

RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH - ROMANS 8: JUSTIFIED FOR SANCTIFICATION**THE JUSTIFIED: THEIR LIFE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

THE sequence of the eighth chapter of the Epistle on the seventh is a study always interesting and fruitful. No one can read the two chapters over without feeling the strong connection between them, a connection at once of contrast and of complement. Great indeed is the contrast between the paragraph [Rom 7:7-25](#) and the eighth chapter. The stern analysis of the one, unrelieved save by the fragment of thanksgiving at its close, (and even this is followed at once by a restatement of the mysterious dualism,) is to the revelations and triumphs of the other as an almost starless night, stifling and electric, to the splendour of a midsummer morning with a yet more glorious morrow for its future. And there is complement as well as contrast. The day is related to the night, which has prepared us for it, as hunger prepares for food. Precisely what was absent from the former passage is supplied richly in the latter. There the Name of the Holy Spirit, "the Lord, the Life Giver," was unheard. Here the fact and power of the Holy Spirit are present everywhere, so present that there is no other portion of the whole Scripture, unless we except the Redeemer's own Paschal Discourse, which presents us with so great a wealth of revelation on this all-precious theme. And here we find the secret that is to "stint the strife" which we have just witnessed, and which in our own souls we know so well. Here is the way "how to walk and to please God," [{1Th 4:1}](#) in our justified life. Here is the way how, not to be as it were the victims of "the body," and the slaves of "the flesh," but to "do to death the body's practices" in a continuous exercise of inward power, and to "walk after the Spirit." Here is the resource on which we may be forever joyfully paying "the debt" of such a walk; giving our redeeming Lord His due, the value of His purchase, even our willing, loving surrender, in the all-sufficient strength of "the Holy Ghost given unto us."

Noteworthy indeed is the manner of the introduction of this glorious truth. It appears not without preparation and intimation; we have heard already of the Holy Ghost in the Christian's life, [Rom 5:5](#); [Rom 7:6](#). The heavenly water has been seen and heard in its flow; as in a limestone country the traveller may see and hear, through fissures in the fields, the buried but living floods. But here the truth of the Spirit, like those floods, finding at last their exit at some rough cliff's base, pours itself into the light, and animates all the scene. In such an order and manner of treatment there is a spiritual and also a practical lesson. We are surely reminded, as to the experiences of the Christian life, that in a certain sense we possess the Holy Ghost, yea, in His fulness, from the first hour of our possession of Christ. We are reminded also that it is at least possible on the other hand that we may need so to realise and to use our covenant possession, after sad experiments in other directions, that life shall be thenceforth a new experience of liberty and holy joy. We are reminded meanwhile that such a "new departure," when it occurs, is new rather from our side than from the Lord's. The water was running all the while below the rocks. Insight and faith, given by His grace, have not called it from above, but as it were from within, liberating what was there.

The practical lesson of this is important for the Christian teacher and pastor. On the one hand, let him make very much in his instructions, public and private, of the revelation of the Spirit. Let him leave no room. so far as he can do it, for doubt or oblivion in his friend's minds about the absolute necessity of the fulness of the presence and power of the Holy One, if life is to be indeed Christian. Let him describe as boldly and fully as the Word describes it what life may be, must be, where that sacred fulness dwells; how assured, how happy within, how serviceable around, how pure, free, and strong, how heavenly, how practical, how humble. Let him urge any who have yet to learn it to learn all this in their own experience, claiming on their knees the mighty gift of God. On the other hand, let him be careful not to overdraw his theory, and to prescribe too rigidly the methods of experience. Not all believers fail in the first hours of their faith to realise, and to use, the fulness of what the Covenant gives them. And where that realisation comes later than our first sight of Christ, as with so many of us it does come, not always are the experience and action the same. To one it is a crisis of memorable consciousness, a private Pentecost. Another wakes up as from sleep to find the unsuspected treasure at his hand-hid from him till then by nothing thicker than shadows. And another is aware that somehow, he knows not how, he has come to use the Presence and Power as a while ago he did not; he has passed a frontier-but he knows not when.

In all these cases, meanwhile, the man had, in one great respect, possessed the great gift all along. In covenant, in Christ, it was his. As he stepped by penitent faith into the Lord, he trod on ground which, wonderful to say, was all his own. And beneath it ran, that moment, the River of the water of life. Only, he had to discover, to draw, and to apply.

Again, the relation we have just indicated between our possession of Christ and our possession of the Holy Ghost is a matter of the utmost moment, spiritual and practical, presented prominently in this passage. All along, as we read the passage, we find linked inextricably together the truths of the Spirit and of the Son. "The law of the Spirit of life" is bound up with "Christ Jesus." The Son of God was sent, to take our flesh, to die as our Sin Offering, that we might "walk according to the Spirit." "The Spirit of God" is "the Spirit of Christ." The presence of the Spirit of Christ is such that, where He dwells, "Christ is in you." Here we read at once a caution, and a truth of the richest positive blessing. We are warned to remember that there is no separable "Gospel of the Spirit." Not for a moment are we to advance, as it were, from the Lord Jesus Christ to a higher or deeper region, ruled by the Holy Ghost. All the reasons, methods, and issues of the work of the Holy Ghost are eternally and organically connected with the Son of God. We have Him at all because Christ died. We have life because He has joined us to Christ living. Our experimental proof of His fulness is that Christ to us is all. And we are to be on the guard against any exposition of His work and glory which shall for one moment leave out those facts. But not only are we to be on our guard; we are to rejoice in the thought that the mighty, the endless work of the Spirit is all done always upon that sacred Field, Christ Jesus. And every day we are to draw upon the indwelling Giver of Life to do for us His own, His characteristic work; to show us "our King in His beauty," and to "fill our springs of thought and will with Him."

To return to the connection of the two great chapters. We have seen how close and pregnant it is; the contrast and the complement. But it is also true, surely, that the eighth chapter is not merely and only the counterpart to the seventh. Rather the eighth, though the seventh applies to it a special motive, is also a review of the whole previous argument of the Epistle, or rather the crown on the whole previous structure. It begins with a deep reassertion of our Justification; a point unnoticed in [Rom 7:7-25](#). It does this, using an inferential particle, "therefore," *αρα* -to which, surely, nothing in the just preceding verses is related. And then it unfolds not only the present acceptance and present liberty of the saints, but also their amazing future of glory, already indicated, especially in [Rom 5:2](#). And its closing strains are full of the great first wonder, our Acceptance. "Them He justified"; "It is God that justifieth." So we forbear to take chap. 8 as simply the successor and counterpart of chap. 7. It is this, in some great respects. But it is more; it is the meeting point of all the great truths of grace which we have studied, their meeting point in the sea of holiness and glory.

As we approach the first paragraph of the chapter, we ask ourselves what is its message on the whole, its true envoi. It is our possession of the Holy Spirit of God, for purposes of holy loyalty and holy liberty. The foundation of that fact is once more indicated, in the brief assertion of our full Justification in Christ, and His propitiatory Sacrifice ([Rom 8:3](#)). Then from those words, "in Christ," he opens this ample revelation of our possession, in our union with Christ, of the Spirit who, having joined us to Him, now liberates us in Him, not from condemnation only, but from sin's dominion. If we are indeed in Christ, the Spirit is in us, dwelling in us, and we are in the Spirit. And so, possessed and filled by the blessed Power, we indeed have power to walk and to obey. Nothing is mechanical, automatic; we are fully persons still; He who annexes and possesses our personality does not for a moment violate it. But then, He does possess it; and the Christian, so possessing and so possessed, is not only bound but enabled, in humble but practical reality, in a liberty otherwise unknown, to "fulfil the just demand of the Law," "to please God," in a life lived not to self but to Him.

Thus, as we shall see in detail as we proceed, the Apostle, while he still firmly keeps his hand, so to speak, on Justification, is occupied fully now with its issue, Holiness. And this issue he explains as not merely a matter of grateful feeling, the outcome of the loyalty supposed to be natural to the pardoned. He gives it as a matter of divine power, secured to them under the Covenant of their acceptance.

Shall we not enter on our expository study full of holy expectation, and with unspeakable desires awake, to receive all things which in that Covenant are ours? Shall we not remember, over every sentence, that in it Christ speaks by Paul, and speaks to us? For us also, as for our spiritual ancestors, all this is true. It shall be true in us also, as it was in them.

Verse 1: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:16, 5

Introductory concepts to note

- a. The happy state of those who believe in Christ, and walk under - the influence of his Spirit, 1, 2
- b. The design of God in sending his Son into the world was to redeem men from sin, 3, 4
- c. The miserable state of the carnally minded, 6-8.
- d. How Christ lives and works in his followers; their blessedness here, and their happiness hereafter, 9-17
- e. Sufferings are the common lot of all men; and from which - Gentiles and Jews have the hope of being finally delivered, 18-23.
- f. The use and importance of hope, 24, 25
- g. The Spirit makes intercession for the followers of Christ, 26, 27
- h. All things work together for good to them that love God, and who act according to his gracious purpose in calling them, 28
- i. The means used to bring men to eternal glory, 29, 30
- j. The great blessedness, confidence, and security of all genuine Christians, whom, while they hold fast faith and a good conscience, nothing can separate from the love of God, 31-39.

Wherever the word of God has been faithfully preached, results have followed that attested its divine origin. The Spirit of God accompanied the message of His servants, and the word was with power. Sinners felt their consciences quickened. The "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" illumined the secret chambers of their souls, and the hidden things of darkness were made manifest. Deep conviction took hold upon their minds and hearts. They were convinced of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come. They had a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and felt the terror of appearing, in their guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. In anguish they cried out: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" As the cross of Calvary, with its infinite sacrifice for the sins of men, was revealed, they saw that nothing but the merits of Christ could suffice to atone for their transgressions; this alone could reconcile man to God. With faith and humility they accepted the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Through the blood of Jesus they had "remission of sins that are past." {GC 461.1}

These souls brought forth fruit meet for repentance. They believed and were baptized, and rose to walk in newness of life--new creatures in Christ Jesus; not to fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God to follow in His steps, to reflect His character, and to purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now loved, and the things they once loved they hated. The proud and self-assertive became meek and lowly of heart. The vain and supercilious became serious and unobtrusive. The profane became reverent, the drunken sober, and the profligate pure. The vain fashions of the world were laid aside. Christians sought not the "outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but . . . the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1Pe 3:3-4. {GC 461.2}

Revivals brought deep heart-searching and humility. They were characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to the sinner, by yearning compassion for the purchase of the blood of Christ. Men and women prayed and wrestled with God for the salvation of souls. The fruits of such revivals were seen in souls who shrank not at self-denial and sacrifice, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and trial for the sake of Christ. Men beheld a transformation in the lives of those who had professed the name of Jesus. The community was benefited by their influence. They gathered with Christ, and sowed to the Spirit, to reap life everlasting. {GC 462.1}

It could be said of them: "Ye sorrowed to repentance." "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." 2Co 7:9-11. {GC 462.2}

This is the result of the work of the Spirit of God. There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation. If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confess his sins, and love God and his fellow men, the sinner may be sure that he has found peace with God. Such were the effects that in former years followed seasons of religious awakening. Judged by their fruits, they were known to be blessed of God in the salvation of men and the uplifting of humanity. {GC 462.3}

There is, therefore, now no condemnation]

To do justice to St. Paul's reasoning, this chapter must be read in the closest connection with the preceding. There we have seen the unavailing struggles of an awakened Jew, who sought pardon and holiness from that law which he was conscious he had broken; and in which he could find no provision for pardon, and no power to sanctify. This conviction having brought him to the very brink of despair, and, being on the point of giving up all hope, he hears of redemption by Jesus Christ, thanks God for the prospect he has of salvation, applies for and receives it; and now magnifies God for the unspeakable gift of which he has been made a partaker.

Those who restrain the word now, so as to indicate by it the Gospel dispensation only, do not take in the whole of the apostles meaning. The apostle has not been dealing in general matters only, but also in those which are particular. He has not been pointing out merely the difference between the two views, the Mosaic and the Christian; but he marks out the state of a penitent under the former, and that of a believer under the latter. Chapter 7 closed with an account of the deep distress of the penitent; this one opens with an account of his salvation. The now, therefore, in the text, must refer more to the happy transition from darkness to light, from condemnation to pardon, which this believer now enjoys.

