

Grace and Glory

Study of the Book of Romans

INTRODUCTION

While we would not exactly state that the order of the books in the Bible is inspired, yet it certainly looks as if the Spirit of God was in control in their placing. The position of the book of Romans, for instance, almost justifies our saying that it was put there by divine providence. In fact, the whole of the New Testament, as well as the Old, evidences a most careful and consecutive order, which we are loathe to believe is by chance. In the Gospel Records, we see the beginning of God's wonderful plan of salvation for man. God is there viewed as laying the foundation of His eternal house in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles we see the structure - the house itself, the Church of the Living God - in course of construction; while in the epistles of Paul, the children are taught how to behave themselves in the house. And the very first necessity of such behavior is that they must feel at home - act simply and child-like in their Father's house. Therefore, the first letter - the book of Romans - informs as exactly upon what grounds this may be done.

Now, for a beggar lad, a waif of the streets, to conform himself to the requirements of a mansion and feel at ease therein, is a difficult task. Such a fellow would be far more comfortable in a barn or in a stable, than in the luxury of a palace. And yet he would feel far more at home in these surroundings, than a sinner in the Presence of God, unless a change was made in him and made known to him. Now as God wants His children to feel perfectly at home in His Presence, to have no misgivings whatever as to their right to His house, everything must be clearly, fully, permanently, and righteously settled between the sinner and God. Furthermore, the children must know all about the settlement. Their own comfort and happiness demand it. They must know upon what basis they stand before God; how it is that they who have been born of the flesh which is at enmity with God can now be born of the Spirit, born of God and brought into His Presence. And they will never feel at home, secure and happy in their new surroundings, taking liberties in their Father's house, until they learn all the truth concerning the great change which has taken place in their nature and environment.

THE PRODIGAL SON

In chapter 15 of the Gospel by Luke, we have a beautiful illustration of the above relationship, in the prodigal returning home. Immediately he is met by his father and brought into the light and joy of his presence, reclining on his breast in perfect peace. How different from his former life - far from home - a bankrupt, miserable, wretched, hungry creature. Now he is at home, clothed in the best robe, shoes on his feet, a ring on his finger, and feeding on the fatted calf in perfect peace.

What is the reason of this sudden change? What has made this prodigal so comfortable, so satisfied and free from care? Why this peace? Because his father is aware of all that befell him when he was afar off. He knows how low he had been, how deep the depths into which he had sunk; and the son knows that his father knows all about it. There is not one thing of which he has been guilty, not one muddy bog in which he has rolled, but what his father knows. That is what makes him tranquil and happy - with peace, his middle name, as we may truly say. There is nothing covered - no deceit or subterfuge any more. His father knows more about him than he knows about himself; so why should he worry? All the guilt and sin has been confessed and put away forever. He is at home.

Now as we said, the prodigal son and his place of certainty, safety and enjoyment, are a feeble illustration of the position into which God's children are brought by the Gospel of His grace. And this letter to the Romans tells us all about this Gospel. It informs us in the simplest way that God knows all about us, that He has sounded the deepest depths of the degenerate heart of man. He knows it to the very core; and He desires that we know all its depravity, and also that we know that He knows the worst about us. Yea, He knows more about us than we know about ourselves; but that is not all that He wants us to know. He informs us that all the depravity of our sinful heart, with all the sins which we have committed, has been fully atoned for by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" - Romans 4:25. All this, and much more, the book of Romans tells us. The epistle falls easily into the following five divisions:

Declaration of the Gospel 1:1-17
Need of the Gospel 1:18-3:20
Unfolding of the Gospel 3:21-5:21
Results of the Gospel 6:1-11-36
Practical Side of the Gospel 12:1-16:27

Jesus all my debt has taken,
Came and loosed my ev'ry chain.

This with love my heart doth waken.
I'm set free from sin and pain.
On His doing, I am standing.
On His merits, His alone,
I am resting, and I'm taking
All my blessings from the throne

DECLARATION OF THE GOSPEL

Chapter 1:1-17

Paul is the writer of this letter. It is the first in order, as well as the greatest in scope, of all his epistles. It stands related to the others as the hub to the spokes of a wheel. All the essentialities of the other letters are embodied in this letter to the church at Rome; therefore, we may say, it is the Genesis of Paul's writings. It deserves a most careful and studious analysis, as do all the letters of the Apostle. We come into our own proper element, when we enter upon a study of these writings of Paul; for they were all written directly to us, and the greater part about us, the Church - the Body of Christ. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable"; but, it does not all refer primarily to us, as do the writings of this Apostle. These are our own particular portion in God's treasure-house of love, the door of which the Holy Spirit will unlock upon application. Thus, in these special letters, Paul is God's special messenger to us - a special people, for a special purpose, at a special time. And mark this fact; they are "letters" from our Father. Common courtesy demands that we read the letters of an ordinary earthly friend until we get an understanding of their contents; how much more then, these letters from our heavenly Father that contain certain doctrines, the revelation of which are essential to our comfort and edification. However, these blessings and privileges relating to the Church, do not exhaust Paul's revelations. The scope of his writings, both as to time and people, far transcends all the other Scriptures. He tells us of all their revelations, besides mysteries hidden in them of which even those that wrote were ignorant. These revealed purposes are not all confined to heaven and a heavenly people, but embrace the earth - yea, the whole universe, in their span. He is not even restrained to the ages in his vision; but reveals purposes formed before the foundation of the earth, and which will not be consummated until ages and time are no more. His range of revelation reaches from a point long before the account in Genesis, and to a period far beyond the final vision in the Apocalypse of John. And we believe the Holy Spirit is the wisdom and power of their arrangement, order, and accuracy, as well as of their inspiration; which facts will be readily noted as they are diligently studied. Paul wrote nine epistles to the Church - seven of them to seven assemblies, four to his friends, and one to his people (the Hebrews), making fourteen in all. Romans comes first of all his epistles (though it was not written in this order), because it contains the fundamentals of our salvation. God always puts first things first. In this epistle He puts His ax at the root and cuts down the whole old tree, the old creation; then lays a good foundation upon which to build His structure of truth for a new creation.

THE THEME IN ROMANS

The theme of this foundation letter is the "Gospel of God"; for, it is a proclamation to the world, by the One Who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" - John 3:16. These glad tidings are here unfolded from every point of view - whom they concern, and what their purposes are, as well as their results, to the children of men. Paul styles himself the "servant of Jesus Christ," giving precedence in this first letter to his glad service of love; his official title...apostle," getting a secondary place, because Christ is here set forth as "the Servant," come to do His Father's will.

Paul is separated unto this Gospel to declare unto the whole world, to whom he is a debtor in love, the mercy and blessings which are contained therein. The Gospel of God herein set forth concerns the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was manifestly divine and human. His birth of a woman, the Seed of David, proclaims Him not only a man, but the Man; while His resurrection from the dead declares Him the Son of God. The Person and work of Christ are jealously guarded from aught that might dim the luster, or mar the perfection, of either. No one will ever be led astray, into any doctrine of error or conduct, who is thoroughly conversant with the teaching of the book of Romans. Furthermore, such knowledge is absolutely necessary, for the purpose of rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

THE SALUTATION

This letter was written to the Church - the "beloved of God, called saints." Our version inserts the words "to be," which are not in the original. They weaken the force of the above salutation. If I am called to become a saint, I may fail to qualify; but, if I am a saint by the fact of my calling, then I am a saint as surely as I am a

Christian. "Saint" means "holy one"; therefore, I am holy by the fact that I am born of God - born of the Holy One. If we were to receive a letter today from Rome, we would receive a far different version of a saint. She finds it rather difficult to point out her saints.

Their names are generally announced after they have been dead many years - when their memories, like wine, have mellowed a trifle. She waits until the men that were acquainted with them have also passed off the scene, so that all their shortcomings and failures are forgotten; but even then, she makes many a poor choice, as history witnesses. How vastly opposite is the truth as to the saints of God. He informs His people of their holy calling, their separated character; and then expects them to live up to, and in conformity with, their exalted position. He calls them saints before they act saintly, and He never reverses the order. The Apostle commends these saints at Rome. Their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. He desired to visit and help them in their Christian lives. He longed to see them, that he might impart his Gospel of the grace of God to them, to the end that they might be established. Now is not that a marvelous statement? These saints had such great faith that it was known in all the world, and yet they needed to hear the Gospel of Paul that they might be established. Do you blame us then for emphasizing his writings, when the saints are not able to stand and resist the onslaughts of Satan without a knowledge of them? And what was his motive for this zeal? Listen to him. "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" - 1:14. That is, he owed something to every man and wanted to pay that debt of love. God had put Paul in debt to all men, by giving him a Gospel that was intended for all men and what all men needed. Whatever blessing we receive from God makes us a debtor to others. In the measure we get, we should give. God wants channels, not pools. The latter become stagnant in time, and are worse than useless. Paul's Gospel is for all mankind. It levels all men. No one is too low and degraded, neither is anyone too high or exalted, to come within its sphere. It reaches men where they are and as they are; therefore, Paul is ready with all the power that is in him, to preach the Gospel to the saints at Rome. What do you think of that? Preach the Gospel to saints? Why, the Gospel is for sinners, most people argue. Well, we had better change our thoughts in this respect, and make them conform to Scripture. Saints, as well as sinners, need the Gospel. Generally speaking, believers have but a very limited view of the Gospel of Paul. They confine it to the message of salvation from the guilt of sin by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; but that is only a very small part of the Gospel. Every display of God's infinite love in the cross, all the marvels of His purposes regarding His Church as unfolded by the Apostle Paul, are a part of his Gospel of grace. And now Paul reaches his subject in a bursting expression of enthusiasm.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," he exclaims. He cannot contain the surging emotions of his ardent, Spirit-filled soul, when he contemplates his message of the marvelous grace of God. "I am not ashamed" - in view of all the wisdom of the world; in view of all its inventive genius, religious and educational attainments and philosophy; in view of all the intricate needs of the whole of fallen man. I contemplate them all, and am not ashamed of my Gospel. He insists that there is nothing that can be compared with the glad tidings which he proclaims. Let the subtlest reason of man test it, I fear not; let the most wretched, depraved, sin-sick, body-sick wreck of humanity try it, I will not be ashamed. It is all that I claim for it and more, says the Apostle. Even though Greeks despise, Barbarians mock, and Jews reject, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It is worthy of God. He challenges the world, as it were, to produce anything that compares with his unique message of love in its power to conquer and subdue the heart of man.

THE GLORY OF PAUL'S GOSPEL

It is thus he announces his Gospel, and then he gives the reason of his triumphant boast. "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." That is, in this Gospel of grace, God has now the power or right whereby He is enabled to save sinners without any merit on their part. That was impossible without the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (which is the definition of the Gospel) - I Cor. 15:3, 4. Without the vicarious atonement of Christ, God Himself was powerless to save a sinner whether Jew or Gentile, though He might and did desire to do so; but His hands were tied. God must be just. If He pardons a guilty man, it must be upon a righteous basis. His government is otherwise found defective. And this cannot be. The key verse of the Epistle then comes in immediately in this connection. Note it carefully. Meditate upon it and learn its secrets. It will pay you. "For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" - 1:17 R. V. The whole plan of salvation by grace is summed up in that short and concise statement. It is the heart, yea, the kernel of this epistle and the Gospel it proclaims. It distinguishes Paul's message of grace from all the religious systems of the world; for they all without exception tell of blessing for the good, the righteous; but never for the lost, the vile, except at the expense of God's righteousness. Even God's righteous law, the covenant of Sinai given to Israel, demanded

righteousness from man as the ground of blessing. But now, in this Gospel of Paul's, God has a new message for man. Oh, for voice and tongue and pen to declare it! Words are feeble to make known the riches of grace, that are disclosed herein. It transcends all the carnal thoughts of man. He can never understand it, apart from revelation. That God should bless and justify the innocent, the good, he can comprehend; but He acts just the contrary. He blesses and justifies the ungodly. Here is where man's reason totters, and he refuses to accept the doctrine of grace. That God should demand a righteousness from man, he can understand; but, that He should bestow one upon him, is more than his mind can comprehend. It is inconceivable, he will argue, that God should be so gracious toward His enemy; nevertheless, it is true. God has done the unbelievable thing. He has come in upon the scene of man's need and has undertaken for His fallen creature, as Paul's Gospel teaches.

Sometimes God takes away all our privileges and comforts that we may learn to find our all in Him.

DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS INDISPENSABLE

Humanity was helpless. Not one of Adam's race could lift himself up, much less lift up others of his kind. The enemy knocked him down and stripped him of his righteousness. He left him naked, wounded, and half dead; not only without a good character, and wholly unable to obtain one, but with a decidedly bad character. If he is helped at all, it must be from a source otherwise than himself. He needs the Good Samaritan. God enters the arena in his defense. He takes up man's case as His own and makes it possible not only to give him a righteous standing, but a righteous character as well; and not only a human righteousness, such as Adam would have attained if he had not sinned, but a divine righteousness. Yea, marvel of marvels, God's own righteous character is bestowed upon the helpless, hopeless creature, when he believes on Jesus Christ.

The righteousness of God, which springs from faith, is made right over to him. It is a matter of revelation. And this fact is the distinguishing mark of Paul's message. Observe carefully that this righteousness is not demanded from man on the principle of works, that is law; but bestowed upon him on the principle of faith, that is grace. It is a BY FAITH RIGHTEOUSNESS, in contrast with a BY WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS, and is revealed unto faith; as it is written - "The just shall live by His faith" - Habakkuk 2:4. With this verse, four times quoted in the Bible, the declaration of the letter to the church in Rome closes.

God Cannot Fail

'Tis not to fail, tho' it appear
That life has lost its zest and cheer,
And all the days you prayed with tears
Are counted now as wasted years.
Tho' men deride and at you rail;
Keep trusting on; God cannot fail.
'Tis not to fail, tho' men may say
That you are down and out today,
And all your work has been in vain.
Do not despair; there's golden grain,
Which you have sown, on hill and dale.
Keep trusting on; God cannot fail.
'Tis not to fail, to do your best,
And give your all at Christ's behest:
His recompense is greatest gain.
The bow of promise follows rain;
And spring's soft winds the winter's gals.
Keep trusting on; God cannot fail.

-Mary M. Bodie

THE UNFOLDING OF THE GOSPEL

Chapters 1:18-3:20

From this point on, we are given to see the reason for such a Gospel. Yea, more, the absolute necessity for the manifestation of God's grace is plainly set forth. Man is held up for inspection before the unerring, perfect Word of God, judged thereby and found guilty. We read in the opening statement that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in

unrighteousness," or keep down the truth by living in wickedness. God has again and again, in the history of mankind, evidenced His disposition against wickedness. And the measure of man's responsibility is according to the measure of light. There are many who appear solicitous as to the welfare of the heathen, and yet at the same time are wholly indifferent to their own need. They turn aside every thrust of the sword of the Spirit against themselves, by their anxious inquiry as to the poor heathen; but they need not be disturbed on this score. God's wrath is not on those who do not know the truth; but on those who do know it, and hold it in unrighteousness. There is much said about heathen darkness; but we ought rather to be concerned about Christian light.

THE IMMORAL MAN

God has never left Himself without witness; and man has the power within himself (which no beast has) of discovering the existence of God in the creation, the work of His hand. The wonderful visible universe is a mighty, ever present witness (to the reasoning faculties of man) of the almighty, invisible Creator behind the veil. If men had no power of apprehension, there could be no guilt; but as it is, they are inexcusable, according to the Spirit's indictment here. Note verse 21. It is timely for today.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God." There is no thought of human progress in that statement. Paul declares that the race commenced with the knowledge of God, which it afterwards lost. No evolution here, or rather "devolution," we would say, and coin a new word. Man begins on the down grade by an assumption of wisdom; but this is simply foolishness, and it is presently manifested. "How?" Someone may ask. "And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." Was not this a descent? And this giving up of God is clearly marked in stages. He is replaced first with the highest conception possible to man, the image of a man.

From this on, he rapidly falls lower and lower in his idolatry. It is from man to birds, then to beasts, and finally he worships creeping things. The last are closer to earth, and more remote from heaven; therefore, the grossest form of idolatry. Such is the rapid descent of man, debased and debasing, when once he leaves God. He alone can maintain him, in proximity to Himself and heaven. Then the sad sequel - "Wherefore God also gave them up." That tells the whole story. When God lets go of man, there are no lengths to which he will not go; no depths to which he will not sink. It is terrible. And observe, there is the same gradation of the giving up on God's part, as there was on man's part.

Man gives up worshipping the invisible God, replacing Him with a bodily image. God gives him up in his body - 1:24. Then man's affections turn from God. God gives him up in his soul, the seat of the affections, and he sinks lower than the beast - 1:26. Lastly, man did not desire to retain God in his knowledge; he wanted to forget Him. Therefore, God gives him up to a reprobate mind - the seat of the spirit - 1:28. Thus man, who is a trinity of natures, made to glorify the Trinity of the Godhead, is utterly given up in every part of his being. That is the retributive justice of God. When man is regenerated, there is the same gradual seizure of his being, by and for God, as there was the giving up. His spirit is first quickened. God takes possession of his spirit. He begins to know God; after which his affections, or soulish nature, are seized by God. He is no longer given up to vile affections, but begins to love Him, whom he has not seen - the invisible God. Finally his body, though not yet in its glorified state, is nevertheless given up to the Spirit of God as His temple; and is counted holy, because of the treasure that it contains. The whole of man, a new creation, is again in unison with God - Father, Son, and Spirit; and enjoys fellowship with Him in every part of his being.

But before we close with the awful condition of man after he leaves God, we desire to call attention to the correspondence here with that which we find in Paul's second letter to Timothy, chapter three. Therefore, we conclude that Christendom is on the way to the same degeneracy as that of man in the beginning. Man has again been given a revelation of the invisible God and His wondrous love in the Person of Christ, the visible God. Yea, he has had a greater revelation than was vouchsafed at the first; but, has he sought to retain God in his knowledge? Has he sought to love and serve Him? How has he requited God for His revelation in grace? Will he not, even as the primitive man, change the truth of God into a lie, and worship the creature more than the Creator? Yea, for so it is written. God's retributive justice will again be in evidence. He will "send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth" - II Thess. 2:11, 12. Men must receive the one, the truth, and walk in the light; or they shall receive the other, the lie, and walk in the darkness. The end of this age will find man again worshipping an image. The man of sin (who is the devil incarnate) will command all men everywhere, to fall down and worship him. In Jerusalem, where his image will be set up in the temple, this idolatry will be especially in evidence. Men will again worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. Such is man whose breath is in his nostrils. Let us cease from any expectation of good from him.

THE MORAL MAN

Chapter Two

The second chapter opens with an address to the moral man. The same conviction of guilt is brought home to him, as is revealed to the immoral man in the former section, with this difference.

The first chapter points more definitely to man before Abraham was called out from among the Gentiles, or nations, to be a witness to all other men of the one true and living God; a witness before the law was given. The Jew, therefore, is the moral man, in contrast with the immoral man.

