

BIBLE STUDIES ON

THE BOOK
OF ROMANS

E. J. WAGGONER

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Study 1

Romans 1

Every doctrine summed up in the gospel.

The condition of man without God.

This book is one of the most wonderful in the Bible. In the sixteen possible lessons before us, we shall be able only to touch, in the briefest manner, upon the general outline of the book. We shall expect to find things we cannot understand, even as we cannot understand how the infinite God upholds the universe by the word of His power. We believe that which we cannot understand, because God says so. Approaching the study of the Bible thus, we place ourselves where God can unfold and explain to us the mysteries of His word.

Verses 1-15. These fifteen verses are introductory, the first seven comprising the salutation, the remaining eight being personal explanations. Yet in these verses are some of the richest passages in the Bible; as in verse twelve, wherein Paul states that he expected not only to minister to the church on his visit, but to be ministered to by it. Both were to be comforted by their “mutual faith.” This does not contemplate a condition of the church in which the minister must spend his energy in combating error, and settling differences between brethren.

Verses 16 and 17. Here we have the text of the epistle. The entire book is but an expansion of these verses.

In the remaining verses of the chapter, we have a statement of God’s justice in punishing wicked men, and of the consequences of a separation from God. We are liable to get an idea something like this; namely, that we have the third angel’s message, consisting of a system of truth comprising

such subjects as the law, the Sabbath, nature of man, advent, etc., and that to this we have superadded a little gospel, the idea of Justification by faith. There is but one doctrine we have to preach, that is the gospel of Christ. Mark 16:15, 16. This commission is to us. Those that believe the gospel will be saved. Is there nothing besides the gospel to teach? “It is the power of God unto salvation.” What do we want besides salvation? What more can we ask for?

The gospel brings righteousness. The righteousness of God is what God does, it is His way. To be in harmony with Him is to make His way our way. The gospel reveals this way to us (Romans 1:17), and not only this, but it is the power of God to work out His way in us. The Bible is a statement of God’s way, and this is summed up in the ten commandments, which are a declaration of His righteousness. Isaiah 51:6, 7. In Matthew 6:33, Christ declares this righteousness to be the one thing needful. Why? Righteousness is life: and the man who has God’s righteousness has everything in this world, and in the world to come.

Verse 17. Here we have righteousness by faith. “The just shall live by faith.” Nothing else? By faith and works? “Add not thou unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” To be just is to be righteous, and a righteous man will do righteous acts. That is the fruit of righteousness. But how does he do these works? By faith. John 6:28, 29. “This is the work of God, that ye believe.” Possibly we have had a narrow idea of what faith is.

“The just shall live by faith.” Here is the whole thing. Nothing can be added to the preaching of the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. What about these doctrines, as the Sabbath, immortality, etc.? Since the “kingdom of God and His righteousness” is the one thing needful, and since there is nothing unimportant in the Bible, all of these doctrines are simply divisions, lines depending upon that one thing—all summed up in the doctrine of righteousness by faith. We can preach nothing else; for everything outside of this is sin.

Verse 18. Wrath is revealed against those who “hold (or restrain) the truth in unrighteousness.” Connect this verse with chapter 10:3. God is a living God. His throne is a living throne. There is the water of life, and the tree of life,—everything is life. Therefore His righteousness is active, is life. Some men, ignorant of this righteousness, refuse to submit themselves to it, and resist it. God will punish men. Why? Because they identify themselves with unrighteousness. They are permeated by it, and, when that is gone—for sin

must be destroyed—it takes them with it. It means simply that God is no respecter of persons.

Verses 19 and 20. Is God unjust? No; for ever since the creation His works have testified of Him. Many do not know that the world could not create itself, but it “may be known.”

Verses 21-32. How does it come that men do not know? They know so much. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” The most unreasonable thing in the universe is human reason. It is utter foolishness with God. 1 Corinthians 1:19-31.

Paul says those who do the things described in the latter part of the chapter under consideration, know that they are worthy of death, and you cannot find a people who do not know it. The heathenism Paul was speaking of, as represented at Athens and elsewhere, was not ignorance of things of this world. It embraced men whose work in the arts and sciences is studied to-day. A man may know without God, just as the beast may know; and where is the difference, save in degree? There is no wisdom apart from God. This is what Paul means when he says, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy...after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ” So also in 1 Corinthians 1:18, and Colossians 2:3.

We hear a good deal of “natural morality” and “scientific morality” — morality common to all men. This is what Paul is describing. It is heathenism. The popular idea of heathenism is an incorrect one. The heathen is the man who doesn’t know God. He may be a religious man, but God is not the source of his wisdom. In Mark 7:22, 23, Christ describes the source of “natural morality.” The hearts of all are alike; we are made of one blood to dwell upon the earth. The heathen are the people who do the things spoken of in Paul’s first chapter, wherever they live. Men who in the United States or in England follow the leadings of the natural heart (Galatians 5:19-21) are no better than those who do the same things in China.

The heathenism Paul was speaking of, as represented at Athens and elsewhere, was not ignorance of things of this world.

Compare 2 Timothy 3:1-7 with the latter part of Romans 1. They are almost identical. It means that men in the last days shall be openly heathen—giving themselves up to the works of the flesh. This helps to explain many references in the Old Testament in which God speaks of judging the heathen. It means that all who will be destroyed will be heathen. Who are the heathen? Romans 2:1. “Thou that judgest doest the same things.” Did we ever do anything we would be ashamed to speak of? Wherein were we different from the heathen? Here is broad enough ground for the gospel. It is a shame to speak of those things that have been done by us all in secret, but “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

Study 2

Romans 2

God — no respecter of persons.
The law — standard of judgment.
Obedience from the heart.

The first chapter of Romans, after its introduction, can be summarized as the condition of man without God, and how he gets in that condition. The cause of this condition can be stated in one word — unbelief.

Coupled with unbelief is self-exaltation; with faith, humility. They lost God, “because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Verse 21. They attributed everything to themselves, and as self was advanced. Faith in God decreased, till they were in the darkness of idolatry.

Men, in the days of Plato, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, taught what they called moral science; Confucius taught moral precepts. But what they all lacked was to tell men how to do what they taught to be right. Even these men who taught moral science and virtue were themselves practicing the things they condemned, and coming far short of doing what they set forth as moral duty.

While those teachers tell us what to do, but fail to give us power to do it, the religion of Jesus Christ not only makes known what is right, but gives us ability to perform that which is good. Thus when Christ is not woven into the teaching, the very effort to teach morals is simply the old pagan science of morals, which is immorality.

All admit that the State should not teach Christianity; but some say we must teach morals without it. Moral science aside from Jesus Christ is immorality; it is sin.

The works of the flesh are clearly stated in the last part of chapter one. These are found in every individual that has not been converted to Christ; we denounce the heathen for doing these things, but "there is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11), and He condemns those things in us just the same and shows us that we are no better than they.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." Romans 2:1. Whoever knows enough to condemn the evils of the heathen is condemned himself, for he does the same things.

The first part of Romans 2 may be summed up in, God is no respecter of persons. He will render to every man according to his deeds. In the judgment nothing is taken into account but a man's works. "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." Matthew 16:27.

The character of the works shows the amount of faith in Christ. A simple profession will not do. "Thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" God does not respect our person or profession. We may call ourselves Christians, and pretend to keep the law, and pity the poor heathen; but God classes all together, who fail to have good works.

"As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Verse 12. This with the verses following shows that the law is the standard by which every man in the world will be judged.

But what is it to keep the law? It is to keep all its precepts; our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees, which was only an outward form. If we hate, it is murder (Matthew 5:22); if we have impure thoughts it is adultery (Matthew 5:25); if we have an impure heart, we violate all the rest of the law. We may be ever so strict in outward Sabbath observance and adhere closely to the outward obligations of all the rest of the law, but an impure heart renders every act sinful.

“When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves.”
Verse 14.

God has by various agencies placed enough light in the heart of every man to lead him to know the true God. Even nature itself reveals the God of nature. And if a man in the darkest heathenism has a desire to know the true God, He will, if necessary, send a man around the world to give him the light of truth.

So every man that is finally lost will have rejected light that, if cherished, would have led him to God.

Study 3

Romans 3:1-24

Responsibility of sharing God-given light.

The law requires perfect righteousness.

All men on the same level.

Righteousness in man.

In our study of the first and second chapters we have found that knowledge without God is foolishness and immorality, and that a high profession, or, as Paul states it, circumcision of the flesh profits nothing, where the thing which that sign was given to indicate—the righteousness of God by faith, the circumcision of the heart—is not present.

Verses 1-4. “What advantage then hath the Jew?” “Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Abraham was led out from amidst heathenism, from faith to faith, and his descendants were beloved for their father’s sake. To them God committed His truth. They failed to realize what the profit of being a Jew was, and rested confident in their high profession, with the thought that God must think more of them than any other people. God had given them the light that they might carry it to others. But filled with pride they did not do the work, and God bore with them generation after generation.

During the captivity He revealed to Daniel that He would yet wait 490 years longer for His people to carry the light to the world. The carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles was a work which God all along the centuries had been working with the Jews to get them to perform, but they refused. Yet God cared for the Gentiles, and “left not Himself without witness.” Do we not see a tendency among us as a people to boast of the light we have, and to feel that the Lord must have a special regard for us as a people? But He has given us the light only that we may carry it to others. If we boast of the

light, but do not carry it to others, God will bear with us long, but finally some one else will take our place and do the work.

God has sworn to Abraham, and His promises will be fulfilled, even though men do not believe. Verses 3 and 4. If none are found with the faith of Abraham, God is able of the stones to raise up children unto Him. God is Himself on trial before the universe, and Satan and evil men have always charged Him with being unjust and arbitrary; but in the judgment all the universe will say, “Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.”

Verses 9-18. All are in sin. There are no two ways of salvation. “The way of peace they have not known.” Here is the touch-stone, showing the difference between the true Jew and the Gentile. The children of faith will have this peace—the peace which Christ had—continually with them.

Verse 19. “Under the law” is a mistranslation. It means in the law, or within its jurisdiction. By this law all the world becomes guilty; no man has any advantage over any other in the sight of the law.

Verse 20. Some people feel apprehensive lest laying stress on such texts as this should discredit the law. But God who wrote the text, may be left to care for the honor of His own law. It is to the everlasting credit of the law that it cannot justify the transgressor. The law requires in man the perfect righteousness manifested in the life of Christ. No man ever lived as Christ lived—all are guilty. The perfection and majesty of the law leads sinners to cry out, “What shall we do?”

Sometimes the idea obtains that if Christ would only wipe out the record of the past, the individual might then get along very well. That was the trouble with the Jews. Romans 10:2, 3. There is not a man on earth who in himself can do one deed as pure and as free from selfishness as though Christ had done it. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” A sermon not preached by faith is a sin to be repented of. Much missionary work has been done by us all, that is to be repented of.

There never was a better man than Paul, as a man. If any man outside of Christ ever did a good deed, Paul did. Yet he had to count all things he had but loss, that he might win Christ. (Philippians 3:4-8.) The psalmist says that God withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly. If Paul, before he found Christ, had had something in his nature that was good, he might have taken these things along with him. But he counted all as loss.

Verse 21. The law will witness in the judgment to the righteousness that the sinner receives without the law, testifying to its perfection. Only instead

of getting the righteousness out of ourselves, where there is none, we go to the fountain-head.

Verse 22. All men are on a level. We will be thankful that God is willing to save us as He saves others. The plan of salvation is one of giving and taking; giving on the part of God, and taking on the part of man. The pride of the heart resents this dependence upon God; but we are pensioners, beggars, miserable, and poor, and naked. The only thing for us to do is to buy the white raiment. This is offered without money and without price.

The prophet rejoiced in the Lord, because God had clothed him with the garments of salvation, and covered him with the robe of righteousness. We are not to put on the robe ourselves. Let us trust God to do that. When the Lord puts it on, it is not as an outward garment merely; but He puts it right through a man, so that he is all righteousness.

Sometimes we hear people talk as though we must ourselves put on a fairly presentable garment before we can ask for the white raiment. But it is the very need and helplessness of the beggar that recommends him to charity.

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” All men stand on the same level, and the offer of mercy is to whosoever will come and partake of the water of life freely. We are “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Verse 24.

Study 4

Romans 3:19-31

Justification by faith alone.

Christ — Creator and Preserver of
the new heart.

The basis of the lesson of the evening is the latter half of the third chapter of Romans, beginning with the 19th verse. “Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

Verses 21-23 contain in condensed form all that is treated of in the remaining verses of the chapter. The remainder of the chapter is an amplification of that which has gone before. In this chapter also occurs the climax of the thought of the epistle. In the first part of this chapter is emphasized the fact that God makes no distinction of persons; works alone are taken into account in the judgment. But while it is true that a tree is known by its fruits, it is also true that it is not within the province of men to judge of those fruits. God alone is judge. He looks upon the heart while man can judge only from appearances; therefore while the works of men may seem good to their fellows, to God, who sees what man cannot see, they are known to be corrupt.

Again: the just shall live by faith. How much of a man's life must be just? All, every moment; for the just shall live by faith. But by the deeds of the law shall no act be just. This is a hard saying, but one that must be believed, for it is what the Bible says.

No deed that we can do can be just by the law only. By faith alone can a man or any act of his be just. The law judges a man by his works, and the

law is so inconceivably great that no human act can rise to its height. There must therefore be a Mediator through whom justification shall come. And that justification properly belongs to him to whom it is granted by reason of his faith.

The heart unrenewed is desperately wicked. Only evil can come from wicked heart. To bring forth good deeds there must be a good heart, and only a good man can have a good heart. But, as all have sinned and come short, therefore all the deeds of humanity are vitiated.

The law itself is the standard of perfect righteousness, but Christ is the truth, the way, and the life. In Christ is the perfect righteousness of the law, and the grace to bestow the gift of His righteousness through faith. And of this the prophets themselves are witnesses, for they preached justification through Christ, by faith.

When a man seeks to justify himself by his deeds, he only heaps imperfection upon imperfection, until, like Paul, he counts them all as loss, knowing that there is no righteousness but that which is of Christ by faith.

There is but one thing in this world that a man needs, and that is justification — and justification is a fact, not a theory. It is the gospel. That which does not tend to righteousness, is of no avail, and not worthy to be preached. Righteousness can only be attained through faith; consequently all things worthy to be preached, must tend to justification by faith.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” It is well understood that no act of ours can make right that which is past, but it is just as true that we cannot be justified in any present act any more than we can render the past perfect. We need the righteousness of Christ to justify the present just as much as to make perfect the imperfect deeds of the past.

In the case of the publican and the Pharisee, the one who put no trust in his own works went down to his own house justified, but he who desired to assume righteousness in himself failed of justification. Everyone can have it who will ask for it, but each must come to the level of all other sinners, and there receive it with the rest, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

*Faith is the
beginning of all
wisdom; it lies at
the foundation of
all knowledge.*

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” What is “redemption”? It is repurchasing. Righteousness is an infinite gift, and bought with an infinite price. It is a free gift to us, but it has been paid for. The blood of Christ has paid for it. We are exhorted to consider His greatness that we may know that although the thing to be done is beyond our comprehension, the power which is to accomplish it is also beyond our knowledge.

“To declare His righteousness” for the putting away of our sins. It is He that puts away our sin and if we but yield ourselves to Him, they will be remitted utterly. Christ grants no indulgences, but His righteousness remit the sins that are past, keeps the heart free from sin in the present so long as His righteousness fills that heart.

Faith is the beginning of all wisdom; it lies at the foundation of all knowledge. The child would never learn anything, if it did not believe what it is told. Now, that being so in physical things, why can we not be as reasonable in spiritual things?

Redemption comes through the creative power of Christ, and that is why I love to think that He is the creator of all things; for He who created the worlds out of nothing, and who upholds all things by the word of His power, can by that same word create in me a clean heart, and preserve that which He has created. To Him is all power, and also all glory.

It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.”

Study 5

Romans 4:1-15

Abraham — an illustration of righteousness by faith.

Life, righteousness, inheritance — the gifts of God.

The principles laid down in preceding lessons cause us to wonder that any should ever suppose that the doctrine of justification by faith is going to lower the law of God. Justification carries the law on the face of it. The only danger is in not getting it. It establishes the law in the heart. Justification is the law incarnate in Christ, put into the man, so it is incarnate in the man.

The third chapter presents the principle of justification by faith. In the fourth chapter the principle is illustrated by the case of Abraham. So far as Abraham had any righteousness, he could glory in that; but as an actual fact, he had nothing to glory in. He was justified by faith alone. Chapter 4:1-3. If a man could do a deed meriting the approval of Heaven, he could boast to that extent. But no flesh will ever be able to glory in God's presence. 1 Corinthians 1:27-29; Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

If a man can work righteousness, then when God gives the reward of righteousness, the man simply receives what he has earned. But eternal life is the "gift of God." Eternal life is the reward of righteousness, and since it is the gift of God it can be so only because the righteousness is the gift of God. Verse 4.

Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness. Verse 5. The forgiveness of sins is not simply a book transaction, a wiping out of past accounts. It has a vital relation to the man himself. It is not a temporary

work. Christ gives His righteousness, takes away the sin, and leaves His righteousness there, and that makes a radical change in the man.

No man can do any works that would stand in the judgement for a moment. Whether he is a professed Christian or an atheist makes no difference in this point. There is no believer in Christ who would dare go before the judgment with the deeds of any day, demanding an equivalent, and risking his case on the works. Verses 6-8 describe the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord, when he is working in the cause of God, will not impute sin in that work.

First, righteousness was imputed to Abraham because he believed, and then he received the sign of circumcision, as the seal of the righteousness of faith which he had. Verses 9-11. Those who make a high profession, must not stand in profession, but must walk in the steps of the faith which Abraham had. Verse 12. The idea obtains that in the Jewish age God did draw a distinction between peoples. But God never has been and never can be a respecter of persons. It was the bigotry and self-righteousness of the Jews which led them to hold themselves aloof from the Gentiles. They were set to be the light of the world, to be the salt of the earth. They refused to do the work, and became as salt without savor, themselves needing to be salted. The salt must permeate the mass which it is to preserve. The same principle applies today.

The promise to Abraham was one, though it was repeated a number of times. It was that in him all the nations of the world should be blessed — that he should be heir of the world. Verse 13; Genesis 12:1-3. The gospel brings to view an inheritance. It brings salvation from death; it brings life; and the fact that life is given implies a place to live in. So we can say, as comprising everything the gospel brings, that it gives to men an eternal inheritance. The doctrine of the saints' inheritance is the doctrine of justification by faith; and if we do not preach justification by faith in preaching the saints' inheritance, we are not preaching the gospel. The inheritance promised is the same

*Yet it is for the
righteous only,
and righteousness
is obedience to
the law.*

as that promised to the fathers (2 Peter 3:4; Acts 7:5), and this does not relate to this present world.

This inheritance is not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. But it will only be for those who are righteous, that is, conformable to the law. Yet “if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” Verse 14.

Not only can we not work out the inheritance ourselves, but just in so far as we attempt it we are putting ourselves further from the inheritance; “because the law worketh wrath.” Verse 15. If the inheritance is by works, it is not by promise. Yet it is for the righteous only, and righteousness is obedience to the law. In other words, we have perfect obedience to the law which doesn't spring from obedience. Chapter 3:21. This is a paradox.

The whole gospel is contrary to human reason; it is infinitely above reason. Yet it is reasonable with God. Christ has promised the inheritance, and His promises are yea and amen. He will give not simply the inheritance, but the righteousness which is to merit the inheritance. And so life, righteousness, and the inheritance are all gifts of God.

Study 6

Romans 4 (cont.)

Abraham — further illustrations
of the gospel.

In the fourth chapter of the book of Romans we have faith in a concrete form. The narrative of the lives of Abraham and Sarai, in connection with the birth of Isaac, furnish a practical example of justification by faith.

Abraham was not justified by works; but he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Abraham received the seal of circumcision. Why? To cause him to believe? No, but because he had believed. It was a seal of the righteousness which he had by believing. The promise to Abraham and to his seed was that he should be heir of the world. This promised inheritance was to be for an “everlasting possession.” Genesis 17:8. Therefore it was a covenant of righteousness, sealed by a seal of righteousness, and the inheritance was to be a righteous inheritance, which none but the righteous can gain. 2 Peter 3:13.

How can God give us righteousness, when we are so sinful? We cannot understand how, nor do we need to inquire. It is just as great a miracle for God to make an unrighteous man righteous, as it was for Him to create the world. If a man calls a thing which is not, as though it were, he tells a falsehood; but when God calls a thing which is not as though it were, the very fact of His calling it makes it so. God not only makes our hearts righteous, when there is no righteousness there, but He does more than that, He makes our hearts righteous, when there is nothing there but unrighteousness.

A man is just as much an infidel who does not believe that God can speak righteousness into his heart as a man who, by the theory of evolution, does away with the Mosaic record of creation. No limit can be put upon the power of God. If there were a huge mountain, which was to set itself up against the power of God, He could take nothing and break that mountain all to pieces.

“We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.” We get to be the children of God in the same way as Isaac was born—by believing, as Abraham and Sarai believed. The promise is to him “that worketh not, but believeth on Him, who justifieth the ungodly.”

There was much implied in the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Through no other son could the promise of the inheritance come. Christ could not come into the world except through Isaac. Cut off Isaac, and what hope of a Saviour? None; Abraham to all appearances would cut off all hope of his own salvation.

Wonderful is the faith here exhibited. Abraham believed that God could raise Isaac up again, and yet, the very one (Christ) through whose power he believed Isaac would be raised up, had not come, and could not come except through Isaac. Nevertheless God had promised, and Abraham believed, although he was called upon to do that very thing which to human sight would cut off all hope of even having the promise fulfilled.

The promise itself was immutable, and that immutable promise was confirmed by an immutable oath. Therefore God is under obligation to fulfil His promises to all who claim them. The very throne and existence of God are pledged to this, and not to do it would be for God to deny Himself.

By and by, God will come and say, “Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” Christ is the sacrifice here referred to. It is through Him we come. He is the surety of the covenant.

