

FORGIVENESS, PEACE, AND DELIVERANCE.

BY WALTER SCOTT.

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FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

READER, do you know what is meant by a Sadducean grave? It is one over which the trumpet blast of resurrection never sounds. Resurrection was boldly denied by the Sadducees; that great truth formed no part of their creed (Luke xx. 27; Acts xxiii. 8). Now, having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what has God *done* and *said* about your many sins? First, He transferred them—all of them—to Christ on the cross: “Jehovah hath laid ON HIM the iniquity of us all” (Isa. liii. 6). Christ has really borne them on His own body on the tree (1 Peter ii. 24). If therefore my sins were laid on Him, borne by Him, they cannot be on me. There are no sins *on* us, but there is sin *in* us. The former are forgiven, the latter is condemned. How complete the salvation!

Second, on believing, not feeling, not working, but simply on believing, God has blotted out all our sins and past life, sunk them as lead in the depths of the sea (Micah vii. 19). Buried *all* our sins for ever and for ever, in a Sadducean grave of divine forgiveness and divine forgetfulness. Hallelujah, it is done! not doing, but DONE. Your sins are absolutely and eternally forgiven. Jehovah has cast them behind His back that He may never, no never see them (Isa. xxxviii. 17), and dismissed them from His memory to be remembered no more (Heb. x. 17). Purged from before the face of God (Heb. i. 3); and purged too from the conscience (Heb. ix. 14). “Once purged, never to be repeated. The value of that one act abides for ever (Heb. x. 17). To God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, your sins and your whole past life are for ever gone. What remains? What but the love that put them away—what but the grace which frankly and fully forgave. In divine forgiveness there are no measures, or degrees, or limitations. The babe in Christ has a forgiveness in all respects equal to the father in Christ. “I write unto you little children because your sins *are* forgiven you for His name’s sake” (1 John ii. 12). How wide and fathomless the gulph between the Cross on which He died and the Throne on which He sits, and into this gulph our sins have been cast.

Now, beloved reader, if these divine statements have entered your soul, sing with the writer those lines of holy triumph :—

Great God of Wonders! all Thy ways
Are wondrous, matchless, and divine;
But the blest triumphs of Thy grace—
Most marvellous!—unrivalled shine.
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Crimes of such horror to forgive,
Such guilty, daring worms to spare;
This is Thy grand prerogative,
And none can in that honour share.
Pardon, O God! is only Thine;
Mercy and grace are all divine.

In wonder lost, with trembling joy
We hail the pardon of our God;
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,
A pardon traced in Jesus' blood.
To pardon thus is Thine alone;
Mercy and grace are both Thine own.

You can now look up to the face of God, and truthfully, calmly, and confidently say, THOU HAST FORGIVEN ME; MY SINS WHICH WERE MANY ARE ALL FORGIVEN: THOU HAST DONE IT. *Amen* and *Amen*.

Peace with God.

Here are two impossibilities: You cannot *create* and you cannot make *peace*. As to the former we read, "In the beginning God created" (Gen. i. 1); as to the latter we read, "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). You could create a world as easily as make your peace with God. Both are divine actions, and both are accomplished facts. Besides which, in *trying* to make your peace with God you are just 2000 years too late. It was made by the blood of the cross. There is but *one* peace-maker—Jesus Christ. He made it (Col. i. 20), preached it (John xx. 19-26), He is it in His own blessed Person in heaven (Eph. ii. 14), and believers have it (Rom. v. 1)—not hoping to have it; but we *have* peace with God.

In the early part of chap v. of the epistle to the Romans we have the absolute justification of all who believe, and its resulting consequences for time and eternity amply unfolded. No

question of the weakness of faith or of its imperfection is raised. Justification applies equally to all—to weak faith and to strong faith, to the convert of an hour ago and to the Christian of matured growth. All believers are equally justified. In God's justification believers are set first in relation to the BLOOD of Jesus (Rom. iii. 25); second in relation to the RESURRECTION of Jesus (iv. 24). The former is God's answer in grace to man, yet in judgment to Christ on the proved guilt of Jew and Gentile; the latter reveals the God of life in power as a Saviour on behalf of those who believe on Him, lifting them out of the state of sin and death wherein they lay, and setting them in righteousness and glory before Himself. The result of this two-fold application of Christ's sacrifice is then stated in chapter v., "Therefore being justified by faith 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 hope of the glory of God." All believers are now privileged because of the death and resurrection of Christ, to regard the whole of their past life with their many sins as blotted out from before the eye of God. He sees the *blood* not the sins. "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13). The sins of the unbeliever are before God. The sins of the believer are covered by the blood before God. Which is it, beloved reader? Is God's eye on your sins, or on the blood which blots them out and covers them?