That was not because of any innate goodness in him; but rather because God had revealed Himself, first to the fathers, and later to Moses, and gave him the Ten Commandments as the rule of life for them. And though Israel, the chosen nation, did not and could not obey these God-given laws, in a spiritual sense nor even absolutely in a natural sense; yet, the very fact of their partial obedience, changed them outwardly. While the nature of those men remained in the same ungodly condition, the fruit of their depravity was checked. It was kept back from its full display of wickedness; hence, the moral man of Paul's day was the Jew. But today, this arraignment is the voice of God, to the professed church member in Christendom; in fact, to any man anywhere,

Jew or Gentile, who comes under this class - boasting in his own clean life, his unsullied character, his respectable lineage, etc I say, this chapter applies to that fellow, whoever he is.

The Apostle boldly declares that, the mere knowledge of the law, cannot take the place of fulfilling the law. The righteous judgment of God, which is absolutely faultless, gives with perfect impartiality the reward in accord with the life.

IMPARTIAL JUSTICE RENDERED

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds" - 2:6. The one who continues in well doing, seeking glory and honor and immortality, will be rewarded with eternal life. That is, if anyone can, by his own efforts, steadfastly continue in well doing, it will be recorded in the archives on high.

And he will get justice; even as the contentious, disobedient, and rebellious will get what is coming to them. God's holy throne demands it. He is not partial. Jew and Gentile, moral and immoral, will be judged; not by profession, but by their works. "For there is no respect of persons with God" - 2:11. Reality alone will count when God is Judge.

And who dare find fault with this? But, says one, "How will the Jew fare, if such is the character of God's judgment? Will he have no special favor shown him?" No indeed! The inspired writer answers this question with the utmost confidence, speaking as though one of these Pharisees stood before him. He would pierce him through and through with his rapid fire-array and fire-away of questions. "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" - 2:21. Then he sweeps away all his refuge of lies, by the crushing testimony of Scripture that the Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. At that time, those words could only apply to the Jew; but, at the present time, they have a much wider application. They fall heavily upon the warring nations, as well as those who are preparing for war, in these so-called Christian lands. They apply also, to the apparently loyal citizens; the grafters in politics, from the least to the greatest, who are stealing from their country, getting rich by any means in their power. What can the heathen say as to such Christian conduct? They could mock and jeer at the true and living God, whom these moral (?) men profess to know and serve. Yes, indeed. That Scripture speaks to men today with a voice that dares to speak and that cannot be hushed; a voice for Jew and Gentile, a voice for all. The last few verses here indicate that the greater the light, the greater the profit, if there is conformity of life. In other words, God demands reality, as He says, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly" - 2:28, 29. In the same manner, we may speak today. He is not a Christian who is one outwardly, one who has only been baptized in water, or has only joined some church; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly - one who has been born again, born of the Spirit of God. God's principles are always the same. Human standards, and outward appearances, weigh little on His scales. He looketh on the heart. Men may change. He changes not.

WHY THE JEW?

Chapter Three

In the case of the Jew then, some may ask, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" - 3:1. Ah, but Paul says they have many things in their favor; the chief of which is, that unto them were committed the oracles of God. And these latter are not affected by man's acceptance or rejection of them. Men may think they dispose of these sayings of God in an easy way, by simply affirming, "We do

not believe them." But that is the utmost of folly. We cannot put a fire out by saying, "We do not believe there is a fire." Likewise men cannot get rid of the lake of fire, or God's judgment upon sin, by denying these facts. Yea, let God be true, though it makes every man a liar. Men's unbelief cannot change the truthfulness, nor the priceless value, of His Word. David even said, in the day of his sorrow, that his very sin should display the righteousness of God - Psalm 51:4. "Oh," cries someone, "if that is the case, why then should I be judged as a sinner? If God's righteousness is magnified by our unrighteousness, let us rather do evil, that good may come." Some even slanderously affirmed that Paul taught such presumption; but, he says rather, "Whose damnation is just" - 3:8. But, says someone, "Is not the Jew better than the Gentile, because of the privilege of possessing these oracles of God?" Nay, these very writings witness against the Jew, as well as against all other men. Paul places all men under sin. Then he quotes from these very Scriptures, to support his argument.

"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God" - Psalm 14:2. And then follows what He saw. It has been termed man's photograph, sketched by an inspired pen - a moral photograph and a black one. It begins by portraying the condition of his throat, which is likened to an open sepulcher. The taint of death is in every breath, even without one word or work of sin mentioned; but then the x-ray is turned on the mouth and tongue, and both found to be in harmony with the throat. A lying, deceitful tongue is found in an environment suited to it - a month full of cursing and bitterness with the poison of asps under the tongue - Mephibosheth, "shame out of his mouth" - II Samuel 9:6. Notice, it is "Me-phem," not "he fib."

So much for their words, now we shall see their work. Bloodshed, misery, and ruin follow in their path. "Their feet are swift to shed blood" - 3:15 - quick to take offense and strike. Sorrow stalks in their steps, while death waits at the door. Is this not true? Look at the wars, for the proof. Who would have believed that barbarous, much less civilized nations, would have been guilty of such cruelty and hatred? But, God tells us what He sees in man, even though religious. The Jews applied this portion in the Psalms to the Gentiles; but the Apostle insists that what is written in the law, applies to those that are under the law. He has previously silenced the immoral, irreligious, as well as the moral man; and now he includes the Jew in the wholesale condemnation. "There is none righteous, no, not one" is the verdict. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" - 3:10, 11. Therefore, the whole world is guilty before God. The picture is as dark as midnight. Every mouth must be stopped; no excuses, retrials, or paroles accepted. All mankind has been shut up to the judgment of God, awaiting their sentence of doom. It surely is a dismal, dark picture; not the slightest hope of a change of God's unerring verdict. But this is just the foil that the Gospel of grace demands. It serves as a perfect background and enhances the glory of Paul's marvelous message, which needs such a setting to show forth its beauty and grace. And it was for this very purpose - to display His grace, that God has shown up man, stripped absolutely of every merit. Not comparing one with another, not that one is better or worse than another; all are leveled to the one measure - guilty before God. We are all shut up to judgment -no difference - all lost sinners, without any merit whatever. If we were deserving in the least measure, His grace would be mingled with works. He found a way to save meritless ones.

He found a way to let the full effulgence of His favor rest upon them. He found a way whereby there would be nothing in them to hinder His grace. He found a way to save them, despite all their sin and enmity toward Himself. Marvelous grace!

ABSOLUTELY HELPLESS

But, there is more than even this dark picture of man's condition, to prove the necessity of God's intervention in his behalf. He was not only wicked and ungodly, but he was helpless as well. The holy law of God showed him up; not only as a criminal under sentence of death, but as unable to extricate himself from his terrible predicament. And, the point which we wish to emphasize is, that it was this very law of God (which men take today as the rule of life) that brought man into this very place of condemnation and sinfulness and weakness. Therefore, we can understand the logic of Paul's first conclusion, after all the aforementioned arguments - "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" - 3:20. That is, on the basis of obedience to law, no man has any chance whatever; for, as we said, it is the law itself that proves even religious men guilty, and shuts all men up to the judgment of God; for, if the Jew found the law a yoke and could not obey its absolute commands (Acts 15:10), what other man can do so? As one has aptly said, "The law is like a mirror which shows us how dirty we are; but it has no power to wash us." We read that, "by the law is the knowledge of sin"; but, it is the blood of Jesus Christ, that cleanses us from the sin which the law manifests - I John 1:7.

"The deeds of the law," are simply man's puny efforts to fulfill God's requirements. By these endeavors, he hopes to propitiate God and gain His favor; but at the outset, after Paul has told us of man's dreadful state,

he blocks any purpose of reform by stating that man's case is hopeless. He is not only down in the gutter, but more; he cannot get up, or out. He cannot do one thing to justify himself before God. On the principle of works, not one single being will ever be accepted of God.

VINDICATES GOD'S CHARACTER

You see God's character is at stake in this matter. All His creatures are looking upon man's rebellion and sin, and watching His attitude thereto. It is all very well to say He is merciful (and it is the truth); but, if on this ground alone man was forgiven, God's justice would be questioned. If there could be found one taint upon His righteous character, or one flaw in His government, His throne would be in jeopardy. If a man had lived all his life without committing one sin and then at the very end fell just once, God's hands would be tied. He could not justify that man on the ground of law, for he has broken the law; neither can God forgive him, for He is just. What can He do? God's character, as well as His government, demands that man be fully punished. His holiness and justice must be satisfied, as regards sin. He cannot righteously forgive, much less justify a sinner. Justification is distinct and far more than forgiveness. Justification declares the man free from all charge, acquitted by the order of the court. It is not as though God says, "The man is guilty; but I will not punish the poor, weak creature. I will pardon him, because he is the creature of My hand. I pity him." That would be forgiveness (and it is all that most believers understand as to their redemption); but that would not be a righteous acquittal. Why, even the devil could rise up against God for such a decree, and question the integrity of His court on that score. He himself could expect forgiveness too on the basis of mercy, if that was all that man had to reckon upon. But when a verdict of acquittal is rendered by the court - the Supreme Court, if you please - the man under charge walks out, not only a free man, but without a stain upon his character. And that is the meaning of justification. It is the standing that every believer has before the court of heaven - a stable, steadfast, righteous footing - as though he had never sinned. And that is much better than having "sentence suspended" (waiting a future judgment) as some teach; or, even "paroled" (our eternal destiny dependent upon our future good behavior), as others proclaim. No, indeed!

God justifies us forever, apart from anything we have done or could ever do. He shows up the helpless, hopeless condition of all mankind, simply that we may see the necessity of His intervention in our behalf. He loved the creature that He had made, but He could not righteously forgive him without atonement; therefore, His own arm provided it. Our sentence of death (because we were guilty before God) was not simply suspended; but it was met by another, Christ. The righteous One stood in our place, bearing our judgment because of sin. He bore God's wrath. Therefore now, God can righteously acquit and justify us from all sin, before the universe of heaven; and not a demon can wag his tongue at us, nor rail at God for His mercy.

That is what Paul's message proclaims. God has come in and put sin away forever; and now He places His power over against man's weakness and helplessness, and challenges any of His creatures to find one flaw in His justice for showing mercy. Thus the perplexing problem of redemption has been solved by Infinite Wisdom. God may now justify a sinner without justifying his sin. He can save him from the due reward of his evil deeds; and yet not compromise His justice, nor condone His creature's sin. This problem may appear simple, even as it is easy to unfasten a most complicated lock when once we have the key; but, if the question had been submitted to the united wisdom of all the philosophers and sages of the world, it would still remain unsolved. No marvel that Paul exclaimed, when he had seen the vision, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33.

THE LOWLY CHRIST

Mary M. Bodie

They borrowed a stable and a humble table,
When Christ the Lord came down.
They borrowed a share in the manger bare,
For the Babe of vast renown.
And the thorny crown,
And the cross so brown,
Were borrowed too From me and you.
They borrowed an ass, the beast of the mass,
When they fled from Herod's frown.
They borrowed a cot and a house and lot,
In an old Egyptian town.
And the thorny crown

And the cross so brown,
Were borrowed too From me and you.
He borrowed the bread and the hungry fed;
For naught had He of His own.
He borrowed the dishes as well as the fishes
As they sat on hill unknown.
And the thorny crown
And the cross so brown,
Were borrowed too From me and you.
He borrowed the boat and soon put afloat,
But Peter feared they would drown.
He borrowed the power that very hour,
And made the wind slow down.
And the thorny crown
And the cross so brown,
Were borrowed too From me and you.
They borrowed a room on the way to the doom,
And that was not His own.
They borrowed the grave which the rich man gave,
When they took the Savior down.
And the thorny crown
And the cross so brown,
Were borrowed too From me and you.

THE UNFOLDING OF THE GOSPEL

Chapters 3:21-5:21

"BUT NOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WITHOUT THE LAW IS MANIFESTED...EVEN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WHICH IS BY FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST UNTO ALL AND UPON ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE" - 3:21, 22.

We have, in the above Scripture, the keynote of the second great section of our letter. It is a marvelous statement, and marks the third division of the book. It means that God (through the Gospel, not through the law) now has a righteousness for man. As the latter has been shown up without any righteousness, spiritually naked and undone, and wholly unable to acquire a righteousness of his own; God is seen coming to the help of His miserable creature. And as man is absolutely bankrupt, we would judge that God's righteousness has the field, without a competitor. And, so it has, as far as God and His acceptance of man are concerned. There is no other righteousness to be obtained, except this one of faith that is bestowed upon the believer.

Yet, men still try to bring in a rival, and dare to compete with God by works of righteousness which they have done. How foolish!

The words, "without the law," emphasize the separate and distinctive character of this by-faith righteousness. We are thus taught that we must not confound it with anything human. The law represents that which is from man. It demands something from him, if he is to have a righteousness of his own; but God's righteousness is absolutely apart from anything of man. It is that which is inherent in God Himself. It is connected with His own very nature, and needs nothing to complete or perfect it. God is not under law to do something to be righteous, as is the case with man. God is righteous. He cannot be otherwise, nor do otherwise, than righteously. And now this divine righteousness which has been manifested apart from law, is placed upon or to the credit of all them that believe. It is imputed to them. They are counted as though they had never sinned; yea, more, counted as though they COULD never sin.

WITNESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Moreover, this is all witnessed to, by the law and the prophets. That is, it is in harmony with the Old Testament writings, not in opposition to them. No, indeed! On the contrary, as Paul would emphasize, the message of grace is witnessed to and confirmed by the prophetic writings. The entire Word of God boldly announces the necessity of such a righteousness, as well as the inability of man to obtain one by his own works. The latter is again and again shown up without any standing - ungodly, depraved, and helpless. The very fact that he was sent out of the Garden of Eden, would prove this fact. It was there he lost his upright standing, the image in which God had made him. There was no sin in him, nor on him, when he came from

his Creator's hand. He had a righteous standing with God, but his state remained a question. He was left naked, exposed; that is, liable to temptation. Jehovah would try the creature He had made. He left him free, for he must be allowed to prove his integrity and faithfulness; thus obtaining a righteous character of his own working, which he could hand down to his posterity. Remember that Adam was the first head of the human race; therefore, he was under responsibility. There was a condition attached to the continuation of his life in the garden (which means a fellowship with God). If he had heeded the Lord's command, he would have obtained a human righteousness which would have fallen to the lot of all his posterity; but alas, he failed. And immediately he knew he was naked. His conscience accused him, and he set about to redeem himself. He made a fig-leaf apron to cover his nakedness, which is a type of human effort to provide a righteousness.

GOD ON THE SCENE

At this point, however, Jehovah appears upon the scene and pronounces judgment upon the transgressors. Notice the sequel. He slays animals, and clothes Adam and Eve with the skins thereof. Marvelous type! God's own durable righteousness, proven righteousness, provided by the slaying of His own holy Son upon the cross, was put on Adam; and in this dress alone he was able to stand before God. We may easily hear the harmony in this connection. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We ALL need a covering, even as Adam; and it is provided for ALL them that believe. The Lord Jesus Christ is the channel through which we may obtain this righteousness of faith. He alone, of all mankind, not only did not do evil; but He actually did good. He perfectly obeyed God's holy law; and then offered Himself as the Substitute, the Scapegoat, for a lost and ruined creation. God accepted Him and smote Him, in our stead.

His wrath fell upon His holy Son in our behalf; and now He can not only gratuitously (that is, without a cause in man) forgive, but justify the sinner that believes the good news of his redemption which was purchased by the cross.

JUSTIFICATION

Let us look carefully into this great, fundamental question of justification; for, there is the grossest ignorance abroad, concerning it. Many use the word as though it was an experience which we enjoyed (or rather endured, if we may so irreverently speak of God's blessed salvation), when we were first converted. It has been ignorantly spoken of as "initial salvation"; but, this is not its meaning, according to the Scriptures. In fact, this is not an experience at all, either initial or full salvation. It is the judicial act of God, irrespective of our feelings. It has to do with our faith alone.

When we believe that Christ died for us and accept Him as our Saviour, God justifies us. He gives us a standing in His Son, the Last Adam, as though we had never sinned. This is much more than forgiveness, though it includes it. In Christ, we stand in a higher relationship to God and His whole creation, than if we had never sinned in Adam. For if the latter had obeyed God perfectly, he would have had a perfect human righteousness only, which would have been our heritage; but the sinner whom God now justifies, because of his faith, receives a DIVINE righteousness - infinite in glorious perfection. And this standing we can never lose. We may not enjoy the results of this wonderful place, because of failure or departure from God; but, the fact of a believer's justification, remains the same. This is unchanged and unchangeable. It is dependent, as to its continuance, upon God's attitude to His Son. As long as Christ continues to be the second Head of the human race, just and upright before God; so long will every believer in Him stand in His standing.

And the source of justification is God's grace - "justified freely by His grace" - unmerited favor toward man. And His plan is gratuitous, that is, requiring nothing in return; because God already has the basis of this favor laid in "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The sacrifice of Christ on the cross makes it possible for God to be just, and yet justify the sinner who believes. For God "set forth" His Son - exhibited Christ before all His creation as a "propitiation." The Holy One was "set forth," shown up as satisfying all the claims of divine justice against man's sin; and He fully expiated the guilt of sin - fully atoned for all God's broken law.

And it was publicly to exhibit His own righteousness that God exhibited Christ - made Him a spectacle before men and angels, as a propitiation for sin. For in view of the fact that God had permitted sin to go unpunished during the previous centuries - "the passing over of sins done aforetime" (3:25 R.V.) - God now proved His infinite and unchanging hatred of sin, in the giving of His Son to death as a sin offering. He thus vindicated His own righteousness. He had passed over sin, apparently letting men do as they pleased; but, it was only because He had His eye on Calvary; where, in His purpose, Christ as the Lamb, foreordained before the foundation of the world, was bearing away the sin of the world. And, when the due time came, Christ actually was made "sin for us." Thus the cross not only shows that God was just in His dealings with sin, but merciful in His dealings with man. He must punish sin; but He gave His Son a ransom for the guilty,

that He thereby "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Human boasting is therefore wholly shut out, through the plan of justification by faith apart from works; for no man can brag because he believes the Word of God. God is honored and His law established by the faith way. For since men have sinned, God proved by the punishment of their sin at Calvary in the Person of His own Beloved Son, that He would not suffer His law to be violated without due penalty. He thus honored and established His holy law. And now, He honors His holy Son, by justifying all that believe in Him. The Judge exonerates them from all guilt; for He is under obligation to His Son in this matter.

ABRAHAM AND DAVID

At this point in his letter, the Apostle stops in his argument to call upon the witness stand two great men of the Bible - Abraham and David. They are examples of the grace plan of salvation.

Both of these men were given special promises regarding Christ: first, as the fruitful Seed through whom all nations were to be blessed; and then as the King, the Seed of David, who should reign over the nations. The one, Abraham, was called "the friend of God"; the other, David, was termed a man after God's "own heart." The Jews especially honored the memory of, and gloried in, these two outstanding ancestors; therefore, Paul would have them tell upon what ground they were justified. If any man had whereof to boast of God's wonderful sovereign dealings with them, these men surely did. Therefore their testimony is important. Abraham is the first on the witness stand.