Who walk not after the flesh]

In this one verse we find the power and virtue of the Gospel scheme; it pardons and sanctifies; the law could do neither but point to the giver of salvation. By faith in our Lord Jesus Christ the penitent, condemned by the law, is pardoned; the carnal man, labouring under the overpowering influence of the sin of his nature, is sanctified. He is first freely justified; he feels no condemnation; he is fully sanctified; he walks not after the FLESH, but after the SPIRIT. It is a fairly assumed point, that those who are in Christ Jesus, who believe in his name, have redemption in his blood; are made partakers of his Spirit, and have the mind in them that was in him; will not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Becoming a New Person

Ellen G. White: Steps to Christ Chapter 7 - The Test of Discipleship

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."
[2Co 5:17.](#)

A New Life in Christ Shows

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. Christ said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." [Joh 3:8.](#) Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts.

It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.

Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." [Gal 5:22-23](#). They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate. The proud and self-assertive become meek and lowly in heart. The vain and supercilious become serious and unobtrusive. The drunken become sober, and the profligate pure. The vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside. Christians will seek not the "outward adorning," but "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." [1Pe 3:3-4](#).

Changed Behavior Shows Spiritual Change

There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation. If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confess his sins, and love God and his fellow men, the sinner may be sure that he has passed from death unto life.

When, as erring, sinful beings, we come to Christ and become partakers of His pardoning grace, love springs up in the heart. Every burden is light, for the yoke that Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness, becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness.

The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. "We love, because He first loved us." [1Jn 4:19](#), R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennoble the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around.

Errors Regarding the Role of Works

There are two errors against which the children of God--particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace--especially need to guard. The first, already dwelt upon, is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

The Service of Love

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." [Heb 10:16](#). And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience--the service and allegiance of love--is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." [1Jn 5:3](#); [1Jn 2:4](#).

Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience.

We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." [1Jn 3:5-6](#). Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." [1Jn 3:7](#). Righteousness is defined by the standard of God's holy law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai.

That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption. "By grace are ye saved through faith." But "faith, if it hath not works, is dead." [Eph 2:8](#); [Jas 2:17](#). Jesus said of Himself before He came to earth, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." [Psa 40:8](#). And just before He ascended again to heaven He declared, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." [Joh 15:10](#). The Scripture says, "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. . . . He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." [1Jn 2:3-6](#). "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." [1Pe 2:21](#).

Perfect Obedience Required - In Christ

The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,--just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,--perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." [Gal 2:20](#). So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." [Mat 10:20](#). Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works--works of righteousness, obedience.

So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.

Different Kinds of Belief

When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that "the devils also believe, and tremble;" but this is not faith. [Jas 2:19](#). Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith--faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the

psalmist, "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." [Psa 119:97](#). And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." [Rom 8:1](#).

There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." [1Jn 2:1](#). And do not forget the words of Christ, "The Father Himself loveth you." [Joh 16:27](#). He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance.

Seeing Ourselves Correctly

The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.

No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ.

The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.

1. **Unconditional Love** - [Joh 3:16](#).
2. **Your Need of Peace** - [Isa 1:18](#).
3. **Freedom from Guilt** - [Mat 11:28](#).
4. **A Clear Conscience** - [1Jn 1:9](#).
5. **Total Commitment** - [Jer 29:13](#).
6. **Discovering Peace of Mind** - [Joh 14:27](#).
7. **Becoming a New Person** - [2Co 5:17](#).
8. **Abiding Peace** - [Joh 15:4](#).
9. **Loving and Sharing** - [Joh 13:34-35](#).
10. **Soaring Higher** - [Isa 40:31](#).
11. **The Power of Prayer** - [Joh 14:13](#).
12. **Conquering Doubt** - [Isa 41:10](#).
13. **Fullness of Joy** - [Php 4:4](#), [Php 4:7](#).

Verse 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. John 8:36; Romans 6:18, 22; 7:24-25; 1Corinthians 15:45; 2Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 2:19; 5:1

For the law of the Spirit of life]

The Gospel of the grace of Christ, which is not only a law or rule of life, but affords that sovereign energy by which guilt is removed from the conscience, the power of sin broken, and its polluting influence removed from the heart. The law has a spirit of death, by which those who are under it are bound down, because of their sin, to condemnation and death. The Gospel proclaims Jesus the Saviour; and what the law bound unto death, IT looses unto life eternal. And thus the apostle says, whether of himself or the man whom he is still personating, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Verse 3; For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: {for sin: or, by a sacrifice for sin} Acts 13:39; Romans 3:20; 2Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 7:18-19; 10:1-2,10,14

For what the law could not do]

The law cannot pardon; the law cannot sanctify; the law cannot dispense with its own requisitions; it is the rule of righteousness, and therefore must condemn unrighteousness. This is its unalterable nature. Had there been perfect obedience to its dictates, instead of condemning, it would have applauded and rewarded; but as the flesh, the carnal and rebellious principle, had prevailed, and transgression had taken place, it was rendered weak, inefficient to undo this word of the flesh, and bring the sinner into a state of pardon and acceptance with God.

God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh]

Did that which the law could not do; i.e. purchased pardon for the sinner, and brought every believer into the favour of God. And this is effected by the incarnation of Christ: He, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh, that is, a human body like ours, but not sinful as ours; and for sin, and as a SACRIFICE FOR SIN, (this is the sense of the word in a multitude of places,) condemned sin in the flesh-condemned that to death and destruction which had condemned us to both.

Condemned sin in the flesh]

The design and object of the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ was to condemn sin, to have it executed and destroyed; not to tolerate it as some think, or to render it subservient to the purposes of his grace, as others; but to annihilate its power, guilt, and being in the soul of a believer.

Verse 4; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:1

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us]

That the guilt might be pardoned through the merit of that sacrifice; and that we might be enabled, by the power of his own grace and Spirit, to walk in newness of life; loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves: and thus the righteousness, the spirit, design, and purpose of the law is fulfilled in us, through the strength of the Spirit of Christ, which is here put in opposition to the weakness of the law through the flesh.

Verse 5; For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

John 3:6; 1Corinthians 2:14; Galatians 5:22, 25

For they that are after the flesh]

And here is the great distinction between Judaism and genuine Christians: the former are after the flesh-are under the power of the carnal, rebellious principle; and consequently mind, relish, the things of the flesh-the things which appertain merely to the present life; having no relish for spiritual and eternal things.

But they that are after the Spirit]

They who are regenerated, who are born of the Spirit, being redeemed from the influence and law of the carnal mind; these relish the things of the Spirit-they are spiritually minded, and pass through things temporal, so as not to lose the things which are eternal. And this, which in these apostolic times distinguished between the carnal Jew and the spiritual believer in Christ, is the grand mark of distinction between the nominal and the real Christian now. The former is earthly minded, and lives for this world; the latter is spiritually minded, and lives for the world to come.

**Verse 6; For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. {to be carnally....: the minding of the flesh} {to be spiritually.... the minding of the Spirit}
Romans 6:21; 8:7, 13; Galatians 6:8**

For to be carnally minded is death]

To live under the influence of the carnal mind is to live in the state of condemnation, and consequently liable to death eternal: whereas, on the contrary, he who is spiritually minded has the life and peace of God in his soul, and is in full prospect of life eternal.

**Verse 7; Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. {the carnal...: Gr. the minding of the flesh}
1Corinthians 2:14; James 4:4**

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God]

Because it is a carnal mind, and relishes earthly and sinful things, and lives in opposition to the pure and holy law of God: therefore, it is enmity against God; it is irreconcilable and implacable hatred.

It is not subject to the law of God]

It will come under no obedience; for it is sin, and the very principle of rebellion; and therefore it cannot be subject, nor subjected; for it is essential to sin to show itself in rebellion; and when it ceases to rebel, it ceases to be sin. From this we learn that the design of God in the economy of the Gospel, is not to weaken, curtail, or lay the carnal principle in bonds, but to destroy it. As it is not subject, and cannot be subject, to the law of God, it must be destroyed, else it will continue to rebel against God. It cannot be mended, or rendered less offensive in its nature, even by the operations of God; it is ever sin, and sin is ever enmity; and enmity, wherever it has power, will invariably show itself in acts of hostility and rebellion.

Verse 8; So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

So then]

Because this carnal mind is enmity against God, they that are in the flesh—who are under the power of the workings of this carnal mind, (which every soul is that has not received redemption in the blood of the Lamb,)-

Cannot please God]

Because of the rebellious workings of this principle of rebellion and hatred. And, if they cannot please God, they must be displeasing to him; and consequently in the broad road to final perdition.

**Verse 9; 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.
John 3:34; 1Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 4:6; Philippians 1:19; 1Peter 1:11**

Verse 9; But ye are not in the flesh]

Ye Christians, who have believed in Christ Jesus as the sin offering which has condemned sin in the flesh; and, having been justified by faith and made partakers of the Holy Spirit, are enabled to walk in newness of life.

If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.]

Or seeing that, the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. The flesh, the sinful principle, dwelt in them before; and its motions were the proofs of its indwelling; but now the Spirit dwells in them; and its testimony in their conscience, and its powerful operations in their hearts, are the proofs of its indwelling. God made man in union with himself, and his heart was his temple. Sin being committed, the temple was defiled, and God abandoned it. Jesus Christ is come by his sacrifice and Spirit to cleanse the temple, and make man again a habitation of God through the Spirit. And when this almighty Spirit again makes the heart his residence, then the soul is delivered from the moral effects of the fall. And that this is absolutely necessary to our present peace and final salvation is proved from this: that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ—the mind that was in him, produced there by the power of the Holy Ghost—he is none of his; he does not belong to the kingdom, flock, or family of God. This is an awful conclusion! Reader, lay it to heart.

Verse 10; ¶ And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

And if Christ be in you]

This is the criterion by which you may judge of the state of grace in which ye stand. If Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, the body is dead because of sin, in reference to sin; the members of your body no more perform the work of sin than the body of a dead man does the functions of natural life. Or the apostle may mean, that although, because of sin, the life of man is forfeited; and the sentence, dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return, must be fulfilled on every human being, until the judgment of the great day; yet, their souls being quickened by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, which enables them to live a life of righteousness, they receive a full assurance that their bodies, which are now condemned to death because of sin, shall be raised again to a life of immortal glory.

Verse 11; 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. {by: or, because of} Acts 2:24; Romans 6:4-5; 1Corinthians 6:14; 2Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 2:5

But if the Spirit]

This verse confirms the sense given to the preceding. He who here receives the grace and Spirit of Christ, and continues to live under its influence a life of obedience to the Divine will, shall have a resurrection to eternal life; and the resurrection of Christ shall be the pattern after which they shall be raised.

Verse 12; Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. Romans 6:7, 4

Therefore, brethren]

Having spoken separately, both to Jews and Gentiles, concerning holiness and the obligations to it, now addresses himself to both conjointly, and,

- a. *Draws the general conclusion from all his arguments upon this subject, Romans 8:12.*
- b. *Proves the validity of their claims to eternal life, Romans 8:14-17.*
- c. *And as the affair of suffering persecution was a great stumbling block to the Jews, and might very much discourage the Gentiles, he introduces it to the best advantage, Romans 8:17, and advances several arguments to fortify their minds under all trials: as-*
 - (1.) *That they suffered with Christ;*
 - (2.) *In order to be glorified with him in a manner which will infinitely compensate all sufferings, Romans 8:17, 18*
 - (3.) *All mankind are under various pressures, longing for a better state, Romans 8:19-22*
 - (4.) *Many of the most eminent Christians are in the same distressed condition, Romans 8:23*
 - (5.) *According to the plan of the Gospel, we are to be brought to glory after a course of patience exercised in a variety of trials, Romans 8:24, 25*
 - (6.) *The Spirit of God will supply patience to every upright soul under persecution and suffering, Romans 8:26, 27*
 - (7.) *All things, even the severest trials, shall work together for their good, Romans 8:28. And this he proves, by giving us a view of the several steps which the wisdom and goodness of God have settled, in order to our complete salvation, Romans 8:29,30*

Thence he passes to the affair of our perseverance; concerning which he concludes, from the whole of his preceding arguments, that as we are brought into a state of pardon by the free grace of God, through the death of Christ, who is now our mediator in heaven; no possible cause, providing we continue to love and serve God, shall be able to pervert our minds, or separate us from his love in Christ Jesus, Romans 8:31-39. Therefore, is the grand inference from all that he has been arguing in relation to sanctity of life, both to

the Gentiles, Chap. 6, and to the Jews, Chap. 7, and 8, to this verse, where I suppose he begins to address himself to both, in a body, to the end of the chapter.