The promise to Abraham depended upon one thing—his having a son. Twenty-five years elapsed from the time the promise was made until it was fulfilled. “Abraham staggered not at the promise of God,” but Sarai did, and “Abraham hearkened unto the voice of Sarai.” She undertook to help the Lord to carry out His plan. But Hagar was a slave, and her child could be nothing but a slave, born after the flesh.

The seed promised Abraham were to be free men, not slaves, therefore nothing was gained by this plan of Sarai’s. The time came when Sarai real-

ized that the only thing for her to do was to believe that ‘God was able to carry out His promise without her help. Then, “through faith” she “received strength to conceive seed.” The birth of Isaac was a miracle. From a human standpoint it was utterly impossible for Abraham and Sarai to become the parents of a child. She conceived by the power of God.

Abraham and Sarai did nothing to gain the promise, except to believe; and yet the child of the promise was their own child. So with Christians. Nothing can be done to gain the righteousness of Christ, save only to believe the promises. It is wrong to put forth efforts to secure the righteousness of Christ. We are told to believe the promises. God has promised to make us righteous, and the only way to obtain that righteousness is to believe that God is able to impute it.

When men are content to believe God, and submit themselves to Him, there is power in His promises to work out their righteousness for them, without any power of their own. How are men made righteous, or partakers of the divine nature? ”Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” The power lies in the promise of God. How can we make the promises effectual to us? By believing them. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Confess your sins, believe that God forgives them as He has promised; and the promise is yours, your sins are forgiven.

The promises of God may be likened to “promissory notes.” How many may have these notes? “Whosoever will.” They are good for a certain amount of blessing. That amount can never be drawn in full, because God is able “to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.” Men take a promissory note to the bank and get the gold on it. Christians take the promises of God to Him, and cash them for a blessing.

Study 7

Romans 5:1-5

Some fruits of faith.

Christ — the Burden-bearer.

The time of preparation is now.

Chapter five contains a partial enumeration of the blessings which are fruits of such a faith as that portrayed in chapter four. It shows the Christian development of the life of any one who has the faith of Abraham. Two words form the keynote of the chapter—much more. If you have the glory, the patience, or the Christian experience spoken of in this, or any other chapter, know that God has them in store, and is willing to give much more, for He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

“Therefore being justified by faith,” that is, being made conformable to the law by faith, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The only way that man can be made conformable to the law, and live free from condemnation is by having faith in the promises of God. In Christ there is no unrighteousness, therefore there is nothing but righteousness. By believing on Christ, the Christian has the righteousness of Christ.

But does not James say that there must be works, or the faith is of no avail? It is true that faith is made perfect by works. James 2:22. But it is by faith and faith alone that men are justified. The very text which speaks of Abraham’s being justified by faith, states that the works were only the outgrowth of underlying faith, and that by this work the scripture was fulfilled which says: “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” Works are the outgrowth of faith. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” We give

ourselves into the hands of Christ. He comes and takes up His abode with us. We are as clay in the hands of the potter; but it is Christ who does all the good works, and to Him belongs all the glory.

“We have peace with God.” What is peace? It is not a feeling, but a fact. Many think that they must experience a “certain feeling” which they will know is the “peace of God.” But they have never had the peace of God, and therefore cannot know what kind of feeling it ought to be. Satan might give a certain happy feeling, and if the Christian had only the feeling to go by, he would be deceived. The Lord does not deal in feelings, but in facts. Peace is the opposite of war, strife, emulation. We are either at peace with God or else at war. If at war, it is because we are carrying on rebellion.

How do men fight God? By following sinful practices. Any one knowingly indulging in one sinful practice is warring against God. God is a God of peace. Christ left His peace with His followers. “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Between God and His dear Son in heaven there is a “counsel of peace.” They counsel for the peace of man. There is only one condition on which man can have that peace—unconditional surrender, surrender all to God, and then there is peace in the heart, no matter what the feeling may be.

“Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” “O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” What rich comfort in these words! Jesus Christ is “the same, yesterday, and today, and forever.” So His peace is likened to the continual flowing of the river, and the never-ceasing roll of the ocean wave; therefore it matters not what the feeling is, for if all sins have been confessed, God is faithful and just to forgive them; and we are at peace with Him. The condition of peace is the condition of being justified by faith.

“By whom [Christ] also we have access by faith into this grace [unmerited forgiveness and favor] in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Righteousness can be wrought in men day by day by the same power by which Isaac was born of parents who were practically dead. When people once gain this experience, the next thing they will be constrained to rejoice in the hope of the coming of the Lord.

How often do we look forward to the coming of the Lord with fear? If we do not rejoice in the Lord in the present life, we have no hope that we will rejoice in Him in a life to come. Why should Christians “rejoice in hope of the glory of God?” Because they are at peace with Him. Seventh-day

Adventists are bidden “when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” We praise Him that He is coming soon, it is one of the most glorious and cheering assurances we have.

We live in the present, not in the future. Read 1 Peter 1:5-9. Salvation belongs to us today just as much as it will when in the kingdom of God. No one but ourselves can deprive us of it. Says Peter, “Receiving [present time] the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” Our present salvation is our only hope of a future salvation “Kept by the power of God” is the expression used by Peter, and it denotes precisely the same condition—“being justified by faith”—in the fifth chapter of Romans.

The same power that will make men immortal in the life to come, justifies them—makes them conformable to the law—by being in harmony with it, every day. Says Paul in the letter to the Philippians, chapter three, and verse twenty-one: “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself?”

In Ephesians 3:16, Paul in an inspired prayer prays that they might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, according to “the riches of His glory.” The grace of God is equal to the glory of God. God’s throne is a throne of glory, and the grace wherein we stand is backed by the glory of God.

“We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” Some say that tribulation worketh impatience. This is not true. If a man is not justified by faith, tribulation will develop the impatience that is in him. How is it, then, that tribulation worketh patience? Let these texts answer: “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:7. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.” Psalm 55:22. “Come

*How did the
martyrs go to
the rack and the
stake with songs of
joy on their lips?
Was that mere
bravado?*

unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.

He takes the heavy loads away. What is that burden? Anything that worries or vexes us. It matters not whether it be a small thing—a little trial—or a great one. Cast it on the Lord. We rejoice in tribulation because we have Christ with us, and we cast all the burden on Him. He is able to bear them. He has already borne them for all the world, so we cannot add to His burden.

How do we get rid of the burdens? Give them to Christ, and then say, “He has them.” And He has them whether you feel any different or not. Then you will experience the truth of the words, “I will give you rest.” It is rest even though the physical pain still racks the body. For Christ bears that tribulation, and you are lifted up above all pain.

How did the martyrs go to the rack and the stake with songs of joy on their lips? Was that mere bravado? No, Christ bore their burden, and in Him they had peace. Out of a full heart they sang their praise to Him. Thus they were happy and joyous, and scarcely noticed the pain while the flames crept around them. We will have to “pass through great tribulation.” It may be the lash on the naked flesh, or it may be the thumb-screw. Human nature shrinks from such torture. In Christ we can bear it. Gain an experience in Him now, and in the trying time He will not forsake you. He can bear that great burden as well as a small one.

Christ will be ours then as well as now, and the life we live will be in Him. No man in this world will be able to stand in that time unless he has previously learned the lesson of faith. Now is the time, while the lesson may be learned under easy circumstances. Great as will be the tribulation of that time we will pass through it with rejoicing. That rejoicing must be learned now.

“Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect, wanting nothing.” Patience shows us to be perfect men.

“Patience worketh experience.” It is a Christian experience that is referred to. “Experience” signifies that men who have it, have been proved and tried. They have laid hold upon God and proved Him.

Experience, or the fact that we daily prove God, develops hope—hope in God. If God is proven every day, then every day there is hope. That is, we have reason to expect the things we desire. We have present salvation, therefore we glory in the hope of an eternal salvation. This is indeed a chapter of hope and rejoicing.

Study 8

Romans 5:6-9

Christ — the Saviour of those who are “without strength”.

God’s love — different from human love.

The heart must be changed now. Christ’s sinless life in the believer.

One motive only should actuate the minds of those who study the word of God, and that is that they may by this study be drawn nearer to God. God is no respecter of persons. He will give His Holy Spirit to any and to all who ask for it. He is just as willing to make the truths of the Bible plain to one as to another. Peace and light may come into your hearts from what is spoken from the desk; but if you do not know the word for yourselves, that peace and light will not stay with you. The Holy Spirit spoke the words of the Bible; and it is only by the aid of the Holy Spirit that it can be understood. Any man who will submit himself to the Holy Spirit, may understand the Bible for himself.

There is but one true help to the Bible—the Spirit of God. If you get your ideas about Christ and His work from the writings of other men, you get it second hand at best. Draw your light straight from the Bible. Learn the Bible from the Bible itself. When our minds are illuminated by the Holy Spirit, although the word will appear simple, at the same time there will be heights and depths to it that will fill us with amazement. All eternity will be spent in studying the plan of salvation, and the longer we study, the more we will find to study.

Last evening our study brought us to the close of the fifth verse of the fifth chapter. We will commence this evening at the sixth.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Mark the words “without strength.” There was a fixed time in the

history of the world when Christ was offered on the cross of Calvary. But that was not the only time when Christ availed for the ungodly. Who are the ungodly? They are those who are “without strength.” The human family has been without strength from the fall, and they are without strength today. When men find themselves without strength, Christ is to be lifted up, and He says that He will draw all men unto Him. So we can look to Jesus as a crucified and risen Saviour today, just as much as could the disciples.

We sometimes think that we look back to Christ, and that the patriarchs and prophets looked forward to Him. Is it so? We look up to Christ, and so did they. We look to Christ a loving Redeemer by our side, and so did they. Said Moses to the children of Israel: “It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? . . . But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” The Word, which was Christ the Redeemer, was nigh unto them; and He is nigh unto us.

They all drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them, and that Rock was Christ. The Israelites did not need to look forward to Christ. He was nigh unto them. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He is and ever has been a present Saviour to all who made Him so. He was a present Saviour to Abel. “By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” “By faith” in what? In the Son of God, for there was no one else for him to have faith in. So it was that Enoch walked with Christ by faith. He did not look away beyond to some future time for the help of the Redeemer. Christ was to him a present Saviour, and they walked along together.

So in every age of the world, when men have felt themselves to be without strength, then Christ has been a Saviour to them. Notice how plain are the words: “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Abel was without strength, and Christ died for him. Enoch was without strength, and Christ died for him. Abraham and Sarah were without strength, and Christ died for them. His death was a reality to all of these. How remarkably powerful was Christ to Abraham! That Christ, the Messiah not yet come, and who was to come through Abraham, that very Messiah was so very powerful that faith in Him brought forth the son to Abraham and Sarah, in order that He might come through that son. At every period of the earth’s history, Christ has been a present Saviour to those who were “without strength.”

“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” The word in the original signifying “righteous,” is a different word from the one which is rendered “good.” The word righteous here means a man who is strictly honest and upright, but having nothing peculiarly lovable about him. Scarcely for such a one will any one die. But for a “good” man, one who is kind and benevolent, who would give all he had to feed the poor and clothe the naked, for a man of this class some would even dare to die. This is the highest pitch to which human love attains. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13. But note the love of God. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” We too often measure God and His love by ourselves and our love. The Lord through David said: “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.” The unregenerate heart treats as it is treated, and judges God by itself, but God’s love is altogether different from human love; He loves His enemies.

How wonderful and how matchless is the love of God, and to how great an extent was that love shown by the death of His dear Son! What had the world done to merit goodness at the hand of God? It had joined hands with the enemies of God; nothing but punishment was deserved. Some say they cannot accept Christ because they are not worthy. People who have been professed Christians for years will deprive themselves of the riches of God’s grace because they say, “I am not worthy.” That is true. They are not worthy. None of us are worthy. But God commended His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Why did He die? To make us worthy; to make us complete in Him. The trouble with those who say that they are not worthy, is that they do not feel half unworthy enough. If they felt “without strength,” then the power of Christ could avail them. The whole secret of justification by faith, and life and peace in Christ, lies in believing the Bible. It is one thing to say we believe the Bible, and another thing to take every word in it as if it had been spoken by the mouth of God to us individually.

In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul says: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” That is exactly what He came for—to save sinners. “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Oh, that men would realize that they are without strength! When they reach that point, then they can have the strength of Christ. That is the strength that is worth something; it is worth everything.

It is a great thing to believe that Christ died for the ungodly. Sometimes we feel almost discouraged the heavens seem like brass over our heads, and everything we do or say seems to come back in our faces as if it were worth nothing. We think our prayers do not ascend higher than our heads. What will you do at such a time? You must thank God. “Thank Him for what? I have no blessing; I don’t feel that I am His child at all; what will I thank Him for?” Thank Him that Christ died for the ungodly. If it does not mean much to you the first time you repeat the words, repeat them again. Then light will soon come in. You feel that you are one of the ungodly; then the promise is yours that Christ has died for you. You are there before Him on your knees because you are a sinner, so you can have the benefit of His death. What is the benefit of that death? “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Many act and talk as if Christ was dead, and irrecoverably dead. Yes, He died; but He rose again, and lives forever more. Christ is not in Joseph’s new tomb. We have a risen Saviour. What does the death of Christ do for us? Reconciles us to God. It is the death of Christ that brings us to God. He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Now mark! It is the death of Christ that brings us to God; what is it that keeps us there? It is the life of Christ. We are saved by His life. Now hold these words in your minds: “Being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Why was the life of Christ given? “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Then Christ gave His life that we might have life. Where is that life? What is that life? and where can we get it? In John 1:4 we read: “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.” He alone has life, and He gives that life to as many as will accept it. John 17:2. Then Christ has the life, and He is the only One who has it, and He is willing to give it to us. Now what is that life? Verse 3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” Has a person who knows Christ eternal life? That is what the word of God says.

Again He says in John 3:36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we know that we have this life? This is an important question. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth

not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

Says one, “We know that we will get eternal life by and by.” Yes, that is true, but it is better than that; we get it now. This is not a mere theory, it is the word of God. Let me illustrate: Here are two men—brothers—to all appearances they are alike. But one is a Christian and the other is not. Now the one that is a Christian, although there is nothing in his external appearance to indicate it, has a life that the other has not. He has passed from death—the state in which the other one is—to life. He has something that the other has not got, and that something is eternal life. The words, “No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him,” would mean nothing if nobody else had eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 5:10: “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.” God cannot lie, and so when we say that the words of God are not so, we make liars of ourselves. Now, according to this scripture, we make God a liar, if we believe not the record that God gave of His Son. What, then, must we believe in order to clear ourselves of that charge, of not believing this record and thus making God a liar? The next verse explains it: “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

Some people are afraid that this idea of justification by faith, and eternal life, will get men away from the commandments. But nobody but the one who is justified by faith—who has Christ’s life—does keep the commandments; for God says that we are justified by faith, and if we say we are not, then we make God a liar, we bear false witness against Him, and we break the commandment. In the verse just quoted we are told what we are to believe in order to be cleared from the charge of making God a liar. We are to believe that God has given to us eternal life in Christ. As long as we have the Son of God we have eternal life. By our faith in the word of God we bring Christ into our hearts. Is He a dead Christ? No; He lives and cannot be separated from His life. Then when we get Christ into our hearts, we get life there. He brings that life into our hearts when He comes. How thankful we ought to be to God for this.

When Jesus went to Bethany, He said to Martha: “I am the resurrection and the life.” We have already read about passing from death unto life; how is that done? Only by a resurrection. In Christ we have a resurrection to a new

life. Note the following: Paul prays that he may know Him, and the “power of His resurrection.” What is the power of that resurrection? In Ephesians 2:4, 5, 6, and 7 we read, “But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us [made us alive] together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”

Notice, He hath done this, and He “hath raised us up and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” We were dead, we are quickened, and we are raised up to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. We must have, and we can have the life of Christ today, for when He comes, He will change our vile bodies by the same power by which He has changed our hearts. The heart must be changed now. It cannot be changed except by the life of Christ coming in and abiding in it. But when Christ is in the heart, we can live the life of Christ, and then when He comes, the glory will be revealed. He was Christ when He was here upon earth, although He did not have a retinue of angels and glory visible about Him. He was Christ when He was the man of sorrows. Then when He ascended, the glory was revealed. So with us. Christ must dwell in our hearts now, and when He comes and changes these bodies, then the glory will be revealed.

Christ gave His life for us. John 10:10, 11. He gave all there was of Him. What was that? His life. He gave it for our sins. Galatians 1:3, 4. We shall be saved by His life. It is the life of Christ working in us that delivers us from the sins of this present evil world. This is a business transaction. He gave His life for our sins. Then to whom did He give His life? To those who had the sins to give in return for it. Have you any sins? If you have, you can exchange them for the life of Christ.

In Hebrews 5:2 we learn that the work of the high priest was to be one of compassion. That is why the men who bore the name of priest when the Saviour was here upon the earth, were not really priests. They had no compassion. They were wicked, grasping men. One passed by on the other side of the man that had fallen by the wayside, whom the robbers had plundered. Christ had compassion: “Therefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

What is done by the compassion of Christ? Strength is given to us. What benefit is the compassion of Christ to us? He knows the strength we need. He knows what we need, when we need it, and how we need it. So the work

of Christ as priest, is for one thing—to deliver us from sin. What is the power of Christ's priesthood? He is made priest "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." That is the power by which Christ delivers you and me from sin this day, and this hour, and every moment that we believe in Him.

Christ was immortal before He came to earth. He was God. What is the essential attribute of divinity? Life. If Christ was immortal, and therefore had life, how could He die? I don't know. That is a mystery, but I am so glad that one did die for us who had life that could not be touched by anything, and that was successful in resisting the attacks of the enemy. Then so powerful was He that He could lay His life down and take it up again. Why was it that no one could take life away from Christ? Because He was sinless, and if there ever had been another man on earth who lived without sin, he too could never die. But there never was but the One who trod this earth, who was perfectly sinless, and that was Jesus Christ of Nazareth. No one could take life away from Christ. The wicked had no power to kill Him. He laid His life down. If He had not chosen to do that, no one ever could have taken it from Him.

God raised Him up, "having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." It was not possible that death should hold Christ. He had power in His life that defied death. He laid life down, and took death upon Himself, that He might show His power over death. He defied death, He entered right into the realms of death—the grave—to show that He had power over it. Christ laid down His life; and when the time came for Him to do so, He took it up again. Why was it that death could not hold Him? Because He was sinless. Sin had spent all its force on Him, and had not marred Him in the least. It had not made a single blot upon His character. His was a sinless life, and therefore the grave could have no power over Him. It is that same life which we have when we believe on the Son of God. There is victory in that thought. We can have it by believing on the Son of God. Give your sins to the Lord, and take that sinless life in their place. He has given that life for them, and why not accept the price that has been paid? You do not want the sins, and the life will be so precious to you. It will fill your hearts with joy and gladness. We are reconciled by His blood, now let us be saved by His life.

The life of Christ is divine power. In the time of temptation the victory is won beforehand. When Christ is abiding in us, we are justified by faith, and

we have His life abiding in us. But in that life He gained the victory over all sin, so the victory is ours before the temptation comes. When Satan comes with his temptation, he has no power, for we have the life of Christ, and that in us wards him off every time. O the glory of the thought, that there is life in Christ, and that we may have it.

The just shall live by faith, because Christ lives in them. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Yes, we are crucified with Christ; but is Christ dead? No, He has risen again; then we have risen with Him. But we are in the flesh. That is true; but in the flesh there may be the divine life that was in Christ when He was in the flesh.

We cannot understand these things. They are the mystery of the gospel. The mystery of Christ manifested in the flesh. Everything that is done for man by Heaven, is a mystery. Once there was a poor woman, who was afflicted with an issue of blood. In a dense crowd she touched the hem of the Master’s garment. Said Christ, “I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.” Now that woman had a real disease, and when she touched the hem of His garment, she was really healed of it. What healed her? There was a real power which came out from Jesus and went into her, and healed her.

These miracles were written for us. Why were they written? “That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” The same life and power which went out from Christ and healed the body of that woman, went out to heal her soul: Jesus is ready and willing to do the same today. These things were put upon record that we might know that the same Divine power and life that went into the bodies of men to heal them, goes into the soul of those who believe. We can take that same life into our souls to withstand the temptations of the enemy.

There is only one life that can resist sin, and that is a sinless life, and the only sinless life is the life of the Son of God. How many of us have been striving to get ourselves sinless. It has been a losing game. But we can have the life of Christ, and that is a sinless life. Thanks be unto God for this unspeakable gift.

Study 9

Romans 5:10-21

The secret of joy in tribulation.

By one, death passed upon all men.

By One, many shall be made righteous.

Christ's obedience in the believer.

The law points to Christ.

For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Romans 5:10.

The eleventh verse states one of the fruits that must follow from a knowledge that we are "saved by His life." When men have a well-grounded assurance that they are saved by the life of Jesus Christ, when they realize it is so till it becomes a part of their very being, they will have "joy in God" through Jesus Christ their Lord. There can be nothing but joy in the heart of an individual when he knows that he is saved by the life of Christ. That is the secret of joying in tribulation.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

This verse contains a partially stated proposition. You will notice that commencing with the thirteenth verse, and continuing down to the end of the seventeenth, there is a parenthesis. Then in the eighteenth verse, the proposition is taken up again and completed. The first part of the eighteenth verse is merely an equivalent to the first part of the twelfth; it is the same truth expressed in other words, "Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Then the closing portion of the

verse completes the proposition: “Even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

We can notice but briefly the intervening verses. They contain rich truths; but the time allotted for this subject is so limited that our remarks must be confined to the major points of the chapter.

In the fourteenth verse we have reference to the “reign of death.” What is the reign of death? What was this passage of death upon all men? The apostle says that “death reigned from Adam to Moses.” He does not mean by this that it did not reign at any other time, and that it does not reign at the present time. The part of the verse referring to Adam and Moses is a part of a great argument, which has its starting point back in chapter four. It is a part of his argument on Abraham.

The argument in a nutshell is, that the entering in of the law did not in any way interfere with the promise to Abraham. In Romans 4:13, 14 we are told that the promise “that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” In these verses the apostle is proving in a practical manner that the law does not enter into man’s justification at all; that justification is solely by faith, and not by works. Why is it that the law does not enter into the justification of man? “Because the law worketh wrath.”

