

Romans 8

by John Nelson Darby

Romans 8 describes the Christian's state in Christ, the person and presence of the Holy Ghost, and God's outward security for us, resulting in no condemnation and spiritual life.

Scripture: Romans 8:1-2, Romans 8:9, Romans 8:14, Romans 8:28, Romans 8:31-32, Romans 8:37-39, Galatians 5:16

Topics: "The Holy Spirit", "Assurance in Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby expounds on Romans 8, emphasizing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. He outlines three key aspects: our state in Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and God's unwavering support for us. Darby highlights that through Christ's sacrifice, believers are freed from condemnation and empowered to live according to the Spirit, which leads to a life of peace and assurance. He reassures that despite the ongoing struggle with sin, the believer's identity is secure in Christ, and God is always for us, ensuring our ultimate glorification.

Transcript

In this well-known and remarkable chapter, we have the results of what we have been considering in what precedes. Chapter 5:1-11 gave us the peace, present grace, and hope, which Christ's dying for our sins gave us, and what God is to us in and by it. This chapter gives our state and place before Him, and as such in the world, a kind of picture of what a Christian is.

There are three distinct parts in the detail of this chapter. First - Our state in Christ - the fruit of the grace of God. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," brought out in its inward power and fruitfulness, and with that, sin in the flesh condemned, but in Christ's death a sacrifice for it. This part goes down to verse 13. Second. - The person and presence of the Holy Ghost in us, down to verse 29. Third. - There is a transition from the work of God inwardly, in our souls, to the outward security, what God is for us, what we count upon Him for; and that makes it so sweet, for He says, "nor any other creature." And surely any creature whatever must be inferior to God: therefore he says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" So that from verse 29 to the end of the chapter it is God for us, the outward security, so to speak, unconnected with the work within us, that he had spoken of in the beginning of the chapter, though preserving them in divine love, in whom it is wrought, for the glory; and so entirely is this the case, that when he says, "whom he justified," he does not add, "them he also sanctified" (though that be true), but "them he also glorified."

78 I repeat again these three distinct parts in the chapter.

First. - The inward effect of the living power of the Spirit of God in our souls, down to verse 13.

Second. - The personal presence of the Holy Ghost in us, down to verse 29.

Third. - From verse 29 to the end of the chapter, all the saving power of what God is, according to His counsel, for us outwardly not looking at His work within the soul, but maintaining it to the end.

It may be noticed by some that I have said nothing on the last verse of chapter 7. "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Now a godly person might suppose having come to the deliverance there is in Christ Jesus, that conflict then was all entirely over. Now that is not the case, as it is after the soul has known deliverance by Jesus Christ that this great principle clearly comes out, "with the mind I serve the law of God"; as the apostle for the same reason could tell us what that state was I cannot do this till I have known deliverance. I cannot calmly describe how one sinks, as I have said, in the morass, till I am out of it. I am crying out for help, for my safety; but this last verse states the abiding general principle (flesh remains in us after we have known deliverance), and hence the conflict to keep it down; therefore in chapter 7:25, we see there is conflict after deliverance, as before, because there are conflicting principles of nature contradictory one to another: but we are no longer under the law after deliverance, we belong to another. Moreover, the power of the Spirit is there in us.

Thus in chapter 7 the new nature and the flesh are opposed to each other, but under law, while in Galatians 5 it is the opposition of flesh and Spirit. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh," because in the Galatians it is about those who have the Spirit, and therefore you get real power here, after the deliverance, which you do not get in Romans 7, because they have not received the Spirit. So that in Romans 7 it is not flesh lusting against the Spirit, but man under the law; whereas in Galatians it is added, if we walk in the Spirit, we are not under law. Therefore he does not say here (Rom. 7), "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," but he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me? for what I would that I do not, but what I hate that do I." But ye (that believe) are not in the flesh, but "in the Spirit." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Therefore in Galatians, when they have got the Spirit, they are exhorted to walk in the Spirit. But if they have the Holy Ghost, why this exhortation to walk in the Spirit? Because the flesh is still there, and lusteth against the Spirit.

79 But when a man is led of the law, he is still, as to his standing and conscience, in the flesh, though, if really Christ's, he cannot be entirely holden there. But you are not led of the law. "For ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you." And if ye be led of the Spirit, ye cannot be under the law, for when really under the law, ye must be led of the flesh; for sin loses its dominion as well as its power to accuse only by our not being under law, but under grace, because the law can in no wise place us in known grace nor give the Spirit. Therefore if under it you cannot be led of the Spirit.

Now then we are prepared to see the deliverance and the extent of it, and also that it is God's deliverance. In the first three verses of this chapter we have the results of the argument in the end of chapter 5, and in chapters 6 and 7. In verse 1 we have the result of chapter 5, as in the last Adam, then the displacing of the Adam nature by our being dead with Christ by the power of the Spirit of life in Him. In verse 2, and in chapter 6, dead to sin, and alive to God through Christ. In verse 3, as in chapter 7, dead to the law; and then in chapter 8, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Still he does not merely repeat what is there, but brings forward according to the full light of faith, and divine teaching, the actual condition of the believer, which that reasoning had brought him up to. That prepared the way? in contrast with the old state in Adam, and in replying to objections. This gives the actual condition of him who is delivered.

The conclusion is in the first verse by itself; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." They have passed out of the flesh as before God and are in Christ who has died and risen again; and, having suffered for our sins, is past death and judgment and the whole condition of sin, even as having to say to it for others. There cannot therefore be condemnation for me in Him. The 'therefore' is not a consequence drawn as an argument, but a great moral result demonstrated by the condition of things developed in what precedes.