Now the Apostle goes on to develop these noble premisses into conclusions. How true to himself, and to his Inspirer, is the line he follows! First come the most practical possible of reminders of duty; then, and in profound connection, the inmost experiences of the regenerate soul in both its joy and its sorrow, and the most radiant and far-reaching prospects of glory to come. We listen still, always remembering that this letter from Corinth to Rome is to reach us too, by way of the City. He who moved His servant to send it to Aquila and Herodion had us too in mind, and has now carried out His purpose. It is open in our hands for our faith, love, hope, life today.

St. Paul begins with Holiness viewed as Duty, as Debt. He has led us through our vast treasury of privilege and possession. What are we to do with it? Shall we treat it as a museum, in which we may occasionally observe the mysteries of New Nature, and with more or less learning discourse upon them? Shall we treat it as the unwatchful King of old treated his splendid stores, making them his personal boast, and so betraying them to the very power which one day was to make them all its spoil? No, we are to live upon our Lord's magnificent bounty-to His glory, and in His will. We are rich; but it is for Him. We have His talents; and those talents, in respect of His grace, as distinct from His "gifts," are not one, nor five, nor ten, but ten thousand-for they are Jesus Christ. But we have them all "for Him." We are free from the law of sin and of death; but we are in perpetual and delightful debt to Him who has freed us. And our debt is-to walk with Him.

"So, brethren, we are debtors." Thus our new paragraph begins. For a moment he turns to say what we owe "no" debt to; even "the flesh," the self-life. But it is plain that his main purpose is positive, not negative. He implies in the whole rich context that we are debtors to the Spirit, to the Lord, "to walk Spirit-wise."

What a salutary thought it is! Too often in the Christian Church the great word Holiness has been practically banished to a supposed almost inaccessible background, to the steps of a spiritual ambition, to a region where a few might with difficulty climb in the quest, men and women who had "leisure to be good," or Who perhaps had exceptional instincts for piety. God be thanked, He has at all times kept many consciences alive to the illusion of such a notion; and in our own day, more and more, His mercy brings it home to His children that "this is His will, even the sanctification"-not of some of them, but of all. Far and wide we are reviving to see, as the fathers of our faith saw before us, that whatever else holiness is, it is a sacred and binding "debt." It is not an ambition; it is a duty. We are bound, every one of us who names the name of Christ, to be holy, to be separate from evil, to walk by the Spirit.

Alas for the misery of indebtedness; when funds fall short! Whether the unhappy debtor examines his affairs, or guiltily ignores their condition, he is-if his conscience is not dead-a haunted man. But when an honourable indebtedness concurs with ample means, then one of the moral pleasures of life is the punctual scrutiny and discharge. "He hath it by him"; and it is his happiness, as it is assuredly his duty, not to "say to his neighbour, Go and come again, and tomorrow I will give". {[Pro 3:28](#)}

Christian brother, partaker of Christ, and of the Spirit, we also owe, to Him who owns. But it is an indebtedness of the happy type. Once we owed, and there was worse than nothing in the purse. Now we owe, and we have Christ in us, by the Holy Ghost, wherewithal to pay. The eternal Neighbour comes to us, with no frowning look, and shows us His holy demand; to live today a life of truth, of purity, of confession of His Name, of unselfish serviceableness, of glad forgiveness, of unbroken patience, of practical sympathy, of the love which seeks not her own. What shall we say? That it is a beautiful ideal, which we should like to realise, and may yet some day seriously attempt? That it is admirable, but impossible? Nay; "we are debtors." And He who claims has first immeasurably given. We have His Son for our acceptance and our life. His very Spirit is in us. Are not these good resources for a genuine solvency? "Say not, Go and come again; I will pay Thee-tomorrow. Thou hast it by Thee!"

Verse 13; 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.

Romans 8:6; Galatians 6:8; Ephesians 4:22; Col 3:5

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die]

There is no future life for those who persist after the works of flesh for we have already seen that its enmity to God.

Let none imagine that without earnest effort on their part they can obtain the assurance of God's love. When the mind has been long permitted to dwell only on earthly things, it is a difficult matter to change the habits of thought. That which the eye sees and the ear hears, too often attracts the attention and absorbs the interest. But if we would enter the city of God, and look upon Jesus and His glory, we must become accustomed to beholding Him with the eye of faith here. The words and the character of Christ should be often the subject of our thoughts and of our conversation, and each day some time should be especially devoted to prayerful meditation upon these sacred themes. {SL 91.3}

But if ye through the Spirit]

If ye seek that grace and spiritual help which the Gospel of Christ furnishes, resist, and, by resisting, mortify the deeds of the flesh, against which the law gave you no assistance, ye shall live a life of faith, love, and holy obedience here, and a life of glory hereafter.

Silencing the Spirit

Sanctification is a daily work. Let none deceive themselves with the belief that God will pardon and bless them while they are trampling upon one of His requirements. The willful commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. Whatever may be the ecstasies of religious feeling, Jesus cannot abide in the heart that disregards the divine law. God will honor those only who honor Him. "His servants ye are to whom ye obey" ([Rom 6:16](#)). If we indulge anger, lust, covetousness, hatred, selfishness, or any other sin, we become servants of sin. "No man can serve two masters" ([Mat 6:24](#)). If we serve sin, we cannot serve Christ. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit; but the Spirit striveth against the flesh, keeping up a constant warfare. Here is where Christ's help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([1Co 15:57](#))! {SL 92.1, 2}

Correct Religious Habits

If we would develop a character which God can accept, we must form correct habits in our religious life. Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to lift the thoughts often to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy. We cannot for one moment separate ourselves from Christ with safety. We may have His presence to attend us at every step, but only by observing the conditions which He Himself has laid down. Religion must be made the great business of life. Everything else should be held subordinate to this. All our powers, of soul, body, and spirit, must be engaged in the Christian warfare. We must look to Christ for strength and grace, and we shall gain the victory as surely as Jesus died for us. {SL 93.1, 2}

Holiness is beauty. But it is first duty, practical and present, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then, brethren, debtors are we-not to the flesh, with a view to living flesh-wise; but to the Spirit-who is now both our law and our power-with a view to living Spirit-wise. For if you are living flesh-wise, you are on the way to die. But if by the Spirit you are doing to death the practices, the stratagems, the machinations, of the body, you will live. Ah, the body is still there, and is still a seat and vehicle of temptation. "It is for the Lord, and the Lord is for it". {[1Co 6:13](#)} It is the temple of the Spirit. Our call is {[1Co 6:20](#)} to glorify God in it. But all this, from our point of view, passes from realisation into mere theory, woefully gainsaid by experience, when we let our acceptance in Christ, and our possession in Him of the Almighty Spirit, pass out of use into mere phrase. Say what some men will, we are never for an hour here below exempt from elements and conditions of evil

residing not merely around us but within us. There is no stage of life when we can dispense with the power of the Holy Ghost as our victory and deliverance from "the machinations of the body." And the body is no separate and as it were minor personality. If the man's body "machinates," it is the man who is the sinner.

But then, thanks be to God, this fact is not the real burthen of the words here. What St. Paul has to say is that the man who has the indwelling Spirit has with him, in him, a divine and all-effectual Counter Agent to the subtlest of his foes. Let him do what we saw him above [{Rom 7:7-25}](#) neglecting to do. Let him with conscious purpose, and firm recollection of his wonderful position and possession (so easily forgotten!) call up the eternal Power which is m-deed not himself, though in himself. Let him do this with "habitual" recollection and simplicity. And he shall be "more than conqueror" where he was so miserably defeated. His path shall be as of one who walks over foes who threatened, but who fell, and who die at his feet. It shall be less a struggle than a march, over a battlefield indeed, yet a field of victory so continuous that it shall be as peace.

"If by the Spirit you are doing them to death." Mark well the words. He says nothing here of things often thought to be of the essence of spiritual remedies; nothing of "will-worship, and humility, and unsparing treatment of the body"; [{Col 2:23}](#) nothing even of fast and prayer. Sacred and precious is self-discipline, the watchful care that act and habit are true to that "temperance" which is a vital ingredient in the Spirit's "fruit." [{Gal 5:22-23}](#) It is the Lord's own voice [{Mat 26:41}](#) which bids us always "watch and pray"; "praying in the Holy Ghost." [{Jud 1:20}](#) Yes, but these true exercises of the believing soul are after all only as the covering fence around that central secret-our use by faith of the presence and power of "the Holy Ghost given unto us." The Christian who neglects to watch and pray will most surely find that he knows not how to use this his great strength, for he will be losing realisation of his oneness with his Lord. But then the man who actually, and in the depth of his being, is "doing to death the practices of the body," is doing so, "immediately," not by discipline, nor by direct effort, but by the believing use of "the Spirit." Filled with Him, he treads upon the power of the enemy. And that fulness is according to surrendering faith.

**Verse 14; For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
Galatians 5:18**

For as many as are led by the Spirit]

No man who has not Divine assistance can either find the way to heaven, or walk in it when found. As Christ, by his sacrificial offering, has opened the kingdom of God to all believers; and, as a mediator, transacts the concerns of their kingdom before the throne; so the Spirit of God is the great agent here below, to enlighten, quicken, strengthen, and guide the true disciples of Christ; and all that are born of this Spirit are led and guided by it; and none can pretend to be the children of God who are not thus guided.

A Progressive Work

Sanctification is a progressive work. The successive steps are set before us in the words of Peter: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:5-8). "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:10; 2Pe 1:11). Here is a course by which we may be assured that we shall never fall. Those who are thus working upon the plan of addition in obtaining the Christian graces have the assurance that God will work upon the plan of multiplication in granting them the gifts of His Spirit. Peter addresses those who obtained like precious faith: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2Pe 1:2). By divine grace, all who will may climb the shining steps from earth to heaven, and at last, "with songs and everlasting joy" (Isa 35:10), enter through the gates into the city of God. {SL 94.1, 2}

Our Saviour claims all there is of us; He asks our first and holiest thoughts, our purest and most intense affection. If we are indeed partakers of the divine nature, His praise will be continually in our hearts and upon our lips. Our only safety is to surrender our all to Him and to be constantly growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. {SL 95.1}

Verse 15; 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.

Isaiah 56:5; Mark 14:36; 1Corinthians 2:12; Galatians 4:5-6; 2Timothy 1:7; Heb 2:15; 1John 4:18

Ye have not received the spirit of bondage]

All that are under the law are under bondage as even the Jewish were in bondage to the laws of rites and ceremonies; and as, through the prevalence of that corrupt nature with which every human being is polluted, and to remove which the law gives no assistance, they were often transgressing, consequently they had forfeited their lives, and were continually, through fear of death, subject to bondage, Hebrew 2:15. The believers in Christ Jesus are brought from under the law, and from under its condemnation; and, consequently, are freed from its bondage. The Gentiles are also in a state of bondage as well as were the Jews, they have also a multitude of burdensome rites and ceremonies, and a multitude of deities to worship; nor can they believe themselves secure of protection while one of their almost endless host of gods, celestial, terrestrial, or infernal, are left unpropitiated.

But ye have received the Spirit of adoption]

Ye are brought into the family of God by adoption; and the agent that brought you into this family is the Holy Spirit; and this very Spirit continues to witness to you the grace in which ye stand, by enabling you to call God your Father, with the utmost filial confidence and affection.