If Abraham had been left to be justified by the works of the law, there would have been nothing to be placed to his account but wrath, for that is all that the law can work. But on the other hand, when he is not justified by the law, which could only be the means of imputing wrath to him, and is justified by faith, then there is life placed to his account. And life is what is wanted, not wrath. Life is what all men desire, not wrath. Whoever seeks to be justified by his works will reap only wrath. Abraham will receive the inheritance only by the virtue of the promise, and he will receive his righteousness only by the faith that he had.

Some think that there are two ways of being saved, because the Lord gave the law at Sinai, and death had reigned till that time, so of course that means that the law brought life. It is true that the Lord gave the law at Sinai; but the law was in the world long before its giving at Sinai. Abraham had the law, and through the righteousness of faith he was able to keep that law. So the entering in of the law at Sinai did not militate against the promise of God to Abraham. There was no different phase of the plan of salvation introduced

at Mount Sinai, or at the time of the Exodus. There was no more law after that time than there was before it. Abraham kept the law. If there had not been any law there, Abraham could never have been justified; but he kept the law by his faith. Death reigned through sin before the time of Moses, but righteousness was imputed unto life. This shows that the law was all there already, although they did not have it in that written, open form, that they had it afterwards.

In regard to the reign of death, I am persuaded that we lose much of the good and the encouragement that there is in this fifth chapter simply by the misapplying of these words, "death reigned," and also the expression "death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned." Why did death pass upon all men? Because that all had sinned! By one man sin came into the world. There are many who will stop at this point, and philosophize and question, as to how this could be, and try to figure out for themselves the justice of it. They will query why it is that we are here in this sinful condition, without having had any choice or say in the matter ourselves. Now we know that there was one man in the beginning, and he fell. We are his children, and it is impossible for us to be born in any higher condition than he was.

Some will shut themselves out of eternal life because they cannot figure that thing out to a nicety and see the justice of it. The finite mind of man cannot do this, so it is better for him to leave it alone, and devote himself to seeking for the proffered salvation. That is the important point for all to consider. We know that we are in a sinful condition, and that this sinful condition, is a lost condition. Seeing then, that we are in a lost condition, is it not best for us to devote our energies to seeking to attain to that state whereby we may be in a saved condition.

What would you think of a man drowning in the ocean, who, when someone throws him a rope, looks at it, and then says: "I know that I am drowning, and that the only hope I have lies in my getting hold of that rope; but I will not take hold of it unless I know that it has really been my own fault that I fell into the water. If it was my own fault, then I will take it, because I am the only one who is to blame for my being in this condition. But if, on the other hand, someone pushed me into the water, and I could not help myself, then I will have nothing to do with that rope." Such a man would be considered devoid of common sense. Then, acknowledging that we are sinners, and in a lost condition, let us take hold of the salvation that is offered to us.

“Death reigned,” it “passed upon all men.” The twelfth and eighteenth verses tell us what this death is. Why did it pass? Because that “all have sinned.” “Judgment came upon all!” What for? What to? Condemnation. We are familiar with death; we see people being placed in their graves every day. But is that the death referred to? Good men die; with only two exceptions, all the good men that have ever lived upon the earth have died. Do they die under condemnation? No, certainly not. Do they die because they are sinners? No, if they were sinners, they were not good men. There has been no man in this world upon whom the death sentence has not passed, for there never was a man in this world that was not a sinner, and if he became a good man so that he walked with God as Enoch did, it was by faith.

If we say that the death which comes to all men—good and bad, old and young alike—is the carrying out of that judgment which “came upon all men to condemnation,” then we take the position that there is no hope for any one who has died. For there is no such thing as probation after death, and therefore the man who dies in sin can never be accounted righteous. If it is said that the good do not die in sin, but only because of sins previously committed, the justice of God is impugned, and His imputed righteousness denied. For when God declares His righteousness upon the one who believes, that man stands as clear as though he had never sinned, and cannot be punished as a sinner, unless he denies the faith. Jesus said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

When Adam was placed in the garden of Eden, the Lord told him, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” That does not mean “dying thou shalt die,” as the marginal reading has it. That expression is neither Hebrew nor English. It means just what it says, that in the day that Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in that day he died. In the very day that Adam ate of the fruit, he fell, and the death sentence was passed upon him, and he was a dead man. Sentence was not executed at that moment, and for that matter we know that Adam was a good man, and that the sentence never was executed upon him. Christ died for him. But he was in the same condition, after he had eaten of the fruit of the tree, that Pharaoh was in, after the first-born of all the Egyptians had been killed, when he arose by night, and said, “We be all dead men.”

When sentence has been passed upon a murderer, he is to all intents and purposes a dead man. But it was more than that in the case of Adam; he was dead, and the Son of God was to make him alive. It was only a matter of time till he should be blotted out of existence. But Christ comes in to give man a probation, and to lift him up. All that Christ has to give to man is summed up in that one word, life. Everything is comprised in that. This fact shows that without Him men have no life. Said Christ to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." Probably they replied, "We do not need to come, because we have life already."

In Ezekiel 13:22 we read: "Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." There is no life to the wicked; they have no life; they are dead. Said Christ: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Christ came to give life to the dead. He gives life only to those who conscientiously lay hold of that life, who bring His life into their lives, so that it takes the place of their forfeited lives. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. He is dead.

So Adam died; and because of that, every man born into the world is a sinner, and the sentence of death is passed upon him. Judgment has passed upon all men to condemnation, and there is not a man in this world but has been under the condemnation of death. The only way that he can get free from that condemnation and that death, is through Christ, who died for him, and who, in His own body, bore our sins upon the cross. He bore the penalty of the law, and suffered the condemnation of the law for us, not for Himself, for He was sinless.

"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;...even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." What is the free gift? It is the free gift by grace, and it appertaineth unto many. The work of Adam plunged man into sin; the work of Christ brings men out of sin. One man's single offense plunged many into many offenses; but the one man's obedience gathers the many offenses of many men, and brings them out from beneath the condemnation of those offenses.

Then the free gift is the righteousness of Christ. How do we get the righteousness of Christ? We cannot separate the righteousness of Christ from Christ Himself. Therefore in order for men to get the righteousness of Christ, they must have the life of Christ. So the free gift comes upon all

men who are justified by the life of Christ. Justification is life. It is the life of Christ. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, even so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous.” These are simple and positive statements. No good can come to man by questioning them. He only reaps barrenness to his soul. Let us accept them and believe them.

“The free gift came upon all men to justification of life.” Are all men going to be justified? All men might if they would; but says Christ: “Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.” All are dead in trespasses and sins. The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared unto all men. It comes right within the reach of all men, and those who do not get it are those who do not want it.

“As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous.” That settles the whole question, as to whether you and I can do works that will make us righteous. It is by the obedience of one man. Now which man shall that be? Can I do righteousness that will do you any good? No. Can you do righteousness that will do me any good? No. Suppose that one man could do righteous works that would be set to his account as making him righteous, who shall he be? I cannot do it for you, and you cannot do it for me. Then who is the man? Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

This settles the question as to whether justification by faith comes by the law. By the obedience of Christ are many made righteous or obedient. Righteousness is obedience to the law. Did you ever read or hear of any human being who kept the law perfectly? Or did you ever hear of anyone, however high his standard was set, who did not find something beyond, that he had not attained to? Even worldly men often have an ideal of their own; but the nearer they can come to that ideal, the greater lack they see in themselves. Anyone who is sincere in trying to reach a high standard, when he gets there, will see something beyond it.

There is one spotless life. There is one man, the man Christ Jesus, who resisted successfully all the powers of sin, when He was here upon earth. He was the Word made flesh. God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself. He could stand before the world, and challenge any to convict Him of sin. No guile was found in His mouth. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;” and by His obedience shall many be made righteous.

Then comes the question, how can this be? It is the same question that the Jews propounded to Christ, when He said; "Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood, ye have no life in you." Said they, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" There are many today who may be found asking the same question when they say, How can I have His life or His righteousness? Could Jesus explain to them how He could give them His flesh? He could not do it except by the words He spake unto them, they are spirit and they are life. The plan of salvation cannot be explained to man. It was made by an infinite being, and we cannot understand it. As to how it takes place we are ignorant. Through all eternity we will not understand how it was done. It is only infinite power that can or could do it; it is only infinite wisdom that can understand it.

If we will eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood, we will have the life of Christ. If we have His life, we have a righteous life; His obedience works in us, and that makes us righteous. This does not leave any room for the statement that Christ obeyed for us, and that therefore we can do as we please, and His righteousness will be accounted unto us just the same. His obedience must be manifested in us day by day. It is not our obedience, but the obedience of Christ working in us. By those exceeding great and precious promises," we take the divine life into us. The life we live is the life of the Son of God. He died for us, and loved us with a love that we cannot fathom. The righteousness that we have is His. Thanks be to God for the unspeakable gift. He lets us get all the benefit of that obedience, because we have shown our intense desire for obedience. That is why He gives it to us.

When you go to God, take these Scriptures on your lips: "We shall be saved by His life." "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Take them to God in prayer. They are true, for the Lord Himself has said so. How can these blessings be obtained? By faith! Take it by faith, and it is yours, and no one can take it from you. Then you will have it, although you do not understand how it can be done. When you have it, you have life. What life? The divine life. Then when you come up to the time of temptation, the time when you have usually fallen, you can tell Satan that he has no power to make you fall beneath that temptation, for it is not you, but Christ that dwelleth in you.

There never was a time in the life of any man when of himself he had power to resist temptation. We cannot do it. That proves that we must have a life different from our natural life in order to resist sin at all. That must be

a life that sin has never touched and can never touch. Repeat the glorious words over and over again, “His life is mine, I cannot be touched by sin. His strength is my strength; His obedience is my obedience, and His life is my life. That was a sinless life, and by faith I have it. I hold to it because it is mine, and sin cannot touch it.” That is the only way to resist them, and that will be successful every time.

“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The time of the entering in of the law was the time when it was spoken from Sinai. It entered that the offense, or sin, might abound. But where that sin abounded, grace did much more abound. There was sin in the world before that law was proclaimed from Sinai. Therefore the law was there before it was proclaimed from Sinai. But God spoke it in that awful way, and in those thunder tones from the mount, for the purpose that sin might seem to be a greater sin. It was done that the people might see sin more as God saw it.

These things were written for our benefit. The speaking of that law in thunder tones, with such a solemn scene of grandeur all around it, is to have the same effect on us that it had on the children of Israel. We are to see the thunder clouds and the lightning, and they are to strike terror into our hearts.

Still further: Whoever touched the mount was to die. What is meant by that? All that was intended to show the awfulness of the law. It was given in that way that the people might see the wonderful majesty that it had, and that by it no man could get life. It was so great that no man could keep it. Everything connected with its giving, conspired to show man that the only thing he could get by it was death. It was so great, so inexpressibly great, that they never could reach to the heights of it. It was given in that way to show the people that there was only death and condemnation to them in it.

Then was not the law just given to put discouragement into the hearts of the people? No; go back to Abraham, and we shall see what else was taught by the giving of the law. There was a promise to Abraham and to his righteous seed, of a righteous inheritance. That promise was sworn to Abraham and to his seed by God Himself. God had pledged His own existence that

there should be righteous men, men whose righteousness should be equal to the righteousness of the law. But here was the law in such awful majesty that there could be no righteousness gotten out of it. It was to be the sole standard. Now put two things together: The law is so holy in its claims that no man can get any righteousness out of it, as was shown in the giving of it; but God had sworn that there should be men who would have all the righteousness that it demands; therefore the very giving of the law served to show the people that there must be and was another way of getting that same righteousness.

So in giving the law, He was giving the gospel in thunder tones. Righteousness and peace dwell together in fullness in Christ. So in Him is life. Condemnation is in the law; but the law is in Christ; and in Christ is also life. In Christ we get the righteousness of the law by His life. The voice that declared the law from Sinai, was the voice of Christ, the voice of the very one who has this righteousness to bestow.

Now see the force of the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 33:2, 3: "And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of His saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, He loved the people."

The giving of that law was one of the highest manifestations of love that could be; because it preached to the people in the strongest tones that there was life in Christ. The one who gave the law, was the one who brought them out of Egypt. He was the one who swore to Abraham that he and his seed should be righteous, and this showed to them that they could not get righteousness in the law; but that they could get it through Christ. So there was a superabundance of grace; for where sin, by the giving of the law did abound, there grace did much more abound. That thing is acted out every time that there is a sinner converted. Before his conversion he does not realize the sinfulness of his sins. Then the law comes in and shows him how awful those sins are; but with it comes the gentle voice of Christ, in whom there is grace and life.

How precious it is to have that conviction of sin sent to our hearts, for we know that it is a part of the work of the comforter which God sends into the world to convict of sin. It is a part of the comfort of God to convict of sin; because the same hand that convicts of sin holds the pardon, that as sin had reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto

eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. In this grace we have again those precious words—much more. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

The Lord searches the heart, and He knows our sins. Shall we go about mourning and sighing, and saying our sins are so great, that God cannot forgive such sinners as we are? Some people seem to fancy that God never knew that they had any sins. Then they say that they are not worthy that He should take their sins away. They cannot see how He can save them. Who is it that makes us feel sinful? Who shows us our unworthiness? How do we come to find out that we have sinned? It is God that shows us our sins. He had known them all the time. We do not consider this, that God has known all our sins beforehand, and that He it is who shows them to us for the first time, when we are convicted of sin by Him.

When God made the plan of salvation, He knew what He was doing. He knew the human heart. He knew the depth of degradation to which humanity would fall, as no man has ever known it. Now, by His law He drives the sins home to our hearts, and then that sin abounds in the proportion that it should. It was small in our eyes before; but He makes us see it as He sees it.

Remember it is the Comforter that convicts. Remember that where sin abounds in your heart, or in your mind, that there grace does much more abound. It is your firm belief of that that makes the grace effective in taking away the sin. Christ is able to save to the uttermost him that cometh to God by Him. You cannot ask anything of Him so good or so great, but what He is able to do it and much more.

God does not have to take the measure of grace, and look over the world to see how many there are among whom it will need to be divided, and then go to work to portion it out so that there will be enough to go round. He gives us scripture measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. No matter how great are the sins to be covered up, there is grace much more than enough to do it. Mortal man may be covered with the righteousness of Christ as with a garment. Then let us take the life of Christ by faith, and live a new life.

Study 10

Romans 6

Every man may choose when he will die.

The secret of all missionary effort.

Christ gives power to live a sinless life.

The battle is God's, not ours.

The sixth chapter of Romans commences with a continuation of the argument that is contained in the fifth chapter. That argument is that the life of Christ is given to us for our justification. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Grace is favor, and the psalmist tells us that in His favor there is life; and so “being justified freely by His grace,” is simply the bestowal of the life of Christ upon us. That life is a sinless life. Christ in us obeys, and by His obedience we are made righteous.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

Now this chapter shows us how we make the connection with Christ, and what that connection does for us. In the preceding chapter we learned that judgment had passed upon all men unto condemnation, and that the sentence of death had gone forth upon every man in this world. The death sentence has been pronounced, and death works in men. Why does death work in men? What is the peculiar power of death? It is sin! “The sting of death is sin.” Therefore sin working in men is simply death working in them.

Men who are sinners are stung by death. Death is in them already, and it is carrying on its work in them, and it is only a matter of time till it shall hold them in its grasp forever. But while probation is continued, there is a possibility that men may escape that sting, and the execution of that penalty. Nevertheless God must be just, even while He is the justifier of them that believe on Him. Sentence of death has been pronounced upon every man, and that sentence will be executed. Every man must die, because all men have sinned.

But there is given to every man a choice as to when he will die. Christ died for all men. We can acknowledge His death, and die in Him, and thus get His life; or on the other hand we may, if we wish, refuse to acknowledge Him, and die in ourselves. But die we must. Death has passed upon all men, and all men must die. The life of every man is forfeited, of ourselves we have no life at all.

The Scripture plainly says, "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12. Now seeing that we are in that condition, when death claims her forfeit, what are we going to do? Don't you see that we are left lifeless. If I owe a thousand dollars, and I have just exactly a thousand dollars in my possession, when I pay that debt, I am left penniless, am I not? So it is with this life of ours. We all have a life here in our possession, but it does not belong to us. It is forfeited to the law. It does not belong to us at all. When the law exacts that forfeit, and that life of ours is gone, then there is nothing left to us but eternal death.

But Christ, the Son of God, has so much life in Himself, that He can give life to every man and still have as much life left. He was not under any obligation to come to earth and go through the experience that He did. He had glory in heaven; He had the adoration of all the angels; He had riches and power: but He left them all, and even emptied Himself of His glory and His honor; came to earth as a poor man, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in all things like unto those whom He came to save.

He worked out righteousness here in the flesh. What did He do it for? For Himself? No, He did not have any need of it. He had riches to begin with. He had everything that He could have when He was in heaven. But here on earth, as a man, He worked out righteousness and eternal redemption that He might give them to us. That is the sole reason that brought Him into the world. He has all that righteousness He wrought out here, and He will and

does give it to men. So He paid the penalty of the law, for Himself? No! He had no sin, consequently the law had no claim upon Him.

In the second letter to the Corinthians, chapter five, and verse twenty-one, the apostle Paul says: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." So it was that He suffered the penalty, not for Himself, but for us. When we by faith lay hold on Christ, and become united with Him, so that we are identified with Him, then we have that life which He has to bestow.

But pay the penalty, suffer the forfeit, we must; for the law will exact the forfeit. But as I said before, we have the choice as to whether we will wait, and let the law take the forfeit from us, at a time when we will have nothing left after it is gone, or whether we will give over the forfeited life when we can take the life of Christ, and have it left after we have paid the forfeit.

Now how do we get hold of Christ? How do we get the benefit of that righteous life of His? It is in the act of death. At what point is it that we touch Christ, and make the connection? At what point in the ministry of Christ is it that He touches us, and effects the union? It is at the lowest possible point where man can be touched, and that is death. In all points He is made like His brethren, so He takes the very lowest of these—the point of death—and there it is, when we are actually dead, that we step into Christ.

The ceremony of baptism is simply the symbol of Christ's death and resurrection. Says Paul, in Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." In Romans he says: "As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death." But if we died with Christ, we are bound and certain to live again; for Christ is alive. Here we can forcibly apply the words of Peter in Acts 2:24: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." It was utterly impossible that death should hold Christ. Therefore if we die with Him, and in our death are united with Him, we shall also live with Him. The great thought around which the whole Bible clusters, is death and resurrection with Christ. If we die with Him, we shall live again.

We die with Him when? Now! When we acknowledge our life forfeited, and give up all claims to that life, and everything that is connected with it, that very moment we die with Christ. Now what is this giving up of our life? Life stands for everything that a man has. It stands for everything that pertains to life. What is it, then, that pertains to the life that we naturally

have in ourselves? It is sin! It is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It is envy, malice, evil speaking, evil thinking—all these things make up the natural life, because we see that every man that has the natural life, has these things. They are a part of his life. They enter into the life of every man on earth.

When we come to that place where we see that we have those things, and are ready to give them up, and pay the forfeit, then it is that we can die with Christ, and take His sinless life in their stead. In yielding up that life of ours, we give up all these things, and when they are all given up, then we are dead with Christ. But just as surely as we give them up and die with Christ, just so surely must we be raised again, for Christ is risen, and we then walk in newness of life. That new life, that newness of life which we have, is the life of Christ, and it is a sinless life. Knowing this, “that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we might not serve sin.”

Here is the secret of all missionary effort. When a man comes to the point, where in very deed he reckons that he has no life of his own, and he gives up the forfeited life which he did have in his possession, and the life he lives in the flesh he lives by faith in the Son of God; then Christ is his life, and his life is “hid with Christ in God.” He has been raised to newness of life by faith in the operation of God. What can that man fear of what man can do to him? What will he fear of what man will say of him? He will say to himself, It is not I, but Christ that liveth in me.

What will it matter to him if he is called to go to an unhealthful locality? His life has already been yielded up, so that death has no terrors for him. He goes willingly, “not taking his life in his hand,” but leaving it in the keeping of Christ in God. If Christ, in whom his life is hid, wishes to allow him to sleep for awhile, it is all right. Moreover he is not discouraged by difficulties in the work to which Christ has assigned him; for he has practical knowledge of the power of Christ and he knows that He who cast down the high things

What a precious thought it is that our lives are not our own. We have but the life of Christ.

that had exalted themselves in his own heart against Christ, is able to subdue all things unto Himself. The life that he lives is the life of Christ, provided only, that every moment of his life he yields himself and is as thoroughly consecrated as he was at the time he died.

It is necessary that we die continually, and that we continually know the power of God, and of the resurrection of Christ. For “we are saved by His life.” We must know and experience the same power that God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. We take that power. How? “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.”

It is simply a matter of making the resurrection of Christ a practical thing in our own lives. It is simply believing that what God could do for Christ, as He lay in the grave, He can do for us. That power which brought forth Christ from the dead can keep us alive from the dead. If we have the life of Christ, and it is working in us, it must do for us all that it did for Him when He was in Galilee and Judea.

What a precious thought it is that our lives are not our own. We have but the life of Christ. It is this thought that makes a man triumph even in death. Why? The sting of death is gone! Death does not sting the righteous man, because he is freed from sin. It was the knowledge of this that enabled the martyrs like Jerome and Huss to go to the stake, singing songs of triumph and victory. “Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Our lives are hid with Christ in God, so that we fear not the power of wicked men, or of the devil himself. When we have given ourselves to Christ, and our life is hid with Him, what matters it whether this life be cut off soon or not? We walk with Christ, and He controls our lives. Wicked men or devils can no more touch our life than they could hold Christ in the grave.

Oh, that we might feel the power of that life, and know that we are His! When we do get it, the power of God will accompany the message, as we go forth bearing it. What difference if men bring reproaches on us—we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God; and the life we live, we live in Him, and through faith in Him. This is the power of the gospel, and the hope that makes the Christian triumph even in death. It is the hope of the resurrection; for when the man is called to lie down and sleep, he sleeps in Jesus. His life is just as sure, and even surer, then, than if he were alive upon the earth. His probation is sealed; he has fought a good fight; he has finished

his course, and kept the faith. Well might the apostle say that he did not sorrow for those who slept, as for those who had no hope.

