

THOUGHTS AND GLEANINGS
ON ROMANS VIII.

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IN the first verse we get our new position, and no judgment. Judgment alone can attach itself to man as in the flesh, characterised by the law of sin and death. We have life in Christ risen—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the other law ; I cannot be in the power of both simultaneously — there is no judgment for me. All is secured in Christ. For judgment to reach Noah, his ark must go to pieces—Christ cannot go to pieces—there is eternal security for those in Him. It is not a question of our *sins*, but our position before God. The old position was in Adam, and such weakness there, that the law was altogether incapable with such a corrupted instrument to produce righteousness—it was weak through the flesh. The Spirit alone can produce satisfactory results—those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit—those in spirit before God and not in flesh. In order to this new state God has condemned sin in the flesh. What a phase of the death of Christ is here ! It is not His blood to cleanse away guilt, but the Son of God come in likeness of sinful flesh, entirely exempt from sin, as to nature and personal imputation, but made it for others, and forsaken of God, who thus condemned it ; and

the man in Christ is as clear from sin as being chargeable before God as in it—"in flesh"—as the One who has been raised by the glory of the Father; because He has exhausted all the judgment that was its due. Till the effect of that terrible moment when the Son of God was made sin is accounted to the sinner, where faith is, all that *there* was manifested as due to him, is on him. But now as Christ has no more for ever to do with that state of things, only to judge by-and-by, so he who is identified with Him in resurrection, (flesh being judged) is in the Spirit, and has done with sin likewise.

Of course it is not the subjective state of walking in the Spirit practically, though this is true, and more than the law's righteousness fulfilled by us, but the new state "in spirit," in contrast to "in the flesh." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." All Christians are looked at as walking after the spirit here, it characterises the chapter. It would be bad indeed if our standing (if I may speak of the new *state* thus) before God, were dependent on our realised and expressed state; but effect, as in John's epistles, is spoken of to distinguish the state. John teaches that we know what we are by what we do. A man who loves the brethren is born of God. We know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. And further down in our chapter: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Also, he that mortifies

the deeds of the body shall live ; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God are sons.

The eighth of Romans is a body with all its members in perfect articulation. It is not responsibility (though privilege and responsibility always go hand in hand, that is, responsibility flows from privilege and relationship), but the new man as God's workmanship in resurrection, and in the spirit, and every function so perfect in that produced, only displaying the workman who produced it. Christ is reproduced, or, as it says, "none of his."

What a grand deliverance is this ! No longer looking within to find only the opposite of all the new desires ; and in the eagerness for holiness in order to rest, applying the law only to be condemned. For the pious who know not deliverance ever necessarily apply to law. Man *must* have a rule by which to be governed, seeing he is only practically acquainted with an Israelite's state, in flesh, under law—how can it be otherwise ?) But now, not only I, but God has judged that which I was as a man in flesh, and I am free from that state as to faith's place before God, and I have life in another who has been made sin, the thing that characterised me before ; and as He will never again have to say to sin except in its judgment, as the One in resurrection to whom all judgment is given, so with me, for as He is so am I. This is deliverance.

The mind of the flesh is death ; it is not, and cannot be, subject to the law of God.

While this wonderful chapter is a blessed succession of statements of facts, it is most salutary to judge the practical by it. How one learns *the least allowance of the flesh works death*. If we live after the flesh we are about to die. The mind of the Spirit is also life. We are in the regions of life or death according as we live after the flesh, or mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit. But doubtless the converted or unconverted state is the primary thought here. They that have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, are not in flesh but in Spirit. The Spirit of God cannot dwell in the flesh. The Spirit of Christ is a different thing, and suggests manifestation: If I have not that Spirit which was the spring and power of all Christ did down here, I am not of Him. If I am of God it cannot be otherwise. I have the Spirit that would, but for the existence and allowance of sin, reproduce Christ. It will be so very soon, but we *have* the Spirit. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." Christ in me, and the body alive which is identified with, and characterised by, sin, would be a contradiction: the body is therefore dead (to faith), because of sin, which would (if it moved) express, as it characterised, the man. The Spirit is life because righteousness now characterises him. The Spirit is life, producing righteousness, and Christ in me is expressed. If the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in me, it is because the Spirit is life, and Christ is in me. I believe

the righteousness here to be practical, it is the means to the end, though the end (practice) is not the subject, and the way it is put is in character with all the chapter which, if not considered, makes this puzzling, and many conclude that it is God's righteousness connected with the death and resurrection of Christ. Though the law has proved man's unrighteousness and weakness, and as a means of righteousness unavailing, yet there is to be righteousness, and that far in excess of Sinai's rule, therefore, the Spirit is life, and righteousness flows. The antithesis is, the body dead because of sin. Compare the triplets: The "body," "sin," "death;" the "Spirit," "righteousness," "life."

