

JOY IN GOD NO. 2550

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 2, 1898.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (or, as it should be, “the reconciliation”).
Romans 5:11.*

YOU notice, dear friends, in reading this verse, the “*not only so*” and the “*also;*” and, if you look back to the earlier verses of the chapter, you will see that there is a continual rising, as of one ascending a golden staircase. You get an “*also,*” and a “*not only so,*” and then a long succession of Christian attainments rising, one out of the other: “*Tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope makes not ashamed,*” and so forth; from all which it clearly appears that the Christian life is one of continuous progress. It would be so without a break if we were more careful, and lived nearer to God. We would go steadily on from our spiritual childhood and youth and manhood, till we became fathers in Christ, and, by and by, perfect men in Christ Jesus, having reached the fullness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus. I am afraid that we, sometimes, sadly hinder that progress by our lack of prayer and our neglect of communion with God. Still, this is what true Christian life should be, a continuous going from strength to strength till we every one of us appear before God in the Zion above.

Let each believer ask himself how far it is so with him. It is to be feared that there are some who, after many years of Christian profession, are not holier, or stronger in faith, or fuller of wisdom than they were twenty years ago. Some believers seem to be like the children of Israel in the wilderness; they go forward and backward, their path is very intricate, and they make but slow progress towards the heavenly Canaan. Let us, beloved, labor to grow in grace; let us cry unto God to enable us to grow. Let us not be satisfied with what we have already attained, but let us always feel an insatiable craving to acquire more and more of the good gifts of the covenant of grace, that we may have all things and abound, seeing that all things are provided for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But I want, just now, to bring this thought especially under the notice of young beginners in grace, for I am about to speak of an experience which belongs rather to the full-grown Christian than to the newly-born believer, and it may be that I shall cause trouble of heart to some of the little ones of the Lord's family while I speak of what is more commonly enjoyed by the greater ones and the stronger ones. I do not mean to do so, but quite the reverse. You, dear friend, who have been lately brought to Christ, must not judge and condemn yourself if you do not as yet possess all the graces which belong to the more matured saint. No one would think of condemning a child three years old because he was not six feet high. No one would blame him because his little feet would not carry him upon a long journey. No one would expect from him the wisdom which we look for in his father. “*You cannot put old heads on young shoulders,*” says our proverb; and it is very true, and it would be a pity that we should try to do so, for the old heads would be out of place upon young shoulders; let the whole man be of the same age. If, therefore, I talk at this time about a high and noble joy, which you have not yet tasted, long for it, and go the right way to gain it, but do not begin to say, “*I do not know that joy, and therefore I am no child of God. I have not partaken of that delight, and therefore I cannot be a sincere believer in Jesus.*” If you do so, you will be acting very unwisely, you will be acting toward yourself in a way in which a father would not think of acting toward his own child. Christian life is a life of progress; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we are going forward, and onward, and upward; and we hope to continue doing so until we behold the face of Him we love, and then “*we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*”

A second observation I want to make is, that the Christian life has its own peculiar joys. If you look through the chapter from which our text is taken, you will see that it begins with a joy: “*Therefore, being*

justified by faith, we have peace with God.” That is a smoothly flowing current, fathomless, and full of infinite sweetness. I do not know, if I had my choice of the state of heart in which I would wish to be between here and heaven, whether I would not prefer continual peace to any other condition of mind. It is a blessed thing, sometimes, to soar aloft, as on the wings of eagles, and to seem to play with the young lightning that is at home with the sun. It is a grand thing to live even here in the very presence of God, and feel that earth has grown into a little heaven; but I find that such an ecstatic state as that is frequently followed by deep depression. Elijah runs before Ahab’s chariot, but the next morning he runs away from a woman, and asks that he may die. Our great “ups” are not far off equally great “downs”; we climb the mountains, and then we slip down the cliffs; we descend into the Valley of Humiliation soon after we have been on the tops of the hills of communion. If one could always be just quiet and peaceful, it would be best.

Then, in the second verse, the apostle says, “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” That is no small joy, to be always looking for His coming in whose sovereignty we shall be made kings, and as the result of whose passion we shall be made priests, expecting to behold Him here, and then looking for the revelation of the glory when we shall be “forever with the Lord.” Oh, we have great joy whenever we think of heaven! Sit down, and turn over the passages of Scripture which relate to it. Think of the communion of saints that you shall enjoy there, and especially of the beatific vision of the face of Him “whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” What must it be to be there? We cannot at present tell, but the apostle says, “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;” and so we do.