80 Verse 2 begins the full resulting view, as 'for' is constantly used by the apostle - the result of what is passing in the apostle's mind - not the proof of his textual argument. The power of life in Christ, acting in and for itself, has set me free from the law of the old man altogether; I may foolishly listen to it, but I am not, really, at all under its power. Just as the breath which God breathed into Adam's nostrils gave him power to use his previously formed body, so the power of life in Christ enables me to serve now in the liberty and power of that life. But another truth comes in to make this good - redemption and resurrection. If it were only a new nature, new in its desires, it would give the sense of responsibility, the conscience of sin, and, in the hatred of it, the knowledge that God must be against it, and thus fear and dread as regards God. This is Romans 7, and in principle, law; but what law could not do, God has sent His Son and accomplished. The blessed and sinless Lord has come, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, that is, as a sacrifice for sin. Thus God has condemned sin in the flesh. It has been dealt with; that which my conscience recognised, which held me in bondage, cannot accuse me any more. Its condemnation is past, but executed, and I have, in that same work of Christ, died to it. I live to God through Him that is risen, to whom I am bound. Thus verse 3 shews me that work of God which leaves me free to live in the life of verse 2. The actual requirements of the law will be thus fulfilled, because I am not under it, and I live by a life which does not do what is contrary to God's will

Under the first Adam, who brought in sin and death, there was nothing but what pressed down; while in the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, it is all lifting up, but lifting up from under the power of sin, as well as from its condemnation - perfect liberty. God has come in in delivering power; but you say, How is that? God's Son went down under death for our sins, and rose in the power of the life of the Son of God without them, and by association with Him, we are taken from under our sins, and the law of sin in the old man, into resurrection-life with Him. Thus, then, if I am dead and in Christ risen, there can be no condemnation, for I have died under God's judgment against sin, and am alive after the judgment has been executed for sin on Him who died for it. I am alive only to God in Him, not in the flesh in which sin is, the sense of sins put away; there can therefore now be no condemnation, for it is God Himself that justifies.

81 God came in in power when man was a sinner, by Christ's coming and taking us out of the old, and putting us into the new condition altogether. Therefore now it is no question of hope, where faith is simple. I do not hope anything about the cross, because it is a past thing, executed and done. We do not now trust in a promise for salvation, but in the fact, the accomplishment of a promise (of course we do trust in a promise for every day's need and deliverance, but that is quite another thing).

By one righteousness the free gift is of many offences unto justification of life. And the way He is bringing them is beyond death, and hence deliverance from the guilt of sin; but through death alive in God's presence, and thus not in the flesh, in which the power of sin was, but in Christ, and there is no condemnation there; and then the reason he gives for this, saying, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And here is the secret of the walk, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," for now he enters on the power of the Spirit, but still, first, on the power of life, for what we do not get in chapter 7, we get here fully, that is, Christ and the Spirit. Having laid the

foundation in virtue of what Christ has done, and having given us life, He then works in us; for this is what we find, the living power of the Spirit of life in Christ setting us, as associated with Him, out of the sphere of the power of condemnation, death, and law; because my life, as a Christian, is through Christ, so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It is this which introduces the doctrine of the Spirit's presence, of which this chapter now proceeds to speak. "What the law could not do" (that is, effect righteousness by keeping it in the flesh), he that walks in the Spirit does; he fulfils the law, and that is the practical result of our position, but the law could never give that power.

I desire to call attention again to verse 1: there is great force and power in it. It does not say you are not condemned, but, "there is now no condemnation," and that goes much farther; for if there is any question of sin on the conscience, the nearer we are to God, the more distressed and anxious we shall be, and therefore the soul needs this full assurance. Could anyone say there was any condemnation for Christ? and that now even, as regards His connection with us? surely not! for He is the Holy One, the accepted Man in the presence of God, having perfectly glorified Him in His work for us. Then how can there be any condemnation for the one that is in Him, for whom this work was wrought? Therefore he says, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." This is more than saying to them for whose sins Christ died, than if it was said on Christ Jesus - as Aaron wore the breastplate as part of the vestment, so that the names of the children of Israel were borne on his heart; and when the light of Jehovah's countenance fell on Aaron with full favour, the same light shone on the names engraved on the breast-plate. But this in Romans 8 is much more, being in the presence of God as Christ is; all the old sins gone; himself, as to the old man, dead with Christ, and he himself before God in perfect acceptance.

82 Verse 2. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The old man could never get rid of its law (law here is power, or nature acting uniformly), but here we have another man, the new man; and that has its law, and what is that? life in Christ: a law as uniform in its spirit of action as any natural law. And this law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is godliness, associating with Him out of the sphere of sin and death. The law, dealing with the old man, had no power against this law of sin and death - this contrary spirit of action; but now there is the new man, with a new law, and that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; but he does not speak of walking in the Spirit, till he has said, "no condemnation," as there is no power for walk till that question is settled. We saw in chapter 7 the desires of the new life, but working towards the law, and, therefore, no power; but here it is life itself in Christ acting in its own law.

Verse 3. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh." The law was not in fault. It failed through the weakness of the flesh; you cannot make anything perfect out of bad materials. A man may be a very skilful workman, but if you set him to work on bad materials, all his skilfulness would prove of no avail. If it is to carve on wood, for instance, he may display the most exquisite taste and workmanship, and produce that which all must admire, and declare to be perfect, and without a blemish or a fault: but if he were to attempt to do the same on clay instead of wood, or on rotten wood, it would crumble to pieces beneath his hand, and thus all his skill would go for nothing; so the law attempting to work on the flesh only crumbles it to pieces. The law never effected the giving of righteousness. It promises life to those who keep it, but it never gives life; what man could not do, God can do. "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," in dying the just for the unjust. God condemned, or, as you might say, executed sin in the flesh for us by the death of Christ. He did not die only for my sins

(though that is true), but for my sin. The root of sin that is in my nature, and that which worries and distresses the heart of the sincere believer daily, is put away for faith by death, and we are dead to it, as well as those sins that are committed; for the heart says, and rightly too, that God ought to condemn it, and trembles; now how is this to be met? By God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, or as a sacrifice for sin.