"My sins, my sins" is the first and urgent cry of the newly-awakened sinner, and for this God has furnished an answer in the death and resurrection of His Son. "Being justified by faith, we have, *must* have, peace with God—solid, settled, eternal, and divine—made by the blood of Christ's cross. Moreover, it is peace WITH GOD, not a truce or respite. That question once settled between God and Christ can never be re-opened. *It is done.* It is not peace with myself, nor is it a comfortable sense within that possibly all may turn out well at the end. No, it is peace with the Offended One about our sins, and offences, and guilt. It is the knowledge that God has righteously blotted them out, not slurred over, but forgiven all in righteousness, in perfect consistency with His own character as *light*, hating the sin; as *love*, yet loving the sinner. Instead, therefore, of our sins existing before God, the blood is now before Him. Fear and dread are now for ever gone.

“Can the peace of the weakest believer be lost?” Certainly not. “*He is our peace*” (Eph. ii. 14). Can He be lost out of heaven? Why He is the centre there. Your peace can no more be lost or forfeited than Christ Himself be lost out of the heavenly scene. What we feel or experience is quite another thing, and *we must not confound peace with its effects*. Where are you looking for peace? Within or without? In yourself, or in Christ on the throne? Christ on the throne is the peace of the writer. Christ, risen and glorified, is the abiding peace of every one who simply believes on God Who raised Him up from the dead. The fruit of the cross, yea, its full moral value and glory are witnessed above, in the Person of the Lamb as it had been slain. Then comes our *present* standing: “this grace wherein we stand.” We stand now and for ever in the full blaze of God’s unclouded favour.

“Are we standing in that grace *now*?”

Yes, for it is unchangeable as God Himself, whose grace it is.

“But if we lose our temper and sin, do we not then forfeit His unclouded favour?”

No, but you forfeit for a season the *enjoyment* of it. The rich, full, unclouded grace of God Who gave His Son rests upon you ever—night and day.

“Why?”

Because it is *God’s* grace, and all His gifts are without recall (Rom. xi. 29).

Then the future also is provided for. “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” So completely is fear removed, so truly has the judgment of God rested upon my past life, that we can positively rejoice in hope of God’s glory, which before was our terror. Thus, then, as we survey our yesterday, it is *peace*; our to-day is one of *grace*; our to-morrow *glory*, only glory. Peace covers our past, grace covers all the need of to-day, glory is our sure portion to-morrow—an eternal morrow.

What we have *done*, not what we are, our sins, not our sin, the *acts*, not the nature from which they proceed, are in question in the first part of the Romans (i.-v. 11). Our sins must have a *root*—a source. This question therefore, which is a sore trouble to thousands of God’s people, is then entered upon by the apostle, and occupies chapters v. 12-viii.

Deliverance from the Mastery of Sin.

Sin and sins are distinguished in Scripture. Thus sins are forgiven (1 John ii. 12); sin is condemned (Rom. viii. 3); sin is the root, sins the fruit; sin is the source, sins the outcome. What we have *done*—sins or deeds; what we *are*—sinful in nature. Our first and great anxiety when awakened by God's Spirit was the question of our sins. Our second great trouble as believers is how to get dominion or mastery over sin in us. Deliverance from the power of evil within, is the all-absorbing question of thousands. Numbers of true believers who rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, who *know* they are saved, are yet groaning under the power of a nature, which God at conversion neither eradicated nor improved. Such persons have holy desires after holiness, and breathings after God. *It is not holiness that is the need.* It is *power* to carry into effect the longings of the new nature. Deliverance is the need of the soul.

We are furnished in this truly magnificent chapter (Rom. viii.) with a full and triumphant answer to the anxious question at the close of chapter vii., "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Herein we have the deliverance itself unfolded, and the Deliverer Himself becoming the boast and glory of the believer.

