

# OUR HOPE.

A CHRISTIAN MONTHLY, DEVOTED TO  
BIBLE STUDY, ESPECIALLY THE  
PROPHETIC WORD.



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## The Epistle to the Romans.

Chapter i. to Chapter iii: 20.

By F. C. JENNINGS.

I am quite sure that the order in which the different books are placed in our Bibles cannot successfully be upheld as inspired. That it is a human order there can be no question, and yet there is, in the position of the book of Romans that we are considering, such a perfect adaptation to the place in which it is found, as to almost make one believe that it was put there by divine providence.

We can fairly regard the New Testament as evidencing a certain consecutive order, in which God is gathering His people unto Himself, *at home*, as it were. Thus in the gospels, we may consider that the foundation of the house is being laid, in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Acts, we may say the house *itself* is being erected by the operations of the Holy Ghost. In the epistles of Paul we may say that we are told how we are to

behave ourselves *in* the house, when it is built. The first necessity for such a proper behavior is that His people should feel simply *at home*—perfectly at home.

Now for a poor ragamuffin to feel at home in a palace is no easy thing. But such a poor lad out of the streets would be far more comfortable in a palace in Fifth Avenue, than should such as we, when brought close to God, without something being done for, and told to us. God says, as it were, “I want you to be at home, and hence, first of all, everything must be clearly, fully, permanently and righteously settled between us.”

Thus our God has His heart set upon us. It is no use asking “why?” He passed by angels, but He has ever, from eternity, set His heart upon *man*, and His heart will not be satisfied until He gets us really at home with Himself.

You know that beautiful picture of the prodigal on the evening after his return home: There are the light and the joy, and there is the poor fellow reclining on the father’s breast in perfect peace. How different from *last* night. Then—trudging home in rags, in absolute bankrupt penury, with misery within and without. Now—at home—clothed in the best robe, and with a peace that nothing can destroy. Why is that peace perfect? Because his father knows how low he has been, *and he knows that his father knows it all*—that there is not a thing that he has done, not a moral slough that he has rolled in—but his father knows it every bit.

Now this epistle does exactly this for us. It tells us in the simplest way that God knows all about us—that He has plumbed the depths of our hearts—knows them to the very dregs, and He wants *us* to know that *He* knows the worst, and has provided for it perfectly and fully.

This book, then, divides into three clearly marked sections:

Chapters i. to viii.—Doctrinal.

Chapters ix. to xi.—Dispensational.

Chapters xii. to xvi.—Practical.

We can divide the first part into two very important divisions: First, dealing with what men have done, i. 1 to

v. 11, and second, dealing with what men are, v. 12 to viii. 39. Let us look now at the first division. We can never afford to lose sight of the first verses of any book or letter in the Bible. Too many slur over the greeting as being a commonplace thing, without definite significance. I beg you, study with special interest the first three, four or five verses of every epistle—of every book. You will doubtless find difficulties, but many a hard lock of difficulty you will find may be opened by this master-key that hangs up at the entrance of every book in the Bible.

Verses 1 to 7 are greeting. The characteristic word is, "the Gospel of God," concerning, however, His Son, Jesus Christ. But the second verse tends to guard us against a possible false view. We must not think that God is meeting the enemy's moves as they are made—a kind of game of chess in which each move depends upon the action of the opponent, until finally God says, "checkmate,"—not at all. God has foreseen all that the enemy could do, and long before it took place, not only foreseen, but provided to meet it. Hardly had ruin settled down upon Eden before there was a sweet word of promise as to the woman's seed. That little word that began then, has gone on, louder, clearer and sweeter, "by the prophets in the holy Scriptures," till we not only hear the voice, but a Person is thrown across our vision—Jesus Christ, God's Son. In Him, and in Him alone, is embodied "the Gospel of God."

Mark then the two dignities in which this glorious One is presented: First, "of the seed of David." This title speaks of the humanity and of the royal dignity that belonged to Him. Second, "Son of God"—so marked with power "according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection of (not from) the dead." Wherever life overcomes death, there is God. The creature, be he ever so exalted, has not the power of life. None can ever keep himself alive, much less communicate life to the dead. Jarius' daughter, the young man of Nain, and Lazarus of Bethany all proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God.

Note, too, the address: "To all those who are in Rome; beloved of God, called saints." The French have a pregnant saying: "Noblesse oblige," that is, that what may be quite

fitting for a peasant cannot be tolerated in a noble—conduct must correspond with position. So I pray you take fully in the sweet and precious character of these words—You are beloved of God—not if you live consistently you will become so; but you are so (oh grasp it firmly); therefore live consistently.—So “called saints.” Our version puts in two little words that weaken very much the force of this: “called to be saints,” There is no “to be.” If I am called to become a saint I may fail to become one; but if I am a saint by the fact of my calling, then I am a saint as surely as I am a Christian.

If, instead of Paul’s letter *to* the Romans we were to receive a letter *from* the Romans of to-day, we should get a very different idea as to who were saints. Rome finds it quite difficult to pick out *her* saints. She has to let their memory *mellow* a little, like wine, and only after some centuries is she able to look back and determine who has such extraordinary holiness as to entitle him to be called a saint. After all she makes a poor hand of it, if I know anything of “Saint George of Merry England.”

How different is the truth. Suppose one buys a piece of waste land filled with thorns, briars, or weeds. What does he do first? He puts a fence about it to separate it from the rest. That ground becomes at once “sanctified.” It does not change its character at all first; it remains as it was; but it is “separated,” and that is the root idea in the word saint. He is a separated one, not by his personal holiness, but by the value of the precious blood that shelters him. Afterwards his life must correspond with his position; but be careful not to reverse the order.

Verses 8-17 are the Introduction. The apostle begins with no exhortation, far less rebuke, but with commendation for the attainment gained. They were known for their bright faith; but this is exactly where they lacked, too, and the Spirit of God in the Apostle would meet them where they were and lead them further. Long had the apostle desired to see them, but had been hindered hitherto. But what was the motive for this? Verse 14 answers: “I am a debtor both to Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and unintelligent”—“I owe something to every one.” But who or what

had made him thus a debtor to all? *God*, in giving him that which was meant for all, and what all needed. *If I have received anything from God, that makes me a debtor to some one else, for He gives nothing that is intended to be stagnant.* He never forms ponds, but always a *river* of blessing comes from Him. And the nature of what he had received leveled Greek and barbarian, wise and unwise. None was outside its sphere. The most polished are deeply interested; the roughest must have to do with God. It transcends the highest wisdom of man, and yet not beyond the level of the babe. It comes to men where they are, and as they are. So this being the case, Paul was ready to preach the Gospel to the saints at Rome. But what a mistake he makes. Preach the Gospel to *saints!* the Gospel is for sinners. So *we* say; but I am disposed to think we had better make our sayings conform to Scripture rather than the reverse. And it is quite clear that it is *saints* here who need the Gospel. Ah, is it not because we have a limited, and rather selfish and low view of what the Gospel really is, that we so speak? We confine it to the message of salvation from condemnation by the Cross of Christ, and far be it that I should depreciate this in any way. But is not every unfolding of Infinite Love, Infinite Wisdom—every display of glory there is in God, the Gospel? This surely is of the deepest interest, not to the sinner, but to every believer; never shall we get beyond the Gospel—never.

Now Paul reaches his subject with a mild and reserved expression of the greatest glorying, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." A quiet word that is the feeblest expression possible of the emotions ever surging in his ardent, God-fired spirit. "I am not ashamed; in view of its wisdom as compared with all human philosophy; in view of its wisdom as meeting the intricate needs of man's complex being; in view of its worthiness of God, its Author. Let the subtlest reason test it, I fear not; let the most wretched, depraved, sorrowful, weary, sin-enslaved make trial of it—it will not shame me. Then if Greeks despise, barbarians mock and Jews reject, it does but prove their own blindness and

obduracy. *I* have no cause for shame in the Gospel of Christ.

Lift up your heads, oh ye timid believers, who think that the ark of the Gospel is about to be overwhelmed with the wave of boastful infidelity of this twentieth century. Catch a little of this same joyous boasting of the apostle, for we have exactly the same divine Gospel as he. Oh, let us, in full face of all the learned folly that opposes, cry, "We are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

But Paul gives a specific reason for his boast: "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." Apart from the Gospel, God, in all His love, is powerless to save. Look at that Persian King Darius, burning, hungering, thirsting to save his beloved servant Daniel from the pit. But he is quite powerless. His hands are tied by *law*. It is a beautiful, if sorrowful, picture of love powerless to save. But exactly and equally powerless is God to save, apart from the Gospel. He may love; but His hands are tied. His poor creature man is a sinner, and as God is *righteous* He cannot save a sinner unless it be righteously. It is the Gospel, and only the Gospel of Christ, that permits this.

I know something of mere human religions. I have read "The Koran"—seen something of translations from the Buddhist books, and I assert without fear of successful contradiction that no false system of earth, dreams of the blessing of the vile and lost. All give blessing to the righteous, or if any blessing to the sinner, it is at the expense of God's righteousness. But, by the Gospel, God is able to take away filthy rags and to give the best robe, to snatch from hell and give eternal glory, to quiet all accusations of conscience and rebuke those of Satan. His hands are free, and He cries, "Beside Me there is no Saviour."

Now we see the force and beauty of the next verse: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Here is the heart and kernel of this epistle, and of the Gospel it proclaims. God's righteousness is on the side of sinful man, and this is made effectual to him from faith to

faith. But you ask what does that mean—from faith to faith? It means on the principle of faith to faith. “But,” you reply, “you haven’t made it much clearer; you only add words that perplex me a little more.” It is that God proclaims it. If I *proclaim* glad tidings, and you are to attain blessing by believing, that is on the principle of faith, is it not? You have not to do anything at all, or it would be the principle of works. But you hear, and you only have to believe; *if* you do believe, then faith meets the message, and the circuit is complete. It comes thus on the principle of faith and finds it home or rest wherever there be faith. It is the good seed falling into the good ground.

Verse 18 to chapter iii. 20 forms now a kind of parenthesis, to show what the righteous character of God justly demands *apart* from the Gospel.

