

Printed Pamphlets

In Christ and Christ in Us

Romans 5:1-12; 7; 8:1-8

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There is a vast difference between an *innocent* creature and a *purged* conscience; and the distinction is important. The knowledge of good and evil came in when man departed from God. In connection with Christianity a believer has an *uncondemning* conscience, a conscience fit for the presence of God in the light where God dwells, a conscience which the light suits. I would ask you, reader, Have you a conscience fit for the presence of God, where God is? This lies at the root of all practical Christianity. If it is not a settled question with you, you are not free to serve God: you must be occupied about yourself. There is a great difference between the consciousness of indwelling sin, or an evil nature, and “no more conscience of *sins*.” We could not speak of no more consciousness of *sin*, *i.e.* of sin not being *in us*; but with reference to the conscience before God, through the work, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, a believer is brought into the presence of God, in the light where God is, without a single stain or spot, though he has still the evil principle of sin in him. The carnal mind “*is enmity*” (not *at enmity*) “against God”; *i.e.* the nature of the flesh is in its essence “*enmity* against God”; but how blessed the fact, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” The principle of Christianity consists in not only the *fruits* of the evil nature being gone, but that sin itself has been *condemned* in the cross of Christ. The believer knows that Christ has met every question, taken all condemnation and fear away, and that, as another has blessedly expressed it, “there is nothing between him and the bright throne of God, where Christ sits, but the love that put all his sins away.” The wonderful transaction took place between God and Christ. Our acceptance is according to the infinite efficacy of the blood of Christ as God sees it, and as God measures it, and the infinite perfection of the One who did the work. It is not a question of *you*, or of what *you* think or *you* feel, or anything in *connection* with you, or your apprehension of it -- it all rests on *God’s* estimate of the infinite preciousness and value of Christ’s work as *He* estimates it. Take an illustration. If an Israelite obeyed the word of Jehovah, and sprinkled the lintel and doorpost of his house, and accepted the word of Jehovah, he went in with the sense of security, because the blood was there. God had said, “When *I* see *the blood*, I will pass over.” Another Israelite also sprinkles the blood on the lintel and door-posts; goes in, and trembles and fears all night lest the destroying angel should not pass over. Which do you think is the most secure? Many would say the former, because they are mixing up God’s value and estimate of the blood as *He* sees it with their own thought or feeling about it. Both are equally safe, because it is the blood which is the ground of the security of both. A sinner is convicted on the testimony of God; and the same God assures him that He has found in the death of His Son a full divine warrant to meet him in perfect blessing according to His own heart.

There are two great subjects treated of in Romans. In Rom. 5:1-12 the Holy Ghost is taking up the question of our

guilt, our sins, the *fruit* of the evil nature. There is *no experience* in this first part of the epistle. It is very helpful to see this. Is anyone not settled as to the question of the forgiveness of their sins? The reason is because they are bringing into it what God never intended should be brought into it; *i.e.* *experience*. Many a soul has doubts and fears and misgivings as to the question of *peace*, because they have mixed up the experience they have, or they think they ought to have, with the simple recognition of and faith in the testimony of the blessed God. “Being justified by faith, we *have peace with God*.” Many a one who is quickened has not the peace of Rom. 5:1. What is peace? It is peace with God as *God is*, in all the unflinching holiness of His character, peace without one of His attributes being violated. That is peace, when there is not one single enemy left, not one solitary foe who could dispute our title to serenity in the presence of God. If a battle has been fought, and the victory gained, this is not *peace*; for after many a well-gained victory there is war again. A truce, however honorable or long, is not peace; it supposes impending hostilities. But if every enemy had been demolished, and there was not a foe left, there would be *peace*. “The Lord Jesus was delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification.” At His death every enemy, the whole array of Satan’s power; was let loose, was met by Him and vanquished -- sin, Satan, death, hell, the grave.

“His be the victor’s name
Who fought the fight alone.”