Those two chapters—vii. and viii.—cannot both present Christian experience, for in the one we have described a state of utter powerlessness to do the good which the renewed mind desires; in the other we have a scene of complete and final triumph—the Christian victor coming out of the conflict with laurels on his brow. Are you, beloved reader, the *wretched* man of chapter vii., or the *emancipated* man of chapter viii.? Why, in the one, the personal pronoun *I* figures upwards of 30 times, and necessarily so, for it unfolds the experience of a soul learning self under law, details the painful process by which it experimentally arrives at the conclusion that the inward state is too bad to be helped or bettered; it then looks out of itself for a Deliverer, not a helper, and so the soul emerges from the slough of despond into the Christian liberty of chap. viii.—which opens with the glorious declaration that there is "*no condemnation*," and closes with the precious statement of "*no separation*," with all the grace and privilege lying between these points.

Now, in chapters vi. and vii. of the epistle to the Romans, we have a good deal said of the inward state ; that is, *sin*, not sins, is in question, and hence deliverance and not forgiveness is the grand theme of chapter viii. Our sins need forgiveness; our state calls for deliverance. We have both founded on the work of the Cross ; *there* sins were borne, and sin itself condemned. In this distinct portion of the epistle, which commences with verse 12 of chapter v., it is the *nature* and not the fruits of it which is treated of. Here, too, one may remark upon the way in which the death of Jesus is spoken of in Scripture. If sins are in view, then the *blood* of Jesus is presented as the divine remedy. If it is the intellectual pride of man, the answer to it is found in the *cross* of Jesus. But when the nature of man is treated of, as in these chapters, it is *death*—the death of Christ and our death with Him. This sinful nature is in each one of us. Not its existence, but its *allowance* hinders communion with God. We are born in sin, but not born slaves to sin ; this latter we become by yielding to it (Rom. vi. 16).

Now, in chapter vi., we have the figure of a *Master* and slave ; while in chapter vii. it is that of a *Husband* and wife. Who is the Master ? *Sin*. Who is the Husband ? *Law*.

How are we to escape from the tyrant, *sin*, and how be delivered from the husband, *law* ? O to know that ours is the victory : to know that when Christ died, we are accounted by God as having died with Him. We are dead with Christ. This is the reckoning of faith in this glorious revelation, knowing this, “that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin (its totality) might be destroyed (or annulled, that is its power set aside) *that henceforth we should not serve sin.*” Here then is the victory over the nature—count it as crucified, as condemned ; treat it as a thing which God could only pass the severity of Christ’s judgment upon.

“But I do not *feel* that the old man or nature is crucified, nor can I *realise* that I am dead to sin.”

But, beloved reader, it is not a matter of feeling, it is one of knowledge : “*Knowing* this, that our old man is crucified with Him.” We know it, not because we feel it, for oftentimes it has wrought in us to our shame and sorrow, and dishonour of God besides, but it is written, and there *we rest*—“Our old man is crucified with Him.” We may not realise that we are dead to sin, but “*reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin ”

(chap. vi. 11). God says it, we believe it; faith reckons it as true. Thus we sing:—

“*His arm the victory gaineth,
O’er every hateful foe;
His love my heart sustaineth
In all my cares and woe.*”

“Then how is deliverance from the law secured? Is it dead or am I dead to it?”

Important questions these in tracing the path of deliverance. The law is *not* dead: it was not crucified in the cross of Christ, nor buried in the grave of Christ. But “*ye* are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.” Again, “*now we* are delivered from the law” (chap. vii. 4-6). It was we, the sinful and responsible children of Adam, who were put out of court in the death and grave of Jesus. By death with Christ we have been delivered from the law, for *it* has “dominion over a man so long as he liveth”; but “*Ye are dead*”—hence the deliverance from the law is as complete as the deliverance from sin. Death has severed the connection with the master, and dissolved the bonds existing with the husband. In chapter vi. we are dead to sin and *alive* to God; in chapter vii. we are dead to the law so as to bring forth *fruit* to God.

The quickened, but yet undelivered man of chapter vii. is under death and bondage in his conscience, that is in the flesh *practically*, for the law—from which he is not yet delivered—is doing its needful work, discovering sin and proving the powerlessness of the man to yield obedience to its holy claims. He further learns that the new nature is not one of *power*, but of *dependence*. Thus the Holy Ghost becomes known as the power and spring of the dependent nature or life received. In the undelivered state it is the *law* and the *flesh* that are contrasted; in the delivered state it is the *Spirit* and the *flesh* that are at war (Gal. v.). In the undelivered state you cannot *do* what the holy nature desires (Rom. vii. 15), whereas in the emancipated state you *can* (Gal. v. 16, 17). Why this? Because the man of Rom. vii. has life, but *not* the Holy Ghost as power; while the man of Gal. v. has life *and* the Holy Ghost in him as power.