What has he to say regarding his justification before God? If he were justified by his works, we want to know it; for he had something to boast of then, says Paul. But what affirm the Scriptures?

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Then is added, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." This surely settles the matter concerning Abraham. He was "justified by faith without the deeds of the law." In fact, there was no law given to Abraham. He lived four hundred and thirty years before the law was given - Galatians 3:17. God told him that He would bless him and make him a blessing, and Abraham believed that He could and would do as He had said.

That was all there was to his justification. And his inheritance in Canaan was obtained in the same manner. God called him to go and take possession of that goodly land; and Abraham said, "Yes, Lord, I certainly will." And he entered in and enjoyed his inheritance by faith. As to sight, the Hittites, Jebusites, etc., were still in undisputed possession. And it was also by faith; as is stated, that Abraham became the father of Isaac, and through him the father of many nations. And in this he became like God who, through his Seed which is Christ, will become the "father of many nations." Thus Abraham witnesses of faith alone.

Then follows David. He also stands forth in defense of the faith way of justification, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." And then he waxes bold in his testimony and exclaims, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Psalm 32:1, 2. This surely is enough to convince anyone, that God never had any other way of salvation than that of grace and faith. As we read: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." Gentile, as well as Jew, is included in the "whosoever" of the Gospel. No one is shut out except for unbelief. The work of Christ is sufficient. The blood atones for all sin. How guilty then, the one refusing to accept God's mercy, which was extended to us in the gift of His Son, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

The fact that Abraham was justified while uncircumcised opens the door of justification to the Gentiles. They, too, thus may claim him as their father on the ground of faith in Jesus Christ.

Justification follows immediately upon faith. It is granted to him who is not working, but believing.

God refuses to let any man have the privilege of earning his salvation. He must take it as a free gift, or not have it at all; for faith has not the least merit. We do not deem it a matter of reward, to believe an honest man. It is not an effort, or a work. And, as it has pleased God to convey His salvation to man by the channel of faith, let us rejoice in His explanation, accept His Word, and enjoy His grace.

Abraham did this childlike thing. He believed the Word of God when all the evidence was against the possibility of its fulfillment. His body, as to all practical purposes, was "as good as dead"; his wife was worse, if that could be - barren all her days. He realized his helpless condition, and faced the facts; yet, he did not doubt, that God could and would do what He had promised. He knew that God was superior to death; and his faith made it possible for God to fulfill His Word to him. Abraham did not doubt, "but was strong in faith," thus necessitating God to vindicate him.

Faith must be rewarded. God works on this principle and no other. Abraham was fully persuaded that God meant what He said and said what He meant. He was not staggered by difficulties in the way; and note the

response on God's part - his faith was counted unto him for righteousness.

But observe that this was not written for Abraham's sake only, but for ours also, "to whom it shall be imputed" (the same kind of righteousness imputed), if we believe (have the same kind of faith) in the same God - the God of resurrection. He "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." The resurrection of Christ is the proof that His sacrifice was acceptable to God. He paid the entire bill. The plate is all wiped Clean, and the resurrection is the receipt. We all know what assurance it gives to have the receipt, when a man comes to collect his bill the second time; likewise, in the matter of our justification. God has put into our hands a guarantee of established relationship to Himself, in the fact that He raised Him (Who was our Substitute) from the dead. We stand in Him perfect and upright. And then the following results of enjoyment and stability may be ours.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" - Romans 5:1.

In the first five verses of this chapter, Paul informs us of some sure results which accompany the fact of our justification. They follow upon our acceptance of Christ. The first is peace - not that peaceful feeling, "the peace of God," of which the Apostle speaks elsewhere (Phil. 4:7) - but "Peace with God." It signifies a change of attitude. We were at enmity with God, in rebellion against Him, as we read later in this chapter; but now we have surrendered, and the consequence is peace. God was besieging our hearts by His Holy Spirit and wooing us for years, to lay down our arms and yield to Him. He has been reconciled to man since the death of Christ upon the cross nineteen hundred years ago. And the peace with God mentioned here proceeds from, and is measured by, what Christ finished for us upon the cross. The peace which I have in my heart - the peace of condition, or state - depends upon the former peace and my vision of Him who "made peace through the blood of His cross." Col. 1:20.

The second result of the fact of our justification is that we find a way opened into the Presence of God. This is the meaning of "access ... into this grace wherein we stand." We are brought into the full favor of Christ, who is before the Father in continual fellowship and acceptance. This glorious favor brings to us the third result - we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." But such an experience is generally followed by tribulation, in which we learn to glory. For this is but the forerunner of patience or steadfastness; while the latter brings us experience, or is a proof of soundness. This gives rise to hope, which makes us not ashamed, but rather makes us happy in the time of trial; for "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." We are thus enabled to triumph over shame and suffering. Paul himself enjoyed such a wonderful experience, as witness that glorious scene in the jail at Philippi; where he and Silas, with their backs cut with many stripes and their feet fast in the stocks, sang praises to God at midnight - Acts 16. Conybeare renders this portion in this wise: "We exult also in our sufferings; for we know that by suffering is wrought steadfastness, and steadfastness is the proof of soundness, and proof gives rise to hope; and our hope cannot shame us in the day of trial; because the love of God is shed forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given unto us."

RECONCILIATION

Now in our epistle, after we have been given a summing up of the blessings attendant upon the justified - those in Christ - we are brought back, as it were, to get a full view of our unjustified condition in Adam, with absolutely no standing before God and without strength to obtain one.

The Apostle declares that we were ungodly - unlike God; yet for such, in due time Christ, the Last Adam, died. We were unrighteous. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. That is, there would have been no need of Christ's death, if Adam had obeyed God; and we had thus inherited a human righteousness through him. "Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Yes, if man possessed even a little spark of good as many hold today, there would have been some cause for God's love to be manifested; but on the contrary, "there is none righteous." God's love toward man proceeded wholly from Himself. There was nothing in us to merit or draw it out. Therefore it is written, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." While we were not only ungodly by nature, but sinners by practice, God's love-Gift, the Last Adam, came to redeem and lift up the helpless.

Then Paul argues, which is logical, if we are justified entirely by the grace of God - the blood of Jesus as the basis - we shall certainly be saved from wrath; agreeing with the promise of Jesus. "...shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life" - John 5:24. And the Apostle further argues - if God reconciled us when we were enemies, by the death of His Son, "much more ...we shall be saved by His life." The reconciliation has been effected whether we come into the enjoyment of it or not. This is judicial. It has reference to Christ dying as the Substitute of our fallen head, Adam. But the words, "saved by His life," refer to Christ's resurrection as the Last Adam - "a quickening spirit" (life-giving Spirit) - which life must be appropriated to be enjoyed. In other words, the whole old creation was put to death in Christ's death; but,

only those who accept His death as their death, are raised a new creation. They have passed from death unto life. So Paul can truly add - "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (reconciliation)." This is conclusive proof that Christ's work, as the Last Adam is in view here. Paul is making way for the following fundamental teaching which is the basic truth for the Church - the twofold Headship of the human race - with the attendant responsibility upon each Head, and its results to the human family.

THE TWO HEADSHIPS

"Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ... Therefore as by the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (Christ) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" - Romans 5:12, 18.

We have arrived at a most important part of our study. It is generally considered a most difficult portion, and with reason; for there are depths and heights and lengths and breadths in this little block of Scripture. It is a profound section. The truth herein contained forms the basis of all Paul's great body of teaching for the Church, a mystery which can be uncovered only by the Holy Spirit.

Christ is shown here as the second Head of the human race - the Kinsman-Redeemer - in contrast with Adam, the first head. Also, His great work of redemption with all its results, is emphasized and contrasted with Adam's great fall and all its results. The preponderance of evidence is "much more" (five times repeated) in favor of Christ and the blessings He has brought to mankind. Yea, these latter, much more than compensate for all the wreckage and ruin that was entailed upon humanity by the sin of Adam.

A parenthesis of five verses occurs between verses twelve and eighteen, the Scriptures quoted above. Paul begins his mastery parallel by acknowledging the universal sway of sin and death over all mankind, and then points out the culprit and fixes the blame upon him. It is Adam. He disobeyed God in the garden, and brought ruin upon all his progeny. Sin thus entered the world, also death. And in support of this argument the Apostle introduces the parenthesis, and shows that death reigned over all men from the time of Adam until Moses; though there was no transgression during that period - for there was no law. Paul does not say that there was no sin, but no law; consequently no breaking of law, which is transgression; yet death reigned nevertheless. He is herein teaching that death has been given its right to reign in the world by Adam's one transgression in the garden. He there broke a known commandment by eating of the forbidden fruit, and so brought sin and death upon the scene.

But now enters an opposer of sin - Verse 15. Grace is on the throne, corresponding adversely with sin; while Christ's one obedience, His death on the cross, is set over against Adam's one disobedience. The one (Christ) just as truly brought life, where the other (Adam) brought death.

Yet even so, the figure falls short of doing justice to the great reality. It fails utterly in several particulars, to fully set forth the scope and power resulting from the sacrifice of Christ. A simple reversal of the offense, would only put us back to where Adam was before he fell. He was without sin; but the free gift of justification through Christ is infinitely more than just recovery from the effects of the fall. Grace does not simply put man back in the garden to be tested again; but rather puts him out of the realm of law and probation altogether. It gives him a righteousness that has already been tried and proven faultless - an unchangeable righteousness imputed as well as imparted to him, a standing as well as a state, when he believes the Gospel. Redemption does not only look back and undo all the results of the fall, but it looks forward and gives us far more than we lost in Adam. Notice verse sixteen in Conybeare's translation - "Moreover, the boon (or gift) of God exceeds the fruit of Adam's sin; for the doom came out of one offence, a sentence of condemnation; but the gift comes, out of many offences, a sentence of acquittal." That is, it was one sin that brought condemnation to the whole of mankind - the many.

On the other hand, the gift of acquittal - or justification - goes farther yet. It is acquittal from the many offenses of the whole human race. Remember, the Apostle is here speaking of the provision for the justification of the world, that was laid in the one righteous act - Christ's death on Calvary. The following verse is great. It is an advance of many steps, rather than just back to the garden in Eden and Adamic perfection. Let us note it carefully - "For if the reign of death was established by the one man (Adam), through the sin of him alone; far more shall the reign of life be established in those who receive the overflowing fullness of the free gift of righteousness by the one Man Jesus Christ" - Romans 5:17 - Conybeare.

Adam set death upon the throne by his one act of disobedience, and it ruled and reigned in the human family. Its rule was inexorable and absolute. It was established. But Christ - the Second Man - not only dethrones this king, as some would argue, but far more. He introduces the despotism of life. He crowns life

in the place of death; and much more than this, He makes believers kings in a great and glorious realm of righteousness and truth. There is not only an abundance, but a superabundance, of grace provided for a full vindication from all guilt - and much more. There is an abundance of grace provided for an overcoming of every circumstance, and reigning in every place. The reign of death was irresistible. It went marching on without hindrance over those under law and those without law. There was no way to stop its progress, or loose its grasp; no place in the world where it did not hold sway. Though men endeavored by all their united skill, sorcery, and science, to halt its onward march; yet it abounded to the uttermost of the four corners of the earth.

But now there is a change. Christ made a way to halt death and put life on the wing. The reign of life abounds now, not only in the same degree as the reign of death, but in far greater measure.

Observe that the reference here is not only to the victory which we may have over sin, but that which we may have over death" - the wages of sin. The Apostle not only sets sin and righteousness one against the other in vivid contrast, but also death and life. In the same measure that sin has been ruling unto death, righteousness may now reign unto life. Sin was constantly bringing death to pass; likewise, in the same manner, grace triumphs in the new creation, making life to triumph in the place of death, because of righteousness. Grace is seen here as a mighty irresistible conqueror, overcoming all the results of Adam's transgression.

Observe that Paul is dwelling more on this subject - sin as bringing forth death - than upon the sin itself. It is his theme at this place, we may say - sin in its deathward aspect, having dominion over a man as long as he lives. And this death is a death not only physically - felt in pain and sickness - but in every part of man. The whole of his being has, in some measure, been brought under the power of death. There is death of the conscience, death of the sensibilities and affections in relation to God manifested in every son of Adam. And, even in believers, this same deadness is in evidence more or less. There is apathy, coldness, indifference, sluggishness of mind as well as of body; death reigning over much of our being, when the provision has been made for life manifested in every part. For even the mortal body of believers, as well as the spirit and soul, may have a part now in this marvelous victory over death. As righteousness has the right of way in us, the very same sway that sin formerly occupied; in that measure, and no more, will death be held in abeyance and finally conquered. We shall have more of this later. "Therefore, as the fruit of one offence reached to all men, and brought upon them condemnation (the source of death); so likewise the fruit of one acquittal shall reach to all, and shall bring justification, the source of life" - 5:18 - Conybeare.

The parallel in the above verse, though obviously on opposite lines, is perfect. The one unrighteous act of Adam actually brought a sentence of death upon all men. But Christ enters the arena in which are gathered all the doomed; and, by His own righteous act, He annuls the sentence of condemnation hanging over them - and more. He hangs over them a sentence of justification which pertains to life. The latter is judicial and it is provisionally, at the service of all men, waiting their acceptance which the following verse makes plain: "For as, by the disobedience of the one, the many were made sinners; so by the obedience of the One, the many, shall be made righteous" - 5:19 - Conybeare.

The "all" of the previous verses is now changed to "the many." The former refers to the judicial aspect of the results of Christ's righteous act of obedience, while here the experimental side is in view. "The many" are those that believe the good news of redemption and are thus, not only provisionally justified, but actually made righteous. Then the Apostle shows that we were not only under condemnation because of Adam's sin; but were actual lawbreakers ourselves - hence, doubly needing grace.

"And the Law was added, that sin might abound; but where sin abounded, the gift of grace has overflowed beyond (the outbreak of sin) - 5:20 - Conybeare.

God desired man to know that he was not only a sinner by Adam's one sin, but that he was a sinner by his own actual transgressions; hence, He gave the law. Its true character and official place on God's program, are thus declared. It was added - not to curb or restrain sin, as many foolishly teach, but just the opposite - to make manifest the sin. It did not make man a sinner. Adam's sin did that. It only declared the character of sin, by making it an offence against God.

The law simply was a boundary line marking the limits of right and wrong, so that men would recognize their inward condition by their lawless acts in stepping over the line, Sin then became the transgression of God's holy command, and thus brought greater condemnation upon the sinner. Furthermore, it increased the sinfulness of sin; but here again God overrules. He makes His grace to superabound and exceed all the sin which His law exposed, all the guilt which His law denounced, all the condemnation which His law inflicted upon the transgressor. His grace overflowed its banks - beyond the overflowing and breaking forth of sin. And the purpose of this prodigal expenditure of grace, as well as the place of its fullest manifestation and its

channel, is told us in the following verse. Notice it carefully. It ends this section of the two Headships.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" - 5:21.

Sin is here pictured as a despot - a master - holding man in an iron grip, from which there was no escape save in death; while the law only strengthened its power - I Corinthians 15:56. But now, righteousness sits in the place of sin and rules with the same, or mightier iron rod, through grace unto life eternal. There is no limit to the power of grace, nor end to her reign. Sin ended in death in the judgment of the cross where it abounded, and overflowed its banks in the death of Christ; but here, too, is where grace superabounds. It cannot be dammed up nor stayed, in its rushing, onward sweep. It must flow out and over all flesh, where sin had reigned supreme. For God's wrath has been appeased; the proof of which is that He raised Christ - the Last Adam - from the dead, and made Him the channel of life-eternal for all men.

Therefore, the prominent truth of this section of our book is compensation, as it were. It is the trespass phase of salvation, that is herein set forth; the thought of which is that God is richer, by all that was taken from Him by Adam. And, rather than having lost anything by the defalcation of the first man, He has gained immensely in the reimbursement which the Second Man has brought to Him. The Last Adam does not merely repay God for His loss; but, He adds the fifth part more, as it is written, "He shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto" - Leviticus 6:5. God is thus enriched; and so is man, when he actually believes the truth of His redemption and lays hold of the eternal life which is provided in our Lord Jesus Christ. We find that we are not only negatively delivered from the guilt of sin, which is justification; but, actually have the victory over the power of sin, which is sanctification. In the following three chapters - six, seven, and eight - we have some of these glorious possibilities set before us.

From heaven above in His infinite love
Came Jesus a Saviour to be;
And He scorned the deep pain our ransom to gain.
O! He is the Saviour for me!
O! Jesus is willing to be a Saviour for sinners like me!
And the burden will roll from the poor troubled soul
That to Jesus the Saviour will flee.

THE RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL

Chapters 6:1-11:36

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN'S POWER

Chapter Six

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" - Romans 6:1.

We have learned in the preceding chapters that the salvation of all who receive the grace of God, extended to man through the Gospel is as complete and as eternal as their ruin and condemnation had been as sinners in Adam. This divine plan, which the Architect of redemption had consummated, had its source in the love of God and has as its foundation the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has now an entirely new order of things for humanity, based upon a new Head. He went to the root of things - "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" - Luke 6:43. He did not patch up the old Adam line, but brought in a new creation. A new realm is introduced - a spiritual realm - where abounding grace reigns, and that through righteousness by our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the first five chapters of Romans close with the great unfolding of the divine way of justification and life.

We have learned the way of deliverance from the guilt of sin; now we shall learn the way of deliverance from its power.

But the latter part of Chapter five has another very important practical hearing. It is the introduction to a wonderful mine of truth, OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST, which is continued and unfolded in the sixth chapter. For as has been stated, the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ was our Representative on the cross, and is now our Head, forms the basis for all that great body of truth entrusted to the Apostle Paul, as a faithful steward, to declare unto us. And it is just in proportion as we believe in the glorious reality, unlimited fullness, and boundless possibilities, of our identification with our Lord Jesus Christ; that we are able to appropriate the fruit of His work for us, and our present position in Him. And this is our sanctification - a progressive, purifying, perfecting work, accomplished in us by the Holy Spirit as He makes this divine union experimental. Thereby He separates us from everything that is not in conformity to the will of God in spirit, soul, and body. Therefore this sixth chapter of Romans is of vital importance as regards our state and

growth in grace. Many, who do not question the fact of their justification, are still under the power of sin; though God has made provision for marvelous victory, even our sanctification. It is by the way of death and resurrection; yet, dependent upon our faith and the Holy Spirit, for practical results.