83 Then He condemned sin in the flesh, and put it away in Christ's sacrifice; thus the whole thing is settled, and that which was a weight on my spirit, and a thorn in my conscience is taken away by the very way in which the condemnation has run out in all its full force, in the crucifixion of Christ. God has settled the question, condemning the sin in you, which you condemn. But where has He done it? Outside of yourself altogether; for if God sets about delivering, He does it perfectly. If Christ has died, not only for your committed sins, but your sin in the flesh, it is real through redemption: for He does not leave us under our sins, but takes them away, and forgives them. And not only this, He takes away the condemnation of sin in the nature, by God's judgment being executed on the sinless flesh of the person of His own Son. Thus sin in my flesh is judged, as well as my committed sins. This is what the heart wants to be delivered from, and what it is in conflict with every day. The tree and the fruit - the root and the sap, that harasses the heart, is settled, and that by God sending His own Son. There was the greatest grace to meet it; and the very thing that harasses you most God has provided for in sending His own Son.

84 Well, then, in verse 3, I get the result of chapter 7 met. "In that the law was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son," etc. Well, but you say, I have sin working in me still, what am I to do? Why, the very thing that distresses you is the very thing that God gave His Son for, "and for sin" and so "condemned sin in the flesh." This it is that gives the real liberty to the Christian, not liberty to sin, but liberty from sin.

Verse 4. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." He is not taking up the old man here, but the walk; and mark, there are two principles of walk - after the flesh, and after the Spirit. Flesh is not changed; if it were, why be exhorted not to walk after it? But no; the flesh is the same as ever, but the believer now has power over it, he does not walk after it, although it be there. The flesh is in him, but he is not in the flesh. There is no excuse for a Christian walking in flesh, because the Spirit of Christ is in him. But, mark further; we all, even as believers, have the flesh, but that does not necessarily make the conscience bad, but I must have conflict with it, then it is no hindrance to communion; but if I yield to it, I get a bad conscience and lose communion, and I have to confess my sin before communion can be restored. For instance, if I have pride in my nature, that does not hinder communion, if I go to my Father and plead with Him about it, and ask Him to help me to keep it down, and walk in gracious humility, to deliver me; instead of losing communion, I have communion with God about it. But if there be neglect, instead of getting strength from God to overcome it, I may go out in the morning without carefulness and get my pride wounded: for if a person does not shew me as much respect as I think he ought, then my pride comes out in some unhappy manifestation, and my conscience is defiled, and my communion with God hindered, and the Lord Himself dishonoured. The very fact of my having indwelling sin is but the occasion of communion, or a barrier to it, according as I am dead to it, seeking God's face, or yield to it.

Verse 5. "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." It is "after the Spirit." the man's condition is looked at here as spiritual. Every nature has its object, which is its "mind." There are two principles here, each having its own object; the very brute creation have their desires, the flesh its more deliberate objects. The spiritual man obeys the tastes and appetites of the Spirit instead of the flesh.

85 Verse 6. "To be carnally minded is death" (or, which is better, the mind of the flesh, and the mind of the Spirit. It is what each in its nature desires, not a state). If the flesh run its course, death, the seal of condemnation, must be upon it. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"; "but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." Now we are getting the real, practical, inward thing. There are two kinds of peace - peace in the conscience, and peace in the heart. "To be spiritually-minded is life and peace." This is a far higher thing than simply peace in the conscience. It is peace in the heart and affections. The affections are at rest, and then there is the steady pursuit of things for which our consciences will not accuse us, for, delighting ourselves in the Lord, there will be peace. If you are restless and discontented in your mind, you are not at peace, you are thinking about yourselves! self has come in, so we want something for self. The Spirit turns the eye away from self towards the Lord. The things of the flesh are too small to fill the heart, and the heart likewise needs enlarging to grasp the things of the Spirit; and herein is the contrast between Ecclesiastes and Canticles on this very point.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon says, "There is no good thing under the sun"; "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Why so? To him, self was seeking its own satisfaction. Here, then, was no rest, no peace; it could not be otherwise. No human object could satisfy an immortal soul, nor could a dying man get rest in what he was to die out of. Yet, when thinking of himself, it was all I, I, I, I did it, and I found it vanity; but in Canticles we see all his blessedness, because he speaks of Christ being all to him there. As it has been said, in Ecclesiastes the heart was too great for the object; in Canticles the object is too great for the heart. We want a largeness of capacity for the enjoyment of God Himself; a largeness of capacity which none but God can give and none but God can fill. Where that is, "life and peace" are. What peace and joy and communion a Christian, so walking, has in his heart! But when self comes in, even if we have assurance, there is no peace of heart, because there is always a liability to have it wounded, and if it be not, self is never content. If we know ourselves, we shall soon see that it is the central thought of every irritated heart.

86 Verse 7. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God," etc. Now, here we get a deeper thing still than lawbreaking in itself; an unsubject will always is the spirit of hatred against Him to whom we feel we ought to be subject, and this brings on the full judgment of self; for while there may be peace of heart and peace of conscience, yet a man finds that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for he finds that he, according to the flesh, has a will that will not be subject to God, and it would not be a will if it were. The flesh has not only desires, but a will that is not subject to the law of God, nor ever can be. The law not only declares right things, but also the authority of the Lawgiver, and that brings out the rebellion of the flesh, for the flesh immediately says, I will, and I won't. If you are guilty of breaking one commandment, you are guilty of all; for the unwillingness to submit is as much shewn in the breaking one, as in breaking all. I may require my child to obey in three things, and in two of them he may obey me, because he does not want to do otherwise; but in the third he does not obey, not liking to do it, and therefore takes his own way instead of submitting; the sin was in the will, for he was as guilty in disobeying me, as if he had disobeyed in all: "So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God," because of the will in the members.