When the church of God, and the ministers of God, have died indeed, giving up everything that has pertained to their own life, then they will belong to Christ in deed and in truth. If Christ is willing to intrust us with some of these things; if we are to be spared on earth for awhile, it is all right. If on the other hand He thinks best to take us away, that is all right too. Whether sleeping in the grave or working for the Master on the earth, matters not, for it is Christ all the time.

When we get hold of these ideas, and make them ours, and we may have them as soon as we please, they are precious to us. Having counted the cost of giving up all those things that have been dear to us, if we are prepared to count them all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, then we can yield ourselves wholly to Christ. Just as soon as we are willing to count the cost, and to let ourselves be crucified with Christ, by giving up the pride of life, the lust of the flesh, and all those things which have pertained to our old life, making no provision for the flesh, then the power of Christ comes upon us. But we are living yet on earth! Yes, but we have given up our life, and all there is to us is Christ working in us.

The very moment that a man denies everything pertaining to the flesh, that very moment he can say that Christ is his, and that he has the life of Christ. How does he know it? Through faith in the operation of Him that raised Christ from the dead!

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.”

Christ's life is an eternal life. He voluntarily went under the dominion of death. By doing this He demonstrated His power over death. He went down into the grave to show that right there, while bound by the chains of the prison house of the grave itself, He had power to burst those fetters asunder, and come forth free and a conqueror. Therefore since He dies no more, and we take that sinless life of His, then we can reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. As death can have no dominion over Him, so sin, which is the sting of death, can have no dominion over us.

A questioner may say, "You make it out that we ought never to sin any more, you leave no room for sin." But is not that what the Bible says? "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." We belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. How? By death, we make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. There is such a thing as a complete surrender to Christ—when we give up everything, and then trust to His power to keep us in that state. And I thank God that He is able to do it.

Men start out on dangerous expeditions, some to conquer a country, and when they reach that land, they burn the boats they came in, so they cannot go back if they desired to. It is right for us to count well the cost. There is no use to make a headlong plunge into the battle. Look over the whole ground. Here is this pleasure, and that indulgence; can I give them up? They have been very dear to me, they have become entwined around my very life itself. They are identified with me, so that they show themselves in my very countenance, they are inbedded in my very character and are a part of myself. I have clung to them as I have clung to life itself. But Christ was not in them, they do not savor of the life of Christ at all. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross. Can I, for the sake of sharing that joy, endure that cross? Can I give up the pleasures of sin for a season, in order to share the riches of Christ, and the joy of His salvation? These are the questions we must ask ourselves.

Look up, and place your eyes on Christ and the joys of present salvation. They form the opposite side of the picture. There is the joy of having an infinite power working in us. For that joy which we can have now, are we willing to give up everything, and to become sharers of the sufferings of Christ, and to be made partakers of His death, and the power of His resurrection? This is a joy that will last forever, so let us burn the boats and the bridges behind us! Can we give up all these things that have been so dear to us, can we give them up forever? That is the hard part.

Says one, "I have tried to give up these things before, and I have fallen again, now how do I know but what I shall fall again?" Ah no, you are not making a new resolution this time, you are not turning over a new leaf, and saying that you are going to do better. You are merely letting the old life and all the resolutions go. Simply say, I know that there is power in God. And that same power which spoke the world into existence, that same power which brought Christ forth from the tomb, into the hands of that power I will yield myself, and let it sustain and keep me in the new life. And day

by day as we do that, our hearts will go out in thankfulness to God for His wonderful power.

It is not ours to make provision for the flesh in the lusts thereof; but we must step out and take hold of the life of Christ, and feel that the power of God is working in us. When we feel that power working—that miracle which is wrought in us—the temptations to which we have yielded so often, the sinful practices to which we have given way, will be overcome, and we will rise superior to them. Then we can go out into the world, in the power of Christ, and carry the message as we never have done before.

How is it that we will have more power? Because we know that if God can work that miracle for us, He can do it for any one. Our work from a human standpoint is an impossible one; difficulties arise on every hand; but we have a knowledge of what the power of God can do, and therefore go forth in faith that He who can cast down imaginations in our hearts, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, can do that same work for others, since He has done it for us. It was that same power which caused the walls of Jericho to fall down before the people of God. I am so thankful that the God who has called us to be His servants is a God of infinite power. Take hold of that power and prove it for yourselves.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” “Likewise” Like what? Like as Christ was raised from the dead to be dead no more, so likewise reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin to sin no more. Is that true? Note it carefully—that sin shall have no more dominion over you. That is what the Bible says. We are no longer under the law, but under grace. We are no longer under condemnation, but the grace of God resteth upon us. The spirit of glory and of grace is present with us.

There is power in Christ. What is that power? Notice. Grace is favor! In the favor of God there is life. Then what is the power of the grace of Christ? It is the power of an endless life. If men really believe that Christ is risen from the dead, they can believe that they are dead unto sin, but alive unto God, and free from sin. Does the apostle mean free from sin? It is a solemn, but a glorious thought. How thankful ought men to be that they can have that confidence in the power of God through Christ that they can without any mental reservation take this chapter and believe it. Yes, believe these very

words, “He that is dead is freed from sin reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.”

But is it true that man can live without sin? In the last part of the chapter we read: “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” We all know what that means. Our past experience is not so pleasant to look back over. In it we see no good. Now why was it that we were free from righteousness? Because we were the servants of Satan. “But now, being made

free from sin, we are become the servants of righteousness.” Christ is the author of righteousness. The service we render is His. Which are we, the servants of Christ or the servants of Satan? When we were the servants of Satan, we did not do any righteousness. But now we are the servants of God. “Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” “Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

There are just two services. The service of Satan, which is of sin unto death, and the service of Christ, which is of obedience unto righteousness. A man cannot serve two masters. All believe that. Then it is impossible to serve sin and righteousness at the same time.

Now we call ourselves Christians. That means—what? Followers of Christ! But in all our Christian experience we have left little loopholes along here and there for sin. We have never dared to come to that place where we would believe that the Christian life should be a sinless life. We have not dared to believe it or preach it. But in that case we cannot preach the law of God fully. Why not? Because we do not understand the power of justification by faith. Then without justification by faith it is impossible to preach the law of God

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to the fullest extent. Then to preach justification by faith does not detract from or lower the law of God, but is the only thing that exalts it.

Now can we be the servants of Christ while we are committing sins, and making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof? Is Christ the minister of sin? Whose servants are we while we are committing sin? We are the servants of sin, and sin is of Satan. Now if a Christian (?) is committing sin part of the time, and doing righteousness the rest of the time, it must be that Satan and Christ are in partnership, so that he has only one master, for he cannot serve two masters.

But there is no consort between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial. They are in deadly antagonism, they are opposed to each other, and they have fought a fight even to the death. There is no quarter on either side. Then it is utterly impossible for man to serve these two masters. He must be on the one side or the other. “Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” We know enough about being servants of sin. We have yielded ourselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.

Now the question comes: How am I going to become a servant of Christ, so that I will be able to die to my old life? “To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey.” The word rendered “servant” really means a “bond-servant.” Just the moment that I yield myself to Christ to become His servant, that very moment I am His bond-servant. That very moment I belong to Him.

How do I know that Christ will accept my service if I do give it to Him? Because He has bought that service and paid the price for it. And in all those years that I yielded myself a servant to sin, I have been defrauding Him of His right. But all this time that I have been keeping back my service, He has been going about searching for me, and seeking to draw me to Him. And when we say, “Here, Lord, here I am, I give myself to Thee,” that very moment Christ has found us, for He has been seeking for us, and we are His servants.

But how do we know that we are going to continue in His service? How do we know that we can live the life of Christ? Just in the same way that we know we have lived the life of sin. When we take this matter into account as to whose servants we will be, we want to take into account the power of the two masters. When we were the servants of sin, we were free from

righteousness, because Satan swayed us, and used us in whatever way he would, and we were at the mercy of his power.

Is sin stronger than righteousness? Is Satan stronger than Christ? No! Then as Christ has proved Himself to be the stronger of the two, and just as surely as when we were the bond-servants of sin, it had power to keep us free from righteousness; so when we yield ourselves as bond-servants unto Christ, He has power to keep us from sin. The battle is not ours, it is God's. I said that Christ and Satan were not in partnership, but that there is the bitterest antagonism between them.

All are familiar with the words, "The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan." It is a household phrase among us. What is the controversy over? It is over the souls of men, and the place of their abode. Who shall have your service and mine, is the question that they are fighting over. The controversy is between Christ and Satan. They are not only the principal ones in the controversy, but the whole controversy is between them, and them alone.

We have this much to say—neither one of them can take our service against our will. Of ourselves we have no power to stand against Satan; we have tried that. We have no power to meet him; we cannot face him and conquer him. We have no power at all; but at the same time we know that we do not want to be his servants. Yes; and we will not only say, I do not want to be his servant, but, I will not be his servant. So instead of putting our strength against Satan, we yield ourselves to Christ, and repeat over and over again, like David the psalmist, "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; Thou hast loosed my bonds." Psalm 116:15.

What? I was a bond-servant of Satan's, but just the moment I said to Christ, "I will be your servant," He loosed my bonds, and took upon Himself the responsibility of defending me against Satan, who has no right to me. So when Satan comes to take me back and make me his bond-servant again, Christ meets him, even as He met him when He was here upon the earth. So simply tell your own heart, and Satan, that you are Christ's, and that He has loosed your bonds. Then you are loosed indeed. You have counted the cost, and now you can take the words of David and repeat them over and over.

Your life is no longer your own, it is the life of Christ. His life, His very existence, is pitted against Satan. The battle goes over our heads, for we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. Says the psalmist, "Thou shalt keep them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt

keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” The battle between Christ and Satan is being waged over our heads, and we are hid in the secret pavilion. This is the victory that overcometh the world, for Christ has gained the victory over Satan, and by grasping the promises of Christ by faith, and laying hold upon the life of Christ, the victory over Satan is ours.

Does not Christ say that all power is given Him in heaven and in earth? Note the precious words in Ephesians 1:19-21: “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.”

That same power which placed Him in that exalted position which is far above all principality and power—what has it done for us? “Quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Where is it that we are placed? Far above all principality and power.

Then the victory is ours in Christ, and He has gained the victory already. He has conquered a peace for us. Just as surely as He gives His peace to us, just that surely has He gained the victory for us. So in the hour of trial we have a victory that is already gained. Well may we say that the battle goes over our heads, and great is our peace. There is peace all the time.

The strength of the Christian lies in submitting—the victory in yielding to Christ, so that He may keep us in His presence, and cover us up in His pavilion from the strife of tongues. Then it does not matter how great the trial may be, if we have Christ, there will be peace in our hearts.

O that every one in this house may be filled with a desire to have Christ and His righteousness, that this very night we may take His word and be inspired by its inspiration, and then we shall have and shall be able to live the life of Christ. Then we can go about as missionaries for Christ and do good. When we take that power which we have by faith in Him, it will not be long till the work will be cut short in righteousness, and we shall see Him, who not having seen, we love.

Study 11

Romans 7

The gospel as illustrated in marriage.

Oldness of the letter exchanged for newness of the spirit.

The sinner — a slave. Sin—the slavemaster.

Christ—the Liberator.

Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For a woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our bodies to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Romans 7:1-6.

The ground covered by this seventh chapter is really gone over twice. The first part lays the broad facts before us; the latter part goes into the details and particulars of what is given in the beginning.

In the six verses that have been read, there is given us an illustration and the application. The illustration is easily understood. The simple fact of marriage is taken. A woman having a husband is bound to that husband so long as he liveth. By what is she bound? By the law. It is contrary to the law for

her to have two husbands at the same time; but if the first husband be dead, the same law will allow her to marry another man. This is but a plain illustration, and if it is kept in mind throughout the study of the chapter, it will be a great help to us in understanding it.

There is no need of any argument in this chapter for the perpetuity of the law. That is not the question under consideration. The apostle is not making a special argument to prove that the law is not abolished. His argument starts from that point as one already settled, and shows the practical working of the law in individual cases. He brings it right home to the hearts of men that they are under the law; and if they are under it, how can it be abolished? He urges its claims upon the hearts of men, and by the Spirit of God they feel its working power upon them, and therefore know that it is not abolished.

Note the people to whom Paul is writing. "I speak to them that know the law." This epistle is addressed to professed followers of Christ. We find that in the second chapter, commencing with the seventeenth verse: "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God."

Now to the illustration: While the law will not allow the woman to be united to two husbands at the same time, it will allow her to be united to two in succession. It is the law that allows her, and it is the law that unites her. The same law that unites her to the first husband, also allows her to be united to the second, after that the first is dead. This is easy to be understood, and there is no need to consider it further.

Now to the application: "Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God." We can determine who the two husbands are by beginning with the second one. The "another" to whom we are to be married, is the one who has been raised from the dead, and that is Christ. We are one of the parties in the second marriage, and Christ is the other. He is the second husband.

The question now arises, who was the first husband that died, in order that we might be united to the second? The sixth chapter has answered that. Compare Romans 7:5 with Romans 6. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." The law held us in the first union, and now to what were we united? What were we in? We were in union with the flesh. In the sixth chapter we found that the body of sin is destroyed

by Christ. By what means is it that the body of sin becomes destroyed? By the man being crucified with Christ.

In the first place we are joined to sin—the sinful flesh. We cannot serve two masters. Here are two figures. We are servants to one master; united to one husband. We cannot serve two masters at the same time, and we cannot be united to two husbands at the same time. But we can be united to two in succession. The first one of these, to whom we have all been united, is the body of sin; the second is Christ, who is raised from the dead.

The question arises, what is meant by our being dead to the law by the body of Christ? That brings us to the point where the illustration fails us. The illustration fails us—why? Because it is utterly impossible to find anything in life that will correctly represent in every particular divine things. There is no illustration that will serve in every particular. That is why we have so many types of Christ. No one person could serve as a complete type of Him. We have Adam in one place as a type of Christ; we have Abel; we have Moses; we have Aaron; David; and Melchisedec, and many others who represent different phases of Christ, because there is no one of them who could represent Him in every particular.

So when the apostle would represent the union of all people with the house of Israel, he says: “I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery.” It is a mystery, it is something unnatural. He says that it is a grafting process, but that it is contrary to the natural method. Therefore this illustration of marriage cannot be considered as complete in every particular. And yet, after all, the illustration does not fall, if we choose to consider that the union with the first husband is a criminal connection. It is so in the application. Those who are united to the flesh are guilty of a capital crime. The law holds them in that connection, i.e., it will not allow them to lightly dissolve the union, and pass it by as though nothing had taken place—but it demands their life. With this explanation we can understand what follows.

We find that we are united with sin, and with the body of sin. Then Christ comes to us, and He presents Himself as the one altogether lovely. And in reality He is the only one who has any real claim upon us. “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” The apostle is writing to those who know the law, and who have left their first love; and what applies to them, will also apply in larger measure to those of the world. Christ comes to the door of our hearts, and knocks, and begs that we will come to Him. He has spread out His hands all the day unto a rebellious people,

“which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts.” How deep, how unfathomable, is the love of God!

In Jeremiah 3:1 we read, “They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall man he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord.” Paul in writing to the Corinthians says, “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Now we desire that loveliness of character which can be found only in Christ. We find that this union in which we are held—with the flesh—is not a pleasant union, but the husband to whom we are wedded is a taskmaster, he is a tyrant who grinds us down so that we have no liberty. The flesh is tyrannical, and it holds us down, and makes us do, not as we wish to do, but as it wishes us to do. When we by the aid of Christ come to feel that this union is a galling bondage, then we awake to the real state of our condition, and realize that whereas it may have satisfied us for a time, now we hate it, and desire to rid ourselves of it, and become united to Christ.

But here is where the difficulty comes in. It is expressed in the words of James 4:4. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” Do you think that it is vain that Christ hath said, “What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?” Now while we still remain in the flesh we desire to take the name of Christ. Of course it is impossible for us to really be joined to Christ and still cling to the body of sin, although to outward appearance we may be able to do it. We cannot actually be united to Christ and the world at the same time. We cannot have Christ for our husband, and at the same time be living with the world.

Of course it is impossible for us to really be joined to Christ and still cling to the body of sin, although to outward appearance we may be able to do it.

But we can take the name of Christ and at the same time retain the sins of the flesh. But the law will not justify a person who does this—who takes the name of the one man, and at the same time lives with another. The law of God does not justify us in taking the name of Christ, and in living with the flesh. Are we justified then in taking the name of Christ—in saying that we are united to Christ, and at the same time in living in union with the body of sin? No, certainly not.

Here again we find how the law is guarded at every step in this matter of justification by faith in Christ. Here every possibility is cut off for a person to say, I am Christ's and Christ is mine, and no matter what I do, it is Christ that does it in me. No; that is not so. We cannot charge any sin to Christ; He is not responsible for any sin, for the law does not justify us in committing any sin. So we see that justification by faith is nothing else but bringing a person into perfect conformity to the law. Justification by faith does not make any provision for transgression of the law.

But we will proceed to consider the case of those who have been unconscious of the claims of the law, while professing it. Paul speaks to those who know the law, and who make their boast in the law, and profess to exalt the law, and at the same time they are so blind to the requirements of the law, that they have thought they could profess Christ, and live in sin. It is not always those who profess to fear that the honor of the law will be lowered, that realize its claims to the fullest extent. Some have even preached the law, and have at the same time thought that they could live in the indulgence of the lusts of the flesh, while thinking that they were united with Christ.

Now Christ has been set before us, and we see that we cannot be united to Christ and the body of sin at the same time. Then we say that we will give up that first husband—the body of sin, and become united with Christ. But how can we get free from this body of sin, this first husband? We cannot cause it to die by simply saying that we wish it were dead. The woman who has a loathing in her heart for her husband, because he is a brutal tyrant, cannot cause herself to be separated from him by simply desiring it. It is a good thing to want to serve Christ, if we have counted the cost, and know that we are sick and tired of the old life, and want to begin a new life, and live with Christ; for when we come to that point, we can easily find out how it can be done.

Christ comes to us, and He proposes a union with us. That is lawful, because He is the only one who really has any claim upon us, and therefore

while we are living in this base connection with the body of sin, He can lawfully come to us, and beg us to be united with Him. But here we are united with this body of sin, and the law will not justify us in becoming united to Christ till that body of sin is dead.

For note again what is implied in the figure of the marriage. When two persons are united in marriage, they become one flesh. This is a mystery. Paul says that it is: “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” This is the thought that is held before us in this figure of marriage. For we twain—ourselves and the flesh—are so completely joined together that we are no longer twain, but one flesh, and our life is just one.

Look back over your life and see if there is any time in it where you can see that it has been separated from sin. It has been a life of sin. Sin has ever been a part of your life. We have only one life, and that has been sin. Therefore, so closely have we been united with sin, that there has been only one life between us—we twain have been one flesh. Then the only way by which we can get rid of this body of sin—which is one with us—is to die too. That is how it is that the apostle says, that we are become dead to the law by the body of Christ. For that union with the flesh was really unlawful, and the law had a claim against us for that union. It will put us to death for that union. We are dead in Christ, and the body of sin dies also.

In chapter six we read, “Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” Christ in His own flesh bare our sins in His body on the tree. He takes our sins that they may be crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed. We consent to die. We acknowledge that our life is forfeited to the law, and that the law has a just claim upon us. Then we voluntarily give up our lives so that this hated body of sin may die. We loath the union with it so much that we are willing to die in order that it may die too.

“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Therefore as we die with Christ, we are raised also with Christ. But Christ is not the minister of sin, so while He will crucify the body of sin, He will not raise it again, and the body of sin is destroyed. Thus we rise, the union between us and Christ complete, that henceforth we should bring fruit unto God.

“Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held.” What is dead? The body of sin! It was because we were united to that body of sin that the law had somewhat against us. Notice; God does not have any hatred against us. God does not have any desire to punish us, but He cannot endure sin. His law must condemn sin, and since we have identified ourselves with sin, so that we were one with it, in condemning sin, He necessarily condemned us; and so long as we lived a life of sin, that condemnation necessarily rested upon us. But as have already shown, we have a choice as to when we will die, and we have chosen to voluntarily give up our lives to Him, while we can have His life instead.

When our lives have been given up to the law, the claim that the law had against us is satisfied, because now, the body of sin being dead, we are delivered from the law, just as the woman whose husband is dead is loosed from the law of her husband so that she can be united to another. But the same law that held her to that first husband unites her to the second. So it is in this case. The same law that bound us to the body of sin, now witnesses to our union with Christ. Romans 3:21. That perfect law witnesses to the union with Christ, and justifies it. And so long as we remain in Christ, it justifies us in that union, showing that union with Christ is conformity to the law.

And the power of Christ is able to hold us in that union. “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” Romans 6:8. We became united to Christ in the act of death. By that death, the bond that united us with our first husband—the body of sin—was broken, the body of sin was destroyed, and now we rise with Christ.

We believe that we shall live with Him? Why do people get married? That they may live together. Then, because we have been united by death with Christ, we believe that now since we are risen with Him, we shall live with Him. Notice further: when two are united, they two are no longer twain, but one flesh. Christ “makes in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” Ephesians 2:15. We are His, Christ and we are one, and therefore together we make one new man. Now who is the one? Christ is the one.

Well might Paul say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Galatians 2:20. It is Christ now, not we. Thus we are the representatives of Christ on earth. This is why Christ in His prayer in the garden, prayed, that “they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”

How may the world know this? From the Bible? No; for the world does not read the Bible; and therefore God hath put us in the world as the light of the world. The Bible is a light and a lamp, but not to those who do not take it. We take the word of Christ, we feed upon it in spirit, and bring Christ into our hearts, and thus effect the union; and then the light shines forth to the world, and the world knows that Christ has been sent as a divine Saviour.