DEAD TO SIN

We are met at the outset with the important question, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" That, which follows, is Paul's inspired answer to his own query. It is logical, practical, and conclusive. He had just previously announced that where sin was most fully manifested - namely, at the cross - "grace did much more abound" - 5:20. God makes this display of man's enmity - where His entire law, embracing love to God and love to man, was ruthlessly broken - the very means of their salvation. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" - Acts 4:12. God delights in manifesting grace. Then someone exclaims, "Let us continue in sin, and give God abundant opportunity to show grace." But Paul cries, No! No! Though this would be the logical conclusion to which we would arrive, if we did not have any further teaching. The one who thus reasons, does not understand the first principle of the Gospel. Paul proceeds to explain that the only man who does not sin is he who is under grace, as this is the only realm where sin is inoperative.

The following unfolding of truth is more marvelous, if this is possible, than that which has preceded. Paul insists that we died to sin. This is his answer to the question of a continuance in sin. Does a dead man sin? Then no more should we who have believed, expect to sin. We are no more identified with the old creation, nor with Adam - the fallen head of the race; and we are not in the realm nor abode of sin. That which, in the previous chapters is presented as the sole ground of justification, is now set forth as the basis of sanctification also. We have died to all that we were - died when Christ died, nineteen hundred years ago. This is a fact. It is not a theory, nor a hobby which some people ride; but it is a most important part of the Gospel. Yes, indeed, it is a fact with God that our old man, Adam, with all that was in him, perished upon Calvary; and, when it becomes a fact with us, sin has lost its power over us. We have learned the secret of victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. We are then helpless, for a dead man can neither do good nor evil; but this is the very condition which makes a way for God's power to be manifested in our behalf. It gives Him the opportunity to deliver us.

Just as truly as Christ died on the cross, just so surely did every believer die in Him. God put us into Christ, as well as our sins upon Him, and judged Him as the sinner; for, He must deal with the sinner, as well as with his sins. Do you not see the logic of Paul's argument? God must of necessity put the body of sin to death, or it would continue in sin. The only way to get rid of sin is to kill the sinner. And here is where grace is shown. God puts His Son to death as though He were the sinner, that we might be forever free from sin. Thus, for us to "continue in sin," is virtually to deny the power of the cross. We were all crucified. We all died. We were all buried with Christ. But that is not all. We were all raised in the risen Christ into a new sphere of life, which has nothing whatever to do with our old sphere. The cross and the grave lie between these two realms. Hallelujah! We are in Christ, a new creation; and old things have indeed passed away, for those who believe these facts. Grace has brought us into a realm where there is no sin.

We have escaped sin's domain, by death and resurrection. Christ died unto sin once, and rose into newness of life. He is now living in the glad eternal light of His Father's face, in blessed love and favor. And we are there in Him. He is our Head. Our feelings are not in question here. We are called to believe the Word of God. Sin has no claim on Christ; therefore, it has no right to reign over us, as we yield ourselves to God in this glorious new relationship.

And this is Paul's basis for deliverance from sin's power. He does not refer to what we see or feel ourselves to be, but to what is literally true of Christ and therefore true of us. He goes to the cross, where sin was judged and the sinner executed, for his argument against sin's dominion; and then adds, as to our present relation to sin - "He that is dead is freed," or as the better rendering, "justified from sin." When Christ died on the cross, He was put out of sin's realm and jurisdiction; and so were we. This is the meaning of the word "justified" in this place. In our great Head we paid the penalty attached to sin. "The wages of sin is death." We received our wages in His death. The law is satisfied. It reckons us dead. It had us slain. Now we have risen with Christ into a new realm. Sin cannot reach us. We are righteously justified from sin, discharged from all its claims of judgment.

MAN'S APPROPRIATION

In the foregoing portion, we have had presented to us God's side of our deliverance from sin; now we are to view our side of the matter. That is, in the first ten verses of our chapter, we are told what great things God has already done by identifying us with Christ. In the latter part, we are told how the above great facts are to become practical in our lives. Just as a man may be lost forever by refusing God's way of salvation,

although Christ tasted "death for every man" - Hebrews 2:9; so, a believer may be held in bondage to sin all his earthly life, because of ignorance or unbelief of God's sure and simple way of victory which is presented here.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" - 6:11. This is the foundation verse of our side of the sin question. We must begin here. It is a double reckoning - dead on the one hand, but alive on the other. We have the secret of a holy life in this verse; for not until we see ourselves sinless in Christ by death and resurrection, have we found the way of approach to sinlessness in life. When we definitely believe what God says about us, that we have actually died to sin with Christ, we are beginning to make progress as to present victory over sin and its effects. We would emphasize the fact that this reckoning has nothing whatever to do with experience. Experience is the result, and follows as a matter of course; but there is no deliverance without our reckoning. God commands us to reckon that we have been delivered out of the bondage in which the whole creation lies - the bondage of corruption" - 8:21. Its tendencies are evil and earthward, and must be mortified, or kept in death, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, if the spiritual life is to be maintained. Sin is desirous of reigning, by means of our mortal body; but we must remember that we are new creatures - our bodies are not ourselves, but only houses in which we live. Sin seeks to enslave us through the lusts or desires of our body, in order to reign over us. It is not sin to have these bodily desires. We cannot help this. It is natural. Nor is it sin to be tempted to gratify these fleshly desires; but it is sin to yield to them. We are exhorted to "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." The Revised Version says, "Present (submit) yourselves unto God as alive." When we accept as true the fact that we died with Christ "unto sin once," and the added fact that we are "alive unto God" in Him, we realize how impossible it is to continue yielding our members to sin. Instead, we yield them to God as instruments in His hands to work righteousness.

SECRET OF VICTORY

There are then, as we see, two necessary steps - reckoning and yielding - to attain this victory over sin. Some take these two steps, or at least think they do, and yet do not experience the difference which they seek. We will look closely at two verses in our lesson which tell the secret of the failure. "Thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were bondservants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became bondservants of righteousness" - 6:17, 18. This is the Revised Version, which brings out the meaning clearer. These are very practical verses. The "form" or type "of teaching," to which Paul refers, is baptism in water. He is writing to people who have received the truth, and have had an experience of salvation which they have acted out by baptism. And he is desirous that they enter into all that the form implies - all the provision of grace embodied in the Gospel. He knows what glory will thus accrue to God and blessing to them. He says they have been made "free from sin." Some saints argue the impossibility of such a state. Observe that Paul is not speaking here of sins, but of sin. The moment we believe, we are "justified from all things" - Acts 13:39 - as regards our actual transgressions; but the sin itself is the subject here. What about it? Let the Word answer. You were "made free from sin." We are quit of its bondage. We are loosed. It no longer rules over us. We are free.

And, not only is it possible to enter into the glorious, actual, unlimited freedom, from the awful tyranny of sin; but, we become servants of righteousness. That is, because of the grace of God in providing another Head for our race, making us who believe, alive in Him, partakers of His life; we become as much inclined to righteousness, as before we had been to sin. We are "bondservants of righteousness." This is the Word of God. Let us not tone it down in the least degree, to suit anyone's experience. Let us measure the experience by the Word, not the Word by experience. When we were the slaves of sin, we had no difficulty in obeying our master. It was natural, and easy. So in like manner should it be in our new experience, in obeying our new Master.

But let us notice carefully that those people became "obedient from the heart," to their resurrection position. They not only reckoned it true and acted it out by baptism in water; but, they were entirely given up to God, that He might have the opportunity of making it actually true in them. They were absolutely abandoned to God and His will. They yielded everything that was inconsistent with their heavenly citizenship. And that was not law. That was a privilege, as joined to Christ. "Obedient from the heart," tells the whole secret of victory. All failure may be traced to a lack at this source. "Out of it (the heart) are the issues of life" - Proverbs 4:23.

We have then this third and final condition to a life of complete and permanent victory over sin - heart surrender to all the truth as to our place in Christ, and all that this involves. It means that we act upon the Word from the core of our heart, as though we saw actually accomplished in us what God says is true of us

in Christ. Of course this last step is really but the second condition - yielding - enlarged and emphasized to guard against failure in practical life. For as Paul adds, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." We want the fruit that abides. Notice these three answers to Paul's question - "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" We have had two answers in the negative already; but there is yet another reason why it is not possible that we should so abide. The first reason is that we have died. A dead man cannot be said to be continuing in sin. He may have been a great sinner, but the moment he died he ceased from sin; therefore, the logical conclusion is that we cannot continue in sin, if we have died with Christ - 6:2.

The second reason is that we have left the employment of our old taskmaster. He does not reign over us anymore. We have a new master, even righteousness. He has the rule in the place of sin. We are yielding to his commands, doing his bidding. It is now as easy to obey the dictates of righteousness, as it was formerly to obey the movings of sin. He has the throne - 6:18.

The third reason that is given for the non-continuance in sin is in the next chapter. We cannot continue in sin, because we have a new Husband - 7:4. Our old husband - the old man - was put to death that we might be loosed from him, so that we might be joined to another Man; therefore, the fruit of our life is the evidence, with which husband we are living. If we are in fellowship with Christ and heaven, our fruit will be unto holiness. God calls the things which be not, as though they were; and He expects us to do the same. If we are in fellowship with our first husband - the old Adam - our fruit will be unto unholiness and carnality. Let us examine ourselves, whether we be "in the faith," reckoning with God.

THE WONDROUS MAN

And He has died,
The Lamb, the Crucified -
He bore the culprit's fearful doom.
Midst heaven and earth's co-mingling gloom,
He lay within the silent tomb,
The Wondrous Man.
He rose again
From death's dark, cold domain:
And in that great, victorious hour,
He broke death's stern, relentless power,
Dispelled its clouds - no more to lower.
The Wondrous Man.
Now, for His own,
He fills yon azure throne.
Heaven's pearly gates were opened wide
When He ascended, the Lamb that died,
But now the Risen, the Glorified.
The Wondrous Man.

OUR FREEDOM FROM LAW

Chapter Seven

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" - Romans 7:1.

Sin has had the prominence in our former lesson; but here it is the law that claims our attention. And Paul insists that he is speaking to "brethren ... that know the law," as though there were some brethren who were ignorant of the law. And such was the case at that time; for the Gentiles were never given the law. But the question arises here - Why should the Apostle write to the church at Rome, a Gentile city, in this manner? It was for the reason that it was established by Jews, or Jewish proselytes, who therefore knew the law. Also, there may be in this statement, a little hint of the Galatianized condition of all Christendom of which Rome at the present time is the mother and teacher. But the appeal is not so much to the law of God, but to the nature of all law - that it has authority over a man as long as he lives.

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband" - 7:2. The law of the marriage relation is given as an illustration. A woman's subjection to her husband, is said to be as long as he lives. During his life, she must have no relations with another man; otherwise, she is an adulteress. Death alone, according to Paul's

reasoning here, can free her so that she may be joined to another man. The latter ties are just as sacred and stringent as those in the former case.

Then the Apostle applies his illustration saying, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to Another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" - 7:4.

Marriage, in the Scriptures, is symbolic of oneness. God said of the first man, Adam, and his wife, "They shall be one flesh" - Genesis 2:24. Hence as we, the Church, were joined to our old husband by the law of life (we were one flesh) and could not be loosed from him except by death; Christ, the other Man in the case, came to our rescue. Note the love story. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh (disguised, as it were) and died as the old husband. We, therefore, died too; for we were one flesh with the old man. But, here is the marvel of it - we were thus loosed from the law of our old husband, that we might be joined to our new Husband in resurrection. He did not merely put our old man to death that we might become a widow, and thus lawless and loose; but that we might be legally set free by death, and married to another Husband - even Christ Himself.

As long as our old husband was living, he had a claim upon us; but now, when we know that he has been put to death, we owe him nothing. We cannot serve two husbands at the same time; for there will surely be trouble. Take it in the natural, when a woman is living with two men, there is always uncertainty and doubt; and more, it is scarcely possible to ascertain to which man the children belong. So in the spiritual. This is the reason for the carnality and division manifest in our midst. There are so many believers living with both husbands. They are committing spiritual adultery, and this is abhorrent to God. The fruit is manifest. And, it is plainly evident, that the old husband has the preeminence. His name is held to; while his words and his reason dominate, instead of the words and mind of Christ. But Paul assures us that we have been loosed from the law of our old husband. Let us take our freedom from him and live continually and only with our new Husband, joined to Him in resurrection by the law of a new creation life - a spiritual life. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death"- 7:5. Note the past tense "were in the flesh." The Apostle will not allow, that it is a believer's condition; for remember he is talking to saints. When our old husband - the old man - was alive, and we were living with him, the fruit of his life was evident. It was fleshly. But now that we have been delivered from the law of our old life, he being dead to whom we were in bondage, we may now serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. The law of God is meant, by "the letter." The new life is not under any law to the new Husband, except the law of love which is its very essence. The old life did not need any law to make it obey the old husband. The law was in the life. It could not do otherwise. Therefore the law of Sinai was not given, as we learned previously, that man should keep it (for God knew this was impossible); but it was given that he might learn that no law was able to make him good, for the natural tendency of his life was bad and incurably so. Furthermore, as we are going to learn now, the law was not given for the new man to keep either; though this is the natural conclusion. Paul states that he himself, once so thought, and conscientiously endeavored to fulfill its every decree.

And the following experience, which was his own, shows how futile was the struggle against the sin in the flesh.

PURPOSE OF THE LAW

But, says someone, "Is the law sin?" If not, why does it make sin more sinful, and transform it into an actual offense? For the Apostle declares that "I had not known sin ... except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The answer is that sin's true character is not known until the law is known.

Paul in his self-righteous state, thought that he was keeping the law, for he actually was blameless as far as its outward requirements were concerned; but, he really did not know sin, until he heard the thunderings of Sinai's mount - "Thou shalt not covet." He then realized that coveting was warp and woof of his very life, as joined to the old husband. The law, which appeared to be given to keep it in subjection, had the opposite effect. It roused it into open hostility. Sin is quiet or dead, until the law stirs it into activity. Thus, instead of giving life to man as it promised, it gives the life to sin. And, instead of being sin's opponent and knocking him out, it becomes the sinner's opponent and knocks him out. As the Apostle says, "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." The law led him on, as it were, with its promise of life (because he was yet ignorant of the power of sin); until he saw his absolute helplessness and called upon the Lord for help. Sin had not only disabled him, so that he could not take advantage of the possibilities in the law; but more, it involved him in its condemnation, by stirring him into open rebellion against God's just decrees. Therefore, he concludes, that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good"; for it showed him up, unholy. It convicted him of sin and pointed him out as a sinner, judged

and sentenced and executed him on the cross.

How was this then? "Was then that which is good made death unto me?" No, says Paul; that is not the case. It was not the law which brought about the trouble and death, but sin was the cause. The law, and its official place, are two different things. The real object of the law does not appear on the surface. It would defeat its own purpose, if it did not appear to have a promise of life in its fulfillment. As no one ever got life from obeying its demands (for no one ever succeeded), it appears to have failed. Moreover it only succeeded in making bad, worse. It revived and roused the dormant sin, and seems to have missed its mark. That is, men would so argue; but such is not the case. The law succeeded most perfectly in the case of Paul and with everyone else, that knows the law and seeks diligently to fulfill its requirements. He finds that the law of sin in his members is far more powerful than the desire of his renewed will. He wants to do good, but cannot. He is forced, as it were, to do things that he hates to do, after he has resolved with all his strength of will that he will not be guilty of such doings.

TWO NATURES AT VARIANCE

He finally learns that the law is spiritual; but he is carnal, a slave in the market of sin. He has arrived at the place where he sees that there are two lives in opposition within him - two principles at work - one set for good, the other set for evil. And then he goes a step further and identifies the sin as being in the flesh, but not in him. He views himself as not identified with the old life, and then cries for deliverance - for help out of the body of death.

And what is the answer to the wretched man's cry? Ah, who could ever guess the riddle? GRACE. There is no other possible hope. Grace takes us out of disgrace. Here we are brought back to the end of chapter five, where the basis of salvation was seen to be in the Headship of our Lord Jesus Christ. There it is provided, for the human race to reign in life through Him. In Christ there is no condemnation, though we carry around with us a body in which dwells the seeds of sin and death. In Him we have liberty and sufficient power to do more than the law of God demanded; power not only to obey because of duty, but to worship and love because of grace. And the One who is the Source and Strength of our service, becomes the Lodestar of our life, lighting the way before us with His comforting Presence. No more are we wretched and self-occupied; but happy and exulting in God, basking in the favor in which His own beloved Son stands. This is GRACE - the way out of sin and up to God.

In this seventh chapter, law predominates; but there are at least three different laws mentioned.

These do not signify the same thing, but are absolutely distinct, the one from the other; and must not be confounded, though they have a relation to one another. The first is the law of life: not necessarily sinful life, but that by which we were joined to Adam - the first head of the human race - 7:4. The second is the law of God: the Ten Commandments from Sinai - 7:7. The third is the law of sin and death manifest in the flesh - 7:23. Observe also that we have had only one mention of the Holy Spirit so far in our study - 5:5; because the greater part has been the provision of the Gospel, and the experience of failure, as in chapter seven. Now in chapter eight, which we are approaching in our study - the experience of victory - we find that the Holy Spirit is mentioned at least fourteen times. His Presence and power pervade the whole sphere of teaching here. Note the fact also, that we have the law mentioned once in this chapter, but it is the law of the Spirit of life by which we have been joined to the Last Adam - the new Head of all those that believe, and the new Husband of all those that yield to Him.

A BRIEF REVIEW

Before proceeding further, we are especially impressed to emphasize the fact that the theme of this Epistle is the Gospel. This is plainly set forth in the first chapter. Paul calls his good news, the "Gospel of God" - 1:1; then the "Gospel of His Son" - 1:9; lastly the "Gospel of Christ," or the Anointed - 1:16. These three citations point to the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - as being vitally concerned in the Gospel. And all the teaching, regarding the Person and work of Christ on the cross contained in this letter, is the Gospel. Yet how very little of this "Good News" do we hear.

Men say they are preaching the "Gospel," when they tell sinners that Christ died for them; but this is only a little part of the Gospel. If you who are reading these lines are preachers, or ever expect to be, read this Epistle until you are familiar with the truth; then go out and tell the Gospel herein declared. But do not dare to take upon yourself such responsibility until you are acquainted with the Gospel yourself. The ignorance as to the truth is appalling. And it is willful. We are responsible before God to know His Word and teach accordingly. The Bible is in our hands, and we claim to have received the Holy Spirit whom Jesus said would guide us into all the truth. The papers and tracts which are broadcast among Christians, with the exception of a very few, are just intellectual, soulish flights of fancy, if not downright errors, which do no one any good. In fact, the teaching most prevalent is a patching up or renovating of the old Adam creation, which

is absolutely unscriptural. The old Adamic line came up to Calvary. There was the end of the "old man," according to the Word of God. And, if you are not preaching thus, you had better wake up and search the Scriptures; or search the Scriptures and you will wake up. If you do not build on the foundation which Paul laid - Jesus Christ, the Head of the New Creation - your works are going to be burned; for you are building upon the old foundation - the first Adam. He will not stand the fire, and neither will his works - "wood, hay, stubble" - I Corinthians 3:12.