Verse 9. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Now we get the liberty, for you are not set in the flesh, but in the Spirit. This is the new nature having its source in the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost working in it. The man is not in the flesh, is not in that place, and standing, and nature before God (he does not say that flesh is not in the man), but in the Spirit; that is, all the Spirit delights in and describes, characterise the man before God, according to the nature and place he has in Christ, though there may be much failure in carrying it out. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." It is not merely God working for us, but in us. We are born of the Spirit, thus we get the new nature, but then, besides the new nature we

want power and liberty, and therefore, consequent on redemption and our cleansing by blood the Holy Ghost, who is God, dwells there to work in the new nature, and this gives living power. For if I have the new nature only, this gives good desires, but I do not accomplish them, as in chapter 7; but here it is "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." It is not merely that we have new thoughts and desires, but He, who is really God, dwells in us to give us power to accomplish them.

87 It is blessed to see how he brings in God as the real practical deliverance of the man who was before in the flesh. For it does not say, "if born of the Spirit," though that is true, but, "if the Spirit of God dwell in you," a truth founded on redemption, and our being delivered by it, cleansed through Christ's blood, so that the Holy Ghost can dwell in us, the power of God Himself working in us. And if the Spirit of God works powerfully in a man, when did it first work and manifest itself in the true and perfect path of a man before God? In Christ; so this is called now the Spirit of Christ, because shewn in the fruit, in walking like Christ, in the practical formal characteristics of meekness, lowliness, gentleness, obedience, heavenly-mindedness, etc., which the Spirit took in Christ (for these were the natural found characteristics of the Spirit in Christ), but formative in us of that which was so perfectly in Him.

Verse 10. "But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin," that is, Christ being power and life in us, we take it for dead, for if alive, it only is and can be sin: "but the Spirit is life because of righteousness," its natural practical fruit; I only am and own that as life. That is, the old man in us (the body with a will is called the flesh) is as dead, shorn of will, for I judge it: but the Spirit is life, already manifesting the fruits of righteousness in us, to the praise of the glory of God.

But, farther, the body itself will be raised. "He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." How entirely are the saints separated from this world! Even their resurrection is different; the world; that is, the wicked dead, will not be raised by the Spirit of Christ, but the just will be raised by His Spirit, for He dwells in them. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you" (here is the link), you will be raised because of the same Spirit dwelling in you. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Thus we have three aspects of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of God contrasted with the flesh; the Spirit of Christ as characteristic of our walk in the world; and the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus, pledge of our resurrection - the triple character of the Spirit of God as given to the Christian. At the end of verse 11 we get the answer to verse 24, of chapter 7, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Here there is full deliverance, not only for the soul now, but for the body also. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." We shall be brought up to the very image of Christ; even our mortal bodies shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body. The liberty of glory is contrasted with the liberty of grace. Now we are in the liberty of grace, then in the liberty of the glory, the creature being sharer in the latter.

88 In speaking of the Spirit of God, He is spoken of up to verse 11 as being life, and after that as distinct from one's life in Christ, as a present Person, as dwelling in us and witnessing with our spirit. See how strikingly these two points of view are brought together in verse 27. It attributes the thoughts and feelings which God searches out to my heart, because it is in my heart that the Spirit works, but it goes on to the source: in my heart it finds the mind of the Spirit according to the doctrine of verses 5-7, which is wrought by the Holy Ghost; and lastly, it is the Holy Ghost Himself who makes intercession in the saints. It is me, because it is wrought in my new nature; but as to the power that wrought it, it is not me. The Holy Ghost does it in and by me. It is me as to the act, but it is He as to the source. We have the new nature given to us, and the Spirit is the source, nor is the stream separated from it; this is the teaching up to verse 11; but

the Holy Ghost dwells in us. Well, a groan comes out, and I may not understand what to ask for, but through the Holy Ghost my groan is according to the mind of the Spirit, by the Spirit of God which is in me; but this brings in the last truth referred to, His intercession. It is the Spirit Himself in me; He makes intercession according to God, and "God that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." It is attributed to my heart, but to Him also that produced it. It is me, and at the same time it is the Holy Ghost. I have anticipated in my reference to this verse, because it made plain the doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. It is a sweet thing to know that the Searcher of hearts finds the Spirit's mind and intercession in us, in place of sin and the flesh.

89 We will now open out the doctrine itself. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit." The Spirit is life, as we have seen, but we must understand that we are sealed after we have believed. It will be said, "Yet, I cannot believe without the Spirit." Most true, it is His work, we are born of God by His quickening power, through the word, whence also it is by faith; but, then, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost is a very different thing from the quickening power of the Spirit. The Old Testament saints were the subjects of this quickening power of the Spirit, but the indwelling of the Holy Ghost could not be till Jesus was glorified. Instances are given in the Acts, where there was an interval in time to make us sensible of the distinction of the two.

Well, there is a new nature, but there is neither strength nor power in it. We cannot act without the Spirit. The very characteristics of the new nature are dependence and obedience, and the Holy Ghost is the power in answer to this dependence, and hence it is we are led by the Spirit. The Spirit does not lead the flesh, but it teaches me to reckon it dead, and to mortify my members upon earth. Yet it is the whole man He leads, for I do not call the flesh me, if I reckon myself dead, but that is "if the Spirit of God dwell in you."

Then we are temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in us, which we have of God. A temple is that in which God dwells, and my body is this temple. Surely this is a most solemn motive against sin, for how can I go and defile God's temple? In John 14:16 the Lord says, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." So also in John 16:7, He says, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." The first Comforter, Christ, did not dwell, that is, abide with them; He had to go away, and further, He was not in them, but the other Comforter was, as He said, to dwell or abide with them, and should be in them. Christ was with them and went away; but the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter, was to be in them, and abide for ever. There is no strength in us to give power to the truth we receive, or to enjoy the things we have believed. But the Holy Ghost not only presents the things of Christ to us, but at the same time enables us to enjoy them, and to walk in the power of them.

