once establishes a parallel between chapters vi. and vii. Chapter vi. treats of deliverance from the servitude of sin. Chapter vii. treats of deliverance from the yoke of the law. The more closely the two chapters are compared the more clearly will this parallel be seen. The prominent points or correspondence will be pointed out in the following pages.

Evidently, deliverance from the yoke of the law is only for those who were under that yoke; that is to say, for Israelites. As the Apostle Peter said, referring to the attempt that was made to put the Gentile converts under the law of Moses, "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear?"

(Acts xv. 10). Thus, by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (Acts xv. 28) the attempt to put the "yoke" of the law upon the necks of the Gentile

converts was frustrated. These never were under the law, and hence never required nor experienced deliverance from it. Paul also speaks of the law as a yoke, "the yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1).

All persons who have read their Bibles with the slightest care and attention must be aware that the law was given to none but to the Israelites. They only, of all the peoples of the earth, were led "to the mount that might be touched;" and to them only was given the law, with the accompanying statutes and judgments, constituting what the Holy Spirit designated a system of "carnal ordinances imposed *upon them* [Israelites] until the time of reformation" (Heb. ix. 10); which things were but "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. x. 1). There, at Mount Sinai, the Israelites, and they only, entered into a solemn covenant with Jehovah to do all the things that He commanded them.

The great difference that God put between the Israelites and the nations is emphasized in the Epistle to the Romans, which has certain well defined portions that are Jewish in their application. According to the method of teaching followed in that book mankind is viewed in the two divisions, Jews and Gentiles. In chapter ix. a seven-fold difference between the Israelites and Gentiles is noted, which items of difference existed from of old; and to these is added the eighth namely, that of them, the Israelites, "as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever" (ix. 4, 5). Among the differences there enumerated is "the giving of the law." This difference is repeatedly mentioned in the early chapters of Romans; and the state of the Jews is separately dealt with in view of the fact that they had "the form of knowledge and of truth in the law (ii. 20); whereas it is said expressly that the Gentiles have not the law" (ii. 14). Moreover, a clear distinction is drawn between those who "have sinned without [outside of] the law" -Gentiles-and those who "have sinned in the law"-Jews (ii. 12); and again it is pointed out that "what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law," that is, the Jews. The law had nothing to say to Gentiles, for they were not under the law.

This difference between Israelites and Gentiles is kept in view throughout the Epistle. Consequently some portions thereof deal with all mankind; whereas other portions deal with the special case of the Israelites. For example, in regard to justification from sin and deliverance from sin, there is but one way for all men; for in this respect there is "no difference; for ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Chapter vi., therefore, which treats of deliverance from the servitude of sin, is of universal application. But, on the other hand, the yoke of the law rested upon the Israelites. Therefore, chapter vii., which treats of deliverance from

the yoke of the law, has to do with the special case of the Israelites. Chapters ix., x., and xi. also deal with the Israelites.

This view of Romans vii. can be tested, and its correctness or otherwise be determined, by carefully examining the contents of that chapter, and noting whether or not the view above stated agrees with and elucidates the same. We shall find, as we proceed, many things in support of the view that in chapter vii. we have the case of a zealous, conscientious and highly religious Jew-in fact the very man that Saul of Tarsus was before his knowledge of the crucified and risen Christ of God-earnestly but vainly going about to establish a righteousness of his own by his efforts at law-keeping. It is a case from actual human experience given as an illustration of the dogmatic statement that "by works of law shall no flesh be justified;" for here was "flesh" at its very best vainly striving after justification by works of law.

Returning now to the parallel between Romans vi. and Romans vii., we note, in the first place, that the manner of deliverance of the Jew from the yoke of the law is precisely the same as that of deliverance of the sinner (whether Jew or Gentile) from the servitude of sin. The deliverance in each case is effected by *dying with Christ*. This point of resemblance is best established by comparing the words of the Scriptures. Concerning deliverance from sin it is written: "Our old man has been crucified with Christ ... that henceforth we should not serve sin." And, again, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer therein?" Concerning deliverance from the law, it is written "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (vii. 4). The Gentile needed not to be taught deliverance from the law, for they were never under the law. But it was of great importance that the Jewish converts (of whom there were many at Rome) be taught that not only had they died with Christ to sin when He died to sin, but they also had died to the law when He died to, or under sentence of, the law. The sentence pronounced against the Lord Jesus at the tribunal of the high priest, was, "He is guilty of death" (Matt. xxvi. 66); and when the Jews accused Him before Pilate, they said, "We have a law, and by our law *He ought to die*, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John Xix-7)-The teaching that deliverance from the law is by dying thereto, is repeated in verse 6 of Romans vii., where it is written, "We are delivered from the law *having died* to that wherein we [Jews] were held." None but Jews were held in the law, and none but a Jew could die to it. (The reader should note that the translation of this verse in our AV. is incorrect in that it makes the law that which died. The law does not die. On the contrary it puts the man to death.)

Again, the deliverance of the Jew from the yoke of the law is similar to his deliverance from the dominion of sin in that the death which is effective to set him free in both cases is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures quoted above show this clearly.

Again, the *purpose* of deliverance from the law is similar to that of deliverance from sin. God's purpose in delivering His people from the bondage of sin is that henceforth they should serve Him; as it is written, "that henceforth we should not serve *sin*;" and again, "But now, being made free from sin, and become SERVANTS Of God," etc. (Rom. vi. 6, 22). In like manner, God's declared purpose in delivering Jewish converts from the yoke of the law is that they might *serve Him* in a new way; as it is written, "We have been delivered from the law THAT WE SHOULD SERVE in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. vii. 6). This verse unmistakably identifies the Jews as the class of converts spoken of. The Gentiles while in the flesh had not served God at all; but the Israelites, as a people, were called to a service consisting in "carnal ordinances." To them pertained "the SERVICE of God" (Rom. ix. 4).

The parallelism between the "newness of life" (Rom. vi. 6) and "newness of spirit" (Rom. vii. 6) is worthy of special attention and consideration. We shall refer to it again.

In chapter vi. the state of the sinner is illustrated by reference to the relation of master and servant, and to the authority of the former over the latter. In chapter vii. reference is made, for the purpose of instruction imparted by that chapter, to the relation of husband and wife, and the authority of the former over the latter. In both cases, the one that originally exercised authority is sin, or the "old man," that is, the flesh indwelt by sin. In both cases those who are delivered from the authority of the "old man" are brought under the authority of Christ.

The foregoing points of resemblance between Romans vi. and vii. are quite clear and obvious. It follows that deliverance from the law, spoken of in chapter vii., occurs *at the same moment*, and is affected by *the same means*, as deliverance from sin. Each is affected by the death of Christ. There is no such thing as a deliverance from sin, and then at a later time deliverance from the law. Moreover, deliverance from the law cannot be the experience of sinners of the Gentiles, for the obvious reason that they were not under law. Deliverance from the yoke of the law is necessary for the Jew only; and it could be appreciated and valued only by a very religious Jew, such as Saul of Tarsus.

Stated in few words, then, the doctrinal lesson of chapter vii. is that an Israelite, upon believing the Gospel of God concerning His Son, is at once

delivered, both from the servitude of *sin* and from the yoke of the law, which is "the strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). In this view of chapter vii. its various details become clear and consistent; whereas there are matters in it that cannot be accommodated to other current and accepted explanations of that chapter.

Some able expositors of the Bible apply Romans vii. to all believers, whether Jews originally or Gentiles, and attempt to find a place for the conflict and deliverance described therein in the life-history of believers subsequent to their conversion. According to this widely-accepted view the sinner upon believing the Gospel obtains forgiveness of his sins and deliverance from the servitude of sin, thus becoming the "blessed [*i.e.*, happy] man" of chapter iv. 8. But subsequently (so it is said) he undertakes to keep the law, and thereupon he finds himself engaged in a desperate conflict with his old nature. In this attempt he meets with constant failure, by reason of which he becomes "wretched." Still later he learns that he is not required to keep the law of Sinai, Christ being the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. This information relieves his mind, and constitutes the deliverance referred to at the end of the chapter.

There are several weighty, not to say insuperable, objections to this view of Romans vii. One of the most serious may be appropriately mentioned here. According to this view, the state of the "wretched man" described in chapter vii. is not a *real* state at all, but wholly an imaginary one. The pardoned and reconciled sinner is *not* under the yoke of the law. As to that we are all agreed. But, for the purposes of the theory we are now examining, he erroneously *thinks* he is under law, and acts according to that erroneous supposition. He continues so to act until he learns the truth, namely, that he was really not under law at all; and the learning that his notion was a mistaken one constitutes his deliverance. According to this view, the "wretched man" was not in need of deliverance at all but only of correct information as to what was effected for him by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. His bondage being an imaginary bondage, existing only in his own mind, his deliverance too was of necessity an imaginary deliverance.