In our previous lesson we learned that, through Christ's death on the cross, we were made dead to the law; for Christ died there as the old Adam, in order that we might be righteously joined to Another - the Risen Christ. The reason we had to die was, as we have noted, not because the law was bad but because we were bad. Our flesh was so powerless to do good and so ready to do evil, that God's holy law only stirred the sin in our enslaved members into open rebellion; so that though we loved God's law and desired to obey its every precept, as did Paul, yet we had no power to do so; but sin in our flesh caused the law to bring us more into condemnation because it made sin to abound. Therefore we must die to escape its realm, and thus be free to be joined to

Christ in a resurrection realm absolutely beyond the sphere of law. And furthermore, we saw that it was only when Paul came to the end of his own legal efforts and despaired of ever being holy by trying to keep the law, thus acknowledging he was helpless, that he got a glimpse of what the Gospel really meant. He saw that Jesus Christ was the Saviour, not only from his past sins; but the Saviour from the ever present sin. He ceased struggling to compel his flesh to obey the law; for he was now assured, that the Almighty God was more able to work in him, while he simply trusted and yielded.

HIM, HIM, HIM

Under the law with its terrible lash,
Learning also how true,
That the more I tried the sooner I died,
While the law cried, "You! You! You!"
Condemning me through and through.
Hopelessly still did the fierce battle rage,
"O wretched man!" my cry;
And deliverance sought by some penance bought,
While my soul groaned, "!! !! !!"
Not knowing that help was nigh.
Then came a day when my sad struggle ceased,
Trembling in ev'ry limb;
At the foot of the tree where He died for me,
There I sobbed out, "Him! Him! Him!"
And joy filled my soul to the brim.
Grace is now lavishing riches untold.
How can my faith grow dim?
For the more I read and the promise heed,
The more I sing, "Him! Him! Him!"
Who fills me with praise to the brim.

Arranged by A. S. C.

OUR TRIUMPH IN CHRIST

Chapter Eight

THE HOLY SPIRIT

As was previously noted, the Holy Spirit is only once mentioned in the previous chapters. But now, in the eighth chapter, we are to learn God's way of delivering us from indwelling sin. Hence, the Holy Spirit is the predominating Person in our present lesson; for it is only by His Presence and power in us, that sin is overcome. In Jesus as Saviour, I am justified. In Christ as Lord, I am sanctified. It is by His life and by His power shed forth from heaven, even as His blood was shed forth on earth.

In the sixth chapter, we are taught to reckon ourselves dead and to yield to God. This is our part. And God's promise is that "sin shall not have dominion"; but the Holy Spirit is not named as the power of such victory. And now we are shown, as to experience, the means and process of this wonderful deliverance. It is the mighty Holy Spirit who actually frees us from sin's power, because of Christ's intercession on the throne.

There is no more delightful reading in the whole New Testament than this eighth chapter of Romans. It is full of the most blessed truth of the eternal security of the believer. There is an atmosphere of life and victory ringing throughout its message, for the Holy Spirit breathes His own Personality herein. The weary, doubting, troubled heart finds rest and hope in this chapter. It commences with "NO CONDEMNATION" for those in Christ Jesus and ends with NO SEPARATION from Him who is their Life.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" - 8:1. What a contrast we have here with our previous chapter. There we were in darkness, hemmed in on every side. The rumbling of the Egyptians' chariots could be heard as they approached in the rear; while the Red Sea to the front of us presented no alluring prospect. But now all is changed.

The Red Sea's mighty waves are still rolling on, but they are behind us instead of opposing our progress. We have passed through, without wetting our feet; while the foe has been drowned in the depths of the waters. We cannot see him, though the sun has risen and his gracious beams are flooding the scene. Our old taskmaster has disappeared. He has gone forever, and we are free forever. No more are we slaves, but free men. We are out of the realm of bondage - out of Egypt - and in a sense have reached the promised land. We are "IN CHRIST."

And the first glorious result of such a place is that there is "no condemnation." It is entirely out of the question. Why? Because there is nothing left to be condemned. Judgment is passed. The sense of condemnation, experienced by the one in chapter seven, was because the Egyptian was alive. He found that in his flesh, sin was dwelling, and he could not get rid of himself. It was what he was in the old creation that is what was troubling him.

But now there is a marvelous change. Not only all that he had done, but all that he WAS, is gone.

There is no body of death. It is sunk in the sea. There is no sin in the flesh; for the flesh is gone.

The waves of God's wrath have rolled over it all; and the man, who a short while ago stood trembling and afraid, now is free and uncondemned. Life, life, eternal life, has taken possession of the place of death. Instead of the poor, wretched condition seen in chapter seven, and the wail of despair; we have the glorious condition and the triumphant blast, "NO CONDEMNATION," of our present chapter. In the second verse of this marvelous outline of truth - "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" - we have the basis for Paul's bold declaration in the first verse. This does not refer to the guilt of sin - that was dealt with on the cross. But it refers to the power of sin, which must be put down in us by the Spirit of Life. The Holy Spirit's work in us is designated a law, because His operation in us is as constant and uniform as sin has been in its operation. And the law of the Spirit is stronger than the law of sin in our members. Sin in us will be immediately put down, upon the single condition of faith. Of course, if our wills are rebellious, we are not able to believe God; therefore, the Holy Spirit is not able to do what He could and would do. God's way of deliverance from sin's power then is not through our struggling; but through the working of the Holy Spirit in the power of the life of Christ, as we believe.

The law was not able to deliver us because sin was ruling, raging, and rebelling in us. Sin was having its own way - it was the unbridled master in human flesh. But God came upon the scene. In the Person of His own Son on the cross, He broke the fetters of sin. He "condemned sin in the flesh"; hence it is a usurper, where before it was a king. Even in our flesh - where "dwelleth no good thing" - the mind and disposition of which are enmity against God, sin has now no right whatever. It is a condemned criminal. To know this and then to believe it, is to enter into absolute triumph over our former master. A life of positive, practical righteousness may be our experience.

And it is God - the very same holy God, whom the man in chapter seven feared, because of the sin in his flesh - that has delivered him. God Himself conceived the wonderful plan of man's salvation, and has carried it out. He sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"; and on the cross of Calvary, He rolled all the waves and billows of His righteous wrath against sin, over His holy Head. There on the cross, was where sin was judged forever: there in that awful darkness, from the sixth to the ninth hours, the judgment of God had its unhindered course on Jesus Christ. All that man was in the flesh, with all the sin that ruled and raged within him, was condemned. He was buried in the waters of judgment in the bottom of the sea.

RIGHTEOUSNESS FULFILLED IN US

And then we read of the positive answer to this in the believer's experience. It is the great and wonderful purpose of the Gospel. We are made to reign over our former taskmaster - enabled to do by the grace shown on Calvary, in the power of the Spirit, what the holy law of Sinai was unable to make us do. Note the following - "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" - 8:4. The law here is God's will, not the Mosaic law alone. The latter was simply an expression of His will for a certain time, a certain people, and a certain purpose. Those who let the Holy Spirit control them

- who walk as He leads - are doing God's will. They are not keeping anything. The Holy Spirit is the Keeper. He is working in them as they are yielding their members to Him. They simply "walk" in Him, and they are assured that they "shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" - Galatians 5:16. The Holy Spirit has undertaken the whole charge. The citadel has surrendered to Him. This is not lawlessness. It is heaven begun on earth, when the will of God is done - the righteousness of the law fulfilled IN us, not BY us. Oh, what a truth. How many see it? Oh, I repeat it - the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us? IN us, not BY us.

Then Paul declares that these two elements - "flesh" and "spirit" - with their mind and disposition are entirely separate and distinct. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" - 8:6. The one is the opposite of the other. We are all living either in the flesh element or in the spirit element. They do not mix at all. We either "mind the things of the flesh," or mind "the things of the Spirit" - 8:5. They are positively distinguished, consequently easily recognized.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" - 8:7. This is the attitude of the carnal mind toward God. And the next verse tells God's attitude toward the flesh. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God"; for this enmity is not by wicked works, but enmity of nature. That is what is meant here. The two creations, with the set and determined principle of each nature, is shown. They are both unchanging and unchangeable. But no believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is ever said to be in the flesh, though the flesh is still in him. And he also may be there as far as his consciousness is concerned; for that is a matter of faith and not of feeling. As regards the provision and purpose of God, the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has passed out of the realm of the flesh and into the realm of the Spirit.

Everything in the matter is dependent upon our faith. We pass out of the place of death and darkness, and into the kingdom of life and light, when we believe. We are then reckoned IN CHRIST, and He in us.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness" - 8:9, 10. These Scripture citations prove the above interpretation. There is an apparent confusion of terms here; but this is no accident - rather the reverse. There is divine design in these different expressions. "The Spirit of God" refers to our new standing in a New Head - out of Adam the natural man, and into Christ the spiritual man. "The Spirit of Christ" tells of our nature, our new birth. We were once dead but we are now alive, for we read, "Christ in you." This is complete identification with Christ in our spirit, though as to our body, we are not yet alive. The spirit is life (for we may spell this with either a capital or a small 's'); for it is our spirit quickened by the Holy Spirit that is Life. This Life can never be touched with death, because of righteousness; therefore we have fellowship with God. Death has no power over the new creation life; for the One who's Life is brought to us by the Spirit of God, has put away all that called for death in us. There is no difference between the believer's body and the unbeliever's body as to sight - death apparently having equal claim over each. But here is the difference: the believer's body has a quickened spirit within. The spirit of Christ has been breathed into him by the Holy Spirit, even as God breathed upon the first Adam and he began to live. Moreover, if the believer has received the Holy Spirit (the endowment with power for the new man), He also dwells in his body - the sure and certain pledge of its resurrection and translation. This pledge the unbeliever has not, as the following citation proves.

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" - 8:11.

Blessed, cheering words, that bring hope and blissful anticipation even in the valley of the shadow of death. The believer's body is just as mortal as the unregenerate man's; but, the Spirit of God gives him power over his dead body. This was true in the case of Christ whose body was quickened into life by the same Spirit that dwells in us.

In the above Scripture, we have differing expressions of apparently the same thing and the same Person - "Christ" and "Jesus" - but we believe there is divine import here also. "Jesus" speaks of the body of the dead Man, helpless in the grave; while "Christ" refers to the living spirit of the same Man, anointed with the Spirit of God that was in the abode of the just spirits but captive there with them. He, too, both in His body and in His spirit, was as dependent upon the energizing, dynamic power of the Spirit of God to raise Him from the dead, as is every believer.

He voluntarily chose this place of weakness - even that of a creature (though He was God) - and put Himself absolutely into the hands of the Spirit; therefore, His resurrection is an earnest of the resurrection of the whole of the new creation. His body, which was dead and in the grave, was quickened and glorified and joined again to His living spirit which was in Hades. He was then made perfect; that is, His perfection was manifest. And the same promise is for us too, as the Scripture plainly intimates - resurrection if we fall

asleep, and translation if we await the coming of the Redeemer.

Observe that it is our mortal body; that is, a body susceptible to death (not necessarily dead), that is said shall be quickened. There is a hint here of the actual revivifying and strengthening now of our mortal body by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. There are many cases of those whose bodies, weak and sickly, were mightily invigorated and built up after being filled with the Holy Spirit. Why not? Our body was once joined to Adam and counted dead. When our body becomes the home of Christ's spirit and the temple of the Holy Spirit, is it not reasonable to expect that He will keep it healthy? The Spirit of God needs our bodies as vessels for the manifestation of His power. He cannot use a sickly, diseased body as He can one that is well; therefore, as we walk in the Spirit, He will keep us fit for His service - "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use" - II Timothy 2:21. He surely is able to protect His own house from the ravages of disease, able to keep it in good repair. The same mighty Spirit of God that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, is able to quicken our mortal body and hold in the death-state the working of the germ of sickness, even as He is able to hold in check the power of sin. He is able now, I say, to rejuvenate our bodies and preserve us, "spirit and soul and body... blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" - I Thessalonians 5:23. This is all in view of full redemption, or immortality of our body. The latter, of course, is much more than the blessing of healing or health that we receive while we tarry here in our bodies of humiliation. It means to have eternal life or to be a partaker of the divine nature, the unchangeable perfection of Christ Himself, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" - I Timothy 6:16. But let us not minify the marvelous touch of the Spirit which we may realize even now in the quickening of our bodies as we yield to Him and walk as He leads.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" - 8:12, 13. "We are debtors," Paul says; that is, we "brethren." But observe, it is not to the flesh.

We owe the flesh nothing. And this signifies that we are no longer bound to live or walk, according to the flesh; for we are in the Spirit element. Our obligation to the flesh is at an end. We have severed all connection with our old environment. We have moved out into another sphere.

We are now identified with the Spirit, and not with the flesh; therefore, we should not serve or provide, for the flesh. And this refers to religious flesh as well as irreligious. We need not obey its desires; for we are no longer in the element where its power is manifested. Another has come to our help - the mighty Spirit of God that rules in His element of Spirit. He raised the Son of God from the dead, the abode of the flesh. And He dwells in us to put to death the deeds (doings) of the body" - 8:13 R.V. And great issues depend upon our attitude to Him - life or death. As we intimated, this refers to our body. The spiritual part of the believer is as eternal as God Himself; though as to his fellowship with God, he may be cut off. But it is the body that is in question here.

It is still subject to disease and death, and needs the constant renewing of the Holy Spirit. The vigor and health of our body is thus generally an index to our spiritual condition. If we are in the perfect will of God, living for Christ, yielding to the Spirit, and trusting Him to keep us - body, soul, and spirit - He is under obligation to do so. His veracity is at stake in this matter.

If on the other hand, we "live after the flesh," we are in the way of premature death. We can yield to our fleshly desires, even good desires, such as perfecting ourselves in the flesh, trying to keep the law, etc., on the one hand; or, on the other hand, by seeking our own ease and the things of this world, its pleasures, riches, and honors. We must deny the flesh, if we would enjoy the renewing of the Spirit in our bodies. When we fail to hold the doings of the flesh in the death state, we are going in the way of sickness and disease. We may not feel these results immediately; but the principle, the seed of diseases is constantly working in our bodies unless our faith is actively engaged against it. And this is only possible to the one that constantly yields to the Spirit. We are debtors; that is, we owe something to Him who is able to put the practices of the body to death. We owe it to Him to surrender our bodies to Him, and He will make us to enjoy the life and victory which is ours in Christ Jesus.

OUR SONSHIP IN CHRIST

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" - 8:14. To walk as the Spirit leads is the proof of sonship. This statement implies much more than the thought of being a child of God. It speaks of growth and development. The child has put away childish things. He has become a son. And he manifests the fact by surrendering to the Guide whom the Father has sent to instruct and show him the way, the manner, and the procedure of spiritual life. He has learned the voice of his Guide, and is in harmony with all that He speaks. He has taken upon himself the yoke of Jesus, and has been taught by Him who is "meek and lowly in heart" - Matthew 11:29. He has ceased from his own works and ways, and does not want his

own will. He is led. Note this - "led by the Spirit of God" - and this is the one positive assurance that he is a son. He has grown up. He is no longer a baby with rattle box and milk bottle, self-willed, and self-seeking - "carnal." He displays the character of the Firstborn in all his actions and manner of life. He is a son and led by the Son's Guide, the Holy Spirit. The next verse is a further unfolding.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" - 8:15. The law led to slavery, to fear, and dread; but grace brings us another spirit, that of sonship. The way to God has been opened by the death of Christ; but it is the Spirit of God that conducts us into His Presence and introduces us to Him. He teaches us as a child, to lisp the Name of "Father"; for we are without constraint in the Presence of His Majesty. The very Spirit of God, assures us that we are His children; and our quickened spirit claims Him as our Father. There is no jar, no clash, between the Spirit of God and our spirit.

And this witness is not a mere feeling which may and does vary, with ever-changing conditions and circumstances; but has its basis in the solid and trustworthy Word of God. Then we have the natural consequences of being so wellborn. We are heirs.

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him" - 8:17. Folks speak of rich men's children being born with a silver spoon in their mouths.

Well, here are some that are born with a gold spoon at their disposal. They have a great inheritance. Every child of God has a large estate in Christ. And it is Real Estate, the only real estate that is worth seeking after; but, as is often the case in the natural, some of these children of God get a greater, fuller, more marvelous allotment than others - joint-heirship with Christ. But there is a condition attached thereto - "If so be that we suffer with Him." All may have this best inheritance; but, all do not appreciate nor desire it, because of the sacrifice and loss of earthly gain that it entails. We will forfeit all inheritance in this world, even as Christ, if we will share jointly with Him in the new creation. Suffering the loss of all things here, is the price we pay for joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom of God. The word "suffer" leads the apostle on another step. He would not have our eyes linger upon the sufferings, for we might become discouraged. They are nothing, he assures us, when we have caught a glimpse of the glory. The toils of the journey seem nothing, when we look to that glorious day. All the glories that are in store for Christ are ours also, as we faithfully pursue our Guide and overcome all the difficulties that lie in the way He leads us. And observe that the glory is going to be "revealed IN us" - 8:18. Then notice further: "For the earnest expectation of the creature (all creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" - 8:19. Oh, this is wonderful! Not only do we long for the moment of our manifestation as the sons of God, but the interest of all creation is centered upon that transcendently glorious moment. Like a racer, with neck out-stretched, awaiting the signal - figure of extreme tension - the whole of the lower creation of which man is the head, awaits the moment of its emancipation. All its hope rests upon that certainty, and waits the moment of the unveiling. Everything is dependent upon "the manifestation of the sons of God."

The whole creation has been involved and thrown into confusion by the fall of Adam. That which befell the head, affected all connected with him. Corruption and decay become their lot also; as we read, "The creation was subjected to vanity (or nothingness), not of its own will" - 8:20 R.V. - but by the will of God; but He did not leave them without hope. Man's full redemption will free creation from "the bondage of corruption," and bring in "the glorious liberty" (the liberty of the glory - 8:21 R.V.), that the sons of God will enjoy. And we have even yet, such a little conception, as to the marvelous fact that we are the sons of God. We are gazing at each other and we see the veil of the flesh, as men did when they looked upon Jesus as He walked among them. They did not know Him. They could not see the Lord of Glory in that humble guise; and so we too, look upon one another, and we do not see the Son of God - the true life of the visible and outward man. We belong to a new creation. The Son is bringing many sons to His glory - His moral, mental, and even physical likeness - and He is not ashamed to call them brethren - Hebrews 2:10, 11. And all creation is waiting for its true lord - the new creation - which is the song with all the sons of God. They will reign over all the universe of God; for while the Jew will be the head of the nations on the earth, yet the Son of Man - David's Son - an heir with the other sons, shall be over all.

And then God's wisdom as to the creation and redemption of man will be fully vindicated; for every created intelligence in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, will bow the knee and marvel at the unveiling of those sons of God. Creation has never yet beheld the man that God, in His purpose, has ordained as its head. It has only seen the figure; consequently, it has never yet yielded up its secret powers and hidden wealth. It has never yet absolutely acknowledged allegiance to fallen man; but, it will bow to its master, when the sons of God are manifested. They will do justice in every particular, to God's conception of man and His Pattern and Princely Leader - Christ Jesus.