The power, cruelty, and rigorous service of the master are beyond all question; we leave his service, giving him his due—a *bad* character. The husband was righteous, and we part from him saying he is holy, just, and good, but he is not *love*.

Now we are free to be for Christ. Death has accomplished our deliverance, and has given us title to the victory—that is our death with Him. Thus, then, our chapter viii. opens with the precious sentence: “There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Mark the word “*now*.” After all the evil has been brought to the surface and dealt with; after the whole subjective state has been fully discussed, and the springs and sources of life and action laid bare before our eyes; after the torch of divine truth has lighted up the dark chambers of the soul; then we can say, “there is therefore *now* no condemnation.” Might not this first verse be accepted as a summary of chapter v., and verse 2 of chapter vi., while verse 3 would as fittingly motto chapter vii.?

Now, this deliverance sets the believer in a glorious *position*, even in Christ Jesus; sets him in the power of the Holy Ghost as to his practical *state*; and also sets him in connection with God as to his absolute *security*.

Beloved fellow-Christian, is it the longing of your soul to know and to be established in the grace of God? O when His unclouded favour becomes the repose of our hearts, the sacrifice of His Son the rest of our consciences, then let us use the *new* found liberty and blessedness of all this grace, as reason why the flesh in us should not be spared a bit. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; but the flesh is in us. O use the grace of deliverance to spare it not.

The Glorious Position.

Who is He, in Whom and as Whom we are set before God? Is there stain or spot on Him? The Son of the Father was owned and accepted as such, when for the first time He formally took His place amongst the choice ones of the earth (Ps. xvi. 3). The opened heavens, the descending Spirit, and the Father's spoken testimony, proclaimed that the Son was present amongst men (Matt. iii. 16, 17). But wonder succeeds wonder, and grace upon grace is given, for the tomb gives forth a MAN for God and for us now in heavenly glory. This Man was lifted up on the cross for our sins, and so perfectly did He glorify God in putting them away—not simply as the *victim* for sin, but as the *victor* over it—that God in righteousness lifted Him out of

death and enthroned Him at His own right hand, setting His glory in the face once spat upon by men.

Is there, then, one single element of blessedness—one green or verdant spot—one ray of glory for the heart and eye of God apart from yonder risen Man? And we are *in* Him and *as* Him before God. O glorious position! How safe! How blessed! How happy!

Peaceless souls ever reason from what they are practically, to what they are positionally—from what they feel, experience, or realise, to what they suppose they are before God. Never reason *upwards*, that is from your state to your position. It is not your state that determines your standing; but your standing marks off your state. Reason *downwards*, that is from God's heart of love; learn there His thoughts of grace towards you, and let *that* regulate your life and state. The truth is, that the whole blessedness of Christ risen and triumphant, and the greatness and extent of His work on the cross, are imputed to you here, *in this world*. God acts towards you, beloved fellow-believer, from what *He* has found in the person and sacrifice of Christ—the virtues of which fill the holy place. Blessed for ever be the name of our God! He has gathered around Himself the memorials of sin judged and put away according to His glory and the claim of righteousness (John xiii. 31, 32), and soon He will surround Himself with the living witnesses of His grace, who will celebrate in eternal strains the everlasting virtues of the Person of His Son. Thus, then, we have the common position of the redeemed, "*Them* which are in Christ Jesus."

"Ah! that is doctrine."

Nay, Paul won't have it so. He makes it intensely real and personal, for in the second verse he says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made *me* free from the law of sin and death." "The law of sin and death" wrought in me once an unbeliever. I could but *sin*: I could but *die*. Now, however, through the working of the Spirit of life—Christ's life therefore, a life free from charge—we are set free from that law, as regards even natural life, for we *may* not die; as also death in the conscience—the present effect of being under law. I *may* die; I cannot say, I *must* die. I *may* sin; I cannot say, I *must* sin. "Law" is used in Scripture, and amongst us daily, as the expression of a uniform and fixed principle of action, as, for instance, the law of gravitation. This is its regular and habit-

ual sense in Scripture, where not applied to any of the sacred writings and must be distinguished from "*the law*" given by Moses.