The sequence in the believer's experience, according to this view of Romans vii., is that, on believing the Gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was instantly freed from the bondage of sin. This benefit of the death of Christ inures to the sinner the moment he believes on Him. This fact of deliverance from sin, the now pardoned sinner is supposed to know all about; or at least it makes no difference, for the purposes of this theory, whether he knows it or not. But the theory makes it necessary to suppose that the pardoned sinner, after having been actually delivered from

the servitude of sin, *wrongly imagines* himself to be under the yoke of the law, which mistaken notion makes him wretched until he is enlightened as to the real state of the case.

We do not find in the Scripture any warrant for the foregoing suppositions. It seems, on the contrary, quite clear that chapter vii. speaks of *actual* deliverance from the bondage of the law, just as chapter vi. speaks of *actual* deliverance from the bondage of sin. Both chapters deal with real conditions, and not with the mistaken ideas of ill-taught or untaught believers. The sinner, upon believing in Christ, is delivered from the servitude of sin, whether he understands it or not; and in like manner the Israelite, upon believing, is delivered both from the servitude of sin and from the yoke of the law, whether he understands it or not.

Careful study of the text of the chapter will put the reader in possession of other convincing proofs that its purpose is to show, by practical example, how, utterly impossible it is for any man to secure justification by works of law. That was "What the law could not do" (Rom. viii. 3). Thus, according to this view of Rom. vii., which we deem to be the correct one, it furnishes an appropriate introduction to the opening verses of chapter viii. If, however, we assume that the man, whose struggles are depicted in chapter vii., was already justified, then the issue of his struggles is of no moment, and the force of the lesson is lost.

We shall now conclude our preliminary survey of chapter vii. by a brief reference to the arrangement of its contents.

The chapter may be conveniently divided into two sections. The *first* section, verses 1-6, reveals a great truth, now for the first time made known, namely, that Israelites who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are freed from the law by which they had been previously held; and that the manner of this deliverance is the same as the manner of their deliverance from the servitude of sin, that is to say, it is effected by reason of their association with Christ in His death.

Because, however, deliverance from the law is effected in the same way as deliverance from sin, it might be inferred that there is some resemblance between sin and the law. It is obviously needful to repel such an inference, seeing that "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good" 19 (verse 12); whereas sin is exceeding sinful," and is the cause of all the evil and misery in the world. Therefore, the question is immediately raised, "Is the law sin?"

The *second* section of the chapter deals with this question. In order to show clearly the holiness of the law, and at the same time the sinfulness of

sin, God here describes the experience of a man yet in sin "*sold under sin*"-but who, nevertheless, is instructed in the law, boasts in it, who even "delights" in it, and who, therefore, struggles with all his might to keep it. This entire passage reveals, as is nowhere else in Scripture revealed so forcibly, the impotence of the law to produce righteousness, the impotence of the law being due to the corruption of human nature by sin. This was "what the law could not do;" and the impossibility conclusively appears from the fact that the man of chapter vii. was the best possible specimen of humanity for the test of the law, being none other than the Apostle Paul himself in the days when he was an unconverted religionist. For he had been "taught according to the perfect manner of the law," and was "zealous toward God," as he says of himself in addressing the Jews at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 3).

The second section of Rom. vii., by proving the impossibility of doing anything by means of law with even the best specimen of human nature, makes plain why "Christ must needs have suffered" (Acts xvii. 3). It furnishes an introduction to what is declared in Rom. viii. 3; for it was because of "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," that God sent His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It was in the highest degree needful to show that righteousness *could not* come by the law, "For if righteousness come by the law, THEN CHRIST DIED FOR NOUGHT (Gal. ii. 21)."

It must be apparent to all who consider the matter with care that the whole force and point of the lesson of verses 7-24 of Romans vii. are lost if it be supposed that the man therein referred to is a converted man, pardoned and reconciled, enjoying peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, having a standing in grace, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God (Rom. v. 1-5). Indeed there could hardly be a greater contrast than the contrast between the state of the reconciled and rejoicing believer of Rom. v. and that of the "wretched man" of Rom. vii.

The second section (verses 7-24) ends with the question, "Who shall deliver me?" Thus the effect of the law upon one who did his best to keep it would be to convince him of his need of *deliverance*. But inasmuch as the question of verse 24 had been answered in verse 6 ("But now we are *delivered* from the law"), the answer is not repeated at the end of the digression, but instead, the man who had experienced the power of sin, having learned its nature and strength "by the law" (verse 7), ejaculates fervent thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, for the deliverance that had been wrought for him.

## CHAPTER XV.

### **“Dead to the Law.” Serving in “Newness of Spirit.”**

#### **Rom. vii. 1-6.**

In Romans vi. the topic was the dominion of sin and deliverance therefrom (verse 14). Now the topic is changed to the dominion of the law. “The law hath dominion over the [not *a*] man as long as he liveth” (vii. 1). This assuredly was a matter of deep interest for all who were under the law; particularly in view of the statement made in chapter iv. that the law works out wrath for those who were under it, and the statement of chapter v. that the law entered in order that the effects of the offence of Adam might abound.

On learning this truth those Israelites at Rome, who were under the law, would naturally inquire if there were any way of escape from the dominion of the law. The answer is now given. There *is* deliverance from the law. That deliverance is by death; for the law hath dominion over the man only so long as he liveth. Therefore, the Israelite who has died is freed from the law, just as it had been already explained that he that died is freed from sin (Rom. vi. 7). Inasmuch as it had already been shown that the death of Christ is reckoned to the believing sinner as setting him free from the dominion of sin, it was only necessary at this point to add, in addressing those who “know law,” “Wherefore, my brethren, *ye also are become dead to the law* by the body of Christ” (verse 4). “We were cleared “from the law *having died* in that wherein we were held (verse 6).

Verses 2 and 3 contain the illustration of the marriage relation, the point of which is that the wife “is bound *by the law* of her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead she is loosed *from the law* of the husband.” In chapter vi. the dominion of sin is illustrated by reference to the relation of master and slave. But for the purpose of chapter vii. another illustration is chosen, namely, the relation of husband and wife, which is a legitimate relation, sanctioned and controlled by laws specially relating thereto. In both chapters it is the man (“the old man”) that dies, and in both cases it is *his death* that brings the relation to an end. But in chapter vii. the point is, not merely that the woman is “loosed” (same word as “destroyed” in vi. 6) from her husband (which, of course, happens when he dies), but that she is loosed from *the law* of her husband. She is, as a matter of course, released from the man himself by his death; but the point here is that she is released from *all obligations* to him, which, so long as he lived, could not be disregarded without the gravest sin. Thus, the death of the man

dissolved the relation altogether; and although the law remained exactly as it was before, the woman was entirely loosed from it, and was free to do, without blame, what previously she could not do.

There may at first appear to be a difficulty in the application of this illustration, in view of the fact that the persons addressed are informed (just as in chapter vi.) that *they themselves* had died to the law, and hence were freed from it (verse 6); whereas in the illustration it is the *man* who dies and the *woman* who is thereby set free. In the doctrinal statement it is the one *who dies* that is freed from the law; whereas in the illustration it is the one *who survives* that is freed from the law. It is not, of course, necessary that an illustration should match in every detail the doctrine it is designed to illustrate; but the detail just noticed is itself instructive in view of what follows. Verses 7-24, which give the experience of the wretched man, contain the account of a struggle between two elements of his own being, namely, "the mind" and "the flesh." What caused this desperate struggle was that his "flesh" was indwelt and completely dominated by SIN, whereas his "mind," on the contrary, was filled with the knowledge of the LAW OF GOD, which is holy, just, and good.

We can readily and clearly distinguish in our own being these two elements. The "flesh" is the human nature or character, the seat of desires ("lusts") and of fixed habits. It is the ruling element in the nature, I man. The "mind" (*nous*) is the self-conscious intelligence that understands, reasons, remembers, and resolves. In Romans vii. what is specially dwelt upon is that the mind is the seat of the "will." "What I *would* [*i.e.*, what I *will* or *resolve* to do], that do I not" (verses 15, 16, 19, 20). "For to WILL is present with me" (verse 18).

The two parties to the struggle, therefore, are "the flesh" and "the mind" or the will in one and the same man and these correspond in the illustration to the husband and wife, bound together and constituting "one" in law.

The "I" may be sometimes one, sometimes another of the various elements of a man. One may identify himself with the mind, as when he says "I remembered" or "I decided;" or with his soul, as when he says "was angry" or "I was sorry;" or with his body, as when he says "I was tired," "I hurt myself." So in our chapter the Apostle says in one place, "sin dwelleth in *me*" (verses 17 and 20), thus identifying himself at that point with the flesh; and in another place he says, "with the mind I myself serve the law of God" (verse 25), thus identifying himself at that point with the "mind." We see then how it may be said that a man died, meaning his flesh, or "old man;" and yet he may be also regarded as alive, since his "mind," or *conscious* self, survives. It is thus in chapter vi. also, for believers are there

informed of their own death with Christ; but this is said of "our old man," the sin-infested flesh. We ourselves are, therefore, called upon to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but *alive* unto God; and this reckoning is an operation performed by the conscious mind, or *nous*.