His disposition against wilful wickedness has always been clearly evidenced. Mark how carefully the measure of light is the measure of responsibility. God’s wrath is “upon all who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

There are many most unselfish souls who are perfectly indifferent as to their own case, but deeply exercised as to the future of the heathen. They turn aside every thrust of the sword of the Spirit from themselves by the anxious inquiry, “Will God damn the heathen for not knowing the Gospel?” My good friend, do not disturb yourself on that score. God’s wrath is not on those who do not have the truth, but on those that do and hold it in unrighteousness. That touches *you*. Further, we talk a good deal of *heathen* darkness; but the serious thing is that there is heathen *light*. Nowhere, at no time, has God left Himself without witnesses, and man has that within, which no beast has, or ever will have: the power of discovering the Creator behind the creation. It takes no Bible, no written revelation, no Gospel as we speak, for man, created with a reasoning power not granted to the brute, to discover from all this wonderful universe, with all its complex inter-adaptations, an Intelligent, Almighty, Eternal Divinity, the One Creator of all. But this power of discernment involves a moral responsibility. If men had no light, or no power of apprehension as the beasts, then there could



be no guilt; but neither is the case, therefore are men inexcusable.

But look at verse 21: "Because when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God." Now this refutes every thought of human progress in divine knowledge. Evolution in any true sense of the word is impossible if the race starts with the knowledge of God which it loses. We are now instructed almost universally by the pseudo-scientists of the day that everything has become evolved during the course of ages from one source. Do you ask what that source is? Well, the reply is in some such simple word as "Protoplasm," whereby they hide their own ignorance and take advantage of yours. But all starts from this wonderful "protoplasm," which has within itself all the possibilities subsequently evolved; and after many weary ages, at length "protoplasm" graduates into an ape. Do not look too closely, or inquire too carefully now, for there is a little link missing here; but it is of small importance; doubtless time will supply it—and then comes man. "The ape; the link?—the man" speaks of a growth *into* knowledge. God's word of a *loss* from it when it was known. I cannot see how evolution can stand in view of these words, "having known God." If this be true, then is the other false, and it would be well for us to make up our minds definitely and distinctly.

And now mark, for a moment, man's sorrowful evolution *downwards*, what we call degeneracy. They start on that down grade by an assumption of wisdom, and this is the proof of foolishness, and leads to evidence of it. And how did this evidence itself? They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into a likeness of an image (I quote literally) of corruptible man, and of birds, and quadrupeds and creeping things." So they descend, and, giving up God, they replace Him with the highest conception possible to man; and that is, mark, not even the *image* of a man, for man is a glorious creature as God made him, but "the *likeness* of an image," a certain external resemblance, but it does not *represent* perfectly, as an image would. (See Heb. x.) Thus instead of the glory, so plainly seen before in creation: incorruptible, eternal—they can only picture the body of man which is corruptible. From this, rapidly they

fall ever lower and lower, from man to birds, to quadrupeds, to creeping things. This last is evidently the lowest form of idolatry, and notes the tendency of poor man to constant degeneracy, when once he leaves God, who alone can maintain him. Note that here, birds, as having some connection with the heavens, are above the quadrupeds, who ever touch the earth; and these are above the creeping things, which are still closer to earth and more remote from heaven.

Now to the end of the chapter God's wrath is shown—"He gave them up"—that's all here; but it is terrible. Lower and lower into the mud they sink, till the filth hides all that was noble. But there is the same graduation of giving up on God's part as on man's. Man gives up the glory of God and replaces it with a bodily image. God gives him up in his *body*. Next man's affections give God up. God gives him up in his *soul*, the seat of the affections, and these all go astray with frightful results. Finally man did not like to retain God in his *knowledge*, therefore God gives him up to a reprobate mind—the seat of the *spirit*. So that man here is utterly given up in every part of his being: body, soul, and spirit.

The second chapter brings by a gentle transition the same conviction of guilt home to the *Jew*. He has much superior light—has he held it in righteousness, walked in obedience to it? This is answered with terrible and solemn emphasis in the negative. Boldly the apostle urges that the mere knowledge of the law can never take the place of fulfilling the law. The righteous judgment of God is absolutely crystally faultless—it gives, with perfect impartiality, the award in accord with the life. Who can find fault with this? But if so, how will the Jew fare? And again with the utmost confidence the writer sees, as it were, a representative Pharisee before him and pierces him through and through with questions, as "thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" and then he sweeps away all possible false defense with the crushing testimony of a scripture that could only apply to the Jew. "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written."

The last few verses also teach that greater privilege is only of profit, if there be a conformity of life. In a word, God demands reality. "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly."

But if this is the case, the natural objection would be then there is no benefit at all in circumcision; the Jew has no advantage over the Gentile. Indeed he has, says the apostle, in many ways, and principally that to him have been committed the oracles of God; nor are these at all affected by man's acceptance or rejection of them. We have discovered a very easy way of disposing of everything not agreeable to us in these days; we simply say, "We do not believe in it," and lo it is gone. Thus have we disposed of the Lake of Fire. We no longer believe in it, and, of course, that settles it. A few years ago a message came to my office, "Your house is on fire." Well, I had an excellent way of putting the fire out; I had but to say, "I don't believe it." What folly! If it is *God* who speaks let all deny. It is God who is true, and every man, in that case, the liar. The truthfulness, and therefore the priceless value, of His Word remains. Yes, David even says in the day of his penitence, that his very sin shall show out the righteousness of God. Oh, then, cries some objector, quick to seize whatever makes for his own pleasure, if that is the case why then should I be *judged* as a sinner, and not rather let us do evil that this good of God's justification may result? The apostle cuts such argument short with the word, "whose judgment is just."

But then if the Jew has this advantage over the Gentile, is he any better? Nay, those very oracles show clearly that both Jew and Gentile are under sin, and here follows the blackest picture of man's state; but consistently with Old Testament usage the description does not go to the *heart*, but begins with the throat, and then, stronger and stronger, the evil gets. The throat is an open sepulchre—every breath tainted with death. Here there is no work nor word; but next there is speech, and of what character? Lies, deceit. More bitter this gets, and with the lip, violence is added to

deceit, as the poison of asps. Finally the whole mouth can find no way of expressing the inherent bitterness except by fearlessly attaching God's name to its unholy imprecations. So much for word, now for work. Bloodshed, ruin, misery, no peace is the character of the path in which men walk. Swift to take offense and strike, ruin follows in their steps and misery waits on ruin. Is it not true? Look at 16,000,000 of men under arms to-day in Europe, the place of Christian civilization, and soon to be again soaked in blood. It is God telling what He sees in man, and black as midnight is the picture here drawn. Not a single one righteous, not one. All the world guilty. Every mouth stopped. It is a black cloud; but it shall serve as a perfect background to throw into relief that sweet and precious Gospel, that to-morrow we hope to look at more carefully.

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## The Epistle to the Romans.

Chapter iii: 20 to Chapter v.

BY F. C. JENNINGS.

Yesterday we went hurriedly over the first three chapters of this wonderful epistle down to the twentieth verse of the third chapter, and it left us, so to speak, in the darkest possible condition. God has looked upon man, and expressed what He has found in him.

It is a sad, dark picture; a very grave and solemn thing, and yet—and we link the two thoughts together—it is a *blessed* thing! Have you learned, dear friend, to take joy from the fact that God knows the worst of you? That you can't tell Him anything that He doesn't know? That you can get no revelation of your own heart that is as shocking a thing to God as it is to you? It brings you down lower in the depths, it humbles you, but God is not disturbed by it. He knew it long ago. What a blessed thing, no matter what comes, God has known the worst. There are depths evolving from depths and constant unfoldings of evil and violence that come up out of my heart and not one thing but is

shocking to me, but it is not a surprise to God, as if He expected something else. He knew it long ago, and His gospel is in full view of this perfect knowledge. This is the blessedness of it.

"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." The deeds of the law are simply what men do to fulfill God's requirements, and then bring them to Him for acceptance. On that principle, not one single being will ever be justified, or God could not be just. You see God's character is very much at stake in these matters. It is all very well to say He is merciful—but God's character is at stake—His very throne is at stake. If one single taint be put upon His righteousness everything is subversed. If you have gone all your life guiltlessly and at last have committed just one single definite sin, God's hands are tied, He cannot justify you on the principle of law. Justification is distinct from forgiveness. Justification is declaring the man free from all charge; not that "you are guilty, but I won't punish you." That is forgiveness, although not a righteous forgiveness. But when a verdict of acquittal is rendered the man is *justified*, he walks out of court without a stain upon him, and that is how you and I are to be before the universe. That is surely better than having "sentence suspended." How good it is that God does not suspend sentence, like the human courts, but "justifies." The way *that* is possible is by the gospel.

"But now the righteousness of God, apart from the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." That, you see, connects closely with the seventeenth verse of the first chapter, and the term "Righteousness of God" is the link between the two. There has been obscurity in some minds as to what is meant by the "Righteousness of God." Many look upon it as being a kind of righteousness which is attributed to the sinner. He has not any of his own. So the Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth, fulfilled the law perfectly, and God takes that fulfillment, and says, "Here is a righteousness I can accept worked out by My Son: I give that to you."

That is unscriptural—utterly unscriptural. It is exceedingly common, but, if we are willing to cast ourselves upon Scripture, we must say there is not a single word which justifies such a thought, as that the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ to the law during His life is attributed to any so as to make him righteous. If I am reckoned a righteous man by His life that is all I want to be reckoned; there is no need for any one to die for a righteous man. “If righteousness come by the law then Christ died in vain.”

So “the righteousness of God” is not that anyhow. But why not take it just as simply as we can and say that it is simply “God’s righteousness?” That is to say, God’s *righteous* character as connected with and in the gospel, not His mercy, demands this course to every believer.

A simple old Scotch woman was dying. Her pastor called and said, “I hope you are trusting in the mercy of God.” She said, “Na-na.” Shocked, he said, “You are not trusting in the *mercy* and *love* of God? Why, I always regarded you as a true Christian.” “Man, I have something better than that. My confidence is in the *righteousness* of God.” Now it is a little strong to put it in that way, so as to exclude mercy; I would not do that, but at the same time the idea is correct. The righteousness of God—let me speak it with humble reverence—demands that He shall take the sinner to Himself.

