Romans - Commentaries by Charles Stanley

Things New and Old: Volume 27, Romans, Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the: No. 15 - Chapter 8:18

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“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. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” Who ever was better able to reckon on this matter than Paul? Bonds and imprisonments awaited him in every city—a life of constant suffering with Him he so loved to serve; yet he says, “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Indeed, even u the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” What a solution of the perplexing paradox of all creation! The groans of battlefields shall cease; the misery and poverty and degradation of the multitude; the sufferings of creation, shall come to an end.

Verse 21. “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” What a day will that be! Yes, creation must share in the glorious liberty. “He tasted death for everything.” It is a pleasant thought. If misery and death has reigned so long, and man’s sins so affected creation, even so the emancipation of creation shall be the result of the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Verse 22. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Mark, it is not for the salvation of our souls we wait, and hope, but for the redemption of the body. It may be from the grave, or it may be we shall be changed in a moment. It will be at the coming of the Lord. As to the body, even we have no relief from groaning, and suffering, until the coming of our Lord. We see not that yet, and therefore we wait and hope. It is a fatal mistake to suppose all this means that we do not know we have salvation; on the contrary, we know we have eternal life—”He that believeth hath eternal life.” There is no waiting or hoping for that. But we can wait in patience for the redemption of the body.

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 he uttered. And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” This is very blessed for as. He knoweth all that concerneth not only us, but the plans and purposes of God. We may be a few days’, or years’, distance of the redemption of the body. He surely knows what is suited for us in such circumstances. And God who heareth, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. If we do not pray in the Spirit, we shall be sure to ask for things quite inconsistent with the dispensation or period in which we live.

We now enter upon the third or last division of our chapter. We may not be able always understand.

Verse 28. We can, however, say, “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.” We know this because God is absolutely for us. This is now brought out to the end of the chapter. “To them who are the called according to his purpose.” God has not called us on account of any good in us, or any purpose in us. Let us carefully mark what His purpose was, for His call is the result of His purpose. This, then, is His purpose: “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.” He foreknew whom He should call; and He predestinated them, those whom He called, to this glorious destiny, to be like, conformed to the image of, His Son. What a purpose that His Son should be the firstborn among many brethren! How great the privilege to be called to share this place of glory!

Verse 30. Let us not alter a single word to suit human thoughts or reason. “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.” Here all is of God, who cannot fail. This is His order. Predestinated; called; justified; glorified. From eternity to eternity. What a golden chain! What solid comfort to the sorely-tempted children of God! Has He called us? Then that proves He had predestinated us; and He has justified us; and will not fail to bring us to glory. Faith will surely trust Him. Unbelief would gladly let Satan reason all this foundation-truth away. Now “what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Yes, if God be thus for us, who is he, and what is he, that can be against us? See how God condescends to reason with us.

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?” What a question? Thus it is manifest that all things must work together for good to us, since God spared not His own Son. What infinite and eternal love to deliver Him up for us all! We can expect all things according to the immensity and character of that love.

Verse 33. Since it is God in His righteousness, as has been seen in this epistle, that is the Justifier, “God that justifieth;” “ Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Who is he that condemneth? If God is our Justifier, can any creature condemn us? It was God who showed His acceptance of our ransom by raising Jesus from the dead for our justification. God delivered Him up for us all; and He raised Him from the dead for the justification of us all; and He is the unchanging righteousness of all God’s elect. “Who is he that condemneth?” God cannot condemn us without condemning Him who was raised from the dead to be our righteousness. Our justification could not be more perfect, for it is all of God. Our justification, then, is of God, and complete and settled for eternity.

There is just one other question. Can any possible circumstance alter the love of Christ, or alter the love of God in Christ to us? There are so many who doubt the love of Christ unless we in some way continue to deserve it, that this is a serious question. Now is it not a great mistake to suppose that we ever did, or do, or shall deserve that love? But does the Spirit of God set before as our deservings?

Verses 34 to 39. How beautiful and simple: He sets Christ before us. Let us follow the word sentence by sentence. “Christ that died.” Did He die for us because we deserved His love? Was ever love like His, and for us when dead in trespasses and sins? “Yea, rather that is risen

again.” View Him risen from the dead to be the beginning of the new creation. For this express purpose—for our justification. And all when we deserved eternal wrath. “who is even at the right hand of God.” He who bore our sins, and was made sin for us, our Representative, is at the right hand of God, as it were in possession of that place for us. Now the enemy who deceived Eve would just step in here, and say, That is all true if you never sin after your conversion, but if any man who is a Christian should sin, then surely that sin will separate him from the love of Christ. Dear young believer, mind your shield is not down when the devil gives you this thrust. Precious answer, “Who also maketh intercession for us.” Yes, “He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. 7:25.) From how many sins does that intercession preserve us! But to the point, if a believer, a child of God, through un-watchfulness, should sin, will He then still, in His own infinite unchanging love, plead the cause of the failing one? “My little children, 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: and he is the propitiation for our sins,” &c. (1 John 2:1-2) Yes, even then, in unchanging love, He is the same Jesus, “who also maketh intercession for us.” Thus all is of God and cannot fail. Read now the whole list in these verses, and let us, with the apostle, be persuaded that nothing; “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” There is no condemnation to those whom God justifies, whom He accounts righteous. And there is no separation from the infinite and eternal love of God, to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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There is no doubt, nay, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Yet there are different stages of the work of God in the soul, as we have seen typified in Israel’s redemption.

Chapter 8:9. This verse will answer the question—When may we conclude we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Then, plainly, if the Spirit of God dwell in you, you may safely conclude you are not in the flesh. Is there, then, a distinct stage between the quickening, or new birth, of a soul, and the dwelling of the Spirit of God in us? Be it long or short, scripture bears out the fact in every case. Yes, in the case of Cornelius and his company, as well as in the baptized believers at Samaria, who did not receive the Holy Ghost until the apostles came down from Jerusalem.

Cornelius was evidently a quickened soul, and all his house (Acts 10:2), but not delivered, and hence it was that he was in the flesh, until the word came with the power of the Holy Ghost, and then the Holy Ghost Himself. (Ver. 44.) This, then, is the question—”Have ye received the Holy Ghost?” If not, though quickened, you are still in the flesh, seeking its improvement—it may be by works of law. Cornelius could not be said to be a Christian until he received the Holy Ghost; neither can you, in the full sense of the word, until you have received the Spirit. “Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

We met an aged man, the other day, who said he had been in Egypt thirty years. Where are you, reader, in bondage, or delivered?—In the flesh, or in the Spirit? This is not a question to be trifled with.

Verse 10. This does not imply sin eradicated, or the evil nature improved. “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin.” If the doctrine of perfection in the flesh were true, the body could neither be dead, nor could it die, for by sin came death. We see the effect of sin in the body, even death. “But the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.” There is death, on account of sin; there is life, on account of righteousness—not ours, but the righteousness of God, accomplished by the death of His Son for us.

Is the body, then, to remain dead because of sin? No. (Ver. 11.) “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from among the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from among the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” How complete the victory of Christ! The redemption of our bodies is thus certain. Does the Spirit of God dwell in us? Then the quickening of our mortal bodies is certain.

We are not, then, in the flesh, though it is in us; but we are not debtors to it, to live after it. The end of sin, or flesh, is death. It is ever ready, we find, to our sorrow, to act in the body. “But if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” If our old nature was not still left ready to act, we should not need to mortify the deeds of the body. It is not mortifying the body, but the deeds of the body. The great thing to see, is, that it is through the Spirit. This is fully brought out in Gal. 5:16-25.

Verse 14. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Jesus said, “And the servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever.” (John 8:35.) We are not in bondage, but in the wondrous liberty and privileges of the Son. Was not this His first message by Mary, in resurrection? “ Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” (John 20:17.) “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.” (1 John 3:1.)

And what is the proof of all this? “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” It is said also, “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law.” (Gal. 5:18.) Assuredly the Spirit cannot lead us under that ministration of law which is done away. (See 2 Cor. 3:7-18.) As we have seen all along, for a believer to be placed under, or led under, law, is to be under the ministration of death and the curse. The Spirit will ever lead us to behold the glory of the Lord, and to be changed into the same glory. The Spirit gives liberty, not bondage. Which is your portion—the liberty of the sons of God, or the bondage of the servant, the slave? And the sons do not cease to be sons, and become slaves again.

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.” Can a son cease to be a son? Can Christ, the Son, cease to be the Son? Have we not heard from His lips that God is our Father, even as He is His Father? That relation can never change, can never cease to be. Oh, the riches of His grace! We, who are conscious that we only deserved His eternal wrath, to be brought into such an unchanging relationship—the sons of God. One spirit with the Son. No bondage or fear again, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby do we cry, as sinners, far from God, Have mercy upon us? No; but, Abba, Father. And mark, this is the very special witness of the Spirit.

Verses 16, 17. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: 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.” Yes, the two great facts of which the Spirit

bears witness, are these, in this scripture, to our abiding sonship, heirship; and in Heb. 10 he bears witness that we are perfected forever, continuously, by the one sacrifice of Christ; so that God will not remember our sins any more. Nothing is more frequently denied, or, at least, doubted, than these two blessed facts.

Yes, it is a fact, that we, if believers, are perfected forever. And it is also a fact that we are joint-heirs with Christ. The Spirit bears witness.

And mark, if we are joint-heirs of all the coming glory of Jesus—Son of man—do not overlook these few words; “if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” That this was the case, see the whole history of the Acts. The world, and especially the religious part of it, hated the disciples of Christ, as they hated the Lord. And they suffered with Him. How is it that it is not so now? Because the religious world now pretends to be christian; and, alas! we sink very much to its level. But, in proportion as we are led by the Spirit, we shall certainly suffer the world’s hatred. Do you, beloved reader, know anything of being led by the Spirit? or are you led by the organizations and plans of the religious world? If so, is there any wonder that you should be a stranger, both to the enjoyed relationship of a child of God, or of suffering for Christ’s sake? Can you say you are led by the Spirit in your daily life—your shop, your business—or are you led simply by the maxims of the world? If so, you grieve the Spirit, and cannot enjoy the blessed relationship of sons of God—joint-heirs with Christ. It is a wonderful thing to have the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, always abiding with us, well able to take care of us, and all our interests here below, as the children of God. Oh, to be led at all times by Him.

We cannot over-estimate or over-state the work of the Spirit, whether in us, as verses 2-13, or His work for us, verses 14-27. Then, to the end of the chapter, we shall find God for us, in all His eternal and absolute sovereignty—blessed ultimate purpose of God, that we may be also glorified together with Christ. Yes, let us remember this is the end God has in view, in all our sufferings and afflictions. Let every reader, however, know, that if he has not the Spirit of Christ, if that does not characterize him, he is none of His. And, further, if he is not suffering with Christ, it is most questionable whether he is a joint-heir of Christ, led by the Spirit.

Refuse to be led by the Spirit, and you may have the honors and applause of the religious world. If led of the Spirit, you will certainly be despised, as Christ was despised, and it will be your happy privilege to suffer with Him. But, oh, the glory so soon to be revealed in us. What a contrast! to be led by the Spirit, or to be led by the fashions of this world. Oh, how many there are that will sacrifice eternity for the fashions of this poor deceived world, and, all the while, pretend, yea, think, themselves Christians. Fatal delusion! If this should be the state of any reader of these lines, may God use these words to awaken him out of this delusive slumber. Surely we all need these searching words: “If so be that we suffer with him.”

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Chapter 8:1. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” What a wonderful statement! It is not a question merely of what will be the justification of the believer when manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, but “now” there is nothing to condemn to those who are in Christ Jesus. If I look at myself in the flesh, it is, “ wretched man that I am!” If I look at what I am in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation. Dead to all that I am, as a child of Adam—dead to sin, dead to law, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Thus, being in and to another, to Christ Jesus raised from the dead, it is not only to bring forth fruit unto God? but “there is therefore now no condemnation.” Do, you get hold of this? Is there any condemnation possible to that risen Christ in the glory of God? Then, if you are in Him, how can there be condemnation to you?

The next words, “who walk not after the fleshy but after the Spirit,” are omitted in the best translations; we shall find them, however, as a, result, in verse 4. Here they have at some time been inserted as a condition, or guard. We would, however, linger over and press this verse as the very foundation of deliverance. No soul ever can know real deliverance from the power of sin that does not first know the unclouded favor of God in Christ. How marvelous, after such a chapter of bitter experience, after coming to the utter end of all hope of good in self, the old nature, to find that, as dead with Christ, and alive from the dead in Christ, we are in the unclouded favor of God, without condemnation! What perfect peace! Nothing to disturb, nothing to condemn. And it is God that speaks the word—”NO CONDEMNATION.”

Dear young believer, is this the solid foundation on which, and in which, you stand? Then we will now look at Verse 2. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” We have seen the terrible law, or power of sin; have we not also known and felt it? But what new law, or power, or principle, is this? Is it the power of my new nature as born of God? No; though, as such, I did delight in the law of God; but that did not make me free from the law of sin, as we have seen. But this does—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This is God the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; it is not now death, but the Spirit of life. Thus, as we have seen, we have a justified life. Now we have power—the law of the Spirit of life. Elsewhere we learn that the life we now have is eternal, and the Spirit is eternal. Thus the power we have is eternal. We have seen that the flesh, or sin, is still in us—that which is born of the flesh; but here is deliverance from its power: made free from the law of sin and death; made free by infinite, eternal power, the law of the Spirit of life. It is not “will” do, but, “hath made me free.” So terrible is our depraved old sinful nature, that, though born of God, and I delighted in the law of God, longed to keep it; yet the law of sin in my members brought me into captivity. Has it not been so? But now we are made free from its power, by a greater power—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Oh, for more simple faith in the word of God; yea, and also in the Holy Ghost dwelling in us! This verse sums up the whole of chapter 6. It is the principle of reckoning ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Jesus Christ, applied by the power of the Spirit.

Still, many a young reader may have this difficulty in passing through the experience of the utter badness of the flesh, as described in chapter 7. He may say, “ I see how my sins were forgiven me; but to find since that, the old nature I have is so utterly bad; to have found no power in trying to keep the law of God, however much I desired to do so; to find, to my surprise, an evil nature, a law of sin, that held me captive; the law I longed to keep could only curse me; my very nature—sin in the flesh—only did that which I hated and condemned. How, then, can you tell me there is no condemnation?” We will look at the next verse for an answer.

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: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Here is what the law could not do, and what God has done. The law could not deliver from either the guilt or power of sin. It was weak, either

to deliver or help man in the flesh, for the flesh was sin; and if it acted under law, it could only transgress, even in one quickened and longing for deliverance.

Now just here arises this question: Is deliverance a matter of apprehension of truth, or mere knowledge of truth? Deliverance from Egypt answers that question. Like a quickened soul, they believed the word of God through Moses and Aaron (Exod. 3:7-10; 4:30-31), and they longed for deliverance (chap. 5:1-3), and they, as it were, passed through the Romans (chap. 7) in the brick-kilns of Egypt, and became more Wretched than ever, and not delivered at all. Was it, then, increase of knowledge, or apprehension, that delivered them? Did the knowledge of the promises in Exod. 6 deliver them? Did the further knowledge of the providential favor of God deliver them, in chapters 7 to 11? Not in the least. They were delivered truly on the ground of redemption, but it was by the power of God.

Now there was no power in the holy law of God to deliver, its only prerogative was to curse the guilty. In Rom. 8:2, then, we have the power that has set me free from the law of sin and death. In verse 3 we have the helplessness of the law to deliver through the weakness of the flesh, and then how God has delivered, and the ground on which deliverance is wrought. This part also answers your difficulty—How can there be no condemnation to me, seeing the flesh is so utterly vile? “God sending his own Son.” Just as when all had failed to deliver from Egypt, then the lamb is to be put up, and slain; the Israelite, though not yet delivered, was completely sheltered by the blood. So the ground of deliverance here, is “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or, a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh.” Not only delivered for our iniquities, and raised again for our justification, as we have already seen; but the atoning death of the sent Son of God for sin—the very root. Thus now, both sins and sin having been condemned, judged, there is therefore nothing, positively nothing, left to condemn. Thus, on the ground of the atoning work of the Son, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives complete deliverance. And as deliverance from Egypt was being brought out of one place, or condition, in bondage, into another in liberty; so the believer is, by the Spirit of life, brought out of one place, or condition, called “in the flesh,” into another place, or condition, called “in Christ;” sin having been perfectly judged, by the Holy Son of God being made sin for us. And this, not that we should continue in bondage, but be free, delivered, that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Israel were in bondage then, now they were free, delivered, to serve Jehovah. So we, after we were quickened, were still in bondage to the flesh, or under law. Now we have learned the utter badness of the flesh, and our powerlessness, and no longer seek its improvement. We are no longer in it, but in Christ, made free by the Spirit. We are now to walk after the Spirit, and the Spirit will act in us in power, on the ground of the work of Christ.

The flesh is given up by those “who walk not after the flesh.” Another position is taken by those who walk “after the Spirit.” There are, so to speak, two parties. “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” (vs. 5). The one is death, the other is life. And, further, the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (vs. 7). Then it follows that they that are on that ground, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God.

Have you, dear young believer, come to that conclusion—that your old nature, the flesh, sin, is utterly incapable of pleasing God? It is a root that only bears evil, however you seek to improve it. It is only enmity against God. Do not listen to that abominable sentiment, that lust is not sin, unless you commit it in act. Sin is the very root of lust, as we see in chapter 7:8. No, this very root had to be judged, and the infinite sacrifice was for sin. “ For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor. 5:21.) On this ground alone we are delivered from the guilt and condemnation due to our sin, the flesh; and on this ground we are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Here comes in a deeply interesting question. When, and how, may we conclude, or know, that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? This is a very important question for both young and old believers. Let us look at it most carefully.

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Chapter 7:7 If left to ourselves, even when there is the new life, the new, holy nature implanted, we should naturally turn to the law, and place ourselves under it. This is always the case where the Holy Ghost is not known. And it is remarkable, in these verses, that the Holy Spirit is not once named. As we have said, there are few that do not now pass through this experience; and those who have got deliverance can look back, and see the great profit they derived from this exercise of heart.

The first thing, then, we learn is this—that the law is not sin; it is by it we learn what sin is. The law found the root. “For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” When the new nature was given, the spirituality of the law was felt. A man without the new nature would say, Lust is not sin, unless you commit the very sin in transgression. But when the law comes home into the conscience, it detects the lust, and I say, Why, that is sin. Yes, the very lust is sin; that is, the nature is sin.