90 In 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 we find three things about the Spirit. First, divine instruction received by the Spirit's revelation to the vessel of truth, verse 12, "Now we have received." Second, communicated to others by the Spirit, v. 13, "Which things also we speak." Third, spiritual capacity to discern; it also gives the truth living power in the souls of those who are taught, verse 14, "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God." There is a solemn truth connected with this, namely, that the Comforter is really come, for He could not come till Jesus was glorified; and if the Holy Ghost is dwelling in us, we are called to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Being born of God, and sprinkled with the redeeming blood of Christ, we get the Spirit indwelling. This blood is the foundation of His presence, for by it we are clean, and He can dwell there, the seal and witness of the value of Christ's work.

The Spirit was abundantly prophesied of in Ezekiel and Isaiah: "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed." Thus to the Jews there were abundant promises that there should be the pouring out of the Spirit; and the Spirit was the quickener of every saint in the Old Testament times: but now there is another thing, for the Holy Ghost is really given to us; and He could not be given till redemption was fully accomplished. It was only promised till then, as Israel well knew; but it was promised, and therefore Nicodemus ought to have known that, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But there is another thing, besides being born again, upon the coming down of the Holy Ghost, the seal was upon the value of Christ's work. The seal was not put upon what we had done (our real fruits are the fruits of the Spirit, when we already have it), but upon what Christ did. The Lord's own anointing, when baptized, was the seal to His personal perfectness - "Him hath God the Father sealed." But then, could He put the Holy Ghost on me? No; this would be sealing the flesh; but on Him: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed."

The Holy Ghost was also given to testify of Christ's glory as the risen Man. In Acts 2:33 we see Christ taking the place of the Head of the body, the church, at the right hand of God, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost. Thus we see the gift of the Holy Ghost was entirely dependent on Christ taking His place at the right hand of God, as we read in John 15:26, "Whom I will send unto you from the Father"; and the effect of this was felt in the apostles. There was a total difference in them before and after Pentecost. They then preached Jesus crucified. Were they afraid? No; Peter goes and charges those who had denied Him with being guilty of a damning sin, when Peter had committed the same in a much worse way himself (having been His companion) in denying Him; and how could he do this? His own conscience was purged, for Christ had died in the interval, and the Holy Ghost had been given, and thus he, who before followed trembling (Mark 10:32), had power now; for he had none before. As it is said, "When they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled," Acts 4:13. I am not speaking of miracles, the mighty signs and wonders that were wrought by the power of the Spirit of God (Rom. 15:19), but of the boldness in which the apostles spake after that they received the Holy Ghost. As we see all through the Acts, the boldness in which the apostles spake and acted was not the boldness of the flesh, but that of the Spirit of God in them.

We have a beautiful type in Aaron (looked at as Christ) who was anointed without blood. But the sons of Aaron (the church) must be sprinkled with the blood and oil. So the leper was first sprinkled with blood, and then over that with oil. Christ was anointed down here, which was the seal of His own personal perfection before the blood had been shed. But we, when we believe the atonement, are anointed and sealed, because of, and as a testimony to, the value of His work; "He that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointeth us, is God." Christ sends the Holy Ghost, and the Father sends the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is in us as the Spirit of adoption. The effect is to connect us with all the glory into which Christ will bring His church, and to associate us with Him now in the place where He is in the presence of the Father, and this as the children of the Father. And this truth, that the Spirit is sent to us and in us, gives the character of our walk down here.

We are to mind the things of the Spirit; and what are they? Anything in this world? No, nothing, if it be not His service there. "He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He gives us the knowledge of past redemption, present joy and peace, and future glory. The Holy Ghost teaches us the glory of the cross after we have known its saving power, for then we are inside the cross. Whatever is morally glorious: you see it in the cross - love, obedience, righteousness, holiness; law, and whatever was morally bad, met there too, condemnation, sin, and death. God and sin met together in the person of Christ on the cross, but in the way of redemption for us, while it enhances the iniquity of sin.

92 When I have found peace, then I can say, "Now is the Son of man glorified" (and so He ought to be), and now He has accomplished that work, and is gone on high, and we have glory in Him; and surely there is no joy like that into which we are brought, the joy of knowing that, in that act of deepest suffering for my salvation, Christ and God were most fully glorified. If Christ suffered all that agony for my sin and vileness, surely there never was a moment in which God could look on Him with greater delight than this. And I have now got all the effect of this; I am the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. The light of God's love rests upon Christ Himself, and we are in Him - "I am in my Father, ye in me, and I in you." We have the blessing of union with Him now, and there is but one thing more - to be with Him for ever. The Comforter is the perpetual remembrancer of that word, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." The church is to be brought to Christ, as Eliezer went to fetch Rebekah to Isaac; and as all along the road he was telling her of the one to whom she was going, just so the Holy Ghost is leading us in the way, the cross being the starting-point, giving the whole character of the road all along the journey answering to it, while He is telling us of the Father's house, and place of the heavenly Bridegroom.

There may be trial in the way, but what is all that but dung and dross to the heart whose affections are on Christ? Poor Rebekah, if she thought of her father's house, where was she? In the wilderness, with a stranger, and an uncertain future; but if she thought of what was before her, then it was all joy and certainty as to the future. The cross is the very commencement of this journey, as separating us from the world, and if we would know the Spirit's power in our souls, we must keep in the narrow path of separation from the world all the journey through. Do not make the wilderness the object of your hearts (Israel did this); or at least do not rest in it. You may desire earthly good, and you may get leanness into your soul: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die"; but let our walk down here be like Paul's, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." Let us be so pressing on to the glory, that everything in this world may be things behind us, that we have left, turning our back on. We are going to Christ, and He will present us to Himself, and to the Father, without blemish and without spot, for He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

93 We have before noticed that there are three parts in this chapter - three distinct subjects. First, the work of the Spirit of God in us, the effect produced in ourselves, as the power of life, even to the resurrection of the body; that it was the fruit and operation of God's Spirit in us extending to the resurrection. Second, it is not only the effect that is produced in living power in us by the Holy Ghost, but the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself in us, distinguishing between that which is born of the Spirit and the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Third, what God is for us in His outward operations. The moral effect of this is, not only that God has worked in me by the Spirit and thereby put me in a certain position, but that the Holy Ghost is with me in that position; what God is for me also, so as to secure and bless him in whom He has wrought. It is not merely that a certain work is wrought in me, but God is in me, for me, and with me. Thus, first, there is that which God has done with me; second, what God is in me; and third, what God is for me.