This righteousness of God is witnessed by the law and the prophets—not opposed to the law and the prophets. The law and the prophets stand up and say, as God accepts the believing sinner, “We have nothing to say against it; on the contrary, that is exactly what we want.” Making the law into a personality, Moses stands there, watching God throw His arm about a prodigal, and says, “That is exactly right. I witness it and I confirm it.”

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all.” Blessed news, blessed word.

Oh may the Lord give you not to listen but to enjoy it, to chew it in the teeth of your faith until you get the sweetness out of it.

Come with me to the dwelling place of God of old. We

will seek to enter and reach Him. But a wall is on every side—a wall of fine twined linen. Of what does that speak? It speaks of just the holiness God requires of those who would see Him. I walk around to another side, but everywhere the same wall shuts me out. I come at last to a spot where I see scarlet and gold and blue mixed with fine twined linen, and there at last is an entrance and we thus go in. Now from the inside I look around again upon that wall. The very wall that shut me out now shuts me in. The righteousness that shut me out is now the very wall that shuts me in. It is now *for me*: The righteousness of God is unto all, *over* all them that believe as a shield.

Oh beloved, that is very simple, very precious, that God's *righteousness* demands that He takes care of us from now until He gets us safe to glory, past all judgment forever. Can you want a surer, sweeter gospel than that?

It is not a righteous thing to ask a man to pay a bill twice, is it? Sometimes we get bills sent us from the tradesmen twice over, and we look very much askance at the man who does that when we tell him, "You have sent me that bill before; here is the receipt." If we are at all doubtful of him, it puts a slur upon his character, doesn't it? But would you dishonor God by making Him to be less honest than your tradesman? Don't you see how you put a slur upon God by questioning for one moment that He would demand payment twice? "We are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," and "the redemption" is the purchase price that Christ has paid. He has paid the bill once. Our blessed God will never ask payment twice. Why? Because of His mercy? No. Whilst I do not say that mercy is not at the foundation of all His blessed ways, yet it is not *mercy* on my tradesman's part that he doesn't send his bill in twice. I don't go and say, "Mr. Jones, I thank you very much for your *mercy* in not charging me twice." I may say, "Mr. Jones, you have only done right, you are righteous not to charge twice." And the redemption in Christ Jesus has satisfied every requirement forever, so that God's righteousness demands a full receipt to the account.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation"—much better to say "mercy seat"—the word occurs twice in the New Testament; the other time in the ninth chapter of Hebrews. "And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat"—the same term used for the mercy seat is here used for propitiation. Now you know the mercy seat was where God could meet with His people—nowhere else! In all the universe there was just one spot, and only one spot. God would teach us by that, that there is just one spot, and only one spot where He can meet you and me, and He has set forth Christ as the mercy seat, as the only place where He can meet with us. But in what way is Christ a mercy seat? *Through faith in His blood.* That really makes a mercy seat; if there was no blood there, it could not be available as that, but it becomes a mercy seat by the blood having been sprinkled. The cherubim which overlooked it could not permit anything sinful or sinning to approach it; except for the blood upon which they looked.

The mercy seat, too, was exactly the same dimensions as the ark,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cubits by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ; those were the measures of the two. Not a fraction of difference. The mercy seat was not  $2\frac{3}{4}$  by  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , but  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . They tell us to-day that all these lovely and precious types contain no teaching but are simply interesting as the remains of a primitive literature of an ancient people. Dear friends, in this connection let me say, Christendom is rapidly coming to the great apostasy. It is no laughing matter, it is a serious thing, and his heart is callous indeed who can think of it without tears, and especially that those who assume to be teachers are leading faster than all in the direction of that apostasy, and they shut their eyes, in wilful blindness, to the significance of these precious types.

The mercy seat, then, was exactly the dimensions of the ark. The ark speaks of Christ's Person unmistakably. The gold speaks of His divinity, the shittim wood of His incorruptible humanity. Nothing could speak more attractively of the Person of our precious Saviour than the Ark, but God justifies me *there*. He says, Look carefully at these measurements, get the lesson I would have you get



from them, and don't come to Me outside of Christ, for there is no mercy for a sinner apart from Him. I will meet you there—I will bless you there—I will fill you with all that My love can give you there. I will let My whole heart go out there. When you are there you can't ask Me enough; ask Me all you can, and then I will do exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or even think. I will let My whole heart and love out to you there—but outside of Christ:—then you meet me on the ground of *law*, and justification, for sinners on the principle of law is impossible, there is only condemnation. Oh why do men put aside their own blessing?

Twenty-fifth verse. Please look at it, because it is sometimes misunderstood. "To declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." Now the first thing we think of is that it is the forgiveness of *our* sins that have gone by that is here referred to. How many souls I have heard, like myself in days gone by, who have said, "Yes, it is all very well. I know that God forgave me my *past* sins. It is not that that troubles me; it is the *present* sins that I do and shall commit that trouble me."

It has no such bearing here at all. God had to do with sins all along time's sad course, hadn't He? and He had His righteousness at stake in every case in which He forgave. For instance, there was His dear servant David had got into an awful life, and God had said "I also have put away thy sin." Anyone might say, "Do you call *that* righteousness?" God is forgiving a sinner with no justification, but God says, as it were, "Wait a little. Until on that central cross of Calvary hangs the Holy One; *all* God's waves and billows roll over Him till He says "all is finished." Now God can say, "You see I was righteous in passing over those past sins." So the gospel declares at this time God's righteousness in passing over those sins of the past time, saying it out now, that "He may be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Where is boasting then? it is quite excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.

Now there is a profound wisdom in the way of salvation.

There are depths in it—a manifold, many-sided beauty in it, just like a diamond. I flash one side of it before you, and you say how beautiful! I give it another turn and you say how beautiful! and another, and you say how beautiful! So it is with the ways of God and His way of justifying, and it is all by faith—a most beautiful way. Why, my dear brother, if you *could climb* to heaven, I don't believe you would have breath enough left to praise God when you got there. Loss of breath speaks heart failure, and I don't believe you would have the *heart* to praise. It would be a case of heart failure. No, no; but when we get there on the principle of faith, which leaves us with all our powers free, it will be out of full hearts to give praise to Him who has carried us every step there.

Here we are, poor sinners whose sins are forgiven and only longing for the time when we shall be able with unhindered heart to burst out with that song which here we have only begun to twitter, like little birds just learning to sing. We only twitter here the praise of God; there we have it in the full flood of joyous song, unchecked by anything. But what is more, the principle of faith gives me a breast to lean upon. I find His heart is all for me, and all I have got to do is to lean my head down upon His heart and *praise* Him. Oh, but this suits a helpless one admirably.

You see the manifold wisdom of God in that simple way of salvation by faith.

"Is He God of the Jews only?" Yes, if the Jews have got all the sunshine there is upon the earth, and all the atmosphere about us, and all the flowers of the field, and all the rain that falls in blessing, if that falls upon the Jew only, then is He the God of the Jew only. If not, He is the God of the Gentile also. So the apostle says, "Of the Gentiles also, seeing it is the one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith."

"Do we make void the law through faith?" I have never met a man who tried to be justified by the law, but who made it void.

He usually says, "Oh, you must not think God is so strict

as all that. He is not going to hold us strictly up to the letter of the law." What is all that but making void the law? The law then amounts to nothing. If you begin to dilute it you have made it void, and faith is the only principle that does not dilute it a drop, but establishes it in all its power and integrity.

Now in chapter iv. we come to the Jew and his experience.

You know the Jew took his place under Abraham, who was the friend of God. Abraham and David were the greatest authorities to the Jew. Well, says the apostle, let us come to that. "What hath Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh found?" You take your place under him as children of the flesh. Well, look at him in that light, and what did he find? that he was justified by works? If so, he was a boasting man. He hath whereof to glory. But I never *hear* of Abraham boasting or glorying before God. That is clear and the Scripture tells us definitely what was the basis of his justification. Abraham simply believed God, and that God took for righteousness. Abraham had been saddened that he had no child. He was then eighty-five years of age, when God called him out of his tent one starry night and said to him, "Look up, and see the stars, count them, if thou be able to number them," and He said, "So shall thy seed be." And He adds in answer to Abraham's reference to Eleazar, "Out of thine own bowels shall he come who shall be thy seed." Abraham simply believed God, and God was so delighted with that confidence that He said, "You haven't righteousness, Abraham, but I will take your faith *instead* of righteousness." You see that is God's estimate of faith. God longs simply to have our hearts. He does not want our *works*, but He does want and values wondrously our confidence and affection. So when Abraham could look out and see all those stars, and say, "I know what Thou sayest is true," God was refreshed. It is a fragrant thing to Him when men trust Him fully. The Lord Jesus got only two meals upon the earth—a breakfast and a supper. In the morning of His ministry we find a publican "making Him a feast," and in the evening of His ministry we find in Bethany, Mary and Martha and Lazarus

making Him a feast. Ah, I should say the Lord had three meals, I had forgotten that wonderful mid-day meal in the fourth chapter of John. But what are all these? In every case it is some poor guilty sinner having found rest in Him who gives Him a feast. "I have meat to eat," He says at that dinner hour at Sychar, "that ye know not of."

Have *you* ever given Him thus anything to eat? Have you ever? You say, "I am not aware that I have."

Let me tell you a secret: If you have said, "I believe that Thou hast died for me, I believe that Thou wilt take me to glory," thou, even thou, hast given meat to the Son of God!

What had Abraham found? That justification was not of works, but by faith. David too says: Blessed the man who never went astray? blessed the man who never sinned? blessed the man who never left his father's house—isn't it that? If it were, it would have been a poor case for most of us.

"Blessed is the man" who *has* sinned—but whose transgression is forgiven, and sin covered."

That means hope for you and me, for under David's testimony blessing consists in justification on the principle of faith, not on the principle of works.

Well, to return to Abraham, Whence cometh this blessedness then—upon the circumcision only or upon the uncircumcision? It is very remarkable that Abraham was pronounced blessed, and the promise was given to him long before he was circumcised. He was circumcised in the seventeenth chapter, and the blessing promised him in the fifteenth chapter, and it is then and there his faith is accounted for righteousness. So that *before* circumcision he is accounted righteous, and he received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith while he had yet been uncircumcised, so that the apostle would say that circumcision is not a prerequisite to justification at all; thus he may be the father of all who believe, even though *they* be not circumcised, that is, even though they be not Jews.