Verse 8. And that nature, being sin, takes occasion by the commandment to work in me all manner of desire for that which is forbidden.

“For, without the law, sin was dead.” It was inactive. Forbid a child to go into the garden, at once he desires to go; and, if will be at work, he goes. Now, not only may the nature be inactive, but, verse 9, “For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” You never met a person, before he was quickened, but that person thought he was alive, and could do, and live. Yes, he says, I thought I was alive without the law once. Ask a natural man, Are you saved? He will reply, I do not know; I hope so. I attend my place of worship, and I am doing the best I can, and I hope I shall be in heaven at last. Oh, yes, he says, I am alive. There is not a thought in his soul that he is lost. Not a word does he confess of the least need of a Substitute on the cross. And if you will but ask, even professing Christians, you will get, where you least expect it, such an answer.

Now, the moment a soul is born of God, all this is changed. Why, he says, how is this—I have a nature that desires the very thing God forbids? He turns to the word of God’s law, and he dies to all hope of being in the flesh what he thought he was. “And I died.” Yes, now we have the hard death of the old “I.” He longs for holiness, turns to the commandments ordained to life: those who do it shall live in it (see Eze. 20:11), but he finds it unto death. He finds sin has the mastery, and uses the very commandment to slay him. Do not forget that this is “when we were in the flesh.” How the last hope of goodness in the flesh was driven out of us! Verse 12. The law was of God; it was not bad or sin; it was “holy, and just, and good.” Life was not death to me; but sin, that it might appear sin. Oh, to find that I—my nature—as a child of Adam, was

only sin, and that by the commandment it might, and did, become exceeding sinful.

Verse 14. Deeper still. “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under Yes, the law justly demands righteousness. And what do I find in me? “I am carnal, sold under sin.” Do you know this? Have you learned it as a helpless slave of sin? That is all that the old “I,” the flesh, is—to hate the thing I do; to find I have no power to do the thing I would; and all the while to own that the law is good, and only requires of me what is good.

Verse 17. “Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” This is a discovery. I learn that there is a nature, sin, whilst in me, yet I can look upon it as distinct from myself, the new “I.” Well, I say, What, then, is there in that old nature, the old “I”? There is not bit of good in me, that is, my flesh, or old nature.

Verse 18. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) there dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

This is very humbling, to find in myself, as a child of Adam, no power whatever to do good—yea, the very opposite. “For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not that do I.” This is the true character of the old nature, even when the new nature desires to do good, and to be holy—yea, when the new nature is holy, as born of God. So that it is not the new nature, the new “I,” that does evil, as the old nature is doing the very thing the new nature condemns.

Verse 20. “Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it”—no longer what I am, as a new creature—”but sin that dwelleth is me.” Then there are two principles, or natures, in the man born of God. The principle of the depraved nature is called a law.

Verse 21. “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” This is the fixed principle of the old nature—”when I would do good, evil is present with me.” Yea, you say, that is just what I have found, to any deep sorrow; indeed, it has made me almost conclude that I cannot have been born of God at all. Those who are not born of God never discover themselves to be half as bad as you find your old self to be. But do not the very next words prove that you are born of God—that is, that you have a new “I,” or new nature?

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” Surely this proves, beyond a doubt, that there are two natures; for how could the old nature, which is sin, delight in the law of God? But it is so. “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” Well, you say, it seems like a contradiction. That is exactly what the two natures are to each other; yes, in direct contradiction to that inward man which delights in the law of God. It says:

Verse 23. “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Thus, to deny the two natures in a man born again, is to deny the plain teaching of the word of God. Did not Jesus say, “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit?” Thus it is a wholly new birth, new nature, new creation, that is of the Spirit, and is spirit. That which is born of a sinful flesh, or nature, is, remains what it is—flesh or sin. And here we learn, if under law—that is, if we are on the ground of the flesh, under law for its improvement, as thousands are—then we find, in the war of the two natures, that we are brought into “captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” It is a terrible fact, but the utter badness of our old nature must be learned practically, if we do not believe what God says about it. But if all this be the case, a man born of God, under law, not knowing the distinction of the two natures, must be extremely wretched, if sincere, and earnestly longing for holiness and righteousness of life. That is just what we find.

Verse 24. “ wretched man that I am.” And it is now no longer, Who shall help me to improve the flesh? but, “who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Yes, self, the old man, the body of this death, must be given up. We must have a Deliverer, and that Deliverer is Christ.

Verse 25. “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Few words, but, oh, what a glorious deliverance and victory! After arriving at the full discovery of my utter helplessness, and the unchangeable badness of the old nature, the eye is now lifted up to Christ, and the heart swells up in the full joy of thankfulness. This deliverance will be more fully explained in the next chapter.

There is one mistake often made here, against which we must most carefully guard. It is often said, or implied, that what we have seen as to the old nature, the flesh, the law of sin in the members, is all quite true of a believer before he gets deliverance; but after that, it is changed, or eradicated—at all events, greatly improved, suddenly or gradually sanctified, &c, and that there is no such evil nature left in the delivered, or sanctified, saints. Is this so, or is it not so? Let the very next words, after our deliverance and thanksgiving, determine this important question.

Verse 25. “So, then, with the mind [or, new man] I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh [the old nature], the law of sin.” We are no longer on the ground of the flesh, as alive under law, seeking to improve the flesh—no longer in the flesh. But that the flesh remains in the delivered saint is stated in the strongest possible way—in the very person who, with the new mind, or nature, serves the law of God. But the flesh, and the law of sin, still remain in me. We may cavil, and reason, and ridicule, but here is the truth of scripture, and what every believer finds to be true. So that we need preserving, spirit, soul, and body, blameless.

Place that old nature under law, try to find some good in it, and immediately our experience will be, as here described.

One question more, before we leave this subject. How is it that so many Christians are in this experience? Simply because, though born of God, they are, through false teaching, or defective teaching, placed under law, and have never known the true character of deliverance. Let us, then, in the next place, inquire what that deliverance is.

Things New and Old: Volume 27, Romans, Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the: No. 11 - Chapter 7

Chapter 7:1. We have now in detail that from which we have been delivered in chapter vi. And it is impossible to understand this chapter unless we see this order. The truth of chapter 6 must have its full place before we attempt to understand chapter vii. The apostle had said, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” This is a very important statement, and the apostle

now explains how we have (that is, those who were under it) been delivered. He then, describes the condition of a quickened soul under law before deliverance. This he does very fully, and finally takes up with joy the theme of deliverance, thus leading on to chapter 8.

First, then, how were those under law delivered from it? “Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” This fact shows the importance of the truth already brought out—identification with the death of Christ; reckoning ourselves dead with Him, and alive to God. For if those once alive under it were still alive under it, they must be responsible to fulfill its every jot and tittle, or it must curse them. Thus Christianity in that case would be valueless. Man would be still under the curse. The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth. His responsibility to law only ends in death. The law as to marriage proves this: death alone dissolves the tie of responsibility. Whilst one husband lives the wife cannot be married to another. She would be an adulteress. This was self-evident to all who knew the law.

In like manner the believer cannot, so to speak, have two husbands. He cannot be alive in the flesh, married to the law (under law), and also be married to Christ. No doubt men say this must be so, that you must have both the law and Christ; but we are not explaining what men say, but scripture. God tells us we cannot have Christ and law. And as a wife is only delivered from the old husband by death, so we can only be delivered from the old husband, the principle of law, by death. Now whilst it is true we have not actually died, yet mark the importance of the truth we have learned in chapter 6 to reckon ourselves dead, identified with Christ in death. Only now this is seen in its special bearing on law in the first place.

Verse 4. “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Thus they were as dead to the law by the body of Christ as though they had actually died. They pass from under its dominion into another entirely new state. They have no more to say to the old husband; but enter into a new relationship, married to a new husband, to one raised up from among the dead, even Christ.

But would not great teachers tell you this is antinomianism, to be dead to the law, to have no more to say to it, or it to you? this would lead to bring forth fruit unto sin. It would be dreadful, say they. But what does God say as to this? He says all this is “that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” This is perfectly in keeping with what has gone before. “For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” To be under the law, is to be under its curse, for all are proved guilty. (Chap. 3) But now we are one with the risen Christ, all sins forgiven, sin judged, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.

Verse 5. “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.” This verse determines the character of the teaching that follows. You cannot say, When we were in the flesh, unless you have been delivered from that state. You could not say, When we were in London, unless you have left it. It is very important to understand this. It is often asked, Is this part of chapter 7 the proper experience of a Christian? Certainly not, or it would not have said, When we were in the flesh. Yet it is, as we shall soon see, the experience through which most, if not all, Christians have passed. Then again, it is said to be the experience of the unconverted. Neither can this be; for they do not delight in the law of God after the inward man. (Ver. 22.) It is evidently the experience of a quickened soul, born of God, having a new nature that delights in the law of God after the inward man; but one who is still under law, and has not yet learned what deliverance by death is.

It would be true to say, the experience described from verse 5 to 24 is the wretched experience of every person born of God, if put under law. And when we remember how many Christians are in that very condition, there is no wonder that so many are thus miserable. We must understand then the words, “For when we were in the flesh” to mean whilst we were under the first husband, the law. The law can only have to say to man as alive. It so regarded man, and commanded and required obedience, as regarding the one under it alive in the flesh. Once dead, all commands and requirements cease. You cannot tell a dead man either to love God or his neighbor; but being alive in a nature which can only sin, the command can only bring out transgression. The law might require righteousness; but as man was not righteous but guilty, it became thus a ministration of judgment and death. The christian position however is this, to reckon himself dead as to the flesh, and alive to God. A wholly new life to God. The whole subject will be greatly simplified if we keep these two things distinct: the old life or old nature, called the flesh—the ground on which man was tested under law; and the new life, or the new nature, which the believer has, even the very eternal life of the risen Christ. We have seen how we have been delivered from the slavery of sin by being dead to the one and alive in the other. It is not that sin is eradicated, but we are dead to it.

Verse 6. Now it is this same principle of death, and resurrection-life in Christ, applied to the question of law. It is not that the law is dead, or abolished in itself, but we are dead to it: “But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

The law did produce all this truly miserable experience, but now we are delivered from the law. Can you truthfully say so? It is most important to have this question settled before we examine that wretchedness from which we have been delivered. By the death and resurrection of Christ we are not only fully justified from our sins, but we have passed from one condition of sin and death, into an entirely new condition; yea, new creation of life and righteousness. From what we were to what Christ is. We stood with Adam in sin and death; we now stand united, one with Christ in resurrection, where He is and what He is. “As he is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17.) His very life is communicated to us. This is as real to faith now, as it will be shortly to sight. A new creation in Christ Jesus.

It must be seen that this is full, complete justification from sins and sin, and deliverance from all claims of law. Again we ask, Are you thus delivered? There must be this complete deliverance to serve in newness of life. Have you thus passed from the flesh—the Adam state, to Christ? Can you say, Yes, it is now all Christ? Do you say, ‘The flesh is still there, and it is sin? That is true. And the law is still there. Quite true.’

And I have sinned. Yes, that also is true. But what did Christ die for? Was it not for both your sins and sin? And are you sinning now, or delivered from sin? We shall, however, see all this more fully brought out in chapter 8. We only press this point: it is a delivered soul that can understand the awful experience described in what follows. The unconverted or the deceived Pharisee knows nothing of this bitter experience. It is ever when the new, holy nature has been implanted, and with it the deep soul-longing for true holiness; and then to find no power in the flesh to do that which we long to do. Yea, the law of sin and death is like a slave master, and there is no power to escape. And the more we attempt to keep the law, addressed to men as alive in the flesh, the deeper the wretchedness of doing the very things the new and holy nature hates. Yes, that which would give no trouble to one unconverted, or rather to one not born of God, fills the quickened soul with intense

misery.

Is this your state? If quickened and under law, we are sure it is in some degree. Oh, how much of the excitement and effort of this day is to drown and help you to forget this your misery. Well, do not despair; we believe every one born of God passes more or less through this; and often those who pass through the deepest are those chosen to glorify God the most. We do not question that both equally mistake the chapter, who make it the experience of an unconverted sinner, and on the other hand, the proper experience of a Christian. Let us then look at it carefully.

Things New and Old: Volume 27, Romans, Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the: No. 10 - Chapter 6

Chapter 6:12. “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

Far be the thought that ye should practice sin, that grace may abound. To live in sin is the very opposite of death to sin, as seen above; dead with Christ, as professed in baptism, is surely not to live in sin. And now, also, alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. a Let not, therefore, sin reign in your mortal body.” He does not say sin no longer exists. He does not say you are to reckon it extirpated. If an enemy no longer existed in a country, there would be no need to say, Do not let that enemy reign.

Neither could you say, “that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof,” if there were no sinful lusts to subdue and to resist. But we are not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, “but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead,” &c. Yes, the very principle of a holy walk is our death with Christ, and our being alive unto God. It is not for a moment to attain unto this state; but, reckoning ourselves thus dead, and alive again, we are so to walk. Conflict is clearly recognized, but there is deliverance.

Verse 14. “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.”

Thus, having life in Christ, we can now look at sin, at our old sinful self, as an enemy, but an enemy that shall not have dominion. What a deliverance this is! To one that knows the utter vileness of the old nature, no words can sufficiently express the greatness of deliverance from the reign of sin. There may be sudden temptation—yea, failure—but sin shall not have dominion—it shall not reign. But why shall not sin reign? “For ye are not under the law, but under grace.” The whole history of Christendom, and the history of every individual believer, proves the truth of this statement, and also its opposite. Just in proportion as the free favor of God, through Christ Jesus, is known and enjoyed, is the deliverance from the slavery of sin, and we can live a holy life. The law can give no power to those under it, but can only curse them.

The moment you make the favor of God to be conditional, whether it be concerning the law of Moses, or the precepts of the gospel, you begin at the wrong end, and will soon find nothing but misery and doubt. You will say, I do not keep the commands of God as I ought; or, I do not love Christ as I ought; am I a Christian at all? Now, is all that law, or grace? Clearly it is law. And the word says, sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under that principle, but under grace. There surely can be no holiness of life, unless the heart be perfectly free, in the unbounded, free, unconditional favor of God. Has He taken me up, an ungodly sinner, who deserved hell? Has He, in pure, unmerited love, given His Son to die for our sins? Has He raised Him from the dead for our justification? Has He given us eternal redemption through His blood? Have we thus peace with God, according to all that God is? Are we identified with Christ in all the merit of His death; and more, alive in Him to God? And all this absolutely free grace, the grace of Him who changes not? And now I am alive to God, I can reckon myself, my old man, dead. And thus I am delivered from myself, to live to God. And all unchanging grace to me, then I am not on the ground of law, or conditions for life, or salvation, or deliverance, but absolutely under grace, free and eternal. Oh, now I am free to serve the Lord, in real separation from, and abhorrence of, evil. Oh, glorious truth! sin shall not have dominion.

No doubt, dear young believer, many will tell you that such doctrine as that will lead you to sin as your old nature likes. “What, then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid!” or, far be the thought. They who talk so have never known what the grace of God is, or what true liberty is—not liberty to sin, but liberty from sin. Mark, these words are not to such as are trying to experience that they are dead to sin, or dead with Christ, and alive to God. They have made the profession in baptism that they are dead and buried with Christ, identified with Him in death. They reckon themselves dead unto sin, and thus are justified from sin, and alive to God. Oh, wondrous, almost forgotten, truth! Death to sin—the only deliverance from sin. But what deliverance would there be without life in Christ to God? How can you walk in newness of life, if you have not got newness of life? If your old nature were placed under law, then, surely, sin would have dominion. But because God has given you a new life—and that His free gift—and now placed you in His own unchanging, boundless grace, “What, then, shall we sin [that is, practice sin] because we are not under law, but under grace?” Far be the thought.

We are quite sure all who would put you under law, have never yet truly known what the grace of God is. And do not forget that all this shows the connection there is between grace and practical holiness, or righteousness of walk. This is clear in the next verse.

Verse 16. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

Once we were the slaves of sin—”without strength.” Sin, as a slave-owner, was complete master. We have been redeemed freely from that condition, and delivered, by the death of Jesus, from that old master. It was then sin unto death. Which master do we obey, sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness? Are we alive to God, that we should obey the old slave-master, sin? Is that the purpose of the grace of God? Far from it. Now, can you apply verse 17 to yourself? Can you, with thankfulness, own the full truth, “that ye were the slaves of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you?” Now, do not shirk this point.

A slave is compelled to do what his owner bids him. He has no power to resist him, though he may hate the thing, he cannot refuse to do it. Have you known this awful slavery of sin? Had sin the mastery? Did you do the things you hated, and had you no power to escape that cruel master? God be thanked, we can own it was so; and, God be thanked, He met us there. And what is that form of doctrine to which we were delivered? Was it not death with Jesus, as our baptism typified? Have you obeyed it? Identification with Christ in death, and in Him alive from the dead. Then the answer is this:

Verse 18. “Being, then, made free from sin, ye became the servants [or, slaves] of righteousness.”

Yes, this is how you changed masters, through death, from sin to righteousness; and all this in perfect grace. “Whilst under sin, free from righteousness; now servants of righteousness, and free from the slavery of sin. Yes, sin and righteousness are looked at as two masters. The Christian is perfectly free from the old tyrant. “So now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.”

It is quite true man used the very law which God gave to prove his guilt, to set up his own self-righteousness. And others may abuse the grace of God as license to sin. Yet it is most clear, that the object the Holy Ghost has in unfolding these truths of infinite grace, is, that we may, as alive to God, yield our members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

Verse 20. “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are ashamed? For the end of those things is death.”

Yes, that was our condition—slaves of sin. And, oh, how deep the shame upon us in all the terrible fruits of that slavery. But what a change!

Verse 22. “But now, being made free from sin [that is, from the slavery, not from conflict], and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

We must carefully note, there is no thought here, either of improvement of the sinful nature, or of perfection of that nature. No, death is not improvement. But the greatest of all mistakes about this chapter, is, to suppose that freedom from sin is a matter of attainment. It is by death—the death of Christ—and that is not our attainment. And reckoning ourselves dead with Him is not attainment. It is not either by serving God that we become free from sin; that would be human merit. Is it not the exact opposite? Read the words carefully: “But now, being made free from sin, and become the servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness,” &c.