God's purpose in effecting deliverance from the law by the death of Christ is that those who were thus delivered might be married (or bound - there is no verb in the original) to another, in order that they might bring forth fruit unto God (verse 4). And it will be remembered that the idea of being married to the Lord was a familiar figure to the Jews (see Jer. ii. 2 1 Ez. xvi.; Hos. ii., etc.). Obviously this reference to service is a repetition, in another form, of the purpose of God as set forth in chapter vi. There the delivered ones pass out of the service of sin into the service of God, and having "become servants to God, they have their fruit unto, holiness" (vi. 22). The purpose of God is to form a new relation with Himself, for His own glory, and that relation may be viewed both as a bond-service and as a marriage. The object is "fruit," and this can result only from such a relation to Christ as that of the branch to the vine. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit" (John xv. 8). This thought is carried on into Rom. viii., as will be seen later.

Verse 5 of Rom. vii. shows plainly that the passage applies to Jews. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were [caused] by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." This could happen only to the Israelites, for to them alone was the law given. "But now," verse 6 continues, "we are delivered from the law." The words, "But now," mark a great change of condition, which has been brought about in the case of every believing Israelite; for all such have been delivered from the law by the death of Christ, the results of His death having been made over to them.

The latter half of verse 6 presents a point well worthy of notice. It contains a repetition of God's purpose in regard to the service of His redeemed people; "That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Here we would call attention to a seemingly slight but important and significant difference between chapter vi. and chapter vii. Both speak of service to God as the obligation and privilege of the delivered ones. But whereas chapter vi. speaks of service to God as being something entirely new to the delivered ones, they having previously served sin, chapter vii., on the contrary, speaks not of serving God as a *new thing*, but of serving Him in a *new way*. In other words, chapter vii. speaks to those (*i.e.*, Israelites) who had served God previously to their deliverance, but had served Him

then "in letter." These are now, upon being delivered from the law, called upon to serve Him "in newness of *spirit*."

This passage shows clearly that the persons here addressed are believing Israelites. These, when they were in the flesh, had a "service" prescribed by the law under the old covenant. "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of *divine service*, and a worldly tabernacle (Heb. ix. 1). The "service" was wholly "carnal" consisting of various ceremonies, carried out by means of physical objects. Those things "could not make him that *did the service* perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which [service] stood [or consisted] only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and *carnal* ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ being come"-all that has been done away (Heb. ix. 9-12,).

In Romans ix. it is said, in enumerating the things that distinguished the Israelites from the Gentiles, that to them (Israelites) pertained "the service" (Rom. ix. 4). In the light of these Scriptures it is very easy to grasp the meaning of Paul's statement "that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." To none but believing Israelites could this statement be made. The "oldness" or former state of the Gentile believers was the service of sin. The "oldness" of the believing Jews was the service of God according to the *letter* of the law. They are now required to serve God in a different way, namely, "in spirit."

Further light on this passage may be gained from 2 Cor. iii., where the glory of the new covenant and its ministry or *service* are compared with that of the old. Paul tells the Corinthians that the service which he rendered them as a minister of the new covenant was from the heart, where they were inscribed. This gives the character of true Christian service. Its object is to benefit the people, to impart something *to* them, not to get something *from* them. The writing in the tablets of the heart is done by "the Spirit of the Living God." Hence the ministry or service is that of the Spirit, not of the letter; for it is by the Spirit that God's love is poured out in our hearts (Rom. v. 5). Thus the truly converted Israelite, whereof Paul himself is the conspicuous example, is called to "serve in newness of spirit" instead of "in oldness of the letter." And the difference is very great. The Apostle declares that God had made him a competent minister (servant) of the new covenant; "not of the LETTER, but of the SPIRIT; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The ministration of the old covenant is called "the ministration of death" and of "condemnation;" whereas the ministration of the new covenant is "the ministration of righteousness" (2 Cor. iii. 6-9). The ministration of the old covenant, according to the law, did not bring perishing sinners to "righteousness" and "life." "For the law brought nothing to perfection" (Heb. vii. 19). It is the peculiar glory of the ministry of the

spirit that thereby dead sinners are brought to righteousness and life, as the result of the work accomplished by the Lord Jesus on the Cross.

This is in full accord with the teaching of Romans vii., in which it is shown that the ministration of the old covenant was one of condemnation and death. The Apostle there says, "The commandment which was ordained to life I found to be UNTO DEATH. For SIN, taking occasion *by the commandment*, deceived me, and by it SLEW ME" (Rom. vii. 10, 11). The wages of sin is death; and the law furnished no remedy for sin, and provided no way out of its power. That was "what the law could not do." On the contrary, the law, by stirring up "the motions of sins," thus turning that which was dormant in the flesh into actual transgression ("for where no law is there is no transgression"), became "the strength of sin."

There was no remedy for sin, and hence there was no ministration of righteousness and life, until the Lord Jesus had died to SIN, and had risen again, the Victor over DEATH. After the completion of His mighty work, and after He, in His glorified humanity had been exalted to the throne of God, the Holy Spirit came to inaugurate a new era, abolishing for ever the ministration of condemnation and death, and proclaiming remission of sins and the gift of a new life to all who believe the Word of the truth of the Gospel.

We see then that there was the greatest possible difference between the service of the Israelites under the law, and the service to which those Israelites are called who have been joined "to Him Who is raised from the dead." And we see further that the chief difference in the two kinds of service lies in the fact that the Spirit of God is now come to be the power wherein the service of God is to be accomplished. The service of God is no longer in ritual, observances, and ceremonies, according to the mechanical repetitions of a system of dead works, but in all the freedom, vigour, and spontaneity of life; not according to "the law of a carnal commandment," but according to "the POWER of an indissoluble LIFE" (Heb. vii. 16). That power is the Spirit of the Living God. "The Spirit is life."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### **Sin and the Law. "Is the Law Sin?"**

#### **Rom. vii- 7-24.**

In the "wretched man" of Romans vii., crying for deliverance from the body of death, we have a strong contrast to the "blessed" man of chapters iv.-vi., "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," who has been "made righteous," who has died and risen with Christ, who has received God's free-gift of eternal life, and who has his fruit unto holiness. The man of Romans vii. is an Israelite who is groaning under the double yoke of sin and the law, and who has learned the awful power of *sin* from the very circumstance that he was thoroughly instructed in *the law*. The experience related in Romans vii. is that of the Apostle Paul himself; for there is nothing in the text to warrant the idea that Paul is here using the personal pronoun "I" in detailing the supposed experience of another man, or the typical experience of a class of men. When he says "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I have not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust," we are bound (in the absence of controlling reasons to the contrary) to take the statement in its obvious sense. And when he says further, "I am carnal, sold under sin," it is evident that the period referred to is that previous to his deliverance from sin, that is, previous to his conversion.

Chapters vi. and vii. are alike in that both contain Divine and dogmatic teaching as to what actually happens to the sinner who believes the Gospel of God's salvation through the crucified and risen Saviour. The essence of that teaching is, *First*, that the believer, whether Jew or Gentile, is delivered from the bondage of sin. This deliverance is needed by all men, "For we have before proved, both Jew and Gentile, that they are all under sin" (Rom. iii. 9). *Second*, And, further, that the believer, if an Israelite, and therefore born under the law (for this does not apply to "the Gentiles who have not the law," Rom. ii. 14) is, at the same time, delivered from the yoke of the law.

The only evidence urged (so far as we know) against the view that Rom. vii. presents the case of a conscientious Israelite endeavouring vainly to keep the law, is the statement of verse 22. It is argued that an unconverted Jew could not say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." It should not be forgotten that unconverted men often say of themselves, and believe too, what is not actually true. But why should not a zealous, religious Jew declare that he delighted in the law of God after the

inward man; The "inward man" is evidently the "mind" or intelligent will (*nous*) referred to in the context. Every unconverted man has a "mind" or "will" an "inward man;" for it is not the *new* man, or new nature that is here referred to, and which only those possess who have been born again. There is not a statement in all of verses 7-24 that would be clearly applicable to a converted man whereas every statement is applicable to an unconverted, but conscientious, Israelite.

It is difficult to account for the idea held by some commentators that an unconverted Jew could not say he delighted in the law of God after the inward man. In this very Epistle statements of like import are made of the unconverted Jew. It is said of such that he made his boast of God, and *knew His will, and approved the things that are excellent*, being instructed *out of the law* - and that he had the form of knowledge and truth *in the law*. Paul bears witness that his brethren, the Israelites, had a zeal of God (x. 2); and he describes himself in another place as having been "taught according to the *perfect manner of the law of the fathers*," and as having been "zealous toward God" (Acts xxii. 3). Beyond all doubt the conscientious God-fearing Israelite could say with sincerity that he delighted in the law of God after the inward man. This disposes of the only objection, so far as we know, to the view of Rom. vii. taken by the writer.

Chapter vii. begins, "Know ye not, brethren," these words being identical with those that introduce the teaching of chapter vi. (verse 3) with the exception of the significant word "brethren." Again, in verse 4, occur the words "Wherefore, my brethren." The word "brethren" had not previously been used in the Epistle, which affords some evidence at least that Paul was here addressing the believing Jews, of whom there were evidently a number at Rome (see Acts xxviii. 17, 24). This is confirmed by chapter ix. 3, 4, where Paul uses the expression "my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, WHO ARE ISRAELITES."