Then we get another principle at the end of the fourth chapter—a very blessed one it is—Abraham did not quite understand God apparently. He was eighty-five years of

age, and God had not said a word yet about Sarah. He had said, "Thou shalt be a father; out of thy own bowels shalt he come who shall inherit," but He had not said anything about Sarah, and Abraham and Sarah put their heads together, and they tried to help God out of the difficulty, and they arranged that Hagar the bondmaid must be the mother of Abraham's child. Well, the result is, God's hands are tied for fifteen years, and then, and not until then, when Abraham is now one hundred years old, when there is no hope, so to speak, of issue from his own body—no hope of Sarah—nothing at all—God comes to him again in the seventeenth chapter, saying: "And I will bless Sarah, and give thee a son also of her"—that is the first time that God had referred to Sarah at all. "Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed—he laughed, mark that, and said in his heart—he didn't say it aloud in his usual manner of speaking, but God records the heart speech—"Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" And Abraham began to plead for Ishmael. "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before Thee. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac."

Now turn to our chapter again (Romans iv. 19), holding this for a moment, "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief,"—but look at the seventeenth chapter of Genesis again,—I would like any infidel, if any such be with us here, to read that chapter, because it will help him very much. In Romans he says, "He did not consider his body;" while in Genesis it says, "Abraham said in his heart, shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old?" Evidently he *was* considering his body. Well, then, we have a manifest contradiction and that ends the whole Gospel for us!

Beloved, difficulties of that kind are avenues to further blessing. I am always glad when I get hold of a nut, there is always a kernel underneath. It is a little hard to crack sometimes, but there is always meat in a nut. It is intended to see whether we want the meat enough to work at it, and

get the hard shell open. God doesn't put all His good things on the surface, but wants to see whether we are anxious to get things from Him, so He has put difficulties just simply to try us. I was stumbling at this for a time, until I saw that God had *forgotten Abraham's unbelief entirely*. Why, don't you know, He says, "Their *sins* and iniquities I will remember no more." God has forgotten Abraham's unbelief. He says, "I don't think of that now; all that is forgotten. If you will please remember," He would say to our supposed infidel objector, "he was only in unbelief *until* I told him that Sarah was to be the mother of the child. The first time I told him he failed to grasp it in faith and *laughed*; but that was the last laugh of unbelief Abraham ever uttered. The next time it was the *laugh* of faith, and that laugh was crystallized forever in the child's name, for "Isaac" means laughter, and God never forgets faith.

That is the kind of faith Abraham had, and that is the kind of faith we must have. He believed that God was able to raise up even from the dead in the future. We are assured and believe that God has done it in the past—exactly the same faith. "It was not written for his sake only but for ours also, to whom it shall be imputed"—the same kind of righteousness by faith shall be imputed—"if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," but now we know a great deal more than Abraham knew. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." This shows that it was satisfactory to God, that He has paid the bill entirely. So we have that "satisfaction piece" put into our hands. If you have anything to do with law terms you know there is a paper called a "satisfaction piece," witnessing that all claims for indebtedness are fully settled, and God puts, in the resurrection of Jesus, a "satisfaction piece" into our hands. God raised up Jesus from the dead and says, "there is as much sin upon you who believe as there is upon Him at My right hand." He raised Him for our justification.

My time is up, and yet I shall take a few moments just to look at the next chapter—I must not omit the first three verses of that.

The apostle says, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God." Don't lower that term to a kind of peace that we get upon earth here. We say we are at peace with Spain. I trust our peace with God is not of the same character as our political peace with Spain. No, it is the peace that the prodigal had when he got back to his father's home. The peace of heaven; confidence, joy, absolute freedom and liberty—that is the character of the peace. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the coming glory, past, present and future blessedness, all in Him.

We have a very beautiful illustration of all this in the tabernacle. We can take it as a kind of type of the way to the very throne of God. We first come to the brazen Altar, that is the cross of Christ, there is our peace. We go on, and we find the Laver, the Candlestick, the Table, there is every possible provision in Christ for our present cleanliness, food, and light; the grace wherein we stand. Then finally we have the glory, the shekinah. That we have not reached yet experimentally; it is to come.

But, you say, think of the tribulation and sorrows which we still have. Well, responds the apostle, I have a secret that will permit you to glory in them too. As soon as a ship which has been floating with the tide turns around it finds everything against it. Now, you and I were floating down with the tide when we were in the flesh, but when we turned around, then everything became against us, and everything being against us, proved that we were now in the right direction, the world going one way and we another. There is not a child of God that hasn't tribulation. He has it *because* he is going against the world. When you have no tribulation you are floating along with the tide. As soon as you turn around tribulation necessarily begins. The apostle says, "We glory in tribulation," for we find after all that these winds blow us toward our home.

Further, every time He brings us through trouble, it increases confidence in Him for the next, and we know that He loves us. We are able to pierce through the darkness by

faith and say God loves. Tribulation can't drive away His love. We have a standing proof of this in the Cross of His Son.

May the Lord lead us to prove all this practically and experimentally. Only that I would ask you, brethren, to make Christ your debtor all you can. You already owe Him a great deal, don't you? Owe Him more. I don't think—forgive me for putting it in that conservative way—I don't think that He will be a bit troubled if you owe Him a great deal more than you do. Don't be afraid of owing Him a great deal. Be afraid of not owing Him much. You owe Him for the past but you don't want to owe Him for the present. Beloved, you must. For the day, for every day. You must owe Him for everything. "If we have been saved by His death, much more we shall be saved by His life." We very often don't give Him credit for the present salvation whilst gladly doing so for the past. It should make a difference every moment to you that Christ lives.

Beloved brethren and sisters, to-day, not only to-day, but for the few moments that you are left here, let the Lord Jesus Christ do it all, as He has done it all. You are as helpless with the least thing of this life, really, as you were in regard to your sins toward God.

May the Lord add His blessing.



## The Epistle to the Romans.

Chapters vi and vii.

BY F. C. JENNINGS.

I should like, in the first place, to say a word as to the way God speaks to us in these days. Not merely what He says, but the gracious way in which He talks to us; recognizes our difficulties, even speaks them out for us; looks at them with us, and in great goodness answers them, just as a man talks with his friend.

It is the characteristic of Christianity that God deals with us now as men. In the day of the Old Testament He did not so speak. He did not write Israel a letter in the familiar way of friends as He does in these beautiful, interesting and most precious epistles. He deals with His people in these days as full grown men as it were, no longer babes, which, in itself, is a point that should draw our hearts and our attention the more carefully to listen.

We have now come to the second sub-division of the first great section of our book.

From the first to the eleventh verses of the fifth chapter we have a kind of song of triumph, ending with the words, "We boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received the reconciliation." Now from that verse on to the end of the eighth chapter we take up another phase of the subject, and a very interesting one it is, although the weight of it is very little felt among Christians. We most of us feel quite content if we know that our sins are forgiven. We think that is the "*summum bonum*" of Christian experience. Our epistle doesn't so teach. There is a deeper thing than the forgiveness of sins.

You have a bad tree in your garden. It brings forth bad fruit. What do you do? You cut off all the fruit, and then complaisantly say to yourself, "Now my tree is all right; I will get good fruit henceforth." But the next year comes, and there is the same bad fruit as before. Quite distressed, you say, "I must go deeper," and now you cut off all the *twigs* of your tree, but the next year there is

again the same bad fruit, and again you are greatly distressed. You say, "I must go still further," and you cut off the *branches*, and you dig about the roots, and you say, "Surely, my tree after all this care will bring forth good fruit now."

No, no, no. It is the same old tree, and it can only produce the same old fruit as long as it *lives*.

Now, dear brethren and sisters, may God grant me to be very simple and plain. We have been talking thus far about the fruit the tree produces. Now we are going to speak of the *tree itself*. Up to this point God has been showing us how He deals with sins. Now He is going to show us how He deals with the deeper question, not sins, but *sin*.

You know Israel was in Egypt in captivity. There are two very marked stages in her deliverance. On that paschal night when the angel of the Lord went abroad over that land at midnight he found some doors, lintels and side-posts sprinkled with blood, and where that blood was—I want you to mark the sweet words which are not very often carefully considered—it is not merely that the destroying angel passed over, it is the Lord Himself who shelters with His own person that blood-stained door; He *passes over*, and covering this house with His protecting wing He tells His angel to pass by. That was the first step in Israel's deliverance. The question of what they had *done* was then settled by the blood of the paschal lamb.

We have thus settled, through God's mercy, in our first four or five chapters the question of our being sinners. The precious blood of Christ has answered that serious question for us perfectly.

But they were not out of Egypt yet, nor are we. There comes the further experimental deliverance at the Red Sea. God takes them out, but He doesn't take them at once straight to that fair land flowing with milk and honey. He leads them in the way of the wilderness, and brings that whole company up to the sea. There are the watch towers of the enemies on one side, a desert on the other, there was no flight to the right hand or to the left, the sea in front and Pharaoh's chariots already rumbling behind.

They are distinctly in a tight place. They can't look to the right hand, nor to the left, nor in front, but God is over them there. He ploughs a way for them by the east wind—the wind of affliction and judgment, of which I cannot now speak more particularly, but it speaks of death in judgment—through the Red Sea, and the next morning they see the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore.

Now, unless I am very much mistaken, we too may see the "Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore" here in our subject to-night. It is the second part of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea.

I must ask you, therefore, to look at a little earlier portion than the sixth and seventh chapters announced. I must ask you to look at the 12th verse of the fifth chapter, and I shall go over with some little care these verses, inasmuch as you know everything depends upon how one *begins*. If my rifle is only 1-100 part of an inch out of the line when the bullet starts no man can tell how far it will be off by the time it reaches the target. So look at these verses, if you please, they need a little careful attention.

"Wherefore."—It will be more intelligible if we make that more literal, and say, "on this account." That is *why* we glory in God. "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."

Now, we could not say that by *one* man *SINS* entered into the world, could we? You and I have had *our* share in putting *sins* into the world, as has everyone who ever lived.