Then, in the third verse, he tells us of another joy of which worldlings certainly never taste. “Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.” There is a secret sweetness in the gall and wormwood of our daily trials, a sort of ineffable, unutterable, indescribable, but plainly experienced joy in sorrow, and bliss in woe. O friends, I think that the happiest moments I have ever known have been just after the sharpest pains I have ever felt. As the blue gentian flower grows just upon the edge of the Alpine glacier, so, too, extraordinary joys, azure-tinted with the light of heaven, grow hard by the severest of our troubles, the very sweetest and best of our delights. Then the apostle tells us, in our text, that we have another joy, of which I am now going to speak, “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Let no man’s heart fail him when he hears the experience of the tried people of God. It is true that we do have troubles peculiar to the Christian state; there are some sorrows which are not known outside the family of God. They are very blessed, health-giving, purifying sorrows, and we would not wish to be without them; but still, sometimes they are very keen, and cut the heart even to its very center. Yet though that is the case—and we admit that it is—we also have some peculiar joys which no others realize. There are fruits in God’s storehouse which no mouth has ever tasted till it has been washed clean by the Word and by the Spirit of God. There are secret things which are not seen by the human eye, however much enlightened by knowledge, until those eyes have been touched with heaven’s own eye-salve that it may look and still may live—look into the glory, and not be blinded by the wondrous sight. Come, then, you who are tempted by the world’s joys, and see where true joy is to be found. Turn away from that painted Jezebel; she will but mock and deceive you—

*“Solid joys and lasting treasure,
None but Zion’s children know.”*

If you, young people, give your hearts to Christ, you must not dream that you have come to the end of your delights; you have but begun them. Notwithstanding the trials of a believing life, the ways of wisdom “are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

Now, coming more closely to the text, I am going to answer three questions. First, *what is joy in God?* Secondly, *how is this the evidence of reconciliation?* “We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation.” And, thirdly, *why is it that this joy is said to be through our Lord Jesus Christ?*

I. First, then, WHAT IS JOY IN GOD?

Now, my dear friends, I have before me a topic which far exceeds my ability. I get out of my depth when I have such a question as this to answer, “What is joy in God?” I shall be like the swallow, that but touches the brook with its wing, and then is up and away again; I can do no more than skim the surface of the subject, but I know that there is, to the believer, a joy, first, *in the very fact that there is a God.* To the ungodly man, it would be a great delight if it could be proved that there is no God. When he is at all

serious, and thinks upon the great problems which concern his own state, he is troubled with the thought of God; for, if there is a God, then sin must be punished. If there is a God, then a life spent in neglect of Him must entail, somehow or other, chastisement and sorrow. The worldling would be glad if he could be thoroughly well assured that the idea of God is “a mere bugaboo of priests to keep men in terror,” as some say. There is a something within a man that makes him feel and know that the world must have had a Maker. If it is so full of intelligence, a Someone, by His intelligence, superior to all the intelligence of mankind, must have made it; and the man gets troubled as he remembers that he has lived so many years, and yet has forgotten his Maker, and broken His laws. But the child of God, the regenerate man, who feels within him the nature of God and kinship to the Most High, could not bear the idea of there being no God. Atheism is a black Egyptian night to a soul that once has known God. If we ever come to have joy in Him, anything which robs Him of His glory makes us grieve; but to prove that there is no God, would be to prove that we are orphans, it would prove to us our everlasting poverty and wretchedness. It would be to us an infinite catastrophe if we could ever be convinced that there is no God. Happily, we have no fear of any such a calamity; we delight to know that there is a God, and that God is everywhere. Our highest joys are experienced when we are in His most immediate presence; and if we ever do anything which we should not do if we are conscious of His presence, we know that it is wrong, and we have to grieve for doing it. But when we live as in His sight, when we truly walk with God, then, we live like Enoch, who “had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Then do we realize the truest form of happiness and joy. So, first, we have joy even in the fact that there is a God.