The ultimate result of the Holy Ghost's presence in the believer is spoken of in the eleventh verse. Jesus who lay in death is now made both Lord and Christ, and if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus up dwell in us, He that raised Christ up shall also quicken the mortal body by His Spirit that dwells in it. It does not speak of the dead—the Spirit is not in the corruptible body. It is a blessed and wonderful fact that while alive in these mortal bodies the Spirit is there by which they will be quickened. There is nothing more, but for the moment of departure, the rapture of the saints—to arrive, and the mortal will put on immortality, and be quickened and transformed into conformity to His body of glory. The power to be used in the execution of this now dwells in us.

The flesh profits nothing, we are therefore not debtors to it, to live after it. The consummation to such a life (the flesh) is death. It is an exceedingly salutary lesson to get hold of in our souls, that flesh and death are inseparable. Flesh and life, and spirit and death, are absolutely incompatible. We are within the domain, morally, of death the moment we allow flesh. The least allowance of flesh works death. The disallowance of it is life. Ye shall live if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body. They that bear about in the body the dying of Jesus are necessarily, and undeniably, in the domain of life. Mortifying the deeds of the body can never give life, but it is in character with the chapter, an unquestionable state proved by the conduct, but which conduct could never in itself give. Those who mortify the deeds of the body will live, and only they, for only Christians do it. It is true they ignobly fail in it, but that is not Romans viii.

It is the portrayal of the normal state of a man in Christ; amongst the many things he does (yet fails so much in doing) is to mortify the deeds of the body. The man of Romans viii. does it, he will live. Let us never forget it, the normal condition of a Christian is depicted in this beautiful picture. It is abnormal, let us equally remember, not to be a perfect expression of Christ, indwelt and led by the Spirit, as we are characteristically as Christians.

The Spirit leads also. It is the power for

mortifying the deeds of the body, but it leads also, and never leads to self-indulgence but the contrary. And those who are thus led manifest the dignity of what they are—"the sons of God." It does not say the sons are led, but those that are thus led are sons. The Spirit leads none other. Bondage knew nothing of this—its spirit the Christian has not received. Fear is quite outside the normal condition of things in the Christian. He is a son and knows nothing of a servant's fear, as such. He fears God in another sense, that is piety, but it is not fear with torment.

The Spirit also gives us the realisation of relationship, it bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. This is the climax of admiration in John's epistle. He exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the *children* [*lit.*] of God." It is more than being put into a *position* however high. It is relationship, born of God. It is an immense thing! The Spirit itself bears witness with my spirit that I am God's child. It is not robbery to take this place; my spirit takes it, and the Holy Ghost bears witness with it, as to it. Relationship is not the subject of this epistle, it is more to be found in Ephesians; but in the marvellous scope of this chapter it is not excluded. The history of this chapter begins with the foreknowledge of God, and ends with the glory never to be ended, yet to be revealed. It dives into the past and finds

no beginning,, it dives into the future, and finds no end. It displays man in ruin, but by means of redemption and righteousness of God set in the family relationships of *John*; and hoping for the salvation, ready to be revealed, of *Peter*. The Holy Ghost, the power for everything in *Ephesians*, is the agent for everything here. The life in practical operation as to walk of *Philippians* finds its parallel here. The twofold reconciliation of *Colossians* is here depicted. The priesthood for infirmity of the *Hebrews*, is here found in the intercession of Christ. The illimitable expanse of the effects of the cross, height, depth, things present or things to come, as well as the all inclusive scope of triumph over all that might be adverse, death, life, angels, principalities and powers, is portrayed in this scripture.

Every Christian finds a home in Romans viii. It is his native soil as born of God, and every prospect displays what he is, and what he will be. It is blessed to see that his heirship depends on his birth. The sons are not called heirs; they have position and character, and by-and-by display. We are heirs, born heirs,—heirs because *children*: and rectitude or lack of it, does not interfere; though of course our chapter only supposes the child to possess the germs that develop into the *son* that glorifies his Father in the dignity of his position.