Through His death He has brought the believer on the same platform as He stands Himself; and faith connects us with it. What is faith? It is simply the hand stretched out to receive what God delights to give. Faith is not *feeling*, or *experience*, or anything that goes on *within*. Faith gives God credit for *being what He is*, and accepts what He gives. “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” The Christian is not a pardoned criminal. He is pardoned; but he is more. We are in the very favor of God, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We have *peace* behind, *favor* under our feet, and *glory* before us. This is not *experience*, but *possession*.

Rom. 5, 7 and 8: We find three things in each of these chapters; three distinct facts are stated in each.

In Rom. 5 we get, first, justification on the principle of faith, and “*peace with God*” the consequence; second, introduction by faith into present favor with God, the very favor that rests on Christ; third, rejoicing in hope; and there is a fourth thing in the chapter (though this is not on my mind just now), we joy in God.

Rom. 7 describes the condition of a quickened soul under law, the searching power of the law. Three great facts are discovered experimentally, because now we get experience, realization, and feeling.

The soul learns first that in the flesh there is nothing that is good. “In me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing.” This is an humbling but real thing to learn. All are on the same platform here, all are in one plight, all are of one

stock. Second, that we have another “I” in us, another principle, which is not the sinful flesh. Third, that this new “I” (if I may call it so), has *not power* of itself over the old; that the old nature is too strong for it; therefore the soul must look for a deliverer “who shall deliver me?”

In Rom. 8 we also find three things: First, the believer has life in the Spirit; second, the Holy Ghost is dwelling in him; third, God is for him. Different states of soul are touched by each of these truths.

I would before going on say again, I trust every one is clear as to the question of the forgiveness of sins that Christ is the “propitiation” (Rom. 3:25) or mercy-seat, the spot where God and the sinner can meet. God can righteously meet me there. Faith takes what God gives as though He said, “I will do all the *giving*, yours is the *receiving*.” It is not *believing* that I *do believe*; this is a serious snare. If you go out to examine the sky and the stars, are you occupied with your eye? If you are, you will never see the stars. You simply look at what is above you. The simple acceptance of God’s testimony carries the benefit to the soul. What is wanted is *simplicity*. It is marvelous how simple people are in every thing but in the things of God. When God makes the most blessed communications to us, we begin to reason and to question about them. In chap. 4 we get another thing; viz., what answers to the scapegoat. When speaking of the way any poor sinner may come to God, it is unlimited, as wide as the world. Any one *may* come; the blood is on the mercy-seat. “God is just, and yet the justifier.” There is a full, free, perfect forgiveness for every one who believes. But in Rom. 4 it is a different thing; viz., “Who was delivered for OUR offences.” We find in the account of the scapegoat that the sins of a definite company were confessed over his head. When *substitution* is spoken of, it is in connection with those for whom He *was* a substitute. If we speak of propitiation, it has the widest sense. Christ has offered His blood to God, God has accepted it; there is a full, free forgiveness for all who will come. The testimony on *God’s* side is in raising Him from the dead, and we, being justified by faith, “have peace with God” in the integrity of His being as a God of truth, holiness, and righteousness. The question of sin was settled on the cross. Everything that could interfere with the holiness of God, has been there disposed of. The believer is brought into nearness to God, and stands in divine favor. Again I would say, this is not experience. You may say you do not *feel* it; but do you *believe* it? Faith carries me into what I am before God and as seen by Him. Do we *believe* the testimony? How many are always occupied with their frames and feelings! and this is what they feed on, and hence so little divine power. It is a question of simple faith in the testimony of the living God. “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater” (“witness” and “testimony” are the same words all through) . . . “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar” (1 John 5:9, 10). This is more serious than our losing blessing.