But we have joy, most of all, in the knowledge that *this everlasting God has become our Father*. We take no delight in the universal fatherhood which comes of creation; that is a poor thing, and belongs as much to dogs and cats as it does to us, for they are as truly created by God as we are; and that sort of fatherhood, of which I hear men talk, is the portion of those who blaspheme God, and live in utter rebellion against Him, is not that of which the apostle wrote: “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” Sirs, until God renews your nature, you are children of the wicked one, and not children of the Most High; neither have you any right to talk about the fatherhood of God towards you. “You must be born again;” and only when you are born again, and have believed in Christ, are you God’s children, for “as many as received Him, to them gave He power”—the right, or privilege—“to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” But that fatherhood which comes of the spirit of adoption within you, because you have been born into the family of God—in this you may indeed rejoice. Now, can you not, and must you not, if you have believed in Christ, joy in God as you feel that He is, through His abounding grace, your Father? Whatever He does, He is your Father. When He smiles upon you, He is your Father. If He frowned upon you, He would still be your Father. I have told you before what the old Welsh preacher answered when his friend said to him, “While you are preaching, this morning, may you have the smile of God resting upon you!” “Yes,” he replied, “my dear brother, I hope that I shall have it; but if I do not have the light of God’s countenance, I will speak well of Him behind His back.” So we should; when we do not have the Lord smiling upon us, we should speak well of Him behind His back. Let us be resolved to say with Job, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” If He should take away every comfort which I have, I am so persuaded that it will be a Father’s love that will dictate the action that I will still praise Him, and magnify Him, do what He may. It is joy indeed when you can say that, if the Lord is strong, He is strong for you; if He is wise, He is wise for you; if He is unchangeable, He is unchangeable to you; and whatever He is, and whatever He possesses, He has made Himself over to you to be your possession, saying, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” This, then, is joying in God—first rejoicing that there is a God, and then delighting in Him as our Father.

When we once reach this point, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we rejoice in every attribute of God, *we delight in Him as He is revealed*. I fear that, in these days, many men are very busy trying to construct a god for themselves, such as they think God ought to be; and it generally turns out that they fashion a god like themselves, for that saying of the psalmist concerning idols and idol-makers is still true, “They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusts in them.” These modern manufacturers of gods make them blind because they are themselves blind; and deaf because they are deaf, and dead because they are spiritually dead. No, beloved, there is no God but the God revealed in Holy Scripture, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and the excogitation of another godhead, which has been the business of the sages of the present

day, is all a mistake and a delusion. God can only be seen in His own light. He must be His own Revealer; and no man can know God except God shall reveal Himself unto him.

I trust that many of us can say that we do rejoice in God as we find Him in the Scriptures. Some quarrel with God as a Sovereign, and no doctrine makes them grind their teeth like the glorious truth of divine sovereignty. They profess to want a god, but he must not be on a throne; He must not be King, he must not be absolute and universal Monarch; He must do as his creatures tell him, not as he himself wills. I adore that God who says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Such a God as He is needs no limitation; let Him do as He wills, for it is not possible that He should will to do anything that is unjust or unholy. Let us joy and rejoice in Him as an unlimited Sovereign.

Then let us rejoice in Him as perfectly holy. The holiness of God is an attribute that may well fill us with awe; to the eyes of ungodly men, it shines like "the terrible crystal" of which Ezekiel speaks, but, in the Word of God, whenever the song rises higher than usual, you will generally find that it is a hymn in praise of the holy God. Yes, this is the song of heaven: "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." The wholeness of the divine nature is seen in His holiness; there is in Him no defect, no excess, He is altogether just such as a holy soul must delight in.

I trust also, dear friends, that you and I can joy in God as to His justice. The justice of God makes men dread Him till they become His children. There are some, today, who pretend to preach the gospel, but who really are preaching "another gospel: which is not another;" and they try to set forth the littleness of sin, and as for the justice of God it seems to be ignored by them. Their effeminate deity is not worthy to be known by the name of God; but our God is terrible in His justice, and He will by no means clear the guilty; and conscience tells every man this. But the believer in Jesus, when he sees what God did that justice might be satisfied, and that love might freely flow to the unworthy—when he beholds Christ crucified, the great Father piercing His Son with sharpest smart that He might justly put away the sin of His people, then he comes to delight in God's justice. Instead of threatening him, God's justice becomes the guardian of his salvation with a drawn sword protecting him from condemnation. Happy is the man who can say of every attribute of God that he adores it, the man who would not have turned back at the Red Sea, and not refused to sing unto the Lord who had triumphed gloriously in His righteous vengeance upon the ungodly. Bow your heads before God as He is, as He declares Himself to be in His own Word; for if you do not, you are not reconciled to Him; but if you are truly reconciled to Him, you will accept Him without question in all those points that seem dark and mysterious; you will believe those doctrines which sometimes grate upon the ear as you hear of them, and you will say, "Though I cannot understand, I adore; and where I tremble before the Lord, so that the joints of my bones are loosed, and I fall prostrate at His feet, yet even in those dread mysteries I feel that I love and I joy in God."