“Joint heirs with Christ!” How came this about? “Heirs!” This is wonderful! What

about my sins ? God is here speaking as though there were none, and never had been any. Has not my guilty life, the flesh so oft allowed, revoked so infinite a purpose ? No, as truly as a child, so truly am I heir, and the One with whom I am joint-heir has borne the penalty of all that I had done, to clear me of it ; and He, the spotless Son of God—the obedient One who only did the will of God and glorified Him in life and death, and is now rewarded in right of what He was and did, He and I the sinner, for whom He suffered, are joint-heirs. I only graced in Him, and His right my only title, and this assurance—the faithfulness of God. Surely it is unbounded grace to save me, and much more to accept me in the Beloved ; why should He make me an heir of anything ? This grace is beyond comparison, and the measure of it, joint-heirs with Christ, is beyond conception ! It is only God-like.

Next we get the suffering, the glory, and the groaning—the suffering, groaning, glory—of the *heirs*. We are heirs, but in incognito. No one would know us, for we groan and suffer. The glory is yet to be revealed, but it is as certain as the suffering, and the suffering is not to be compared to it. We suffer because we are identified with Christ, we groan because, as to the body, identified with creation. Having part with a rejected Christ, we suffer the part of a rejected Christ. Having the Spirit of Christ, once humbled here, our spirits groan in harmony

with His. Subjection to vanity was never the Creator's purpose for His works; it has come about by reason of Adam's fall. But the sons of Adam redeemed to God by the last Adam—those once identified in life and nature with him, through whose transgression creation groans and travails in pain, are first to be displayed, God's sons (not children) in glory. Then creation shall share, not the glorious liberty, that might be the liberty of grace, but the liberty of the glory of God's children: now it groans, not participating in the liberty of grace. The blessings of grace in the day of grace are the firstfruits of the Spirit; nevertheless *even* we ourselves who have them groan within ourselves, awaiting adoption. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed, but as to its completeness, it is still a *hope*, we do not see it. The promise not seen remains a hope. The Spirit that will produce all manner of fruits in the day of hope's consummation has yielded its firstfruits to us. The Spirit is here: He will not be taken away till all is fulfilled as prophesied by Joel, and rehearsed by Peter in Acts ii. How assuring to our hearts, who have called on the name of the Lord and are saved, in the midst of this vanity, to be already in this scene enjoying the choicest fruits possible to be yielded by the Spirit.

The presence of the Holy Ghost is an immense thing; very little realised by those whose greatest and richest blessings are derived therefrom. Christ is glorified, and has received the promise

of the Father, and many sons in known and enjoyed relationship as such are being brought to glory. They are already united to Christ by the Spirit, made members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones ; and by the same Spirit made members one of another. The Spirit is no mere influence, though this is carried with Him wherever He works. The Holy Ghost is a *person*, God the Spirit. A power or influence merely, is suggested in our Bibles where the translators have used the word "that" where it should be "He," verse 16 of Acts ii. GOD the Holy Ghost, in whose name with the Father's and the Son's, Christians have been baptised : surely not in the name of an influence, or power, only, as such.

In 2 Corinthians v. the Holy Ghost is spoken of as given to us as the earnest of what we are wrought for, as to what is mortal of us being swallowed up of life. We shall soon exchange the mortal tabernacle for the house from heaven. We are absent from home, the abode of such glorified bodies, but always confident, though in weakness.

We have the Spirit—the earnest of the whole : and as surely as we have the Spirit, so surely shall we have the body—the redemption body—the fitting casket for what already dwells within, which latter will be the power that does it. How intimately near are we already, to what we hope for ! In these our present bodies we possess the power that only waits His will as to

time, and the transformation is effected—changed to His likeness “in the twinkling of an eye.”

In Ephesians i. the Holy Ghost is said to be “the earnest of our inheritance.” The personality of the Holy Ghost is here again a little obscured by the translators; verse 14 should read “*who* is the earnest,” instead of “*which* is the earnest.” He is the earnest to the redemption of the acquired possession. We are not actually in possession of our inheritance, but as with the body, so with the inheritance, both are as certain as the earnest, for God *cannot* deny Himself; and the Holy Ghost which *we have* is the means of the effectuation of all it gives hope for, or is the earnest of. I repeat, He is now in us, an unquestionable, even as He is an infallible, proof of the certain end. The Holy Ghost has revealed Him, the Son, to us by faith. To His likeness we shall soon be changed by the same power, and He will be revealed to sight—“when we see Him we shall be like Him.”