The Spirit of adoption]

Adoption was an act frequent among the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans; by which a person was taken out of one family and incorporated with another. Persons of property, who had no children of their own, adopted those of another family. The child thus adopted ceased to belong to his own family, and was in every respect bound to the person who had adopted him, as if he were his own child; and in consequence of the death of his adopting father he possessed his estates. If a person after he had adopted a child happened to have children of his own, then the estate was equally divided between the adopted and real children. The Romans had regular forms of law, by which all these matters were settled. God speaks with such modes we understand. It's by that infinite sacrifice that we have been adopted and drafted to this family.

Whereby we cry, Abba, Father]; Mark 14:36

The introduction of the words here shows that the persons in question had the strongest evidence of the excellence of the state in which they stood; they knew that they were thus adopted; and they knew this by the Spirit of God which was given them on their adoption; and let me say, they could know it by no other means. This is the true Righteousness by Faith Hebrews 11:1. Rising above the shadows and on realities as if they were present though hoped for The Father who had adopted them could be seen by no mortal eye; and the transaction being purely of a spiritual nature, and transacted in heaven, can be known only by God's supernatural testimony of it upon earth. It is a matter of such solemn importance to every Christian soul, that God in his mercy has been pleased not to leave it to conjecture, assumption, or inductive reasoning; but attests it by his own Spirit in the soul of the person whom he adopts through Christ Jesus. It is the grand and most observable case in which the intercourse is kept up between heaven and earth; and the genuine believer in Christ Jesus is not left to the quibbles or casuistry of polemic divines or critics, but receives the thing, and the testimony of it, immediately from God himself. And were not the testimony of the state thus given, no man could possibly have any assurance of his salvation which would beget confidence and love. If to any man his acceptance with God be hypothetical, then his confidence must be so too. His love to God must be hypothetical, his gratitude hypothetical, and his obedience also. IF God had forgiven me my sins, then I should love him, and I should be grateful, and I should testify this gratitude by obedience. But who does not see that these must necessarily depend on the IF in the first case. All this uncertainty, and the perplexities necessarily resulting from it, God has precluded by sending the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, by which we cry, Abba, Father: and thus our adoption into the heavenly family is testified and ascertained to us in the only way in which it can possibly be done, by the direct influence of the Spirit of God. Remove this from Christianity, and it is a dead letter.

It has been remarked that slaves were not permitted to use the term Abba, father, or Imma, mother, in accosting their masters and mistresses. The Hebrew canon, relative to this, is extant in the tract Berachoth, fol. 16. 2. Men-servants and maid-servants do not call to their master Abba, (father,) N. nor to their mistress Imma, (mother,) N. And from this some suppose that the apostle intimates that being now brought from under the spirit of bondage, in which they durst not call God their Father, they are not only brought into a new state, but have got that language which is peculiar to that state. It is certain that no man who has not redemption in the blood of the cross has any right to call God Father, but merely as he may be considered the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

Some have supposed that the apostle, by using the Syriac and Greek words which express Father, shows the union of Jewish and Gentile believers in those devotions which were dictated by a filial spirit. Others have thought that these were the first words which those generally uttered who were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. It is enough to know that it was the language of their sonship, and that it expressed the clear assurance they had of being received into the Divine favour, the affection and gratitude they felt for this extraordinary blessing, and their complete readiness to come under the laws and regulations of the family, and to live in the spirit of obedience.

The Value of the Soul

We must come nearer to the cross of Christ. Penitence at the foot of the cross is the first lesson of peace we have to learn. The love of Jesus--who can comprehend it? Infinitely more tender and self-denying than a mother's love! If we would know the value of a human soul, we must look in living faith upon the cross, and thus begin the study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. The value of our time and our talents can be estimated only by the greatness of the ransom paid for our redemption. What ingratitude do we manifest toward God when we rob Him of His own by withholding from Him our affections and our service! Is it too much to give ourselves to Him who has sacrificed all for us? Can we choose the friendship of the world before the immortal honors which Christ proffers--"to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev 3:21)? {SL 93.3}

For as many as are led by God's Spirit, these are God's sons; for you did not receive a spirit of slavery, to take you back again to fear; no, you received a Spirit of adoption to sonship, in which Spirit, surrendered to His holy power, we cry, with no bated, hesitating breath, "Abba, our Father." His argument runs thus; "If you would live indeed, you must do sin to death by the Spirit. And this means, in another aspect, that you must yield yourselves to be led along by the Spirit, with that leading which is sure to conduct you always away from self and into the will of God. You must welcome the Indweller to have His holy way with your springs of thought and will. So, and only so, will you truly answer the idea, the description, 'sons of God'-that glorious term, never to be 'satisfied' by the relation of mere creaturehood, or by that of merely exterior sanctification, mere membership in a community of men, though it be the Visible Church itself. But if you so meet sin by the Spirit, if you are so led by the Spirit, you do show yourselves nothing less than God's own sons. He has called you to nothing lower than sonship; to vital connection with a divine Father's life, and to the eternal embraces of His love. For when He gave and you received the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of promise, who reveals Christ and joins you to Him, what did that Spirit do, in His heavenly operation? Did He lead you back to the old position, in which you shrunk from God, as from a Master who bound you against your will? No, He showed you that in the Only Son you are nothing less than sons, welcomed into the inmost home of eternal life and love. You found yourselves indescribably near the Father's heart, because accepted, and new-created, in His Own Beloved. And so you learnt the happy, confident call of the child, 'Father, O Father; Our Father, Abba.'"

So it was, and so it is. The living member of Christ is nothing less than the dear child of God. He is other things besides; he is disciple, follower, bondservant. He never ceases to be bondservant, though here he is expressly told that he has received no "spirit of slavery." So far as "slavery" means service forced against the will, he has done with this, in Christ. But so far as it means service rendered by one who is his master's absolute property, he has entered into its depths, forever. Yet all this is exterior as it were to that inmost fact, that he is-in a sense ultimate, and which alone really fulfils the word-the child, the son, of God. He is dearer than he can know to his Father. He is more welcome than he can ever realise to take his Father at His word, and lean upon His heart, and tell Him all.

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are God's children, born children. The Holy One, on His part, makes the once cold, reluctant, apprehensive heart "know and believe the love of God." He "sheds abroad God's love in it." He brings home to consciousness and insight the "sober certainty" of the promises of the Word; that Word through which, above all other means, He speaks. He shows to the man "the things of Christ," the Beloved, in whom he has the adoption and the regeneration; making him see, as souls see, what a paternal welcome there "must" be for those who are "in Him." And then, on the other part, the believer meets Spirit with spirit. He responds to the revealed paternal smile with not merely a subject's loyalty but a son's deep love; deep, reverent, tender, genuine, love. "Doubtless thou art His own child," says the Spirit. "Doubtless He is my Father," says our wondering, believing, seeing spirit in response.

But if children, then also heirs; God's heirs, Christ's co-heirs, possessors in prospect of our Father's heaven (towards which the whole argument now gravitates), in union of interest and life with our Firstborn Brother, in whom lies our right. From one hand a gift, infinitely merciful and surprising, that unseen bliss will be from another the lawful portion of the lawful child, one with the Beloved of the Father. Such heirs we are, if indeed we share His sufferings, those deep but hallowed pains which will surely come to us as we live in and for Him in a fallen world, that we may also share His glory, for which that path of sorrow is, not indeed the meriting, but the capacitating, preparation.

Amidst the truths of life and love, of the Son, of the Spirit, of the Father, he thus throws in the truth of pain. Let us not forget it. In one form or another, it is for all "the children." Not all are martyrs, not all are exiles or captives, not all are called as a fact to meet open insults in a defiant world of paganism and unbelief. Many are still so called, as many were at first, and as many will be to the end; for "the world" is no more now than it ever was in love with God, and with His children as such. But even for those whose path is-not by themselves but the Lord-most protected-there must be "suffering," somehow, sooner, later, in this present life, if they are really living the life of the Spirit, the life of the child of God, "paying the debt" of daily holiness, even in its humblest and gentlest forms. We must observe, by the way, that it is to such sufferings, and not to sorrows in general, that the reference lies here. The Lord's heart is open for all the griefs of His people, and He can use them all for their blessing and for His ends. But the "suffering with Him" must imply a pain due to our union. It must be involved in our being His members, used by the Head for His work. It must be the hurt of His "hand" or "foot" in subserving His sovereign thought. What will the bliss be of the corresponding sequel! "That we may share His glory"; not merely "be glorified," but share His glory; a splendour of life, joy, and power whose eternal law and soul will be, union with Him who died for us and rose again.

***Verse 16; The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
2Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30***

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit]

Auto to pneuma, that same Spirit, the Spirit of adoption; that is, the Spirit who witnesses this adoption; which can be no other than the Holy Ghost himself, and certainly cannot mean any disposition or affection of mind which the adopted person may feel; for such a disposition must arise from a knowledge of this adoption, and the knowledge of this adoption cannot be given by any human or earthly means; it must come from God himself: therefore the auto to pneuma must have reference to that Spirit, by whom alone the knowledge of the adoption is witnessed to the soul of the believer. And what qualifies all this?! Ephesians 2:8, 9.

With our spirit]

In our understanding, the place or recipient of light and information; and the place or faculty to which such information can properly be brought. This is done that we may have the highest possible evidence of the work which God has wrought. As the window is the proper medium to let the light of the sun into our apartments, so the understanding is the proper medium of conveying the Spirit's influence to the soul. We, therefore, have the utmost evidence of the fact of our adoption which we can possibly have; we have the word and Spirit of God; and the word sealed on our spirit by the Spirit of God. And this is not a momentary influx: if we take care to walk with God, and not grieve the Holy Spirit, we shall have an abiding testimony; and while we continue faithful to our adopting Father, the Spirit that witnesses that adoption will continue to witness it; and hereby we shall know that we are of God by the Spirit which he giveth us.

Verse 17 ¶ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

And if children, then heirs]

For the legitimate children can alone inherit the estate. This is not an estate to which they succeed in consequence of the death of a former possessor; it is like the Promised Land, given by God himself, and divided among the children of the family.

Heirs of God]

It is neither an earthly portion nor a heavenly portion; but GOD himself, who is to be their portion. It is not heaven they are to inherit; it is GOD, who is infinitely greater and more glorious than heaven itself. With such powers has God created the soul of man, that nothing less than himself can be a sufficient and satisfactory portion for the mind of this most astonishing creature. Col 1:27, 2Peter 1:4

Joint heirs with Christ]

Partaking of the same eternal glory with the glorified human nature of Christ

If so be that we suffer with him]

Observe how prudently the apostle advances to the harsh affair of suffering. He does not mention it till he had raised up their thoughts to the highest object of joy and pleasure—the happiness and glory of a joint inheritance with the ever-blessed Son of God. We are heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him. This, with the additional consideration that we suffer with Christ, or, as he himself suffered, would greatly qualify the transitory afflictions of this world, and dispose them to attend to the other arguments he had to offer.

Verse 18; For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2Corinthians 4:17; 1Peter 1:6-7; 4:13

For I reckon that the sufferings]

If the glory that is to be revealed be the enjoyment of God himself, (see above,) then the sufferings of this life, which, when compared with eternity, are but as for a moment, are not worthy to be put in competition with this glory which shall be revealed in us. This case is perfectly clear.

