

Thoughts *on* **ROMANS 8**



“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ... (nothing can) separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Rom. 8:1, 39

accomplished glory of the future, there is a perfectly linked chain of blessing, no link of which can ever be sundered. God's purpose is that Christ His Son, should be a first-born among brethren. And the chain of blessing is--**foreknown -- predestinated -- called -- justified and glorified.**

FOREKNOWLEDGE expresses the original operation of the Divine mind, considered with reference to the pure and unapproachable majesty of the blessed and only Potentate.

PREDESTINATION respects rather the condition and destiny of that which is thus foreknown, objectively regarded as a vessel of His will.

God knows all who would believe and these are predestinated, called, justified and will be ultimately glorified for His eternal purpose will not fail and all who are in Christ will be conformed to the image of His Son.

This is the Hope of God's calling (**Ephesians 1:18**). And what a blessed, most precious and glorious ending of this great chapter and the entire doctrinal section of this great Epistle!

What shall we say then to these things? Our answer must be worship and adoration of the God who hath loved us so in giving His only begotten Son, who reached down to our misery and shame and who hath lifted us so high. The Apostle then reviews the great truths of the Gospel.

God is for us; "Who can be against us?" The proof of it is that "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him freely give all things?"

God is the justifier - then who then is he that condemneth - "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Christ died, Christ is risen, Christ is at the right hand of God making intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ and the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord -- nothing!

No condemnation and no separation; no more wrath as we wait for eternal glory! Such is the wonderful salvation of God. How could we be ashamed of it!

THE BELIEVERS NEW POSITION:

It is helpful to see that at the end of **CHAPTER 7** the question of "I" has been forever settled. It is now the mind or inner man which has been brought to delight in the will of God, and which is regarded as the true "I"; in the last verse the apostle says, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh [he does not now say 'I myself'] the law of sin."

Hence all questions as to my state are over forever; I have now come to the conclusion that my inner man, which delights in the law of God, is myself, and that I have a Deliverer, Jesus Christ our Lord, from the working of sin and death in me. This is a very important and wonderful consideration beloved!

ENJOYMENT OF THE NEW POSITION:

Then in **CHAPTER 8** deliverance is enjoyed by the Spirit of God becoming in us the Spirit of Christ, and in so doing, superseded by His operation, the working of the flesh. Here the Spirit is the controlling power of **our thoughts and feelings**, as those brought into liberty by Christ.

In **CHAPTER 5** the love of God is shed abroad in the heart of the believer by the Holy Ghost. Our spirit thus knows the thoughts and feelings of the blessed God of all grace towards it who is now justified (made perfectly righteous before God).

In **CHAPTER 6** he is taught to reckon, according to what has taken place in Christ, who has died and risen again; he is taught to reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

In the end of **CHAPTER 7** the soul has found the Deliverer, the One in whom we have life and righteousness. Life for the believer is in Him who has been raised from among the dead.

But in **CHAPTER 8** we get more than reckoning, the believer comes under a controlling principle, not the law, but the Spirit.

The law had discovered in him another governing principle, that of sin and death; motions of sins were by the law, and sin working death in a man by that

the kid, and the calf and the young lion and fatling together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Isaiah 11:6-9). It is the glorious vision of the coming age, the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things will be gathered together in Christ. The Prophets and the Psalms tell out more fully the story of a restored creation, through Him who paid for it with His own precious blood. And we, who have the first fruits of the Spirit also groan within ourselves, awaiting that blessed consummation, when we shall come into our full inheritance, the redemption of our body. Our salvation is in hope of this future redemption and glorification. We wait patiently for it beloved.

THE INTERCESSION OF THE SPIRIT (Vss. 26-27)

Prayer is now mentioned for we need it in the midst of the groans, the sorrows and sufferings with which we are surrounded and which is our lot as long as we are in this mortal body. And prayer is our refuge, the expression of our dependence upon God and our utmost confidence in Him. But while we know how to pray, we often do not know "*what we should pray for as we ought.*"

Then the Spirit Himself maketh intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered. "Prayer is most commonly the witness of our infirmities. The burdened heart may find itself too full for speech, too much perplexed, for the ordering of its thoughts. But there is an utterance of supplication that makes no sound. It is the Spirit, as the helper of our infirmities, who makes these desires known to the God. Groaning in sympathy with the tried and longing heart, He makes His intercession for the Saints according to the will of God."

Thus the mind of the Spirit in us is known of God-- and heard by Him. And then besides this intercession of the Spirit there is the intercession of Christ at the right hand of God (**Verse 34**). The believer is therefore hedged about and made secure and if he walks in the Spirit, constant peace and joy will be His daily portion.

THE SAINTS CALLING: THE CHALLENGE AND THE ASSURANCE (Vss. 28-39)

Therefore "*we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God who are the called according to his purpose.*" We can rest in God and commit all to Him. The purpose of God for His own, from eternity to eternity is blessedly revealed. From God's foreknowledge of us in the past eternity to the

which was good; but the believer now by the Spirit, is in conscious relationship with his Deliverer, being married to Him who is raised from the dead.

This is no mere position or standing, but a link of life by the Spirit, and hence a link of love.