I have dwelt longer on this point than I purposed, but I feel the great importance of it. The presence of Christ was a reality. The presence of the Holy Ghost is as great a reality with, I think I may say, greater effects. (John xiv. 12.) The scope of the effects of the one is displayed in the other, as He applies to the many the work of the one. My justification through Him, my union to Him, my blessings in Him, my glory with Him, are all made mine, and enjoyed now, in the power of the Holy Ghost. He is our

guide into all truth, and our power for all service and worship. What should we be without this *person* of the Trinity !

Such then, "even we,"—to return to our scripture, "groan within ourselves." But how different is the groaning of Romans viii. to Romans vii. ! The suffering too, so different. One is the suffering and groaning *for* deliverance, the other of the delivered. The one is the groan of disappointment and despair ; the spirit of the other, "I take *pleasure* in infirmities." There is no disappointment or despair in it. It makes all the difference to have real and pious desires resting for attainment on what can only disappoint them, and to have learnt this to start with—to expect nothing from it, but to suffer and groan because in its presence, though not under its power ; but finding all in a spring of divine origin and sustained by divine power, outside the ken of human depravity, infirmity or incompetency. It is divine power that has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, and flesh has no place whatever. We are thoroughly equipped from another sphere, while judgment rests on this. How vain to look for an answer in it to the feeblest aspiration of the life from above !

The more I think of it, the more I delight in the suffering of this chapter—it is power. Power alone can take pleasure in infirmity ; weakness revolts or collapses under it. Divine power never takes me out of suffering with Christ. Here in Romans viii. I am in Christ's company,

and I appreciate the world's estimate of me when it is the same as of Him: anything better to nature is really inferior. I suffer because I am consciously identified with Him. In chapter vii. it is consciously to get Him—though He has got me; and the suffering is self-inflicted, but unconsciously. It is the yearning for subjective state before the positive state, in spirit, has by faith been appropriated, and walked in for enjoyment. If I know what I am which is so infinitely beyond and above what I was, I am superior to the things that assailed me as I was, and if needs be come back to them in divine power, and take pleasure in them because of *His* power. I was under them before, they hindered me from rising to what I desired as they condemned me. I come down to them now, and suffer and groan after another fashion. Wealth coming down to suffering while remaining wealth is one thing, poverty suffering in its poverty is quite another. Such as the first, so are the heirs. We are heirs, we do not reign yet, hence we suffer. To groan under my burden is bad. To reign as kings as though we had none, is no better, if not worse. The Lord help us to maintain the dignity of heirs compatible with all that is suggested in being HEIRS, not kings—to enjoy and maintain the dignity of an heir, but not for a moment to assume to reign before my time—before my brethren. When He whose *right* it is to reign, takes His kingdom, it will be surely time enough for those who had forfeited

all to take possession of that acquired *for* them. Let us not forget that it well becomes the heirs to suffer and to groan, but let us also never forget the character of the suffering and the groaning. It is not with chafed and mortified feelings, but as those whose circumstances for the moment do not answer to our calling, and who by the ministry of the Holy Ghost are delivered from the aching heart, which in nature is ever found, where hope is long deferred; and where, till its fruition, the body and mind suffer. Neither is it *for* Christ here, it is *with* Him as in John xv.: "If the world hate you ye know that it hated me before it hated you . . . if they have persecuted me they will also persecute you." I believe we suffer *with* Christ, *for* Christ, and *with* Christ again. The first "with Christ," is what I have described above. "For Christ" is what we get at the end of the chapter. The Apostles in Acts v. 41 rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame *for* the name." And in Philippians: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer *for His sake*." Christ has suffered *for* us. Then we suffer *with* Him in a deeper sense—intelligently suffer with Him—suffer in heart with Him. He wept over Jerusalem, we, as it were, weep with him. It is the church now; we suffer in heart with Him as we mourn its devastation and ruin. It was sympathy in the old men of Ezra's day to weep, and it is that with us, when it is our privilege to be thus touched.

The first is association with the rejected One, and hence a necessity for all. The second is the soldier's and the servant's privilege. The third, the sympathy of feeling in a *friend's* position, from whom nothing is hid. The first is the necessity of birth; the second, of aggressive action; the third, of contemplation and communion. May we know more of all three! Identification with Christ; deliverance unto death for His sake, and common thought with Him as to the objects of His interests.

We have been saved in hope. Of course this does not infer that we only have a hope that our souls are saved, that is out of the question. Salvation in Romans means the complete effects of the cross, and His life now for us. We have got the salvation of our souls, but not of the body; we await adoption, to wit the redemption of the body, who have the Spirit of adoption, and cry, Abba, Father. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed. We daily get nearer the consummation of our hopes—the winning of Christ, the glory, and the glorified state. Till we get it we expect in patience. The Holy Ghost suggests that we might be impatient to get it. I fear we are very ready to stop where we are—if not loath to leave. But it is the christian normal state we have to do with.