Now we sing "Unto Him that loved *us* and washed *us* from our sins in His own blood, and hath made *us* kings and priests unto God and His Father." Each saved one can say, "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." So here, if the position of the redeemed—"them which are in Christ Jesus"—is our *common* heritage, we have also *individual* application—"hath made *me* free from the law of sin and death"

"Till we behold Thee on Thy Throne,
In Thee we boast, in Thee alone,
Our beauty this, our glorious dress
Jesus the Lord, our Righteousness."

The Practical State.

The practical life and state of the Christian, according to Scripture, consist in this, that he consciously possesses the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as *life, character, power, relationship, and sympathy*. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The two principles of life are here contrasted. *I was* in the flesh: *I am* in the Spirit. God never views the believer in the old Adam-nature—*never*. He beholds him in Christ as to his position on high, and in the Spirit as to his life on earth. What then about the man in chap. vii.? Is he not in the flesh *practically*, although not positionally? True; but God does not recognise *that* as the expression of Christian standing and of Christian experience. It is the Spirit that creates in us all that is according to God; the life, actions, the sources of our moral being are formed and characterised by the personal presence of the Holy Ghost in us. The life which the Christian receives is distinct from the Holy Ghost, for *He* implants the life in the soul. Yet they are so identified before God, that it is said, "the Spirit is life" (verse 10).

The contrast between "spirit," and "flesh" in Christians, as the respective sources of good and evil, their tendencies and issues, with the irremediable badness of the one and the triumph of the other, even on to resurrection or change of the body (verse 11), is pursued from verse 4 to verse 13. The whole

power, character, and enjoyment of Christian life might be summed up thus:—*The Holy Ghost* in us. This is Christianity, and nothing short of it characterises a Christian in God's sight.

Then, in verses 14-18, we have the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of Adoption, leading our souls in triumph into the deep, divine enjoyment of our glorious privileges. He is the witness in us of our *relationship* as children, for by Him we cry, "Abba, Father." He it is, too, who instructs us in our *dignity* as Sons of God; and becomes also the earnest in our souls of the *inheritance*, for we are co-heirs with Christ. All this is made good in us, by the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit has come down from Christ glorified—from the Anointed Man in the presence of God, and has taken up His abode in the Church, for which see 1 Cor. iii., but also to dwell in the bodies of the saints, as in our chapter—the moral link between what is on earth approved of God, and the exalted *Man* on high; the witness, moreover, of Christ's glory and position, gained through death as man, leading us into that very place He has secured through His work, and what is *that*? His own very place and blessedness as man in the glory of God. Is He the Son? We are sons. Is He the Heir of all? We are heirs. May the Lord give our souls to drink deeply into this cup of rare and rich delight!

Now the spirit of the believer made free by the delivering work of the Son of God, in dying for his sins, and condemning sin in its very principle and nature, and knowing it consciously by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, has its links established in a scene of glory—beyond the suffering and the weeping of the way. O blessed seasons! when the heart bounds forward and rests itself in glories, where God and the Lamb are source and object of eternal delight (verse 18). But has not the poor body its *present* links with a suffering and groaning creation? What means the universal wail? Why the tears and broken hearts and seething mass of human misery? Creation groans; its bosom swells with an agony known alone to God. Man has ruined the scene over which he was set as link between it and God, and dragged the creation down to present misery. *It* had no will or choice in the matter (verse 20), *he* subjected it to vanity. But it sorrows on "in hope" (verse 20). Its

long-anticipated deliverance—which has been the yearning of men in all ages, the dream of the poet, the labour of the philanthropist, the excelsior of the statesman—will surely be accomplished in a way unlike the carnal thoughts of men, but in a manner and style befitting the God of love and glory. Here the creation is regarded as on the earnest outlook for the coming manifestation of the sons and heirs of God in glory (verse 19), for *that* glory will throw its skirts over the groaning earth and deliver it from its thralldom of at least 6,000 years (verse 21).