Thus every Christian is made free from sin? and, “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” (Ver. 18.) It does not say, Ye became the servants of righteousness, and then ye were made free from sin. There can be no true fruit unto holiness until we are made free from sin. These great truths will occupy us? if the Lord will, in chapter vii. In the meantime these are true, solemn facts!

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, in Jesus Christ our Lord.” What a gift! Oh, how few believe this! We have no hand in meriting this, or it would not be the gift of God.

Things New and Old: Volume 27, Romans, Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the: No. 9 - Chapter 6

Chapter 6:1. This, then, is the question, if grace has abounded over sins and sin—over all our iniquities which we have committed, and over the sin we have inherited, and where sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded—is it true, then, that abounding grace leads to continuance in the practice of sin? From that day to this, the rejecters of the gospel have always said it is so. If you are completely justified, not by your own works, but in and by the subsisting, unchanging righteousness of God in Jesus Christ our Lord raised from the dead—then that implies you hold that you may be careless, and indeed may practice sin!

Now what says the Holy Ghost by the apostle as to this? “What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Far be the thought; “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” Here, then, is that principle of deliverance from sin so greatly ridiculed—deliverance from sin by death. Neither shall we find any other deliverance from sin in the word of God. For centuries, many sincere souls sought deliverance by fastings, and seclusion in monasteries. Many sincere souls now seek it by efforts after a false perfection of the flesh. But here is the full truth of God—deliverance from sin by death.

Only mark, it is not the future death of our bodies, should we die, but this—”How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” What does this mean, “we that are dead to sin?” Do you say, “It may mean those who have attained to perfection?” Is there such a thought? Nay, in order to show how assuredly this applies to all Christians, the apostle says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Ver. 3.) So that he is careful to show that this principle of deliverance from sin by death applies to all who have been truly baptized unto the death of Christ. Nothing could be more plain, and yet nothing is less known. It ought surely to be well understood, for the apostle says, “Know ye not?”

Do you understand, reader, this great practical truth of deliverance from sin? Do you say, as an authorized teacher said to us a few days ago? “We are all sinners, and unfit for heaven; we must seek in every way to improve our sinful nature; but I fear it will never, in this world, be quite fit for heaven.” Fit for heaven! Is a corpse fit for heaven? It is dead, it is too loathsome for heaven or earth. It must be buried. Do you bury it, to make it suddenly, or gradually, perfect? It is a mass of corruption; there is no life in it, not a particle, nor can there be, until the putting forth of the power of God in resurrection.

Is it not so as to our whole moral being? Our neighbor, sincere as he is, is spending his life in seeking to improve himself—the flesh, by sacraments and ritual, he fears he will never be able to do it so as to be fit for heaven. How blind to that which even his baptism should teach him. The fact is, we do not believe God, that we are as bad as He says we are; so bad, so vile, so loathsome, so offensive, so dead to all that is good, in the flesh as children of Adam. Have you ever said, “I am only fit to be buried out of sight. Yes, bury me, bury me out of sight. I am not fit for heaven, I am not fit for earth. Oh, bury me out of the sight of God, and out of my own sight?” Here is water, said the eunuch, what doth hinder?

Mark well, then, the deliverance from sin is not the improvement of self, or an evil nature—the flesh, but “we are buried with him by baptism into death.” We are not baptized unto the work of the Spirit in us, but unto His death, who died for us, and rose again. The death then, that delivers from sin is not a death unto sin we attain to, but the death of Christ on the cross, and our identification with it—”buried with him.” And you will notice, there is no thought of baptism communicating life. Baptism is unto death, and life in the risen Christ is beyond it. For Christ not only died, was actually dead, but He is “raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.” How glorious the new creation! Christ, the beginning of that new creation, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. “Even so we should walk in newness of life.” Not only old

things are passed away, and all become new, but we are in that new creation by the glory of the Father. “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” The resurrection side of this subject is brought out more fully in Col. 2, only here let us note, that baptism unto His death is the chief point to show what all Christians should know—the truth of deliverance by death.

Verse 6. “Knowing this, that our old man is [or, has been] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [annulled], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [or, justified] from sin.” Now the question is this: Is the old man crucified when the believer attains to perfection, as it is called—that then the old nature ceases to exist, or is all turned good? There is no thought in this text of its being a state peculiar to some Christians, and not the state of others. It is the very truth of our christian position. Knowing this that our old man has been crucified. When? In our experience? That is not the thought here, but, “has been crucified with him.” Surely that was on the cross. Not only He, in infinite love, bare our sins on the cross, but our old man was fully judged there too. It is indeed made good to our souls’ experience when we become identified with this crucified Jesus, of which baptism is a figure. Are we thus identified with the death of Jesus? Not the improvement or restoration of our old nature, but can we look back to the cross, and say, There I was crucified with Christ? All that of which I might boast had to be crucified. Most assuredly this was so, that the body of sin might be annulled, made powerless; for a dead man is powerless, or he would not be dead.

We have seen how God justifies His people from their sins by the blood of Jesus. Now we see how He justifies them from sin, the root, or nature. “For he that is dead is justified from sin” (margin). Sins are forgiven, and now sin cannot be imputed to him that is dead, he is justified from sin.

But there would be no power for a holy life in merely being dead to sin. What true power is we shall find when we reach Rom. 8:2; only we must carefully notice, that we are as truly identified with Christ risen, or more so, than we were identified with Him in death.

Verses 8-10. “Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” The one follows the other. And this forever. “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” He has nothing more to say to sin, or sin to Him; He was here once, and bore its utmost curse; He was made sin, or a sin-offering. What sin? His own? He had none. Sin, our sin, has nothing more to say to Him, or He to it. It is all gone from the sight of God. He who was once under it, even unto death, now liveth to God. Oh, precious, soul-sustaining truth! And sin can have no more to say to Him, and no more to say to us. Once identified with Him in death—yea, more than identified, alive in Him for evermore. Oh, my soul, dost not thou believe God?

Verse 11. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord.” Is it, then, that the old nature, or sin, is eradicated, dead? Does it no longer exist in the believer? There is no such thought here. If it were really so, really dead, we should have no need to reckon it so. Did you ever hear that a corpse was reckoned dead? We are so identified with Christ, that God wishes us to reckon ourselves dead with Him, and alive in Him. He wishes us to treat the old nature as if it were dead unto sin, and alive in Christ risen from the dead; only, as we said, the latter ever goes beyond the former. For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (the word “through,” in this verse 11, should be u in”). We have peace with God, as to our sins, through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. But God, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ, has also raised us up in Him; so that we are alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, nothing suits Satan’s purpose more than to set all this aside; both the finished work of Christ, by which we are justified from our sins—our identification with His death unto sin, and also the work of God, in raising us up in Christ, and thus delivering us from sin, alive unto God. Yes, instead of the plain truth of this scripture, deliverance from sin has been held out as a future attainment of the believer, attained only by some. This is the root of self-righteous perfection in the flesh.

Just what God says to us in these verses gives the only principle of deliverance from sin. All other methods are mere deception. But you say, “I find my old nature is not dead as to fact.” Just so; but you are to reckon yourself dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Much that follows we shall find to be the unfolding of this all-important principle. It will affect every step of our walk in this world. How ought we to walk to show our identification with a crucified Christ? Yes, we are crucified with Him. You may know many who walk as if they were dead to the things of God and His Christ, and fully alive to the world that crucified Jesus. May God use these solemn truths in sanctifying power to our souls!

Things New and Old: Volume 33, Are You Reconciled to God?

How earnestly did the apostle beseech men to be reconciled to God! He says, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor. 5:20, 21.) Now some may suppose that reconciliation is not like justification; that justification is a present thing to the believer, as may be clearly seen in Rom. 4 and 5, but that reconciliation, in its completeness, is a future thing. This would take away all present enjoyment of being reconciled to God. If we turn to the scriptures we shall find to our joy, that both are alike now.

First, as to justification—all is of God. It was He who sent His Son. It was God who raised Him from the dead. Is it not thus that we are accounted righteous before God, believing “on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification? Therefore, BEING justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now, dear reader, if you believe God, is it not clear that you are both justified from all things, and also that you are reconciled, that you have peace with God? Oh, let not Satan rob you of this divine certainty. For the strengthening of your faith, read four verses in which you will find justification and reconciliation equally certain to you, and equally a present thing. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation.” (Rom. 5:8-12.)

Now what care the Holy Ghost has taken to show us that both are alike certain; both now: “being justified by faith:” “being now justified;” “much more being reconciled” All is of God; we joy in God. Not only shall we joy in God, when all that grieves and hinders is passed away, but

we now joy in God, not through anything in us, but through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. We joy in God: He has received the Holy One who made atonement for our sins, and we receive the result—the peace He has made by the blood of the cross: the reconciliation. Mark, He has met the whole question of our guilt, our sins, “our offenses;” and we are reconciled to God in perfect peace and righteousness—righteousness of God.

I do not ask, Do you assent to these great foundation doctrines of God’s word? but are you reconciled to God, so that you joy in God? Do not say that this is inferior truth; you want the gold. Such a craving would indicate that you have not the enjoyment of present peace, reconciliation, joy in God.

We will now turn to another scripture. “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.” (Col. 1:20-22.)

Oh, doubting one, is not this present? Look not at self, look at Him who hath done it all. We were alienated by wicked works: He hath reconciled us by that peace which He has made by the blood of His cross. And what He has done, and what we are as reconciled to God through His death, shall certainly be manifested, even as it is now in His sight, But more as to this shortly.

So far as we have gone, can you say, Through the mercy of God, I have this perfect peace with Him, according to all that He is? You may have struggled hard to find something in yourself as the basis of all this. You may have sought to attain to a righteous state first in. yourself before you can have reconciliation—as millions seek: some by works, and an infused, inherent righteousness in us. You may say, It may be true in some uncertain way; but how can I have perfect reconciliation to God, and joy in God, whilst I find sin in me? Must not that be entirely eradicated by some means, and righteousness take its place in me? Do not you see, perplexed reader, that is the old question? Is it to be our righteousness in us; or the righteousness of God? Is our state to be the ground of our reconciliation—what we are; or is what God has done, and what God is revealed to be, through the work, of Christ for us, the only basis of our reconciliation to Him? That is the question of infinite moment.

The Council of Trent teaches it is our state; we become righteous by infused, inherent righteousness. Surely you do not wish to become a Romanist. Others suppose they reach this righteous (or holy) state by an effort of faith, sin entirely displaced by holiness. Others, again, think it cannot be reached until death—not many, I trust—but some, that it cannot be reached until the coming of the Lord. Now, do you think any of these theories would give the soul perfect peace with God, joy in God? Never. I do not believe any person, on any of these principles, knows in his own soul what reconciliation to God is, so as to joy in God. As surely as you turn to any of these, you will sooner or later find darkness to your soul. It is not righteousness of God. It is not what Christ is before the face of God.

Still you say, “You do not relieve me. You do not show me clearly how I can be reconciled to God now, and yet have a sinful nature which I abhor. How can I enjoy peace with God, whilst sin is still not eradicated and righteousness has taken its place?” We will turn to the chapter we first quoted, 2 Cor. 5 It is a very solemn chapter, and this is a question of the utmost moment.

You will notice that the deep enjoyment of divine certainty, even in the presence of death, showed the same peace. (Vers. 1-9.) Then the fact that we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. Are we justified? It will be manifested then. Are we reconciled? It will be manifested then. Blessed thoughts! Hence we are perfectly free to labor for Christ, and He will give us each our reward. We know the terror of the Lord to such as are not justified and reconciled, and thus we persuade men.

Only mark, that we are made manifest unto God, We have to do with God: and if we know that we are reconciled to God, all is as clear now to faith, as it will be then to sight. Still it is most important to think of being manifested there. Are you quite happy about that?

There is also new creation brought before us as a present thing: “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, a new creature [or new creation].” But is this present? Yes, “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,” &c. Notice, that present certainty as to reconciliation, is quite as strong as to justification, as put in Romans. Thank God. There is not a word about your own state as, or in, the sense of your own righteousness, or righteousness infused into you, or displacing sin in you by any of the means named above. Be it standing or state, it is all of God. He sees you in Christ, a new creation. Oh, fellow believer, the Holy Ghost declares that God hath reconciled you to Himself. Will you doubt Him? Surely it is only as we believe God that we can proclaim the true gospel, and beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, to cease their fighting and rebellion.

But there is still the difficulty of sin in me. Does God reconcile my sinful nature to Himself? Surely not! Now mark the last verse, “For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might he made [or become] the righteousness of God in him.” Compare this with another scripture: “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or by a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh.” (Rom. 8:3.) In both places, all is of God. If the Holy Son of God was thus made sin, a sacrifice for sin, as well as bare our sins in His own body on the tree, then both our sins, and sin the root, have been dealt with by God, in the blessed Person of His Son, so that before Him there is nothing left to condemn. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Mark, it is not in us, in ourselves, but in Him. He has been made sin; He has endured its awful judgment; and in Him we are a new creation. In Him we are the righteousness of God. In Him, whiter than snow. In Him, the believer is a justified and a reconciled person. And all is of God.

Do you say, I have had the fear that I am in a condition here in which sin and the flesh are taken account of? You could not make a more fatal mistake. Your sin was taken account of when Jesus cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” To say that it is again taken account of would be to deny the righteousness of God. Your sin has been judged: there is nothing left to condemn. If you are a believer, this is as true of you as of the believer 1800 years ago. Why should you doubt? And will all this be displayed in us when in the glory? Certainly; that is, we shall be the display of the righteousness of God as in Him. Nothing short of this would satisfy the perfect love of God to us. So that as to judgment, all fear is gone for the child of God. What we are now, such we shall be presented, “holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.” Oh, take care that no one moves you away from this certain hope of the gospel. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we shall be like Him when He appears. (1 John 3) Oh, how blessed to be manifested, justified, and reconciled, without spot before God. But do not look within at your own state, or your own righteousness for all this, but at the testimony of God to His risen Son at His right hand. Think what it cost Him, that you might become the righteousness of God in Christ. If an unconverted soul should read this, I entreat you to cease your

striving; be ye reconciled to God. The work is done; peace is made by the blood of the cross; Jesus risen from the dead, shows His hands and His side, and gays, Peace be unto you.

C. S.

Things New and Old: Volume 27, Romans, Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the: No. 8 - Chapter 5

Verse 12. We now come to the question of sin, or the two heads of the two races: the one head, Adam, by whom sin entered into the world; the other head, Christ, by whom grace has abounded over sin.

Many souls are greatly perplexed who find, though they believe their sins are forgiven, yet they find the root, sin, in the flesh. Much of this confusion arises from want of carefully noticing the distinction between sins and sin, as in this epistle. As we have seen, verse 11 closes the question of sins. Verse 12 takes up sin. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Thus there are two proofs of the origin of evil: sin entered into the world by one man. Of the whole race of mankind, all sin, and all die. What absolute consistency in the word of God, and with facts! And this has been found to be the case, whether man was placed under law, or without law. After sin had come in, and man fell, the law was not given for two thousand five hundred years. “For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed [or, put to account] when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.’’ (Vers. 13, 14.) That is, they had not transgressed a given law; yet there was death, the proof that sin was there. Sin and death then came into the world by its head, Adam. Death, then, is not merely the penalty of a broken law; but sin having once come in, death is its result; or, as expressed in the word, “The wages of sin is death.” Now, in contrast with what came in by the creature’s sin, the first head—sin and death—God is pleased to reveal to us what has come in for a new race by the gift of His own Son—righteousness and life. Only the infinite gift must abound over the finite, dreadful as has been the result of that creature’s sin. God could not, in His free favor to us, give a gift that would come short of our need. Hence, the care of the Holy Ghost to show us how that gift of free favor has abounded over the sin, the root of evil, and death, that came in by Adam. “But not as the offense, so also is the free gift [the act of favor]. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man—Jesus Christ—hath abounded unto many.” (Ver. 15.) No doubt the effect of the offense of Adam’s sin on the many, even all his posterity, is great and terrible; and we all belonged to that “many.” Death passed upon all men. Yet if we have passed from death unto life in the risen Head of the new creation, we have now to see how the grace of God, and the gift, by grace, by One—Jesus Christ—hath abounded unto the many in Him.

Verse 16. “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification.” In Adam we see one sin, and the consequences that have flowed from it in judgment. Now look at the free gift. See Jesus, our Substitute: all our iniquities have been made to meet on Him, and this for the very purpose, that we might by faith be justified from them all. And, much more than this, not only justified from all our iniquities by His blood, but He, having died for our offenses, was raised again for our justification.

Let us dwell now on this great fact—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead—and this for the express purpose of our justification—of our complete, abounding justification. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He took to Himself that eternal life He had, and was. He could take it in perfect righteousness, having glorified God; and having redeemed “the many,” according to that glory, He could now communicate to them, to us that same eternal life—and that, a justified life, in righteousness, unchanging, ever-subsisting. It will be very blessed if our souls understand this reigning, subsisting justification of life, though fully admitting that our life, as children of Adam, was forfeited.

Verse 17. “For if by one offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one—Jesus Christ” This is the close of the parenthesis from verse 13. Can anyone deny that death reigns over Adam’s race through sin? Where is the physician that can stay the reign of death? And Jesus says of His many, “and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” Death has positively no claim on those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness. They reign in life by One—Jesus Christ. Nothing can stay its course; none can pluck them out of His hand.

Verse 18. “Therefore, as by the offense of one [or, one offense], judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one [or, by one act of righteousness], the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” The true sense of this verse is, as by one offense judgment toward all men; so, by one act of righteousness, the free gift toward all unto justification of life. That is, as in verse 19, the effect of the two acts—Adam’s sin, and Christ’s obedience unto death on the two “manys”—the two families.

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.” It is, however, of the utmost importance to see that this justification of life is connected with, and results from, His resurrection from the dead. It is not written that He kept the law for our justification, but that God raised Him from the dead for that very purpose—for our justification. It is not, and could not be, our life in the flesh under the law that is justified; that could not be in any way. It is judged, and set aside. The life that we have now before God is the eternal life that has passed through death for us; and everything that the righteous claims of God had against us is fully met by that one death of our Substitute. Christ is our life. Can there be a charge against Him, even as our Substitute? We have, then, through the abounding of grace, a life against which there is, and can be, no charge—therefore a justified life.