We will now turn to the different states of soul I have already touched on in chap. 7. Most of the difficulties people have is because they are not *delivered*, which is distinct from

quickening. The first thing to learn is, “that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth *no good thing*.” The soul has to be passed through humiliating exercises to learn this. Could you say before God you know that? Why then are you trying to repair it? I may discover I have done wrong things, but to discover that I have a nature in me which is incapable of doing *any thing* BUT wrong things is very humiliating. I must submit to the humbling fact I cannot do the *right* thing. Many a one is ready to say, “I know I do wrong things every day,” who shrink from the fact they have no power to do the *right* things. Many of us know this *doctrinally*, but do we know it *experimentally*? Rom. 7 is experience. A person may have listened to the truth taught for years, and yet not know chap. 7 *experimentally*. We have to be subjected to the exercises the soul passes through in chap. 7 to find out what is in us; viz., that there is “*no good thing*.” Do you believe it? Do you *know* it? Have you gone through these ploughings and testings? or are you going through them? If you know it, you will never try to reform *man* in any way. Are you trying to remedy or to keep down such a state? You must learn you cannot do it. Again I ask, Is it a settled matter in your own soul that there is *nothing good* in you? I often hear it said, “I was overtaken, and tripped up to-day; but I will keep this temper down; I will not allow it to act.” Of course it is all right not to allow its exercise; but if you only seek to *correct* it, this is what Job did, who, after going through all the terrible discipline of God’s hand, comes to the point, “I am vile . . . I will lay my hand upon my mouth,” I will not let out anything further. But in Rom. 13 we get a step further, Job is brought to this, not only to acknowledge “I am vile,” but “*I abhor myself*”; and then he finds the relief of turning away from himself altogether, “Mine eye seeth *thee*.” It is now no longer trying to keep down or to correct the old nature, or to get anything good out of it. This is the first lesson a soul has to learn practically in the experience of this chapter: the utter, *thorough*, and *complete* ruin, that there is nothing good in us; yet not merely *saying* it, but what we have learned deep down in the heart. There is even danger in seeking to get a character out of the owning of our badness. When I hear a person talking much about their badness, I begin to fear they know but little about it. If we really know in the depths of our hearts that “in me dwelleth no good thing,” we shall not be seeking to get a character out of our own badness, or out of self at all; we shall find out the relief of turning our back upon it altogether as that which is good for nothing. How do we make this discovery? The law comes in for this purpose; it never could bring anything good out of the flesh. What was it made that which in itself is “holy, just, and good” powerless? “It was weak *through the flesh*.” It brought out and exposed what the flesh is before God. “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and *I died*.” We thus discover practically and experimentally there was nothing in us that answered to it.

The second thing is, there is another principle in me, another “I” which is not the flesh, but which longs after God, which “delights in the law of God.” What a bitter disappointment it is to discover, thirdly, that this new “I” has no power of itself. And this is the point where people get

disheartened. Many a one who may have given up hope of correcting the old nature, or of getting any good out of it, is utterly discouraged when they find the new nature of itself has not power over the old. The common idea is, that the cross of Christ has some kind of charm on *man*; that conversion consists in the *re-adjustment* of what was there before. This is deeper down in minds than we think. Scripture says, "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*." You cannot make anything out of the flesh but flesh, however you may cultivate it. All the culture and care and diligence you may bestow on a crop of nettles will only produce a crop of nettles, because the nature of nettles is to produce nettles, though they may be stronger nettles from cultivation. A little ray of comfort breaks into the soul when it knows there is another "I" which wills right, which longs after God; but a terrible thing it is to discover that this new "I" has not power. Take an illustration: A child who is born to-day has got life, but no power; it has all the constituent elements that go to make the man, but there is *strength* wanting. It has been said, "All we have to do is to put our will over on the side of God"; but it is said, "to *will* is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18). Here the will is on the side of God; but there is no power to act. Are you saying, "I expect in the power of the new man to get power over the old man; I will keep it down; I will put a curb on this and that evil tendency; I will check it"? This is Rom. 7. You will find it so. "How to perform that which is good I find not." Every soul must go through this in some way or other; and, as has been truly said, "No one can get out of it until they get into it." In order to walk happily with God we must learn this lesson. It is like a person in a deep ditch; the more he struggles to get out, the deeper he gets into it; the more he *tries* to get free, the deeper he sinks in the mire. Then he turns from all expectation in himself and says, "Who shall deliver me?" Often there remains in souls (it may be undiscovered by themselves) some latent hope that allows the exercise to go on till we are broken to pieces, and we look outside ourselves to another. The reason why people struggle on in this experience of Rom. 7 is because they have not practically found out the condition God says they are in. As long as there is a lurking suspicion in your mind that you can help yourself, God, as it were, says, "Go on, try." I could not call the experience of Rom. 7 *conflict*. If a giant were in this room on the neck of an infant, this would not be conflict.