We turn now to the second section of chapter vii., the purpose of which is to answer the question, "Is the law sin?" and to declare the important work accomplished by the law in making known the awful nature of sin, and its tremendous power. We have, in this portion of Scripture, a commentary upon the statement of 1 Cor. xv., "The strength of sin is the law."

In order to grasp the true interpretation of this part of our chapter, it is needful to observe that verse 6 has already brought us to the place where the believing Israelite learns his complete deliverance from the law. The words, "But now," with which that verse begin, mark the change of dispensation from that of law to that of grace reigning through righteousness. The same words, "But now," were used with the same

significance in chapter iii. 21. In the preceding verses of that chapter the Jews had been taught that righteousness could not be secured by works of law. "But now," Christ having died and risen, "a righteousness of God *apart from law* is manifested." In chapter vii. it is further shown that, under the law, fruit for God could not be brought forth, nor acceptable service rendered to Him. "But now," under the new conditions brought about by the death and resurrection of the Son of God, those Israelites who have been delivered from the fruitless bondage of the law, may serve God in newness of spirit, and bring forth fruit unto Him.

This point in the unfolding of the doctrine having been reached, we might have been taken at once to chapter viii. where the subject of the new life and walk in the power of the Spirit is resumed. But the doctrine of the preceding chapters having shown in part the connection of sin and the law, it became necessary at this point to complete the teaching on that subject. This was the more necessary because the connection between sin and the law, as pointed out in chapters iii. to vii. 6, was such as might give rise to an erroneous idea in the minds of the readers. If the law only had the effect of multiplying iniquity and of increasing the evil consequences of Adam's offence (Rom. iv. 15; v. 20), and if it became necessary for those under law to obtain deliverance from its bondage in precisely the same way that they had to secure deliverance from sin, namely, through the death of Christ, then it might occur to some minds that there was a *similarity* between the law and sin. Hence the question is plainly put at verse 7, "Is the law sin?" And the answer is a decided negative, "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law."

This question, therefore, takes us *back again* into the conditions existing previous to the deliverance described in verses 1-6. In what follows is shown the effect of the law in an extreme case; that is to say, in the case of a man who had the fullest knowledge of the law that was possible for a man in the flesh to have, and the greatest possible zeal for carrying out its provisions. That man was the Apostle Paul himself. Who could better serve for this purpose? He had been "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God" (Acts xxii. 3); and furthermore, among the grounds that he had for boasting and trusting "IN THE FLESH" was this, namely, that "touching the righteousness which *is in the law*" he was blameless (Phil. iii. 4-6). The picture presented to our view in the passage beginning at verse 7 of Rom. vii. is that of the experience of Paul as a man "in the flesh," endeavouring with all the earnestness of his fervent nature to secure righteousness and life through works of law. This, we say, was an extreme case, insomuch that, if that man could not succeed in being justified by means of the law, no man could; and it must follow that "by works of law shall *no flesh* be justified" (Gal. ii. 16).

Verse 7 gives us the key to the whole passage in the words: "I had not known sin but by [means of] the law." Paul here applies to himself personally the general statement of Rom. iii. 20: "For by the law is [or came] the *knowledge* of sin." The succeeding words of verse 7 make the statement still more definite. "For I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet" (lust).

In the succeeding verses the Apostle proceeds to tell what he had learned about sin as the result of his efforts to keep the law. It is not to be supposed that Paul could have *given this description* of his experiences and its results prior to his conversion, and without the special illumination of the Spirit of God. So it is needful to bear in mind that we have here a description *by the converted and inspired Paul* of his experience as a man "in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 4), or as here stated, "carnal, sold under sin."

The first information in regard to sin that is here imparted to us is that it gives rise to desires, lusts, or covetings. (The same Greek word is rendered "lusts," "covet," and "concupiscence" in verses 7 and 8). It is through these "lusts of the flesh" that sin domiciled in the flesh, works out all manner of evil. This throws a flood of light on the nature of sin. In that light we see that sin is not the wrongful *act*, but the evil *principle* dwelling in man, which evil principle causes the wrongful act; and we see also that sin, in causing wrongful acts, works through desires or lusts. With this lesson in our minds we can the better grasp the meaning of the Lord's teaching in such passages as Matt. v. 28 Whosoever looketh after a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. "Sin then is in the heart of man, not in his wicked deeds; and it is it out of the heart of man" that all wickedness proceeds (Matt. xii. 35). Thus, Paul came to know by means of the law, that sin was in him, and that its presence was manifested by the desires or lusts that it produced, all of which have self-gratification for their object.

In verses 8-11 the Apostle shows by his experience that the law did not counteract or weaken the power of sin; but just the reverse. Sin "took occasion by the commandment" to work in him all manner of desires. This is similar to verse 5; and since verse 5 expressly applies to the time "when we [Jews] were in the flesh," it is clear that verse 8 relates to the same period. Moreover, it is said of believers not that sin works in them to produce all manner of desires, but, on the contrary, that God works in them to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 13 - Heb. xiii. 20, 21).

The Apostle also shows in this passage that the nature of sin is so evil, and its power so great, that it turned the commandment, which was ordained to life (because it said "this do and thou shalt *live*") into an instrument of death. Nothing could more forcibly teach the tremendous

power and the "exceeding sinfulness of sin" than the statements of verses 9-11. This passage serves to interpret the statement of 1 Cor. xv. 56, "the strength of sin is the law."

Further light on the nature of sin, and the relation of the law to sin, is given by Gal. ii. 14-21. It should be noted that, in this passage in Galatians, the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is expressed. Verse 15, which reads, "We *who are Jews by nature*, and not sinners of the *Gentiles*," shows that when, in succeeding verses the Apostle uses the pronoun "we" he means to distinguish Jews from Gentiles. In Gal. ii. 19, Paul says, "I through the law died to the law, that I might live unto God." This is practically the same statement as Rom. vii. 9 and ii, "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died;" "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Since Gal. ii. expressly refers to the time when Paul was under law, Rom. vii. 7-24 must refer to the same period.

Briefly stated, the argument of Gal. ii. 16-21 runs thus: "We, who were Jews by nature, have believed on Jesus Christ in order that we, in like manner as Gentile sinners, might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by works of law. For by works of law shall no flesh, Jew or Gentile, be justified. But suppose we, Jews by nature, put ourselves again under law, and by the test of the law are found to be sinners, is, therefore, Christ the minister of sin; That is, does Christ become, what the law proved itself to be, an instrument whereby sin wrought destruction and death; May it not be ! In such a case it would be I myself, by building again the things abolished, that is, by setting up the law again, who *made myself* a transgressor of the law. (For where there is no law, there is no transgression.) For I through the law died to the law, that I might live unto God. For I have been crucified with Christ," etc.

It is easy to trace, in the important Scripture just quoted, the same great truths that are revealed in Rom. vi. and vii., namely, the identification of the believer with Christ in His death and resurrection, which involves, in a case where the believer was like Paul a Jew, deliverance from the yoke of the law as well as from the servitude of sin. If Paul, in Gal. ii. was describing his own personal experience as a man under law and his deliverance therefrom, as cannot be doubted, then surely he is describing his own experience in Rom. vii.

Our Scripture has now taught us, by statement and illustration, the evil nature of sin. At this point it is announced, in direct contrast with the nature of sin, that "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good." It is to be noted that one commandment only is spoken of, namely, the tenth, "Thou shalt not covet," evidently because it is by this

commandment that the existence of sin in the flesh was made known. This disposes of the question, "Is the law sin;" and rescues the holy law of God from evil surmisings.

But there is more to be taught concerning sin. Thus far the law has served to detect the presence of sin in the flesh by stirring up various desires or covetings. In addition to this the law makes known the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Verse 13 tells us that sin, in order that it might *appear* to be what it really is, was permitted to work death *by means of that which is good*, namely, by the law itself, in order that by means of the commandment ("Thou shalt not covet"), sin might become *exceeding sinful*.

Then follows the explicit statement that "the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." That is the state of the unconverted man as described in chapter vi. in the words, "Ye were the servants [literally, bondslaves] of sin." The succeeding verses of chapter vii., verses 15-23, relate the experience of one "sold under sin," but the experience there related is clearly not that of the *ordinary* sinner. What gives to this experience its peculiar character is that the person of whom it is related was one who delighted in the law of God after the inward man. He consented to the law as good, and consequently hated and disowned that which he "worked out." This unhappy experience proved two things: *First*, that the law was good, because it led the man who tried to fulfil it to attempt to *do* good. "For the good that I would I do not." *Second*, it proves that it was not the man himself ("I myself") that "practised" or "worked out" the evil. \* On the contrary, it was some opposing force or power, foreign to the man, but which had got into his flesh, and which was able to overpower, and bring to nothing the strongest efforts, that the man could make in the direction of doing what is good. "It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." In this way the mightiness of sin is brought out by means of the law, and in this sense "the strength of sin is the law."