If in Adam, or in the flesh, under law, nothing can justify us, or that sinful life. Death and judgment are written upon it. If in Christ, we have a life that reigns, a life completely justified, that nothing can condemn. As to our sins, we are accounted righteous—faith is reckoned as righteousness, and, being justified, we have peace with God. As to our sinful Adam nature, life, and standing, we are no longer in it, but in Christ raised from the dead; and the eternal life we have in Him is justified life—in Him, how completely justified! It is of the utmost importance to lay fast hold of this; completely justified from our sins by Him; and, as in the new creation, completely justified in Him raised from the dead. In both cases it is wholly of God, both by and in Christ Jesus.

Dear young believer, do you know that you are no longer in Adam, or connected with the old things that belong to him? The great point for you to see is this: “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new; and all things are of God.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) What a sad mistake would you make to go back, or cling to, the old things—law and a sinful nature—and suppose that anything would improve the one, or justify you under the other, now passed away! And now mark, your righteousness and life is to you all new, and all of God. What is of God must be perfect. Thus we are perfectly and forever justified in the risen Christ.

Verses 20, 21. Oh, marvelous free favor of God! Do you ask, Why was the law given, if man cannot be justified by it, or if it cannot give a justified life? “ The law entered that the offense might abound.” It may even have been so in your past experience. It may have entered with killing power, and the more you have struggled to keep it, the more the offense has abounded. How you may have struggled to make the flesh holy and the more you have struggled, the more you have failed. “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Do you believe God as to this? Can you now cease from works, and rest in the boundless, free favor of God? “that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign”—yes, and that “ through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” It is not grace alone that reigneth—that would be indifference to sin; neither righteousness alone, or the sinner must be condemned; but grace, through righteousness. Yes, it reigns on, on, unto eternal life.

But if we are constituted righteous by and in Christ, entirely apart from any works of our own, sins being forgiven, and sin not reckoned to us—a question is then raised as to practical righteousness—Shall we continue in the practice of sin? The enemies of the grace of God always raise this question, or put it as a charge, that those who hold the doctrines of the sovereign grace of God? imply that they live in sin that grace may abound. The charge is as common in this day, as it was by the Pharisees in that day, against the apostle. In the next chapter we have his inspired answer to the usual calumny. But rest assured, nothing short of this abounding grace can give rest to the soul.

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Connecting, then, this verse—indeed the first eleven verses—with the last verse in chapter 4, we have three things made sure to us. Being justified, accounted righteous, before God, we have, as to all our sins, peace with God, yet fully recognizing His holiness and righteousness; and this, not through anything we have done, but through our Lord Jesus Christ; peace resulting from the blessed knowledge by faith that all our sins have been put away by the blood of Jesus, so that God can have no charge of guilt against us. We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. As to the past, all is cleared away.

Then, in the second place: “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” We enter by faith into the full, unclouded favor of God. This grace implies the free favor revealed in the redemption we have, being justified freely. This is our happy, abiding place. There we stand. What a wondrous, present peace! We need not say this cannot be enjoyed if we are walking carelessly, or allowing sin in any way.

And in the third place, as to the future, we “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” We do not hope to be justified, or to have peace—these we have—but we hope, with rejoicing, for the glory of God. Is it not joy to our hearts to know that we shall soon be in the scene where all is to the glory of God, all suited to Him; all pure within and without? Yes, sinless purity suited to Him, when He who has redeemed us has come, and taken us to Himself. Can anything give our hearts such joy as this, to be with Him, and like Him?

Verses 3-5. “And not only so” not only have we peace with God, present access into the free favor of God, and the longing hope for His glory, but this enables us to glory in present tribulations also. “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given UNTO US.”

We must notice a very common mistake as to these verses. They are often read as meaning the exact opposite of what they say, as though we must have this experience in order that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts; and if we pray much, and are very diligent in patience, experience, and hope, that then we may hope that the Holy Spirit will be given us. No words can tell how utterly wrong all this is. The Holy Ghost is given to us because Jesus has finished the work of redemption; and He being now glorified, we are sealed by the Spirit, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Thus, to suppose that the Holy Ghost will be given because of any efforts, or experience, or devotedness of our own, is to set aside the perfect work of Christ. No, it is the very opposite; all this blessed patient experience is because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

Now just suppose you are invited to dine with her Majesty the Queen, and she shows you every possible attention and kindness; and, instead of enjoying that kindness, you propose to those present that you shall pray earnestly that you may have a queen, and a queen that will show you kindness; what would she—what would any one—think of such conduct? Blind and deaf persons alone could make such a mistake. No doubt those who know such a Queen best are most loyal; and those who know that the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them, will love Him most, and have this blessed experience because of the very fact.

What shall we say of the blind and deaf who see nothing of God’s love to us, or its being shed abroad in our hearts; but, turning this precious scripture into legality, think and say that God will love us only as long as we love Him? The more we love God, the more He will love us!

This thought is at the root of a great amount of spurious effort of holiness in man. Many would be startled to see it in plain dress. What would you say to striving to make the flesh holy, in order that God might love it? Are not thousands doing so? Is not this the very thing you have been doing? Have we not practically said the old “I” must be holy, in order that God may love me? Truly the flesh must be subdued, but not even that, that God may love me, but because He has. We will now consider how He has loved us, and in what state we were when He loved us.

Verses 6-11. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Have our hearts been bowed down to this fact? Not only were we guilty, but we had no strength, were without strength to be better. Whilst we were in that very state, infinite love to us was displayed, “in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” There was no other means possible for God to justify the ungodly, but by His Son dying for the ungodly. Yea, it is in this very thing the love of God shines out to us. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Was this on the principle, that the more we love God, the more He will love us? Can there be a greater display

of His love than, “Christ died for us?” Impossible! But this was while we were yet sinners.

Oh, pause and dwell on the love of God to us. Yes, not our love of God first. Not that we loved God, but that He thus loved us. The more this takes possession of our souls, the more shall we love Him.

Do you say, All this may be quite true as to the past; but may we not fail in the future, and then will not God cease to love us? Nay, having known the love of God, may we not at last be left to everlasting wrath? Let us hear the answer of the Holy Ghost to this most solemn question. If God has thus commended His love to us that when we were sinners, Christ died for us, a much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” Mark, being justified by His blood is always immutably the same; it is not having been justified once by His blood, we need to be again, but, being justified, it ever stands. His blood is ever the same before God, having atoned for all our sins. Therefore we are ever justified by His blood. There is no change. Then, not only we are, but “we shall be, saved from wrath through him.” Oh, precious, infinite grace!

And there is still more: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Oh, what pains our Father takes to convince us of His everlasting, unchanging love! Just think—the whole atoning work of reconciling us to God was done by the death of His Son. God was glorified; our sins, all our sins, were transferred to Christ, and borne by Him, when we were enemies! And now we are justified from all things, redeemed to God, made His children. He who reconciled us by His death lives to serve, to wash our feet, to save to the end, by His priesthood and advocacy, should we fail “Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Now this certainty as to the future removes every hindrance to the heart’s full joy in God. Not only have we this certainty of being saved to the end by His life, “but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

This ends the whole question as to our sins. God is absolutely righteous in the way in which He has put them away by the death of His Son. They have been laid on the atoning Substitute, in infinite love to us. when we were enemies, without strength. He who once bare them in His own body is raised from the dead for our justification. We are justified, and we have peace with God. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. The love of God and the righteousness of God are fully revealed and displayed in reconciling us to Himself by the death of His Son. Our future practical deliverance and salvation from wrath are absolutely certain. We have received in our souls the full effect of all this as to our sins. And, oh, wondrous privilege! as to all our sins, we have now unhindered joy in God! Salvation is entirely of God, and we know Him, so as to have joy in God, according to all that He is. We need not say this could not be through the law. If even the law could have justified from past sins—which was impossible—yea who could stand on his own responsibility as to the future, and joy in God? No, it is all through our Lord Jesus Christ, from first to last. Let us beware of letting slip this perfect grace, of letting in the least bit of confidence in the flesh. It is Christ in the future, as Christ in the past.

This verse 11, then, closes the question of sins. The question of sin will come before us in our next, if the Lord will. May the Holy Ghost deepen in all our souls a sense of the infinite grace of our God, so that we may continually joy in Him.

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Let us, then, take the facts in their order. God is speaking to us here. Do we believe Him, that He hath raised up Jesus from among the dead? That alone would not be enough, the devils know that that is so, and many an unconverted man does not doubt that. But mark the next fact: “who was delivered for our offenses.” Had it said, “our transgressions,” it would not have taken in Gentiles, who were not under law; but this is a word that takes in all our sins—under law as transgressions, or sinners without law. Now, do you really believe that Jesus was delivered up to the cruel hands of men, yea, nailed to the cross, and there to bear, and did bear, the wrath of God due to your very sins? Before you read another line, we entreat you to answer that question in the presence of God. Can you look back, and see the Holy One of God bearing your sins, as truly as if there was not another whose sins He bore on the cross? Oh, what a sight, and your Substitute!

And, if we may use the word, not only did His death make the infinite payment that infinite justice demanded, but He “was raised again for our justification.” Thus God has shown His acceptance of the ransom—the death of our Substitute; but He could in no way more distinctly have shown our everlasting discharge, than by raising up the Substitute for our justification. Oh, how wondrous! He was raised up from among the dead, that, believing God, we might justly be reckoned, accounted, righteous before God; our sins as truly borne away, never to be reckoned to us, as though we had never sinned—justified, reckoned righteous before and by God our Father. Thus we have more than promise—all is accomplished fact. All our sins—for they were all alike future then—have been borne by Jesus. “Who was delivered for our offenses.” God has raised Him again for our justification. Believing God, we are justified, reckoned righteous. Mark, “raised again for our justification” cannot possibly mean because we were justified; this thought entirely sets aside faith. It is evidently “for,” in the sense of, for the purpose of our justification; that is, when, through grace, we believe. “Therefore, being justified by faith”—being reckoned righteous on the principle of faith— “we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Chap. 5:1.) Many souls are perplexed as to whether they have the right faith— “justified by faith.” If we separate this verse from the end of the previous chapter, we get occupied with faith as an abstract matter; and indeed we make faith that which, somehow, merits justification, and very soon it becomes a question of examining our own feelings. It may be said, but did not “many believe in his name when they saw the miracles which he did; but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men”? (John 2:24.) Just so; but what did they believe? No doubt they believed in Him as the Messiah, when they saw the miracles that He did. But that was quite a different matter from what we have before us here. “Well,” you say, “I am sure I long to have peace with God, but I am not sure I have got it. How is this? You say, Partly because I ask myself, Have I the right faith? but the fact is, my horrid sins and iniquities rise up before me, and press me, until I am almost ready to conclude I have no part in Christ. Conscience also says it is all true.”

Was not Jesus, the Holy, Holy One, delivered for those very iniquities? Do you believe God has raised Him from the dead—He “who was delivered for our offenses?” This is a very different affair from miracles, important as they are in their place. Mark, this is real substitution—Christ, the delivered Substitute of His people, of the believer. We must not confound this with the propitiation, which was not only for us, but for the whole world. God is glorified about sin, so that free pardon is preached to every creature—to all men.

Let us take a picture, or type, of this; indeed this scripture seems to refer to it. After the blood of one goat had been sprinkled on the golden mercy-seat before God, showing the righteousness of God met by the blood of Jesus, before the eye of God—then “he shall bring the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away, by the hand of a fit man, into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited,” (Lev. 16:21.) Now compare this with another scripture: “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.....And he bare the sin of many.” (Isa. 53:5-12.) The scriptures do not teach that He bare the sins of all; but, as the Substitute, the sins of many; and this in contrast with the doom of those who reject Him, and must therefore be judged. Yes, mark the contrast. “And AS it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” (Heb. 9:27, 28.)

Now faith is not believing that I feel, or that I do believe. But do you believe this amazing fact, that God hath raised Him from the dead who has been thus, as your Substitute, delivered for your offenses? This is the first question as to all your iniquities. Were they transferred to Christ, laid on Him? Not the sins of one year. like Israel on the day of atonement, but all your sins and iniquities before you were born. Did He take the whole responsibility of them, according to the righteous claims of God? Did He come, and was He delivered for this very purpose? Was it bearing the wrath of God against your sins, that made Him cry out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Oh, love beyond all words or thought! Did He fail? Nay; hear His words: “It is finished.” Yes, that work He came to do is finished. God is glorified. Our iniquities have been laid on Him, transferred to Him, borne by Him; not some of our sins, but all our iniquities, were laid on Him. The Lord Jehovah laid them on Him. And it is finished. Oh, my soul, ponder this well—”It is finished!” He hath made thy peace with God by His own blood. And now what does He say to thee? “Peace unto you.” Dost thou say, But, oh, my horrid sins! He replies, They were all laid on me; “peace to thee.” He shows His hands and His side. But I have denied Thee, Lord, when I ought to have confessed Thee. “Peace unto you.”

Now God, having judged our sins, all our iniquities, on His Son, can He again in righteousness judge them on us? Do you say, “I do not for a moment doubt Jesus died on the cross as my Substitute, and bore my sins in His own body on the tree; still, I have not the blessed certainty that I am justified, and have peace with God; I do not experience that happiness I ought.” Does this scripture, or any other, say we are either justified, or have peace, by experience? Does it say that we are to look at our feelings for evidence that we are justified? God has done a certain thing, to give to faith the certainty of our justification, and that one thing, which He has done for this very purpose, has been greatly overlooked. Jesus not only was delivered for our offenses, but we read, “and was raised again for our justification.” Yes, God raised Him from among the dead, not because we were justified, but for the express purpose that, believing Him, we might be justified. Thus, if Christ be not raised, we are deceived, and yet in our sins. (1 Cor. 15:17.) But He is raised; the whole question is settled to faith.

Do you say, “But must not I accept the atonement of my Substitute?” Nay, in this case it is God that has shown to us that He has accepted the one sacrifice for our sins, by raising Jesus from the dead, and giving Him a place above all heavens. And now, as to your sins, fellow-believer—where are they? They have been transferred to your Substitute. Well, they could not be on you, and on Him. No. Where are they, then? Are they on Christ? No. But they must be on Him, if on any one, as He has taken the whole responsibility of them before His God. They are not on Him. Then they cannot be on you. Oh, wondrous grace! God says He will remember them no more. If He did, He must remember them as against Christ, and this is impossible. Christ is in the unclouded presence of God in light. Then so are you justified from all things—not hoping to be so. Could anything be more certain than this resting on the very words of God? Did not God give His beloved Son for this very purpose, that we might have unclouded peace with Him? Why should we doubt Him?

Pamphlets, Imputed Righteousness: What do the Scriptures teach?

Romans 3:19-26

It is very remarkable that the Scriptures never use the expression, “the imputed righteousness of Christ,” or even “the righteousness of Christ”; but always, as in the above passage, “the righteousness of God” (Rom. 3:21-22, 26). The Holy Spirit must have an object in this; and surely it is to direct our attention, first of all to God Himself, to show His own character and attributes in perfect consistency and harmony, that He is just in justifying the sinner. The way He is so will be found to be through the redemption blood of Christ.

How full the Psalms are of this subject — the righteousness of God. Take one — the 71St. “Deliver me in Thy righteousness” (Psa. 71:2). “My mouth shall show forth Thy righteousness and Thy salvation all the day long” (Psa. 71:15). “I will make mention of Tthy righteousness, even of Thine only” (Psa. 71:16). “Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto Thee!” (Psa. 71:19). “My tongue also shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long” (Psa. 71:24). Indeed the spirit of Christ, in the. Psalms, is constantly breaking out in praise at the bright prospect of the righteousness of God, being exalted above the heavens, and His glory filling the whole earth. Surely then it is of the first importance that God should be seen to be perfectly consistent with Himself, in the relation in which he stands to all created beings, and this is righteousness. Daniel 6 very strikingly illustrates this. There was this peculiarity about the law of the Medes and Persians, it could not be altered. The king must enforce its full execution. Daniel had broken this law, a very unjust law, (but this does not affect the illustration). Now it so happened that Darius the king had an intense affection for Daniel. But the law of the Medes demanded that Daniel should die, should be cast into the den of lions. If Darius cast Daniel into this horrible den, where was his love? If he spare him, where was his consistency, as king of the Medes and Persians? This was the difficulty. The king set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and be labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. But mere love could not deliver. Daniel must be, and was, cast into the den of lions. The king’s seal was put on the great stone that covered the den. This was the end of the law of the Medes and Persians. But the living God stopped the mouth of the lions. That night was a night of sorrow; but the next morn was a morning of joy. Daniel arose from the den. Beautiful figure of death and resurrection. Daniel is alive and highly exalted, and Darius is consistent as king of the Medes. Now if the word of a man, even respecting a wicked decree, could not be altered, if the law of men could not be changed, can the sentence of the Most Holy God be changed or set aside?

He is holy, and His sentence on sin is death. But O! blessed to know and tell, God loved the sinner. Now here is the great question, If God in love spares the sinner, where is His righteousness? and if He destroys the sinner, where is His love? The love of Darius could not spare Daniel. The love of God cannot spare or, save the sinner, at the expense of His righteousness. Words cannot describe the intensity of God's love to the sinner; but He must be consistent as the moral Governor of the universe.

That question in the old Book of Job, then, is the one that needs answering. "How then can man be justified with God?" (Job 2:4). I am not aware that this question is answered anywhere in the Scriptures, until we come to the Epistle to the Romans The subject of the first eight chapters of this epistle, is the unfolding the righteous character of God in condemning sin, yet justifying the believing sinner.

God's love had been fully shown in so loving, as to give His only begotten Son. But the love of God alone, is not the good news that gives settled peace to a guilty sinner. Paul was separated unto the gospel or good news of God. Of this good news he was not ashamed; "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Now what is the great point in this wondrous good news? Why the very point we are looking at. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: (or on the principle of faith:) as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). This, then, is the great subject of the Epistle, the very thing the sinner needs above all things to know, the righteousness of God on the principle of faith. The first thing, then, the Spirit does in this Epistle to clear the way, is to prove there neither is nor can be human righteousness, on any other principle but faith.

In the 1St chapter of Romans, man without law became thoroughly lawless; abandoned himself to the deepest degradation. Witness the state of the heathen world (Rom. 1:21-32). Man under law broke it and became if possible worse than the heathen. Witness Israel (Rom. 2:17-29).