Many who are sincerely seeking for holiness of heart and purity of life seem perplexed and discouraged. They are constantly looking to themselves, and lamenting their lack of faith; and because they have no faith, they feel that they cannot claim the blessing of God. These persons mistake feeling for faith. They look above the simplicity of true faith, and thus bring great darkness upon their souls. They should turn the mind from self, to dwell upon the mercy and goodness of God and to recount His promises, and then simply believe that He will fulfill His word. We are not to trust in our faith, but in the promises of God. When we repent of our past transgressions of His law, and resolve to render obedience in the future, we should believe that God for Christ's sake accepts us, and forgives our sins. Darkness and discouragement will sometimes come upon the soul and threaten to overwhelm us, but we should not cast away our confidence. We must keep the eye fixed on Jesus, feeling or no feeling. We should seek to faithfully perform every known duty, and then calmly rest in the promises of God. {SL 89.1, 2}

The Life of Faith

At times a deep sense of our unworthiness will send a thrill of terror through the soul, but this is no evidence that God has changed toward us, or we toward God. No effort should be made to rein the mind up to a certain intensity of emotion. We may not feel today the peace and joy which we felt yesterday; but we should by faith grasp the hand of Christ, and trust Him as fully in the darkness as in the light. Satan may whisper, "You are too great a sinner for Christ to save." While you acknowledge that you are indeed sinful and unworthy, you may meet the tempter with the cry, "By virtue of the atonement, I claim Christ as my Saviour. I trust not to my own merits, but to the precious blood of Jesus, which cleanses me. This moment I hang my helpless soul on Christ." The Christian life must be a life of constant, living faith. An unyielding trust, a firm reliance upon Christ, will bring peace and assurance to the soul. {SL 90.1, 2}

Resisting Temptation

Be not discouraged because your heart seems hard. Every obstacle, every internal foe, only increases your need of Christ. He came to take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. Look to Him for special grace to overcome your peculiar faults. When assailed by temptation, steadfastly resist the evil promptings; say to your soul, "How can I dishonor my Redeemer? I have given myself to Christ; I cannot do the works of Satan." Cry to the dear Saviour for help to sacrifice every idol and to put away every darling sin. Let the eye of faith see Jesus standing before the Father's throne, presenting His wounded hands as He pleads for you. Believe that strength comes to you through your precious Saviour. {SL 90.3}

Viewing With the Eye of Faith

By faith look upon the crowns laid up for those who shall overcome; listen to the exultant song of the redeemed, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hast redeemed us to God! Endeavor to regard these scenes as real. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, in his terrible conflict with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places exclaimed, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Act 7:56). The Saviour of the world was revealed to him as looking down from heaven upon him with the deepest interest, and the glorious light of Christ's countenance shone upon Stephen with such brightness that even his enemies saw his face shine like the face of an angel. If we would permit our minds to dwell more upon Christ and the heavenly world, we should find a powerful stimulus and support in fighting the battles of the Lord. Pride and love of the world will lose their power as we contemplate the glories of that better land so soon to be our home. Beside the loveliness of Christ, all earthly attractions will seem of little worth. {SL 91.1, 2}

**Verse 19; For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.
2Pe 3:13; 1John 3:2**

For the earnest expectation of the creature]

There is considerable difficulty in this and the four following verses: and the difficulty lies chiefly in the meaning of the word, which we translate the creature, and creation. Some think that by it the brute creation is meant; others apply it to the Jewish people; others to the godly; others to the Gentiles; others to the good angels; and others to the fallen spirits, both angelic and human. Dissertations without end have been written on it; and it does not appear that the Christian world are come to any general agreement on the subject. Dr. Lightfoot's mode of explanation appears to me to be the best, on the whole. "There is, a twofold key hanging at this place, which may unlock the whole, and make the sense plain and easy.

- a. *The first is the phrase, which we render the whole creation, Romans 8:22, and with which we meet twice elsewhere in the New Testament. Mark 16:15: Preach the Gospel, to every creature; and Colossians 1:23: The Gospel was preached, to every creature. Now it is sufficiently apparent what is meant by it in both these places, viz. all nations, or the heathen world. For that which in St. Mark is, preach the Gospel to every creature, is, in St. Matthew, go and teach, all nations. And this very phrase in this place lays claim to that very interpretation. And the Hebrew, which answers to the Greek, every creature, is applied by the Jews to the Gentiles, and that by way of opposition to Israel.*
- b. *The second key is the word, Romans 8:20, which is not unfitly rendered vanity; but then this vanity is improperly applied to the vanishing, dying, changing state of the creation. For, vanity, does not so much denote the vanishing condition of the outward state, as it does the inward vanity or emptiness of the mind. So the apostle, speaking of the Gentiles concerning whom he speaks here, tells us, They became vain in their imaginations, Romans 1:21; and again, The Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Ephesians 4:17; so also, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, , that they are vain, 1Corinthians 3:20. To all which let me add this farther observation, that throughout this whole place the apostle seems to allude to the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, and their deliverance from it; with a comparison made betwixt the Jewish and the Gentile Church. When God would deliver Israel from his bondage, he challenges him for his Son, and his first-born, Exodus 4:22. And in like manner the Gentiles earnestly expect and wait for such a kind of manifestation of the sons of God, within and among themselves. The Romans, to*

whom the apostle writes, knew well how many predictions and promises it had pleased God to publish by his prophets, concerning gathering together and adopting sons to himself among the Gentiles; the manifestation of which sons the whole Gentile world with a neck as it were stretched out, as the word implies, (from, and, the head, and, to expect,) doth now wait for."

Of many conjecture there is no need, its observable that creation in its literarily has suffered human sophistication by gas emissions, pollutions, industrial wastages, degradation, wastage. Not only does this earnest longing for restoration apply to animal kingdom but also the plant kingdom. Everything longs for Eden made new.

Verse 20; For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Genesis 3:19; Romans 8:22

For the creature was made subject to vanity]

If we take that the Gentile world here is meant and that they were subjected to vanity of mind; but how? Not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same. May we not say, it became vain willingly, but was made subject to vanity unwillingly? For, let us recur to the origin of Gentilism, the confusion of languages, by reason of the attempt to build the tower of Babel; and though there are some passages in the gloss of the Targumists upon this matter that are sufficiently ridiculous, yet as to their scope and design they are worthy of notice. "They said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, and let its head reach unto the top of heaven; and let us make a house of worship in the top of it; and let us put a sword in his hand that he may wage war for us against our enemies, before we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." It is an ancient tradition among the Jews, that this tower was built on an idolatrous account. The confusion of tongues, by which true religion was lost in the world, is a proof that the builders of this tower sinned against God in the highest degree. They were inclined to vanity, i.e. idolatry, WILLINGLY; but they were subjected to vanity UNWILLINGLY; for this proceeded from the just indignation and vengeance of God. From this time the world lay under heathenism till the bringing in of the Gospel, upwards of 2000 years after.

Verse 21; Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Because the creature]

This and the preceding verse should be thus connected: in hope THAT the creature itself also shall be delivered. The word denotes, very frequently, sinful corruption. So, 2Peter 1:4: Corruption through lust, 2Corinthians 11:3: Lest your minds should be corrupted. 1Corinthians 15:33: Evil communications corrupt good manners. Whatever mode of corruption, it doesn't only leave effects on animals but the whole creation also.

Verse 22; For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. {the...: or, every creature}

Jeremiah 12:11; Mark 16:15; Colosians 1:23

The whole creation groaneth and travaileth]

If it be inquired how the Gentile world groaned and travailed in pain; let them who explain this of the fabric of the material world, tell us how that groans and travails? They must needs own it to be a borrowed and allusive phrase: but in the sense above given, the very literal construction may be admitted.

A CLOSER LOOK AT ROMANS 8:19-22**Romans 8:19**

19; *For the intent expectation of the creation, etc.* He teaches us that there is an example of the patience, to which he had exhorted us, even in mute creatures. For, to omit various interpretations, I understand the passage to have this meaning — that there is no element and no part of the world which, being touched, as it were, with a sense of its present misery, does not intensely hope for a resurrection. He indeed lays down two things, — that all are creatures in distress, — and yet that they are sustained by hope. And it hence also appears how immense is the value of eternal glory, that it can excite and draw all things to desire it.

Further, the expression, *expectation expects*, or waits for, though somewhat unusual, yet has a most suitable meaning; for he meant to intimate, that all creatures, seized with great anxiety and held in suspense with great desire, look for that day which shall openly exhibit the glory of the children of God. *The revelation of God's children* shall be, when we shall be like God, according to what John says,

“For though we know that we are now his sons, yet it appears not yet what we shall be.” ([1John 3:2](#))

But I have retained the words of Paul; for bolder than what is meet is the version of [[Erasmus](#)], “Until the sons of God shall be manifest;” nor does it sufficiently express the meaning of the Apostle; for he means not, that the sons of God shall be manifested in the last day, but that it shall be then made known how desirable and blessed their condition will be, when they shall put off corruption and put on celestial glory. But he ascribes hope to creatures void of reason for this end, — that the faithful may open their eyes to behold the invisible life, though as yet it lies hid under a mean garb.

Romans 8:20

20; *For to vanity has the creation, etc.* He shows the object of expectation from what is of an opposite character; for as creatures, being now subject to corruption, cannot be restored until the sons of God shall be wholly restore; hence they, longing for their renewal, look forward to the manifestation of the celestial kingdom. He says, that they have been *subjected to vanity*, and for this reason, because they abide not in a constant and durable state, but being as it were evanescent and unstable, they pass away swiftly; for no doubt he sets vanity in opposition to a perfect state.

Not willingly, etc. Since there is no reason in such creatures, their will is to be taken no doubt for their natural inclination, according to which the whole nature of things tends to its own preservation and perfection: whatever then is detained under corruption suffers violence, nature being unwilling and repugnant. But he introduces all parts of the world, by a sort of personification, as being endued with reason; and he does this in order to shame our stupidity, when the uncertain fluctuation of this world, which we see, does not raise our minds to higher things.

But on account of him, etc. He sets before us an example of obedience in all created things, and adds, that it springs from hope; for hence comes the alacrity of the sun and moon, and of all the stars in their constant courses, hence is the sedulity of the earth's obedience in bringing forth fruits, hence is the unwearied motion of the air, hence is the prompt tendency to flow in water. God has given to everything its charge; and he has not only by a distinct order commanded what he would to be done, but also implanted inwardly the hope of renovation. For in the sad disorder which followed the fall of Adam, the whole machinery of the world would have instantly become deranged, and all its parts would have failed had not some hidden strength supported them. It would have been then wholly inconsistent that the earnest of the Spirit should be less efficacious in the children of God than hidden instinct in the lifeless parts of creation. How much soever then created things do naturally incline another way; yet as it has pleased God to bring them under vanity, they obey his order; and as he has given them a hope of a better condition, with this they sustain themselves, deferring their desire, until the incorruption promised to them shall be revealed. He now, by a kind of personification, ascribes *hope* to them, as he did *will* before.

Romans 8:21

21; *Because the creation itself, etc.* He shows how the creation has in hope been made subject to vanity; that is, inasmuch as it shall some time be made free, according to what Isaiah testifies, and what Peter confirms still more clearly. It is then indeed meet for us to consider what a dreadful curse we have deserved, since all created things in themselves blameless, both on earth and in the visible heaven, undergo punishment for our sins; for it has not happened through their own fault, that they are liable to corruption. Thus the condemnation of mankind is imprinted on the heavens, and on the earth, and on all creatures. It hence also appears to what excelling glory the sons of God shall be exalted; for all creatures shall be renewed in order to amplify it, and to render it illustrious.

But he means not that all creatures shall be partakers of the same glory with the sons of God; but that they, according to their nature, shall be participators of a better condition; for God will restore to a perfect state the world, now fallen, together with mankind. But what that perfection will be, as to beasts as well as plants and metals, it is not meet nor right in us to inquire more curiously; for the chief effect of corruption is decay. Some subtle men, but hardly sober-minded, inquire whether all kinds of animals will be immortal; but if reins be given to speculations where will they at length lead us? Let us then be content with this simple doctrine, — that such will be the constitution and the complete order of things, that nothing will be deformed or fading.

Romans 8:22

22; *For we know, etc.* He repeats the same sentiment, that he might pass over to us, though what is now said has the effect and the form of a conclusion; for as creatures are subject to corruption, not through their natural desire, but through the appointment of God, and then, as they have a hope of being hereafter freed from corruption, it hence follows, that they groan like a woman in travail until they shall be delivered. But it is a most suitable similitude; it shows that the groaning of which he speaks will not be in vain and without effect; for it will at length bring forth a joyful and blessed fruit. The meaning is, that creatures are not content in their present state, and yet that they are not so distressed that they pine away without a prospect of a remedy, but that they are as it were in travail; for a restoration to a better state awaits them. By saying that they *groan together*, he does not mean that they are united together by mutual anxiety, but he joins them as companions to us. The particle *hitherto*, or, to this day, serves to alleviate the weariness of daily languor; for if creatures have continued for so many ages in their groaning, how inexcusable will our softness or sloth be if we faint during the short course of a shadowy life.

