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*“My grace is sufficient for thee.”
 2 Corinthians 12:9*

LET no Christian imagine that he will ever have immunity from trouble while he continues in the body. Should you be favored with visions and revelations of the Lord, caught up to the third heaven, admitted into paradise and privileged to hear things which it were not lawful for a man to utter, conclude not that you have escaped the rod, rather expect that such high privilege will need heavy affliction to balance it. If God has given you the great sail and the prosperous wind, He will also give you the heavy ballast to keep your keel deep in the stream.

Do not expect, dear brethren, that because you have been strengthened in the faith, you will therefore be loosed from the burden of the flesh, neither because you may have been the means of strengthening others, that therefore, trouble will be light for you. Even into your ship the deep waters may come. Think not that it is so water-tight that the billows will only dash against it. You may be called to feel heaviness, your faith may be all but staggered, and your soul may have to cry out from the depths because of the slender strength you possess.

The Lord has such ways of chastising His children as to make them feel. We think, some of us, after we have suffered a certain amount of trouble, that we have been so inured to it we shall no longer be moved as we used to be. The apostle Paul had been beaten with rods, tossed about in shipwrecks, yea, he had suffered hunger and thirst and nakedness, till he felt that if any man had a right to glory after the flesh, he had.

Still, even he found that the Lord had a way of getting at his heart, and making it smart. He had thorns in the flesh, messengers of Satan that did most effectually buffet him. We too, must have trials—trials of a kind that shall come right home to us, and touch us in our bones and in our flesh.

Neither let us think, dear friends, that even the privilege of the mercy seat will shield us from the rod. When chastened we shall run to prayer, but we shall not, therefore, escape the chastisement. Paul, an apostle, prays, he, who certainly must have understood “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man,” beseeches the Lord thrice, yet the thorn in the flesh was not blunted, much less removed, he still had to suffer as he had done aforetime.

Oh, how often we think we can use the mercy seat for our own lusts! Is not prayer too sacred a thing for us to make a selfish use of it? When God gives us the key of His storehouse, and bids us take what we will, shall we use even a single promise of His Word merely to pander to our own desires, and to enable us to escape from enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ? If we thus misuse prayer, we may be excused *for* it, but we shall not be accepted *in* it.

Even Paul is non-suited when he asks ease for the flesh. He gets no release from trouble. He gets something better however, for the Lord says to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Thus, beloved, we must reckon upon the adversities that are sure to befall us. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” This is one of the divine shalls and wills. The Lord *will* chasten those whom He loves, and His children *shall* suffer it, of a surety. It is as sure as any other thing in the world, “Ye *shall* have tribulation.”

I. To those who have proved the truth of this declaration, the text will be peculiarly sweet. **THERE ARE CERTAIN SORE VEXATIONS OF SPIRIT, FOR WHICH GRACE IS THE ONLY BALM.**

The Lord does not say, “My providence shall protect thee.” Nothing of the kind—grace is the remedy in this case, and I take it, this was because the apostle was suffering in the very core and center of his being. There are many trials, the grief of which may be fully relieved by ordinary providences, but these, that come and wound a man to the quick, require grace as their only effectual balm.

Past experience of grace is of no avail in such a case, it is present grace that is promised in the text, and it is present grace that is required. When we have sometimes been bowed down and walked in darkness, and seen no light, we have called to remembrance our song in the night, and our spirit has made diligent search, but that very song has been turned into howling in the remembrance, and all that we thought we felt, and thought we knew, has vanished from before our eyes.

I do not know how it has been with you, but there have been times with me when I could set no value upon my past experience. The devil has said it was all a delusion, my faith mere presumption, my hope mere excitement, and all my joys but the effusion of animal spirits. There will be a time when he will bid you look back and all the way will look like the valley of the shadow of death. You cannot see one hopeful sign in it, and you turn over the books of experience and read them, and you think, “Well, my spot is not the spot of God’s children, and my footprints do not seem to be at all like the footprints of the flock.”

I tell you, if you have ever done business in deep waters, you have found that anchors at home are of no use in a storm, and that the anchor which stood so well a year ago, if it is left at home on shore, is of no use to you now in the storm. It is present grace, nothing but present grace, that will do now. You have eaten all the cold meats, and you have brought out from the cupboard every moldy crust you can find, and now your soul is reduced to the very last, and faints within you, and now you must cry to your God in your trouble, and get present grace in this your time of need.