We pass over a few verses. The apostle shows that while the motions of sins were by the law, it is not because the law is sinful, but because the law is holy. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Paul was once alive in carnal security, serving God, as he thought; but when the commandment came, then sin abounded, and he died; and this law which was ordained for life, because it justifies the obedient, he found had nothing but death for him, because he had not really been obeying it. That is why he says, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just, and good."

But note; before this time Paul had been one who honored the law, he had made his boast in the law, and therefore he writes to those who know the law, to those who have been striving with all their might to keep the law; and yet, they are the ones who have to be delivered from the law. Why? Because while making their boast in the law, through breaking it, they dishonored God.

Now we shall still serve, but how? Not the way we did before, in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit. That means that our very service to the law is something that we have got to be delivered from. Why? Because it has been simply a forced service; it has been simply in the oldness of the letter; there has not been spirit and life in it. It has not been of Christ, therefore it has been sin. We boasted in the law, and we professed to keep the law, yet that very service was sin, and we must be delivered from that kind of service to the law, to serve in the right way. So now we serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

In the latter part of the chapter, the apostle shows what that oldness of the letter is from which we must be delivered. "I am carnal, sold under sin." We do great violence to the apostle Paul, that holy man, when we say that in this he is relating his own Christian experience. He is not writing his own experience now that he is united with Christ. He is writing the experience of those who serve, but in the oldness of the letter, and while professedly serving God, are carnal, and sold under sin.

A person sold under bondage is a slave. What is the evidence of this slavery? “For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I... For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Have we ever had any such experience as that in our so-called Christian experience? Yes; we have fought, but with all our fighting, did we keep the law? No, we have made a failure, and it is written upon every page of our lives. It is a constant service, but at the same time it is a constant failure.

When in this condition, can we say that we have hope, and that we “rejoice in hope of the glory of God”?

I fail, I make a new resolution, I break it, and then I get discouraged, then make another resolution, and break that again. We cannot make ourselves do the thing we want to do by making a resolution. We do not want to sin, but we do sin all the time. We make up our minds we will not fall under that temptation again, and we don't—till the next time it comes up, and then we fall as before.

When in this condition, can we say that we have hope, and that we “rejoice in hope of the glory of God”? We do not hear such testimonies, it is solely of what we want to do, and what we have failed to do, but intend to do in the future. If a person has the law before him, and acknowledges that it is good, and yet does not keep its precepts, is his sin any less in the sight of God than the sin of the man who cares nothing for the law? No.

What is the difference between the would-be Christian, who knows the law, but does not keep it, and the worldling who does not keep the law, and does not acknowledge that it is good? Simply this: We are unwilling slaves, and they are willing slaves. We are all the time distracted and sorrowful, and getting nothing out of life at all, while the worldling does not worry himself in the least.

If one is going to sin, is it not better to be the worldling, who does not know that there is such a thing as liberty, than to be the man who knows that there is liberty, but cannot get it? If it has got to be slavery, if we must live in the sins of the world, then it is better to be in the world, partaking of

its pleasures, than to be in a miserable bondage, and have no hope of a life to come.

But thanks be unto God, we can have liberty. When life becomes unbearable because of the bondage of sin, then it is that we may hope, for that leads to the question, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Mark; there is deliverance. “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Christ came that we might have life. In Him is life. He is full of life, and when we are so sick of this body of death, that we are willing to die to get rid of it, then we can yield ourselves to Christ, and die in Him; and with us dies the body of death. Then we are raised with Christ to walk in newness of life, but Christ, who is not the minister of sin, will not raise up the body of sin; so it is destroyed, and we are free.

Let all your sinful passions go, and believe that Christ will give you something so much better than they are, that you will have an unspeakable joy. Not only will there be joy now, but there will be joy through all eternity, a song of joy for the precious gift that He has given.

Christ has condemned sin in the flesh, and by faith we take Him and live with Him. That is a blessed life. Take hold of Christ by faith and live with Him.

Study 12

Romans 8:1-16

Freedom from condemnation.

The completeness of God's forgiveness.

Freedom from sin and death.

Hope based on the Word, not on feeling.

We must not forget that the only object that we should have in this study of the Bible is that we may be drawn nearer to God, and that we may learn that the Word of God means just what it says, and that what it says, is the voice of God speaking to us individually. Take the Word and build upon it.

There is one thought that was mentioned last night that I wish to impress upon your minds. Our union with Christ and with His righteousness, may be and should be just as close and complete as our union has been with sin. The figure of marriage shows that to be so. We were held in union with sin—married to the old man—to the body of sin. That was an unlawful connection, consequently the body of sin was a body of death to us, because we could not be separated from that body except by death. That body and ourselves were identified, we were married; therefore we were one, and the body of sin was the controlling influence in that union; it dominated everything.

Now Christ comes to us, and when we yield ourselves to Him He looses the bonds that have bound us to the body of sin. Then we enter into the same intimate relation with our Lord Jesus Christ that we previously sustained with the body of sin. We become united to Christ—married to Him—and then we are one. And as in the other case, where the body of sin was the controlling influence, so in this second marriage, Christ is the controlling influence.

Notice how perfectly that figure of marriage is carried out. We are represented as the woman. The husband is the head of the family; and so Christ is our head, and we yield ourselves to Him. We are one with Him. What a precious thought it is, that we are one flesh with Christ! In this we see the mystery of the incarnation appearing again. If we can believe that Christ was in the flesh, God incarnate in Christ, we can believe this — Christ dwelling in us, and working through us — through our flesh, just the same as when He took flesh upon Himself and controlled it. It is a mystery that we cannot understand; but we acknowledge it, and that gives us freedom.

We sang tonight, “My sin is nailed to His cross.” He says that our old man was crucified with Him. That is true; but it is not raised with Him. Christ came to minister, and not to be ministered unto, but He came to minister to us, and not to be the minister of sin. Therefore when we and the body of sin together are crucified with Christ, and are buried together, we are raised up to walk in newness of life, but the body of sin remains buried, so we are free from it. Now what follows?

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”

In these verses we have that which, if we will hold it in our minds, and believe that Jesus is able to save us by faith, will be to us a sure rock upon which we can build. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” In these words lies a practical thought, and from it arises a question which troubles many. They say, “I believe all that in theory, I am fully in harmony with that, and I know that Christ can cleanse from sin. I believe that if I confess my sins, He is faithful and just to forgive me, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. But the question in my mind is, have I confessed all my sins? That is what gives me trouble; if I was only sure that I had confessed all my sins, then I could claim that promise, and believe that there was no condemnation for me.”

Now this is something that troubles very many: How are we going to know that we are not under condemnation? We cannot charge God with having left the matter so indeterminate that it is impossible for us to know whether we are condemned or not, therefore it must be that we can find out. We may put it this way: "I have confessed all the sins that I know of, everything that the Lord has shown me; and when the Lord shows me something else, I will confess that." Of course confess everything the Lord shows you: but, brethren, don't stop half way. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Then when you have confessed a sin, believe that God forgives it, and take His peace into your hearts, and if He shows you other sins, confess them, believe that they are forgiven, and have His peace still. But there are scores of honest souls who deprive themselves of a blessing, and finally go into darkness, because when they have confessed their sins, they do not take the forgiveness, and thank God for the freedom that must follow.

Now the idea conveyed in that expression, that we have confessed all the sins we know of, but still we dare not acknowledge freedom from condemnation, for fear that there are other sins that we do not know about, and therefore have not confessed, is really bringing a serious charge against God. It is making the Lord out to be the forgiver of the man who has the best memory. But was it your memory alone that enabled you to remember those sins that you did confess? Who quickened, and spurred up your memory? It was the Spirit of God that showed those sins to you. Now are we going to charge God with doing a partial work? He sent His Holy Spirit to show you those sins. Shall we say then that He kept back a part of them, that He did not reveal to us? He showed us just what He wanted us to confess, and when we have confessed them, we have met the mind of the Spirit of God, and we are free.

Suppose that I have injured one of you, I may have been pursuing a systematic course of evil toward you — accusing you falsely, trying to injure you in your business, trying to provoke and irritate you in every way possible, doing everything I could against you, day by day, and week by week, and month by month. By and by my eyes are opened, and I see the meanness of that course. I feel all broken down because I have lent myself to such a mean way of acting, and I come to you, and acknowledge what I have been doing. You can see in a moment that I am all broken down over it, and that I really feel that I have done wrong.

Some of us here have had occasion to forgive people who came to us in just that way. Now has it been our custom when they come in that contrite way, to stand coolly back, and let them tell the whole story from beginning to end, and rack their minds to try to remember everything that they have done in detail, so that they may confess it? Then when they think they have told it all, and ask for your forgiveness, do you stand back still, and remind them that there was another little thing which they have missed, and tell them that you would like them to confess that too? Then when they have told everything that they can think of, and that you can remind them of, do you say, “Well, I guess you have confessed it all, so I will forgive you”? There is not a person in this house that would do that.

When I settled that question for myself, I thought, I have no business to make myself out any better than God. When anyone comes to me or to you, all broken down, and confesses his wrong, we forgive him freely; and before he has told half what he might tell, we tell him that it is all right, that he is forgiven, and to say no more about it.

That is just what God does. He has given us the parable of the Prodigal son, as an illustration of how He forgives. His father saw him a great way off, and ran to meet him. I am so thankful that God does not require me, before I can be forgiven, to go back, and take up every sin that I have ever committed, and confess it. If He did, He would have to lengthen my probation longer than I believe He possibly can, for me to repeat the smallest part of them. Well may David say, “For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.” Psalm 40:12. Yes, our sins are innumerable,” but “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;” a broken and a contrite heart He will not despise. We take hold of the sacrifice of Christ, take it into our very selves, and thus we make a covenant with God by sacrifice.

The Lord forgives freely, and we can know it. God shows us the representative sins of our lives. Sins that stand out prominent—they stand for our whole sinful nature, and we know that our whole life is of that same sinful character. We come and confess the sins. Shall we charge God with saying, “I have shown you those sins, and you have confessed them; but there are some other sins, and I will not show you them, but you must find them out for yourself, and until you do I will not forgive you.” God does

not deal with us in that way. He is infinite in love and compassion. "Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

Now another point: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." People say, "I have taken Christ, and now I look back and trace my life history through the day, or the week, and I cannot see anything but imperfection in what I have done, and then the feeling of condemnation comes over me, and I can't stand free. How can I say, there is no condemnation for me, when I see these failures?" This is a subtle deception of Satan, to deprive us of acceptance and peace with God. Do we expect to be justified by those deeds? If we do, we make a grand mistake in the beginning. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." To Jesus we must look for our justification, and to Him alone.

Says one, "I am afraid that I will fall." You need not be afraid. Paul says, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." 2 Timothy 1:12. What have I committed unto Him? My life, and He is able to keep it.

When we get over into the kingdom of God, we will not look to the best deeds that we have done, and thank God that we are justified because we have done so well. But our song of joy will be, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." And so we know that when we yield ourselves to Him, and die to Him constantly, that He does those things for us that we cannot do for ourselves. Let us look to Him continually! But when we take our eyes from Him, and go into sin, He is not responsible for that.

Just as long as we keep looking at Him, there is no condemnation. Try it, and you will know that it is a fact, for it is a fact that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Why? "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In our sins the law is death to us; and not only is it death to that man who makes no profession of righteousness, but it is death to that man who acknowledges the claims of the law, that it is good, and yet says, "But how to perform that which is good I find not."

All will allow that a Christian must do what is good, some of the time at least. But this experience in Romans 7:21, "When I would do good, evil is present with me," shows that the man having that experience does not do good at all. Yet he wants to do good. This is service in the oldness of the letter. The man is serving the law, but is a slave. There is no freedom

in the service; it is bond-service. But now having tried with all his might to do what he wants to do, and having failed, he finds that in Christ is the perfection of the law, in Him there is life.

So the law as it is in the person of Christ is the law of the Spirit of Life. So he takes the life of Christ, and gets the perfection of the law as it is in Christ, and serves Him in spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Thus he is delivered from bond-service to the law to freedom in it. There is a wonderful amount of rich truth in that—“The law of the Spirit of Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.” Is there any discouragement in that? Does it cast disparagement on the law? Not in the least. What could not the law do? It could not justify me because I was weak. It did not have any good material to work on. It was not the fault of the law, it was the fault of the material. The flesh was weak, and the law could not justify it. But God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin in the flesh, that He might justify us.

Some have taken the position that this verse teaches that the law could not condemn sin unless Christ died. Brethren, that is a fearful charge to bring against God and Christ. That would be making Christ, not our Saviour, but our condemner. Christ Himself says, in John 3:17, “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” The law always condemned sin. He that believeth not, is condemned already. Christ is the justifier. Since the law condemns man, it is evident that it cannot justify him, for it is impossible for it to condemn and justify at the same time. But what the law could not do, Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh to do. How did He do it? By keeping the law when He was in the flesh.

There are certain things which I used to do, which I always liked to excuse myself for. I knew that they were wrong, consequently I made resolutions that I would not do them. But I did them just the same. Again and again I did them, until finally I made up my mind that they were inherited traits—that I was born with them, and therefore I could not help doing them. But thinking that way did not free me from condemnation; I felt condemned just the same. For Christ has left us no excuse; He has condemned sin in the flesh; by His life He has shown that sin in the flesh is condemned, and He has destroyed it, for in Him the body of sin is destroyed, and we are new creatures in Christ. By His exceeding great and precious promises we are

made partakers of the divine nature. He has taken away this sinful nature, taken it upon Himself that we might be delivered from it.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

But the carnal mind can acknowledge that the law is good. “I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.” We have fancied, and have tried to comfort ourselves with the thought that we were subject to the law, because we loved it, and regarded it as a beautiful thing, and tried with all our might, or as some put it, “in our weak way” to keep it. But the carnal mind is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be. And what is the evidence of the carnal mind? The inability to do that which is good, and which we know we ought to do. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Galatians 5:17.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

There is a beautiful thought contained in these verses. First, we have the fact presented that we may have the Spirit of God. How do we get it? By asking. Go back to the eleventh chapter of Luke. Christ says, “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? . . . If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” Make a personal application of that text. When you kneel down to pray for the Spirit of God, which is all powerful and will cleanse from all sin, quote that to the Lord.

If your children came to you, asking for some of the necessities of life, you would study every way to know how you could give them the things that they desired. You are poor, and weak, and miserable, but God is infinite; therefore He is infinitely more willing to give you the thing that you need,

so much more willing than you can be to give good things to your children. The Holy Spirit is His to give, and He is willing and anxious that we should have it.

Again Christ said, “He that believeth on Me, . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” And this He spake of the Spirit, that He would give. Said Christ again to the woman at the well, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” Why? “For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Here is the hope of the resurrection again. What remains to be done when the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you? Only to quicken, that is, to make alive, our mortal bodies.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear! O remember that.

He gives us His Spirit now; and shall we be afraid? Isaiah says, “I will trust, and not be afraid.” No; we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; for perfect love casteth out fear. Think of Abraham, and what was written of him for our benefit. We need not consider the frailties of our bodies, but be strong in faith, giving glory to God, knowing that what He has promised, He is able to perform. Yes; we will “consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.”

“Abba, Father,” that means, Father, Father. First of all realize that He is in heaven, and that He is God; He is infinite in power, and so great that He can take up the isles as a very little thing; to Him the nations are as a drop in the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Great and awful being that He is, we can come to Him, and call Him, “our Father.” He has the tenderness of a parent, backed by the power of infinite divinity.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” In Ephesians 1:13 we are told that spirit is the “earnest of our inheritance.” Some do not seem to be able to understand this witness of the Spirit. They say if they only had it they would rejoice. What is the witness of

the spirit? “Why,” says one, “it is a sort of feeling, and when I have it I will know that God has accepted me.” But brethren, it rests on something more substantial than a feeling. I am glad that God has not left the witness of His Spirit to be dependent on my feeling.

Sometimes I feel so tired and exhausted that I have hardly any power to feel any way. And that is the very time when I want to know more than at any other time that I am a child of God.

Sometimes disease takes hold of us and saps all our strength, and we have no power of mind or body. We are just alive, conscious, but with no emotion. That is the time we want the witness of the Spirit. Can we have it then? Yes, “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” How does it witness? “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” 1 John 5:9, 10.

Now what does a witness do? Bears testimony, does he not? I am brought up as a witness in a court. How do I bear witness in that case? By telling what I know. That is all, I give my word, and perhaps I back it by my oath. Then if the Spirit witnesses, it must say something, must it not? Yes; then how do we recognize the witness of the Spirit? How does the Spirit speak? Mark this point: God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.

The Holy Spirit spake by the prophet Jeremiah. David, the sweet psalmist, says, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue.” It spoke by the apostle Paul. Whose word is this? [Holding up the Bible.] It is the word of God. What speaks in this word? The Spirit of God. Then what is the witness of the Spirit? It is the word of God.

Well, but how about this witness in myself? Remember the words of Paul in Romans 10:6-8. “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend unto heaven?

*...that is the very
time when I want
to know more
than at any other
time that I am a
child of God.*

(that is to bring Christ from above:) or, who shall descend into the deep? (That is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach.” What word? The word of Christ, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart, that God raised Christ from the dead, “ye shall be saved.”

The Word of God is the voice of the Spirit of God. Then we have the witness in ourselves, when we have His word in our hearts by faith. We eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, by feeding upon His word, and so we have the witness, within ourselves.

This witness has been sworn to. God has put His testimony on record, and He swore to that testimony. When God has put Himself on record, what can you bring to corroborate that word? When God has spoken, will you bring up the testimony of a man to sustain it? No, it is the word of God, that is our sheet anchor. It is our only hope, and It is the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. It enters in within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.

Our Christian life, from the very beginning, must be based on the word of God. That is why I want you to take the word of God and believe it. When you go to your homes — to your closets — recognize the voice of God speaking to you; for His Spirit witnesses with our spirit, that we are the children of God. I thank God for the witness of His word.

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Brethren, it means something to be a child of God. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” Behold it. We are to be called the sons of God! It is too wonderful for the human mind to fully grasp. Poor, unworthy, miserable creatures, worthy of nothing, yet God has had such an infinite love for us, that He has made us worthy to be His sons; and He gives us everything that He gives to Christ.

In John 17:3 the Saviour prays to the Father, “That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” Brethren, the Father loves us, just as much as He loves His only begotten Son. How do we know? The assurance of that is given not only in this text, but in the fact that He let His only begotten Son die to save us from death. We share with Christ all the love that the Father has for Him.

“We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” That means that since we are joint-heirs with Christ, that Christ cannot enter into His inheritance without us. For if you and I are joint-heirs to an estate, we must have it together. You cannot enter on your inheritance before I enter and enjoy it with you. Then whatever Christ is sharing now at the right hand of His Father is for us. He is at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, and so we are quickened with Him, and raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

By and by when Christ takes His own throne, we will take that too. In the first letter to the Corinthians it is written, “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him,” 1 Corinthians 2:9. This has to do with the inheritance, but don’t put it all off for the future. Go back a couple of verses, “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” They might have known it, for read what follows in verse 10: “But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

It is something that God reveals to us now. We must not put it all off to the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, to the pearly gates, and the walls of Jasper. And the only reason why we have not seen these things in the past is because the natural man cannot see them. It is a precious thought, and I want you to grasp it, that everything that Christ has we have now. Like David of old we can say, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” Psalm 16:6.

Let us take God at His word, that we may know the meaning of that prayer in Ephesians 1:17, 18: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” If we lack this wisdom, let us ask of Him who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given unto us.

Study 13

Romans 8:17-31

Joint-heirs with Christ.

Heaven begins here.

Man cannot search his own heart,
only God can.

God's foreknowledge.

Last night we closed our study with a consideration of the sixteenth verse of the eighth chapter of Romans: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This evening we will commence with the seventeenth verse. It will be impossible to consider each verse in the chapter separately, for our time is too limited, so that some of them will have to be passed with but a small amount of study.

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." There is one thought about this glory that I wish to make plain to you. I stated last night that if we were joint-heirs with Christ, we must have whatever Christ has. When He enters upon His kingdom, receiving that promise which God made to Abraham and to his seed, we shall enter upon it with Him. We are joint-heirs with Christ; therefore whatever Christ enjoys now, we have too, if we are in Him. Whatever glory He has now, is for us also. All the love that He enjoys in the presence of His Father, we enjoy likewise; for He says, "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." So it is that God has bestowed this wonderful love upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Think of it, God has one only begotten Son, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person; He is the well beloved; but O, the wideness of His love, that He is able to take us into it, to adopt us into His family, and make us sharers of the same title that His only begotten Son shares. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Just as the world did not recognize Him as the divine Son of God, the heir of heaven; so it will not recognize us as the sons of God, and the heirs of heaven. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." We are the children of God now, just as much His sons now as we ever will be. The glory of the Sonship is not manifested in us, but when Christ shall appear, we shall be like Him, for He "shall change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

Then shall the children of God shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Brethren, since I have learned that God gives both grace and glory, I delight more and more in thinking of the glory that shall be revealed in us. For I understand that God gives them both by the same power, and that throne to which we come and make our petitions, as to a throne of grace, is likewise a throne of glory. Says Jeremiah, when making petition for his people: "Do not abhor us, for Thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us." And so, since it is both a throne of grace and a throne of glory, the grace that is bestowed is equal to the measure of the glory that there is in that throne. That glory is by and by going to be revealed in us, so that this poor, vile body will shine like the sun. This assurance, that the glory is to be revealed in us by and by, is our assurance that the measure of that grace may be revealed in us now; and that is why the Lord has revealed to us now just as much of the glory that is to come, as we can understand. Here is where we often fail to get the benefit of things that God has set before us about this glory that is to come. We forget that they are given for our present help, that we can have and share all the strength that there is in them now.

Just as much as the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed; just that much are the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the grace that is given us at this present time to endure them. The grace is equal to the glory.

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Now we have received the firstfruits of the Spirit. That does not mean that we are now to receive only a little of the Spirit, but that we get the Spirit as the firstfruits, or the advance money—the earnest—of our inheritance. Paul proves this in Ephesians 1:13, 14: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory.” Then having the Spirit of God, and being the sons of God, is entering upon the riches of our inheritance now. We begin to share the riches of that inheritance now, and if we continue to be the sons of God, we continue in our inheritance right along through eternity, the only difference being that when the Son of God comes, we shall have the full inheritance and glory of it.