The various opinions which have been given on these verses are referred to at some length by *Stuart*; and he enumerates not less than *eleven*, but considers only *two* as entitled to special attention — the material creation, animate and inanimate, as held here by Calvin, and the *rational creation*, including mankind, with the exception of Christians, which he himself maintains. In favor of the first he names [Chrysostom], [Theodoret], [Theophylact], [Æcumenius], [Jerome], [Ambrose], [Luther], [Koppe], [Doddridge], (this is not correct,) [Flatt], and [Tholuck]; to whom may be added [Scott], [Haldane], and [Chalmers], though [Scott], rather inconsistently with the words of the text, if the material creation including animals be meant, regards as a reverie their resurrection; see [Rom 8:21](#).

After a minute discussion of various points, [Stuart] avows his preference to the opinion, that the creature” means *mankind in general*, as being the least liable to objections; and he mentions as its advocates [Lightfoot], [Locke], [Turretin], [Semler], [Rosenmüller], and others. He might have added [Augustine]. Reference is made for the meaning of the word “creature” to [Mar 16:15](#); [Col 1:23](#); and [1Pe 2:13](#).

It appears from [Wolfius], that the greater part of the Lutheran and Reformed Divines have entertained the first opinion, that the “creature” means the world, rational and animal; to which he himself mainly accedes; and what he considers next to this, as the most tenable, is the notion, that the “creature” means the faithful, that “the sons of God” are the blessed in heaven, and that the Apostles and apostolic men were those who enjoyed “the first-fruits of the Spirit.”

This last opinion relieves us from difficulties which press on all other expositions; and it may be extricated from objections which have been made to it; only the last sentence needs not be introduced. The whole

passage, from [Rom 8:18](#) to the end of [Rom 8:25](#), is in character with the usual style of the Apostle. He finishes the first part with [Rom 8:22](#); and then in the second part he announces the same thing in a different form, in more explicit terms, and with some additions. The "waiting" in [Rom 8:19](#), has a correspondent "waiting" in [Rom 8:23](#); and "the hope" in [Rom 8:20](#), has another "hope" to correspond with it in [Rom 8:24](#); and correspondent too is "the manifestation of the sons of God" in [Rom 8:19](#), and "the redemption of our body" in [Rom 8:23](#). To reiterate the same truth in a different way was to make a deeper impression, and accordant with the Apostles manner of writing. He begins the second time, after [Rom 8:22](#), in which is stated the condition of the *whole world*; and it is in contrast with *that alone* that [Rom 8:23](#) is to be viewed, which restates and explains what had been previously said, so that "the creature" are the "we ourselves;" and the Apostle proceeds with the subject to end of the 25th verse. Instances of the same sort of arrangement are to be found in [Rom 2:17](#); [Rom 11:33](#).

[Rom 8:21](#) may be considered as an explanation only of the "hope," at the end of [Rom 8:20](#); "For even it, the creature," though subjected to vanity, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption;" which means the same as "this body of death," in [Rom 7:24](#).

The word κτίσις, means, 1. creation, the world, [Mar 10:6](#); [Mar 13:19](#); [Rom 1:20](#); [2Pe 3:4](#) : — 2, what is created — creature, what is formed — a building, what is instituted — an ordinance, [Rom 1:25](#); [Heb 4:13](#); [Heb 9:11](#); [1Pe 2:13](#) : — 3, mankind, the world of men, [Mar 16:15](#); [Col 1:23](#) : — 4, the renewed man, or renewed nature — Christians, [2Co 5:17](#); [Gal 6:15](#). There are only two other places where it is found, and is rendered in our version "creation," [Col 1:15](#), and [Rev 3:14](#)

It is objected to its application here to Christians, because where it has this meaning, it is preceded by *καινή*, new. The same objection stands against applying it to mankind in general, for in these instances push precedes it. Its meaning must be gathered from the whole passage, and we must not stop at the end of verse 23, but include the two following verses.

END OF CLOSER VIEW ON ROMANS 8:19-22

Verse 23; And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Luke 20:36; 21:28; 2Corinthians 5:2,4-5; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30

And not only they, but ourselves also]

Neither the Gentiles only, but we Jews also, (however we belong to a nation envious of the heathen,) to whom God hath granted the first fruits of the Spirit; we sigh among ourselves for their sakes, waiting for the adoption; that is, the redemption of our mystical body, whereof the Gentiles make a very great part.

The scope and design of St. Paul in these verses may be thus summed up:-The apostle shows that the whole creation is in a suffering state, into which it has been brought by the disobedience of one man, Adam; therefore, it was made subject to vanity-pain, sickness, and death; not willingly, for mankind had no part in that transgression which "brought death into the world and all our woe;" but whole was subjected, but God purpose to afford the whole creation a deliverance and infusing into every heart a hope that a more auspicious era should take place; and it is through the influence of this hope, which every man possesses, that the present ills are so patiently borne, because all are expecting better days. The great deliverer is the Messiah, and the Gospel days the auspicious era which God intended to bring forward. They who believe in Christ with a heart unto righteousness are freed from the bondage of their sinful corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and they look forward with joyous expectation, waiting for the general resurrection, when their bodies also shall be redeemed from corruption, and the whole man, body and soul, be adopted into the family of heaven ABOVE, as their souls had been previously adopted into the family of faith BELOW. And although it may be said that the redemption provided by the Gospel can not be an object of hope to those who have never heard of it; yet, as every man has hope, and this hope is inspired by God for this very purpose; that it may be the means of supporting them in the ills of life, and God, in inspiring it, had respect to the glorious state of Christianity, therefore it is this state, in effect, that the whole creation are longing for. So Jesus Christ is said, by the Prophet Haggai, Haggai 2:7, to be the desire of all nations; and yet not one of the nations of the earth had, at that time, heard of him.

Verse 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?

2Corinthians 5:7; Habakkuk 11:1

For we are saved by hope]

We are supported and are comfortable in the expectation we have of receiving from the hand of our God all the good we need in the troubles and adversities of this life, and of having our bodies raised from corruption and death at the general resurrection.

Hope that is seen is not hope]

As hope signifies the expectation of future good, so it necessarily supposes that the object of it is not seen, i.e. not enjoyed; for to see, in Scripture language, sometimes signifies to enjoy, as in Job 7:7: Mine eye shall no more SEE (margin, ENJOY) good. Job 9:25: My days flee away, and SEE no good; i.e. enjoy no prosperity. Psalms 50:23: I will SHOW the salvation of God: I will give that man to enjoy my salvation who walks uprightly. Matthew 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall SEE God; that is, they shall enjoy his favour and blessing. See also John 3:36; Hebrews 12:14, and 1John 3:2. The hope that is seen, that is, enjoyed, is no longer hope, it is fruition: and a man cannot hope for that which he has in his possession.

Verse 25; But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

But if we hope for that we see not]

If we have a well-grounded expectation of our resurrection and final glorification, knowing that such things are necessarily future, and must for a certain time be delayed; then do we patiently wait for them, continue patiently to endure the common ills of life, and whatever tribulations we may be exposed to in consequence of our Christian profession; for we know, FAITHFUL is he who has promised. Hope is a sort of universal blessing, and one of the greatest which God has granted to man. To mankind, in general, life would be intolerable without it; and it is as necessary as faith is even to the followers of God. Hope is still at the bottom; and therefore man is encouraged to bear up in all the pressures of life. Take away hope, and then black despair and indescribable wretchedness would be the instant result. Hope stands justly among the highest mercies of God.

Verse 26; Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 20:22; Ephesians 6:18; Jas 4:3

The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities] The same Spirit, , mentioned before as bearing witness with ours that we are the children of God; and consequently it is not a disposition or frame of mind, for the disposition of our mind surely cannot help the infirmities of our minds.

The word is very inadequately expressed by helpeth. It is compounded of sun, together, anti, against, and to support or help, and signifies such assistance as is afforded by any two persons to each other, who mutually bear the same load or carry it between them. He who prays, receives help from the Spirit of God; but he who prays not receives no such help. Whatever our strength may be, we must put it forth, even while most implicitly depending on the strength of God himself.

For we know not what we should pray for as we ought]

And should therefore be liable to endless mistakes in our prayers, if suitable desires were not excited by the Holy Spirit and power received to bring these desires, by prayer, before the throne of grace.

But the Spirit itself]

The same Spirit, viz. the Spirit that witnesses of our adoption and sonship, Romans 8:15,16, makes intercession for us. Surely if the apostle had designed to teach us that he meant our own sense and understanding by the Spirit, he never could have spoken in a manner in which plain common sense was never likely to comprehend his meaning. Besides, how can it be said that our own spirit, our filial disposition, bears

witness with our own spirit; that our own spirit helps the infirmities of our own spirit; that our own spirit teaches our own spirit that of which it is ignorant; and that our own spirit maketh intercession for our own spirit, with groanings unutterable? This would have been both incongruous and absurd. We must therefore understand these places of that help and influence which the followers of God receive from the Holy Ghost; and consequently, of the fulfilment of the various promises relative to this point which our Lord made to his disciples, particularly in John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; 16:7; and particularly John 16:13,14: Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

Verse 27; And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. {because: or, that}

1Chronicles 28:9; Psalms 7:9; Proverbs 17:3; Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Acts 1:24; Thessalonians 2:4; 1John 5:14; Revelation 2:23

He maketh intercession for the saints]

The word intercession signifies to apply one's self to a person in behalf of another; to intercede or negotiate for. Our Lord makes intercession for us, by negotiating and managing, as our friend and agent, all the affairs pertaining to our salvation. And the Spirit of God makes intercession for the saints, not by supplication to God on their behalf, but by directing and qualifying their supplications in a proper manner, by his agency and influence upon their hearts; which, according to the Gospel scheme, is the peculiar work and office of the Holy Spirit.

While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth. He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church. {Desire of Ages page 166. Paragraph 2}

According to the will of God]

According to the mind, intention, or design of God. And thus the prayers which we offer up, and the desires which subsist in the unutterable groanings, are all such as are pleasing in the sight of God. So that God, whose is the Spirit, and who is acquainted with the mind of the Spirit, knows what he means when he leads the saints to express themselves in words, desires, groans, sighs, or tears: in each God reads the language of the Holy Ghost, and prepares the answer according to the request.

From all this we learn that a fluency in prayer is not essential to praying: a man may pray most powerfully in the estimation of God, who is not able to utter even one word. The unutterable groan is big with meaning, and God understands it, because it contains the language of his own Spirit. Some desires are too mighty to be expressed; there is no language expressive enough to give them proper form and distinct vocal sound: such desires show that they came from God; and as they came from him, so they express what God is disposed to do, and what he has purposed to do. This is a matter of great encouragement to all those who are agonizing to enter in at the strait gate.

Verse 28; 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 9:11, 23-24; 2Timothy 1:9

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God]

To understand this verse aright, let us observe:

1. *That the persons in whose behalf all things work for good are they who love God, and, consequently, who live in the spirit of obedience.*
2. *It is not said that all things shall work for good, but that, they work now in the behalf of him who loveth now; for both verbs are in the present tense.*
3. *All these things work together; while they are working, God's providence is working, his Spirit is working, and they are working TOGETHER with him.*

And whatever troubles, or afflictions, or persecutions may arise, God presses them into their service; and they make a part of the general working, and are caused to contribute to the general good of the person who now loves God, and who is working by faith and love under the influence and operation of the Holy Ghost. They who say sin works for good to them that love God speak blasphemous nonsense. A man who now loves God is not now sinning against God; and the promise belongs only to the present time: and as love is the true incentive to obedience, the man who is entitled to the promise can never, while thus entitled, (loving God,) be found in the commission of sin. But though this be a good general sense for these words, yet the all things mentioned here by the apostle seem more particularly to mean those things mentioned in Romans 8:28-30.