Beloved brothers and sisters, what a blessed and transcendent joy this joy in the Lord is! Sometimes you joy in your children, yet they die, and then you sorrow. At other times, you rejoice in those who are grown up and are prospering; but perhaps they treat you with ingratitude, and then again your joy is gone. You joy in your health, and that is a great blessing; but you sicken, and your joy departs. Some rejoice in their riches, but wealth takes to itself wings, and flies away. You may joy in a choice friend, but after a while you may be forsaken and forgotten. You may joy, perhaps, in past achievements, and there may come to you a joy in your prospects for the future; but there is no joy equal to joy in God. Suppose I have nothing in the house but God; suppose there is nothing for me to rely upon but God, nothing that I can call my own but God; well, is that a little thing? Are not all creatures but the visions of an hour? But the Creator is the substantial all in all; so that he who has God has all that he can possibly need. God, to His people, is the fullness out of which all their wants shall be supplied. What a mercy it is that, when we can joy in nothing else, we can joy in God! We can joy in His power, for He can help us. We can joy in His faithfulness, for He cannot fail us. We can joy in His immutability, for He changes not, and therefore we are not consumed. We can joy in every thought that we have of Him, for altogether and observed from every point of view, He is the delight of His people.

Well now, dear friends, if we have come as far as that, we can also say that we joy in God *in all His dealings with us*. "That is hard work," says one. But when you perfectly joy in God, you joy in everything that He does. Suppose you had a dear friend who came to your house, and suppose you should say

to him, “anything that there is, you may enjoy, or you may take. I will give you anything you can ask for or desire. I owe my life and all my prosperity to you.” Well, if you did miss this and that of your treasures which you might like to have retained, when you heard that your friend had them, you would be quite content. According to that good old parable, when the master went into the garden, and took a very choice rose, the gardener did not trouble himself at the loss of it when he knew who had plucked it. He was so glad that the master admired it, that he could even rejoice that it had gone. Now, dear friends, can you not get to this point, that, if the Lord brings you comforts, you will not rejoice in them so much as in Him who brings them? You say that you can get as far as that, but if the Lord takes away your comforts, can you come to this point, that you will not sorrow over them, but that you will joy in Him who took them away? The drops are gone; yes, but there is the fountain always flowing. Though the sunbeam is hidden from your eye, the sun is always shining. Therefore, always rejoice in God, your all in all, and say, “Yes, I will rejoice in all His dealings with me.” Looking back on the whole of my own life, I desire to bless God for everything that He has ever done for me. I desire to praise Him for every cut of the rod, for every blow of the hammer, for every melting in the furnace, for the crucible and the burning heat. Everything has commenced, and continued, and concluded as it ought to do, according to His infinite love and wisdom; and I therefore joy in all that God does to me, and bless His holy name.

Then I think that we also learn to joy *in all God’s requirements of us, and in all His teachings*. In all that He tells us, and in all that He reveals to us of the world to come, we learn to joy in God. Thus, as I told you, I have only touched the surface of this great subject; I pray the Holy Spirit to reveal to you all that there is in the blessed Trinity in which we can rejoice. This God is our God; and He has said, “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” There is no fear of your delighting too much in Him, so let your hearts be filled with joy. Take down your harps from the willows, and touch every string with sacred delight as you joy in God.

II. I was, next, to have answered the question, **HOW IS THIS JOY THE EVIDENCE OF OUR RECONCILIATION TO GOD?** I have occupied so much time over the first part of my theme that I must not dwell upon this portion of the subject; but it must be clear to you that any man who can truly joy in God is reconciled to God. That God is reconciled to him is certain, or else the man would not be reconciled to God, for no sinner was ever beforehand with God; and if I love God, I may be sure that He long ago loved me. But one of the most glorious evidences of a man being reconciled to God is when he rejoices in God. Suppose he becomes obedient to certain outward precepts that he may be, and yet be very sorry that he has to be obedient to them. Suppose he begins to repent and mourn to think that he has sinned; he may do that, and yet there may be in his heart the wish that he could have his full of sin without fear of punishment. But when a man feels, “There is no one in the world that I love as I love God; there is none that I adore as I adore the Lord; for Him I would live, for Him I would die; He is everything to me, He is the source of my delight, and the spring of all my joys”—why, that man is perfectly reconciled to God. You can see that the enmity in his heart is slain; you can see that now God’s purposes are his purposes, and God’s desires are his desires. That which God hates, this man hates; that which God loves, this man loves. You can see that he is perfectly reconciled to God because he rejoices in God. As for that part of the reconciliation which has to do with God Himself, about that no question can possibly arise. The difficulty never was as to how to reconcile God to a sinner, but to reconcile the sinner to God. The Lord Jesus Christ has done perfectly that which enables God with justice to manifest mercy to the guilty. That is done; you may take that for granted, and be sure that it is done in your case when this lesser matter of reconciling you to God is most assuredly accomplished, as it is when you “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