Is the Christian insensible to the wretchedness around? Does not the lash as it falls on the poor suffering animal send a thrill through the soul of the believer? Who so sensitive as he to the sufferings of others? Have you never groaned at the sense of injustice? Have you never sighed at the sin and unbelief of man? Is the groaning of the saint (verse 23) and of the Spirit (verse 26) the groan of unbelief?—of uncertainty as to present acceptance, or doubt as to future participation in the glory to be revealed? Nay, these groans are of a holy character. The struggles for deliverance detailed in chapter vii. are not dignified by the title “groans.” Jesus, who ever lived in the cloudless favour and delight of His Father, yet more deeply than all then or since, comprehended the sorrow and entered practically into the moral wreck and universal ruin in which man was involved. Tears, broken hearts, and death—the fruit of sin—moved the heart of Jesus: “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled” (John xi. 33); and when the unbelief of man in the glory of His person as the Resurrection and the Life were expressed, He again groaned in Himself (ver. 38), and then vindicated His title as Son of God by resurrection from the dead (see also Rom. i. 4). Ah! these groans had a voice for the ear of God, and the answer was the resurrection of Lazarus by the Father, but in conjunction with the Son (verse 41). And O wondrous privilege, to have fellowship in the power and sympathy of the Holy Ghost with the groaning *One* of John xi.! Thus the Spirit of God gives expression to, and voice and character to the, it may be, unintelligent prayers of the saint. The Searcher of all hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, who in us maketh intercession according to God (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

God for Us.

We have had the Christian set in Christ Jesus. Then we have had present and personal deliverance realized by the blessed action of life in Christ Jesus making *me* free from the *law* of sin and death—"me," the captive of chapter vii. now the free man of chapter viii. The deliverance, be it observed, however, is not from sin and death, but from sin's *law* and death's *law*. This is followed by an exposition—not of the doctrine as if it were unpractical, but of the *truth* of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer, and the range and blessedness of His action *therein*. But now in this concluding section of our chapter, which is from verses 28-39, we have God Himself as the rock, and rest, and blessedness of our souls. We are here introduced into the centre and source of all that is solid, and rich, and enduring. The counsels of God secure us, the predestination of God marks off the blessing to which we are set apart (verses 28-30). He is a God of wealth and love (verse 32). He is a justifying God, and the elect are "*God's elect*" (verse 33). And then we have the tenderness and strength of divine love (verses 34-39).

Read, beloved friend, read till the magnificent thought burns into the soul, that God in the silence of ages before the world began, sat upon the throne of Absolute Sovereignty, and purposed thoughts of grace and glory concerning thee; yes, before ever the book of history was opened, or ever its pages were blotted, and when there was no sin to judge, and no misery to move His blessed heart. Historically we had the sin, and then in time came the remedy, but with God it was otherwise. The blessing was planned before ever the need existed, and thus the measure of the blessing is altogether independent of man's state. The measure of the blessing is the heart of God. O see then the mighty arm of God stretched out; it is an arm of love, it is a hand of glory pointing on to the everlasting ages of His own rest, which will succeed the blessed era known as the millennium, and He says, "*You are there.*" And what in purpose He determined, His omnipotent power and love will infallibly secure. Do you reply, "And what, Lord, will be my condition in those eternal and unfading scenes of bliss?" "As my Son in glory," is the answer. Thus if I look back I see God

counselling for my eternal and unmeasured blessing ; if I look onward I behold the glorified family, and Jesus in the midst, chief of the glorious throng—and I am to be there for ever *like Him* and for ever *with Him*.

Said we not rightly, that He is a God of love and wealth ? Come, see He is opening the treasures of love and grace ! Draw near, beloved saint, He is a giving God. Does He give out of those opened treasures ? No ! He “gives us *all* things”—the treasury itself. Does He grudge parting with such wealth, and what is the style of His giving ? He “freely” gives. He “frankly” forgave. Who and what has God given ? *Who ?* His Son. *What ?* All things. And this God is ours.

Now the bold challenge is thrown out by the delivered one. Hear it, ye principalities and powers ! Hear it, ye enemies of our Lord ! Hear it, Satan and all thy demon host ! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ?” Mark you, it is “*God’s* elect.” Can you grasp the saint from the hand of omnipotent power ? Can you pluck the delivered brand from the bosom of infinite love ? Calm and divinely grand is the reply of the Spirit of God to the bold challenge of faith, “It is God that justifieth.”