Clearly, then, God is not now dealing with *sins*, but with *sin*, the nature, the bad fruit-tree, of which we are now speaking. This came by one man only, and was followed by death. Not eternal death here. This is temporal death, which is the consequence of sin. Please note: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Just as the root of a tree sends, with its sap, its nature up into every twig of that tree, so this root of the tree, Adam, has sent his nature up into every twig, every single one of us here, and that nature is *sin*, and its consequence *death*. But God

further says, "All have sinned." That is to say, all have *shown* and *proved in experience* that they really *have* that nature, by acting in conformity with it. *i. e.* sinning.

I hope that point is clear.

Now look at the next: "For until the law."—There are some people who think that the law has been almost an eternal thing, but the law did not come until Moses at Sinai. "But until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law."

Let me try to illustrate this: You go out of your house one morning, and your flower-beds are in beautiful order; you admire them as you pass, and you admire your children, too, but when you come home at night you see little foot-marks all over your flower-beds, and you can no longer admire them, nor the children either, perhaps, for they have been running over the flower-beds in every direction. Now, what do you do? Do you say, "Come here, I shall punish you severely for running over the flower-beds?" I don't think so. You say, "Come here; see what you have done. You ought not to have run over these flower-beds." What do the children say? "Papa, you didn't *tell* us not to run over the flower-beds." "Very well, my dears," you reply, "I shall not *impute it* to you this time, because I did not tell you; there was no law. But now I *tell* you not to run over the flower-beds; if you do it again I must punish you." That is, it *will be* imputed, because now there is law.

This is exactly the way God acts. He never, in His government of the earth, called men to account for wrong things that they committed from Adam up to Moses. To Adam he gave a law. He said, "Don't eat of that tree." Adam did. He broke that law and received the penalty. But there was no immediate direct penalty that followed any wrong-doing from that time until Moses came. The point of that argument is in the next verse, "Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." That is to say, Adam's sin was transgression. You who have the same little knowledge, perhaps, of the dead languages as myself, will see the force of the word trans-

gression. It is "to step across" something. Now God, in Eden, put a line all around the tree of knowledge of good and evil when He said, "Thou shalt not eat of it." Adam stepped across that line. Now where there is no line, there can't be a stepping across; but death reigned even over those who hadn't stepped across any line—who hadn't sinned after the similitude of Adam's "stepping across the line," or transgression. God didn't impute a single sin to those people individually. If they went and picked up sticks on the Sabbath day, God didn't say they were to be stoned; God didn't punish them for it. If they blasphemed, they were not at once put to death. But after the law had come, then if a man picked up sticks on the Sabbath day, he was stoned at once; then the man who blasphemed the name of the Lord was put to death instantly.\*

Nevertheless whilst these individual sins were not imputed, there was one general penalty that rested on the whole race: death reigned from Adam to Moses. Why did death reign? It was not because God was punishing with death each man who sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, for no one did. But it reigned because the nature, sin, with its penalty death, has been transmitted from him from whom the race sprung, and who, in this verse, is said to be the figure of another Head who was to come.

All the people after Adam died, and yet God didn't impute sin to them as to Adam. They died then because of something else than their own individual sins. This is the point: They died because they had inherited a sinful nature from Adam to which nature death was attached.

"But not as the offense so also is the free gift"—it goes beyond.

Let me say, dear friends, that God never simply makes good what His enemy mars. You and I are very glad

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\* Do not let anyone misunderstand this as applying to eternal issues. God will ever hold every individual responsible to Him, and will measure to each according to the privileges enjoyed (Rom. ch. ii). But in the government of the earth, where physical death is the punishment of transgression, God does not visit this, where there is no law.

sometimes to patch up an expensive piece of pottery that is broken. It is a sign of our poverty, we find it difficult to replace it. God never so confesses to poverty. Not only that, but He never puts even the same kind of plate in its place—if the enemy spoils anything that God makes, He makes something *better*,—always something better, *always, always*. He is never going to put us back into a mere earthly paradise again, but thank His Blessed Name, it is going to be much better,—it is always "*much more*."

There is a very beautiful illustration of this, and at the risk of being a little tedious I am going to ask your attention to it for a moment. Look at that trespass offering in Leviticus, 6th chapter, verses 1-5. We will say I steal ten dollars. I begin to feel the prick of conscience and I go to Moses and say, "Oh, my Lord Moses, I have sinned against the law. I have stolen. My sin is upon me." "How much did you steal?" says Moses. "I stole ten dollars, my Lord Moses. Here are the ten dollars back,—I will give them back." "That won't do," says Moses, "ten dollars are not enough. You must give *twelve* dollars." "But my Lord, I only stole ten dollars." "True," replies Moses, "but God demands that you add the fifth part to the amount you stole; you must leave the man from whom you stole better off than he was before; you must make your theft a positive advantage to him."

Oh, it is beautiful. It is just beautiful. I must make that man richer because I have stolen from him. Do you see why? Just to give in a picture the wondrous truth that God is richer by all we have taken from Him. The Lord Jesus Christ doesn't give God *just the amount* of honor that I have taken from him, but He, on my behalf, adds the fifth part more. God is better off than if Adam hadn't sinned, and we are better off. Oh, the glories of God's Gospel!

So here, "Not as the offense," but beyond it in every way, is the free gift. Please put in the "the's" before these words, as I do, and you will find it clearer, "For if through the offense of *the* one, the many (who are attached to Him by the life He gives) are dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by the one Man Jesus

Christ, hath abounded unto the many, who are attached to Him by the life He gives."

Now we have two generic roots, sending up the result of what they are, and have done, into all their branches to the remotest twig.

Adam passes on to all that have life from him, *i. e.*, all the race, certain results of his "one offense": death. And so the second man passes on to all who have life from him, certain results: grace and the gift that is by grace.

"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." Adam sinned once and the results followed to all here. But it is not one sin that the Lord Jesus Christ had to do with, as you and I know well, but it is many offenses, and yet justification follows.

Now we get the results in both cases: "For if by one man's 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."

Death has reigned on account of Adam; life shall not reign merely on account of the Lord Jesus Christ, but *we* shall reign in life. Mark the abundance of that. Death came in by Adam, natural death, not eternal death. We must not think of the lake of fire, the second death; that was kept in the background, not spoken of when the Lord said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He didn't mean "the lake of fire." He simply meant that Adam was dust, and to dust he should go back. So death reigned over all the race by Adam. Now life has not merely reigned by what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, but they who receive an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign *in* life by One, that is, by Jesus Christ. It is the "much more."

"Therefore, as by one offense, judgment came unto all men to condemnation, even so by one righteousness the free gift came with all men for justification of life." I quote more literally than our Authorized Version.

What does "justification of life" mean? It has a pleasant sound, and yet do you suppose if I ask you, my

younger hearers, to tell me in simple words what it means, you could readily do it? Try to think it out. If you and I were alone, what would you say was meant by "justification of life?" I think you would, perhaps, find it a little difficult to put your idea into words.

Justification is *attached* to the new life we receive through our Lord Jesus Christ. The life that I get from my parents has indissolubly attached to it condemnation. Every dear babe that is born receives, with the life that is communicated, the condemnation resulting from Adam's transgression. That life has condemnation attached to it because of its evil character. It may be a good child or a bad child, as we popularly speak, but it does not affect the solemn fact that the condemnation of death is attached to the life of the babe.

But it is equally true that there is not a single child born to God, born the second time, born again, and you may see here the force of the term by "Ye **MUST** be born again," but that justification is attached to the new life he now has. Just as condemnation was attached to the life received in first birth, so justification is attached to the life received in the second birth. O how blessed! This is "justification of life."

"For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the One, Christ, the many shall be made righteous." "Moreover the law entered." Why? In order to keep man within the bounds of our morality, and not let him go to the extreme of wickedness that he would if there were no law?

It does not so read, does it? "The law entered"—why? is it possible?—"that the offense *might abound*." Isn't that strong? isn't that dangerous teaching? Just think of it. The law entered that there might be more *offenses*. If it were not here, dear friends, I believe you would call me a heretic and leave the tent in wrath. The law entered to *stop* the offense, you would say, to keep men within the bounds of common morality, to make them externally upright at least. Not at all. This was not its purpose, and it did no such thing. According to the simple Scripture the law came in that the offense *might become more*—abound!



Now, doesn't that upset your ideas somewhat of the law and its purpose? The law came in—by the way, the word "entered" gives the idea of "parenthetically"—that is, it was not in the main purpose of God's plan at all, but "by the way," "parenthetically," the law came in that the offense might abound. If you read your Bible carefully, you will perhaps find your ideas regarding the law very much astray; you will find that actually the "*motions of sin* are by the law," "the law worketh wrath," "the knowledge of sins is by the law," but never the prevention of sins comes by the law.

There is just one scripture that, at first sight, might appear to oppose all these. Turn to Galatians, if you please, and read nineteenth verse of the third chapter: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions." And many of us say: that is, the law served to *check* transgressions. Do not conclude this too hastily. All depends upon the force of the word, "because." Now, the strict meaning of the word so translated is "for the sake of." It was added for the sake of transgressions, so *as to make them*. Exactly what our epistle says here, "that the offense might *abound*"—in order to *make* transgression. Where there is no law there is no transgression at all, as we saw just now; so it would be impossible to say that the law came to stop what did not exist, but for the sake of making sin into *transgression* the law came.

I want you to be clear about it, for your peace, holiness, and comfort depend largely on the right view of God's law, its purpose, place and your present relationship with it. This is largely all lost truth in Christendom.

"But where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Grace was not to be dammed up by sin, but its waters rolled over the dam, for "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness"—that righteousness which Christ worked out upon the cross—"unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Well, now, we come to the first difficulty about such teachings as that: what a man might naturally say, "Well, do you mean to say that it no more depends upon me with

regard to my salvation, than it depends upon me with regard to my condemnation?"

That is with a certain proviso exactly what the Scriptures teach here.

"Do you mean to say that damnation comes to me because somebody else sinned?"