III. My last question is, **WHY IS THIS JOY SAID TO BE THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST?**

Why, first, *because it is through Him we have received this reconciliation*. No man can rejoice in an unreconciled God. As long as you look up to God, and see Him bound by the justice of His nature to punish you for your sin, you cannot delight in Him; you are filled with dread and dismay. But when you see Christ making a full atonement for sin, when you know that, because you have believed in Him, you have the sure evidence that He made atonement for your sins in particular, and put them away, then, you feel that you are reconciled to God. God, apart from Christ, must be the object of dread to the guilty; but God, in Christ Jesus, upon the throne with the covenant rainbow round about Him, that God becomes our joy and delight.

I believe that, in the world in general, men talk a great deal more about God than they do about Jesus Christ. At least, they speak about "Providence," and about "the Almighty," and so forth; and there are some who say, "Yes, God is good, He has been very good to me," and in common parlance you hear much about God. But, ah! My dear hearer, well as that may be, it is all ignorant misunderstanding until you see God in Christ Jesus. For you unconverted people, there can be nothing about God that can be comforting to you until you see Him revealing Himself by His own Son, the great Sacrifice for sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." No man comes unto the Father but by Christ. He that has seen Christ has seen the Father; but he who knows not God, knows not Christ, however frequently he may speak about Him. So that it is God seen through Jesus Christ to whom we are reconciled, and in Him we joy, in the reconciled God who has at His side—

"The Man of love, the Crucified,"—

of whom we sang just now.

Furthermore, we only joy in God being reconciled to us *when we have been ourselves viewing the Lord Jesus Christ*. Is there anything that makes a man love God like a sight of Christ? You may, when you are well trained, love God for all His goodness in creation and providence, but the heart is never truly tuned to love until it comes to Calvary; and I believe that, afterwards, the waves of love never rise to Atlantic billows except when the wind blows from Calvary. When I behold Him, who is the best-beloved of the Father, an infant in His mother's arms, a sorrowing man toiling over the rough roads of Palestine, when I behold Him as a bound victim led to the slaughter, and willingly yielding up His life in a cruel and shameful death that He may redeem us from the curse of the law, then my heart clings to the heart of God as a child clings to its mother. Blessed be God the Father, since we have beheld God the Son, and our hearts have been renewed by God the Holy Spirit, we can joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no joy in God except as you see Jesus Christ intimately knit with Him, and with yourself. Do not try to go to God by any other way than through this golden gate of the great sacrifice of your redeeming Lord; but just now sit here, and joy in God, and then go home, and still joy in God. Perhaps, when you reach your door, there will be some bad news for you; if so, still joy in God. Possibly when you get home there will be an ungodly husband there, and no peace or comfort in the house; but still joy in God. Perhaps when you sit down to your evening meal, the question may arise, "Where will the next one be found?" Yet still joy in God; say, with the prophet, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." If you have, between here and heaven, no source of joy but your God, it shall be with you as when the rock was smitten in the wilderness, and the stream followed Israel through all their journeys. But if you have all that heart could wish for, and yet do not joy in God, you have not tasted what true joy is; you have only the pretense and the mockery of an adulterated delight; but if you get just a sip of true joy in God, though it is but as a drop by the way until you get to the wellhead in the home country, you shall be cheered and comforted in a manner that worldlings cannot understand. I would that some of you would come and trust the Lord; you cannot joy in Him till you have trusted Him; but if you trust in Jesus as your Savior, you shall go onward, step by step, till even God Himself shall be an infinite delight to your every thought. God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
*ROMANS 8:19-39.***

Verse 19. *For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

The whole Creation is in a waiting posture, waiting for the glory yet to be revealed.

20, 21. *For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope, because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

Everything here is blighted, and subject to storm, or to decay, or to sudden death, or to calamity of some sort. It is a fair world, but there is the shadow of the curse over it all. The slime of the serpent is on all our Edens now. "The creation itself was made subject to vanity," but it "also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

22. *For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.*

The birth pangs of the creation are on it; the living creature within is moving itself to break its shell, and come forth.