\* The single English word "do" is made to serve as the rendering of three different Greek words. The last "do" in verse 15 and the first in verses 19, 20, and 21, might be rendered "practise"; and the first "do" in verses 15 and 17, the last in verse 20, and the word "perform" in verse 18, might be rendered "work out" as in Bagster's literal translation, which we have followed in certain quotations.

The distinction which the Scripture here points out between the conscious personality of the man, the "I myself," and the sin domiciled in his flesh, is instructive and highly important. Thereby we learn that it is the "mind," the seat of the *will* and of the *consciousness*, that constitutes the true personality of the human being. The "mind" in the natural man is not

thoroughly corrupted, as is his "flesh." The mind needs not to be given over to death, as does the flesh. It needs "renewal" as to its contents (Rom. Xii. 2). The "old man," the flesh, is to be wholly put off, and a new man put on. But the "mind" is to be "renewed" in its spirit (Eph. iv. 22-24). This renewal is in respect to the knowledge of God (Col. iii. 10).

In the natural or unconverted man the mind is quite capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, and of desiring and striving after what is good. It is capable of receiving a high degree of "ethical culture," and of detecting and judging unsparingly sins, such as acts of immorality and injustice. It is capable of appreciating and delighting in the law of God. But the "mind" in the unconverted man is *joined to a nature* that is thoroughly perverted and corrupted. This nature, "the flesh," inherited from Adam, has control of the mortal body and its members, through which all vital actions have to be performed, and through which all resolutions or "willings" of the mind have to be translated into doings. This corrupted flesh, with its desires, and the law of sin that operates in it, are so powerful that they render futile the resolves of the mind, bringing its purpose to nought, whenever these run counter to the lusts of the flesh.

What, therefore, is needed is that the mind, the "I myself" of the man, be *disconnected and set free* from the corrupted nature or flesh, and that it be joined to *another nature*, even that which God imparts to those who become members of Christ. By no other agency than by death can the corrupt nature, "the flesh," or "old man," be taken away. This is the work of Christ on the Cross on behalf of all who believe on Him, to whom His death is imputed as if it were their own. Thus, by the death of Christ, the "mind" of the believer (his true self) is set free or detached from the flesh, just as a woman is set free from her husband when the latter dies, and may therefore form another alliance. The mind, the "I myself," having been thus delivered from the dominating power of sin in the flesh, can now act freely. This *capacity* for freedom of action carries with it the *responsibility* to act in accordance with the revealed mind of God; for capacity and responsibility go hand in hand.

The detachment of the "mind" from the "flesh" by death is, according to Romans vi., deliverance from the servitude of sin. The self-conscious element in man, the "I myself," need not any longer let sin reign in his mortal body to obey it (sin) in its desires for he has been "made free from sin." This applies to all believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, "for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are ALL UNDER SIN" (Rom. iii. 9). In chapter vii., however, the detachment of the mind from the flesh effects also deliverance from the yoke of the law. And this applies only to

believing Israelites, for they alone were "under the law;" and what the law said, it said to them only.

We now arrive at the concluding verse of chapter vii. The result of the experience there recorded is that, while the man delights in God's law after the inward man (the mind), he sees *another law* in his physical members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law which operates in his members. That other law is called in verse 23 "the law of sin," and in viii. 2 "the law of sin and death." It is the law of sin in the sense of being those commands or demands, to which sin enforced obedience. Sin is regarded as a ruler or despot, and whatever expresses the will of a ruler to his subjects, and which they are compelled to obey, is the "law" of that ruler. In this sense we understand the expression "the law of sin."

The man's state, then, is one of "captivity," and specifically of captivity to the law of sin. This state of captivity is *exactly the reverse of* the state of the man of chapter vi. who had been "set free from sin." Thus the outcome of all his efforts at keeping the law of God is *wretchedness*. Nothing is left for him but to cry for deliverance. This brings us again to the point reached at verse 6, and prepares us for a further advance in the teaching of the Epistle. The Apostle voices his thanks to God for deliverance from the body of death, and then sums up the whole matter in these words. "So then *with the mind I myself* serve the law of God; but *with the flesh* the law of sin."

It must be remembered that even the justified man, who has been set free from sin, may voluntarily obey the law of sin. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether *of sin* unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. vi. 16). So far as the flesh in the believer is allowed to act at all, it acts in accordance with the law of sin; "for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The flesh, therefore, whether in a converted man or an unconverted can serve only "the law of sin." Hence the statement of Rom. vii. 25 applies to the believer as well as to the unbeliever. Perceiving this we see the connection between the last part of chapter vii. and the first part of chapter viii., which speaks of believers who walk after the flesh.

Therefore, there is a stage of experience beyond that of Romans vi. and vii. Those chapters bring us respectively to freedom from the *servitude* of sin, and freedom from the *yoke of the law*. This leaves the flesh, which remains in the believer, yet under the LAW of sin, as the last words of chapter vii. testify. But the Apostle does not leave the history of his own personal experience at that point. He goes on to say that *he* has been made free not only from the servitude of sin and from the yoke of the law, but also from the *law* of sin and death (Rom. viii. 2). The fact that Paul continues his

personal experience thus far in chapter viii., and that the statement regarding deliverance from the *law* of ,sin is confined to himself ("hath made *me* free from the law of sin and death"), and is not asserted of all believers, is frequently overlooked. Yet that fact must have some important significance , and it would be the part of wisdom for us to ascertain it, if we can. "And this we will do if God permit."

In concluding our comments on chapter vii. we would point out, as should be obvious to all, that the experience there related could only be that of a man like Saul of Tarsus, whose mind had been stored with the knowledge of the law and thoroughly impressed with veneration for its sacred character. It could not possibly, at the time it, was written, have been the experience of a Gentile sinner , because God had not given to the Gentiles a law in order that they might store it in their minds and do the things written therein. On the contrary, "God gave *them* over to a *reprobate* mind, to do those things that are not convenient" (Rom. i. 28).

Nevertheless, in lands where the Bible has now gone, and where its precepts have become more or less matters of common knowledge, there have been in all generations large numbers of legalists, who are very much in the same condition as the unconverted religious Jew of Paul's day and previously. These legalists, who abound at the present day in the churches of Christendom, might easily experience, to a large extent, the struggles and defeats of the "wretched man" of Romans vii. And doubtless it has often happened that truly converted men, as the result of the influence of legal teaching, have had similar experiences. But it remains true that the experience is *properly* that of the conscientious, unconverted Israelite, who had been thoroughly schooled in the law. It was, in fact, the experience of Saul of Tarsus as a man in the flesh, and therefore not, strictly speaking, a proper *Christian* experience at all.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### **Set Free from the Law of Sin and Death.**

#### **Rom. viii. 1-4.**

The Epistle to the Romans contains the authoritative announcement of a change of dispensation; that is to say, a change in the character of God's dealings with sinful men. The change is from the economy of the law to that of grace. The words "But now" (Rom. iii. 21; vii. 6) mark the change. It is, also clearly announced in chapter vi. 14 by the words: "Ye are not under law, but under grace." To the same effect it is written elsewhere: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17).

The dispensation of the law came to an end at God's appointed time. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). Thus the dispensation of the law ended, not because the law was a failure and God found it necessary to try some other plan; but for the very different reason that the law had fully accomplished its intended purpose, and hence was no longer needed. "It was added because of transgressions, *till the seed should come* to whom the promise was made" (Gal. iii. 19).

We have dwelt upon that which "the law could not do;" but let us not overlook that which the law could and did accomplish.

By means of the law every mouth was stopped and all the world came under sentence before God. That was a great result. The law was the means of demonstrating that the natural man was so corrupt that, even with all the help God could supply, he could not become righteous. It proved that no man could hope for an thing but through the grace (the wholly undeserved favour) of God. Thus the law prepared for the dispensation of grace.

Furthermore, the effect of the law was to multiply transgression, causing the offence of Adam to abound, that the effects of it might be made fully manifest (Rom. v. 20). But this was with a view to magnifying the Grace of God, so that the recipients of His grace might render to Him

intelligent praise therefor. In this way also the law prepared for the revelation of God's marvellous grace.

By the law, moreover, came the knowledge of sin and the revelation of the strength of sin (Rom. iii. 20; vii. 7, 13). The real nature of sin in the flesh, thus made known by means of the law, shows the need of a Divine Sin-offering. The law was thus the forerunner of Christ, acknowledging its own inability to deliver the captives of sin, but pointing to the Lamb of God, Who alone could bear away the sin of the world. "For what the law could not do, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and [as a sacrifice] for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3).

Romans viii., to which we now come, connects directly with chapter v., taking up the subject of the race or family of the Second Man, referred to as those who are "in Christ Jesus." In chapter v. it is revealed that the judgment was by one offence (the transgression of Adam) to condemnation, and that in consequence of the one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation (Rom. v. 16-18). Such was the state of all of us in Adam. For "in Adam all die." But "*now* there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (viii. 1). This is true of all who belong to Christ, and does not depend at all upon their "walk." The words "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" do not belong to verse 1, but to the end of verse 4. There is now "no condemnation" for the believing sinner, because God sent His own Son, who came to do His will by offering Himself a sacrifice for sin (Heb. x. 7, 10, 14). Thus God, instead of condemning the sinner, condemned sin in the flesh. God made Him Who knew no sin "to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). The condemnation has been borne *by* Him, and there is therefore no condemnation to them that are *in* Him.