“Likewise the Spirit also joins its help to our weakness;” we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit makes intercession for us. Weakness and prayer go hand in hand.

Prayer is the attitude of dependence, which links weakness to strength. But man is not wise enough of himself to know what is good for him. To the value of the Holy Spirit's presence is added this service, to make intercession for the saints according to God; and He who searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit. We get the Intercessor within, and the Intercessor above, in this chapter. Little do we know and appreciate this service of the Holy Ghost. If help in the hour of need were dependent on our prayers, as we express desires, we might well be a straitened people. It is wonderful that we are equipped with that within which knows all our need, and makes it known to Him who ever meets it.

If we do not know what we should ask for as we ought, we *do* know that all things work together for our good. God is for us: come storm or calm, cloud or sunshine, God being for us, all is for our good. What rest is this! I do not think the sense of God being for us here makes us good martyrs, but good *conquerors*; though a martyr may be a conqueror. We can be real martyrs (we are too often bad ones; self-made and only sentimental), but it leads more to the thought of our being for God, than God for us. A martyr dies in his suffering, and is counted a good one because he did not flinch from death, which delivers him. The conqueror of Romans viii. is not thus delivered, but rejoices all the time he is passing through, or existing *in* the

suffering. Paul is such a conqueror in 2 Corinthians xii. 9. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory *in* my infirmities." We do not say, all things work together for good, in the spirit of wishing all the time that the things were very different: like a child that thanks God for its "nice dinner," when all the time it had been pettishly crying and whining, because it wanted most the thing that was withheld. The pristine Christian, as represented in our chapter, is sensible (though it is not experience that the Spirit speaks of), in his very soul, that in everything God is for him, and all is absolutely good for him; all is working for his good. God has the end in view. *He* has purpose about us; and how can it be otherwise than that He is directing all according to His own sovereign will, for the good of those His purpose relates to. It is infinitely higher to think of the "all things" for our good relative to the "purpose" of God, than simply relative to His desire for our *present* good. A father passes his child through a certain routine, he has a purpose about the child for a future day. The child understands little of the means to the end, but gladly submits to a course wisdom has taken: not by chance, but by purpose.

Infinity of scope is in verse 29. Foreknowledge! Predestination! When was it? In the "days of eternity" past. To be conformed to the image of His Son—the blessed future. Our sinfulness as sinners, and our lack of rectitude as saints, come in between, and the long history

of a world's depravity and ruin; but foreknowledge and the destined state, rest unimpeachable and unalterable, spite of it all. Between the morn of purpose and the day of glory, the world has come into being, which man has made a theatre to display his hatred of all good, and corrupt desire for evil; but, notwithstanding, as though it had not been, purpose will be displayed in glory, and He, whom in the interim man slew upon a tree, will be encircled in glory, He, the first-born among *many* brethren.

Moreover, whom He did predestinate (not to be saved from their sins, as many would have it; predestination is never thus spoken of, but to be like Christ glorified), He has also called and justified, and glorified, so our scripture says, though experience and manifest state contradict the latter. The point is, God is for us, and the future is as certain as the past, and both to faith as real as the present. God's eye in the past was on the future, and all is before Him as present. Faith thinks and looks with God, and *thus* the Apostle speaks. How blessed to nestle in the purpose of God! Where is there room for a single doubt? God is for me as to the end, and all the way up to it. If God be for us, who can be against us? How much is He for us? "He that spared not his own Son!" The Son is the measure for everything. Our sin and God's hatred of it; God's love, and holiness; all was displayed at the cross. It is the measure of

everything with God in regard to man. Surely He is for us—He spared not His Son !

It is exceedingly blessed to see in verse 32 that the “all things” He freely gives are linked up with the gift of His Son. We little think how His interests are involved in our things. The little things are as pleasing to Him as the great, when Christ is in them: the Lord speaks of “a cup of cold water,” and “two mites.” He does not speak of thousands, or millions of money. The “all things” we receive of Him are invested with this character, He has given Christ! He has given the greater, He will give the lesser; the one is the assurance of the other. It is not the less as the earnest of the greater, but the greater’s necessary accompaniment.

We often, alas, have to say to, and use our “things,” as though God was to be left out of the question, whereas we are taught that even the things we eat can only be received in thankfulness, when we can identify them with His word, and freely address Him in partaking of them. (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.)