By works of law there could not be righteousness; for the whole world stands guilty before God (Rom. 3:19). The law only makes known sin. The more man tries to keep it, the more it shows his utter sinfulness. It was given for this purpose that the offense might abound. O! marvel of all marvels, that this deep, universal unrighteousness, should thus commend the righteousness of God. That is, when man's condition could not be worse, God's grace shines forth in meeting him; saving him, and justifying, yea in glorifying him with Himself forever, and that in perfect righteousness. Thus it is, when man has no righteousness, and it is most certain, both from Scripture and experience, on the principle of law, he never in any way can have; then it is we read, "BUT NOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, without law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3:21-22).

Note well, it is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Yes, it is the death, the propitiation, through faith in His blood, that God hath set forth to declare His, that is, God's, righteousness, both in passing over the sins of all believers during past ages; and also, "To declare (I say) at this time His (that is God's) righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). The next five chapters explain how this is done. Before we enter upon them, note, God's conclusion of the matter is this, "That a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). Is there any wonder, then, that the person vainly trying to be righteous by works of law, on the principle of 'do and live,' should never be able to find peace and rest to his troubled soul?

Two cases are now cited, to show that justification has always been on the principle of faith, and never on the principle of works, a plain proof of man's fallen condition, which some are so impiously denying.

First, Abraham. To the Jew this must have shocking. It might be true that he was quite consistent or righteous as a man before men; but before God, righteousness was counted, reckoned, or imputed to him on the principle of faith. "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:8). Now as to this word "imputed." The Word "Logizomai" occurs forty-one times in the New Testament; nine times it is translated "thinkest"; (Rom. 2:3; 1 Cor. 13:5, 11; 2 Cor. 3:5; 10:2, 7, 11; 12:6; Phil. 4:8); nine times, "counted," (Rom. 2:26; 4:3, 5; 8:36; 9:8; 1 Cor. 4:1; Gal. 3:6; Phil. 3:13; Heb. 3:3); eight times, "imputed," (Rom. 4:6, 8, 11, 22, 23, 24; 2 Cor. 5:19; James 2:23); six times, "reckoned"; (Luke 22:37; Rom. 4:4, 9, 10; 6:11; 8:18). There are a few other places, "reasoned," as in Mark 11:31, "was numbered," Mark 15:28. But a careful comparison of all these passages, where the word is used, shows that the simple meaning of the word is, "reckoned," or "considered to be"; just as we should say of a boy at school whom we knew to be heir of an estate, though not actually as yet in possession; yet, on the veracity of the will, on the genuineness of the document, we should look upon the boy as heir. On the principle of faith, we should reckon the estate of the father to him He is not yet in possession, but we should impute it to him, treat him as though he were in possession. Let it not be supposed that the Scriptures teach, that the blessed obedience of Christ under law, is imputed to the sinner, like a piece of new leather is put on an old bottle; or what would be more familiar to us, as a man who, finding in his garment a slit here and a hole there, puts a piece of new cloth on, or a piece of new leather, on his shoes here and another there. Righteousness is not thus imputed to mend the sinner. It is not the mending of the old shoe by a piece of leather here and there; neither is it by covering the old rotten leather all over. It is not mending at all; but setting aside as worthless, and the giving an entirely new thing. I should not speak so plainly if I did not really believe it needful. (See Mark 2:21, 22.)

The thought of Christ having kept the law for me and that this is imputed to me for righteousness, even supposing I had been a Jew under law, would be utterly wrong, for this would only be making me righteous on the principle of law-keeping, which God says is impossible (Rom. 3:20). Nor does the Scripture anywhere teach the whole life of Christ as keeping the law, imputed to, or put upon, the lawbreaker to enable him to stand in law-kept righteousness before God. A far deeper thing was needed. It was not possible for a holy Christ to be attached to a sinful creature. Had he lived forever on earth in spotless righteousness, he must have remained alone. If you turn to the following passage, you will see this most clearly: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). The blessed Lord explains all this as meaning His own death, and if any will have life, they must follow Him in that death.

The great error of this day is, discussing how the old man is to be mended, instead of seeing God's truth in the old thing being set aside as unmendable, and an entirely new thing set in its place.

Let us now proceed with the inquiry in Romans 4. It has been remarked, that nine times out of the eleven, where imputed righteousness is spoken of in the Scriptures, faith is said to be imputed. How very strikingly this carries out the thought of the Epistle, the righteousness of God on the principle of faith.1

They are Romans 4:3, 5, 9-10, 22- 24; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23. All these speak of faith, or the faith imputed or reckoned for righteousness. The other two put righteousness itself reckoned. These are, “God imputeth righteousness without works” (Rom. 4:6) and “That righteousness might be imputed to them also” (Rom. 4:11). To return; “Abraham believed God” (Rom. 4:3). Now, what did he believe? Plainly, he believed what God said, because God said it. This is the great point, as to true faith. If I do not believe the bare word of God, unless the church or the man says it is so, this is not believing God at all. Abraham had only God’s word; there was no church to say it was so; the world was full of idolatry. He could not look to his own feelings. He considered not his own body now dead. And what did God say to him? Say to him? why, in the promise of the seed, or the principle of resurrection, He opened up to faith the day of Christ in resurrection. “As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which are not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17). Thus Abraham believed in the God of resurrection, on the very same principle as we do, only we more clearly, since now Christ has died and is risen again.

One word as to the other case — David. Now, without controversy, this man could not possibly be justified by, or on the principle of, law keeping. He had shamefully broken it before the whole world. On what principle, then, was he justified? On the principle of faith. But on what did his faith rest, or how far did it reach? Most clearly to the God of resurrection, as Peter declares (Acts 2:24-34). Paul also says the same thing (Acts 13:34-36). So bright was the certainty of resurrection to David that he says, “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness” (Psa. 17:15). It was not that faith had merit, and that merit reckoned for righteousness. Faith may be compared to eyesight. Eyesight without light would be nothing; and both without an object would be useless. Faith is the gift of God: and it is God who says, Let there be light; and it is God, by the Holy Spirit, who reveals the glorious object of faith. So the faith of Abraham and David saw Christ in resurrection; and this, even Christ in resurrection, was imputed, or reckoned, for righteousness. A blessed justified state, in which God not only forgave sins, but to whom, in such state, the Lord will not impute sin. Doubly blest.

Let us now see how Abraham’s believing in the God of resurrection is applied to us. “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:23-25). Is it not most sad that this bright half of the gospel — the resurrection half of it — should have been lost? How can the righteousness of God be understood where this is the case? Impossible. And, on the contrary, where the justification by resurrection is understood, every shadow of a difficulty, as to imputed righteousness, vanishes at once.

The statement that justification merely means pardon of sin, betrays at once entire ignorance of the resurrection, half of the gospel. Besides, to limit the meaning of justification to pardon of sin, if compared with its use in the Scriptures, will be seen to be absurd. David, speaking to God, says, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and clear when Thou judgest” (Psa. 51:4). To apply the limited meaning of pardon to the word justified here, would make David say he had sinned that God might be pardoned. Many other passages, such as the justification of Christ, in Isaiah 1; and the sinners who justified God, being baptized of John in the gospel, might be pointed out; but the above is sufficient to show it must be in sad ignorance of Scripture, that such a statement can be made, as that justification means only pardon of sin. I would not make these remarks were it not that the right understanding of the double character of justification, is of such immense importance, both as to the righteousness of God, and the enjoyment of peace with Him.

We shall find that double character most clearly presented in the next chapter (Rom. 5). I mean JUSTIFICATION BY BLOOD (Rom. 5:9) and JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE (Rom. 5:18). Justification from all that I was, complete clearance from all sins; and justification of that life and existence which the person has when thus cleared. The death of our adorable Substitute meets the former -His blood. The resurrection of Christ is the source and justification of the latter. “Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). Let it be distinctly understood that the precious death of Christ on the cross, for our sins, is the foundation of everything. To deny this is not a matter of opinion. In the face of such passages as the following, could anything be more impiously wicked, than to deny the vicarious sufferings of Christ? God says to us, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh,” etc. (1 Peter 3:18). “Who, His own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 3:18). “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 8:28). “Who gave Himself for our sins” (Gal. 1:4). “He was wounded for our transgressions” (Isa. 53:5). “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). If any man denies this, he will find in the day of judgment, that this is not a matter of opinion. To believe God in what He thus so plainly speaks, is saving faith — to deny it, is damning unbelief. There is no middle place. This blessed work is accomplished. Christ has died, the just for the unjust. Let the eye now rest on Him as the surety, taking the place of the sinner — delivered for our offenses — and in that place He could not be spared. The love of God, if He must be righteous in saving us, could not spare His Son. The cup could not pass from Him, and it did not. If Darius labored to deliver Daniel until the going down of the sun, what did it cost the Father, when He beheld His beloved Son prostrate in sad Gethsemane, and on the cross? Oh! well might the Holy One cry out, “My God, My God! why hast thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). Oh! who can fathom the love of God to us poor sinners, when He spared not His beloved Son? He died the accursed death of the cross; he was buried; a great stone was laid on the mouth of His sepulcher; it, like Daniel’s den, was also sealed with a seal. And there was the end of the law’s utmost claim — fulfilled to the last jot or tittle. To redeem them that were under the law, He thus bore its curse. To save us Gentiles, who were sinners without law, He was made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

The law could go no further than death, but God could go further. Where the law ended, God began; God raised Him from the dead; and thus, beyond law altogether, Christ is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18). Thus, by His blessed death, Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness, to them that believe (Rom. 10:4).

If King Darius was exceeding glad when he came early in the morning to the mouth of the den, when Daniel arose from among the lions, as it were arose front the dead, what must have been the joy of God on that morn when the women came very early to the sepulcher, and Jesus was risen from among the dead? Darius proclaimed peace to all peoples; for Daniel was alive, who had been in the den of death, and that he was exalted and his enemies destroyed in the very den. Surely it is a striking figure, or illustration, how God has triumphed through the cross of Christ. Daniel was alive, and Darius had fully carried out in righteousness, that is, in kingly consistency, the law of the Medes.

Now, Christ was the only one who had life in Himself, who could lay it down for the sheep and take it up again. He was dead, but is alive again — He died for our sins, our substitute — He arose for our justification, our surety and representative head. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). For our comfort, we must have peace, for we must have what our Surety

has, on the very ground of the righteousness of God. For God made Him to be our substitute, made Him sin for us. And God has made Him to be our surety and representative; for, as man, God hath raised Him from the dead, and that for the very purpose of justifying us. If we would enjoy this blessed peace, we must not stop at Christ's death. This alone would not help us in the least. "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). But He is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

Now, if God could not spare our substitute, and be righteous in doing so, how can He be righteous and condemn us, since our substitute has made atonement to the full for all our sins? and much more, since God has raised Him, as our justified surety from the dead. Christ for us is ever in that justified or perfectly righteous state; and herein, as we shall see presently, justification is much more than pardon. Suppose a prisoner before the bar, proved guilty, say of stealing a sheep. He might be forgiven, but could the judge justify him? Clearly not; unless be could justify sheep stealing. Could he rise in court and say, I justify this person from every charge; and as a proof that there is not a stain on his character, I take him by the hand, and receive him to my home and table, in proof that he is clear from every stain or charge. No man could do this and be just himself in doing it. That little boy who, the other day, had stolen money from the till, and was forgiven because it was the first offense, was he justified? Would there be no difference between pardon and justification here? Take another case. The proprietor of a large shop makes a rule, that the first person in his employ found stealing shall be discharged. A young man is found guilty. The employer loves the young man — he forbears; but can he spare that young man, and be consistent as the proprietor, and the maker of that rule? Now this was just the position in which God stood to man. Man sinned — was guilty — God forbore in mercy 4000 years. But could He spare the life of man, forfeited through sin, and be righteous, that is, consistent as the Creator? Impossible, unless He denied HIMSELF. And thus, when Jesus took our sins, as really took and bore their curse as though He had committed them every one, God laid them on Him, the substitute, as really as though they had been His own; I say, He, having borne them, having died for them, God was righteous in raising Him from the dead, cleared from them; and thus God is just in clearing us from them, through faith in His blood. Once more: a man owes £15. Very well, then, it cannot be justly said he owes nothing. But, if another becomes surety, and does pay the full amount, £15, can it not now be said that he, the man who did owe it, is now clear of debt? I do not see how it would be just to say anything else. Now, if I see then, that Christ has paid the debt of my guilt, the full count of all my sins, past, present, and future, and that, much more, God hath raised Him up from among the dead for my justification, is not, then, God perfectly righteous in reckoning me justified in Christ? I mean, plainly, that God is just in justifying the believer, and therefore would not be just in condemning him What perfect peace this gives! It may be said, This is all very well for such as have a measure of righteousness of their own. Nay; "But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more, then, being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:8-10). What can this twice repeated "much more" be? Something much more than being justified by His blood — much more than being reconciled by His death. Yes, all this being done, much more, "we shall be saved by His life." There is a remarkable turn in the epistle at this point. The question of life is now fully brought out. First, as to man, his being a sinner, his life is forfeited. Death is passed upon the whole race of Adam, for all have sinned, whether under law or not. And if sin did not come in by Adam, and death by sin, let the skeptic find me a city, a town, or even a village, or even a person in that village, on the face of the whole earth, that is not a sinner, and a sinner on whom death is written. Well, if death has thus reigned over the whole race of Adam, how can any have life? This, the apostle shows, is on another principle — even life flowing from another source altogether — it is the life of the risen Christ. It is not the recovery of that life which was forfeited by sin — it is far beyond it — cannot be compared with it. "For if by one offense death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). Yes, the life that the believer has now is the gift of righteousness. God is perfectly justified in giving this life, even to the sinner who has forfeited his own, because the life of the spotless Substitute has been freely given up. First, justified by His blood from all sin; then justified, yea, much more justified, in the life which is the gift of righteousness. "Therefore as by one offense, toward all men condemnation, even so by one righteousness, toward all men justification of life" (Rom. 5:18).

Scholars tell us this is the literal translation of this verse. Observe, it is not here the justification by blood, but justification of life. To take once more the illustration of the den of lions, a person might have said — how can this Daniel live, is he not condemned to be cast into the den of lions? Darius could have replied — this is the Daniel who has been cast into the den of death, and has risen out of it! He could be condemned no more. Just so the blessed One who stood in our place. He has been condemned, He has died, He has been buried; but He is risen, and death has no more claim on Him, even on our account. It had once, and He freely met its claims If Adam, then, was the beginning of a race of sinners, condemned to death, Christ, having died for His own, is the beginning of a new race. So that, as a believer, the life I have is not my life spared, or restored; but the very life of the risen Christ, and therefore a justified life. Thus, my fellow-believers, are we justified by the blood of Christ from all that we were as children of Adam; and we are justified in all that we are as children of God in Christ. Thus are we much more saved by His life. Yes, and shall be saved by His life.

This is a very different thing from that uncertain half-gospel, that only sees justification to be pardon of sin, and then leaves the future all dark and uncertain, really depending on self-righteousness after pardon. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). I believe the words "shall be made righteous," go even beyond the present state, right on to our literal change or resurrection, when we shall see Him and be like Him. It was this that was before the blessed One when He endured the cross and despised the shame. For this He now sits and waits at the right hand of God. His precious obedience unto death has secured all.

If you ask what is the righteousness we shall be made, and which is now imputed to us? I reply, look up at that glorified man, Christ Jesus, in whose face shines the glory of God. That is what we shall be, my fellow-believer, we shall be exactly like Him. He says, "The glory that Thou hast given Me I have given them" (John 17:22). Now, note, there can be no uncertainty as to this, for God hath raised Him from the dead as our Surety; and He is gone up on high, and holds possession of this glory, as Son of man, for us. Is it possible for God to give His Son to bear our sins on the cross, to raise Him from the dead for our justification, and then after all not bring us there? I say it is not possible. His very accomplished righteousness demands that we should live eternally with His Son. Nothing can possibly hinder God from the joy of His heart in our everlasting salvation. Because do not you see, "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. 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" (Rom. 8:29, 30). The fact is, the whole thing is so put together of God, and is so wholly of God, that the believer will not be more sure of this glory when in it than he is now, if he believes what God says. Now, just dwell on this, think of this, "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). What a prospect, to gaze on the face of God in perfect righteousness — God perfectly righteous in bringing us there. We, righteous without spot or stain, in being there; and all this accomplished by the obedience of Christ unto death. The words of

Daniel are fulfilled — He hath brought in everlasting righteousness. Now, because all this is sure, throughout the countless ages of a bright coming eternity, therefore it is reckoned to the believer now, during this little moment that intervenes before we enter upon the glad fruition. The doctrine, then, of imputation, or of being reckoned righteous, seems as simple as possible. First, on the ground that the Surety is risen, in perfect righteousness, having glorified God. The payment in blood of that Surety is reckoned to all who believe. What is done by a surety is reckoned to the one for whom it is done. And, secondly, on the ground of what our Representative is in glory; for what is done to a representative is reckoned done to those whom he represents. O! what joy this gives the heart, that thus knows Jesus in the presence of God. In a word, it is identification in the sight of God; we are dead with Him and risen with Him. And this is the truth of Romans 6. Do read these wondrous verses, Romans 6:3-11. Not our old man saved by Christ, but crucified with Him — buried with Him. There is no compromise — the sentence of death fully executed. Not my life, as to my old self, spared or helped, but crucified. But is this all? Oh, no; we are also risen with Him. This is how God reckons us, and this is how we are to reckon. “Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). This word reckon is the very same as impute elsewhere. Then, what does it mean in plain words? Just this: suppose a friend sends you a letter to say an estate has been left you; if you believe him, you would from that moment reckon it to be yours. Of course, when you are in possession you will not need to reckon then; it will no longer be faith in your friend’s letter, but the actual sight of your estate. Just so I believe God’s word, applied by the Holy Spirit. I adore the blessed One who gave His heart’s blood for me. I believe, an eternity of purity and righteousness is mine in Him. Yes, is mine, on the certainty of the righteousness of God. I reckon, during this little while of sorrow and conflict, that all this future glory is mine. God also reckons it all to me. He reckons me dead, risen, justified, glorified, with Christ. And this is God’s salvation.