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan ...waiting for ...the redemption of our body" - 8:22, 23. Yes, creation groans, and moans, and sighs. See the poor dumb brutes, the many apparently useless creatures, that are beaten and buffeted about, chased from pillar to post - the alley hounds and alley cats; not saying anything of the wild, ferocious beasts that feed upon one another. And we, brethren, the sons of God, groan too. The groaning creation is looking for deliverance, and we are in expectation also. We cry over the frailties and limited horizons which environ us. Our new man longs for his body of glory, which will not be handicapped with weakness and cumbered with infirmity. We groan for our glorified bodies, our redemption bodies, which will fully display all the moral and mental glory of the redeemed spirit - "The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" - Ephesians 4:24. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" - 8:24, 25.

Ah, argues someone, Paul here says that we are saved by hope. Well, so he does; but he is referring to the body, when he so speaks. We have not yet come into our redemption rights, as far as the body is concerned. We are still longing and groaning and waiting with patience, for that glorious consummation. It is still future; for we do not hope for, nor are we in expectation of something, of which we are already the possessor. There have been some folks around at different times, that claimed to have received their resurrection bodies; but we have never seen anyone yet that looked like it. We would say of them from our observation, just what the Scripture says of all of us as regards our bodies, that we are still in expectation - "For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" If we had our glorified bodies, we would not be hoping for them. Then the following verses are right in harmony - "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for ...but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession ...with groanings ...And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit" - 8:26, 27. We are in a body, tempted because of limitations and infirmities. We groan after deliverance; and the Spirit likewise groans and prays effectually for the perfect will of God, though there may be no utterance. We do not always pray for that which is best; but the Spirit overrules and prevails with groanings and sighs, and we get that for which we would have asked if we had only known. Oh, how marvelous is God's undertaking for us, in every particular. Not only has He Himself laid the basis for our perfect redemption at Calvary; but He has also come to dwell in us by the Spirit, and make the purchase price of the blood real to us. And God, that searcheth the hearts, sees that need for which the Spirit is making intercession; and forthwith, that for which He prays, comes to pass in our lives. Then the next verse is the answer. Observe the real setting of this marvelous gem in this treasure box of truth.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" - Romans 8:28. Thus we are taught that, though we know not what to pray for as we ought, this is of no consequence; for God is making all things cooperate for our welfare. It does not matter how things appear. They can work no ill to us; for they are the answer to the Spirit's groaning within us. Yet it is not to every saint that these words can be applied; but to those that "love God," those that are "the called according to His purpose." Many Christians love the world and the flesh, more than they love the Lord. They never surrender to Him, nor find their place in His perfect will; hence, the "all things" are not serving them. They cannot sit down in this great easy chair and get the comfort out of even the hard places, as that one does that loves God and yields to Him. They ever murmur and complain when the trials come; hence, they work no good to them. But the other class has many servants. These workers are in harmony; they "work together," with one aim and purpose. They never conflict with one another, and they cannot fail to accomplish the end for which they are intended; for we are the "sons of God." Our destiny was not a thing of yesterday, nor even of when we were saved; but it was fixed by Jehovah from the beginning, long before we could have had any part in it, as we are here informed.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" - 8:29. Men are proud to tell the world of their descent from a long line of noble (as they call them) ancestors. They prate about their blue blood, their family tree, etc. (and some of them have a family skeleton of which they are not so proud). But the Christian can claim kinship with Deity. He can go farther back into the dim and hoary ages past, and trace his ancestry from the Great Eternal I Am, when as yet there was not a man upon the scene. We can boast in God as our Father, and rejoice in the fact that the Son of God is our Brother. Furthermore, the Son cannot be exalted in the fullest sense as a Man, until we are with Him. In fact, by yielding to the Spirit and allowing Him to lead us and work in us, we are really putting Christ in the place supreme. We are thus being conformed to His image. He must have "brethren," even like unto Himself; otherwise, He cannot be "the firstborn." We are essential to His

glory and honor and exaltation. Note further: "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He, also glorified" - 8:30. Is this not almost too good to believe? And, the most marvelous part about it is the fact that God has put Himself upon record in such a way, as being absolutely sovereign in the matter of man's salvation. Election is certainly taught here; but, it is the election of a new creation and not the individual, that is in question here.

We were identified with Christ as a new creation in the eternal past. God purposed in His sovereignty, a golden chain of four links for our blessing. These can never be broken. He has predestinated and called and justified and glorified us, in His Son. Christ is the Head of this new creation, and all that is true of Him is true of all those in Him. These words could not refer to us personally; for they were written when as yet there were none of us who are living today. And we, to whom the first three links - predestined, called, and justified - might apply, are not yet glorified; therefore, the conclusion is obvious. These are God's sovereign purposes for us in Christ. They all have been fulfilled to Him; hence are sure, to all those that believe. He is the proof that God will not fail His Word. And we have experienced three of these blessings already. The final one is glory.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" - 8:31. Paul asks two questions, but the second is really an answer to the first. If God has put Himself on record as being the aggressor in our redemption, what can anyone do to hinder or hurt us?

Everything works for our good, because God moves on continually to fulfill His purposes and plans in Christ; therefore, we move on with Him. He will accomplish His counsel concerning us; therefore, no one can really be against us. And there is nothing upon earth that can compare with the sublime consciousness that we have a place in God's eternal plan for His Son. It will put a "go through" in us that nothing can daunt nor discourage. The next verse is the proof that the above interpretation is correct as to the election.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" - 8:32. God gave His Son for us ALL, and now shall He not give us ALL things that He purposed in Him? Sure, He will. There can be no failure; for Christ Himself is the proof, as was said before, of the fulfillment of God's Word. God gave the "ALL THINGS," in giving His Son. He was a Gift. And, in the wisdom of God, there was hidden in Him all the blessings of man's salvation. He was the Acorn, as it were. The whole trunk of redemption, with its different branches laden with fruit for the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God, was in Him; therefore, why should we worry? The love of God is the basis of it all. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for a sinful, ungodly race; what can He withhold from His sons? This is Paul's argument, and there is logic in it too. In giving His Son, God gave the best; hence all things are ours in Him.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" - 8:33. We may challenge the universe, even as God, and ask who can indict the elect of any misdemeanor when

Jehovah Himself has cleared them of all charge. They are viewed as in Christ their Representative and Head. It is in Him that we were justified, that is provisionally justified; for we were not even born when this was written. When we believed the Word concerning Christ, as it was preached to us, we simply entered into our provision rights. These have been waiting for us, as well as for all the new creation, since Christ arose from the dead; but they had been purposed for us in Him, from a past eternity, as we learned previously. And God is the Judge. He will not receive an indictment against His children. Then note further how impossible it is for us to be judged.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" - 8:34. All judgment has been committed to the Son of God. And He, marvel of marvels, is the very One who has died for us. He was judged in our stead - suffered the penalty due to us because of sin. But He was raised again for our justification; therefore, to condemn a believer, is to condemn Him. And not only so - but more. He is the Advocate of His people, as well as the Judge of all creation. He pleads their cause before His Father's throne, holding up His nail-pierced hands; and all their frailties are hidden. The Father beholds our Shield, and looks upon the face of His Anointed (Psalm 84:9), and vindicates us before the court of heaven. He sees no fault in us; for we are not in question. It is Christ whom God has made responsible. He is approved; therefore, we are approved. And God's Word is sufficient for our faith. He is satisfied, and puts Himself on record as being on our side. And Christ, who alone has the right to condemn (being the Judge), is also on our side. He is our Saviour. He paid the price for our redemption. His atonement and advocacy are surely sufficient. And then, right in order, is the following verse.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" - 8:35. This refers to the Spirit's work. He is the uniting bond between the

Son and the sons. They have one life, made one and kept so by His indwelling Presence and power; therefore, there can be no separation. This is a divine unity; and a breakage, or dissolution, is impossible. The whole Triune God has undertaken the work of man's salvation; therefore, it must be consummated. There is an air of confident assurance throughout this chapter. It begins with NO CONDEMNATION, and ends with NO SEPARATION. It is not a maybe; but a shall be is emphasized. Man's plans and ways are uncertain; for he is unstable. His will is vacillating. And, even when he is strong willed, his power to carry out his plan is limited and finite. But God's will moves on in its changeless course, age after age. It is perfect from the beginning, therefore admits of no change; while infinite power assures of its execution without failure or delay.

God's plan is like a vast universal system that fills the universe and embraces all things. He who loves God and is led of the Spirit, enters into that plan as a wheel into a perfect machine; and henceforth he is a part of God's universal harmony. He goes on in this wonderful will of God, nothing deterring or driving him backward, for God's plan embraces all circumstances. These latter, whether they be good or bad, are only means to an end. There can be no successful opposition from friend or foe; for God is for us. There can be no real separation when we are once in this perfect mechanism; for every part has its definite place and sphere of revolution.

Why, we cannot imagine any interference; for divine wisdom and foreknowledge are behind all these things, and brook no collision. Believers are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, and God will not fail of His purpose. We cannot be separated from Christ. The Apostle names seven and then ten barriers, that might have a tendency to move us from Christ's love, if God was not working in our defense. He triumphs over all things, for they are all in His hand. Tribulation is the first. It is a fierce opposer, but God uses it to refine and purge us from the dross. Distress is allowed, but only to draw us closer to Himself. Persecution becomes a test of our love to God. Famine, nakedness, peril, and sword only teach us our need and dependence upon God, on the one hand, and our satisfaction and rest in Him on the other. Death cannot separate. Nay, these overcoming sons of God are dying every day. They die to live, and live to die again.

Hear Paul: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" - 8:36. Death is the way into life. Jesus went this way of daily dying. This does not refer alone to His death on the cross, though it includes it; but it also speaks of His years of service for others, even as He said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it" - Luke 9:24. A perpetual dying, yet that dying is a perpetual victory - a gain rather than a loss. It is another paradox of the Christian life. He loses his life, to find it more abundant; he gives his little, to get profusely; he is buried as a seed, but a harvest comes up from the burial. This is the overcomer. He turns his foes into his friends. They not only are not able to do him harm, but actually do him good. The trials and temptations that appear to threaten his peace and his power and even his final perfection, are but the means of promoting them. The very messenger that Satan sends to buffet and hinder him, becomes the instrument of blessing; for God is thus enabled to give him a revelation of His strength, being made perfect in weakness. Every circumstance, which apart from God's plan would cast him down and defeat him, is only an additional cause of thanksgiving - luminous with purpose, when we reckon with Him.

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" - 8:37. The Diaglott's rendering is, "We do more than overcome," etc. Some might enquire, "Who does this?" "And how is it possible?" This expression is peculiar and significant. It is only found in this place. Who is this one who is more than conqueror? He is the one of whom we have been writing. That one who is never defeated. That one who is reigning over every circumstance. That one who converts defeat into victory, and realizes power out of infirmities, necessities, and weaknesses. That one who not only vanquishes the foe, but then leads him captive; that is, makes him serve him. That one who abandons self-effort and trusts God. That one who has no fear of the foe, but shouts the victory before the battle; as Paul the pattern of this overcoming, victorious life triumphantly asserts: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" - 8:38, 39.

Marvelous confidence in God's faithfulness is expressed in such positive language, that we fail to understand how there ever can be a question as to the eternal security of the believer. The Apostle has mentioned seven apparent opposers of the perfect union of the believer with Christ, and showed them all futile and of no avail to really separate. These were the low and base things.

Now he arrays all the great, positive forces of the universe - the high and exalted things - and declares that none, no, nor all of them together, can come between the believer and the unconquerable love of God as

displayed in His Gift to us in Christ Jesus. Death will not separate us; for to die is but to live. It is gain. Life cannot separate us; for us to live is Christ. Angels, principalities, and powers - celestial or terrestrial - cannot separate us; for we are above them all, in Christ Jesus. They are all subject to His sway. The present may perplex us at times, and the future may fill us with dread for a moment; but they cannot effectually move us from our place in the Conqueror. Nothing above nor beneath, nothing at all, has the power to break the union that exists between the saint and the living God. The Holy Spirit is the uniting bond of this union. He has put us into Christ, and cemented us there; and no creature heavenly, earthly, or devilish can dissolve that perfect oneness, it is the oneness of life. Paul was so persuaded, and we are likewise persuaded. It is a good persuasion, and leads to peace and quietness of heart; and finally to that golden throne, where the new creation shall live and reign a thousand years and forever.

THE NATIONAL TRIUMPH

Chapters Nine to Eleven

The first eight chapters of Romans have given us a marvelous outline of God's great plan of salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. The Gospel in its fullness, as well as its result to the Church, has been therein declared. The first three chapters revealed the absolute need of such a Gospel. "For all have sinned" - "there is no difference" - 3:23, 22. None have been found righteous. All have come short of God's requirements; and no works of man are now acceptable with God. Man has utterly failed to obtain a righteousness of his own. There is no hope for him. He is lost, irretrievably and eternally lost, unless help comes from another source.

The succeeding chapters tell the sequel. God Himself comes upon the scene of our ruin, and provides redemption for our fallen race. And it is a wonderful plan, far beyond our thoughts: all grace on His part, all faith on ours. It begins with complete justification - a standing, just and upright in Christ Jesus; and ends with certain glorification - the state brought up to the standing - "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" - Ephesians 4:13. Thus, full and glorious is the salvation of all who are in Christ Jesus. Their destiny is assured. They are already joined to Christ in an eternal union. It is for us to believe and enjoy now all the results of the Gospel, provided by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But now there is a change. The present lesson - chapters 9, 10 and 11 - tells us of the results of the Gospel to the nation Israel. These chapters form a distinct and complete section of the Epistle, by themselves. They give us an outline of all God's past, present, and future dealings with this chosen nation, and His reasons for so doing. Israel plays a very important part upon the world's stage. They were the people of Jehovah for fifteen centuries; and, though they have been rejected and scattered in judgment over the face of the earth for the past eighteen centuries, they are yet to come into the blessings promised to Abraham. God made a covenant with this man of faith, and His throne will fall ere He fails to fulfill His Word. "Though it (the vision) tarry, wait for it" - Habakkuk 2:3; Hebrews 10:37.

THE PAST OF ISRAEL

Chapter Nine

His present action, in rejecting the chosen line and admitting Gentiles as well as Jews to a higher relationship than was ever offered to Israel, is one of sovereignty and involves the great theme of election. This is the special subject of chapter nine, and gives us the reason for God's past dealing with Israel. The teaching herein declared, is very little understood by God's people. They appear to consider it a subject that we should ignore, because they imagine it genders strife and confusion. But this is due to ignorance of the subject. We should not be afraid of frankly discussing any portion of the truth. God's Word needs no apology from man. And, when we rightly understand election, it is a most blessed and comforting doctrine. Let us listen carefully now to the Spirit of truth, and see if He does not breathe upon this chapter.

Paul commences his subject with tears. He had personal sorrow and anguish of heart because of the rejection of Israel, but he does not blame God; though he could wish that he might stand in the gap and bear the punishment due his brethren according to the flesh. When we feel thus, our state is close to our standing. Where has Saul the Pharisee gone? This is not the hard, zealous, bitter law-keeper; but Paul the gentle, the loving follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. The Christ life is in evidence here, to the glory of God. He is a sweet savor of Christ. We are told at the outset, that Israel were divinely chosen. The Old Testament promises were all given to them. The Church is not in question here. The Gentiles were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" - Ephesians 2:12. Israel had and still has (notice present tense of verbs), eight points of advantage and blessing over all other nations. They were God's adopted people. He took them

apart from all earthly nations. He chose them "to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" - Deuteronomy 7:6. The glory pertained to them, and the covenants - one to Abraham, that of promise; and the other to Moses, that of law. Connected with the latter was the tabernacle and temple service of God. All the promises in the Old Testament were given directly to Israel. We, the Church, have come through and from this chosen people. The "fathers" are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the last of these wonderful favors to Israel is greatest of all - "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" - 9:5.

But Israel, with these eight great points of advantage, failed of their wonderful privilege. They are for the present time disowned and rejected of God. Yet notice, God's Word has not failed, though at first view it seems to have miscarried. But no, God always had, and still has, a remnant in Israel. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" - 9:6. God proves that there was an election out of the nation, by whom the promises were appropriated and the blessings enjoyed. The real children of Abraham are of the promise - "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" - 9:7. Abraham was the natural ancestor of a fleshly line; but, he is the father of all them that believe, whether they belong to the fleshly line or not. And finally, to those of the fleshly line who do believe, God will fulfill all the Old Testament promises as to earthly blessings. But they must receive the "SEED," which is Christ, through whom all these Abrahamic blessings will be realized. It is to Him, as the Head of a new creation, that these promises were really spoken.

ELECTION MADE PLAIN

God called the Abrahamic Seed through Isaac, rather than Ishmael, because he speaks of a new creation. He was the second son, and was born when Abraham and Sarah were dead, as to the possibility of bearing children; consequently, his birth was wholly of God. Then Paul cites the case of Esau and Jacob, to teach us more on the same subject of election. God said He hated Esau, but loved Jacob - 9:13; but this was uttered years after they had both manifested their nature - Malachi 1:1-3. Esau represented the fleshly seed, the old Adam; Jacob the spiritual line, the last Adam. God chooses none of the old creation, either in Israel or any other nation. They were all, according to His provision, put to death with Christ - their Substitute and Representative.

The new creation is the election. They are born anew, of a spiritual seed, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ in resurrection is the Head of this elect race, whom God "hath chosen ... in Him before the foundation of the world" - Ephesians 1:4. This is most wonderful, when we see it. Any man in the old creation may at any moment step out of his old Adam head and into Christ the new Head, the elect Man, by simple faith in God's Word. Thus all are elected who believe the Gospel. Then it can be said of such, "The elder, shall serve the younger" - 9:12; for the old creation serves the new man. Then Paul asks the question which comes naturally to the human heart, "is there unrighteousness with, God?" - 9:14. That is, has God the right to act sovereignly in this matter?

Then he proceeds to answer, by quoting God's own words to Moses - "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." And he adds further, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" - 9:15, 16.

Now this is all most wonderfully simple when understood; but acceptable to the contrite heart, whether understood or not, because it is God's Word. The Lord has shut up all men to accept His grace. There is nothing else for them to do. He has had no mercy on the old man. He shows him no compassion. Man deserved death, because he was a rebel in the universe of God; and he was judged, found guilty, and executed on Calvary, in the Person of Jesus Christ. And further, as is noted, he need not try to do anything to merit any favor from God; for it cannot be earned in any way - "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." God will show mercy to us when we acknowledge we deserve none, and accept His Son as our Substitute. Then He comes in with abundant mercy; but it is to the new creation, because of His Son and His effectual service in their behalf on the cross.

"For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth" -

9:17. The above is just more of the same, only another phase of it. Pharaoh is a striking example of the self-willed, sinful old man, that refuses to yield to God under any consideration. He will not say, "Yes" to God. He is born this way. The Word of the Lord only stirs up his enmity and hatred.