Next we get God as the justifier. Who shall lay anything to the charge of His elect? The One against whom we have sinned is the One who justifies the sinner! No one else could do it. And it is on the ground of what He has done that He refuses every charge. Yea, He alone had power to condemn, which instead of doing, He has cancelled by substitution of another, all charge that could be brought against

us. How blessed it is to know that God Himself, the mighty, holy, righteous God has been the liquidator of all my debts! Many have not learnt the truth of this—reader, have you? Many are not quite certain—sometimes happy, sometimes sad and fearful. Does God alter? The God unchangeable, who never has, and never will, and never can revoke a thought, a word, an act that has been in favour of His own. Reader, believe me, if you believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, and yet have doubts and misgivings as to your eternal salvation, there is nothing more inconsistent and incongruous in the universe of God. I establish this unequivocal statement on the foundation of one word—one Person—God. God is immutable; there is nothing else that is. To question what proceeds from Him is to deny Himself. But if we deny Him, He will not deny Himself. With Him is to be found no shadow of turning. It is here where Christ rested; is it not enough for us? He could say: “He is near that justifieth me the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me?” And again, “my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” The devil would have us judge by our feelings, than which there is nothing more capricious and erratic: and nothing more pleases him than to see us, like puppets, swayed up and down in its throes.

Justification is not a thing to be felt. In Romans v., feelings result from it. First, He

delivers and raises Christ, then justifies the one who believes on Him, the One, and as such, who did it. Peace is thus established, and the soul is introduced into the favour of God. Blessed experiences follow. All these things are true before there is the least enjoyment, and there may be great enjoyment, though the way to it may not be understood. Souls want to feel what they ought not to expect, and never can feel. Justification and peace are God's answer to Christ's death and resurrection, and are not for us to feel. They are established facts, and not amenable to our perceptibility or lack of it, or much or little faith, but made available for blessing in practical enjoyment that flows from them where faith is. They introduce us into the favour of God, and grace follows grace till we joy in God, the Author of the whole. We are not said to boast in His deliverance for us, His resurrection, God's justification, or the peace established. We *do* boast, or joy, in hope of the glory of God. We *do* boast in tribulation, because of its effects; and we *do* boast in God. Christ has been delivered; He has been raised; justification only waits objects where faith in God is, as the One who has thus wrought through Christ, to be applied; and is all embraced in "if God be for us." Romans viii. takes up Romans v. in this part, as far as this, not the effects in us, because it is in character with the subject "God for us." The love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and joying in God, &c. &c., are effects in us,

what we feel and enjoy : and, thank God, the weakness and changeableness of this does not affect the immutability of the other. The justification and peace with God are alone dependent on Christ in death and resurrection. Have you, dear reader, faith in God as to the death and resurrection of Christ ? Then rest assured of the faithfulness of God to justify, and that you have peace with God, peace which you cannot make, not only by reason of the utter impracticability of it—it is not God's way—but because it has been made by another, even Christ. I do not ask do you feel it ? The Bible states, the justified have it—it is a statement made.

The question, "Who is he that condemneth ?" is most conclusively answered. A chain of four links composes the answer ; the efficacy and power of each successive link flowing out of its predecessor, and inseparable from it.

If none can lay charge to those God justifies, where is the being who can condemn those for whom *Christ* has died ? This is the first link. "Yea, rather has been raised again," second link. "Who is even at the right hand of God," third link. "Who also maketh intercession for us," fourth link. First and fourth, He died and He lives for us ; second and third, God raised and God received Him to His own right hand.

Our substitute, our surety has reached the goal, and from thence intercedes for us, lending timely help for His saved (yet needing present saving) people. What four wonderful facts are

in this 34th verse! Four fundamentals of Christianity. All that was predestined by God will be fulfilled, and every christian hope develop into brightest fruition by reason of it. "It is *Christ* that died." The Creator of all things, the eternal Son of God, God manifest in flesh; He who could undertake to obey and do the will of God, and finish the work given Him to do; it was HE who died, and who dares question that He for ever settled, gloriously settled, all that stood against, and removed all that debarred gain to, those who had forfeited all! I do not doubt that here the emphasis is on the word "Christ." It was no angel who might be charged with folly, or ordinary man or multitude of them, or thousand sheep or bullocks. No, it is *Christ* that died. The great, the mighty, the first-born of all creation, the Creator who took the place of weakness—death—to discharge us from it. He has not only suffered death in atonement for our sins, but so exhausted judgment for the believer that He can go to heaven, and escape the penalty, death, the wages of sin, as will be the case at the rapture. What a victory! What a victor! "It is *Christ* that died." Yea, rather has been "raised again." It is on resurrection that justification is established. It is God's recognition of the completeness of the atonement made. It is God's act of righteousness towards the One who volunteered to empty Himself of glory state, and circumstances, and go into death, and all that was entailed in thus