Thus death and resurrection are seen to be the end of two things, sin and law. In Romans 6 we are dead to sin, as dead and risen with Christ; and in Romans 7 dead to law -that is, if we had been under it. And all this to bring out still further the blessed, eternal life we have in Him.

Far be the thought that all this should be, that we may continue in sin. “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2). If any man desires to live in sin, it is because there is not this life in him. That which is born of God must be like Him. Now God is not only righteous, but, He is holy. That is, not only relatively consistent with Himself, in the blessed relation in which He stands as God; but his very nature is inherent purity, and this is holiness. And such is that new nature which is born of God. Yea, such is he that is born of God. That which is of God must be pure. Now, how truly blessed this is! while our old being, or nature, as of fallen Adam, had neither righteousness nor holiness, but was altogether sinful, yet now that nature, that existence, being set aside in the death of Christ, the new nature, or life, or existence we have in the risen Christ, is of God, and delights in holiness. Is it not so, believer? Do you not long for that blessed state, where all shall be unsullied righteousness and unchanging holiness? Oh! how soon shall this be thine in actual enjoyment forever! And now, in Christ, it is reckoned to-thee.

Righteousness of God, then, was reckoned to Abraham on the principle of faith, he believing that God was able to perform His promise. How much more clearly, then, is it reckoned to us who believe that God hath fulfilled His promise, in that He hath raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead. All is done: God is divinely righteous in justifying us from all sin, and in raising us from among the dead, and giving us the life of the eternal Son — therefore, eternal life. That is imperishable.

Thus justification is a state of perfect clearance from sin, and everlasting life — all the result of God’s righteousness revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ. We are no longer looked at in our old Adam standing, but dead to it, and now looked at as in Christ, alive from the dead.

There can be no mistake. This was — whatever mistakes men make now — this was the way the apostles preached the good news of God — through Jesus the resurrection from among the dead. No patching and mending humanity in the Scriptures. Fallen, sinful humanity cannot live in the presence of divine holiness. It is wholly set aside, and the law that was adapted to it also. And thus, being dead, there is an end of sin and death and law. Sin shall not have dominion over us therefore, because we are not under law, but under grace. Note, in Romans 7, we cannot be married to two husbands at the same time. If we are still alive under law, or if we take that ground, we cannot be married to Christ. To the believing Jews at Rome the apostle could say, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom. 7:4).

Thus the power also for fruit-bearing is in our union with the risen Christ. The apostle then shows that all that the law can do for the old man when under it is to bring him into the captivity of sin — the very opposite of the position of the person delivered by death and resurrection. It is utterly useless seeking righteousness in old self, under or on the principle of law-keeping. All is in Christ, whether as to freedom from guilt and condemnation, or for everlasting righteousness before God, or as to fruit-bearing before men. Thus the believer is reckoned — dead and risen with Christ; no longer in the first Adam, but in Christ. And if in Christ, condemnation there is none. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). This is, indeed, far more than mere forgiveness of past sins. To be in Christ is a state in which there is not such a thing as condemnation. There could be no justification of our Adam life; there can be no condemnation of our justified life in the risen Christ. “The law of the Spirit of (our) life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2), is, then, fully explained (Rom. 8:2-17). Read these verses carefully. What perfect freedom from the law of sin and death. And the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. And, now, not only is all this reckoned to us, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Thus the Holy Spirit seals our sonship. And while Christ on high is the living witness of accomplished righteousness, the Spirit also bears witness here below.

Now, if God be for us, and for us poor sinners, in perfect righteousness, who can be against us? It is most important to see clearly that God is for us. The thought that God was against the sinner, and that Christ died to reconcile Him to the sinner, in the sense of turning His heart towards the sinner; I say this thought is horrible. If Darius yearned over Daniel, not only loved him, but looked at him as an injured man, much more did God yearn for the sinner. Yea, God has come to man’s rescue — God is the sinner’s friend. Was it not because He loved us, when sinners, that He gave His Son, whose precious blood puts away the sin? Do not mistake me here: surely the untold agonies of Calvary tell how exceeding horrible sin is to God. Yet, behold the glory of the cross? Infinite love to the sinner, infinite wrath on sin. “He spared not His own Son” (Rom. 8:32). The work of justifying the sinner by the gift of His Son, is the brightest display of the unalterable righteousness of God. What a justification! “It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:33-34). There is no condemnation; there is no separation. Who can condemn? who can separate? How can there be condemnation? the old child of Adam no longer exists before God. while a criminal is alive he may be tried, condemned, and executed; when he is dead and buried you cannot then find him to condemn him again. It is so with the believer; he has been executed in the person of his Substitute; he is buried with Him. He does not any longer exist, as a child of Adam, before God, and

therefore cannot be condemned again. The apostle says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, (not the old I,) but Christ liveth in me: and 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. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal. 2:20, 2). If my old self could have been righteous on the principle of law, or further, if God could have been righteous in sparing the old nature, then Christ would not have needed to die and rise again that I might be made righteous, through death and resurrection. My Adam life is dead through sin; my Christ life is everlasting because of righteousness.

How does all this bear on experience? Let the apostle answer. Read carefully in that epistle of true Christian experience, Philippians. In Philippians 3 the apostle has no confidence in the flesh under law, however blameless. The things that were gain he counts loss, “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:8-9).

He had seen the risen Christ in brightness above the sun. Compared with Him all was dung and dross. This risen Christ was the only object before his soul at the end of the journey of this weary world. I say this is experience, not imputation, here; hence be looks at the final triumph in glory, “and be found in Him.” This is the object of his heart; for this he pressed on. “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection” (Phil. 3:10). Clearly, in this passage, the righteousness which is of God, by faith, is Christ in resurrection. What was the righteousness imputed? Christ in resurrection. What was the mark toward which he pressed? Christ in resurrection. Short of Christ in resurrection, there was not a shadow of a hope to Paul. There was no righteousness without this, or on any other principle. Without this he knew no news worth telling. Beside this he had no object worth living for. Oh, that this doctrine may be revived again in this our day. What a contrast to the man-mending doctrines they preach who are ignorant of this resurrection side of the gospel. What is the faith of the gospel as preached by the apostle? Christ in resurrection. He is, as risen from the dead, our righteousness. Only in Him, as it is written, “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is (not was) made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). It is not what we have made Him to be unto ourselves. No, God hath raised Him from the dead. He hath made Him to be our life, our righteousness, our all. The whole thing is of God, and therefore it is called righteousness of God, or righteousness which is of God. What perfect consistency; what divine harmony. God infinitely just, yet my justifier. Oh! look at it! God can now take the vilest sinner, translate him from the kingdom of darkness, sin, and death, into the kingdom of His own risen Son, in unchanging justification. For, while forgiveness is repeated in the Scriptures, there can be no repetition of justification. How can there? The death and resurrection of Christ is the justification of the believer, and does not need, nay, cannot be repeated.

There is one more expression, quite different from any we have yet examined. “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). We made the righteousness of God. This is a very peculiar expression. The context will make it plain. Christ dying for all proved that all were dead, and that, therefore, nothing short of His death could meet them. The object of His death was, that the saved should live to God; that they who were dead should live (2 Cor. 5:14-15). All being dead, Christ’s life in the flesh could not benefit them. “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things are become new; and all things are of God,” etc. (2 Cor. 5:16-19). Nothing could be more striking and clear than this. Christ made sin — dying, the sacrifice for sin, on the cross; this is the end of the old things, the end of all that belonged to me as a dead, lost sinner. On that cross, by faith, I see the end of old I, and all that belongs to old I. Christ raised from the dead is the beginning of the new creation, as it is written in that remarkable verse, “Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18). This is most fully shown out in Ephesians 1; 2 As God raised Christ (the beginning) up from the dead, in Ephesians 1, so He hath raised up us also in Christ, who were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2). Surely He hath not only pardoned us, but made us sit with Christ in heavenly places. This new creation is so entirely of God, that we are God’s workmanship, or, as in this 2 Corinthians 5, “That we might be made the righteousness of God, in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). That is, in the risen Christ, the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. We were lost in sin and death; God has given us a new life, a new existence, a new creation in Christ, in which new creation there is no sin, there can be none; all is absolute holiness, perfect righteousness. As seen in that new creation, we are what God has made us; for all things are new, and all things of God, and therefore the believer is as risen in Christ, the righteousness of God, all, all of God.

It is thus, on the ground of the accomplished righteousness of God also, that the gospel is proclaimed -God having raised up Christ from the dead. “Be it known unto you, therefore, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things (Acts 13:38). This paper may fall into the hands of the scoffing infidel. These are solemn words for such — “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you” (Acts 13:41). Fellow-child of God, this is but a feeble glance at the lovely landscape of the new creation. Regions of holy delight stretch far beyond. May the Lamb lead thee by the side of still waters, and the green pastures of His precious truth; soon, soon thou wilt awake in His likeness. Oh, to be like Him, and this so certain! As surely as Jesus died and rose again, so surely is it all reckoned to thee now. The righteousness of God is thine now on the principle of faith. To enjoy it in its full result in blessed fruition will soon be thine everlasting portion. Blessed hope of righteousness, as says the, apostle, “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Gal. 5:5). Ours now by imputation, then, forever ours in the full enjoyment of sight. Blessed Lord, increase our faith.

Should any wish to see this subject more fully examined, I would commend to them a most valuable pamphlet lately published, “The Righteousness of God,” by J. N. D.

Things New and Old: Volume 29, Offerings, Short Papers on the: No. 11 - Propitiation and Substitution

WE have dwelt more on the propitiation aspect than the substitution of the atoning death of our Lord on the cross, because it is so little understood, and it is so important that it should be, as the ground on which forgiveness is preached to all. The one atoning death of the cross was both. Propitiation was what Jesus did: He glorified God as to sin. Substitution was what Jesus did; He bare our sins on the tree. But all for God, and for us, was done when Jesus said, “It is finished;” and died. We shall find the implication of both these parts of the atonement in the epistles.

But the next thing is not what Jesus did, looked at as Man, though truly infinite God; is what did God do? When Jesus had glorified God by the death of the cross, having bowed His blessed head in death; and further, His body having been laid in the sepulcher; did God leave the One who had finished the work, which He had given Him to do in the grave? Impossible! He might have left Him there if He had failed to finish the work. If it had to be finished in heaven, or now on earth by human priests; but, having made propitiation by His blood—that is, having glorified God by atonement—God could not in righteousness leave Jesus in the grave.

The first thing then, that God did was to raise up from among the dead the One who had glorified Him as to sin. God raised up Jesus from the dead. This has an immense bearing on propitiation and substitution. He who had made propitiation, is now “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. 1:4.) Thus all doubt as to the work being finished, is forever removed; for God has raised Him from the dead who said on the cross, “it is finished.” We could have no greater proof that God is perfectly glorified by Jesus than this, God raised Him from the dead in proof, and that by the Spirit of holiness.

There is thus the most absolute certainty of forgiveness of sins, preached in the name of once crucified, now risen and glorified, Jesus. All is now fully open and revealed. The great question was this, How could the righteousness of God be maintained in pardoning and justifying such poor, guilty sinners as we were?

Forgiveness was preached, and all who believed were declared to be justified from all things. (Acts 13:38.) But now God, in the tenderness of His love to us explains how He is righteous in doing this. The explanation is this, and there is no other: “Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God bath set forth a propitiation, through faith in HIS BLOOD, to declare his righteousness,” &c. (Rom. 3:24, 25.) This is shown to be the explanation of the righteousness of God, both in passing over the sins of His people, past sins before the death of Christ, and also in justifying all who believe now.

Oh, do you see how God is glorified by the death of the Lamb, through which redemption we are justified freely? Has God justified you freely? Did not He provide that Lamb? God sets forth that same death on the cross, as the revelation of His righteousness in mercy to a lost world. Do you believe that He is righteous in justifying him that believeth? And you believe. Blessed foundation for your soul to rest upon. Can you say, God is just in justifying me? You must say so, if you believe God. For this is the word of God. As the propitiatory, or mercy-seat was sprinkled with the shed blood, the blood applied to it, so the infinite value and efficacy of the shed blood of Christ is applied to the throne of sod, and the effect is, that throne of mercy is opened to the whole world. Grace reigns through Righteousness.

The first part of the day of atonement, as well as redemption, is fulfilled: Jesus has made propitiation for the sins of the people. So that, apart from law, God is righteous by that sacrifice in being my Justifier. (Rom. 3:26.) You will now get still greater comfort to your soul, by looking at the other part of the day of atonement. It must be borne in mind that both parts, propitiation and substitution, took place at the same time on the cross. If you are a believer—if you believe God that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead—what we mean by substitution is this: Jesus standing as our Substitute. “Who was delivered for our offenses.” Just as on the day of atonement, when propitiation had been made, the sins and iniquities of Israel were transferred to the head of the goat, so all believers can say, He hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.” Do you now see how Jesus was delivered for your offenses? all our sins laid on Him, transferred to Him? Oh, precious Jesus! and didst Thou thus take the whole responsibility of my sins? Yes; for this He was delivered. Are they still on Him? Is He still bearing them? there, can there be, a sin charged now to Him? No; God says, “and was raised again for our justification.” Who is the Justifier who raised Him from the dead—our Substitute standing for us, in our stead? It is God.

Our sins have been laid on Jesus; yes, and fully judged on Him. Yes; and God has raised our Substitute from the dead for the very purpose of being our justification, of being the everlasting evidence that we are justified from all things; yes, and of being our everlasting, unchanging righteousness. Yes; exactly so Oh rejoice, my soul, then! “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” If you believe God, then assuredly you are thus justified, and you have peace with God. And it is equally plain that if you are not justified from all things, and if you have not peace with God, then you evidently do not believe God. If you read on, you will see that if you have thus been saved, and justified through the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, proved and made sure to you by His resurrection; how much more certain is it that you will be saved from wrath through Him? ‘For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life,” (Rom. 4:24 to 5:11.) Yes; the question of our sins is settled in divine righteousness. We are justified from all things. Such is the efficacy of the death of Christ. And God who has been glorified by that death, is our Justifier. Who then can condemn?

The first Epistle to the Corinthians is chiefly occupied with the church and its order, when it was seen in its unity on earth; but when the apostle does mention the gospel, it is Christ, the believer’s Substitute: “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures,” (Chap. 15:2-4.) Take away that foundation, and Christianity falls to pieces. It would be a mere system of lies. But God has raised Him from the dead, and given assurance to all men. All now is clear and certain. We must, however, never forget that not only did He die for our sins, but there is even a deeper truth—Jesus the fulfillment of the sin-offering. That is, in reconciling us to God, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor. 5:21.) Thus in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom. 8:3.) What deep joy this gives to the soul that knows not only the shamefulness of sins, but the loathsomeness of sin, the very nature in us, that produces all the sins and that this also has been fully condemned, judged, in Jesus taking the place of the sin-offering on the cross. This was the lowest depth He could descend to for us. He went down to the lowest, that we might be raised to the highest—the righteousness of God IN HIM.

Oh, this was good news! This was the will of God and our Father. The grace also of Christ “who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from the present evil, world,” &c. (Gal. 1:3-6.) And that this was the sacrifice on the cross, there can be no mistake. For of those who were under the curse of the law, we read, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,” In it also was the purpose of blessing to the Gentiles. (Gal. 3:12.) It is remarkable how the Holy Ghost ever keeps the first great truth of the death of Christ before us—redemption through His blood—even when about to speak of our highest standing and privileges. When our adoption and sonship is the thought, He says: “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, TO REDEEM them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God bath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. 4:5, 6.) Oh, how God sees in the redemption-blood His title to bring us to Himself as His sons. As we have said, all the offerings that follow redemption, reveal the righteousness of God when explained in Christ in all His dealings with us after we have redemption.

Even when the very highest standing and portion of the saints is before the Spirit, He still. goes back to redemption—when dwelling on the gracious purpose of God in bringing us into favor in the Beloved, than which nothing can be higher. Oh, think of it, not only in favor, but in favor in the Beloved! In whatever favor Christ as the Beloved is, we are brought into favor IN HIM. But immediately He says, “In whom we have REDEMPTION through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” (Eph. 1:3-7.)

Do you know that you are in the Beloved, in all the unchanging love and favor of God to His beloved One—in Him the Beloved? How great, then, the value of that blood, through which you have forgiveness of your sins. Oh, the riches of His grace! And if He has thus loved His church, of which you are a part; if you have thus redemption, as to give Himself for it; will He, can He, possibly fail to wash it by the water of the word? Will He fail to present it to Himself, without spot and glorious? Why are you troubled, then, and why do thoughts, arise in your hearts? May He not still say this to us all? (Eph. 5:25-27.)

And again, is it a small privilege to know with a thankful heart that, instead of untold years of purgatorial suffering, the believer is fit for heaven at any moment? — “Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?” Can you, at this moment, thus give thanks? Only as you have the Spirit’s teaching of Him, “in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” After the so-called Fathers lost the true doctrine of eternal redemption, you never hear them thus give thanks. And to this day, how few have recovered either the full knowledge of what redemption really is, and how equally few can truly give thanks that the Father hath made them fit for the inheritance, and at any moment Christ may come to take us to Himself. Think of those words: “In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.” (Col. 1:22, 12-14.)

Things New and Old: Volume 26, Romans, Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the: No. 4

“Being justified freely by his grace.” Yes, accounted righteous freely, without anything on our part, except believing Him—and even faith is the gift of God—it is by His free favor, grace. But how is God righteous in justifying us freely by His free favor, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus?” Not merely—blessed as that is—justified from every charge of sins; not merely sheltered from judgment, like Israel in Egypt, by the blood of the Lamb; but redeemed, fully delivered—redemption through His precious blood.

Well, you may say, that is all very blessed, but how am I to know that I have a share in it? How am I to be assured that it applies to me?

Well, since God is righteous in freely justifying us, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, let us inquire what that redemption is, and how you may know it is unto you, and applies to you. What is redemption? The emancipation, or redemption, of all the slaves in the West Indies, some years ago, will illustrate what redemption is. A vast sum was given, voted by the English government, for the complete redemption of the slaves. They were, so to speak, redeemed forever. Forever emancipated, delivered from the wretchedness of slavery.