It brings to the surface all the deep seated depravity of the human heart. If God Himself did not come upon the scene and open our eyes to our condition, we would resist His will and revile His Name. God was not in ignorance as to the result of His first creation. He was all prepared for it. He had another Man in His purpose, before He created the first Adam. And Paul argues rightly, that we should not find fault with this. The potter has power over the clay, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor. And we do

not object; He is sovereign in this respect. The lump belongs to him. And so, God had a perfect right, to create a man that He knew would fail; for this is the force of the illustration used. He did not make Adam sinful; but He knew he would become so. He further purposed to use him as the display of His authority and power, as well as

a contrast to His perfect, sinless New Man. He was also aware that the Second Man, the Last Adam, would not fail. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" - Acts 15:18.

Furthermore, we learn that the Lord endured with longsuffering the rebellion, ingratitude, and hatred of the old man, simply for His own purposes. Long ago He would have wiped out sinful humanity - "the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction"; were it not for the sake of the new creation - "the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory" - 9:22, 23. And these glorious riches are for both Jew and Gentile. But no one may enjoy them otherwise than as a new creation. "Ye must be born again," stands above the portal of God's Kingdom, for all who enter here. And then He can say of us the Church, as well as of Israel, "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" - 9:25.

Israel were simply a pattern people. They but manifested the heart of the whole old Adamic line, though tried under the very best conditions and environments. Their failure to attain a righteousness of their own, teaches us that there is no hope for anyone. Righteousness cannot be obtained by any works or endeavors on man's part; otherwise, Israel would certainly have found what they sought. Again we say, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." The Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness by their own efforts, attained to that wherein Israel failed, "even the righteousness which is of faith" - 9:30. And wherefore is this? asks Paul.

Because Israel sought righteousness, "not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law" - 9:32.

But it is written, "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" - 9:33; Isaiah 28:16. Jesus Christ is this Stone. And yet, people stumble over Him today and say, in the face of God's unchanging Word, "Yes, if we do right and hold out faithful, etc., He will save us." But God says that faith in Christ is counted for righteousness, not works of the law, either for Jew or Gentile. And you are calling God a liar, if you add any conditions to this or teach otherwise. God never had any other way of salvation than by faith. The law was given, as we have seen, as a test to allow man to ascertain by his own experience how unable he was to keep that law or please God.

IN A MOMENT

Mary M. Bodie

In a moment! In a moment!
At the breaking of the day,
Christ shall come with clouds triumphant,
And shall steal His Bride away,
Evermore to reign in glory,
Altogether glad and gay.
In a moment! In a moment!
All our sorrows will be past,
As the Lord shall be descending,
He shall change these mortals fast;
And we'll leave our fragile basket
At the trumpet's bridal blast.
In a moment! In a moment!
At the moving of the reel,
We shall don our heavenly clothing,
And mount up at trumpet peal.
All the wounds and stabs of Satan,
Jesus then will quickly heal.
In a moment! In a moment!
In the twinkle of an eye,
We'll be taken up in chariot
To our mansion in the sky,
Where we'll meet and greet our Bridegroom,
And will never say, "Goodbye."

THE PRESENT OF ISRAEL

Chapter Ten

In chapter ten of this letter, we are shown the attitude of God toward Israel for the present time. They are to Him as any other nation, and may be saved as individuals on the same condition as all other people; that is, by faith. Paul commences this chapter with prayer for Israel, "that they might be saved" - 10:1. It was his heart's desire. He bore record that they had a zeal for God; he knew by his own experience. For who was ever so untiringly zealous as Saul the Pharisee? But it was a zeal of ignorance, as he informs us - "not according to knowledge" - 10:2. Israel as well as himself, were seeking to establish a righteousness of their own, as we learned previously, and thus were not submitting "themselves unto the righteousness of God" - 10:3. For he adds, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" - 10:4.

Then we have the righteousness of faith described. It is very simple. We do not have to go back two thousand years, and bring Christ down from heaven; for He has been here and died. We do not have to descend into the deep, or Sheol, to bring Christ up from the dead; for He has come up and has ascended into heaven. There is nothing for us to do but believe the Word which is nigh to everyone; that is, the Word of faith which Paul preached - "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" - 10:9. We repeat, that there is nothing for us to do to attain the righteousness of faith, but to believe God and confess our faith. The work of Christ on the cross is not limited to any age, nor to any people. It is for all time and all men. We are told that Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world - Revelation 13:8. His death availed for Adam, and it is sufficient for all of his sons. "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" - 10:11. It is as though He died yesterday. There is no other way of salvation for Jew or Greek. The same Lord is over all, and He will save any individual any time and at any place. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him" - 10:12. Therefore, let us believe and call.

And thus the need of preachers like Paul, the pattern preacher, as the following questions suggest. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" - 10:14, 15. The logical conclusion is evident. The Good News must be told; but the preachers must be sent of the Lord.

And such ministers will preach the Word of God, and not psychology or modernism. They have beautiful feet, "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace" - Ephesians 6:15. They bring "good tidings" of good things - Isaiah 52:7. This is a hint of Israel's call in the end of this age and the beginning of the next. They will be the evangelists to the world. This office has been given to them as a nation. They, not the Church, will convert the world. "And I will send those that escape of them (Israel) unto the nations ... to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles" - Isaiah 66:19. Let us love them and pray for them.

"The Lord shall guide thee continually" - Isaiah 58:11

THE JEW

Scattered by God's avenging hand, afflicted and forlorn,
Sad wanderers from their pleasant land, do Judah's children mourn;
And e'en in Christian countries, few breathe thoughts of pity for the Jew.

Yes, listen, Gentile, do you love the Bible's precious page?

Then let your heart with kindness move to Israel's heritage.

Who traced those lines for you? The sacred writer was a Jew.

And then as years and ages passed, and nations rose and fell,

Though clouds and darkness oft were cast o'er captive Israel;

The oracles of God for you were kept in safety by the Jew.

And when the great Redeemer came for guilty man to bleed,

He did not take an angel's name; no, born of Abraham's seed.

Jesus, who gave His life for you - the gentle Saviour - was a Jew.

And though His own received Him not, and turned in pride away,

Whence is the Gentile's happier lot? Are you more just than they?

No! God in pity turned to you - have you no pity for the Jew?

Go, then, and bend your knee to pray for Israel's ancient race;

Ask the dear Saviour every day to call them by His grace.
Go, for a debt of love is due from Christian Gentiles to the Jew.
Author Unknown

THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

Chapter Eleven

From all the foregoing dealings of God, one might be inclined to ask, as Paul in chapter 11 - "Hath God cast away His people?" - 11:1. But we get his answer immediately - "God for- bid."

Then the proof follows, in that he himself was not cut off; for he was "an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." He cites further proof - the instance of Elijah, who felt in his day that Israel were all cut off; but God encouraged him with the news that He had "seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" - 11:4. This is full of instruction, and is also prophetic as to the future of Israel. The fearless prophet Elijah, stands here as a type of the two witnesses spoken of in Revelation 11. He lived in a day of woeful declension. Ahab the apostate king, and his heathen wife Jezebel, were reigning over the house of Israel. They are types of the anti-Christ and the apostate church, in fellowship with Satan. They will seek to kill all God's prophets and destroy all His true worshippers. It will no doubt appear as if there were none of Israel faithful to God. The two witnesses will especially infer such a condition; but God assures us that He will even then, in that awful day, have a faithful remnant in Israel, as heretofore and at the present time. There has always been an election of this chosen nation. Some have always believed God. They have seen His grace and accepted His mercy.

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" - 11:7. Here again we have the two creations in evidence in the history of the nation. The latter, who were blinded, are the old creation. How were they blinded? Was this arbitrary with God? No indeed. The Word of God was spoken to them, and they refused to accept the truth. The light shone upon them, but they did not yield to its power; hence, it had the effect of hardening their heart and blinding their mind. Their eyes became heavy and their ears dull of hearing. God and His Word are so divinely one that obedience to the Truth is as obedience to God, and vice versa. They cannot be separated without disastrous results.

The same lesson is given us in the case of Pharaoh. Moses and Aaron, prophet and priest, came to him with the Word of God. They proved their divine commission by miracles; but he refused to heed their command. They were types of Christ, in His office of Prophet and Priest, appearing before the nation with His divine credentials; but Israel did not heed His words any more than did Pharaoh. They proved their kinship to the Egyptian. They were no different than he, after all their training and environment. The old man cannot change his nature, any more than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots. God did not harden Pharaoh's heart. He hardened it himself when he refused to yield to the Word of God. And Israel, the chosen nation, later did the very same thing; but some of the nation did hear and heed the voice of God. These are the election - the new creation.

But did Israel stumble just so that they might fall? Paul exclaims again: "God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" - 11:11. God is never defeated, is the lesson. If one people, or one individual, will not accept His offer of mercy, another will. He is not at a loss. All things serve Him and work good for someone. Israel's failure was the Gentiles' gain.

Through their fall, salvation came to us. And thus Paul argues that, if such blessing came to others when Israel failed and was cast off, immense results will follow their restoration and fullness. "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" Balaam was made to ask - Numbers 23:10. And not only themselves will be blessed and multiplied; but the world will come into blessing through them. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" - 11:15. No one can estimate the fruits of righteousness which will be manifest, when a nation shall "be born at once" - Isaiah 66:8. Oh, the marvels and wonders and gladness of the resurrection day for the nation. We can only faintly realize the magnitude of the refreshing which will come upon the earth, when Israel is the head and not the tail of the nations. This is the place that God has given to this chosen people, and everything is out of harmony when they are out of their inheritance.

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches" - 11:16. That is, provisionally, Israel were holy - "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" - I Peter 2:9. The firstfruit - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the twelve patriarchs - were divinely chosen and devoted to God. They were holy because of God's call and choice. They were a new creation when they believed God and yielded to His call. By faith, not by conduct, they were "born again"; even as is the case with us. So the conclusion

which Paul reached is logical. If the firstfruits are holy, the lump must be of the same character. What does this mean, but the very same truth of which we are constantly reminded in Romans? Israel were chosen as the new, not as the old creation; and as such they were sanctified provisionally. The root was holy, and so were the branches.

Then we are taught that, because of unbelief, some of these Israelitish branches were broken off, and the Gentiles, called "a wild olive tree, were grafted into their place, and thus partake "of the root and fatness of the olive tree" - 11:17. Israel is of course the olive tree, against which the Gentiles are warned not to boast; because they are indebted to the nation, not the nation to them.

And yet, this is exactly what Christendom has done. The Jews have been persecuted, harassed, and afflicted by so-called Christian people, all down the centuries; though it stands here in the oracles of God, that Israel are the tree of which the Gentiles are only a small part - a few branches. These natural branches were broken off because of unbelief; and we are admonished, "Be not highminded, but fear" - 11:20.

This very result, of which Paul warns, shall come to pass. Christendom has boasted and has become lifted up. They have come to believe that they are the "olive tree." They have taken to themselves all the promises to Israel, as to earthly blessings, and have relegated the nation to oblivion; but God is still over all. And how natural the conclusion - "If God spared not the natural branches" - 11:21 - how much more will He not spare those which, contrary to nature, have been grafted into the olive tree? The branches that were broken off because of unbelief, shall be grafted into their own place again; "for God is able to graft them in again" - 11:23 - when they believe His Word.

Paul is not here speaking of individuals, but of Israel and the nations. No individual believer will be broken off from the olive tree. The professed Christian nations or Gentiles, who are boasting of their place as the rulers of the world, are those to whom this applies. Israel, the ancient people, are now being gathered back to Palestine; where, after due time has come, they will again be grafted into their own olive tree and become the head of all the nations. The blindness of Christendom, and their failure to recognize the place of the Jew in God's program, is amazing. They have denounced the conduct of Israel in scathing terms, and persecuted the poor castoff people of Jehovah for these centuries since their rejection; and yet they themselves are following the same rebellious course. Long ago the "Wise Man" wrote, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" - Ecclesiastes 1:9. And so it is. Men are always the same. Degeneracy is warp and woof of the old creation. They go the downward grade, as easily as a log rolling down a bank, unless the Lord mercifully arrests and turns them around to go the upward, shining way that leads to Him.

The nation of Israel is a witness to the world, of the fact of man's inclination to depart from God - the source of all good. He planted them in a fruitful field after He, by His grace, had delivered them out of Egypt. He gave them laws, spiritual laws, and hygienic rules, etc., relating both to their moral or inward life, as well as their physical or outward life. He surrounded them with every protection, giving them the benefit of a perfect environment; but with what result? Woeful failure of His covenant, and rejection of Himself. Yet if a wild graft can be introduced into a cultivated tree with good results, how much greater the fruitage when the good branches be grafted into their own place again? They will then witness to the world of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His Word to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob regardless of unfaithfulness and in spite of their weakness and inherent sinfulness. In other words, they will be a mighty testimony to the world of the grace of God. They will indeed boldly declare, as David the inspired Psalmist prophesied long ago, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever" - Psalm 52:8. The olive always speaks of the light of testimony. That was the only oil that could be used in the sanctuary.

Israel will cease from their own works, and forever trust in God's grace and depend upon Him. This is the end for which all these hard things have befallen them. They have been the means whereby God would teach them (and through them all men) their frailty and need. They suffered the most because they were to be the example, not because they were worse than others; for according to man's standard, judging by the Ten Commandments, they were the best specimen of the Adamic race. Christendom does not show the same morality that is evidenced among the Orthodox Jews today, much less than when Christ was in their midst. Morality or a clean life, as men speak, has no weight with God. He seeks a new creation, and only upon such does His favor rest; even as the Apostle, who is a marvelous figure of the nation, tells us. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" - Galatians 6:16.

Then the Apostle lets us into a secret, "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" - 11:25. This verse is very little understood, though it appears so simple. The meaning is that there is a remnant from Jews and Gentiles gathered in this age - the Body of Christ, or the Church, as

they are called. When that determined number is made up, then Israel's blindness as a nation will begin to be lifted. The veil over their eyes will be taken away. All nations will share in their blessings. Only a few, comparatively speaking, are taken out from among them for the Name of Christ; but when the nation, Israel, will be the light of the world, then as the prophet assures them, "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" - Isaiah 60:3. The nation is still "beloved for the fathers' sakes" - 11:28. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" - 11:26 - because God made a covenant to this effect with Abraham, and confirmed it to Isaac and Jacob. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" - 11:29. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee - Isaiah 49:15.

Men regret favors shown to others; but not so does God. No nation or individual ever disappoints Him; for He knows the end from the beginning. He has prepared a great part in a marvelous plan for Israel, which they must fulfill; even though, for the present setting, they as a nation, do not appear on the stage. But mercy cannot be shown to, the self-righteous, or self-sufficient. Israel, as well as the individual, must learn his need. They must come in empty-handed, even as well as all men, so that their boast will be alone in God. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" - 11:32. And then Paul can contain himself no longer. He is beside himself with all the marvels and the mysteries of God's eternal purposes, and he bursts forth, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" - 11:33-36.

God is the source of all. He is the beginning. All things sprang from Him. The universe was made by His Word - made out of nothing visible. Creation evolved from the Infinite, out of His own counsel and mind. No one can search Him out, nor understand His ways. Poor man, who would dare to search Him out, or reason as to the origin of species! Oh, how good to believe the Record, and soon we come to understand. God is back of all man's history. He began with God, and God was all. And He will eventually, through Christ's redemptive work, become his all again in a greater, fuller measure than He was in the beginning. Man will end with God, not in an earthly paradise which may be lost again; but in a heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. God will again dwell with man. Then will be manifested the results of the Gospel for Jew and Gentile and the Church of God. All men will share in redemption.

But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and An everlasting King. Jeremiah 10:10

THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE GOSPEL

Chapters 12:1 - 16:27

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" - 12:1.

We have in these three following chapters - 12, 13 and 14 - the practical side of the Epistle of Romans: for herein are contained all the exhortations and admonitions based upon the mercy of God declared in the Gospel. When the truth revealed in the former chapters has been grasped by the heart in living faith, the results will be manifested in practice. The twofold reckoning enjoyed in the sixth chapter is very effective in silencing the old man and awakening the new man.

Paul begins this portion of his Epistle, which may very truly be called man's side of the truth, by the leverage of God's side - which wonderful provision has been his theme heretofore. Because of all the preceding matchless grace, we are now urged to present our bodies to God. And notice that each body is as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," because of the treasure which it contains - the new life. For when we count the old man dead, God sees the body as an earthen vessel - the receptacle for the display of the Life of Christ. And this is counted as our reasonable service. That is, it is in harmony with reason, that we should give to God that which He has redeemed at such infinite cost. Paul suggests it as a privilege, not a duty, of which we may gladly avail ourselves by his reminder. And this is real Christian service or worship. It displaces the forms of divine service as formerly connected with the law.

This will necessitate nonconformity to the world, and will result in a transformation God-ward. The process will be accomplished by a continuous renewing of our mind; thus proving or finding, "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" - 12:2. That is, we thereby learn God's will for us personally, of which there seems to be three distinctions - three progressive stages - we might say, in the school of Christ. The first is His GOOD WILL; later, we find His more ACCEPTABLE WILL, as we walk with Him; until finally we

are in the very ocean of God's PERFECT WILL, fixed and unchanging as His own eternal decrees.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHURCH

Chapter twelve deals particularly with our responsibility as pertaining to the whole Church, the Body of Christ. This Body is viewed as an organism of which we are all members, having one Head and one Life. And this Body has gifts which are bestowed by the Head, and are to be exercised for the mutual good and edification of all. We are exhorted to let the gift be manifest, whether prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, or showing mercy. We would never know the latter was a gift, neither the fact of giving, if the Word did not here so indicate.

Thus, everyone in the Body has a gift. There are no useless members in the human body, much less in the Body of Christ.

Then follows the Christian ethics, or moral philosophy, as we have heard the following portion called; but we would name it the fruit of the Christian's life. There are the negatives and the positives to these precepts and admonitions. The foundation of all is love. It is the root - unfeigned love - that, cannot be curbed or bound; the result of which makes the overcomer not only negatively good but positively good, overcoming the evil - 12:21. We are exhorted to let love have its way - flow out, as it were. Then all that follows will be in evidence. Notice the constant repetition of this little word "let." The force of it is that we are to yield to our new Head in the power of the Holy Spirit, and thus make way for these admonitions to be realities in our lives.

Unyieldedness is all that hinders. The new life will manifest itself if we let it. And thus only, will we be enabled to heap coals of fire on our enemy's head, by ministering good to him. "The old man would heap on the coals of fire, if he were allowed to add a little dynamite," as one said, "when urged to forgive his enemy and do him good instead of evil."

We are to remember the grace of God as shown to us and act likewise, in all our dealings with the members of Christ's Body. If God should avenge Himself on His enemies, where would we be? The manner of His treatment of our case should be our example. Our enemy in distress, gives us the opportunity to show grace. Instead of calling for hate and vengeance, it calls for love. This is the way that God vanquished our enmity, and there is no better way.