This last is brought out at the end of the chapter: what God is for man, and not what man is for God, but man looked at as a saint; for when the apostle has brought distinctly out what man is, then he brings out what God is for man, such as he is, as a sinner, summed up in chapter 5; and then what the position of the saint is in his life and trials, and God in and for him as such. Therefore God is fully set forth, that our hearts may rest in what He is, and not in what we are. The rejection of God's Son proved what man is; but those who believe rest on what grace is, as we saw at the end of chapter 5; and now, made alive to God, they know their position with God according to His predestinating power, and the glory to come. Faith rests on what God is, and on what God has done, as shewing what He is withal; God has quickened us and

sanctified us, and we have a place with God through this, but what is wrought in me is not the object of faith: faith rests on what God is, as thus revealed in His word, which is our warrant for believing.*

{*Hence, in a certain sense, chapter 5 goes beyond chapter 8, as revealing what God is in Himself to a sinner, not what we are made before Him.}

94 The witness in power is the Holy Ghost. It is not only believing that the Spirit quickens, but that we stand before God in the Spirit according to the place He has given us actually in Christ, and that if we believe in what God has done, in that He has quickened the dead, and brought into His presence with power Him who had gone down under death for our sins, when everything was against us (for sin can nowhere be shewn out as it was on the cross, when He who hung there was made sin and a curse for us), and that we know He is now the very delight of God - a man in heaven - not only as to His person, but His work, we are brought thus to see what sinners we were - lost sinners - transgressors from the womb; but at the same time, to see His grace which has wrought deliverance, and that we are placed in Him who is thus accepted. And God has so brought out and applied to our hearts all this grace, that we can now say, "God is for us," for this is the great general truth at the end of chapter 8; the Holy Ghost giving us to understand it by bringing it home to our hearts, in the conviction of what we are in ourselves, and in Christ; what God is, and that He is for us, "What shall we say to these things? if God be for us, who can be against us?"

The testimony of the gospel always comes to convince of sin, but at the same time to speak of His grace - what God is for us; but then, it must be received by faith, for we have no power in ourselves to enjoy God, and it would never be properly faith if it were not by God's power, as it is said, "We are kept by the power of God through faith," but why through faith? Because faith leads my soul into the understanding of His love. Thus leading the heart to trust in Him, and not in ourselves, in a way that makes us understand and prize what God is (not in the heart's love to Him, but in His love to it), as known in all the dealings of His grace, keeping us by His power; not keeping as we keep a precious jewel, which is unintelligent and uninterested in all our care, but as creating an answer in our hearts to what He does. His power never fails: we are kept by that, but it is through faith, that we may have the enjoyment of it, as being brought to delight ourselves in Him, by whom we are kept.

95 In the three things brought out in this chapter, we have, first, the new nature, which has spiritual faculties, capable of enjoying God; as a child, for instance, has the capacity of enjoying its relationship to the parent, but must also be in the relationship to have the affection in exercise; so we are conscious of our place through redemption, but then we want power, because the new nature is a dependent nature. The first man sought to be independent, and so became the slave of the devil; the second man did nothing of Himself, He came to obey - He took the form of a servant. It is the same place we are in, and having a dependent nature, we want power as we have seen in chapter 7, where there is a new nature "delighting in the law of God after the inward man," but neither object nor power; for we must have something to love, and then power to love it, for in chapter 7 the soul has neither Christ nor the Holy Ghost till the end of it, when he finds the Lord Jesus Christ, and then exclaims, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and because he can say, "There is no condemnation." Now, the soul has got an object, and it has got power, Christ revealing the Father and the Spirit, and it is no longer a question of conscience. It is not that he is without a conscience, but his conscience is purged by the blood of Jesus, and then there is the power of the Spirit of God in him, and having the new nature, there is the development of God's things in us, by the power of the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us, and is the power in us also to understand them, as the Lord said, "He shall take of mine and shew it unto you," and

"shall be in you."

It is the presence of the Holy Ghost with a soul that has been quickened and knows redemption, having submitted to the righteousness of God, and not as quickening the soul at conversion, which is the subject here; nor is it the Spirit, as He is with the church, which truth is taught in another place, but it is the presence of the Holy Ghost in man, in the believer; as the great subject of the epistle to the Romans is, how God can be just and the justifier of the sinner, and man stand accepted before Him - the relation of an individual soul with God. Therefore the great fundamental truth is what man is for God, and what God is for man, and lastly, what through grace man becomes before God. In the early chapters we saw what man in his natural state is for God; in chapter 5 what God is for the sinner; but in chapter 8 what man is in Christ is brought out, and thus what God is for him, as in this place - "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"; he does not say as many as are quickened by the Spirit, though that is true, for they must be quickened, before they can be led by the Spirit. They are also sealed; then again, if they are led by the Spirit they are not under the law, but, being sons of God, they are led by the Spirit of God. For the Christian is looked at here in his own place, according to the word. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

96 In John's Gospel we see, as truly as the Son was sent from heaven, so truly was the Holy Ghost sent from heaven; the Father sent the Son, and the Father and the Son sent the Holy Ghost; the office of the Holy Ghost is quite distinct from the work of the Son come in the flesh. We will now refer to some passages in John's Gospel, that we may understand it. In chapter 16:7, He says, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you" - a living mighty agent, God the Spirit, who comes down and dwells with you, and is in you, and He remains. Christ must go away, but He shall abide with us, and be in us.