We call attention to the statement that the justified, and reconciled sinner is "*made* righteous" (Rom. v. 19; 2 Cor. v. 21). He is *constituted* righteous, that is to say, a righteous nature or constitution has been imparted to him. This new nature, the "new man," is the new element in the believer. It is that which is begotten of God. It is called in Rom. viii. and in other Scriptures "spirit," because it is born of *The* Spirit. This is according to what the Lord Jesus said: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6). This "spirit," or new nature, is in every child of God. Like the flesh, or old nature, it has desires or inclinations or "lusts" (for the word "lust" is used in the Scripture without reference to the character of the desires, whether good or bad); but the desires of the spirit are directly contrary to, and are antagonized by, the desires of the flesh, or old nature, which still abides in us, unchanged and unchangeable, "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit,

and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. v. 17).

We see then that the new nature, begotten of the Holy Spirit of God by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, comes into a temporary lodging place where everything is not only unsuited to it, but contrary and antagonistic. Its lodgment is the mortal body, subject to infirmity and decay, and it comes there into contact with the old corrupted nature, the flesh, whose lusts are directly opposed to all the longings and holy impulses of the spirit. It is seemingly an incongruous arrangement; but God's wisdom and love are displayed in it, as in every detail of His redeeming work. We may not now digress for consideration of the great ends of the Lord in bringing the new nature into such an evil place, there to learn its first lessons, and to have its first experiences. It is enough for the present to say that the lessons and experiences given to the children of God in their earthly tabernacles are needful in preparing them for their future positions and responsibilities, and that those lessons and experiences could not be had elsewhere.

The flesh then remains in the believer; and the flesh is subservient to "the law of sin," as stated in the last verse of chapter vii., which thus introduces us to the subject of verse 2 of chapter viii., namely, deliverance from "the law of sin and death." The believer may now "*with the mind* serve the law of God," as Paul said of himself (vii. 25); but "the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (viii. 7).

Here then is a situation fraught with danger, and therefore it is important that we should give the most earnest heed to what is written for our admonition. Manifestly if the believer follow the desires of his old nature, he submits himself to be brought into captivity to the law of sin. Following the desires of the old nature is "walking after the flesh." He has been delivered from the *dominion* of sin by the death of Christ, "For sin shall not have dominion over you." But there is a further deliverance in view, and the believer is responsible to avail himself of this deliverance in the exercise of the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free. That further deliverance is from the *law* of sin."

We see then two classes of Christians, namely, those who "walk after the flesh," following and gratifying the inclinations of their old natures (it may be in ways that are perfectly decent and respectable), and those who "walk after the spirit," following the desires of the new nature and the commands of Christ. Or it would perhaps be more accurate to say that there are two states, namely, that of walking after the flesh, and that of walking after the spirit; for it is quite possible for the believer to be at one time in one state and at another time in the other. Nevertheless, generally

speaking, there are two classes of Christians, the one class habitually seeking the things of the flesh, the other habitually seeking the things of the spirit. The same division is indicated in 2 Cor. v. 15 between those who live unto themselves, and those who live unto Christ, Who died for them and rose again. Lot and Abraham may be taken as illustrations respectively of these two classes.

Now, the point to be specially noted in the Scripture before us is that "the righteous requirement of the law" (which is the true reading of Rom. viii. 4) may be fulfilled in those of us who are walking, (or in us so long as we are walking) "not after the flesh, but after the spirit." We shall inquire presently what is this righteous thing which the law *required* in man, but could not *produce* in him. We would, however, first emphasize the point that the fulfilment takes place only in those who are walking after the spirit. It was for this very end that God, sending His own Son to be a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; namely, that the righteous requirement of the law might have a fulfilment in us; for He by whom the law was given declared that He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, and that not one jot or one tittle thereof should pass away "until all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18). While it is, therefore, most blessedly true that the economy or dispensation of the law has passed away, God has not by any means relinquished "the righteous requirement of the law." The difference, which is very great, is this: Under the law *man* was required to fulfil the requirements of the law; but now, under grace, provision has been made whereby the requirement of the law may *be fulfilled* in us. The fulfilment, then, is the work of Another in us. That One Who has come with power to work *in* us what Christ has wrought *for* us, is the Spirit of God.

And here we come upon some important "ifs," which we may not without serious loss to ourselves overlook, but which, however, are often brushed aside or explained away. Let us, therefore, note carefully before proceeding that the Word is-not that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, but that it *may be*, and that the condition of such fulfilment is that we "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." The Apostle says, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made ME free from the law of sin and death" (viii. 2). He does not say it has made all believers free from that law, for many voluntarily subject themselves to it, but it is the privilege of all believers to be free from the law of sin and to be subject in all their ways, words and thoughts, to the law of the Spirit of that life which is in Christ Jesus, and whereof they have been made partakers. The way whereby we may avail ourselves of this great privilege is pointed out in the Scripture now before us.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### **The Law of Christ.**

#### **Rom. viii. 2-7.**

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ is what makes free from the law of sin and death. "Spirit" and "life" are here placed in opposition to "sin" and "death." The law of the former supersedes and displaces the law of the latter. Man must be subject to law, for he is a creature having moral responsibilities, living in a moral universe. The whole race of Adam came under the dominion of sin and obeyed the law of sin. The Israelite was, for the special purpose already explained, placed under the law of Moses. The Christian is not under the law of Moses. Yet he is "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 21). In a word, then, the law which the Christian is required to obey is "the law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2).

"The righteous requirement of the law," that is, the righteous thing which the law sought in man, but could not produce in him, was LOVE. When asked by a doctor of the law what commandment was the great one *in the law*, the Lord replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second, like it, is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang *all the law* and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 37-40). This is the requirement of God, and it is a "righteous" requirement, for man as God's creature—a creature endowed with the capacity to know God, and endowed also with a free-will and with affections—is bound to render to God the love and service of his entire being, heart, soul, and mind. Yet there never was a man of the race of Adam who fulfilled or could fulfil this requirement. We all realize, on a moment's consideration, the utter impossibility of approaching to anything like a fulfilment of it. Nevertheless, God purposes that it shall be fulfilled in us; and for that purpose the Spirit of God is come. The Spirit is the power to accomplish in us that which "the law could not do."

Only once previously to chapter viii. is the Holy Spirit mentioned in Romans. That occurrence is in chapter v. 5, where it is said "*the love of God* is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us;" and then the character of this love of God towards us, which God commends, is briefly indicated in the statement that it is such that, while we were yet sinners, that is to say, while we were all that is loathsome and abhorrent in God's sight, Christ died for us. There the subject is discontinued, to be taken up in chapter viii., where the ministry of the Spirit is the leading theme.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, kept His Father's commandments, and abode in His love (John xv. 10). The work of the Spirit of God in us is to transform us into the image of the Son of God, to the end that we may keep *His* commandments and abide in *His* love (John xv. 9, 10). This is a work *now in progress*. "We beholding, are being changed into the same image as by the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18). Therefore, the *perfect* fulfilment of the righteous requirement of the law awaits the completion of the work of the Spirit. The fulfilment now is relative and partial. It is only as we are walking, not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

The practical directions given to us in the Epistle to the Romans are for the most part contained in chapters xii.-xvi. The first of these practical directions is that we present our *bodies* to God, and the second is that we be transformed in the renewing of our *minds* (not fashioning or conforming ourselves to this age) in order that we may prove, or know experimentally, what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God (Rom. xii. 1, 2). The character of the renewed mind is the reverse of high-mindedness. "For," says the Apostle, 'I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think [*lit.*, not to be high-minded above what it behoves you to be minded]; but to think soberly [*lit.*, to be so minded as to be sober-minded to each], according as God has dealt to every man the [a] measure of faith." (The repetition of the word "minded," "high-minded," "sober-minded," the same word as in viii. 5, 6, 7, is striking.) Lowly-mindedness is an essential characteristic of love, which is it "not puffed up" and "thinketh no evil" (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5). The reason for this exhortation to lowly-mindedness is that those who are in Christ bear the same relation, one to another, that the members of the body bear to each other. "For AS we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many are ONE BODY in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 4, 5).

This is of the highest importance. From it we learn that the activities of love, whereby the law of Christ is fulfilled, tend to the building up of the one body whereof we all are members. To the same effect is the teaching of Eph. iv. 15, 16, namely, that by holding the truth *in love*, we may grow up into

Him in all things, Who is the Head, even Christ, out of Whom come all the supplies whereby the body, fitted together and compacted by every joint of supply, *according to the working in its proper measure of each several part*, makes for itself increase of the body, *to the building up of itself* IN LOVE.