Now, when the proclamation, or glad tidings, of their redemption arrived in the West Indies, how were they to know it applied to them? Suppose an aged slave, with many a scar of whip and chain upon him, had inquired, in the following words: “Yes, I have no doubt so many millions have been paid—I have no doubt the proclamation of redemption, emancipation, everlasting deliverance, is good and glorious—but how am I to know it applies to me?” What would you have said? “Why, are you not a slave; are not those scars a proof of it? Were you not born a slave? If you were a free man, it could not apply to you, but since you are a slave, it must, it does, apply to you; the proclamation is to you. Believing the proclamation, this moment you are, in perfect righteousness, forever free.” Would you not say so?

Ah, if we took our true place, and owned our true condition as born slaves, conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, then all difficulty would soon vanish as to seeing how redemption applies to us. Have you ever owned, do you own, that by nature you were the bond-slave of sin—sold under sin? The poor West Indian slave might possibly escape from his master, but have you not found yourself utterly without power to escape from Satan and sin? Have you any ugly scars of sin? If you think, bad as you are, that God will help you to keep the law, and so at last you hope to get to heaven; then you do not know your need of redemption. If the English government voted so much in the council of Parliament, what did God vote in the councils of eternity? Was it to give silver or gold for your redemption? It was to give His well-beloved Son. Yes, He is the One “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.” Poor helpless slave of sin, that redemption is unto you. If you are such, then it must be unto you. Yes, the slave that believed the proclamation was that moment forever free. It is just so with you. God grant it to thousands who read this paper.

Dear young believer, it is most important to understand this: that you are not only justified freely (all sins being forgiven, God sees no iniquity), but you are also redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Yes, delivered from that state of slavery forever. If that great sum of gold set the slaves free forever, has not the infinite propitiation of Christ set us free, redeemed us forever? Shall we allow a shadow of a doubt? No; He gave Himself for us—all free, unmerited favor. Not one thing did we do for our redemption; it was all accomplished before we had one desire or thought of redemption. And now we hear the glad tidings unto us poor slaves of sin; we believe, and are forever free.

Glory, glory everlasting,

Be to Him who bore the cross.

But we must further inquire how the righteousness of God is affected by all this.

“Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Verses 25, 26.

You notice God hath set forth the propitiation of Christ to declare two things. His righteousness needed to be revealed in these two things. His passing over, in forbearance, sins that are past; and that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Here we would warn our readers of a serious mistake, often found, as to “sins that are past,” as though it meant sins that have been committed before our conversion to God; that sins up to that time are pardoned, or remitted, through the propitiation of Christ; that God would therefore be righteous, through the death of Christ, in thus pardoning past sins before conversion. This error leaves the believer in utter

perplexity as to sins, should they be committed after conversion; indeed, this view leaves the Christian worse off than the Jew, as he had another day of atonement every year. But if the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ only met our sins, or atoned for sins, up to conversion, then there remains no sacrifice, no remedy, for sins after conversion. For “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” (Heb. 10) On this finite view of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who could be saved? The one infinite sacrifice must have met all the sins of a finite sinner, from first to last. What, then, does this scripture mean? Simply this: God had passed over, in forbearance, past sins, the sins of all believers before Christ died; and now He was the Justifier of all that believe, reckoned them as righteous, as though they had never sinned. But the great question was this: How could God be righteous in doing both these things? How could this be revealed, declared, explained? Without an answer to this inquiry, how can any soul have peace with God?

If all had been guilty, how could God be righteous in passing over the sins of those who believed, whether Jews or Gentiles? And if all are proved guilty now—if you are proved guilty—how can God declare of you, like Israel of old, that He hath not beheld, and does not behold, iniquity in you? Clearly He could not be righteous on account of anything in us, or done by us, under law, or not under law. Here the eye of faith must rest solely on the blood of Jesus—“a propitiation, through faith in his blood.” This alone explains, declares, the righteousness of God, both as to the sins of past believers, and ours now. Let us, however, remember, that on the propitiatory mercy-seat the blood was placed before the eye of God! “And he shall take pf the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.” (Lev. 16:14.) This had to be done again; the blood of a bullock had to be sprinkled before God on that golden mercy-seat once every year. And blood of other victims had often to be shed. Not so the blood of Christ; that blood, once shed and sprinkled, can never be shed or sprinkled again.

Oh, my soul, think what that blood is for all thy sins before the eye of God! The blood, sprinkled on the gold, shows what the blood of Christ is, as meeting, upholding, declaring the righteousness of God. Yes, He was righteous in justifying David a thousand years before the blood was shed; just as He is righteous in justifying us eighteen hundred years after. Jesus must needs suffer for both.

Thus we see the great mistake of those who say, “The righteousness of God is that by which He maketh us righteous.” No; the righteousness of God is that by which He Himself is righteous, in reckoning us poor sinners righteous. The difference is immense. If the voice of what calls itself the church says one thing, and the word of God says another thing, which am I to believe? Doubtless the latter.

“Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Dwell on each sentence. Is it not the righteousness of God that He might be just? Do you believe in Jesus—that He has thus glorified God by His expiatory sacrifice—that now, at this time, through that death, He is in righteousness able to justify all that believe? Is God thus revealed to your soul just in reckoning you righteous?

Since righteousness therefore is wholly of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, “where is boasting then?” Is it on the principle of works that we have done? No, such a thought is excluded. “y what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.” For we have seen faith finds righteousness in God. I cannot, then, boast of having been, or being, righteous in myself, since we are proved guilty, and know it to be true, and, on the principle of works or law, we can only be condemned. Justification cannot be on that ground, however we may struggle to make it so. Justification, then, must be on another principle. “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.” What else could scripture conclude, since all are guilty, and justification is not what we are to God, but what He is to us, set forth in Christ? Do not mix these two things together. Let your salvation be entirely on the principle of faith—what God is to you.

To be justified by faith is what God is to us through Christ. Deeds of the law are on the principle of what we are to God. Amazing grace! we are justified by the one, without the other. And in this the “no difference” doctrine is fully maintained. The same righteousness of God to all, Jews or Gentiles, on the principle of faith, and by means of faith.

Those who maintain that we are still under the law, make it void, because it curses those under it, because they do not keep it. Those who were under it once had to be redeemed from its curse by the death of Jesus. Thus, if scripture put us under it again, then Jesus would need to die again to redeem us from its curse. (See Gal. 3:10-13; 4:4, 5.) “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish law.” Jesus revealed to the eye of faith, bearing the curse of the broken law for those that were under it—if this does not establish the claims of the law of God, what could do so? But if we were put under it again, then its claims would have to be established again, or it would be made void.

First Years of Christianity: And What Is the Church?, First Years of Christianity, The: Doctrines and Righteousness

“God is love.” But the question was, How could God deal with a creature like man, whose very nature was hatred and rebellion against the blessed God, who loved him even in his enmity? The law had been given to Israel for fifteen hundred years, God's righteous rule for man — a law which brought out man's rebellious nature in open transgression. The rest of the world had been given up to their own will and lusts, they having given up God and His truth as set forth in His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1.)

The Gentile world had sunk to the lowest degradation, worshiping demons, and being led by them into every form of gross wickedness. Yet “God is love.” Israel, on the other hand, was no better. With every privilege, having the oracles of God, yet they did not keep the law; and, what was far worse, so blind were they that they were seeking to attain to righteousness by that very law which God had given to manifest man's sin in open transgression.

All this may be read as the distinct teaching of the Spirit of God in Romans and Galatians. Yet “God is love.” However bad man may be, and he cannot be worse than he has proved himself to be in murdering the Son of God, yet “God is love.” But then God is also a holy God; and “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18).

You ask, Is this a proved fact? Surely we need no greater proof than the Word of God—Thus it is written. The wrath of God is a fact—wrath against sin. Let us look at one fact in proof of this—the penalty of breaking the first command to man: “For in the day that thou eatest thereof

thou shalt surely die," or "dying thou shalt die." At the moment you read this, there are thousands of the children of Adam within one hour of death. By sin came death, as it is written, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12). Yes, every day of this dying death — every twenty-four hours — many thousands of the family of that man by whom sin entered, pass away in death, and many in great agony. Have you ever read of an infidel who escaped the doom of sin? Now if such a visible stream, such a terrible river of death and anguish flows from sin, and all along its course such suffering and pain, and anguish of mind and body, poverty, sickness, guilt, and wickedness, flowing from sin, even in this world, what may you and I expect if God deals with us in righteous wrath through all the ages of eternity? Can we count the number of our sins? Ah, well He may say, who bore them in His body on the tree, "They are more than the hairs of My head."

And the doctrine of the First Years of Christianity was this, that all were guilty, Jews and Gentiles—not a single exception. "There is none righteous, no not one." Every mouth stopped; all the world guilty before God (Rom. 3:9-20). And still you say, "God is love." Yes, and God from all eternity, from before the foundation of the world, has chosen a people that shall be holy and without blame before Him in love. Now tell me, reader, how do you expect to attain to that happiness? just tell me, how do you, a guilty sinner, hope to be able to stand before God, justified from all things, accounted righteous? Perhaps you say, "By attending a place of worship; there I am taught the law of God; indeed, it is hung up for my eyes to see it. There I am taught to keep that law. And I hope to so keep it, with the help of God, that I may at last attain to righteousness, so as to be able to enter heaven at last. Is not this the right way to heaven?" Millions expect the same as you do. It is this very way that led the Jews to reject the righteousness of God. Being ignorant of that, they went about, just as now, to establish their own righteousness. See Rom. 9:31 and 10:4.

Ah, those verses are dead against the fashionable religion of the whole world.

But the doctrine of the First Years of Christianity was the very opposite of all this. It was plainly this: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified IN HIS SIGHT: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Have you not found it so? How old are you—forty? And if sincere you have been trying to keep the law over thirty years; are you fit for heaven? Are you righteous in His sight? Are you awake? Is your conscience awake, or hardened? Look back! Look at the present—this day! Remember, God tells you, if you break one commandment you are guilty of all. You have longed to be holy, pure, sinless; but sins, sins, sins. Have you ever been overwhelmed, not able to look up? But you say, "I am eighty years of age." Worse still, eighty years of sins, instead of forty. Ah, they stare upon you now every day of your life. Not a single day have you loved God with your whole heart. And with eternity before you, and all your efforts miserable failures, is it not enough to make you gasp? The most righteous thing you and I can do is to judge ourselves guilty before God. On the ground of any righteousness of our own we are lost. Past, present, or future, we have no hope of attaining to righteousness by works of law. We are undone.

Now for our question: with the wrath of God against sin before us, as we have seen, in Adam's transgression and our own sins—with the absolute certainty that sin must be punished, as that stream of agony and death even in this world fully proves—how is God to be righteous in taking such ungodly sinners as we are, and declaring us justified from all things? How is His eternal love and infinite abhorrence of sin to be revealed in perfect, consistent harmony?

What is the righteousness of God as revealed in the First Years of Christianity? Oh, the importance of having again the gospel as then preached: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed" (Rom. 1:17 and context).

This is fully explained in Romans 3:21-26. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Mark, this is God's righteousness, apart from law, though surely witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ. We thus look by faith away from ourselves, and law, and everything else, to Jesus Christ. And what we find there, is unto all and upon all them that believe. Let us fully own that all have sinned—you, I, all—and come short of the glory of God. God points us then to Jesus Christ as the revelation of His own righteousness, and to the work of propitiation which He has wrought. God declares His righteousness, both for the remission of the sins of Old Testament believers, and also His, God's righteousness in justifying now "him which believeth in Jesus." This is a vital question for us. And mark it well, this is entirely of God. "Being justified freely by His grace." This is the free favor of God. By what means is God righteous in doing this, accounting the believer righteous before Him freely? The answer is very simple—"through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

But you say, "Sin must be punished." We have seen this verified, as to God's government in this world, by the black river of death, and in the judgment that is to follow; but how has God dealt with all believers' sins and iniquities? If they must be judged according to all that God is, has that been done? This is exactly how God has both commended His love to us, and revealed His inflexible righteousness. Yes, God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son for this very purpose. And we believe God, "that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses." Oh, behold, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, once delivered for our offenses. Ah, He only knew what it was to be delivered to bear that wrath of God due to sin, as God sees it; to endure the punishment according to God's holiness and abhorrence of sin. Such was God's love to us, that it pleased Him to bruise His Son in our stead. Yes, He who said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will," sank beneath the dark billows of the wrath of God. Such was the price of our eternal redemption. And did God in righteousness accept the ransom price? This is the very thing we believe, that God raised Him from the dead "for our justification," in view of our justification, for that very purpose. So that God is our righteous justifier. Who shall condemn?

O reader, reject this redemption, and you must suffer in your own person the just wrath of God against your sins, throughout an unending eternity. But now, thus believing God, we are accounted righteous before Him, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Thus God has acted in perfect consistency with Himself and toward all created beings. The sins of the believer have been borne, and sin judged on the infinite Person of the Son of God, according to the eternal purpose of God—according to all that God is in His holiness, majesty, and love.

It was this great truth—the righteousness of God revealed, displayed by the atoning death of the Son of God, proved by His resurrection and ascension to heaven, borne witness to by the descent of the Holy Spirit—that gave absolute peace with God, in the First Years of Christianity.

And, however men and demons have sought to deface it, yet it remains the same—the only safe foundation for the sinner's soul to rest upon. There is no other foundation on which my soul can rest. God has settled every question for me in absolute righteousness, so that now we can say with certainty, “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

God is thus revealed to us. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” There is nothing on our part but sins—no work of our own in this matter—all is free grace. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth [reckoneth] righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute [reckon] sin” (Rom. 4:4-8).

Do you know God thus as your Justifier? Are you this blessed man? Not of, or by any works of your own, but freely by His free favor, through the redemption you have in Christ Jesus. Now if we see the kindness of God in making all this so plain to us, and His own righteousness in justifying us, all fear and doubt will be gone, and we shall do as they did in the First Years of Christianity, as Paul says, “We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement [reconciliation].” May it be so with the reader.

Selected Writings of Charles Stanley: Volume 2, Righteousness of God, The

God has graciously given us a complete, divine revelation of Himself, in His Word! That revelation is complete: there is no further development. But how little have we studied and searched it! How little we understand of its fullness! With many, the distinct object of the Spirit in each book of the Scriptures is very little understood, and hence what confusion! Passages are often quoted which, if examined, would be found to refer to totally different subjects.

Let us take one or two important illustrations: “The righteousness of God” (Romans 3:21). How commonly this is quoted from such scriptures as Romans 3:21-26, as if it meant the righteousness of Christ. Is not this great and serious confusion? Is it not as clearly as words can express, the righteousness of God in justifying the believer, whether before Christ came or after — the righteousness of God without law, or apart from law altogether? Not on the principle of law in any sense, but “being justified freely by His grace [by God’s grace] through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His [God’s] righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time, His [God’s] righteousness: that He [God] might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26). This great foundation truth, how God is righteous in justifying, is scarcely ever heard, even in evangelical preaching. I have read carefully the preachings at Exeter Hall and elsewhere, in defense of the gospel, as attacked by hosts of infidel ministers; and I thank God for the zeal of so many who spoke. Yet we are compelled to say on this most important truth, “the righteousness of God,” the trumpet gave a most uncertain sound. No anxious inquirer could tell from those preachings what “the righteousness of God” means. It is so confused with the righteousness of Christ. Far be it from me to seek to oppose those learned and gifted men. I would only seek to help. I am sure nothing would help them and the whole church of God more than a clearer understanding of this subject.

What then is the righteousness of God? and what is the righteousness of Christ? Righteousness is perfect consistency of character and actions, according to the relation of one being to others, or with himself. Thus the righteousness of God is the perfect harmony of His attributes in His dealings with all created beings — perfect consistency with Himself, and that in justifying the ungodly sinner. How could His perfect love to me a sinner, and His infinite hatred of my sins, be in absolute harmony? The redemption work and infinite propitiation for my sins, and substitution on the cross, is God’s only possible answer to this awful question. Blessed be God, He is righteous, and my justifier! Let a man place himself in honest truth before God as a guilty sinner, and then he will find in the gospel the only possible revelation of the righteousness of God in justifying him. Now the way God is righteous in justifying the sinner is “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24). The Scripture does not say through the righteousness of Christ imputed to the sinner to restore him before God, just as if he had kept the law, and never failed to keep it. It is quite a different Gospel to seek to reinstate man as a fallen child of the first Adam; and there is no mistake we are so liable to make as this.

Bearing in mind, then, that the righteousness of God is God’s whole purpose of salvation for guilty man, from first to last, and that purpose has been accomplished by Christ in redemption, let us then inquire, What is the righteousness of Christ? and then what is the redemption that He has wrought? The reader may not be aware that there is not exactly such an expression in scripture as the righteousness of Christ; 2 Peter 1:1 is the nearest to it. But there His Godhead is spoken of. We may say, however, the gospels present the only perfect righteous Man that ever trod this earth: perfect, and in absolute harmony with the mind and will of God, consistent with every relationship in which He stood. But that obedience must go up to the death of the cross. He must die, or remain alone. That one obedience must meet all the sinner’s need, in order that the many may be made righteous (Romans 5:18-19).

He must be a spotless victim, without sin, to do this, as it is written, “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4). Every type and shadow, every sacrifice, the utmost demand and curse of the law on the guilty (and that is what we surely are) has found its very end in Christ. God is glorified above the heavens, in absolute righteousness in justifying the guilty. Yes, God’s righteousness is exalted above the highest heavens, before the whole universe. Praise ye the Lord!

But is this Christ keeping the law, and that placed to man’s account to restore him, and make good his standing before God as a law keeper? Does righteousness come in this way by law? If so, there is no meaning in redemption. And it is remarkable, that wherever this different gospel is preached, which is not another gospel, redemption is not understood and seldom referred to.

What is redemption? Now, before reading another line, take a sheet of paper, and write down what you understand by redemption, especially if you have held that Christ’s keeping the law is one half of our salvation, and His atoning death the other half.

Let us take God’s own type for illustration: the redemption of Israel from Egypt. It would require quite a different story to illustrate the different gospel. Take just one point in Exodus 5. They are in bitter bondage as slaves; they have no straw, and they cannot make the count of

bricks. They are in sore distress. Does Moses, as a figure of Christ, make up the count of bricks for them? Are the bricks that Moses made imputed to them, so as to make up the full legal count? There is no such thought in a single figure of the Old Testament, or a verse in the New. Redemption is not the amelioration or improvement of man as the slave of sin and Satan; but, as in Egypt, it is the bringing man out of the place of slavery altogether into an entirely new place and condition. And this could only be by the blood of the Lamb. Is it not so whether we speak of the present redemption of our souls by His precious blood, or the still future redemption of our bodies at the resurrection? It is the bringing of that which is ransomed from one state to another. Redemption is not the improvement or making good the old man. When Israel had passed through the water, figure of death, they were dead to the law of brick-making in Egypt. They passed out of that state altogether. Is not this the very secret of the believer's power for a holy, righteous life even here? Being dead to sin (Romans 6:11), is he not to reckon this to be so? Is he not also as dead to law? "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4).