Teach me to know Thy will;
Teach me to walk with Thee.
Help me Thy leading to discern,
And Thine own purpose see.

Gladys W. Roberts

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORLD

Chapter thirteen refers to our attitude to the world, through which we are passing as strangers and pilgrims. The Word of God is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path at all times and in every sphere of life and in every circumstance of life. We may safely consult it in any dilemma. It contains the answer to every question, and teaches us how to act in every sphere of life and toward all men.

We are admonished to be subject to the higher powers; that is, the government under which we are residing. These are very needed instructions for the present time, for the ruling powers are certainly making increasing demands of their subjects today. And we are admonished to obey them at all times, when not inconsistent with the expressed or revealed will of God. We read that the powers that are in control are "ordained of God" - 13:1. Therefore to resist such is to resist the ordinance of God, and will result in judgment to the offender, though he may think he is doing the will of God. Ignorance does not excuse him, because the Word plainly instructs us on this point.

In cases where the demands are arbitrary and apparently unreasonable, we can pray and the Lord will plainly evidence His will to us. He will protect us and make a way of escape, if it is impossible to comply with their laws and regulations. We have but to remember that God our Father is over all; and that all the kings, dictators, and governments are in His hand. They are doing His will, even though energized and controlled by Satan; and when we are subject to them, we are subject to God.

Jesus Himself set us an example, by paying tribute when it was exacted of Him. He owed nothing to this world. It was in His debt - infinitely so - as its Creator, and afterwards as its Redeemer; but He was yielding, as subject to His Father. And when the Jews Endeavored to catch Him in some misdemeanor, that they might accuse Him to Caesar, He said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" - Matthew 22:21. Love is again the controlling factor in this case. It is the

one debt from which we are never free. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" - 13:8-10. And we are brought down to the very end of the age in these admonitions. The time to awaken is at hand, Paul urges. Our salvation, or deliverance, is nearer than when we first believed - 13:11. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" - 13:12. The coming of the Lord is the Apostle's incentive to all holy living and doing. He puts this hope before us constantly, that we may be cheered and strengthened by the fact of its imminency; for he well knew its wonderful power of separation from all that is of the night and the darkness. And then the secret of all victory is given to us in the last verse. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" - 13:14. When He is on, there is no unyieldedness toward God, nor lack of love toward our fellow.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD INDIVIDUALS

Chapter fourteen deals with our responsibility to manifest love to the individual believer. The weak in faith are to be received, but not to judge their doubts and fears; but rather that we may be a blessing to such. Notice who are under the law - cannot eat meat, must keep the Sabbath, etc. The natural man reasons just the opposite from God. The man who comes telling people not to eat pork, and to fast certain days, and keep certain days holy, and such like carnal commandments, is generally considered to be some great one. He is looked upon as very strong and holy. But Paul assures that such a one is weak; and he exhorts us who are strong - those under grace - to receive the weak, not to judge them but to help them; for God is able to make them stand, even in their weakness. This of course refers to those who are honest in their convictions; not to those who are making merchandise of the Gospel, willfully deceiving the people, that they may be exalted.

The teaching here is that we are neither better by our fasting, nor worse by our eating. And we are not to judge our brother in these things. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" - 14:12. I am not held responsible for my brother's walk, only so far as I have failed in my love toward him. Paul said, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" - 14:14. This is individual responsibility. We are to eat in faith; for what is not of faith is sin. And "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" - 14:17. This is not a definition of the kingdom, but simply a statement of principles which pervade or rule there; not law, but love flowing from righteousness. It is a spiritual kingdom.

But if our weak brother is grieved with our liberty in these matters - that is, stumbling - what are we to do? Now let us look at this carefully, for there are many who do not understand these matters. They speak of being stumbled by their brother, when in reality they are the guilty ones.

We are not offending or stumbling our brethren, when they condemn and judge us for some action which they think is wrong. They are taking the place of the strong - the judge. When our brother who is weak imitates us who are strong and does accordingly but not in faith, we are stumbling him. For instance, I have faith to drink wine; and a brother who is under law, yet likes wine, beholds me indulging and immediately follows my example and is brought under the power of strong drink. Then I have stumbled my weak brother. But if, on the contrary, he tells everyone what he saw - putting all manner of evil construction upon it, with the added information that he would not do such a thing - he is not weak according to the Word of the Lord, nor is he stumbled. It is only the one who doubts or judges something to be wrong and continues in it, that is judged.

"Hast thou faith?" Paul asks. "Have it to thyself before God" - 14:22. Do not endeavor to push it upon thy brother. Grace considers the weak, rather than the strong. Note this fact: the weak are not exhorted to bear the infirmities of the strong. Christ Himself, as always, is the most striking example of this marvelous condescension. Observe the grace displayed in His dealings with His disciples, whose weakness and lack of faith were no doubt a source of constant distress to Him. If He could and did bridge the great gulf between Himself and them, surely we ought to bear with those whose infirmities are the common lot of us all.

The Lord would teach here, that we are not to force our faith upon our brother. Some may be able to believe God for greater things than others. God may bring them into a larger place of liberty than others. We are not under law; and we are not to bring our brother under law, nor to judge him by our little rule of faith. He may be miles away from us in his experience - in the senior class perhaps, while we may be just a freshman yet. Here is the rule that Paul, laid down in such matters of individual conscience, and it is a good rule to which many today might well take heed. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" - 14:22.

But there is the other side of the question. We are not to make a boast of our liberty in Christ. Knowledge of

the truth, without the corresponding love, puffs up. If peace and unity are to be manifested in our midst, the strong must be the aggressors. Things which may be done with a good conscience before God, may be the means of giving offense to others; therefore, we should forego some things, unless directly led of the Lord in such matters. The edification of the greater number of the people of God, should be our constant aim in all our actions. No one can please all the people all the time; but let us seek to build some of them up some of the time, and please God all of the time by so doing. And thus, we may be a partaker of Christ's sufferings, according as it is written, "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me" - 15:3; Psalm 69:9. That is, the people that do not want the will of God will be displeased with us, even as they were in the case of Christ; but their reproaches are really aimed at God. They only fall upon us because we are His representatives upon the earth.

PAUL A STRIKING TYPE

Chapter Fifteen

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" - 15:8.

The above Scripture appears to be a continuation of chapter eleven, and the three intervening chapters - twelve, thirteen, and fourteen - should come at the end of chapter fifteen. And some even contend that these three chapters, as well as chapter sixteen, do not rightly belong to this epistle. While we do not entirely agree with this view, we know that the first twenty verses of chapter sixteen belong to the Ephesian Epistle rather than to Romans. There are five plain evidences of this fact. (See our notes on Ephesians). We have the ministry of Christ emphasized in this fifteenth chapter. It is said to have been to the circumcision (the Jews), in contrast with that of Paul which was to the uncircumcision (the Gentiles). Christ was sent to confirm the promises which were given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but Paul's ministry was not in fulfillment of any particular promise. It was in absolute grace. The uncircumcision had no promises whatever, except those which were to follow the Millennial blessings upon Israel. These can only be enjoyed after Christ will be received by the circumcision (the Jews) and be seated upon His throne as the King of the Jews. Then these Scriptures quoted here will come to pass - 15:9-12. Christ was the Seed of Abraham, through whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. And only through Israel receiving Christ, can the nations be blessed. There is deep teaching here. Paul himself is a typical man. His very life, commencing with his conversion, is prophetic. He said of himself, referring to the above event, that he was as "one born out of due time," an abortive - I Cor. 15:8. In his wonderful conversion beholding the glorified Jesus, as he was going in his self-willed, high-handed way to Damascus, he is a striking figure of Israel. Paul was born of God two thousand years before the nation to which he belonged, is the meaning.

God sovereignly chose this son of Abraham, even as He chose the nation, because of His grace; to be the servant of Jesus Christ, serving the Gospel of God, "that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" - 15:16. The above Scripture is very significant. It shows plainly that Paul is the most prominent character during this dispensation - "the public servant of Jesus Christ," serving the Gospel at his own expense, as the Greek gives it. He offered to God, as a priest, a people whom He is taking out of the Gentiles for His Name; and as was said previously, he is also a figure of Israel as a kingdom of priests, offering up the nations as a holy, acceptable sacrifice to God, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This latter will truly come to pass in due time. Israel as a nation, will be the flaming evangelists to the Gentiles, the zealous, untiring, obedient servants of the Lord. And they will glory in the wonderful service committed to their charge, even as Paul said, "I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God" - 15:17. The mightiest signs and wonders will follow their ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit, "so that from Jerusalem," which is in the center of the earth, and round about (in a circuit) unto Illyricum" - meaning "joy" - they will fully preach "the Gospel of Christ" - 15:19. And it will be in the lands where Christ will not be known.

This gives us light as to the whereabouts of the Gentile nations to which those flaming evangelists will go - where Christ is not known, in lands where the Gospel has not yet been preached. We would infer then that Israel - the ten lost tribes - in contrast with the Gentiles, are located in the regions where the Gospel has been preached. This only confirms what we have been assured of for some time that the so-called Christian nations are the ten lost tribes. In the ninth chapter of Romans, quoting from Hosea and speaking of the Church - both Jews and Gentiles - Paul says, "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" - 9:25; Hosea 2:23. But, when we refer to the above mentioned prophet, we are amazed to learn that he is speaking of Israel; thus plainly indicating that the ten lost tribes are in Christendom. They are apparently the professed people of God today. This was no doubt the reason that

the Holy Spirit constrained Paul to go to Macedonia, not suffering him to go into Bithynia nor to preach the Word in Asia; because the ten lost tribes were in the Roman Empire and her provinces, where they had been previously scattered. And, furthermore, it appears that they are in Rome yet. She reigns over Israel still. And while now it is in a more religious sense, yet the national rule will come later; for the Roman Empire must again be prominent. The ten-toed kingdom must be in evidence just before the end; for the Stone cut out without hands will fall upon the "ten toes," which are plainly said to be kings, and break them in pieces - Daniel 2:34.

That is, the Roman Empire will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ - the King of all kings.

Paul's journey to Rome with its disastrous results - wrecked vessel, etc. - while a prophetic picture of the ruin of the Church of Jesus Christ as to her outward testimony, is also prophetic of Paul bringing blessing to Israel who are captive in Rome. For he did finally reach this city which he had for many years desired to visit. Satan had hindered him hitherto, he tells us in his Epistle; but he assures us positively he will yet see Rome. Now this is wonderfully significant. As we have intimated, he is a figure of the believing remnant of the Jews in the end of the age who will be sent to the nations to preach the Kingdom of God. But Paul's own personal ministry is of another character and has another significance. It is of absolute grace as to his own conversion and his message to the uncircumcision. As to the Church, there was not even a promise of such a glorious gathering out from among the Gentiles to become a marvelous privileged class, the Body of Christ during this age. We see the figure of this much-graced company in the Old Testament Scriptures; but nowhere do we find the actual fact stated. It is truly a hidden mystery, "hid in God" - Eph. 3:9.

Observe several points of difference between Christ's ministry and that of Paul; for this is of importance. There are many today that argue that, because it is the Apostle speaking, we do not have to heed his words. They do not give him the unique, distinctive, official place that God has delegated to him. We often hear such words as, "Oh, I take the words of Jesus"; or, "Oh, that was only Paul who said that," etc. But the Apostle is our minister for this day, and we are to heed his message particularly. Christ's ministry was wholly to Israel. He never went outside of the confines of Palestine with His message of love. And Paul never went inside Palestine, we might say, to emphasize the contrast; for, though he several times assayed to bring to his own people his Gospel, he never was successful. The only time that he preached in Jerusalem (Acts 21) he was taken prisoner and later taken to Rome, the capital city of the Roman Empire, and he never saw Palestine again. That is, the Lord used the Jews in their rage to convey Paul to the place and the people to whom He was then calling him. God has different ways of getting us where He wants us to go. He is sovereign in the lives of those He calls to leadership. There are no volunteers into these places of trust; neither, we may add, are there any slackers.

Paul was a chosen vessel; and though he was a Jew, yet he was not born in Judea, but in Asia Minor. He was not saved within the limits of the land that he loved, nor even officially called into the work until he had left it - Acts 9 and 13. He was severed from the twelve kingdom apostles, that he might fulfill his distinctive ministry to the people whom the Lord is calling out today. And all the truth for this present age is found only in his writings; therefore, the Church must study his writings, to come into her inheritance in Christ. After they have learned the secrets which were revealed to him and really enter into the heavenlies where he invites them, they will never be tempted to descend and take their place on a level with the people to whom the earthly ministry of our Lord and His twelve apostles especially apply. But this does not signify that we deny the healing of the body during this age, nor the fact of the nine gifts of the Spirit. These were given to the Church, and were in evidence in that cosmopolitan assembly at Corinth; and also figured mightily in the ministry of the Apostle Paul, even to the end of his biography, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. In fact he wrote that many were weak and sickly and sleeping (dead), because of the chastening of the Lord - I Cor. 11:30. Thus we would infer that the healing or health of the body, is an index to the health of the soul, as John also indicates - III John 2. We admit though, that spiritual prosperity is the important item; but why do away with the lesser blessing when it is so wonderfully convincing to the sinner? There is nothing that so convicts men of their need of Christ as sickness. It often opens their eyes to their sinfulness, and makes a way by which their hearts may be reached when everything else has failed. Paul's own labors, which he claims were more abundant than all the other apostles, were accompanied with mighty signs and wonders. The Church of God is thus taught, by the example of their apostle and teacher and saint, to expect miracles of healing and supernatural signs to accompany the preaching of the Gospel. Why not? If the earthly people had such signs vouchsafed to them, why should not the heavenly company be equally invested and privileged?

And we do not have to reason about it, nor even ask, "Why not?" For the Word is clear on this point, and the signs do still "follow them that believe" - Mark 16:17.

At the time that Paul wrote this letter to Rome, his work appears to be finished in the region of Greece and the adjoining regions; for he thus wrote - "Having no more place in these parts" - 15:23. He desired new fields for his service, new worlds to conquer by his Gospel. His zeal was unabated, his interest and fire just as intense after years of hard labor. He did not even think of taking a rest, or of being pensioned off in his old age. No, indeed! Old age with him was just ripeness, full growth, perfection of development and spirituality. The greatest (in doctrine and depth) of his epistles, were written after this book was written. In fact, the other epistles were written from the very city to which this epistle was written, from the prison where he was given an enforced rest - not one of his own choosing nor desire. He had desired to visit his brethren there; and his longing was satisfied, but not in the manner that he had expected. He went to Jerusalem on a ministry of love, bringing a large contribution to the poor Jews from the Gentile Christians.

They received the money, but not his message. This was a hint of their choice of the earthly place rather than the heavenly. If God had not interfered in his behalf through the government, he would have been killed, so terrible was their rage against one that loved them. It was almost a reproduction of Calvary; the same enmity was manifested toward him. Thus he went to Rome by way of Jerusalem. The Jews actually were the instruments used to further God's purposes to the Gentiles. Paul had written previously, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" - 11:33 - and here is a further exhibition of them.

He feels sure that he will come to Rome in "the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ" - 15:29. The above was fulfilled. The remnant gathered from out of the Gentiles during this age, comes into the highest, most privileged place of all the children of men. It is truly the FULLNESS of blessing in Christ, transcendently wonderful and glorious. The Gentiles become the prominent figure on God's program for this age. The Jews' preeminence begins to vanish away. When they sent Paul away, they sent their hope of the heavenly glory away. They sent their last opportunity for this age away. Truly it was "Ichabod" with them; for even their earthly glory had departed for the time being.

PAUL'S CLOSING WORDS

Chapter Sixteen

As we intimated, the first twenty verses of chapter sixteen are a part of the Ephesian Epistle; hence, we will not attempt to speak of them here. We will close with just a few words on the last verses of the chapter. They are important, as Paul himself wrote them after Tertius had finished the body of the epistle - 16:22. He sends greeting to the Christians at Rome, along with the whole Church from Corinth, whence the epistle was written. Then Paul adds the postscript. Notice it. The Apostle characterizes the theme of this epistle as HIS GOSPEL. It is the proclamation of Jesus Christ in harmony with the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since eternal ages. Now this is in contrast with "the Gospel of God," which had been promised before - 1:1. The latter refers to all the purposes of blessing in Jesus Christ to humanity; but the secret that was hidden, the revelation of the heavenly glory, was given to Paul. It is the wheel within the wheel, the deeper depths, the higher heights of the glorious, matchless marvels of God's unfathomable love in Jesus Christ. It is that revelation - the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" - that God had purposed for His people that are called out in this age - II Cor. 4:17. (Tertius was simply Paul's amanuensis).

The prophets had intimations of the glorious heavenly calling; but they did not understand. It remained for Paul, the Apostle of the church, to unfold the mystery of this great parenthesis in God's purposes which comes in between Israel's casting away and their restoration, and between the first and second advents of Christ. Instead of God being defeated by Israel's rejection, He has the opportunity of bringing to pass His greatest purpose. All things work for His glory; even the wrath of man doth praise Him. Paul commits the people to Him who is able to keep them without wavering; but it is according to HIS GOSPEL of absolute grace. That alone has the enabling. To Him, who has purposed it, be all the glory forever. Amen!

WONDERFUL! OUT OF AND INTO

Out of the distance and darkness so deep,
Out of the settled and perilous sleep,
Out of the region and shadow of death,
Out of its foul and its Pestilent breath;
Into a sense of forgiveness and rest,
Into inheritance with all the blest,
Into the peace of an infinite calm,
Into the place of the song and the psalm,

Wonderful change from the false to the true,
Wonderful standing where all is made new,
Wonderful place into which I have come,
Wonderful tenderness, welcoming home.
Out of the clamor, the noise and the strife,
Out of the glamour, which once I called life,
Out of the sin and the sorrow and shame,
Out of the folly, the sadness, the blame;
Into the love and the favor of God,
Into the holiest, cleansed by the blood,
Into the foretaste of rapture divine,
Into the Canaan of old corn and wine;
Wonderful word of life, opened to me,
Wonderful heaven where I am to be,
Wonderful glory to which I am bound,
Wonderful throne where I soon will be crowned.
Out of my poverty into His wealth,
Out of my sicknesses into His health,
Out of what measured the full depth of "lost,"
Out of it all, and at infinite cost;
Into that which there is nothing beyond,
Into that to which my heart doth respond,
Into that union which nothing can part,
Into what satisfies His and my heart;
Wonderful Person, whose face I'll behold,
Wonderful story, then all to be told,
Wonderful! All the dread way which He trod.
Wonderful end, He has brought me to God.
Into communion with Father and Son,
Into the sharing of all Christ has won;
Into the ecstasies full to the brim,
Into the leaving of all things with Him;
Into Christ Jesus, there ever to dwell,
Into more blessings than word can e'er tell.
Wonderful lowliness, draining my cup,
Wonderful purpose that ne'er gave me up.
Wonderful patience that waited so long!
Wonderful glory, to which I belong.
Wonderful day when He comes for His Bride –
Ever enthroned by my dear Bridegroom's side.