taking up the cause of God's fallen creature man. He discharged the undertaking to the utmost—gloriously. He claims the place He never lost title to, but gave up for man's sake, and God's glory. But I am anticipating, our second link in this blessed chain is not the glory, but the resurrection. It is well to notice, and avoid, the discrepancy in the translation here. It should not read "that is risen," but "has been also *raised* up." It is what we get in chapter vi., "raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father." It is not His own act as found in other scriptures, such as, "Destroy this temple, and in three days *I* will raise it up." It is perfectly consistent with the subject. As the obedient One He went into death, as the dependent One He was raised again. It is the Father raising His Beloved Son who had done all His will; and in it we see our title to nearness of approach, for all that could hinder is gone in His death. On Calvary's dark night the grave was the burying place of all our sins in Him who lay there; but in resurrection it becomes the womb of justification, which was never revealed to man before. "But he whom God raised again saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins, and by him, all that believe are *justified* from all things." (Acts xiii. 37-39.) Repentance and faith, and forgiveness, on the ground of substitution go together. His resurrection and justifica-

tion go together. His glory and streams of blessing in grace, in the fulness and power of the Holy Ghost, also go together. Here we arrive at our third link, "who is even at the right hand of God," the place of honour and power. He took the place of weakness, He has been given the place of power, though He never forfeited, or relinquished title to it: but it is given Him, and He now takes it, in resurrection, on the ground of what He has done. He is not spoken of as at the right hand of God till He takes the place as man, and that as having glorified God as such. What rest to the soul to see Him there! 'Tis joy to look above and see Him there. It is not only for His own sake, though this is our highest, happiest, strain; but all our eternal interests are involved in it, and apart from this, the lesser, we could not have the greater. He is there, and in getting there has removed every obstacle to my being there too, so that there is absolutely nothing between, but the question of *time*, and this great good. The Father raised Him, He is at God's right hand; who can condemn those whose cause He undertook, and made His own?

He also intercedes for us. We are weak, but He is mighty, and He takes charge of us while left here. How blessedly secure! How vain the attacks of the enemy to condemn! We are supported by Him who is able to keep us from stumbling; and though Satan accuses the brethren unceasingly, His intercession pre-

cedes him, and avails. There is no condemnation !

There is enough in this one verse to establish every soul that believes it ; Christ dead, Christ risen, Christ at the right hand of God—sitting there, the work all done ; Christ interceding—maintaining those He has delivered.

Next we get no separation. Nothing to separate from the love of Christ ; nothing to separate from the love of God. It is interesting to notice and compare the two categories of adverse currents, that might be suggested as a proof of His love waning, or that might occasion separation from it. Where *Christ's* love is spoken of, it is tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword—bodily sufferings enumerated that cannot separate from His love. But these are the very things that occasion His activities on our behalf as intercessor. It is because we are subject to weakness and infirmity, that we need Him in this priestly character ; and every occasion when infirmity has to cope with any trials of these characters, rather than separating from His love, it sets the love in motion in the gracious activity of intercession. What more displays a mother's love than the *suffering* of her child ? Love prompts her to its aid, and separation is more foreign to her heart than ever.

Moral things cannot separate from the love of *God* ; death, life, angels, principalities, nor powers, things present, things to come, height,

depth, nor any other creature. God has more than comprehended all these things in the moral glories of the cross; and as each takes its place as subjected by it, each thus only displays the love and devotion to those, still surrounded by these moral adverse currents, who are guarded and preserved while in them. No condemnation! God has justified me. No separation! God is for me. Compassed by infirmity I may be, but Christ intercedes. Persecution assailing, but Christ's love more abounds.

How blessed it is to see the apostle at every opportunity, introducing quotations from the Old Testament. What blessed assurance, and how refreshing to the heart thus to do! What was characteristic of Christ as a man, His perfect dependence, expressed itself in those words peculiar to Him, "It is written." Thus, ever giving pre-eminence of authority to another, while He, who "was God," retired into the subject place. So Paul introduces here the same words, "It is written" (see also 2 Cor. iv. 13, ix. 9), and quotes for authority in testimony of what he has said, the language of Him who voluntarily had yielded up authority for obedience, and thus walked Himself. It is the Spirit of Christ in the remnant: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The language of the Spirit of Christ who *had* known the circumstances, speaking in the remnant who *will* know the circumstances, is applied to the

saints of the present interval who *are* in the circumstances, by the Spirit.