23. *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

That is our state now; at least, it is the condition of the most of us. Some of our brethren have gone ahead so tremendously that they have passed out of the world of groaning altogether; they are perfect. I regret that they are not in heaven; it would seem to be a much more proper place for them than this imperfect earth is. But as for us, our experience leads us, in sympathy with the apostle, to say that we are groaning after something better. We have not received it yet; we have the beginnings of it, we have the earnest of it, we have the sure pledge of it; but it is not as yet our portion to enjoy; we are “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;” for, though the soul is born again, the body is not. “The body is dead,” says the apostle, in the tenth verse of this chapter, “because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” There is a wonderful process through which this body shall yet pass, and then it shall be raised again, a glorious body, fitted for our regenerated spirit; but as yet it remains unregenerate.

24. *For we are saved by hope:*

Hope contains the major part of our salvation within itself.

24-26. *But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does 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 helps our infirmities.*

That same Spirit who gave us the spirit of adoption, that same Spirit who set us longing for something higher and better, “also helps our infirmities.” And we have so many of them that we show them even when we are on our knees.

26. *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.*

There seems to be a good deal of this groaning; it is only in heaven that there are—

*“No groans to mingle with the songs
Which warble from immortal tongues.”*

But down here a groan is sometimes the fittest wheel for the chariot of progress. We sigh, and cry, and groan, to grow out of ourselves, and to grow more like our Lord, and so we become more fit for the glory which shall be revealed in us.

27. *And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

That is the whole process of prayer. The Spirit of God knows the will of the Father, and He comes and writes it on our hearts. A true prayer is the revelation of the Spirit of God to our heart, making us desire what God has appointed to give us. Hence the success of prayer is no difficulty to the man who believes in predestination. Some foolishly say, “If God has ordained everything, what is the use of praying?” If God had not ordained everything, there would be no use in praying; but prayer is the shadow of the coming mercy which falls across the spirit, and we become in prayer in some degree gifted like the seers of old. The spirit of prophecy is upon the man who knows how to pray; the Spirit of God has moved him to ask for what God is about to give.

28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,—*

“All things.” That is a very comprehensive expression, is it not? It includes your present trouble, your aching head, your heavy heart: “all things.” “All things *work*.” There is nothing idle in God’s domain. “All things *work together*.” There is no discord in the providence of God. The strangest ingredients go to make up the one matchless medicine for all our maladies. “All things *work together for good*”—for lasting and eternal good—“*to them that love God*.” That is their outward character—

28. *To them who are the called according to His purpose.*

That is their secret character, and the reason why they love God at all.

29. *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.*

Oh, what a glorious privilege is yours and mine, if we are indeed children of God! We are, in some respects, children of God in the same sense as Christ Himself is; He is the first-born, and we are among His “many brethren.”

30. *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.*

Notice that personal pronoun “He”—how it comes at the beginning, and goes on to the end. “Salvation is of the Lord.” This is so often forgotten that, trite as it may appear, we cannot repeat it too often: “Whom *He* did foreknow, *He* also did predestinate. . . Whom *He* did predestinate, them *He* also called, . . . and whom *He* called, them *He* also justified: and whom *He* justified, them *He* also glorified.” You might suppose, from the talk of some men that salvation is all of the man himself—that is free agency pushed into a falsehood, a plain truth puffed into a lie. There is such a thing as free agency, and we would make a great mistake if we forgot it; but there is also such a thing as free grace, and we shall make a still greater mistake if we limit that to the agency of man; it is God who works our salvation from the beginning to the end.

31. *What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

If God is that great working One who does all this, who can be against us? “Why, a great many,” says one. But they are nothing, nor are all put together anything at all, compared with Him who is on our side.

32, 33. *He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God that justifies?*

No, that is impossible; and if He does not lay anything to their charge, what cause have they to fear?

34. *Who is He that condemns? It is Christ that died?*

What? Die for them, and then condemn them? Nobody can condemn them but the Judge; and if He is unable to condemn them, in consequence of what He has already done for them, then none can. But this is not all.

34. *Yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

Will He blow hot and cold, and first intercede for them, and then condemn them? It cannot be.

35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

“*Quis separabit?*” That should be our motto in every time of trial: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

35, 36. *Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

They have all had their turn; but did any of them, or all of them put together, ever divide the saints from Christ?

37-39. *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved 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.*

Blessed, forever blessed, be His holy name! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—181, 229, 228.

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