By looking at these promises this way, we can see how it is that heaven begins right here on earth. If we really take hold of these things by faith, we can carry the Spirit of God with us, and we shall know the peace and joy of heaven.

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope. For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.”

Brethren, there is a whole world of encouragement in these verses. I have thought so much sometimes when I have been at our meetings, and have heard one after another arise and bear testimony, and close with the words, “pray for me,” that Christ Himself prayed for us, and that the Holy Spirit itself is making intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered. Brethren, while we can ask for others to pray for us, cannot we take hold by

faith and appropriate the prayers that are being continually offered for us in heaven above? Even if the brethren do not pray for us, we have the joy and the comfort of knowing that Christ and the Spirit are praying for us.

For myself, I can understand these things and draw encouragement out of them just this way: I go to God, and lay my soul open before Him, and ask Him to give me—what shall I ask for? Sometimes the words are gone, and I can think of nothing, only an inexpressible desire for something more than I have; but the Holy Spirit knows what I need, and knows the mind of God. It knows just what God has to give me, and so it makes intercession for me, and God gives exceeding abundantly above all I can ask or think. The Spirit of God takes those thoughts that we cannot put into words, and can scarcely think, and it transmutes them into words and petitions before the throne of God, and He that searcheth the hearts of men knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.

I am persuaded that a great many of us make a great mistake in this matter of searching the hearts. We hear brethren saying that they “are going to search their hearts, and put away all the evil things that they can find to be in them.” Says Jeremiah, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” Jeremiah 17:9, 10. We are here on earth, and in a sinful condition. We admit that we are not in that spiritual condition that we ought to be; and so we will search our hearts, and put away all the wickedness that we can find in them. We cannot do it, for the heart will deceive us every time. Yet God can search the heart, and He does; and if we will take the result of His searching, great will be our joy. For it is the Comforter that brings these sins to our hearts, that the Lord hath searched out; and this very act of bringing our sins before our eyes, is a part of the comfort of God. Yes; by the very work of making known our sins to us, God gives us comfort.

Some people say that the Lord makes known their sins to them as they can bear them. When the Lord made known my sins to me, I could not bear them. I thought that the very life was being crushed out of me, and I knew I could not bear them. There was where the comfort came in, I could not bear them, so I was willing to let the Saviour bear them for me. So the Lord searches the hearts of men, and the only thing that we have to do is to

accept the pardon that He has for us, when He has searched them out, and held them up before our eyes.

Now we come to the most blessed, and the most glorious part of this most glorious chapter.

One word forms the keynote of the eighth chapter of Romans: “glory.” “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

The twenty-eighth verse is quoted wrong very often, and applied wrong, very much more often, just by the changing of tense. People read it, “We know that all things will work together for good to them that love God.” But that is not what Paul says. He says that all things work together for good, at the present time, for those who love God. But says one, I don’t know that they do. Well, just take hold of this Scripture, and believe it, and then you will know it. The only way that we can know is by believing the word of God. We shall then find that all things do work together for good to them that love God. This is the joy of the Christian—that there cannot anything bad happen to him.

Some say, there is a special class to whom this is so. Yes, that is true, there is a special class, and that special class is composed of them that love God. We know whether we love God or not, therefore we know whether we can appropriate this promise or not. Is there not reason enough to love God? Some say, I want to love God more, I know that I do not love Him enough. How absurd this is—just as if the love of God was a duty that we could drive ourselves to perform. Love cannot be forced; the very act of forcing a person to love another, would show that there was not any love at all. How do we love any object for which we do have affection? Simply because it is lovable in our eyes, and the more we know of that thing we love, the more we love it. Then the more we know of God, the more we shall love Him. As we come to His word, from which we must get our knowledge of Him, we see the wideness of the mercy of God, and we cannot help loving Him. Why cannot we help loving Him? Because He first loved us. Then if we would love God more, study His love more as it is revealed in His word.

Now how about this class, “To them who are called according to His purpose”? Here we have the matter of “calling,” and that causes some to be discouraged sometimes. A brother will say, “Perhaps I am not called, I am not at all sure that I am; and therefore it don’t work good for me.” That matter of “calling” can be settled very easily. Who has God called? “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17.

Now the call is to every man and woman and child on earth. Those that hear it are to take it up and pass it along. The kindness of God is wide enough to take in every individual; “for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Those two texts are sufficient to scatter to the four winds all the theological trash that has been written to prove that God has some set few that He has called, and no others. Let no soul stay away, because he thinks he is not called. The call is to all. All do not come, all do not take the advice of Peter, and make their calling and election sure; but that is not the fault of God’s provision.

Now we are “called” and “elected.” Sometimes we get wonderfully afraid of that word, “elected.” Is there any need to be afraid of that term? No; for every individual can be a candidate, and every candidate can be elected. Here is something that everybody can have, and the fact that one is elected, does not debar everyone else from being elected.

In 2 Timothy 1:9 we read, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Mark you, His own purpose is a purpose of grace, and the free gift by grace comes upon all unto justification of life. Now note what the election is: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him In love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

“He hath blessed us in all spiritual blessings!” In what? In Christ; therefore just the moment you give up self and take Christ instead, you have

everything that Christ has to give. Why have all these blessings been lodged in Christ? Because He is able to bless you, “in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:26. So since we have given to us by God Himself all the blessings that can be given to deliver us from sin, and to turn us from our iniquities, we can have joy and peace in Him. Peter says, “According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” Everything that is necessary for life and godliness is given unto us. In whom? In Christ. Therefore the soul that stands in Christ may stand and does stand as firm and secure as the Rock of Ages.

Now it is “to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted.” In whom? “In the beloved.” Not in ourselves, but in the beloved; and every one is called to the fellowship of Christ, if he will accept it. Brethren, is it unreasonable that God does not accept those who will not accept Him? No. Then is it unreasonable and unjust that God accepts us when we accept His call? Certainly not. Then we are elected in Him, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved...Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in Him; in whom we also have obtained an inheritance.” Mark it, when we are in Christ, we have obtained an inheritance—we have the firstfruits of it—we begin to share it now.

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate. Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Just a few words on “foreknowledge.” Sometimes the position is taken that God did not know what man was coming to when He made him, and if He did know, then He ought not to have made him at all, or He ought to have stopped him from going in the way he has gone. God does know, and He foreknows, and He knows the end from the beginning. “Known unto God from the beginning are all His works.” God has not changed a hair’s breadth from the plan which He knew before the world began. And there is no power in all the universe that could make Him change.

“Did God know that Adam was going to sin, and does He know whether we will be saved or not?” Yes, He knows all about it; who will be saved and who will be lost. “Then how can it be that we are free?” I do not know, and

it does not make any difference. I know from His word that I am perfectly free to have salvation, and to have it when I want it. I know at the same time that God knows whether I will take it or not. I cannot understand how these two things can be; but God knows, and He is not unjust, so it is all right. There is not an angel in heaven who knows how it can be, but they know that it is so.

Notice the absurdity of the statement, that God can know if He wants to, but that He does not want to know some things, and therefore does not exercise His power to know. Some say that if he did know, He would be responsible for our being saved or lost, so He does not exercise His power to know, and therefore releases Himself from that responsibility. That is bringing a fearful charge against God. It really throws all the responsibility of man's ruin upon God, and charges Him with trying to shirk it. If He chooses not to know certain things, how is it possible for Him to know what He wants to know, and what He does not want to know?

The very statement that He wills not to know certain things proves that He must know them in order to know that He does not want to know them, and this is an utter absurdity. That He wills not to know the things that He does know, is a self-evident absurdity. Such an idea as that must necessarily be based on the supposition that God knows what He does know by studying. But God does not have to count, and calculate, and figure to arrive at conclusions. He is God, and knowledge is in Him, and begins and ends in Him.

God is the High and Holy One "that inhabiteth eternity." He dwells in eternity. What is eternity? It is something that has neither beginning nor ending. It may be represented by a circle, at every point of which God dwells at the same time. He is self-existent. That is, the millions of ages that have been in the past, and the millions that are to be in the future, are all "just now" with God. Past, present, and future are all present with God. He lives in an eternal now. We cannot understand how that can be; but that does not matter; He says it is so, and we believe Him.

That He is the eternal God, constitutes the strength of the fact that He is our refuge. It is the eternal God who has had charge of our ways in the past, and we have confidence in His leading. If He had not known the past and the future, how could I have known whether He was leading me right or not? Job says, "He knoweth the way that I take."

He leads us in the way that we should go, and He looked over the ages, and He saw just who would have the inheritance, and He is preparing it for him. What would you think of a man, to put the thing on a very low plane, who got a lot of stones together, and commenced to build a house. You ask him what kind of house he is going to build. “Why,” he says, “I don’t know, I am going to put these stones and timbers together, and then see what kind of house will come of it.” Such talk as that would be foolishness. Before a man starts in to build a house, he knows just how it is coming out, he knows exactly how it will look when it is finished. When God laid His plans in ages past, don’t you think that He knew what kind of earth He was going to have? He knew what kind of earth it was going to be and He had a purpose in making it. He created it to be inhabited.

Not only did He know what kind of place it was going to be, but He knew what kind of men were going to dwell in it; He knew every man who would dwell in it, and He had every one of them named. Those men whom God saw that He would have to inhabit the earth, when He laid His plans for it in ages past, were to be good and holy men; and that same earth, when this little experiment of sin is worked out, will be inhabited by just exactly the persons that God saw would inhabit it, and they will have the names that He gave them in ages past.

In Revelation 2:17 we read, “And I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Now it is not to be supposed that over in the kingdom of God we will not know each other’s names, to be able to pronounce them. In the Bible every name signified something. Jacob was the “supplanter;” Israel the “prince of God;” Abraham, the “father of many nations;” Sarai, a “contentious woman;” and Sarah, a “princess.” The name signified the character of the individual.

Now while all the redeemed are to have the perfect character of God, yet that character is so perfect and so broad, that there is room for each to have a distinct character. Why is it that no one will be able to understand the name of any one else? Because no two persons will have had the same experience in developing character. No two persons have been led in the same way, and have had the same experience, or trials. “The heart knoweth its own business and the stranger meddleth not therewith.”

In Exodus 33:17 the Lord said to Moses, “Thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name.” Moses was wonderfully near to the Lord

at that time. He walked with God, and endured continually “as seeing Him who is invisible.” Day by day his character was moulded by the Almighty, and had it not been for one sin he would have been translated without seeing death. He was meek above all men, and God knew him by that name which was written in the book.

Man fell, but every man who lived directly after the fall could have accepted the proffered salvation if he had wished, and could have been one of those persons who would people the earth, one of those persons whom God saw when He laid the plans for the earth and for its inhabitants. If that had been so, the earth would have been filled, and the work closed up long ago. Would that have been unjust to us, for in that case we would have been unborn and therefore left out? No, it would have been no more unjust than it will be unjust to close the work in a few years from now, and leave out possible nations yet unborn.

Now God foreknew us in Christ, and in Him in the beginning we were predestinated to just such a place in the earth in its state of purity as God wants us to have. I am so thankful that we may have Christ if we will, and if we will believe Him and trust in Him, we know that we are predestinated to a place in His kingdom. God hath “predestinated us according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Cannot you see that all things work together for good to them that love God?

How do I know that I am a child of God? He loved me, and He bought me, and I gave myself to Him, and therefore I am His. Now I am in Christ, and it matters not what happens to me. There is not a bad thing that can come upon me, for everything that does come, God will work it for my good; and not only will He do it, but He does do it. He does it that He may develop my character, and fit me for what He is preparing for me.

Now, Satan concocts some wicked scheme against me— influences some man or government to do something against me, that is calculated to destroy me. Well, that is all right; for God takes those very wicked schemes, and out of them He brings good for me. Satan works those wicked schemes to accomplish my ruin; but God takes his schemes, and by them carries me along to the desired haven. Therefore the Christian has no business to be complaining.

There is no one who would think of complaining when he was having a good time. But the Christian is having a good time all the time, for all things work together for good to him. These bad things good, that are concocted against us? Yes, for although they are bad when they start, and are designed to

ruin us, yet by the time they get to us, God transforms them into good. When we look at things in this way, we can praise God no matter what happens.

There was Joseph, his brethren sent him down to Egypt. They did it with no other intention than to destroy him. They first tried to kill him, and then when they sold him for a slave, they thought that he would not live long down there as a slave, and that they would get rid of him that way. And yet we are told by the psalmist, that, “God sent a man to Egypt.” Those brethren of his were working out the evil of their hearts, and at the same time God sent him down according to His will. We cannot understand how this can be, but we know that it was so.

Caiaphas, that wicked old high priest, asked if it were not better that one man die, than that the whole nation perish. There was the sentiment of the worldly-wise, scheming politician. Yet at the same time, in those very words, God was speaking a prophecy. There is not a wicked person, not even the devil himself, but God just takes him and his wickedness as it comes, and makes it work out His own eternal purpose. There is a world of comfort in the thought, that is the kind of God that we serve.

So it is that those whom He predestinated He called, and whom He called He justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified. Christ says, “and the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them: that they may be one; even as We are one.” John 17:22. Yes, the Lord does give grace and glory, and we have the glory now, only it is in the form of grace. “He will beautify the meek with salvation.” He has given unto us the riches of His glory and His grace. By and by He will show us the exceeding riches of His grace with the glory that is to be revealed.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Study 14

All things work together for good — now.

Receiving God's promises — now.

Satan — the accuser.

Romans 8:28-39

God-the Justifier.

In order to finish the eighth chapter this evening, it will be necessary for us to spend but a short time on each verse. Yet I believe it will be best to briefly review the verses considered at our last study.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” Romans 8:28-30.

You will notice that the verbs in these texts are all in the past tense. The blessings and promises contained here are true continually of those who are called of God, and of all who are called of God. Who are called? “For the promise is unto you, and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” He calls, “Whosoever will.” “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Now what is the purpose of God in calling all the world, whosoever will come, to Him? “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him.” Ephesians 1:10. Speaking on the same subject in 2 Timothy 1:9, the apostle Paul says: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given in Christ Jesus before the

world began.” We are then to be gathered together in Christ according to the purpose and grace of God. Seeing this, what is our duty? “Therefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” 2 Peter 1:10.

Now how can we make our calling and election sure? Every one is called; but the purpose of God is in Christ; “for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” Romans 11:36. We are all called, and we can all make our calling and election sure, by accepting Christ, and abiding in Him; then we are called according to the purpose of God, because we are in Christ. Give up everything of self, and everything that is connected with self; then you can have Christ, and you are called according to the purpose of God.

If we say, “Here I am, Lord, take me,” then we are in Christ; but that saying, “here I am, take me,” must be in deed and in truth. It is not simply the words, but we must know what it means. Then we are in Him, and therefore we are predestinated to be conformed according to the image of His Son.

“All things work together for good to them that love God.” When? Now. How is that? “For whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. When we tell the Lord, day by day, “Here is my heart, Lord; I have made no change in the gift; I want Thee to have it,” He will bind us with cords of divine love to the horns of the altar. We are then predestinated with Christ. What He has, we have. He has given us eternal life, and hath said Himself, “Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” John 10:28.

God had a purpose. Can it be changed? No, the thing is fixed. Those that are called, are justified, in Christ, therefore we have justification. But those that are justified, are also glorified. Can we believe that? If we can, we have got hold of a wonderful amount of strength. We have the glory of Christ? Yes, “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one.” John 17:22.

Mark, it is past tense. The glory that God has given to Christ is ours today. It is true that that glory doth not yet appear, and the world knoweth us not, because it knew not Christ. But it is ours, and it will appear, and even now it appears in the form of grace. Inwardly we have it, for says Paul, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened

with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” Ephesians 3:10. For the same reason Jeremiah says, “Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory.” Jeremiah 10:21.

“The Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Peter says that, believing, we may “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” 1 Peter 1:8.

The glory is all ours, we have it now. By and by when we have accepted this grace according to the riches of His glory, and worked out in us His purpose, then we will step out of grace into glory on the same level.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Take this verse and read it, and commit it to memory; and then remember to say, “They overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.” Revelation 12:11. And remember that Christ gave the example of defeating Satan by the word of the testimony; every time the temptation came He said, “It is written.” So when the clouds of darkness come, and the thick darkness gathers around, just say, “If God be for us, who can be against us!” And God is for us, as is shown in that He gave Christ to die for us, and raised Him again for our justification.

There is peace in the thought that God works out all things after the counsel of His own will, and that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Then it does not matter what comes against us, for in that it comes against us, it comes against the purpose of God, and that is as sure and firm as the existence of the Almighty can make it.

Now who is against us? Satan is against us. That does not make any difference if he is. Satan has tried his power with Christ, and it has proved itself to be nothing. “All power in heaven and earth is given to Me,” says Christ. Then if all power has been given to Christ in heaven and in earth, and it has been given, where is there any left for Satan? There is none. In a contest with Christ, Satan has no power; so if we have Christ for us, nothing can be against us.

Some of us have been talking about the power of Satan in the past; but he has none, there is none left for him. Technically speaking, Satan is against us. Who is he? “The Prince of the power of the air.” He brings pestilence, he brings disease, he puts things in our way, and arrays them against us. But the very things which he arrays against us to work our ruin, God takes and makes them for us. They are all good.

We often sing:

*Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me,
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee.*

But we very often sing things that we do not believe at all. Now I would not have any one sing these things any less, but I would have you believe them more. It is often the case that if you took the words from the music, and put them into plain prose there would not be any one in a whole congregation who would believe or dare to say them. Let us believe them not because they are in the hymn, but because they are Bible truth.

We are like the people who are represented by the prophet Ezekiel: “Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against [about] thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord.” That is it; they say, Come, let us go to meeting, and hear the sermon. “And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.” Ezekiel 33:30-32.

I say that a great many of these truths are just a song to many people. They hear them and are interested in them, and then pass on, but they do not believe or do them. But the Lord has given them for us to both believe and to do, and they will be our strength. So everything works for good to them that love God. We cannot always see how, or tell how; but God has said it, and we know it is so. There are many things that we cannot tell why we believe, and to our very senses they do not appear to be so; but the very fact that God has promised that if we do believe them they will be so, makes them so, when we take hold and believe them. We can never know this till we do believe; but when we do believe, then we will know. So if God be for us, who can be against us?

Think of that lone prophet of God, Elisha. He was down in Samaria, the mountains were all around him. A whole host of armed men had come to

take him. He stood alone with his servant, and that servant was afraid. He did not think in that moment, nor did he say, that the King of Israel ought to send a troop of horse, or some infantry to defend him. The young man came to him, and said, "Alas, my master! How shall we do?" Elisha prayed, "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes." And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw and behold the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire round about.

The whole mountain and plain was filled with chariots and horses, and any one of them was stronger than the whole host of the enemy. It is as true in our case as in that of Elisha, that "they that be for us are more than they that be against us," and the only thing for us to do is to get our eyes open so that we may see that this is so. What opens our eyes? The word; it is a lamp unto our feet and a light to our path, and if we believe it, we will know that they that are for us are more than they that are against us.

He who is with us is the living God of Israel, who has power to turn darkness into light, and weakness into strength; and every evil thing that comes against us, He turns into a blessing to help us on our way.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" Why will He with Christ also give us all things? Because all things are in Him. Note Ephesians 1:23. "Which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

He that hath put on Christ is "strengthened with all might!" Why? because God has placed Christ "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Therefore everything is in Christ. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He has all power given Him in heaven and in earth. Don't you see that this being the case, it is a foregone conclusion, that when God gave Christ for us, and freely delivered us all, that in Him He does give us all things.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Ephesians 1:3. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to knowledge and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding

great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:2-4.

Christ has all power, and He hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Notice that the past tense is used. This has been done for us. Then why don't we have them? For just one reason: because we don't take them. We have been mourning for so long, and saying that we want these things; well, we can have them, they have been given to us, and there is no reason why we should not appropriate them to ourselves.

Suppose I come to you and say that I am very hungry, and that I would like something to eat. All right, you say, just sit down here to the table, and we will get something for you. Soon you place the best of what you have on the table, and tell me that there it is, and now, eat. But I say, “O, I am so hungry, and I do want food so much.” All right, take it and eat. “But I am so hungry, and I do want something to eat, I have not had anything for days.” Well, take it. “Yes, but I do want food so bad.” You would say that I was out of my mind if I acted that way, and did not eat of the food that was so freely placed before me.

Said one to me the other night, “If that is the way that the Lord does with these blessings that pertain to life and godliness, we are certainly foolish that we do not take them; but I do not think that the illustration is a fair one, because we cannot see these things that the Lord has to offer, and we can see the food.” Neither do I think that it is a fair illustration, because it does not half fill the bill.

Did not you often think you saw something, that you did not see? Does not your sight often deceive you? Sometimes you think you saw a thing that you did not see, and then again you saw things that when you came to look at them closely were not as they really appeared to be. But the word of God never deceives. Therefore I am more sure of the things promised in the word of God than if I could see them. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.” Romans 4:16.

“The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:18. We must revise our logic a little in this matter. We think that anything that we can see is all right and sure. Therefore we get hold of a house or a piece of land or some other property, and think

that we have something, because there is in our possession something that we can see. But the truth of the matter is that the only things that we can depend on are the things that we cannot see. We can see the earth, and we can see the heavens, but they are going to pass away. “But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Peter 1:25.

With the psalmist we can say, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” Psalm 46:1-3. Can we say that? Brethren, that time is coming. The earth will reel to and fro like a drunken man, and be removed like a cottage, and the mountains will skip away, and pass over into the ocean. That is going to happen, and there will be some people at that time who will feel perfectly calm and trustful; but they will not be composed of men and women who have never learned to say that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose. The man that doubts God now will doubt Him then. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He with Him freely give us all things? That promise includes all. “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. This is not in the future. All things are yours, at the present time. Everything is ours, and therefore we can say with the psalmist, “The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

Yes, we have everything; we are children of the King, of the Most High. What difference does it make if people do not own us? God owns us, and He knows us; and therefore, if men heap on us reproach and persecution, the only thing we can do is to pity them, and labor for them, for they do not know the riches of the inheritance.