Now the suffering is *for* Christ, not simply *with* Him, as verse 17. It is the suffering of one who is doing the will of another, which leads in a contrary direction to the course of this world, and provokes its ire, though quite unintentionally. It is the suffering of Paul and Peter in service. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction *with* the people, and he identifies himself *with* them. This was true of him all through his after-course, but there were special moments when he suffered *for* them. Once he volunteered to be blotted out of the book Jehovah had written. This was altogether *for* them. I mention this that my point may not only be better understood, but that it may be more suggestive to the reader. It is *characteristic* of us as *Christians*, all our course, to suffer *with* Christ; it cannot be otherwise: *circumstances* along our Christian path give occasion of suffering *for* His sake. As a Christian I suffer, I suffer as being what I am,—a *Christian*—for my own sake shall I say? as identified with Him—rejected. It is my joy, my gain, my reward, to suffer *for* Him—for His sake. We are not told we shall reign with Him, as involved with this suffering *for* Him, but the other “*with* Him,” which is necessarily involved in what I am,—not what I do, or my faithfulness. It is given unto us as a privilege, more true of some than others, yet open for all, not only to believe in His name, but to suffer for His sake.

We are killed all the day long, only accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet how little we like this place, and when we get a taste of it from the world, are often more ready to rebel, than to take it joyfully. We often reckon as to what others' behaviour should be, on the principle of status, and desire respect accordingly. This is not like a sheep led to the slaughter: of how much value, think you, is its life? Yet thus we should expect to be valued. Christ was literally led as a lamb to the slaughter, and He forbade the women even weeping for Him: they had more reason to weep for themselves, and for their children.

I have only one point more to touch on, in this wonderful chapter, where everything is not only comparative, but superlative. See this in verse 37. Does suffering and persecution separate? Indeed, no! Though we suffer even to being led as a sheep to the slaughter, we are more than conquerors in it. Not only conquerors as compared with being deserted by Christ (verse 37 follows, and answers the question in verse 35), but it is superlative in degree. We are *more* than conquerors; and that through Him that loved us. He leads us in triumph *in*, not out of, the trials. This is what it is to be *more* than a conqueror. A conqueror vanquishes the foe, and is relieved of his existence, at any rate as disturbing him, for the time. He is *more* than a conqueror who, the disturbing element still existing, is buoyed up by faith, carried by love,

and supported by intercession; abiding practically in the whirlwind, but morally above, and outside it, with his spirit rejoicing in the Lord. Paul and Silas are more than conquerors morally, while practically in weakness and defeat in prison. They worship in their superlative superiority, morally, to all around them. They are two of the mightiest men on earth at that moment.

Habakkuk iii. 17-19, affords a striking illustration of "more than conquerors." "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, *yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* The Lord God is my strength [God is for me], he will make my feet like hinds' feet [swift obedience for earth], and he will make me to walk upon mine high places [appropriation of heavenly places and blessings]. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments [who, in the midst of the assembly sings praises]." Of course, this is an earthly scene: it is Israel allured and brought into the wilderness, where He speaks to her heart (lit.), and "gives her her *vineyards* from thence, and the valley of anchor for a door of *hope*, and she shall sing." (Hosea ii. 14, 15.) The troubled man who procures or acquires respite from his troubles, may be a conqueror; the man who is killed all the day long, but lifts

his head in the power of Christ's intercession, and rejoices in being counted worthy to suffer for His name, like Peter and John, is *more* than conqueror, though the suffering may intensify.

May the Lord bless these simple thoughts in this most precious scripture. May they be read in the spirit of worship while reviewing such unqualified grace as in here displayed. May it redound to His glory, who has taken such pains to set us intelligently in His presence, free of all restraint, righteously, and in liberty : so that we can appropriate, and enjoy, all the marvellous fruits of His grace ; not as the objects of compassion or pity simply, but as those destined in future ages, to be for His own pleasure, according to His purpose long before, by reason of circumstances, there was motive for either pity or compassion, or even a Saviour ; though all was known. God's purpose, ere time, was for the glory when time shall be no more. All that has intervened, God—the same God—has provided for. May our hearts bow before such grace, and worship in it.

F. T. H.