To them who are the called according to his purpose]

All things work together for their good; for this reason, because they are called, invited, or made welcome to the blessings of the covenant, (which is ratified in eating of the covenant sacrifice,) according to God's original purpose first declared to Abraham, Genesis 17:4: Thou shalt be a father of many nations-and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him, Genesis 18:18. Now, it will be better to reiterate the fact that Abraham received this promises without circumcision. The covenant of that blessing was entirely based on faith and not works. Hence it cannot be righteousness by works but faith but faith that works. No human being will stand in heaven and trace his salvation to his own works, it's the merits of the blood of Christ that saves us - the power to do and will of his own good pleasure in us and for us. Thus this clause is to be understood; and thus it is an argument to prove that all things, how afflictive soever, shall work for our good while we continue to love God. Our being called or invited, according to God's purpose, proves that all things work for our good, on the supposition that we love God, and not otherwise. For our loving God, or making a due improvement of our calling, is evidently inserted by the apostle to make good his argument. He does not pretend to prove that all things shall concur to the everlasting happiness of all that are called; but only to those of the called who love God. Our calling, thus qualified is the ground of his argument, which he prosecutes and completes in the two next verses. Our calling he takes for granted, as a thing evident and unquestionable among all Christians. But you will say: How is it evident and unquestionable that we are called? I answer: From our being in the visible Church, and professing the faith of the Gospel. For always, in the apostolic writings, all that are in the visible Church, and profess the faith of the Gospel, are numbered among the called or invited; i.e. among the persons who are invited to feast on the covenant sacrifice, and who thus, in reference to themselves, confirm and ratify the covenant. As for what is termed effectual calling, as distinguished from the general invitations of the Gospel, it is a distinction which divines have invented without any warrant from the sacred writings. Our calling, therefore, is considered by the apostle in the nature of a self-evident proposition, which nobody doubts or denies; or which, indeed, no Christian ought to doubt, or can call in question.

Verse 29; 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.

Exodus 33:12,17; Psalms 1:6; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 7:23; John 17:22; Romans 11:2; 2Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 1:5,11; Philippians 3:21; Col 1:15,18; 2Timothy 2:19; Hebrews 1:6; 1Peter 1:2; 1John 3:2; Revelation 1:5

For whom he did foreknow]

This is not a theology of predestination - that there are some folks whatever they do they will be saved despise their conduct. NO. Christ died for all and all have same advantages to be saved but He foreknew others in the sense that they accepted his call and he gave them a spirit to remain in fellowship with them forever if they continue in his will. "In this and the following verse the apostle shows how our calling is an argument that all things work together to advance our eternal happiness, by showing the several steps which the wisdom and goodness of God have settled, in order to complete our salvation. In order to this he first gives us, in this verse, the foundation and finishing, or the beginning and end, of the scheme of our redemption: For whom God did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. To foreknow, here signifies to design before, or at the first forming of the scheme; to bestow the favour and privilege of being God's people upon any set of men, Romans 11:2. This is the foundation or first step of our salvation; namely, the purpose and grace of God, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, 2Timothy 1:9. Then, he knew or favoured us; for in this sense the word to know is taken in a great variety of places, both in the Old and New Testaments. And as he knew the GENTILES then, when the scheme was laid, and before any part of it was executed, consequently, in reference to the execution of this scheme, he foreknew us. This is the first step of our salvation, and the end or finishing of it is our conformity to the Son of God in eternal glory, Romans

8:17, which includes and supposes our moral conformity to him. When God knew us, at the forming of the Gospel scheme; or, when he intended to bestow on us the privilege of being his people; he then destined or designed us to be conformed to the image of his Son; and, as he destined or determined us then to this very high honour and happiness, he pre-destinated, fore-ordained, or pre-determined us to it. Thus we are to understand the foundation and finishing of the scheme of our salvation. The foundation is the foreknowledge, or gracious purpose of God; the finishing is our being joint heirs with Christ. Now, our calling or invitation (see Romans 8:28) stands in connection with both these: -

1. *It stands in connection with God's foreknowledge; and so it is a true and valid calling: for we are called, invited, or chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, who may bestow his blessings upon any people, as may seem good in his sight, 1Peter 1:2; consequently, we have a good title to the blessings of the Gospel to which we are called or invited. And this was to be proved, that the Jew, to whom the apostle particularly wrote, might see that the Gentiles being now called into the Church of God was not an accidental thing, but a matter which God had determined when he conceived the Gospel scheme. Thus our calling is connected with God's foreknowledge.*
2. *It stands also in connection with our being conformed to the image of his Son; for we are invited by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2Thessalonians 2:14. And therefore, supposing, what the apostle supposes, that we love God, it is certain, from our being called, that we shall be glorified with the sons of God; and so our calling proves the point, that all things should work together for our good in our present state, because it proves that we are intended for eternal glory; as he shows in the next verse. For we must understand his foreknowing, predestinating, calling, and justifying, in relation to his glorifying; and that none are finally glorified, but those who, according to his purpose, are conformed to the image of his Son."*

The first-born among many brethren]

That he might be the chief or head of all the redeemed; for HIS human nature is the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead; and He is the first human being that, after having passed through death, was raised to eternal glory.

Verse 30; 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.

John 17:22; Romans 1:6; 9:24; 1Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 2:6; 4:4; Hebrews 9:15; 1Peter 2:9

Whom he did predestinate]

The Gentiles, whom He determined to call into his Church with the Jewish people, He called-He invited by the preaching of the Gospel, to believe on his Son Jesus Christ. It is worthy of note, that all that is spoken here refers to what had already taken place; for the calling, justifying, and glorifying are here represented as having already taken place, as well as the foreknowing and the predestinating. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the apostle refers to what God had already done among the Jews and Gentiles: though he may also speak of the things that were not as though they were.

He also justified]

Pardoned the sins of all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turned unto him.

He also glorified]

He has honoured and dignified the Gentiles with the highest privileges, and he will take many of them to the kingdom of glory; and all who love him, and continue faithful unto death, shall inherit that glory eternally. Hence it is added, them he also glorified; for all the honours which he confers on them have respect to and are intended to promote their endless felicity; and though the terms are here used in a more general sense, yet, if we take them more restrictedly, we must consider that in the work of justification sanctification is implied; justification being the foundation and beginning of that work. From all this we learn that none will be glorified who have not been sanctified and justified; that the justified are those who have been called or invited by the Gospel of Christ; that those who have had this calling are they to whom God determined to grant this privilege-they did not choose this salvation first, but God sent it to them when they knew him not-and therefore the salvation of the Gentile world, as well as that of the Jews, comes through the gratuitous mercy of God himself, was the result of infinite designs, and stands on the same ground as the calling, of the Jewish

people. The word, which we render glory, and, to glorify, both mean to render illustrious, eminent, in various parts of the New Testament; and in this sense the verb is used John 11:4; 12:23,28; 13:31,32; 14:13; 15:8; 21:19; Acts 3:13; 11:13; in none of which places eternal beatification can be intended. Here it seems to mean that those whom God had called into a state of justification he had rendered illustrious by innumerable gifts, graces, and privileges, in the same manner as he had done to the Israelites of old.

God's test of the heathen, who have not the light, and of those living where the knowledge of truth and light has been abundant, is altogether different. He accepts from those in heathen lands a phase of righteousness which does not satisfy Him when offered by those of Christian lands. He does not require much where much has not been bestowed (MS 130, 1899). {SDA Bible Commentary Volume 5 Page 1121 Paragraph 14}

As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. A parchment was placed in the angel's hand, and as he descended to the earth in power and majesty, he proclaimed a fearful warning, with the most terrible threatening ever borne to man. This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, "They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth." The third angel closes his message thus: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." As he repeated these words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. THIS ATONEMENT IS MADE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD AS WELL AS FOR THE RIGHTEOUS LIVING. IT INCLUDES ALL WHO DIED TRUSTING IN CHRIST, BUT WHO, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE LIGHT UPON GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, HAD SINNED IGNORANTLY IN TRANSGRESSING ITS PRECEPTS. {Early Writings Page 254 Paragraph 1}

A Special Class in Heaven

Some among the redeemed will have laid hold of Christ in the last hours of life, and in heaven instruction will be given to those who, when they died, did not understand perfectly the plan of salvation. Christ will lead the redeemed ones beside the river of life, and will open to them that which while on this earth they could not understand.-- Undated manuscript 150. {Selected Messages Book 1 Page 262 Paragraph 2}

Let him who glory in his legalistic religion think about the above pen of inspiration statements. The whole of the preceding discourse will show that every thing here is conditional, as far as it relates to the ultimate salvation of any person professing the Gospel of Christ; for the promises are made to character, and not to persons, as some have most injudiciously affirmed. The apostle insists upon a character all along from the beginning of the chapter. Romans 8:1: The heathens who doesn't have the law when they do the things contained in the law are drafted in while those who have the law and could not learn from it are cast out.

Matthew 8:11, 12:

11: And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12: But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:13: If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. The absolute necessity of holiness to salvation is the very subject of his discourse; this necessity he positively affirms, and establishes by the most solid arguments. At the very entrance of his argument here, he takes care to settle the connection between our calling and our love and obedience to God, on purpose to prevent that mistake into which so many have fallen, through their great inattention to the scope of his reasoning. Romans 8:28: All things work together for good-To whom? To THEM that LOVE GOD: to them that are the called according to his purpose. To them that love God, because they are called according to his purpose; for those only who love God can reap any benefit by this predestination, vocation, or any other instance of God's favour. Now the gospel is not only revealed in the preaching or reading of the Bible, but nature is another great book to learn from, and this is how the heathen

who have never heard a word about Jesus, while they appreciate that which they see and treat it according to the still voice of the Holy Spirit in their conscience bids them to, will be saved. This is Justification by faith done by the Spirit. Their conscience is sanctified even though they never heard anything to do with the table of showbread, the lampstand and altar of incense in the sanctuary where sanctification proceeds.

**Verse 31; What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?
Numbers 14:9; Psalms 118:6**

What shall we then say to these things?]

What conclusion should we draw from the above premises? From all that was already laid down in the preceding chapters, but especially in the preceding verses, from Romans 8:28-30 inclusive. As if he had said: What comfort may we derive from these doctrines? God has called us all to holiness, and to love to him, which is the principle of holiness. We are persecuted and despised, it is true, and we may be more so; but, as God has called us to love him, and all things work together for good to them that love him; and, as his covenant with Abraham, while he was in his Gentile state, shows his gracious purpose towards us Gentiles, whom he has foreknown, who have been objects of his gracious foreknowledge, as well as the Jews, and who have now the fullest proof that we were so, by his sending us the Gospel, and showing us, in it, that if the Israelites were to be a holy priesthood, a royal nation, we are no less favoured, as he has predestinated, from the beginning determined, that we should be conformed to the image of his Son, who is to be the first-born among many brethren, the head and chief of all converted Jews and Gentiles, and, in order to our final salvation, has called, invited us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, has justified those who do believe, and has glorified, highly honoured, and adorned them with innumerable gifts and graces, and, if they continue to possess that faith which worketh by love, will bring them, both body and soul, to his eternal glory, their bodies being made like unto his glorious body:-seeing, therefore, all these things are so, what comfort in our tribulations shall we derive from them?-Why this: If God be for us, who can be against us? He who is infinitely wise has undertaken to direct us: He who is infinitely powerful has undertaken to protect us: He who is infinitely good has undertaken to save us. What cunning, strength, or malice, can prevail against his wisdom, power, and goodness? None. Therefore we are safe who love God; and not only shall sustain no essential damage by the persecutions of ungodly men, but even these things work together for our good.

**Verse 32; 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?
Romans 4:25; 5:6, 10**

He that spared not his own Son]

And can we, his sincere followers, doubt of the safety of our state, or the certainty of his protection? No: for if he loved us, Gentiles and Jews, so intensely as to deliver up to death his own Son for us all, can he withhold from us any minor blessing? Nay, will he not, on the contrary, freely give us all things? For if he told Abraham, who is the father of the faithful, and representative of us all, and with whom the covenant was made, that, because he had not withheld from him his only son Isaac, but delivered him up to that death which he thought his God had required, in blessing, he would bless him; and in multiplying, he would multiply him; that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies; and that in it all the nations of the earth should be blessed, Gen 22:16-19; will HE not give US all that was spiritually intended by these promises, whose only begotten Son was not sacrificed in a figure, but really, in order to purchase every blessing that the soul of man can need and that the hand of God can dispense.