Of the Holy Ghost the Lord says, "whom the Father will send in my name," and again, "whom I will send from the Father"; that is, Christ obtains it for us, and the Comforter comes from the Father to put us, through that name, in relationship with the Father; then secondly, Christ sends Him from His Father, and the Holy Ghost comes to tell us all the glory into which Christ has entered as Man. But, that we may be distinct and clear upon the subject, we will look at John 14:16. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever"; and then, verse 17, "for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"; and then, in verse 20, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The Holy Ghost in thus coming down gives to the believer the consciousness of being in Christ, and His being in them, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The disciples ought to have known that He was in the Father, and the Father in Him, as He said, Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? (v. 10). But they could not know while He was on the earth of the fulfilment of these words, "ye in me, and I in you." As He says, "At that day ye shall know," etc.; then in verse 26, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name." Here we have the Father sending in the Lord's name; and in chapter 15:26, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father"; and then in chapter 16:13, "when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall shew you things to come."

97 Here, then, in John 16 we get the fulfilment of this great promise, that the Holy Ghost was to come down to reveal Christ, and to abide for ever; for here the Holy Ghost is looked at as upon the earth, telling of the things He has heard, taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them unto us; thus carrying on the whole work in our hearts, and then that He is to abide with us for ever: for the efficacy of Christ's work

must fail, God must fail, before the Holy Ghost could be taken away, as it is in virtue of our being sprinkled with the blood of Christ, that the Holy Ghost is given. The Holy Ghost is in us, in virtue of the work of Christ, being the great testimony of God's estimate of the value of the blood of Christ, and of the glorification of the Man Jesus. We may grieve Him, and hinder His operations in us (alas! we do grieve Him), nevertheless, that cannot drive Him from us, as His presence in the individual is not in consequence of the condition of the individual, but in virtue of the blood of Christ, and that must be given up before the Holy Ghost could be removed; for the anointing oil, when the leper was cleansed, was put upon the blood; as Peter also teaches when he says, 1 Peter 1:12, "By them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The Holy Ghost came down upon the person of the Lord when He was upon earth at His baptism, as a seal of His personal perfection, "him hath God the Father sealed"; but when He ascended up on high He received it for others (Acts 2:33), and therefore promised (Acts 1:5), "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence"; which actually came to pass at Pentecost. See Acts 2. So also in John 7:39, "This spake he of the Spirit," which, in virtue of redemption, they were to receive, "for the Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

98 In Acts 19:2, Paul asks, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They answer, "We have not yet heard whether the Holy Ghost is come." They were John's disciples, and therefore it was not that they questioned the existence of the Holy Ghost, for indeed, every thoughtful Jew acknowledged the Holy Ghost as spoken of by the prophets; but they had not heard whether the Holy Ghost had come in power, as spoken of in John 7; and according to the words of John the Baptist: "He shall baptise with the Holy Ghost," Matt. 3:11. So again in Galatians, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"; and in Ephesians, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." In these two passages we have the same truth taught, having got redemption through His blood, they have the Holy Ghost as the seal and the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.

The Holy Ghost was obtained by the work of Christ, and given to those who believe in consequence of faith, the seal of God set on those who believe in that work. Being sprinkled by that blood we can be sealed; the blood being that on which the anointing of oil comes,* as the seal of that work, which God had wrought in Christ, and the earnest of the glory to come; while the soul rests on that work of which the Holy Ghost is the seal. The Holy Ghost is the strength of fellowship in two ways, giving us first the knowledge of present favour, as adopted children; and secondly, of our union with Christ, our forming part of the body or bride of Christ. Thus we have seen redemption accomplished; the present work of the Holy Ghost in us; and glory in prospect. And if you are to bear fruit, you must be both quickened, and have the Holy Ghost; for others must see the fruit by my life, because they cannot see the faith.

{*This refers to the cleansing of the Leper. In the consecration of priests: the oil and blood were sprinkled together on Aaron, his sons, and their garments, with him, after the blood was put on the ear, the hand, and the foot.}

99 In 2 Corinthians 1:20, 21, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." And mark the power and blessing of these two little words, "by us." Now, could this be said of us unless we had the Holy Ghost giving us the blessed knowledge and consciousness of our place? "Now he which establisheth us with you, in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," v. 22. He hath planted us in Christ, and hath anointed us, and hath sealed us for the day of redemption, and given the earnest of it in our hearts.

In verses 15 and 16 of Romans 8, he says, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." In these two verses the blessed Comforter, who dwells in us, associates Himself with us, to witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; working in our hearts, and creating in us the confidence and proper affections of a child to the Father. As the Holy Ghost in me is the power by which I cry, Abba, Father; so He also reveals the object that attracts my best affections.

The Holy Ghost always reasons downwards, from God to man, for He reveals what God is, and therefore He says, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." If God has made you His children, will He leave you without an inheritance? In truth He will not; but the moment you bring God in, then you get the consequences down here. For if you get all this glory, you must have the cross here, for we do not have a half Christ; "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together": and mark what stress he lays on the word with, "joint-heirs with Christ," "suffer with Christ," "glorified with him." It is thought by some to be a great attainment to see the union of Christ and His church, but it was living association with Christ that was presented in the words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And Saul was arrested and converted along with the revelation of Jesus Himself, by the knowledge of the fact that those whom he was persecuting were the members of Christ's body. It could not be said of Paul, "Ye have been with me from the beginning," for Paul saw the Lord only in glory, and therefore he says, he did not know Christ after the flesh.

100 Well, then, you are members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones; therefore you must have His portion down here, as well as up there. If we have fellowship with Him in the whole spirit and tone of our minds, we must suffer as Christ did in passing through this world, seeing the sin and misery all around us, or it may be sorrow on account of the state of the church. All this must make one go through the world as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; not merely suffering for Him, though that is the highest condition, no doubt, but suffering with Him; it is the necessary consequence of being associated with Christ.