O that we who now compose that body on earth, may have grace to learn from these Scriptures the *individual responsibility* of the several members of the body, for the building up of the entire body, and the office of *love* in the carrying out of that work! For the supply of love, as for everything else, we must look to the Head, in Whom all fulness dwells, and out of Whom come all supplies for the body. But it is our responsibility to resort continually to Him for the supply of that which we lack; and if we realize (as which of us does not;) the lack of love in "these cold hearts of ours," should not the consciousness of the need admonish us of our dependence upon Him, and act as a powerful incentive to seek of Him that which is lacking in ourselves; Are not our weakness and poverty of spirit permitted to the very end that we should draw continually from the inexhaustible stores of His grace, thus living, now while in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God, Who loves us, and gave Himself for us?

Let us now notice particularly that, among the detailed exhortations following the revelation of our mutual relations as members of one body, great prominence is given to *love*, and that love is explicitly declared to be the *fulfilling of the law*. "Let love be without dissimulation [unfeigned]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. xii. 9, 10). "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to [*lit.*, pursuing] hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not." Again we have directions as to our minds or thoughts (*phronema*). "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate" (*lit.*, associating. with the lowly). Attention should be paid to all the precepts of this chapter (Rom. xii.) for they are pertinent to the fulfilling of the law of Christ; but we need not here transcribe them all. We call special attention, however, to the concluding admonitions: "Owe no man anything, but to *love one another; for he that loveth another HATH FULFILLED THE LAW*" (Rom. xiii. 8). In this way, then, is "the righteousness of the law FULFILLED IN us," namely, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worked no ill to his neighbour; therefore, LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW" (Rom. xiii. 9, 10). And along with this, for the sake of its direct bearing upon our immediate subject, we should consider the succeeding verses of the chapter,

especially the concluding words—"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

We see, then, that notwithstanding the dispensation of law has given place to the dispensation of grace, the righteousness which the law required has not been relinquished. The commandment yet remains, but it remains in the form of the "new commandment" which the Lord gave to His disciples on the eve of His departure from the world, and by which His disciples were to be known by "all men" (John xiii. 34, 35).

The fifth chapter of Galatians throws further light on our subject. That chapter begins with the exhortation to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not become entangled again in a "yoke of bondage" (the Mosaic law and rites, circumcision being particularly mentioned). The reason given is that the man who seeks to be justified by means of the law is depriving himself of all effect of Christ's work. Such a man is "fallen from grace" (for grace is based on righteousness accomplished by the obedience of Christ to the death of the Cross, Rom. v. 19-21), and cuts himself off from the benefits which grace supplies. Then, in direct contrast to those who seek righteousness through the law, comes this important statement, "For we, through the Spirit, wait for THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH."

This we understand to be that which is being wrought in us by the Spirit. By faith, which is "the substance of things *hoped for*," we await the completion of that work. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but FAITH THAT WORKS BY LOVE." Here are faith, hope, and love associated as in Rom. v. 1-5. Faith confidently awaits the hope of perfect righteousness to be accomplished by the Spirit, and meanwhile works through love; this being in direct contrast to law-works. Following this, the saints of Galatia were reminded that they had been called unto liberty; but with this comes the warning, "only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but BY LOVE serve one another. For ALL THE LAW IS FULFILLED IN ONE WORD, even in this, THOU SHALT LOVE thy neighbour as thyself (Gal. v. 13, 14).

How then shall the law of love be fulfilled in us? Our part is to "walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." This is but putting in another form the lesson of Rom. viii. 3, 4. The antagonism of the flesh and spirit is described in Gal. v. 17, and the works of the flesh are enumerated in verses 19-21; and then the question how the law is fulfilled in us is thus answered in verse 22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace*," etc.

We see then, that the fulfilment of the righteous requirement of the law is the fruit of the operation of the Spirit of God; but we see also (and

this is of the utmost importance for us) that the fulfilment takes place, and the fruit is produced, only while we are walking, not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

The very highest Christian privilege for those who are yet in the mortal body is to "bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. vii. 4). The Lord Jesus said, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so [*i.e.*, by fruit-bearing] shall ye be [*lit.*, become] My disciples" (John xv. 8).

But again we are forcibly reminded by the Scripture we are now studying that where there is great privilege there is great responsibility, and also the possibility of correspondingly great damage and loss. Our responsibility is limited to this one thing, namely, to "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." But this one thing includes many things, as we have seen from examination of Rom. xii. and xiii. Verse 5 explains that they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the spirit mind the things of the spirit. The direction and character of our walk will therefore be determined by the character of our thoughts.\* Hence it is of the utmost importance that we should be *occupied inwardly with the things of Christ*. This calls for constant vigilance, exercise, and incessant applications to the throne of grace for needed help. The ease with which vagrant thoughts enter and occupy our minds, taking up our attention with things that are temporal, trivial, foolish, worldly, or worse, is a constant reminder of our weakness; and this should impel us to resort constantly to the stores of strength and wisdom that are laid up for us in Christ, in Whom all fulness dwells. We too often forget the words "Without Me ye can do nothing."

\* The word rendered "mind" in Rom. viii. 5, 6, 7, and in Rom. xii., is not *nous*, the self-conscious intellect, but *phronema*, signifying rather the thoughts, or contents, or disposition of the mind.

"The mind of the spirit," that is to say, to be inwardly occupied with spiritual things (the things of Christ) "is life and peace." But, on the other hand, "the mind of the flesh is death." Death, then, is in the path of those who are "after the flesh," who seek their gratifications in the things that interest and occupy the natural man. This statement is repeated in verse 13, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." To the same effect is the statement of chapter vi. 16, on which brief comment has already been made: "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, whether of *sin unto death*, or of obedience unto righteousness."

These statements are to be taken (as it seems to us) in their most obvious sense. The death spoken of is physical death. The believer who,

having the privilege of minding the things of the Spirit and walking after the spirit, and having access to inexhaustible stores of grace in Christ whereby he may be empowered so to do, chooses rather to be inwardly occupied with, and to walk outwardly after, the things of the flesh, exposes himself to *physical death* in some one of the many hideous forms in which that great enemy attacks and destroys its victims. Undoubtedly we have here an explanation of many of the diseases and premature deaths among the people of God. There is a great difference, as is very evident, between the case of those who live out here their appointed span of life, and then, having finished their course, depart to be with Christ, and the case of those who are prematurely carried away before the appointed lessons were learned, the appointed tasks accomplished, the pointed experience gained. "For this cause" the Apostle writes to the Corinthians, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many are fallen asleep" Cor. xi. 30).

The Lord Himself plainly teaches the same lesson in the passage already referred to, John xv. The Father examines the branches of the Vine looking for fruit. when He finds fruit He purges the branch that it may bring forth more fruit. But, the Lord says, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit *He taketh away.*" His taking away of the unfruitful branch is by means physical death. This does not mean that the branch cut off is lost. The member thus taken away from the earth does not lose his place in Christ. The relation of the branch to the vine represents the believer's *earthly* relation to Christ. This world is the place, and now is the time for bringing forth fruit unto God. When the branch is cut off that relation is broken. "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth *as a branch*" (John xv. 6). He has thereafter no further opportunity to bear fruit. The fruit must be produced here; but if produced it will "remain." "I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that *your fruit should remain*" (John xv. 16).

It is essential to fruit-bearing that the branch abide in the vine. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." Abiding in Christ is equivalent to minding the things of the Spirit. Christ had just promised that the Spirit should come and should bring to remembrance His Words (John xiv. 26). Therefore He says, "If ye abide in Me, and *My words* abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." One result, then, of abiding in Christ and keeping His words in us, will be asking and receiving from Him; without which, of course, we cannot bring forth fruit.

Having thus spoken of fruit-bearing, and of what happens to the branch that bears no fruit, the Lord gives again His great commandment, "This is My commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you."

Love, then, is the law of Christ; and this is the fruit of the Spirit, brought forth by the branches that abide in the True Vine, and in which His words (which are spirit and life) abide. Thus we are taught that the mind of the Spirit is life and peace to those who are after the things of the Spirit. It is not without significance that the Lord, in speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit and of the fruit-bearing that would follow, mentions in the same connection, the first three items of the fruit of the Spirit given in Gal. v. 22, namely, Love (John xv. 9, 12), Joy (xv. ii), and Peace (xiv. 27).

There are many threads in the pattern of this discourse, and they are wondrously interwoven, so that it would require much time to trace them all. We must, however, rest content with pointing out that which has a direct bearing on our subject, and this, we believe, has now been done with sufficient minuteness to bring the prominent points into view. And surely the main thing is this, that they who through faith in the Son of God have received pardon and life, should *keep His commandments*. *This is the requirement of God, as concisely summed up in I John iii. 23, namely, "That we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as HE gave us commandment."*

The reward of obedience is great; and the penalty of failure is proportionately serious.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### **The Indwelling of the Spirit of God.**

#### **Rom. viii. 8-13.**

We shall comment but briefly upon **the remaining verses** (8-13) of Romans viii.

“So, then, they that are [*exist*, the verb being expressed in the original] in the flesh cannot please God.”