Certainly, without any controversy, as far as that condemnation finds expression in literal, physical death. People die, not because of their own sins, but because of a death-subject organism received with their life from our first father, Adam. But further, this death is but a shadow—a very dark one—of what is after death. "After death the judgment," and here condemnation necessarily awaits those who have lived alone in sin, in accord with the sinful nature received from Adam. So that in answer to your question, "Does condemnation come to me because somebody else sinned?" Scripture answers, "Not just that, but from the fact that that sinner has imparted to you exactly the same sinful nature, and you have sinned too. If you pass out of this scene with no other life or nature, what can result but eternal judgment?"

"But do you also mean to say that salvation comes to me equally by what another has done?"

Exactly so, combined with the same proviso, that you receive a new life from Him.

Beloved, I have heard a great many men murmur against God in this way: "God has made me with passions, appetites and longings, and then He damns me for satisfying them."

I say, "Are you helpless against those passions, appetites and longings—are you helpless?" And, do you know, these murmurers never like to admit that—never.

"You are either helpless, or you are not. If you are not helpless why do you not help yourself, and not blame God? If you *are*, why don't you heartily own it, and let the Lord Jesus Christ do for you, in a good sense, what Adam has done in a bad?"

So then the first difficulty is, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" If the more sin abounds grace is to abound more and more, well then, let us give grace an

opportunity of abounding more and more, by abounding in sin. That doesn't sound at all illogical. It is just *diabolically* logical. But it is no match for divine wisdom, and the apostle crushes it in a moment. "How shall we who have died to sin live any longer therein?" That is a crushing answer, isn't it? If Paul can establish the fact that we are dead, sin goes. You can't be both alive and dead, can you? You can't be half way between the two. If we are alive we are not *dead*. If we are dead to sin we are not alive, and the Apostle says here, "How can we who have died to sin live any longer therein?" Or perhaps, he says in the next verse, you don't know what even the initiatory rite of Christianity implies. "As many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death." We took the place, in the first rite that made us outwardly Christians, of being under sentence of death. We don't bury people because they are alive. Life is not a pre-requisite to burial. The only necessity for burial is that people must be dead. Therefore if a man is baptized he recognizes that death is his portion, and that he has received his portion. He says, "Blessed be God, there was a cross on Calvary. I am buried indeed, but it is to His death, with that death in view as the sole hope and confidence of my heart. He is the One who in my place died. He received what was due to me, and in thus being buried in figure I would express that death is my rightful portion; but in the death of Jesus Christ I died, therefore I may be buried with Him by baptism." If then, we have been thus truly identified with Him in the likeness of His death, then, necessarily, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. If we were not, in this baptism, mere hypocrites, or false professors, the life that we now live will correspond too with His. It will be a resurrection-life. Since I reckon all my old life dead and buried, I now can only look to the risen Lord for the *power* of my life that goes on here.

"Knowing this, that our old man," that is, ourselves, as identified with that first man we spoke of in the fifth chapter, having our descent from Adam; this is the "old man" who is crucified with Him, that the body of sin

might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Here is the bad fruit-tree cut down and put away entirely.

Please do look at that very closely. When the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross, when he hung His blessed head, when He cried, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," when His head dropped upon His breast in death, when the soldier with his spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, God reckoned that you and I, dear fellow-believer, passed out of existence, then and there, as responsible creatures in the flesh, before Him—we *died*. The bad tree has gone root and branch.

"That henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is free from sin," rather justified, as the margin has it, from sin.

You can't accuse a dead man of *being* anything or *doing* anything, can you? I never heard any one speak of a dead man and say he *is* a thief. He may have been that when he was alive. We can't call him that now. He is "justified," not from sins, for "the evil that men do lives after them." He is not necessarily justified from what he has *done*, that evil may still live, but from what he was, and that is the only way of being justified from what I am. I can only get that justification by stopping my very *being*, that is by dying. Death is the only Saviour. But we need not wait for our own literal physical death to be justified from sin. But nothing less than identification with Christ in His death will avail.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." The standpoint from which the apostle speaks is the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we be truly identified with Him in His death, then we believe that our present life will be of a different character entirely. Not an improved old life, but a *new* life; not turning over a new leaf, but a new kind of life, a resurrection life, going on to a literal resurrection with Him in glory.

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death has no more dominion over Him, for in

that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now this is certainly true, or God would not tell us to reckon it, would He? That is to say, we died judicially before God when the Lord Jesus Christ died. On the other hand, we must not press that as far as many press it, and say that sin within us is dead, because we shall sorrowfully find that this is *not* true before we go very far. I have known very many serious and sorrowful results from that error. Many of my dear friends in Christ have contended that they have no more sin in them. They have said, "We give God the glory, He has actually crucified sin within us. We are crucified with Christ; we died when He died. There is no more sin left in us."

That is as much an error as the other.

The apostle would have said nothing about our *reckoning* if it were a literal fact, would he? We don't *reckon* a thing when it is an actuality, but we reckon it when it is true in a certain sense, and not experimentally a fact. True to faith, but not true to experience, then and thus, we reckon it so.

So, according to the simplicity of faith with which we are able to grasp this truth, that we passed out from our judicial standing as children of Adam from before God when Christ died, will be the practical liberty in holiness that will result from this faith.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." He would not have needed to say that if sin had been actually dead and gone. While sin is still in us and will be in us as long as we are here, we are not to let it be our master; we are by faith to see the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

The morning after Israel had passed through the Red Sea they looked and there were their taskmasters dead upon the sea shore. And as we look upon the cross of Christ, which is the antitype of the Red Sea, we see, too, a taskmaster, Sin, crucified and put to death there; dead, as it were, upon the sea shore. So we must not obey that master any more—reckon there is no need for it.

(To be continued.)

## Epistle to the Romans.

Chapter vi, vii.

BY F. C. JENNINGS.

So we come to the second answer to that question, "What shall we say then; shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" There are three answers to that here, each of them connected with the words, "know ye not." It will perhaps make it simple if you put that down.

First, you can't continue in sin, you have died to it; again, you can't continue in sin, because you have another master; finally, you can't continue in sin, because you have another husband.

Because you have died to it, because you have another master, because you have another husband; three reasons why we can't continue in sin.

So we now come to the second, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof, neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, for sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law." I am sure there are some here who think that sin shall not have dominion over them because *they are* under the law. They delight to take their place under the law. I know that they are not happy there, but at the same time they still cleave to the fact that God gave the law, and the law is good; they want to obey it, therefore they put themselves under it.

But Scripture says that it is not the way of holiness. It is not the way of liberty; sin shall not have dominion over you because ye are not under the law—but what are you under? Grace—that brings me close to God in all the confidence of a child. Grace says "You have nothing, but I will give you everything." That suits me a great deal better than law. "What then, shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid." "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants

to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey." You must obey one or other, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you." Don't befog this by introducing any thought of baptism here. The "form of doctrine" is simply the gospel that delivers from the slavery of sin as baptism of itself does not at all.

Then in the next clause, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." But that needs to be guarded, says the apostle; I speak after the manner of men, I know how difficult it is for you to get these things clear, and so I am using an illustration and speaking as men would speak, for while I speak of your being slaves of righteousness, don't understand me to mean that I am putting you into another legal position. It is merely to accomodate myself to your weakness and to make myself clear. So as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Your members have been in the past yielded freely as servants of corruption and violence, so now yield once for all your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Go on in that direction. As the other led downward from iniquity to iniquity, this leads up from righteousness unto holiness. It is like the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? The apostle has a very delicate way of merging one of his subjects into another. The "what fruit" here suggests the argument of the seventh chapter. "What fruit" had ye then? Ye are ashamed of what you did then now. I am sure when you and I look back upon the life that is now past forever, it is not with any pleasure, is it? We are ashamed of those things. What fruit was there in it? Fruit is a sign of life, but the end of those things is death. There can't be life and death both together. I see men sometimes get up in meeting and tell rather boastingly how bad they have been. One has very little sympathy with that, dear friends. I believe the fruit of God's work

would lead us to be ashamed thoroughly, and if we confess those things it is with shame ; with lowliness of heart and self judgment, the loathing that Job speaks of, "I abhor myself."

For the wages of sin is death. That is the awful, disappointing, terrible wages that one gets for living in sin. The wages that sin pays, which you get at the end of your day's work—and it is a pretty hard day's work too ; and when you have got to the end of it, you must take your wages—death.

Oh, dear heart, God speaks to you. One hundred years hence the tent may be here ; the tables and chairs, everything that you see material may be here, but there will not be one of us here. Will you be taking these wages then ?

There is no escape. Sin pays its wages without any let up.

But look at the contrast now.

The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Blessed be God.

This brings us to the seventh chapter of our book, and here again we tread on an old battle-ground, one on which, too, conflict is still active. And why is this ? Is it not because the plain teaching of this Scripture as to the believer's relationship with the law is altogether too radical to be accepted simply by those who, not only are under the law as a rule of life, but are consistently taught that there is exactly where they ought to be ? I remember in my younger days owning a small book ("Bogatsky's Golden Treasury"), which gave a short exhortation on some text for every day in the year, and, for the most part, very evangelical, sound, and helpful they were. It is many years now, but I still clearly remember this counsel : "If anyone—even your closest friend—insists that we are free from the law as a rule of life, *have nothing whatever to do with him*. We are first under the law for conviction, then delivered from its condemnation by the cross of Christ, then we take it again as our rule of life on our way home." I am sure this teaching was due to a justifiable fear of "lawlessness," and it was, and I believe still is, the



popular teaching of those who may be called the evangelical teachers of the day.

Sunday after Sunday the law is read out to the assembled congregations, and it is proclaimed as the only rule for the believer's guidance. One large communion puts into the mouth of its members this prayer: "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." What wonder if such a word as "the motions of sin *which were by the law*" is felt to be absolutely contrary to this whole line of things, and that there is consequent uncertainty and confusion.

Our chapter forms the third answer to the question, "Shall we continue in sin?" and is again introduced with the words "Know ye not?" The apostle appeals to those who know law.

There is no end of law's dominion over a man. The moment he is born he instantly comes under law, and there remains as long as he lives; that rule ceases only with his death. The apostle does not here refer exclusively to the Sinaitic law, but to "law" as a universal principle.

Then he gives an illustration of this in the marriage relationship, which only death can annul. The woman who is for another whilst her husband lives is an adulteress; but death intervening, she is now quite free to form a similar relationship with another man without any stigma of guilt.