The first clause of verse 34 should be read as the finish of verse 33, as founded on the previous statement, “It is God that justifieth.” Beloved reader, say it in triumph, “Who is he that condemneth ?” for in the opening of this wonderful exposition of grace, the *thing* condemnation for thee does not exist, while here at the close there is *none* to condemn. But let us trace still further the path of deliverance, and here the heart is at once arrested as the story of Christ’s love and work is once again told out (verse 34).

He fathomed the depths of our misery by going down in grace to the point where the judgment of God met Him, even Calvary’s depth of woe ; but He has also gone up to the heights of glory. Nothing could be lower than the cross. Nothing could be higher than the right hand of God. The extent of His work—its range—embraces all lying between His Cross and Throne. Need you therefore be surprised, as the eye rests upon this victorious One, rising from His agony (having endured it to the full) to His glory, at the second bold challenge of the delivered one : “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?” We have had the greatness and extent of His work (verse 34),

which was the outcome of His love, because of our wretched condition as sinners. The spring and power of the work was "the love wherewith He loved us." The work was the demonstration of the all-conquering and triumphant love of Jesus.


The pagan and papal powers bent their energies to the task of breaking the links of love formed between the soul and Jesus; but the links were forged by God Himself, of omnipotent strength, of eternal love; unbreakable therefore by all the power of the enemy. But let us marshal the difficulties which are vainly supposed to thwart the purposes of redeeming love, which are employed to separate the believer from his eternal Lover: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, and slaughter (verses 35-36). Can these, *but* creature-difficulties, snap the golden chain—the link of life and love eternal? Nay, they practically rivet the links of Christ's everlasting love, and bind our souls more firmly to Jesus. In them all, we drink more deeply of His measureless love, and prove its strength and tenderness, and emerge out of all creature-difficulties with flying colours, not conquered, but *more* than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Now that we have had demonstrated the impotence of all the enemy's efforts to separate the believer from *Christ* and His love; we have next creature-powers arrayed in all their strength; Satan's closing and grand attempt to separate us from *God* and His love. Who dare meddle with the special objects of Jehovah's choice? What are all the powers of hell and earth combined? What are powers or difficulties to the *Living* God? And so heights are explored, depths are fathomed, but Christ has already in grace measured the one and sounded the other. But may not "things to come" interrupt the holy flow and current of Divine Love? Nay, the moment of final triumph is nearing for Him and for us; "things to come" will bring us together in the same glory and same predestined blessing. "Things present," whether of trial, or fear, or sin, cannot separate "for having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." Can spiritual principalities and powers, and angels, too, combined, thwart the counsels of redeeming love, or reach the heart of God, the positional resting place of the saint? (John xiv. 20). Why, these very powers are already vanquished, have become part of the footstool for the feet of the Ascended Man who gained the victory through death

and resurrection, and Who triumphed over the whole power of the enemy in His wondrous cross (Col. ii. 15), and then dragged them in triumph at His chariot wheels (Eph. iv. 8). "Life," as the fruit of Christ's victory over our sins, instead of opposing the purposes of Divine and sovereign love, would the rather hasten their accomplishment, "for when Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "Death" cannot separate; we do not now belong to it; but *it* belongs to us, is part of our heritage (1 Cor. iii. 22). Ah! beloved, we have to do with the love of *God*, a love strong, irresistible, and eternal.

We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and this is *positionally* true of every soul brought to God; but alas! that so many quickened persons are found *practically* in the flesh, as in chap. vii., and insist upon it moreover as a God-given and continuous place and experience for them, whilst the grapes of chap. viii. lie untasted, and the fields of Christian liberty lie untrodden, and the harvest of grace remains unreaped. Lord, break the fetters of Thy people, and as Thou didst say, "come forth"—"forth" from the death and darkness of nature—oh, say to the yet undelivered, "Loose him and let him go."

Ours is the place of overcomers. What are creature-*difficulties* in view of the *tenderness* of Christ's love! What are creature-*powers* before the *strength* of God's love! And the tenderness of the love is equal to its strength. My reader, is this, then, the persuasion of your soul that no creature dare lift up itself against the delivered of Jehovah's grace? Art thou treading the path of deliverance? Is the work of Christ in dying for thy sins, and in the condemnation of sin itself (and that in its very nature and roots when He became a sacrifice on the cross), the ground only and alone of thy complete deliverance—the Spirit, the witness of it to thy heart, and the love of God thy present triumph of soul? "What shall we then say to these things?" Is there room for aught save to worship in the presence of *such* grace?



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