**Verse 33; Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.
Isaiah 50:8-9; Revelation 12:10-11**

This and the two following verses contain a string of questions, most appropriately introduced and most powerfully urged, tending to show the safety of the state of those who have believed the Gospel of the grace of God. Observe: -

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?-God who justifieth? Who is he that condemneth?-Christ who died? or, rather, who is risen again? He, who is at the right hand of God? He, who maketh intercession for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?-Tribulation? or distress? or persecution? or famine? or

nakedness? or peril? or sword?" In all these questions the apostle intimates that if neither GOD nor CHRIST would bring any charge against them who love him, none else could. And as God justifies through Christ who died, consequently no charge can lie against these persons, as God alone could produce any; and He, so far from doing this, has justified them-freely forgiven their trespasses.

Verse 34; 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.

Job 34:29; Mark 16:19; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 7:25; 8:1; 9:24; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 John 2:1

Who is even at the right hand of God] To which he has exalted our human nature, which he took in conjunction with his Divinity; and there he maketh intercession for us-manages all the concerns of his own kingdom in general, and of every member of his Church in particular.

Verse 35; Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?] I do think that this question has been generally misunderstood. The apostle is referring to the persecutions and tribulations to which genuine Christians were exposed through their attachment to Christ, and the gracious provision God had made for their support and final salvation. As in this provision God had shown his infinite love to them in providing Jesus Christ as their sin-offering, and Jesus Christ had shown his love in suffering death upon the cross for them; so, here, he speaks of the love of the followers of God to that Christ who had first loved them. Therefore the question is not, Who shall separate the love of Christ from us? or prevent Christ from loving us? but, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Who or what shall be able to remove our affection from him? And the questions that immediately follow show that this is the sense of the passage; for the tribulation, distress, &c., which he enumerates, are things by which they might be affected, but by which Christ could not be affected; and, consequently, the question most evidently refers to their love to him who had first loved them, and, while it affords a strong presumption of their perseverance, furnishes a most powerful argument against apostasy.

Shall tribulation?]

Grievous affliction, or distress of any kind; from, to compress, oppress, straiten, &c.; any thing by which a man is rendered miserable.

Or distress?] a word of nearly the same import with the former, but more intense in its signification. It signifies straitness, being hemmed in on every side, without the possibility of getting out or escaping; from, strait or narrow, and, a place.

Or persecution?] from, to pursue, press upon, prosecute, signifies such pursuing as an enemy uses in order to overtake the object of his malice, that he may destroy him.

Or famine?] from, to fail; the total want of bread, and all the necessaries of life.

Or nakedness?] being absolutely without clothing; forcibly expressed by the derivation of the word, having one's limbs only, being totally unclothed.

Or peril?] a state of extreme and continued danger, perplexing and distressing with grievous forebodings and alarms; derived from, it excites anguish; because much evil is felt, and much more feared.

Or sword?] slaughter; the total destruction of life, and especially beheading, and such like, done by the order of the civil magistrate; for the word is used in this epistle, Ro 13:4, to signify the authority and power which he has of judicially terminating life; i.e. of inflicting capital punishment.

Verse 36; As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Psalms 44:22; 1 Corinthians 15:30-31; 2 Corinthians 4:11

As it is written]

And these are no more than we may naturally expect from the present constitution of the world, and the positive predictions of the prophet, Psalms 44:22, who foresaw that a wicked world would always persecute and oppress the true followers of God.

Verse 37; Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 1Corinthians 15:57; 2Corinthians 2:14; 1John 4:4; 5:4-5; Revelation 12:11

Nay]

As the prophet adds in the same place, all this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant, Romans 8:17, 18, so all these things may happen unto us; but in all these things we are more than conquerors; WE abide faithful in the new covenant of our God; and HE is faithful who has promised to support and make us more than conquerors; i.e. to give us a complete triumph over sin, and death, and hell, not leaving one enemy unsubdued.

Verse 38; For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:15; 1Peter 3:22

For I am persuaded]

After the blessed experience we have had of support by the grace and Spirit of him that loved us, that neither fear of death, nor hope of life, nor evil angels, nor principalities, nor powers, persecuting us for Christ's sake; nor the things we endure at present, nor the things to come, whatever tribulation we may be called to suffer in future

Verse 39; 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.

Nor height-of honour, nor depth-of ignominy, nor any other creature, (nor any other thing whatever,) shall be able to separate us, who love God, from the love of God, which he has vouchsafed to us in Christ Jesus. And for farther observations on the subject of the 29th and 30th verses, see at the end of the chapter.

Paul's Shout of Victory

The apostle Paul was highly honored of God, being taken in holy vision to the third heaven, where he looked upon scenes whose glories he was not permitted to reveal. Yet this did not lead him to boastfulness or self-confidence. He realized the importance of constant watchfulness and self-denial, and plainly declares, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1Co 9:27). {SL 95.2}

Paul suffered for the truth's sake, and yet we hear no complaints from his lips. As he reviews his life of toil and care and sacrifice, he says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom 8:18). The shout of victory from God's faithful servant comes down the line to our time: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For 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" (Rom 8:35-39). {SL 95.3}

Though Paul was at last confined in a Roman prison --shut away from the light and air of heaven, cut off from his active labors in the gospel, and momentarily expecting to be condemned to death--yet he did not yield to doubt or despondency. From that gloomy dungeon came his dying testimony, full of a sublime faith and courage that has inspired the hearts of saints and martyrs in all succeeding ages. His words fitly describe the results of that sanctification which we have in these pages endeavored to set forth: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2Ti 4:6-8). {SL 96.1}

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel which he hoped to present in person. He stated his position on the questions which were agitating the Jewish and Gentile churches, and showed that the hopes and promises which once belonged especially to the Jews were now offered to the Gentiles. With great clearness and power he presented the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. While addressing the Roman Christians, Paul designed to instruct other churches also; but how little could he foresee the far-reaching influence of his words! The great truth of justification by faith, as set forth in this epistle, has stood through all the ages as a mighty beacon to guide the repentant sinner into the way of life. This light scattered the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind, and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. It has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the same source of pardon and peace. Every Christian has reason to thank God for that epistle to the church at Rome. {LP 187.1}

Here, in a certain sense, the long golden chain of the doctrine of the Epistle ends-in the hand of the King who thus crowns the sinners whose redemption, faith, acceptance, and holiness, He had, in the Heaven of His own Being, fore-willed and fore-ordered, "before the world began," above all time. What remains of the chapter is the application of the doctrine. But what an application! The Apostle brings his converts out into the open field of trial, and bids them use his doctrine there. Are they thus dear to the Father in the Son? Is their every need thus met? Is their guilt cancelled in Christ's mighty merit? Is their existence filled with Christ's eternal Spirit? Is sin thus cast beneath their feet, and is such a heaven opened above their heads? "Then what have they to fear," before man, or before God? What power in the universe, of whatever order of being, can really hurt them? For what can separate them from their portion in their glorified Lord, and in His Father's love in Him? Again we listen, with Tertius, as the voice goes on:

What therefore shall we say in view of these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own true Son, but for us all handed Him over to that awful expiatory, propitiatory, darkness and death, so that He was "pleased to bruise Him, to put Him to grief," {Isa 53:10} all for His own great glory, but, no whit the less, all for our pure blessing; how (wonderful "how"!) shall He not also with Him, because all is included and involved in Him who is the Father's All, give us also freely all things ("the all things that are")? And do we want to be sure that He will not after all find a flaw in our claim, and cast us in His court? Who will lodge a charge against God's chosen ones? Will God-who justifies them.? Who will condemn them if the charge is lodged? Will Christ-who died, nay, rather, who rose, who is on the right hand of God, who is actually interceding for us? (Observe this one mention in the whole Epistle of His Ascension, and His action for us above, as He is, by the fact of His Session on the Throne, our sure Channel of eternal blessing, unworthy that we are.) Do we need assurance, amidst "the sufferings of this present time," that through them always the invincible hands of Christ clasp us, with untired love? We "look upon the covenant" of our acceptance and life in Him who died for us, and who lives both for and in us, and we meet the fiercest buffet of these waves in peace. Who shall sunder us from the love of Christ? There rise before him, as he asks, like so many angry personalities, the outward woes of the pilgrimage. Tribulation? or Perplexity? or Persecution? or Famine? or Nakedness? or Peril? or Sword? As it stands written, in that deep song of anguish and faith {Psa 44:1-26} in which the elder Church, one with us in deep continuity, tells her story of affliction, "For Thy sake we are done to death all the day long; we have been reckoned, estimated, as sheep of slaughter." Even so. But in these things, all of them, we more than conquer; not only do we tread upon our foes; we spoil them, we find them occasions of glorious gain, through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, life with its natural allurements or its bewildering toils, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, whatever Orders of being unfriendly to Christ and His saints the vast Unseen contains, nor present things, nor things to come, in all the boundless field of circumstance and contingency, nor height, nor depth, in the illimitable sphere of space, nor any other creature, no thing, no being, under the Uncreated One, shall be able to sunder us, "us" with an emphasis upon the word and thought, from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord-from the eternal embrace wherein the Father embosoms the Son, and, in the Son, all who are one with Him.

So once more the divine music rolls itself out into the blessed Name. We have heard the previous cadences as they came in their order; "Jesus our Lord, who was delivered because of our offences, and was raised again

because of our justification"; {Rom 4:25} "That grace might reign, through Jesus Christ our Lord"; {Rom 5:21} "The gift of God is eternal life, in Jesus Christ our Lord"; {Rom 6:23} "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord". {Rom 7:25} Like the theme of a fugue it has sounded on, deep and high; still, always, "our Lord Jesus Christ," who is all things, and in all, and for all, to His happy believing members. And now all is gathered up into this. Our "Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption," {1Co 1:30} the golden burthens of the third chapter, and the sixth, and the eighth, are all, in their living ultimate essence, "Jesus Christ our Lord." He makes every truth, every doctrine of peace and holiness, every sure premiss and indissoluble inference, to be life as well as light. He is pardon, and sanctity, and heaven. Here, finally, the Eternal Love is seen not as it were diffused into infinity, but gathered up wholly and forever in Him. Therefore to be in Him is to be in It. It is to be within the clasp which surrounds the Beloved of the Father.

Some years ago we remember reading this passage, this close of the eighth chapter, under moving circumstances. On a cloudless January night, late arrived in Rome, we stood in the Coliseum, a party of friends from England. Orion, the giant with the sword, glimmered like a spectre, the spectre of persecution, above the huge precinct; for the full moon, high in the heavens, overpowered the stars. By its light we read from a little Testament these words, written so long ago to be read in that same City; written by the man whose dust now sleeps at Tre Fontane, where the executioner dismissed him to be with Christ; written to men and women some of whom at least, in all human likelihood, suffered in the same Amphitheatre, raised only twenty-two years after Paul wrote to the Romans, and soon made the scene of countless martyrdoms. "Do you want a relic?" said a Pope to some eager visitor. "Gather dust from the Coliseum; it is all the martyrs."

We recited the words of the Epistle, and gave thanks to Him who had there triumphed in His saints over life and death, over beasts, and men, and demons. Then we thought of the inmost factors in that great victory; Truth and Life. They "knew whom they had believed"-their Sacrifice, their Head, their King. He whom they had believed lived in them, and they in Him, by the Holy Ghost given to them. Then we thought of ourselves, in our circumstances so totally different on the surface, yet carrying the same needs in their depths. Are we, too, to overcome, in "the things present" of our modern world, and in face of "the things to come" yet upon the earth? Are we to be "more than conquerors," winning blessing out of all things, and really living "in our own generation" {Act 13:36} as the bondmen of Christ and the sons of God? Then for us also the absolute necessities are-the same Truth, and the same Life. And they are ours, thanks be to the Name of our salvation. Time hath no more dominion over them, because death hath no more dominion over Him. For us, too, Jesus died. In us, too, by the Holy Ghost, He lives.

BLESSINGS