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” Well, there is one that will do it surely. We have his name, Satan. Here is a testimony concerning him. “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night.” Revelation 11:10. Yes;

Satan is the accuser of the brethren; he has done it day and night, and he is doing it still, —laying everything he can to the charge of God's elect. But he is cast down, and now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of His Christ. Christ has all power; how good that is.

But says one poor discouraged, desponding soul, "I believe all that, and I have confessed my sins, and I believe that God is faithful and just to forgive them and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness; but these sins keep coming up before me all the time!" Are you sure that it is Satan that brings them up? That is an important point, for if you are sure of that, and they do come up, you ought to be one of the happiest creatures alive.

Why does Satan bring these things up? Because he is the accuser of the brethren, and he is a false accuser, he is a liar and the father of it, and therefore if Satan brings these sins up and accuses you, then you know that they are forgiven, because he would never have brought them up if they had not been forgiven. He could not tell the truth if he tried, and unless they had been forgiven he never would bring them up, never in the world, because he would be afraid that you would confess them, and they would be forgiven.

Well, another query: "I don't know; perhaps it is not Satan; it must be God." No; "It is God that justifieth." If God justifies, He cannot condemn. Who has any right to condemn, but God? No one—God is judge alone. Then there is no other soul that has any right to condemn, except God. He shows us our sins, and we confess them, and give ourselves to Him, and He justifies us, and in Him is no variableness nor shadow of turning; therefore, when He justifies, who is there in the universe that can condemn? Who will do it? Satan; but what have we to do with him? If we would only give more credence to God's truth, and less to Satan's lies, it would be better for us.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Who is going to condemn us, then, since God justifies, and Christ died and rose again as a pledge of that justification. Christ died and rose again, and is even now at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. Don't you see there is not a possible loophole left for discouragement for the Christian?

There is a time when God brings sins up before us, but it is when they have not been confessed. That is the only time. But it is the Comforter that convicts of sin; so He comforts us in every place, and in the very act of calling to our remembrance the wrongs that we have done. Then when God

brings sins to my notice that I have not confessed, I will thank Him for the comfort, and when Satan brings them up again, I will praise God again, for if they were not forgiven, Satan would never bring them up; but if they have been confessed, they have been forgiven.

In Christ are mercy and truth met together. The same hand that holds the law, holds the pardon also. Brethren, remember this, that when the law was spoken from Sinai in thunder tones, it was in the hand of a mediator, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the same hand which holds the justice, and that which convicts of sin, holds also the pardon. Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” That idea of “much more” which is so prominent in chapter five, is found again in these verses.

We often hear the expression, “If I can only get inside the gates of heaven, I will be satisfied.” I am so thankful that we don’t have to just get in as if we wished to apologize for our presence after we were there. Why not? Because He has promised that “an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

“We have enemies to contend with,” says one. Don’t talk about them, or your trials and temptations, but talk of the power of Christ. All power has been given to Him. So when we wrestle, we will remember that it is not an even-handed battle, but we fight a fight of faith, and the power is given unto us whereby we can be more than conquerors through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. Where sin abounded, there did grace much more abound.

Who are conquerors? They are those who have gained the victory. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” It is not flesh and blood that we are fighting against, therefore flesh and blood are of no account in the defense. Then how do we meet the foe? “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.”

There comes in that life question again. “Lay hold on eternal life.” The only power that can resist evil is the power of an endless life, and He that hath the Son hath that life. We are to fight the good fight of faith. What is

faith? Trusting in another. If I fight a fight with my fists, I do the fighting. If I fight the fight of faith, someone else is fighting for me, and I am getting the benefit. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well how is this? Christ has fought, has He not? Yes, He has fought hand to hand with Satan here on earth. He conquered Satan and all his host, and He has put down all might and dominion, for He has put above all “principalities and power and might.” Mark, those are the very things that we wrestle with. How great was the victory of Christ over them? “Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself.” Colossians 2:15. So Christ met these very enemies that we have to wrestle with, and He triumphed over them and spoiled them. He has gained the victory over them. What is the result? What always must be the result when a battle has been fought, and one side has conquered the other completely, peace. Satan would not give in, so the Saviour conquered a peace.

“He is our peace. ‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27. As He has given us His peace, and peace follows victory, so the victory has been gained already. And if we have Christ, that victory is ours already. We simply lay hold of the eternal life of Christ, and that is done by laying hold of His word, which is spirit and life. Thus we bring Christ into our hearts, and so we have Christ, and the victory that He has won for us.

The great trouble with us is that sometimes we are afraid that Christ will gain the victory. Why? We have some darling sin that we do not want to give up, we are willing we think that all the rest should go but that, and so we are afraid that Christ will gain the victory, and that that sin will have to be given up. Just think of it! We call Christ in to help us defeat our enemy, and when He comes, He finds us on the side of the enemy. But if we will give up all these things, Christ will give us something that is infinitely better. When we make up our minds from the word of God that all that God has to give us is in Christ, that He is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, we will realize that the meager things of this earth are not worth having, compared to what is going to be given us.

In 1 John 4:2-4 we have reference to the wicked spirits with which we have to fight, and this assurance is given to the children of God: “Ye are of

God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” So with Elisha we know that they that are for us are more than they that are against us. “This is the victory that hath overcome the world even our faith.” R. V. 1 John 5:5

Do we believe that Christ has conquered everything, and that when we have Him, we have everything, and that there is no power of darkness that can do us any hurt?

When this has been done, we are crucified with Him. Our own lives have been given up to Christ, but we still live. Then it must be some other life that we live, and that life is the life of Christ. That is the life in which we glory. Christ is our life, and He has the victory, and therefore we have it. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11.

What is it to put on the whole armour? To stand in Christ complete, that is what we mean.

He is the truth, the Lord our righteousness. Shod with peace, He is our peace. It is Christ all through. Then take the sword in your hand, and it is the word of God, and Christ is the eternal word.

“And ye are complete in Him.” Having put on the whole armour which is Christ, we are complete in Him. “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ!” He is the armour, and the armour is He. Thus it is that in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us and gave His life for us. There is nothing that can take the armour away from us. “For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Study 15

The Christian's relationship to governments and masters.

Submission to persecution.

Romans 13:1-8

Witnessing for Christ in the face of persecution.

It will be necessary to skip from the eighth to the thirteenth chapter; not but that there are some of the most important truths in the Bible contained in the intervening chapters, but the time allotted for this series of Bible study is too limited to admit of their perusal. So tonight we will take up the study of the 13th chapter, as it treats upon questions which are of vital importance to all believers in the third angel's message. This chapter is frequently used and quoted to prove that civil government has something to do with religion; and the reason why this mistake is made, is that the chapter is regarded as a treatise setting forth the duties of civil rulers, and showing the limits to which their power may extend. But this is a mistake.

In this chapter the apostle Paul is speaking to professed Christians. As we have already stated, this is proved in the early part of the epistle where in the second chapter the apostle addresses those who rest in the law and make their boast of God. From that point forward the epistle is addressed to those that profess to know God. In the seventh chapter the apostle says, "For I speak to them that know the law." So instead of the thirteenth chapter being simply a treatise on civil government, showing its duties and limits, it is addressed to the church, showing how they should relate themselves to God, so as not to be in conflict with the powers that be. If this is borne in mind, it will be a great help in the solution of the many important questions which are considered in the chapter.

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation.” Romans 13:1, 2. These verses are not to be construed as teaching that Christians must obey every command that civil governments may impose upon them. We may recall the time in which this was written, and the people to whom it was addressed.

It was written at a time when the Roman Empire held sway over all the known world, and it was especially addressed to the church at Rome, the capital of this universal Empire. The emperor reigning at that time was Nero, and he was doubtless the wickedest, the most blood-thirsty, and abominable licentious monarch that ever sat upon the throne of any kingdom. I suppose there never was another man in the world that combined so much evil in himself as Nero the emperor of the Romans. He was a heathen, and a heathen of the heathens.

The laws which were enacted in Rome recognized the heathen religion, and were opposed to Christianity. In the reign of Nero occurred the most cruel persecution to the Christians that ever has been since the world began; and it was during this persecution that the apostle Paul lost his head. Therefore it is manifest that the apostle, when he says that we are to be subject to the powers that be, does not mean to convey the idea that we should do everything that the powers that be tell us to do. If the apostle Paul had done that, he never would have lost his head: but he suffered because the truth which he preached was opposed to the principles of the Roman government; and we cannot suppose that the apostle Paul would preach one thing and do another. Then the question arises, What does he mean by exhorting us to be “subject unto the higher powers”?

Take the case negatively. We are not to resist the powers that be. Why? Because we are children of the Highest, children of the heavenly kingdom, and the rule of that kingdom is peace. The ruler of the kingdom is the Prince of peace. Therefore since we have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His Son we are to allow the peace of God to rule in our hearts. Colossians 3:15. For this reason we are to “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14.

In the 12th chapter of Romans we are instructed, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” That does not mean that

we are to live peaceably with all men just as long as we can endure their provocation, and when that gets unendurable, that we are at liberty to have it out with them in a regular quarrel. But, it does mean that “if it be possible, as much as lieth in you,” you are to live at peace with all men. How far now, is it possible for the Christian to live at peace with all men? It is possible for him to be at peace with all men, as far as he himself is concerned, all the time. For, he is dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto Christ. Christ dwells in his heart by faith, and Christ is the Prince of peace. Then there are no circumstances under which the Christian is justified in losing his temper and declaring war either against an individual or a government.

In Galatians 5:18, we are told that, “If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” The works of the flesh are the works which are done by those who are under the law, and in the enumeration of these works we find the word “strife.” Therefore a Christian cannot enter into strife, because he is not in the flesh. Strife can have no place in us: therefore so far as we are concerned it will be peace all the time. But if those men with whom we have to do, steel their hearts against the truth of God, and will not be affected by the truth, they will make trouble, but the trouble will be on their part; with us there will be peace all the time.

In 1 Peter 2:21 and onward, we are told that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps. He, when He was reviled, reviled not again: when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. The case of Christ before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, is an instance of perfect peace. Therefore, if we follow the example of Christ, and the exhortation of Paul, which being inspired must be in harmony with it, we shall not arrive at that point where so many say that, “forbearance ceases to be a virtue.” If we are Christians, we have the love of Christ abiding in our hearts. That love is charity, and charity endureth all things.

Christ, in His sermon on the mount, commanded us “that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Now does He mean what He says or not? Does that mean that if a wicked man come up to us and offer personal violence, we are to defend ourselves, or not? We leave this question open for you to decide for yourselves.

No matter under what government a Christian is living, he is in duty bound not to resist its ordinances. All governments, good, bad, or indifferent, are ordained of God; so that the wickedness or evils existing in

the government give no excuse to the Christian for resisting. Governments are all ordained of God, and they are all better than anarchy; but they are not ordained to take charge of and promote or carry out religion, because God has not delegated His authority in matters of religion to any earthly power, although they are ordained of God.

Now how about being subject to the powers, yet not always obeying them? Take a familiar example. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon, and his was certainly a government ordained of God, for God had given all the lands over which he ruled into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and all nations were to serve him, and his son and his son's son. Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold and commanded that when the music sounded, all the people were to bow down to it. It was told to the king that the three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had not fallen down and worshiped the golden image. The king called them to him, and told them that although they had disobeyed him, he would overlook that offense, if when the music sounded again, they would worship the image. "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy god, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

They did not resist the king. He gave them an alternative. They could do one of two things: bow down to the image, or be cast into the furnace. They disobeyed the order to bow down to the image; but they did not resist the alternative to go into the furnace. And moreover they told the king that their God was able to deliver them out of his hand; but they did not know whether He would or not. That would not matter any way. If He did not choose to deliver them, they were to be burned. That was all right; they would yield up their lives, triumph in death, and in that way be delivered out of his hand, if in no other.

What is the relation of Christians to civil government? Christ is the anointed One. For what was He anointed? "To preach good tidings [the gospel] unto the meek;...to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Now there will be a time when the kingdoms of this earth will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, as is stated by the prophet.

In the second Psalm, we read, “Ask of Me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” But what is He going to do with them? Dash them in pieces. That time has not come yet; therefore Christ, the Mediator, has nothing whatever to do with the governments of earth; His rule is a spiritual rule in the hearts of His people. His kingdom, for He sits upon a throne and rules, is a rule over the hearts of His people. He rules in the hearts of men, where it is impossible for the kings of the earth to rule. Strife may rule there all the time; but they cannot prevent it; or peace may have dominion, and they cannot disturb it. He sits upon a throne of grace, and there He dispenses grace without interfering with the governments of earth and in a way which they cannot hinder.

The great men of this earth exercise lordship over others; but Christ has commanded that it be not so among His people, but he that would be greatest among them, should be the servant of all.

Take Daniel as an example of how men should be subject to the powers that be, and still be subject to God. There was a decree established that whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days after the passing of that decree, save of the great king Darius should be cast into the den of lions. Daniel occupied a high position in the government, and he was a peaceable citizen, as every Christian must be. It would have been very easy for him to say, “I do not need to ask anything of any man for thirty days, and I can shut myself up in my house where no one can see me, and there I can worship God quietly, and so I will carry on my religion and worship the God of heaven, and still not stir up the anger of the king against me.

This is a question of vital importance to us. When persecution is liable to come upon us, shall we cease to work openly in our fields on the first day of the week, as we have been doing, and do something quietly in our houses, so that no one will see us, or should we do as Daniel did? He opened his windows and did exactly what they told him not to do: make petitions to the God of heaven. He did it openly where his enemies could see him do it, although the decree had been passed that for following such a course he should be cast into the den of lions. Are we not, when for fear of persecution, we work quietly in our houses where no man can see us, are we not hiding our light under a bushel? Some say that there is no need of being foolhardy. That is very true; but shall we be foolhardy if we do as Daniel did? Shall we say that he made a mistake?

In 1 Peter 2:13, we are told, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." This is parallel with the statement in the 13th of Romans, as is seen by verse 7.

Peter carries this same principle into the minor things of life, and immediately after speaking of the duty of obedience to the king, he speaks of the duty of servants to their masters. If we find ourselves subject to a master, and there is no difference whether he rules over one or over millions, we must all be subject to him. But supposing that the master be a bad man, and he commands those who are under him to do something that is wrong, then what? "For this is thankworthy if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." 1 Peter 2:19-20.

If a man finds himself the subject of a bad master, and he does everything that bad master tells him, how can he suffer for it? He is a willing tool in the hands of his master; but the suffering is brought by the fact that he will not do the wicked things commanded; and this is what is acceptable in the sight of God. He has disobeyed the power, and because he has disobeyed it, he suffers; but he suffers for well doing. If he obeys that wicked master he must disobey God. This we know would be wrong. But it is perfectly right to disobey the wicked decree of a master or government, provided always that when the punishment comes, we take it patiently. This is acceptable with God. The very fact that a man suffers for well doing, shows that he is the servant of God, and accepted of Him. Then how is it that we can be subject to the powers that be, and yet go directly contrary to what they say? By submitting to the punishment, but not doing the evil thing they commanded us to do. As Christians, we owe allegiance to God, the highest power, and to Him alone.

"Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?" "Do that which is good," and we shall have praise of the same. The same truth is brought out by the prophet Isaiah when he says, "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be

afraid. Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.” Isaiah 8:12, 13. Christians must sanctify the Lord in their hearts; then He will be their fear, and they will not fear what men shall do unto them.

Peter brings out the same truth when he says, “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” 1 Peter 3:14, 15. Don’t be afraid of the terror. Why? Because we have sanctified the Lord God in our hearts, and He is our fear. God is with us, Christ is with us, and when men cast reproaches upon us, they cast them upon our Saviour. He is the one that suffers, not we.

We are to sanctify the Lord in our hearts and to be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in us. It has seemed to me from the connections of these words, and the scripture that is quoted, that the special time when we are to give this answer of the hope that is in us, is the time when we are brought before magistrates for well doing. What help have we? We have sanctified the Lord God in our hearts by taking His word into our hearts so we need not make any great provision for what we will say. For God will give “a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to gainsay or resist.” Luke 21:15.

It seems to me that the most important thing for all of us who have this special truth which is bound to bring us into trouble with the powers that be, is to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts by the Spirit of God and His word. We must become students of the word of God, and followers of Christ and His gospel. I believe there are farmers and mechanics among us, who, although they have never been able to put texts together so as to preach a sermon, have nevertheless sanctified the Lord in their hearts by faithful study of His word. These men will be brought before courts for their faith, and they will preach the gospel there by way of their defense, because God in that day will give them a mouth and wisdom, that their adversaries can neither gainsay nor resist.

Sometimes people say that there is no use to make our faith prominent and thus to court persecution. But if we follow such a policy as this, brethren, what are we doing but hiding our light beneath the bushel? If you do not allow any one to see the shining of your light, what good does it do?

Sometimes we are in danger of working so diligently to stay persecution, so that we may be able to carry forward the work in peace, that we neglect the work. We are told that if we disobey the laws and are put in prison, our wives and families will suffer, and that the first duty we have is to provide for them. Now, brethren, how far can we carry this? Shall we show our loyalty to God, or shall we hide it? O, says one, "We can keep our religion; but we can keep it quietly; we must not leave our families to suffer!" Brethren, what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul? The Master says, "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

Go back to Daniel's case. He did not keep quiet: he prayed openly. "Yes; it was all right for Daniel to do that, but it is different now in the nineteenth century." No; it is not. It is just the same. The people might have said to him, "Daniel, you can do your people good in the position of influence you hold; you can keep them from being persecuted. Now don't go and get shut up in that den of lions, and lose your life, and bring great calamity upon your people!" But Daniel did go to the den of lions, and he went there for living out his faith openly, and in a way that all men could see it, and did it bring calamity upon his people? No; indeed. In consequence of his obedience, the name of the God of heaven was more highly honored and revered in that nation than it ever had been before.

It is our duty to preach the gospel; to arise and let our light shine, and if we do that, God will hold the winds as long as they ought to be held. Brethren, the third angel's message is the greatest thing in all the earth. Men don't regard it as such; but the time will come in our lifetime when the third angel's message will be the theme and topic of conversation in every mouth. But it will never be brought to that position by people who keep quiet about it, but by those who have their trust in God, and are not afraid to speak the words which He has given them.

In doing this, we will not take our lives in our hands, and I thank God for it. Our lives will be hid with Christ in God, and He will care for them. The truth will be brought to this high place simply by men and women going forth and preaching the gospel and obeying that which they preach. Let people know the truth. If we have a peaceful time in which to spread it, we will be thankful for that. And if men make laws that would seem to cut off the channels through which it can go, we can be thankful that we worship a God who makes even the wrath of men to praise Him; and He will do it, He will spread His gospel by means of those very laws which wicked men

have enacted to crush out its life. God holds the winds, brethren, and He commands us to carry the message. He will hold them as long as it is best for them to be held, and when they begin to blow, and we feel the first puffs in the beginning of persecution, they will do just what the Lord wants them to do. We sing:

*If through unruffled seas,
calmly toward heaven we sail,
With grateful hearts, O God, to Thee,
We'll own the favoring gale.
But should the surges rise,
And rest delay to come,
Blest be the sorrow, kind the storm,
Which drives us nearer home.*

We often sing that, brethren, when we don't believe it. For when we see the storm coming, we think it is not best for us to let it come so we hide from it or try to prevent it. But everything works the counsel of God's will. The storm will hasten the calm, and rest will not delay to come.

“Render therefore their dues: tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” Romans 13:7, 8. If you do this, you live peaceably with all men, as far as lieth in you. If you love your neighbor as yourself, that is the fulfilling of the whole law; because a man, to love his neighbor, must love God, because there is no love but of God.

If I love my neighbor as myself, it is simply because the love of God is abiding in my heart. It is because God has taken up His abode in my heart, and there is no man on earth who can take Him away from me. It is for this reason that the apostle refers to the last table of the law, because if we do our duty toward our neighbor, it naturally follows that we love God.

Sometimes we are told that the first table points out our duty to God, and constitutes religion, and that the last table defines our duty to our neighbor, and constitutes morality. But the last table contains duties to God just as much as the first one. David, after he had broken two of the commandments contained in the last table when making his confession, said: “Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight.” God must be first and last and all the time. And if the requirements of God demand that

we go contrary to the requirements of man, we must obey God and trust our all to Him.

It matters not whether wicked men hedge up the way; we should “go forward” with our work. When Israel was going out of Egypt, they came to a place where the Red Sea was before them and the mountains and the hosts of the Egyptians behind; but the command of God to Moses was, “Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” But how could they with the sea before them and their enemies behind? That did not matter. God said, “Go forward.”

These things are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. The Israelites were to go forward on the word of God. It mattered not if the sea was before them. God opened it so that they passed through dryshod. But if He had not, they could have gone through on top of the water just as well. They could have gone over on the word of God. That was the way that Peter walked on the Sea of Galilee.

We must ever remember that we are the children of God; and being children of God, we have overcome the world. All these lessons that we have had are to prepare us for the time of trouble. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God (which is the Lord Jesus Christ), that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Study 16

Romans — A Review

Romans is a study of the third angel's message.

The third angel's message is summed up in the preaching of the gospel.

Every doctrine is an expression of the gospel.

This is the last evening allotted to our Bible study, and it therefore seems proper that we should take a little review of the truths we have been considering. We shall find this review outlined in Revelation 14:6-12.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

We are accustomed, and rightly so, to speak of these three messages as one threefold message. The word which is rendered “followed” means properly, “went with.” Thus rendered the text would read, “And the third angel went with them.” It is the same word that is used in 1 Corinthians 10:4, “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that went with them (margin), and that rock was Christ.” Thus the first angel sounded, the second joined him, and the third joined them both; and together they all three go sounding the message. There is therefore but one message for us to consider, and that one comprises all three.

The message prepares a people who are described in the twelfth verse, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” There are three points which these people have: patience; keeping the commandments; and the faith of Jesus. While they are all combined in one, I think we may consider them in a reverse order to that in which they are stated: faith; obedience; and patience. For faith is the foundation upon which everything is built, and out of which everything grows. Faith that works obedience and the crowning grace is patience; for the apostle James says, “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James 1:4. When patience is perfected in the saints, then they themselves are perfect. So it is that this threefold message brings out a people who are perfect before God. They are just what the Saviour says they must be: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48.