This is God's way. Man's way is just the opposite. He would say, "If you are born of God now, you must be married to the law to bring forth fruit by keeping it; and where you fail, the law-keeping of Christ will be imputed to you to make up." Can any soul have peace or deliverance in that way? Read the whole of this chapter before us (Romans 7). Here is the very case: a man born again, but still under law, trying to find some good in the flesh, in the utmost distress as we have all found: he cannot make his count of bricks. It is not a make weight or helper he needs. He finds there is not a bit of good in the flesh. As born of God he delights in the law of God; but, ah, that other law in his members! He needs, and in Christ he finds, full deliverance.

Well, you may say, I have, through the grace of God, believed the free forgiveness of sins, through the atoning death of Christ. Is there not something more? I do not seem satisfied. Well, it is blessed to hear and believe, that "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13:38). And even as to this part of the gospel, it is well to know the sure witness God has given. Not only has Jesus been delivered for our offenses, but God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, and for this very purpose, in view of this which we so need: "And was raised again for our justification." Believing this we are reckoned righteous. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 4:24-25; 5:1). Yes, we are justified from all our sins; accounted righteous through what Christ has done for us on the cross. But then Paul not only preached that free forgiveness through Jesus, but he also said, "And in Him all that believes is justified from all things" (Acts 13:39, literal translation). If we are believers, what have we not in Christ? Do you say, I want to be sure I have righteousness? "In Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Do you want to be assured that there is no condemnation to you? "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Do you say, I want this old sinful nature to be improved, and made fit for heaven? Ah, there is no such thought in Scripture. No, on the cross the Holy One of God was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin the flesh" (Romans 8:3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21). No, the righteousness of God is seen condemning our sinful nature on the cross, as well as in Jesus bearing our sins; and thus, by the cross, He set aside forever the old man with his deeds, and gives the believer a new place in Christ, the second or last man.

Oh think what it is to be in Christ. This was the purpose of God before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; but all this "in Him." (Read Ephesians 1:3-7.) And mark what God has given us in Him, according to His eternal purpose. No, it is not the lost man restored and made a good Jew under law. Mark these words: No, we do not know Christ after the flesh. It is not Moses making up the bricks under law, but, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). What can the believer need or even desire more, except grace to walk worthy of this high calling in Christ Jesus. He is thus our righteousness, but not to make good the old man under law. It is what He is now, made unto us, as risen from the dead. As He is so are we, and all of God. Oh what a difference is felt and enjoyed, when we come to the end of all hope of the flesh under law, and find all in Christ in resurrection! Not I, but Christ. Oh God, our Father, bless these few remarks to the deliverance of many souls; and to Thy name be all praise!

Things New and Old: Volume 33, Present Need of Souls, The

An earnest enquirer asks, "In Rom. 1:17, there is revealed the righteousness of God by faith unto faith." "What does Paul mean by the two faiths in this verse?"

This inquiry contains one of the deepest needs of souls—one which lays at the very root of solid peace with God.

The literal translation of this scripture is given thus: "For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings; for it is God's power to salvation, to every one that believes, both to Jew first, and to Greek: for righteousness of God is revealed therein, on the principle of faith, to faith: according as it is written, But the just shall live by faith [or on the principle of faith.]" Righteousness of God is a new thing—a new thought, revealed in contrast with righteousness of man required by the law. It is important to understand this clearly. The glad tidings are thus in direct contrast with the law.

The law was concerning man, God's righteous claims on man, God claiming righteousness from man, the just and holy commands of God to man—that was the principle of law. It was no question of faith, but of perfect obedience.

Now mark this entirely new revelation, the glad tidings, is God's power to salvation to everyone that believes. Surely then it is of the first importance to understand what this new revelation is. "For righteousness of God is revealed therein, on the principle of faith, to faith." That is, it is not at all. neither can be, on the principle of works of law; but is entirely on the principle of faith. And it is still further remarkable what follows: "according as it is written, But the just shall live by faith." In the original "by faith" is the same as "on the principle of faith."

The apostle then proves that on the principle of law, man, whether Jew or Gentile, cannot be justified. Those under law were sinners, guilty of the most shameful sins. Those not under law were no better; all were proved guilty. "For we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one," &c. The applied principle of law only brought out this: "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Let it then be fully understood that on the principle of law and works no one can be justified—all are concluded under judgment to God. Man has been fully tried, found guilty, and is under judgment. Like a prisoner who has been fully and fairly tried by a jury of twelve of his countrymen. All that counsel could say for him has been said. The sentence is past: he is under judgment of death. Look at him in his condemned cell, waiting the awful moment of execution. Here the illustration must stop. Nothing can illustrate this new revelation of God. No judge could pass sentence on a proved-guilty prisoner, and then declare himself to be the very justifier of this guilty man. Could he say, “The prisoner at the bar has been proved guilty. I have, according to the principles of the law of this land, passed sentence of death upon him; and now I justify him from every charge, and declare there is no condemnation to him?” On the principle of law, even human law, this would be impossible.

Have you ever been taken up? It is not unlikely that you have been trying to attain to righteousness and justification by the principles of law. Have you ever felt the horror of the condemned cell—guilty and under judgment? You may say, “I am not a Jew, I was never under law.” Very well, but you have sinned; you are guilty; you are under judgment if you belong to this world. Now the very principle of law is what you are to God, and you never can be satisfied that you are what you would like to be to God. No, if you stand before God on the principle of what you are, and what you have done, or what you feel, &c, if it is concerning yourself, you are in the condemned cell; and you cannot get out on the principle of your works to God. God is true; you have no righteousness, not even as much as would satisfy your own conscience. Have you?

Hence the deep need of your soul to have righteousness of God. This is, not what you are to God, hut what God is to you. It is entirely what God is, in justifying you, a guilty, condemned sinner. Oh, the need in this day of this new revelation, righteousness of God, on the principle of faith. This is without law; if we bring in the principle of law, God could not be righteous in justifying what His law condemns. It is wholly apart from law, though the law with all its sacrifices bore witness of Gods provision and purpose to justify the sinner. The prophets speak of the Holy Sufferer, who should bear the iniquities of His people. Abraham believed God, and was accounted righteous.

Now, how has righteousness of God been revealed? On the principle of faith. “Righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 3:22-24.) You will notice these glad tidings are concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; not concerning us, or our feelings, or our works.

What then has God done? We are guilty, only guilty. What has God done? is the question. He has loved us when guilty in the condemned cell. He has given His Son to die for us, to redeem us from guilt and judgment. All this was pure grace to the guilty under judgment. God, in sending His Son to redeem us, is set before us as the object of faith. In the life of Jesus we see God for us, not reckoning our iniquities unto us, but in love, beseeching us to be reconciled to Him. And when this utterly failed to win the heart of man, when the very priesthood of His people Israel hated Him with inveterate hatred, even unto the most cruel and shameful death, even there in that death, grace and righteousness shone forth as never known or seen before. When we had done our utmost against God in the person of the eternal Son, in that very place, on that very cross, God was for us. He was delivered for our iniquities. If God is to be righteous in justifying us, Jesus must suffer the infinite wrath due to our sins. Yea, more: He must be made sin, and as the one sin offering, He must be forsaken of God. Yes, Jesus, lifted up on the cross, explains, reveals righteousness of God in justifying both Old Testament saints before, and all who have believed since that death on the cross. Jesus said, “It is finished.” He bowed His head in death, gave up the Ghost, and was laid in the sepulcher.

But how am I to know that God has accepted the atoning death of Christ for me? “Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification:” precious certainty for faith to rest upon. Now, have our works, or our feelings, or our keeping the law, anything to do with this certainty of faith? Did our feelings raise Him from the dead? Oh, the blessed principle of faith: God the object of faith to our faith. That is, we believe God; and believing God, we have all the eternal benefit of righteousness of God. It is upon us. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,” &c. (Rom. 5:1.)

You notice the article, “the,” is omitted in the original. “Righteousness of God,” not the righteousness, as if there were any other righteousness. “There is none righteous, no, not one.” How vain then must be the effort to seek righteousness by works, or on the principle of works, or law. There is no such thing as righteousness on the principle of works. God sets His Son before us as the object of faith, all on the principle of faith. Will you try any longer to prove that God has made a mistake? that after all you hope, with His help, to attain to salvation by your works, and by your prayers, or fasting, or by any other means? You must see that all this is not on the principle of faith. And you never can have peace with God on the principle of works.

No, righteousness of God is what God has done. Do you say, What has He done? He set Christ before you as the mercy seat. The blood of Jesus is the answer. The atoning death for our sins is the answer of God. God hath laid our iniquities on His only begotten Son on the cross. Yes, God so loved us when we were in, not our righteousness, but in our sins, and had no righteousness. God undertook our redemption. He provided the Lamb. This is “righteousness of God, which is, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.” What a wonderful thing the principle of faith is. Many hundreds of years before Jesus thus died as the sacrifice for sins, Abraham believed God, and faith was reckoned for righteousness. But now Jesus has died, God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (all who believe). Jesus, sent of the Father, has taken the entire responsibility of all our sins. He has endured the wrath due to them; and He has put them away. The believer is justified in Him.

Can you doubt that God has accepted Him as our representative? Look at that empty sepulcher. Where is Jesus? Look up to the throne of God. Jesus is there, crowned with glory. He was once crowned with thorns, bearing the shame that we deserved; and then soon far deeper sorrow, bearing the wrath of God—made sin for us. Once all our sins were on Him when forsaken of God. Oh, mystery of love!

Is one of our sins on Him now? If one of our sins is on Him now in heaven, He must be as forsaken of God as He was on the cross. Such is sin in the sight of righteousness of God. No, sins are gone, to be remembered no more: and all this on the principle of faith according to righteousness of God, not according to my righteousness of law. Jesus has made peace by the death of the cross, according to righteousness of God. Thus everything that was on the principle of our works is gone. All things are now new, and all of God.

Now, do you believe that God is righteous in putting away your sins by the blood of Jesus? and further, in raising up His beloved Son for your justification? If you believe God, righteousness, His righteousness, is reckoned to you. You are reckoned righteous before God. You are reckoned what that blessed Man, God’s Son, is in the glory. “As He is, so are we in this world,” and soon to be as He is, like Him forever. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Do not forget Satan’s object is ever to take the

eye off Christ, the principle of faith, to self, the principle of works, or what I am to God. Satan knows well, how this fills the soul with darkness and unbelief. The principle of faith is what God is to me revealed in Christ.

C.S.

Things New and Old: Volume 32, First Years of Christianity: No. 7

We have seen in the Acts that the church, or assembly of God, as distinct from the Jew and the Gentile, and yet composed of both, began on the day of Pentecost by the descent of the Holy Ghost; and that all through the Acts, all that were converted were added to that one and only church. Every local assembly, as Jerusalem, Antioch, Thessalonica, &e, formed the one assembly of God. These were gathered out of the world from Judaism or heathenism—they were not of the world, but formed a new company, by the Holy Ghost. And there never had been such a company before. There had been individual believers, as Noah, Abraham, &c. There had been a nation, in a certain relation to Jehovah, as Israel. But the church was not a nation, but all the saved ones out of the nations.

What, then, is this new company thus formed by the Holy Ghost? In the Romans there is very little said on this: the church is not its theme, but the righteousness of God is the great subject of that epistle; man before God, and how God is righteous in justifying them that believe. We do however learn this, that “as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” (Rom. 12:4, 5.) And then all gifts, service, and work, is in accord with this entirely new position. This “one body” is IN Christ—every member of the one body is in Christ.

Now this could not be, as He tells us, until the grain of wheat had died. Until His death and resurrection He must remain alone. (John 12:24.) The believer is in Christ, who has died and forever put away his sins, and condemned his sin; and is now risen from the dead, and ascended on high. The one body of Christ is in Christ as risen from the dead. We are to minister to one another as members of the glorified Christ in heaven. We are to walk on earth as those who are risen with, and now in Christ, on high. We shall see more of this one body in other epistles. What a subject! And yet men can despise, and even deride it. Such seem to be given up to judicial blindness.

We are also told that the mystery was kept secret since the world began. (Rom. 16:25.) And this is a fact, that there is not one word in the Old Testament about this “one body in Christ.” Now it is revealed in the New Testament scriptures, we may see figures of it in the Old, as Eve was the one wife of Adam. And it would seem that since the first days of the church until these last days the mystery of the “one body in Christ” has been almost lost. And many believers even now have no idea what the church, the one body, is.

Many have a strange thought, that all sects form the one true church. But are all sects in Christ? Are all the millions of the Greek, Roman, and Protestant sects in Christ, risen from the dead and glorified? Are all these without condemnation, in Christ? No man would venture to say so.

But may there not be some individuals in all Beets, or divisions, of Christendom in Christ? purely this may be so. Then are not those individuals, if in Christ, justified from all things? Do not they form the one body in Christ? They do; that is the very thing I want to show clearer. Thus, if the reader is in Christ, risen from the dead, he is a member of the one body, in Christ. But though he may be a pope, cardinal, archbishop, clergyman, or minister of any so-called church, yet if he is not in Christ risen, he has no more to say to the one body of Christ, or the true church of God, than a Mahomedan. But if that be so, it is of very little value to belong to any of the so-called churches—Greek, Roman, &c. Just so. The question is this, not are you in the Church of Rome, or the Church of England, but are you in Christ?

And it does seem to me an important question, Does the Lord approve of my belonging to any division of Christendom? We shall find an answer to that question in 1 Cor. 1-3. You will notice this epistle is addressed to the true church of God, and also shows the responsibility of all who profess the name of Christ. And do not forget the test, the only test, in Christ “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints [or, saints by calling], with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours.” (1 Cor. 1:2.) The church of God is composed, then, of those who are separated from the world, sanctified in Christ Jesus; and all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus are responsible to hear. If, then, you are not sanctified in Christ Jesus, if you are not holy as in. Him by calling, you have no part in the church of God, the one body, in Christ.

God permitted sectarianism to begin in those first years, so that He might speak His mind by the Holy Ghost on the subject. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions [or schisms] among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.... And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ... for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men (1 Cor. 1:10; 3:1, S. See the whole context.) Thus we may even boast that we do the very thing that God in His word condemns. Did you never meet a man that boasted that he belonged to the Church of Rome, or of England, or some other division? God says, I beseech you that you do not.

If we really know what the one body of Christ is, and that we are in Christ, in the one body, we really could not belong to any other body, be it Roman, or Protestant. The Lord restore this great truth to our souls more clearly. If the fact of divisions proves even Christians to be in a carnal or natural state, acting as men of the world, and forming schools of philosophy; and, as we have seen, all this is thoroughly disapproved of by the Holy Ghost, then, for the comfort of every believer in Christ, does the same word of God settle the question—that each and all believers in Christ form the one body in Christ. To put it still a little plainer, as God disapproves of all divisions, they cannot, as supposed, form the true church, or one body in Christ. Can I, then, if I am in the risen Christ, be assured that I am a member of the one only true body of Christ?

Let us hear the answer. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit,” &c. (1 Cor. 12:12 to end.) If, then, you are in Christ risen and glorified, you are baptized by the Holy Ghost into the one body of Christ. This is a stupendous truth, and if known, error will drop off like autumn leaves.

Let us now pass on to the epistle to the Ephesians. In chapter 1:1-18 we have the purpose of God; chapter 1:19 to end, and chapter ii., how that purpose has been accomplished. In chapter 3 the administration of that mystery committed to Paul; chapter iv., the church, the body of Christ; chapter 5, the church as the bride of Christ.

But mark again how all this is limited to those only in Christ, to the faithful in Christ. (Chap, 1:1.) They are blest with every spiritual blessing in Christ. They were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. (Ver. 4.) God predestinated them unto the adoption of children unto Himself. It was His good pleasure, His delight, to have them to Himself. In Christ, the beloved, they are brought into favor. God said, as it were, I will have them in the same favor as my beloved Son. In Him they have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Yes, this was our God's eternal purpose, and such is every saint in Christ. God accomplished this purpose by raising up His beloved Son from among the dead, and set Him, as Son of man, the new risen Man, at His own right hand in the heavenlies. Not now as Messiah on earth, but far above all principality and power. And all this as Head over all things to the church, which is His body: "the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Chap. 1:18-23.)

Then is revealed to us the riches of His grace in taking us poor sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, and, in pure love, grace, free favor, giving to us, whether Jews or Gentiles, the very same place as His beloved Son, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." All this is far beyond anything ever made known or promised before. Thus in the church, all distinction between Jew and Gentile was broken down; peace was made by the blood of the cross, and peace preached to all both far and near. Oh, the depths of His mercy, the riches of His grace!

The assembly—all who are in Christ—are the true saints of God, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Have we been raised from the dead with Christ? If not, we are not stones in this heavenly building. Thus it is nothing to be members of man's churches, but everything to be in Christ.

Now the administration and revelation of this mystery was given to Paul. (Chap. 3) It was hid from ages, and never made known: "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the joint body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."

This did sorely perplex the Jews, and fill them with hatred to Paul. It perplexed them, because every promise in the Old Testament, the word of God, gave them a distinct place in the time of the kingdom; the coming time of this earth's blessedness. They knew not of this period of mystery whilst their Messiah is cut off and has nothing.

Every word to them, as a nation, shall surely be fulfilled, but in its time, not now. It wounded their pride to hear that there was no distinction—that in the boundless grace of God, beyond al thought, Jew and Gentile formed the one new joint body of Christ. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the assembly the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." What must the church be in the sight of God, and in the sight of all angelic hosts! Is there any wonder that Satan should seek to deface it with all the divisions of Christendom?

Now Paul had very fully put before them what it is to be in Christ risen from the dead. Without this no soul is a member of "the one body in Christ." But there is another thing equally important, and without which we cannot comprehend this wondrous purpose of God. For this he prays.

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