And if past experience is of no avail, *much less is past success*. Somebody might have touched the apostle on the shoulder and have said, “Paul, Paul, Paul! What! must you feel the buffetings of Satan? Did you not establish the church at Corinth, and plant churches throughout all Asia Minor? Who has served his God as faithfully as you have? Have you not been in many journeyings often in perils by waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the sword, in watches and fastings? Have you not had the care of all the churches? Has not your Master highly distinguished you, and made you not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles? What multitudes of spirits are now before the throne, that were born under God through your ministry! And what thousands are still on the road who call you their spiritual father, and to whom you have been as a nursing mother in the faith!”

If you had said this to the apostle, he would have replied, “Yes, sometimes this might have comforted me, if it had been a question of my apostleship, this would have been satisfactory, if the point in hand had been a question as to whether my ministry has been owned of God, this would have been decisive, but I am touched in another place now, and the wound is so deep, my sore is grievous, and my heart is so exceedingly heavy that no kindly thought of others, and no pleasant musings of my own, bring me the slightest relief. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me!” The Lord knew how to succor him, and therefore He gave him that gracious assurance, “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

I think it is well, dear friends, to remember the Lord’s past goodness, but we must not live on that, we must go and get fresh supplies from heaven. Old manna, to this day, though it came from heaven, will always breed worms and stink, if it is kept. There is no alteration in it from the days of Moses, it is the same at this moment. You must eat the manna as you get it, and go constantly for more, but the old manna will be of very little use to you. It is only on Sabbath days, when your soul is perfectly at rest and quiet—it is only at those sweet resting seasons, which the soul sometimes enjoys, that the remembrance of the past becomes very sweet. You must have daily present dispensations of manna from the throne of God.

In such a case as this, to which the apostle was brought, we feel sure that *the fact of his high office and eminent attainments of grace*, would not have been a sufficient consideration. Paul, who shall match you? So deep in knowledge and so ardent in zeal, you seem to have a seraph's spirit. So mighty in word, and yet, withal, so humble in your own esteem, you are surely a prince in Israel. Paul was not one of the young men, much less one of the babes in grace. He says, "There are not many fathers," though certainly he himself was worthy to be called a Patriarch. Yet that fact would not comfort him.

And brethren, you may come to such hard pinches that your growth in grace, and the flourishing of your virtues, will not afford so much as a drop of comfort to you, you will have to go to the eternal fountain to drink, for even these marble cisterns will have been broken, and will hold no water.

Observe further, brethren, that the Lord does not say, "*The consolation of your brethren shall be sufficient for you.*" Oh, how sweet it is to be comforted by our fellow Christians! Let those who will, walk in isolation, give me sweet communion, for to tell one's trial to a true brother in Christ is often to lighten the weight, as if half of it were removed. Sometimes it is to be wholly relieved, for the words of some wise men in our Israel are indeed as balm that brings speedy healing to the wound. But there are wounds which the stranger intermeddles not with, nay, that even the dearest friend cannot touch, there are certain vexations of spirit, and disquietudes of soul, that mock human agency.

I have had sometimes, to converse with some members of the church and I have never felt so much the littleness of my own power as when I have tried to comfort them and failed. I thought it was because I was but as a little child in experience, and could not talk with them as a father in Israel might have done, whose years might have given him more wisdom, but I have found that even the fathers have failed, and that years have not always sufficed to give sufficient knowledge to comfort the troubled conscience, or to remove the burden from the galled shoulders.

No, there are cases that mock the ordinary practitioner, and must be taken straight to the Great Physician, for the only thing that will survive the purpose is the grace, the present grace of an all-sufficient God.

I might prolong this catalog, but you who experientially know the truth, will know from your own experience, that there are trials and there are points in affliction where nothing can possibly console but the immediate outpouring and receiving of the grace of God.

II. And now, beloved, in the second place, let me say that SUFFICIENT GRACE IS A SURE BALM, that even for the most acute disorder, the most chronic disease, "grace" *is* "sufficient."