Now, in this figure the law of God fills a double role. It is first the law principle that has dominion over the two contracting parties, but, as is afterwards shown, it is also one of the parties to the marriage contract. The apostle then plainly, simply applies his illustration. "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 was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Mark here, the figure again changes. It is not the husband who dies, but the wife that is in the corresponding position held by men in the flesh with regard to the law. Ye have died, as already proved in the previous chapter. It is not that the law dies, or is put aside, or is abrogated in one jot or tittle. It has all its force and all its vitality

without one particle of diminution. It is the believer who is reckoned as having passed out of existence as a man in the flesh, in his substitute Christ, as already proved.

But is he then to be lawless? Indeed no; but he is now free to recognize, and must necessarily recognize, since he still lives and must live by some principle or power, another similar marriage bond, only now not to the law on *this side of death*, but to Him who was raised from the dead. The new union is thus alone on *the resurrection side of the grave*. What will be the result of this union with the blessed Lord who has redeemed us from the curse of the law? Fruit, that God Himself will own as well pleasing, resurrection fruit.

By this the Holy Spirit of God would plainly teach us that only as dead with Christ, and united to Him, as a wife to a husband, in resurrection life, devoted to Him, fully surrendered to Him, can there possibly be any fruit that God Himself can own.

What then was the fruit of the first marriage with the law when we were in the flesh? (You see He will not permit for a moment that we *are* in the flesh. Dead men are no longer in the flesh; all but dead men are, and we are dead men by the body of Christ. But before we died thus we were in connection with the law. What was the result?) "Motions of sins." The law made the sins move; brought them into evidence. Just as if I should claim that there is only pure water in a vessel that I hold. You deny this, and, taking a clear, crystal rod, ask me "Is that rod perfectly pure?" I examine it and admit that it is so. "Nothing impure can come from my rod?" "No, nothing." You then put the rod into the glass and stir it. Now, look, the water that was fairly clear when quiescent is all alive with the filth that had hitherto rested dormant at the bottom. The motions of the filth were by the rod. The crystal rod has not brought dirt into existence but into evidence only. So the holy Law of God did not *make sin*, it brought it into evidence only as sins, and every member of the body is used for their display when they stir.

Thus the carnal perversity that would argue that since

the result of being united to the law was evil, in bringing forth fruit unto death, therefore the law produced the evil result, is fully answered. It is *Sin* that is responsible—some inherent principle of evil in man in the flesh. *Sin* gets a kind of basis for its operations by the law.

The fact of a thing being forbidden is enough to awaken this principle to action and a desire to do exactly what is forbidden. This phenomenon has been recognized even by heathen writers, as one of them says: "What is lawful is not cared for; what is unlawful is coveted fiercely."

Now the apostle becomes intensely personal; and indeed every man must in some degree himself groan under Egyptian bondage to get divine deliverance. "I was alive without the law once," *i. e.*, quite complacent, unaware of the death penalty overhanging me. "The law came," *i. e.*, I awoke to consciousness of its full claims; at once *sin*, which had been but dormant, now raised its head as an angry viper awakened, and I passed into death—my complacency died, my hopes perished.

Ah, I had heard a voice that seemed to promise me *life* if only I walked the legal path. But it was conditional only on an obedience I could not, by the very nature of my being, give. *Sin* enticed me in self confidence to take a path at the end of which I was to get life, and I found myself face to face with the sword of death instead of the crown of life.

Is the law in any way to blame for this? Perish the thought. The law is perfect, "holy, just and good," and yet it is by so good a thing that *sin* has worked my death.

Had my death been the result of some evil thing, as a cruel tyrant might order the death of a good man, then nothing within the condemned could be held responsible. All responsibility rests with the condemner. But if the judge is "holy, just and good," then all the evil is in the criminal.

But this only partially illustrates—the case is worse. It is not that the law condemns only, but it is *sin by the means of the law itself*, making the holy law its vantage ground of attack, only stirring in opposition to the law's demands, worked out in me that resistance to what I confess is "holy,

just and good," which that law must slay me for. What opposes good must be evil—is shown out in its true character. But that sin should use so good a thing to produce the very evil the good thing condemns! It is this that shows how awfully, unchangeably, essentially, exceedingly sinful is *sin*. It uses even a good thing for the worst results, *i. e.*, to bring out the very things that good thing condemns.

Now listen, Israel is beginning to groan. Oh, it is splendid when there is a genuine groan on this account. Sweeter music than all "crackling of thorns under the pot." Sach as is the merriment of carnal men.

"Alas! I am carnal, sold under sin"—a bond—slave in Egypt. The tasks that are set me to do, even the building of Egypt's treasure cities, Pithom and Ramases, the very works that fasten more securely my own fetters, I hate them; I would not do them. But an inexorable task-master within, ever urges and compels me to build what I would fain cast down, and prevents me carrying out the better purposes I form. Well, if this proves nothing else, it proves at least that I *am* an Israelite, *not* an Egyptian. That there is a will opposing the task-master "*Sin*," so that it is no longer "*I*," the Israelite, but "*sin*," the Egyptian, who is responsible for these works. Still this task-master is ever present with me. It is a *law*; always invariably acting consistently with its evil nature; the law of sin and, its consequence, death, and this is *within me*; awful discovery!

It is true, I have also discovered another law, ever delighting in what is good. I both delight in the law of God, love it, approve it, and yet break it, consistently always, and steadily. Not in an outward way of course. Not always stealing; but always coveting, and ever feeling those uncontrollable impulses that are themselves condemned as sin. Now this is certainly not "the devil" at all. I cannot roll the responsibility on him, but something that is "*myself*" in a sense, and still not *that* "*I*" that wants to do right, and yet there are not two persons but only one responsible man. Strange paradox! Two natures connected with two births. By the first birth I am fleshly,

natural, sin-loving. By the second I am spiritual, God-loving, sin-hating. But the second birth only sets the will aright. "We are renewed in the spirit of our minds;" but it gives no power. The lesson of helplessness and of consequent dependence has to be painfully learned, and the life in, and living on, Another.

So here the Israelite was no warrior in Egypt, but a helpless slave. In this part of the seventh of Romans we are not looking on the excitement of an equal conflict, much less on the glories of a victory; but on the misery of the slave-pen. And now I find that my own body is connected with my bondage in some way. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" My tyrant oppressor is in my body. Not that the mere flesh and blood is evil, but the body's needs, its appetites, its powers are all used by the evil principle sin; hence it is now so identified with the principle behind it that I must call it ever a body of sin and death. To get deliverance from it I must get *out* of it. How is that possible then, except by dying? Oh, hopeless outlook, the grave alone my relief! Is there any other way? Who can deliver me? Of old even to touch a dead body was most seriously defiling. I not only *touch*, but *am* a dead body? Who can deliver me? "*I thank God.*" Mark, with some joy, the word: the very God, whom I have feared as condemning, by this holy law, the sin within me. It is He, and none but He who ever could conceive a path out of such a difficulty as this. He has again ploughed through the Red Sea's waves. And as I now see that path of dry land, I sing my song of praise to Him—"I thank *God.*" But it is through Jesus Christ the Lord alone that the path of perfect deliverance has been wrought, as the next chapter clearly shows in precious detail, and I am free.

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea.  
Jehovah hath triumphed, His people are free.

The last words, "So then I myself with the mind indeed serve God's law, but with the flesh sin's law," form a comprehensive summing up of the whole situation as far as "myself" is concerned.

It is exactly what the writer had previously discovered. There is little, or no advance over verse 17 or verse 20. But chapter viii : 1, gives a new position entirely, and connects directly with the shout of praise, "I thank God."

This is a very imperfect, and all too hurried review of a chapter, every word of which is worth a separate study; but may the Lord add His blessing.

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## Epistle to the Romans.

Chapter viii.

BY F. C. JENNINGS.

What a contrast have we here! It was but a little while ago and the dark night was about us; we were hemmed in on every side, the rumbling of the Egyptians' chariots could be heard as they approached, and now, the Sun has risen, His gracious beams flood the scene. The Red Sea's waves are rolling as when last evening they opposed our progress; but now they are behind us, we have passed through them without a wet foot; the shore is lined with the dead bodies of our foes. We are free! But where now are we? We have in one sense already reached our Land. We are "in Christ Jesus," and what is the first cause of joy there? No condemnation! Why? Because there is nothing left to *be* condemned. What brought the sense of condemnation over me but lately? The Egyptians made me do their work. I found that in me, that is in my flesh, there was no good thing—nothing but sin. It was not because of what I had done; but because of what I *was now*. All is gone. *What I was is gone*. Look about. There is no body of death in this fair scene. Life, Life, Eternal Life, permeates everything, everywhere. What has become of *the Sin* that I found "in me that is in my flesh?" Gone. Sunk in the sea. Yes, God, the very God from whom I feared condemnation, has Himself conceived the wonderful plan, and carried it out. He has sent His Son, in the likeness of that "sinful flesh" that was my tyrant, and on the Cross of Calvary He has rolled all the waves and billows of His righteous judgments over His holy Head, and there condemned forever all the sin that I as in the flesh am (mark it well). There, in that awful darkness, during the three hours from the sixth to the ninth hour, the sea has been divided, judgment has had its unhindered course, and sin is forever condemned and is at the bottom of the sea!

But where then can I now look for a *new* life? I still *breathe*, and my heart beats in my body still. Harken to their Spirit's Voice. Henceforth your life is "in Christ

Jesus." Where is He? In the tomb? No; but risen, living, and at the right hand of God. There, there only, not one inch below that supreme level do I find my Life now, and it is a life free from the law of sin and death. Sin shall never, for all time and eternity, have any dominion over that life.

But here is a practical difficulty. Do those who enjoy this deliverance never more sin? Are they *perfect*? If so where shall I find them? I know a few who lay claim never to sin at all; I have no confidence in such claims, whilst those I have most confidence in are the first to confess to shortcoming. Nor as a matter of fact could Israel say she was yet in her own land—when singing that triumphant song with Moses she cried, "Thou hast guided thy people to *thy holy habitation*." Their bounding triumphant spirits sprang into the short journey and they were there already. But alas they soon dropped from this high happy place, and the wilderness, which was not in God's plan at all, came in with its frequent failures and God's dealings with them. So with us; we are delivered from Egypt, and have title to our Land at once; we may live there if we will, it is ours; but we do not always enjoy what is ours. For this we have to "walk after the Spirit," and as we walk after the Spirit, i. e., always occupying our hearts with our Lord Jesus Christ and drawing all needs from Him, we find practical, absolute freedom from the law of sin and death, and the righteousness, that the holy law of God in vain demanded from us, is unconsciously fulfilled.