The world's joy can have no place in our hearts, if walking in fellowship with Christ, for if we go on with the world, Christ will not accompany us there. Jesus groaned down here, and deeply, in spirit, and so do we, as part, too, as regards our bodies, of the groaning creation; but does this set aside the word of our Lord, "that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves?" No, not in the least; for there is still joy by reason of the effect of God's presence in the soul, as an earnest withal of the inheritance of glory, which makes me say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed to us." But, then, the effect of the blessedness of God's presence gives a deep and sorrowful sense of God's absence from those around, and of the passions and miseries which sin has brought in; every misery becomes a groan in my heart, every sorrow presses on my spirit, because it is a sign how sin has come in, and has ruined all man's natural blessings, and made him more than a stranger to all spiritual ones.

The more my heart understands what God's presence is, the more deeply my soul will understand the place the creature has got into. What a wonderful position this puts us into, one of association with God! When Christ passed through the world, did He screen Himself from sorrows? No, not even from death: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels"; But did He do it? No; He went through the midst of it - suffered it all. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners; He went to the grave of Lazarus, and groaned, because He saw and felt the power of death on all around. But He passed through it all in the power of love. As to the condition of the

world, we are glad in one sense, that as it is, it is not God's, though we know it will be by-and-by, when taken out of the hands of the usurper. It would be too sorrowful to think it was God's now.

101 Verse 23. "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves." As far as the body is concerned, I am connected with the creation, and therefore subject to vanity, sickness, and death: but still, I have the Holy Ghost in me, and He groans in me, so that my groaning is not selfishness, but groaning in a divine way, according to God, which is the second effect of the power of the Holy Ghost in me. He bears witness to what we are, first, as children and heirs; and then, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I have a sense of the vanity of this perishing world and everything in it. Christ suffered for righteousness as well as for sin. In the first kind, we are called to have fellowship with Him. It is that which He endured through the whole of His course down here. The latter suffering, for sin, we could have no part in; this He endured alone upon the cross, as that beautiful passage in Peter suggests, "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing. For Christ hath also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

But our part in sorrow here flows thus also from the sense of the subjection of all around us to vanity and the bondage of corruption. It is a very sorrowful thought. We do not hear that Jesus ever smiled. Weep He did, He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But it was because He was heavenly, and love, yet also because He was a man. And we have to remember that in us this feeling flows, when a right one, from the same causes. We are partakers of the divine nature by exceeding great and precious promises; the Spirit is life as the spring to the rill, and the Spirit of God dwells in us, making us know we are sons and heirs of God. This we have seen: as heirs, we shall be in glory like Christ, and the creation is waiting for our manifestation, for it was not by its will it was subjected, but through us. But to the groaning creation we are united in our bodies; we draw our sense of the sorrow from more than our being lookers on, and we feel for it from more than selfish grief, we feel for it through the Holy Ghost according to God. Our groans are well the groans of our hearts, but they are the mind of the Spirit, and more, the groans of the Spirit in us, a divine sense of the sorrow around us, yet in the sympathy of a human heart, the mind, too, of the Spirit as acting thus in man. Thus when God searches the heart, He finds my heart with divinely given feelings, and this He loves; the mind of the Spirit, which meets His holy requirements, is acceptable to Him, and the intercession of the Spirit itself for the saints. But it does not follow that our intelligence can estimate the evil or know a remedy, yea, till Christ comes, there may not be a remedy possible. But the heart is formed after God's in respect of the need and sorrow, and this is very precious.

102 As regards ourselves, it leads to another clear judgment and consciousness as to our position. Our portion we have not, but our blessed apprehension of it by the Spirit, is what gives us the clear consciousness of the existing evil and sorrow, but then it gives us also the consciousness, that, while yet having it all only in hope, we await only the redemption of our body to be in our glorious estate. There is no doubt as to our title, no question as to the salvation of our souls, no uncertainty as to the possession of what we hope for. We do not see it, that is the reason we hope, not because it is doubtful. It rests on God's word, and Christ's work, and we have the seal and earnest of the Spirit. Further, the power of evil does not give weariness or impatience: we wait with patience for that we do not see, because it is settled; of that patience we have need. Meanwhile, as we have seen, the Spirit helps our infirmities; and this brings out another glorious and precious truth, and ground of assurance.

We have seen the spiritual man, feeling according to God the burden of corruption on creation, but not knowing what to ask as a remedy: yet if we do not know what to ask for, we do know that for those that love God all things work together for good, even for those who are called according to His purpose. For we

have now brought before us not the state of things through sin, but the purpose of God as regards the objects of that purpose, in the midst of that state of things, and in bringing them to glory.

In general the epistle to the Romans deals with man's responsibility, and God's blessed remedy in Christ, but here the epistle rises up to the purpose of God formed before the responsibility began; it reaches to the point where that to the Ephesians begins. The saints are called according to this purpose. Compare Titus 1:1, 2; and 2 Tim. 1:9. God foreknew these persons and predestinated them to a state equally in His purpose, for the glory of Christ, namely, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Wonderful place! but the place of God's counsels for them, who works all things after the counsels of His own will, not relative to anything that we are, save as connected with Christ's becoming a man; but the fruit of God's will, so that we measure it by that. But how blessed for us, not only as intrinsic glory, but as likeness to, and association with, Christ, the Son of God! He is the firstborn among many brethren. Such is the counsel of God - to associate us with Christ, in the place of sons, and conform us to the image of Him, the firstborn. Our responsibility was as children of the first Adam; the purpose of God concerning us in connection with the last Adam. This is a glorious and blessed truth. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Being in this place, we are, then, anew responsible to shew forth the life of Christ, and glorify Him; but this is founded on the possession of life. This purpose God pursues and accomplishes. Whom He has predestinated to this, He calls; whom He calls, He justifies: whom He justifies, He glorifies. He carries it on to the end. We have nothing here of sanctifying.

103 The true Christian life, the life of the Spirit, has been fully expounded in the early part of the chapter. Here it is God for us, not His living work in us, nor the presence of the Holy Ghost; these are the two subjects treated in the previous part of the chapter. We are now at the third part - God for us, His securing those thus quickened according to His purpose, from purpose before the world on to glory, the actual introduction to blessing being by God's own calling: all is the blessed fruit of God's being for us. This is the triumphant question of

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