Why, do you not perceive that it just meets *the fear which trial excites*? What is the Christian's fear when he is buffeted, tried, and afflicted? I know him in his sober senses, he has a fear of sin. Listen to him. "I am afraid of being poor," says he, "not because I dislike poverty, but I am afraid of my faith, lest I should murmur against God. I am not afraid of suffering," says he, "if God send it to me, I am willing to receive it, but I am afraid of my faith, lest the pangs should be too severe, and I should doubt my God. I am not," says he, "afraid of slander or of persecution. I have learned to rejoice in this, for so am I made a member of the goodly fellowship of the martyrs, but I am afraid lest I should deny my Lord, or be ashamed of Him, or prove an apostate, after all. As I look forward to the temptations of the world, the suggestions of Satan, and the corruptions of the flesh which shall yet assail me, I am not afraid of their coming if I can but be guaranteed that they shall not cause me to sin," for the only real wound the Christian gets is when he has sinned.

Sufferings are only scars, flesh wounds, sins are the real woundings. We are never trampled on by Satan, however low our spirits may sink, it is only when we give way, and would fain capitulate in very terror, and begin to be afraid, that Satan is really victorious. The battle of sin is the battle in which Satan gains the victory, but suffering, and shame, and distress, and peril, and nakedness, and sword, are no triumphs to Satan, for "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

You see then, brethren, that *grace meets the danger because it deals with sin*. You are afraid that your patience will give out, so the Lord says, "My grace shall operate upon your patience, and make thee endure." You think your faith will fail, so the Lord says, "My grace gave thee thy faith, and My

grace, like oil secretly applied to the fire by One standing behind the wall, shall keep thy faith burning while the devil pours on his floods to quench it. It was My grace that first taught thee to love My great name, so, when persecuted, My grace shall make thee love Me better. I have kept thee from apostasy until now, and let what will come, My grace, by which I guaranteed your final perseverance, shall be sufficient for thee, and thou shalt come out of all thy trials and troubles like silver out of the furnace, not defiled, but cleansed and purified by the flames.”

You see then, brethren, that this assurance does actually touch the fear which the Christian may ever have before his eyes, nay, it does not merely touch the fear, but it absolutely touches all the real danger. It is as though the Lord should say to one of His servants, who was standing alone, while thousands of his enemies were shooting at him with their arrows, “They shall shoot at thee, but I have covered thee with armor from head to foot.”

Or it is as if you or I trembled at the thought of crossing the deep sea, and the Lord had said, “The sea is deep, and thou must cross it, but I will be by thee, and thou shalt go through it dry shod.”

Or it is as if He said, “The fire is hot, and thou must walk through the midst of it, those glowing coals thy foot must know, but I will so cover thee by My power that the flames shall not hurt thee, thou shalt walk through the fire, and not so much as the smell of it shall pass upon you.”

What matters it how much we suffer if we have grace to endure it? Put a believer where you will, if his Master gives him grace, he is in the best place he can be for security. I have heard brethren sometimes say, “Such a minister is in great danger, his position is lofty, his head will be turned.”

Ah! brethren, if he had had the keeping of his own head, it would have been turned long ago. And your head will turn even if you are on the ground if you have the keeping of it, but if God sets a man as high as the stars, and if He kept him there, he would be able to sing, “Thou makest my feet like hinds’ feet, and makest me to stand on high places.” It is the grace we have, not the position we occupy, that is the important matter. If a man had grace enough, you might put him in the worst haunts of sin, and he would be the better for being there.

Now, do not think I say what I do not know. Solomon saw hyssops grow on walls, and cedars on Lebanon, howbeit, I have seen cedars grow on walls and hyssops on Lebanon. I have seen the smallest Christians in the best places, and the best Christians in the worst positions. I have seen, in the midst of the haunts of the harlot, grace shining in all the purity and chastity of lovely womanhood, and in the haunt of the thief and of the burglar, God has been pleased to have some choice saint, that, for honesty, integrity, and holy living, might have been worthy to have walked in a bishop’s palace, or to have adorned the best evangelical drawing room in England.