There are Christians whose existence is in the flesh, who walk after the flesh, who please themselves, who seek the things of the world, who desire its honours, titles, and dignities, who enjoy its gratifications, who, in a word, “mind earthly things.” These *cannot* please God. But this ought not so to be, for we, brethren, are not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh. We are not under obligation to live after the flesh, but we are *free* to do so, and there is great and constant danger that we may do so. But we are here warned in the plainest language that if we live after the flesh we shall die. That this is said to believers is beyond all question. Therefore, our safety lies in putting to death the things that would drive or lure us into a life of self-pleasing. “But if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” This passage takes full account of our weakness and inability to overcome, unaided, the strong desires of the flesh; for we are reminded that there is a Paraclete (that is, One who has come to help) through Whom the deeds of the body are to be put to death. It is a case in which we must show no mercy to the deeds of the body, for either we must put them to death, or else they will be the death of us.

“But ye are not [have not your existence] in the flesh, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you” (verse 9).

To be born of the Spirit and sealed by the Spirit is one thing, and that is true of all believers; but, if we rightly apprehend the teaching of this and other Scriptures, not every believer has the Spirit of God *dwelling* in him. The word “if” seems to be decisive. Those who deliberately choose their place of existence in the flesh have not the Spirit of God *dwelling* in them. This portion of Scripture clearly distinguishes two classes of Christians, namely, those who live after the flesh, and those who live after the Spirit. There is a very great difference between Abraham and Lot, between Paul and Demas. Paul loved the appearing of the Lord. For him, and for all such, there is laid up a crown of righteousness. Demas “loved this present world”

(2 Tim. iv. 8-10). This, we believe, is a Divinely-given illustration of the difference between one who is after the things of the Spirit, and in whom the Spirit of God dwells, and one who is after the things of the flesh and has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him.

This is a matter about which we cannot afford to make any mistakes. It is very easy to accept the comfortable doctrine that the Spirit of God dwells in every believer, from which it would follow that the ways of all believers are pleasing to God. But if there be no difference between a Paul and a Demas in this respect, then these verses are merely intended to give us some interesting information. There is nothing in them to arouse the conscience and exercise the heart before God.

"Now, if any man have not spirit of Christ, he is none of His." We understand that every believer has "spirit of Christ." There is no article before the word "spirit," so that it should be spelled with a small initial letter to distinguish from "the Spirit of God." "Spirit of Christ" is the new nature derived from Christ, without which a man is "none of His" (*lit.*, "not of Him"). The expression is similar to that of Rom. *iii.* 26, which tells us that God is "the justifier of him that is of *the faith of Jesus.*" In like manner Paul said, "I live by the *faith of the Son of God*" (Gal. ii. 20). To have spirit of Christ, or faith of Christ, or anything else of Him from whom we get everything, is a very different matter from having the Spirit of God *dwell* in us.

"But if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (verse 10).

We call special attention to two seemingly slight corrections which should be made to the text of this verse as given in the A.V., as these corrections, when made, aid materially in the comprehension of the passage.

*First*, the verse should begin with "But" instead of "And." We see at once that there is a direct contrast between having "spirit of Christ," which if any man have not he is none of His, and having "Christ in you."

*Second*, the word "indeed" should be inserted after body." This shows that the fact here referred to, namely, "the body dead," is one that has been previously stated. "The body dead because of sin" is thus plainly shown to be the body of the old humanity, "the body of sin," "the body of death." The old body, to which we all belonged, is a dead body, "dead because of sin." The sense of the verse then, seems to be this:-If Christ be in you, then, although the body be dead indeed because of sin-for our old man was crucified with Him that the "body of sin" might be destroyed, and we have been commanded to reckon ourselves "*dead indeed unto sin*" - nevertheless, the Spirit is life on account of righteousness. The sin that brought death into

the body was the disobedience of the first Adam. The righteousness that brought the Spirit into the new body is the obedience of Jesus Christ, the last Adam. Thus grace reigns *through righteousness unto life eternal* (zoe) (Rom. v. 21); and we know now that "the Spirit is life" (zoe).

It is evident that the failing life which is in the members of Adam could not supply the energy that is needed for walking after the Spirit, and for accomplishing the service of God. Hence we are taught to rely upon the ministry of the Spirit for the new life wherein we are called upon to walk. God's work can be done only in the energy of the Spirit.

But another question will naturally arise. Granted that the Spirit is the life wherein we may so walk as to be well pleasing to God, and may bring forth fruit to His glory, yet the only physical instruments available for our use are the members of these crumbling, decaying bodies of humiliation. How can any work for God be accomplished by such means as these; The answer directs us to the exceeding greatness of the power of Him Who raised up the Lord Jesus from among the dead, and assures us that if the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us, He Who raised up the Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Some take this to mean nothing more than that the dead in Christ shall be raised and the living saints, changed bodily at His coming; but we deem it quite certain that the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the change of the living saints at His coming is not contemplated in this verse at all. The entire passage relates exclusively to the *present* ministry of the Holy Spirit during the absence of the Lord Jesus, and behalf of His members who are yet in their mortal bodies. This verse (ii) speaks expressly of a ministry of the Spirit to the very "mortal bodies" which He is indwelling, and *while* He is indwelling them. The action is expressed by a word ("quicken") which is elsewhere used of the Spirit's work (John vi. 63; 2 Cor. iii. 6; Eph. ii. 5), but which is *never* used to describe either the resurrection of the dead or the bodily change that awaits the living saints at the coming of the Lord. The Scriptures do not speak of any agency of the Spirit in connection with the resurrection.

Moreover, the word "if" is again decisive of the meaning of the verse. The resurrection of the saints is nowhere made to depend upon the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in their mortal bodies. That depends solely upon believing on the Son of God. As He Himself said, "And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and *I will raise him up at the last day.*" The "if" of salvation, which includes the promise of resurrection, is "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead" (Rom. iv. 24). Manifestly to

believe on Him that raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead is one thing, and to have dwelling in us the Spirit of Him Who raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead is a very different thing. Upon the first "if" depends the imputation of righteousness to us; upon the second "if" depends the promise of quickening the mortal body.

We shall not attempt in these pages to state the reasons that compel us to read in Rom. viii. ii the gracious promise of present help from the indwelling Spirit of God for these our frail, mortal tenements, whereby they may be made serviceable to God for the purpose stated in the context.\* Suffice it to say that the writer has discovered many reasons why we should, and none, so far, why we should not, take the verse in its simple and obvious sense.

\* For a fuller discussion of Rom. viii. i r, the reader is referred to the author's pamphlet, "Quickening the Mortal Body." S. E. Roberts, SA Paternoster Row, London.

What the Scripture now before us has to do with is the "walk" (*i.e.*, the whole round of vital activities) of the saint while in the mortal body-that and nothing else. But the believer as regards his physical body, is in nowise different from the unregenerate members of Adam's race. Yet a wonderful thing is here revealed, namely, that the Spirit of God condescends to dwell in such mortal bodies. This is a fact so stupendous that we shrink even from attempting to grasp its import. Nevertheless, the statement is clear and plain, and other Scriptures confirm it. The fact of the Spirit's abiding presence is what is difficult to believe. That fact being accepted there can be no difficulty in believing that the benefit of His presence extends to the poor bodies that so greatly need His quickening power. Of this the verse on which we are now commenting gives us the assurance, declaring that the Spirit quickens those bodies wherein He dwells and while dwelling therein. Thus the physical members are empowered for the "walk," the "life," the "service," and the "fruit-bearing" for which otherwise they are utterly unfit.

The pattern man of faith, to whose walk of faith our attention is specially directed in this Epistle, is Abraham. We have already referred to the fact that while Lot was "walking after the flesh," in enjoyment of all the advantages and political honours of Sodom, Abraham was walking "after the spirit" as a stranger and pilgrim on earth. The record tells us that, when a crisis arose which required more than ordinary physical strength to meet, Abraham was physically strengthened, so that he was able with a few followers to vanquish the kings who had conquered the King of Sodom and his allies (Gen. xiv. 14-16). And again, this very Epistle to the Romans tells us that Abraham's and Sarah's mortal bodies were quickened by the God "in whom He believed even God who QUICKENETH THE DEAD" (Rom. iv. 17), in

order that the promises of God might be fulfilled, and His purposes accomplished through one whose body was "now dead (Rom. iv. 19), or "as good as dead" (Heb. xi. 12).

These we regard as Divinely-given illustrations of what is meant by Rom. viii. 11. Another case is that of the Apostle Paul himself, as described in several Scriptures. We would refer specially to 2 Cor. iv. 7-11, where we read an account of hardships, persecutions, and afflictions, beyond all natural physical endurance, insomuch that the Apostle, who has many infirmities (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10, etc.), said he was always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, but, he adds, that this was to the end that the life (zoe) also of Jesus might be manifest in his "mortal flesh."

Illustrations of the quickening of mortal bodies might be multiplied; but surely the foregoing will suffice to establish the meaning of the passage. Here then is a gracious promise for that part of us which is a sore drag and hindrance in our attempts to walk in newness of life, and to run with endurance the race that is set before us. Let us not despise the promise, nor seek to explain it away; for it is sorely needed by those who are called upon to bear the lamp of testimony, in these last perilous days, to Him Who raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead.\*

\* Further comments on Rom. v. 12; viii. 13, may be found in the author's volume, "The Wretched Man and His Deliverance," special attention being given therein to the seventh chapter of Romans.