The life is in Christ Jesus. He lives to God as alive from the dead, in perfect love. He has taken this place for us through death, and all this is the proof of love.

The blessed and important point for us is that we have the Spirit as the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Christ is alive out of the whole circumstances and scene where sin and death are; we are not actually out of them, but the Spirit is the link of life with Him who is out of them. This is important for us, because where there were passions of sins by the law, now by the Spirit there are motions of life, and no longer obligatory compulsion, but rather living obedience.

A further point connected with the Spirit is that it is *God's Spirit*. It is not merely a question of a renewed spirit in us; but the apostle says, "*Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that God's Spirit dwell in you.*"

Here we see that the believer has that which no angel possesses - *God's Spirit*. They are holy, unfallen beings and we are fallen creatures; and yet, we who are separated from the life of flesh by the death and resurrection of Christ, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that the character of God as revealed in Christ, might be formed and manifested in us. No angel enjoys this privilege although they desire to look into these things. They are found after their own order in the heavenly Jerusalem (**Heb. 12**), but they are not the city, nor is the character of the city that is of Christ, seen in them. Now here we are in a scene of contrariety, once fallen creatures, but redeemed, and *God's Spirit dwelling in us who believe in Christ*.

This chapter does not carry us into the full blessings connected with the Spirit, but shows us the leading elements connected with the Spirit of God dwelling in the Christian. We see the immense privilege of *God's Spirit* being given, not to renovate in any way what is of *man*, but to bring in what is of God, that *God's character* in all its moral elements, *as seen in Christ*, might come out in us; hence we have the Spirit spoken of as the Spirit of Christ.

Those who were under the tutelage and guidance of the law were servants, but to be guided by the Spirit gives us the character of sons. It is wonderful to see the true character of sonship which belongs to Christians as linked with Christ.

A man might adopt a child, give him the position and privilege of a son, make him his heir and so forth, but there is one thing he cannot do, he cannot give him the spirit and character of a son with its suited affections. Now this is what God's Spirit can and does do – He guides the believer into all the movements of life and affections which belong to the position in which grace has set us in Christ. The Christian position is sonship, in contrast to that of servants under the law, and God's Spirit gives reality to the relationship of God's sons. It is in the cry, "*Abba, Father*," that the Spirit produces the response to the love of God which He sheds abroad in the heart. *Abba*-Hebrew, *Father*-Greek for all!

THE TIME OF TRAVAIL AND GROANING LEADS TO THE FUTURE REDEMPTION (VSS. 18-25)

Thus the highest summit of the Epistle has been reached. In Christ, no condemnation, free from the law of sin and death; indwelt by the Spirit of God; led by the Spirit of God; sons of God; heirs of God; joint heirs with Christ--this is the blessed and sublime culmination.

And as it is when we stand on some mountain-peak, a great vision now bursts upon us. It concerns the future wonderful glory that is in store for the children of God. The sons of God are going to be manifested (**verse 19**). That will be when Christ, the head of the new creation is manifested; then we shall also be manifested with Him in glory (**Col. 3:4**). Then He will occupy the throne of His glory and "*we shall reign with Him over the earth*."

All creation groaneth and travaileth until now, anxiously looking forward to that coming day when the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Creation was put into the place of corruption and death through the fall of man but it is not without hope. The hope of a ruined creation is in the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both the Creator of all things and the Redeemer.

Upon His blessed brow He bore the thorns, the emblem of the curse which rests upon creation. And when He comes, groaning creation will be delivered. Then "*the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with*

The apostle continues the sharp contrast which he had previously drawn between the mind or disposition of the flesh - the way in which the flesh thinks and feels - and the mind or disposition of the Spirit - that is, the thoughts and feelings which have; their source in the Spirit of God. So here he says, "*Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.*" **Vs. 9**

It is no question of a renovated man, but being *of Christ*. God does not recognize any man but Christ. He has died to sin and lives to God. All is in death that is not of Him, and we are livingly of Him as having His Spirit. So it continues, "*If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*" We are still down here in the body and our link with Christ is by the Spirit. "*He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.*" (**1Cor. 6:17 N.T.**)

The effect of Christ being in the Christian is that now the body is looked at as dead on account of sin, for Christ has died to sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Righteousness is established in Christ, and now **life** and **righteousness** go together. We are here viewed as still in the body, the **body** not yet quickened with the Spirit, but dead, but the Spirit who dwells in us is **life**. **Vss. 10, 11**) Then **verse 11** contemplates the mortal body being made alive because of the indwelling Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead. This completes the answer to the question, "*Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" The **first** part of the answer is that we have found and reached the Deliverer, and the **second** part that He has given us of His Spirit, and this involves as consequence that the body will be made alive in the power of the life of Christ.

Everything for the believer depends on having the Spirit; he is actually in the body and in a scene of contrariety, but God's Spirit dwells in him, hence he is in no way debtor to the flesh, though still living in the body of humiliation down here. Indeed, living after the flesh is the way to death, but if by the Spirit, who is our link with Christ, we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live. All this supposes that we are still in that condition where we experience the contrariety of the flesh, but the Spirit sets us free so that we may live in new affections and relationships.

And here, as in Galatians, **SONSHIP** is in contrast with legal bondage.