Brethren, it is not the position that is the main thing, the best of men may grow in the worst places, and some of the meekest of believers may be found where there ought to have been the bravest. I will leave this point, then, by repeating that whatever may be the trial of heart which a man may have to endure, this assurance just meets the case, “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

III. And lastly, SHOULD NOT THE ASSURANCE THAT WE SHALL RECEIVE SUFFICIENT GRACE MAKE US EXCEEDINGLY GLAD?

“My grace is sufficient for thee”—what then? “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities”—not only gladly, but “*most gladly.*” *Nothing else will make you happy.* The grace of God comes to meet your case, and now how happy you should be! Think about the *sureness* of this fact, that sufficient grace will be ours.

My dear brethren, I am not careful about *preaching* tonight, I merely talk right on about some things that you know, and can testify. It has been so, has it not, in your experience? If there be one saint here who has an accusation to make against his Lord, let him speak. He might well say to you, “Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? Which of you have I failed to succor? When have I violated My promise? You have been in the waters—were you drowned? You have passed through the fire—were you burned? What loss have you ever sustained by your troubles? Did I ever refuse to hear your cry when you called upon Me? When was it that, in the day of battle, I did not cover your head, and that I left you as a prey

to the destroyer?" My answer is—O Lord, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that thy servant's witness is,—

*“When trouble, like a gloomy cloud,
Has gather'd thick and thunder'd loud,
He near my soul has always stood,
His lovingkindness, oh, how good!”*

And is not that your case, my brother, my sister in the Lord? I am sure it is. Well then, this ought to make you glad. “My grace is sufficient for you,” says the Lord. Your past experience proves it. Gladly, therefore, rejoice that you have an opportunity yet again of testing and trying the good Word of the Lord.

Again, *is not God's grace sufficient for you in your present emergency?* Have you had some trouble today? I suppose you have had quite sufficient too, for I never did find a day yet that had not enough trouble in it, and sufficient for the day is the evil thereof—well, but have you not had sufficient grace today? Do you feel dull, and heavy, and gloomy in God's house of prayer? Well, but there is grace to be had, and therefore, looking to Him ere you go to your bed, you may still have another day to sing of the sufficient grace which was given in the necessary hour.

“Oh but,” you say, “it is not now, I can trust God for today, but there are clouds looming before me and I fear to enter the cloud.” Well, my dear friend, if He is faithful to you today, add that to the fact that He was faithful yesterday, is He not the same yesterday, today, and forever, and ought you not at once to rejoice in Him?

Furthermore, ask your Father, and He shall tell you, turn you to the records of inspiration, and they shall teach you, were the righteous ever forsaken, and when did the Lord cast off His chosen? They have been certainly in quite as deep waters as you have ever known, you have not yet been brought to lose all that you have, to lose every child, not yet do you sit among the ashes, and scrape yourself with a potsherd as Job did, not yet to the fullest extent can you say, “They that walked in the streets did condemn me,” not yet have ye drunk of that cup, and been baptized with the baptism of Him who said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—

“His way was much rougher and darker than thine,”—

and yet your Lord triumphed, and all His people, in all ages, and under every circumstance, have triumphed in Him. If you could find one child of God who has been left, and if you could find one instance in which God has been untrue to you, then it would be fair for you to be depressed in spirit, but until then, most joyful should you be.

Recollect also, brethren, that *we would never know how sufficient grace was if it were not for these troubles*, therefore, we ought to be glad of all the lessons that assure us how ample and sufficient this grace is. I know not whether all soldiers love the thought of war, but there are many who pant for a campaign. How many an officer of low rank has said, “There is no promotion, no hope of rising, no honors, as if we had to fight. If we could run to the cannon's mouth, there would be some hope that we might gain a promotion.”

Men get few medals to hang upon their breasts who never know the smell of gunpowder. The brave days, as men call them, of Nelson and Trafalgar, have gone by, and we thank God for it, but still we do not expect to see such brave old veterans, the offspring of this age, as those who are still to be found lingering in our hospitals, the relics of our old campaigns.

No, brethren, we must have trials if we are to get on. Young men do not become midshipmen altogether through going to the school at Greenwich, and climbing the mast on dry land, they must go out to sea, and be on deck in the storm, and if we are to be amongst the worthies, we must have stood side by side with King David, we must have gone down into the pit to slay the lion, or have lifted up the

spear against the eight hundred, as Adino did. Conflicts bring experience, and experience brings that growth in grace which is not to be attained by any other means.