Perhaps some in the audience have not realized the fact that the lessons we have been studying for the last dozen evenings on the book of Romans, have been nothing but the third angel’s message. I wish to show you this evening that the third angel’s message is all summed up in the preaching of the apostle Paul, as described in 1 Corinthians 2:2. “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” That was all that Paul preached, and that which he preached was powerful. He says, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God....And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” 1 Corinthians 2:1, 4.

Now the things which Paul preached he describes in 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18: “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” Christ sent him to preach the gospel, and he did it not using the wisdom of man’s words, in order that his preaching might not be disannulled. He says “Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” Then when Paul preached among the Corinthians he preached nothing but Christ and Him crucified, and that was the gospel. That gospel—the cross of Christ—is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.

Now the question arises, Was this preaching of Paul’s anything like the third angel’s message, or the three fold message which is committed to us? Did his preaching differ from the preaching which we preach? If it differs, are we preaching what we ought to preach? In other words should our preaching embrace anything more than what the apostle Paul had? If it does, then whatever it may be we had better get rid of it as soon as we can. Now let us see why: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” That is a strong statement, but he repeats it and emphasizes it: “As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Galatians 1:8, 9.

These words are not in vain, for there have been men that have preached other gospels, or other things for the gospel; and more than that, there have been angels who have preached other gospels, and other things for the gospel. We shall yet see those fallen angels coming to us and preaching that which they call the gospel, which will have a power with it, and which will be accompanied by dazzling light. But the things which they tell us, we are to pronounce false, and the one who preaches them to us, accursed; because it will differ in some particular from that which the apostle Paul preached.

Leaving this point, we return to Revelation 14:6, where we read, “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth,...saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” This is a work that prepares men for the last judgment, and consequently a work which carries everything for man’s perfection, as we saw by the twelfth verse. But that message is nothing more nor less than the everlasting gospel. The second angel went with the first, and the third accompanied them both, and all three together sounded one cry.

The question arises, if the third angel came along and added his sound to the cry of the first and the second angel, do not we have something more to tell the world, than those who labored under the first message had? Well, we certainly can have nothing more to preach than the everlasting gospel. The second angel announces a fact, that Babylon is fallen, because of her apostasy from the gospel. Mark you, the second angel has no new truth to tell; merely a fact, that something has occurred. The third angel merely announces the punishment that will fall on the men who do differently from the truth announced by the first angel. But the first angel keeps sounding, and the three go together; and since the three keep sounding together, and the first is telling the everlasting gospel—that which is to prepare men to stand blameless before God—and the third angel is telling the punishment that will befall them if they do not receive the everlasting gospel, it necessarily follows that the entire threefold message is the everlasting gospel.

Mark it, the first angel proclaims the everlasting gospel; the second proclaims the fall of every one who does not obey that gospel; and the third proclaims the punishment that will follow that fall, and come upon those who do not obey. So the third is all in the first, the everlasting gospel. Yes, that everlasting gospel carries with it all truth. It is the power of God. That everlasting gospel, remember, is all summed up in one thing, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and of course risen again. We have nothing else in this world to proclaim to the people, whether we be preachers, Bible workers, colporteurs, canvassers, or simply people who in the humble sphere of their own home let the light shine. All that any of us can carry to the world is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Says one, that is taking an extreme view; are we going to throw away all the doctrines we have preached—the state of the dead, the Sabbath, and the law, and the punishment of the wicked? Throw them away? No; by no means. Preach them in season and out of season; but, nevertheless, preach nothing but Christ Jesus and Him crucified. For if you preach those things without preaching Christ and Him crucified, they are shorn of their power, for Paul says that Christ sent him to preach the gospel, not with words of man's wisdom, lest the preaching of the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. The preaching of the cross, and that alone, is the power of God. I say again, the gospel is the power of God, and the cross is the center of the gospel. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians 6:14. To Paul there was nothing else worthy of glorying in, save the cross of Jesus Christ his Lord.

We will now take up a few of the different lines of doctrine that we preach, and see how we may preach them, and at the same time preach only Christ and Him crucified.

And first, as to the doctrine of the Bible. The Bible is all doctrine. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17. The word doctrine means "teaching." Sometimes we get afraid of doctrine. We talk of doctrinal and practical sermons. But doctrine means teaching, and if any man do the will of God, he shall know the teaching. But teaching must be practical, or it is useless; then, brethren, the teaching of the Bible is all practical.

Now if we do not know the doctrine of the Bible, we do not know how to practice what it teaches. If a thing is not practical, it is impractical. But we will not say the teaching of the Bible is impractical something that cannot be practiced. So perhaps we can throw aside that distinction of doctrinal and practical sermons. A servant of God ought never to preach anything but practical sermons; but as all the teaching or doctrine of the Bible is practical, it is evident that in preaching really practical sermons we must preach nothing but doctrine and that doctrine must be the doctrine of Christ.

Now as to the specific lines of doctrine in Christ. We will first consider the law. I have only to call your attention to the fact that Christ is in the law, and the law is in Christ, and that you cannot separate one from the other, to prove that the two go together, and that preaching without Christ in it, will have no power or effect on the hearts of men. Our study of the book of Romans has brought this plainly before your minds. We do not make void the law by faith, but it is only by faith in Christ that we establish the law in our hearts.

The law condemns the sinner, and therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. But it is by the obedience of one that many shall be made righteous, and that obedience can be made ours by faith in the word of God, and by making Christ ours. To make Christ ours is to bring Him into our lives, and to have Him in our lives is to have life eternal. Christ is the truth, and the law is in Him in its perfection; and if we keep Christ in our hearts day by day, we have the law in our hearts in its perfection, so long as we do not waver.

If we have Christ, He is our salvation; but we must have Him every moment of our lives. One act of faith will not suffice for all time; "the just shall live by faith." But we can live only one moment at a time; and since

faith is our salvation, it is evident that we are saved moment by moment. There is no power in the law apart from Christ, and the preaching of the law without Christ in it, is simply preaching damnation to men, and not hope. But Christ has sent men as His ambassadors, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to tell them that they are prisoners of hope. Then are we preaching the preaching of Christ, are we carrying out His commission, if we preach the law, which only condemns, without Christ? No. We are to preach "hope." While the law is held over the sinner with all the terrors of Sinai, he is to have his mind directed to, not simply the law, but to the giver of the law, who has grace as well as truth in Himself. Truth and grace are in His hand; and when that truth condemns men, the grace that is held out by the same hand converts from sin.

When men have Christ they have His righteousness, which is the righteousness which the law demands. But the righteousness of Christ carries everything else with it for He has said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. That is the one thing needful, and if we have it, we have the whole gospel, for it is Christ and His righteousness, and He is our righteousness, our salvation, and our life, both here and hereafter.

The Sabbath

The particular truth that must be held up in these last days is the Sabbath. We cannot believe it or preach it too strongly. It is there that the great breach has been made in the law of God. Have you ever stopped to consider why it is that Satan has concentrated all his forces on that fourth commandment? The root of the whole matter is found in Hebrews 1:10. In speaking to the Son, God the Father says, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands."

Then when we read, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork," we know that they simply manifest the power that there is in Christ. John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:1-3. Everything that is made, is made by Christ.

In Psalm 111:2-4, I read, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious: and His righteousness endureth forever. He hath made His wonderful works to

be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.” Literally, and according to the Jewish rendering of the Hebrew, the first part of verse 4, would be. “He hath made a memorial for His wonderful work.” What is His work? The heavens are His works and He laid the foundations of the earth. I wish you to note that those three words righteousness, gracious, and compassion, are grouped together by the psalmist with these thoughts on the creation of the world. We shall see why, presently.

What is the memorial of God? “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:1-3. What then is the memorial? The seventh day; which is the Sabbath. It is the crowning day of the week, a memorial of creation completed a creation in which the power of God’s word was manifested for He spake and it was He commanded and it stood fast.” If you will just keep the word of God and the power of the word of God before your minds it seems that you cannot fail to see why it is that David groups grace compassion and righteousness, all together with the works of God’s hands.

It is the word of God that created the heavens and the earth. The Sabbath is the memorial which is given that we might commemorate and meditate upon the power of God’s word. In Ezekiel 20:20 God says that the Sabbath is to be a “sign between Me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Now mark it is to be a sign so that we may know that the God of heaven is our God.

Now turn to Jeremiah 10:10-12 and there we read, “But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God and an everlasting king:... Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion.” Turn to Psalm 96:5 and there we read “For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

Now anything that will bring the mind of man to a knowledge of the fact, or that will recall the fact, that the God which we serve is the Creator, will also prove to us that all other gods are false gods. For the power to create is the distinctive attribute, it is the sole prerogative, of the God of heaven.

He can create, and everything else that pretends to be worthy of worship is shown to be a false pretender because it cannot create.

But why does God want us to remember Him as God? What particular thing does God want us to have in mind when we think of Him as God? The keynote to these questions is found in Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” We must believe that God exists; and from that idea of existence, cannot be separated the idea of reward and help from the God that we believe exists. If we do not regard God as a rewarder, as a present help in trouble, we do not know Him as God. If we do not know that He is exactly what He says He is, then we do not know Him.

Since the Sabbath is a memorial of God’s wonderful work of creation, and is given that we may know that He is God; therefore the Sabbath is given that we may know God as a rewarder, for He is not anything else but a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. This is conclusively proved in Ezekiel 20:12. “Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” Then the object of giving the Sabbath to man was that he might know that that God who gave it, was a God that sanctifies him. That idea of sanctification is the one we want to make prominent in this connection.

It may be objected that the Sabbath was given before the fall of man, so that at the time it was given he was sanctified, and therefore did not need Christ to save him from sin. Adam was placed in the garden of Eden by the Lord. He lived in spotless purity, but he could keep that purity only by faith in God. It was the power of God that kept him. Adam did not live in himself. Yes, he did at last — and he fell. But just so long as he was kept from falling, it was by the power of God and the Word of God. Then he needed the power of God to keep him from falling, as he did afterwards, when he had fallen, to save him from the sins which he had committed, and to keep him from committing others.

We make the same mistake regarding the time after probation is closed. We think that because there will be no mediator then, that we stand in our own strength. There will come a time when there will be no mediator; but those who stand at that time will not stand in their own strength, but in the power of Christ that will keep us at that time; because we will be without sin, we shall need no mediator, but we shall need a Saviour every moment.

Christ is the one “who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 1:8.

If Adam had never fallen, the Sabbath would have been there, as the memorial of the power of God to keep him from falling from the position and place in which God had made him. That is just exactly what the Sabbath is for now. It is to prove to us that God is our sanctification, and that He puts His righteousness on us and in us by the same word by which He made the heavens and the earth. Then the Sabbath is for the purpose that we may meditate upon the power of God, and to remember that that same power which made the earth, is the power that keeps us from sin unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In Colossians 1:11-19 we read, “Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”

The apostle presents Christ as the one through whom we have redemption. Why? Because by Him were all things created. This thought will settle the objection that is so often raised in connection with the Sabbath, that redemption is greater than creation, because redemption is creation, and it is and can be nothing else. It is the same power, and the same thing. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the word of the Lord is righteousness declared in us. Speaking this universe into existence, was an act of creation, and speaking righteousness into the heart of man that has a wicked heart is also an act of creation. Christ is set before us as the Creator that we may know His power to redeem. The way in which Christ is set before us is by the word of His power.

The Sabbath day is the day that calls to remembrance God's wonderful works. In that day we are to meditate more especially than upon any other day on the works of the hands of God. As upon that day we meditate upon the work of His hand, and the wonderful power that is exhibited in the universe, so also do we meditate upon His power to save us from sin, for it is the same power throughout. That is why children from their earliest years should be taught to look upon creation as the power of God. If this is done, principles will be imbedded in their minds that no infidel sophistry can change.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Paul brings to view the power of faith to work righteousness; but you will notice that the opening thought expressed is, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Then by directing the minds of the young to the power of God in creating the universe, they will understand it by faith, and their minds will grasp the thought that the same One who made all they see, is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

How plain it is why Satan has massed all his forces against that fourth commandment; because it is the one above all others that brings to view the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan is antichrist, and he does not do anything in this world that is not directed against Christ. That is why he has covered up that fourth commandment, -that he may take the minds of men from God in Christ as Creator; because just so far as men lose sight of the creative power that there is vested in Christ, so will they lose sight of His power to redeem. So preach the Sabbath more and more, yet in so doing be sure that you preach Christ and Him crucified as the Saviour from sin.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord..." Isaiah 58:13, 14. Then the keeping of the Sabbath perfectly, as God wants it kept, is to delight ourselves in the Lord; but this we cannot do if we do not know Christ, and make Him our joy.

The Saints' Inheritance

We will now consider the saints' inheritance, and see if in that we cannot also preach Christ and Him crucified. There was an inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed. It was promised to him and to his seed that they should be heirs to the world. That seed is Christ and all who are in Christ. The earnest, the pledge, of that inheritance is the Spirit of God. "In whom ye

also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13, 14.

The Spirit of God is the advance payment on our inheritance, and then Paul prays that “the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.”

The whole gospel has reference to the inheritance of the saints. That inheritance is obtained, not by the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. If we are Christ’s, then are we heirs according to the promise. What is there in the preaching of the saints’ inheritance, if we do not carry with it Christ, as the one through whom that inheritance is obtained? He is the one “in whom we have obtained an inheritance.” The promise to Abraham was that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed. In making that promise to Abraham, Paul says, that God preached the gospel unto him. See Galatians 3:8.

Can we preach Christ in the resurrection? The resurrection goes with the promise of the inheritance. When God gave the promise to Abraham, he staggered not at it, but was fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able to perform. He had faith in God to raise the dead, and that faith was shown in perfection when he offered Isaac on the altar. So his belief in the promise was based on his belief in Christ as the resurrection and the life. In Christ is the law and the Sabbath; in Him is the inheritance. Christ crucified and risen again is the means by which we can obtain that glorious home.

Immortality of the Soul

Can Christ be preached when we talk on the subject of the immortality of the soul? Yes; for that is nothing else but life through Christ. Through Christ we have life, and there is no other way that we can get it. We may prove conclusively from the Bible that there is no consciousness in the grave, and that man is mortal, and still not have the true principle of the question of the immortality of the soul.

Some say that when people understand that man is mortal, they are safe against spiritualism. Is that so? No; for many people have acknowledged that, and still have gone into spiritualism. Why? Because they did not have

Christ in their doctrine. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. He that believeth the Son hath life, and he that believeth Him not shall not see life. Christ has bought life for man, and we can have that life by believing His word. Aside from Christ there is no life, and aside from Him we can have no life.

In Ezekiel 13:22 we read: “Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way by promising him life.” The reason why men are fastened in their iniquities, and why they go down into perdition, is because they are promised life when there is no life for them as long as they remain in that sinful state. Darkness is going to cover the earth, and gross darkness the children of men, and it will be as it was before the flood, when all the imaginations of the hearts of men were only evil continually. It is because they believe that they will have life without Christ.

Christ must be set forth as the only means of life, and that that life comes by faith, which is the only means of righteousness, that men may acknowledge “as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.” That life is the life of Christ. Those that are justified will be saved, and those that are not justified will be lost, and the only way that we can be justified is by the life of Christ.

Therefore we preach justification through Christ—life in Him, and death out of Him. Then he that hath not the Son hath not life and shall not see life, and all that there remains for him to have is the everlasting death, the punishment of the wicked. Therefore it is impossible for us to present the question of the immortality of the soul in any other way but through Christ. If we do, it will not be accompanied by power; for nothing but the preaching of the cross is the power of God.

Spiritualism

Now let us consider Spiritualism. It is true that a man may believe that men are mortal, and that they do not go to heaven at death; but if he does not know the power of that, he is not safe from Spiritualism. If he does not know the power of the life of Christ, there is nothing that will save him from the wiles of this terrible delusion. But if he does know the weakness of man, and that he has no life in himself, but that there is life in Christ, and that faith makes that life his own, then he has a safeguard.

Did you ever know a man who believed that Scripture, “The dead know not anything,” to go off into Spiritualism? I presume you have, and I know that I have. Then if men who have known and believed that Scripture, do go off into Spiritualism, there is no power in that belief that the dead do not know anything to keep them from Spiritualism. I have known men who have believed it and who have preached it; but they went off into Spiritualism. I have heard them preach it, and I have heard the same men afterward preach the most blasphemous Spiritualism. Then if the positive belief that man is mortal will keep men from the wiles of Spiritualism, why did those men go into it? Because they did not know the secret of life in Christ.

Said Christ, “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad.” Matthew 12:30. There is no half way measure. It is either Christ or Satan. It is Christ, or it is antichrist. Everything that is not for Christ is what? Against Christ. What does the word “antichrist” mean? Against Christ. Then he that is not for Christ is antichrist, or he is actuated by the spirit of antichrist. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

Romans 8:9. Then if he has not the Spirit of Christ, what spirit must he have? He must have the spirit of antichrist. There are only two contending forces in the world: the power of Christ, and the power of antichrist—the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of antichrist.

“And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Ephesians 2:1,2. Who is the prince of the power of the air? Satan. Then it is the spirit of Satan that actuates the children of disobedience.

Then the fact that a man may acknowledge that man is mortal, will not save him from Spiritualism. He must acknowledge and know that Christ is our life,

*Said Christ, “He
that is not with
Me is against
Me; and he
that gathereth
not with Me,
scattereth
abroad.”*

and that without Him we have no life. To merely acknowledge it will do no good, he must know it by personal experience. Christ must live in him, and Christ alone, and then he will not be actuated by the spirit of antichrist, for the Saviour said that the prince of this world had no part in Him.

What is the secret of Spiritualism? Separation from Christ; and every man who does not receive Christ, whether he professes to believe the Sabbath, the coming of the Lord, that man is mortal—no matter whether he believes all that, if he does not receive Christ into his own heart, sooner or later that man is bound to be carried away in this great deception of Satan.

It is those who receive not the love of the truth to whom God will send strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Now it is possible for me to acknowledge all the different lines of present truth that are contained in the third angel's message; but just so long as I have unrighteousness in my heart I have the seeds of Spiritualism there. All unrighteousness is the work of antichrist. Having unrighteousness, I have that by which Satan can work deceit in me. It is the "deceivableness of unrighteousness." It is not the deceivableness of ignorance, but it is the deceivableness of unrighteousness.

Then the sole source of safety lies in a belief in Christ as my life, and in justification by faith. It must be Jesus Christ and Him crucified as our righteousness, our life, our joy, our everything that is to be desired; yea, more than can be desired, or even thought of, the only one who can keep us from antichrist.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know we the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." 1 John 4:2.

Now what is it to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? To say so—no, to believe it—for all that it is worth. What does it mean? God was manifest in the flesh; God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, that He might condemn sin in the flesh. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15.

Brethren, to acknowledge that Christ has come in the flesh, means that we must take Christ as He came in the flesh, and for all that He came in the

flesh to do. He came in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, that we might have His righteousness and His endless life. Every spirit that denieth Christ as the sole means of life and righteousness, is the spirit of antichrist.

Now take your bearings and see where you are. Is it the spirit of Christ that works in us when we say that we are going to overcome if Christ will give us a little assistance? When we say that, we are going to have heaven by our own work, in part at least; we deny Christ, and deny that He is come in the flesh. That spirit is the spirit of antichrist working in us.

In the papacy we recognize a form of antichrist. The secret of obtaining life as the papacy teaches it, is not Christ and His life, but penance, the monastery, and the Virgin Mary. So the spirit that leads a man into a monastery, and scourges the flesh, and does penance, is simply the logical outcome of the thought that we must do something to free ourselves from sin. It is the spirit that teaches that we cannot trust all to Christ, and let Him work out our own righteousness for us. So everything that is not totally subject to Christ, is actuated by the spirit of antichrist.

“Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:3, 4. We overcome antichrist only by having Christ in us. It is Christ first and last and all the time; Christ in the law, and the law in Christ; Christ in the Sabbath, as Lord of the Sabbath, because He made it, and because the Sabbath simply shows the power of the word of Christ, by which the heavens were made, and by which they are upheld.

The power of the word of Christ also works righteousness in us. The preaching of the cross of Christ presents life and immortality to men. It is the preaching of the cross of Christ that warns men of destruction. It delivers us from the snares of the world, and gives us access into the grace where in we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The preaching of that cross of Christ makes known to us all Christ wants us to know. It lays before us the glories of the saints' inheritance, and it warns us of the perils of the last days.

While we are loyal to the third angel's message, and to all the doctrines that make us distinct from the world, let us determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is the power of God unto salvation. It is

the everlasting gospel, which shall prepare men for the judgment which is even now set. And oh, if that first angel declared, "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come," how much more should we declare that message—the everlasting gospel—now, when that judgment is not only come, but even now nearly done.

I thank God that He is revealing the truths of His word to us, and that He has shown us that the third angel's message is the whole gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. Why do we know so much more about the word of God? Because God is revealing Christ to us, and in us. All we know of the power of Christ we know from the word, and by this we are made clean from sin. Our faith lays hold of Christ, and He becomes a reality in our own hearts and in our lives.

When we have strong faith that Christ is abiding in us, we can go forth to work for others with power, and join our voices with those of the angels in heaven, and then the message will go with a loud cry. The reason that it has not gone with a loud cry is because we have not grasped it in its fullness. In the past many of us have not had that kernel of the message that it is all Christ.

When we have Christ, we have everything, and we know the power that there is in Him. Then we submit ourselves to Him, and the power will rest upon us, and the word that we preach will go with power, and the loud cry of the third angel's message will be here. I rejoice tonight in the belief that the loud cry is now beginning.

The grand consummation will soon be here, when Christ shall come. Then we shall see Him, whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In that glad day we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

May God grant that that day may come soon. God grant that every one in this house may give their hearts to Him, and be able to say, "Here am I, Lord, take me; I am Thine, and Thou art mine; use me, Lord, in Thine own way, that Thou mayest make known to the Gentiles through me the unsearchable riches of Christ".

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