Rom. 7: 24. "Who shall deliver me," not from my *sins*, but from that which *produced them*; who will take me out of the terrible condition in which I am involved? Then at once follows, "I thank God through Jesus Christ!" This is the breathing of the man delivered out of the pit, and whose feet are on the bank. He falls down and worships at the feet of his Deliverer, whereas before he was trying to get out of his helpless condition. To know *deliverance* the eye must be turned altogether from self to another. We learn we have *died with Christ* -- our old man was crucified with Him; and we have passed out of the condition in which we were involved in connection with the first Adam, and now we are *in Christ*.

In the history of Jonah we get an illustration of this

exercise which souls go through. Jonah is cast out of the ship, and would have been lost; but God prepared a fish, and Jonah was saved in the life of another. Look at all the exercises he went through; he was in a *safe* state, but not a *delivered* state. We get three things in Jonah 2 which correspond to the three points of Rom. 7: "I will sacrifice unto thee," he is not delivered for that; "I will pay that I have vowed," he is not delivered yet; "Salvation is of *the Lord*," and at once the fish vomited out Jonah on the dry land. Directly he looks outside himself, or anything he could do, or say, or render to God, he gets his feet on the dry ground, and hears the word of the Lord the second time, saying, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." The Lord give us to understand the difference between the *forgiveness* we get, through the death of Christ, of all our transgressions and sins, and the *deliverance* out of *the condition* we were in by nature. All our sins are forgiven; but beside, we have died with Him, and are delivered through death from the terrible state of thralldom we were in, to be now in everything for Him who died for us. *Deliverance* gives power over self. Turned entirely away from self, a new song is put into my mouth, even praise to our God. We need Christ to *deliver* us as much as to *cleanse away* our sins. How blessed to know Him as our deliverer, our friend, our stay, our all; to learn "salvation is of the Lord." The Holy Ghost is the *only* power by which we can do *anything*. If we could have *power* apart from the Holy Ghost, we could use it when going on badly. All must be practically consistent with His presence, or there can be no power. When we see persons without power, one of two things must be true of them; either they do not know deliverance, or they have been inconsistent with the deliverance which is theirs, and with the fact of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and thus the Spirit is grieved. If I grieve Him, He has to witness to me of my *sins* till I judge them, instead of witnessing to me of Christ. Proper Christian conflict comes in after deliverance is known.

The force of Gal. 5:16, 17 is, "in order that you may not do what you otherwise would do." There is One dwelling in you who conducts the conflict against the flesh; but the victory is on the side of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 7 is the experience of a quickened soul under law, and consequently bondage. Gal. 5 is the Holy Ghost, the strength and power of the new nature, and there is victory. In Rom. 8 we get the true and proper standing of a Christian "in Christ Jesus," and what the Spirit of God says of such is "no condemnation," which is much stronger than merely saying they are not condemned. We stand in One who in grace went down under the judgment and condemnation which was due to us, and who appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. *He* has risen out of it. Can there be condemnation for Christ? neither {can there be} for those who are *in Him*.

The first great fact is, "Christ died for our sins"; the second is, *we* died with Him. Nothing will give the soul deliverance but knowing *I died with Christ*. The sentence of death has been passed on *me* in the cross of Christ; then that which I am to reckon *dead* has been crucified with Christ. A Christian is entitled to know he has died with Christ, that