For now it is no longer, as in chapter vii., *myself* helplessly struggling against *sin* within me; but there is a new, and that an Almighty Actor come into the case: The Spirit. The conflict now lies between that Spirit and the flesh. *I*, the individual, may walk after either; but the two generations into which all mankind are divided are characterized by being gathered by one or the other of these opposing principles. To give oneself up to the flesh is *death*—death in its source, in its present sphere, and in its eternal issue. On the contrary, "the mind of the Spirit" is life and peace as a present enjoyment and necessarily eternal result. And



that the carnal mind or the mind of the flesh (i. e., the activity of thought or desires of the flesh with its old evil nature) is death in every true sense is sure; since this carnal mind is not merely an enemy that may be reconciled (as ch. v:10), but *enmity* itself—its attitude towards God's law can never be changed. Hence it certainly follows that they that have no principle of life but a natural one—who are thus in the flesh—cannot by any possibility please the God, with whom they are—by the very principle of their being—at enmity. At enmity, not here by wicked works, but by a wicked *nature*.

This is solemnly simple and clear, but how surely this writes "death" over all the fairest of the works of the flesh. Everything is the product of a nature that is "enmity with God." Fair, aimiable, kindly, honest, possibly philanthropic—it is hard to say that all in man naturally is permeated with a God-hating principle, and pleases not God—hard to slay all the best of Amalek; hard to turn out Ishmael; but there are two factors of the same truth:

"Unless a man be *born again* he cannot please God;" and "unless a man thus new-born *walk after the Spirit*, he cannot please God." God will have no peace with Amalek wherever he may be *forever*.

But no believer in the Lord Jesus is really in the *flesh*. He may indeed be there as far as his intelligence and consciousness goes, as was the true saint in chap. vii.; but what necessarily characterizes every child of God always, and in every place, is a new Spirit-born, Spirit-energized, Spirit-filled life, and if any one lacks this, i. e., "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" at all. There is no halfway. It is impossible, except poetically, to "hover between life and death." Every one must be in one condition or the other.

But with the apparently studied confusion of terms—"if the *Spirit of God* dwell in you"—"if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*." "If *Christ* be in you." But there is, we are sure, a divine design in this apparent confusion.

"The Spirit of *God*" marks our new *standing before God*.

"The Spirit of Christ" as evidencing that we *belong to Christ*.

"Christ in you"—a complete identification of the Spirit-life within me, with Christ who has passed through all judgment for me and who is risen from the dead and in whom thus risen my life is.

Hence "the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." But what does this mean?

Sin has indeed had its death-bearing effect upon the body, nor is the body as yet at all free from that effect. I cannot say, notwithstanding that Christ is in me, that my body is yet in resurrective life. Every pain, every infirmity, every gray hair denies this. Death still has its hand upon our bodies because of sin.

And this is what would keep straight what is known as "Divine healing;" a line of teaching with which so much precious truth is interwoven—truth of confidence in God rather than in flesh, of His faithful response to the prayer of faith—with error, that the Lord's dear people swallow both without discrimination. As it is now professed, it is based on the assumption that our bodies ought to be as free from the effects of sin as our spirits. No, death still has its claims over the body because of sin.

But the Spirit (and there is one of those beautiful ambiguities here that are themselves better than all mere human procession—you must spell this both with a capital and a small "s." It is my spirit as renewed and energized by the Holy Spirit or the Holy Spirit as giving character, and the power of life, to my spirit) is Life—Life, never for all eternity to be touched with death. Why? Has death lost all power over that Spirit-given life? Yes; *all*. How is that? "Because of righteousness," which has put away all that called for death, in the One who died in the likeness of sinful flesh. This life is as the other side of all condemnation, and is "life indeed" (1 Tim. vi:19). There is no difference between the believer and unbeliever as to their *bodies*—death has its claim over each; but (and here is *the* difference); in the believer is a new Spirit-filled life which he has received from Him who, after He had borne all that righteousness demanded, breathed upon him, as God

breathed upon Adam, and the Spirit received, is now his only true life, both as to its essence and *power*.

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He who raised up Christ from among the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Precious, cheering, joyous truth, so divinely reasonable. The believer's body is still as mortal as the worldling's. A Christian is not distinguished from an infidel by any difference in that respect. The greatest inconsistency in our brethren who teach "divine healing" is that they *die*. If their bodies are as much entitled to the risen life of Christ as their spirits then should their bodies be as free from death as their spirits, or as Christ's Body now. But this is folly. The sound, well-founded truth is that as surely as Christ was raised from the dead, all in whom that same Spirit dwells, must—not necessarily—be also raised from the dead, for death is no necessity itself but the mortal body must be also quickened into a new deathless life.

Then how much do we owe to the flesh? Let us pay our just debts. We owe it *nothing*, it has never done us any good at all. Nay, if ever now any one lives after the flesh he is "about to die." He is—irrespective of all his claims to a past experience, to being a Christian, and a thousand other ways that never deceive themselves—he is on the road to *death*. Not mere physical death surely; but death in its most solemn aspect of separation from God forever. But if, on the other hand, the deeds of the body (i. e., the flesh in its activity and finding expression through the body) be kept in the place of death, then he is surely on the path of life. For the children of God are known, not by bodies free of disease or death; but only by being led of the Spirit. This does not *make* any one a child of God; but proves that he is so. No man can be recognized as a child of God except as he is evidently led of the Spirit. But that Spirit never is the author of a legal fear; but of that childlike confidence that cries "Abba Father." The Hebrew and Greek; the Jew and Gentile speech united in

this one adoption cry. There is again "no difference," except that the Jew comes first as ever.

Further the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. There is no jar, no clash, between the Spirit of God and our spirit. It is not a mere "feeling" which may, and does, change with the ever-varying conditions of this scene; but we have an assurance that has the most solid and trustworthy basis in the Word of God and this is approved by our highest powers: our spirit.

But look at the next glorious consequence, "if we are children then are we heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." What an inheritance! But then see the triumphant path of these sons of God to their Home: homeward, telling out their calling in the dignities of their persons and the honors accorded them? Nay, nay. But just the same path as the Firstborn. That is, what peculiarly characterizes the child of God is not mere suffering in the abstract; but "*suffering with Him.*"

Now this word "suffer" generally leads the apostle on another step. He reckons that persons sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory which is to be revealed in us. I have seen a spark, burning it is true; but burning dimly in our atmosphere. I have seen it plunged into a jar of oxygen and at once my eyes were almost blinded to the glory revealed in it. Ah, it was *at home*—in perfect harmony to its environment. So with the saint of God, the spark burns here but dimly; but let it once get into *its own atmosphere*: At home with God: and there shall be an outshining worthy of its divine Author.

But more;—the interests of all creation hang upon that glorious moment. Like a racer, with neck outstretched, awaiting the signal: figure of extreme tension,—the whole of this lower creation of which man is the head awaits this manifestation of God's sons. Why? Because this creation has before it the same hope. According to that principle of divine government, "thou and thy house," what befalls the *head*, affects all connected with him. It will make our text clearer to read it with a parenthesis, thus:

"For the earnest expectation of the creature awaits the manifestation of the sons of God [for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly (i. e., not of its own will or sin), but through him who subjected it (i. e., it was through some other than itself that it became subject to vanity)] in hope that the creation itself also shall "be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

When man lost his place with God, all that creation of which he was the head was thrown into confusion and disorder;—all passed, with its head, under the shadow of vanity or the bondage of corruption. But when in and through the Second Man, man is more than restored, then the whole creation of which he is the head, shall share (according to the measure of the original intent of the Creator) in the glory of that scene and sphere.

Not that beasts shall not die, they were never intended to have perpetual existence (cf. 2 Pet. ii:20); *they* have no such link with the living God who breathed not into *their* nostrils the breath of life. But the Scriptures clearly speak of a beautiful harmony even among the beasts in contrast with the present discord:

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
The leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
The calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together  
and a little child shall lead them,  
The cow and the bear shall feed,  
Their young ones shall lie down together,  
The lion shall eat straw like an ox,  
The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,  
The weanest child shall put his hand in the cockatrice's  
den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.  
For the land shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea."

Thus the present antipathies between the beasts: the feeding of the strong on the weak; the enmity between man and the beasts are the evidences of the "bondage of corruption" that shall be done away at the manifestation of the sons of God.

The beast—or at least the beast of that creation of which man is the head—was never primarily intended to *feed on beast*, but on every given herb (Gen. i:30), i. e., on the kingdom below it. Nor was man intended to feed on that which he shared so much in common and which was also “a living soul;” but on another life-filled kingdom below him—the green herb. Thus there is, according to Is. ii., perfect restoration or harmony between man and the creation, and between the creatures themselves. Things are as God would have them. The Second Man brings back to liberty the whole creation (of which man is head) from the bondage of corruption into which it has been brought, not by its own act, but by the first man.

“Oh scenes surpassing fable and yet true,  
 Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see  
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
 His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy.”

Sweet and entrancing contrast to the present scene, where everything speaks, by its very discord, of some awful solemn catastrophe. Everything groans—at death or at birth, there is suffering. Nor are the sons of God delivered from it yet; they share the groaning of that groaning creation to which they are still linked by their bodies. They share it in actual suffering, and by a sympathy that has been awakened into more acute sensitiveness by their new and divinely given life. They too await the adoption—not the *spirit* of adoption, but being publicly owned and manifested before the whole creation as God’s sons—even the redemption of the body. That is when our bodies shall be redeemed from every vestige of the effect of sin and shall shine forth in more glory far than in innocency in Eden.

Oh, my beloved brethren, never pretend for one moment to have that blissful consummation yet. It is simply a dishonor to God to claim that our present bodies are in any true actual sense redeemed. Our gracious God and Father uses the very fact of their present condition to teach lessons otherwise never learned, to give blessings otherwise never enjoyed.