Besides, brethren, *how is God's grace to be seen by other men in the world except by our trials?* Grace is given to keep us from sin, which is a great blessing, but what is the good of grace except it is in the time when the trial comes? Certainly, the grace that will not stand in the hour of temptation or affliction, is a very spurious sort of grace and we had better get rid of it, if we have it.

When a godly woman's child dies, the infidel husband sees the mother's faith. When the ship goes down, and is lost in the sea, the ungodly merchant understands the resignation of his fellow man. When pangs show through our body, and ghastly death appears in view, people see the patience of the dying Christian. Our infirmities become the black velvet on which the diamond of God's love glitters all the more brightly.

Thank God I can suffer, thank God I can be made the object of shame and contempt, for in this way, God shall be glorified. This shall be the wonder of many, and to the praise of His own grace, that so mean and so contemptible a thing was made the instrument of effecting His purpose.

I will say no more, except to commend this assurance to you, and ask you to take it home, and lay it on your tongue, it will be like a wafer made with honey. Mind you have it for your breakfast tomorrow morning, and let it be your constant daily meal, live on it, "My grace is sufficient for *thee*." Let the word "thee" come home to your heart as though God spoke it to you, and as if He had never spoken it to anyone before.

There are some of you to whom the text does not apply, except in this light. You have many sins, but if you trust Christ, His grace is sufficient for you. You have been head over heels in the kennel of sin, but the power of His blood is sufficient to make you white, and even if you have become a very prince and peer in the dominions of evil, the grace of Christ is sufficient to wash you whiter than the driven snow. May the Lord add His blessing on these feeble rambling remarks, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 3:9-27 AND 5:6-11 AND 8:1-32

Romans Chapter 3. Verse 9. *What then? are we better than they?*

The first chapter of the epistle to the Romans contains so horrible an account of the manners of the Gentiles, the heathen of Paul's day, that it is one of the most painful chapters in Scripture to read. Not long ago, one of our missionaries out in China, was attacked concerning the Bible on this very ground. One of the learned men said to him, "This Bible of yours cannot be as ancient as you say that it is, for it is quite clear that the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans must have been written by somebody who had been in China, and who had seen the habits and ways of the people here,"—so accurate is the Holy Spirit, who knew right well what the ways and manners and secret vices of the heathen were, and still are. But the Jews said, "Ah, but this is a description of the Gentiles." So Paul replies, "What then? are we better than they?"

9-10. *No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Then he selects passages out of different parts of Scripture to show what man is by nature.

11-18. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.*

These are all quotations from Old Testament Scriptures, from their own psalmists and prophets. from whom Paul quotes to the Jews so that they might see what their own character was by nature.

19. *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

The law was given to the Jews, and the descriptions which it gives must be descriptions of the Jews. “Therefore,” says Paul, “as Gentile mouths have been already stopped by the descriptions of their vices, you also, the favored people of God, have your mouths stopped by the descriptions of yourselves taken from your own prophets.”

20. *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh—*

Whether Jew or Gentile—

20-21. *Be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now—*

Since man is lost, since man is guilty—

21-27. *The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then?*

If salvation is given to the guilty, and if all are guilty—if no one can claim exemption, and yet salvation is freely given—what then? Why, salvation must be purely by the grace of God, so let grace have all the honor. “Where is boasting then?”

27. *It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

The law of works sometimes aids boasting, for a man rejoices and glories in what he has done, yet the law of works ought to stop our boasting because we are guilty in God’s sight. The law of faith does stop our mouth because we are under obligation to God, and do not dare to boast, seeing that we have nothing of good but what we have received from God.

Romans Chapter 5. Verse 6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

What a wonderful sentence that is! Not, “Christ died for the saints,” not, “Christ died for righteous men,” but “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

7-9. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

What an argument this is for the final safety of believers! If Christ died for us when we were enemies, surely He will give us now that He has died for us, and made us His friends, His reconciled subject, “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

10. *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.*

There is a threefold argument there. We were enemies, yet God blessed us even then, so will He not bless us even more now that we are reconciled to Him? When we were enemies, He reconciled us unto Himself. Having done that, will He not certainly save us? We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, so much more shall we be saved by the life of the risen and glorified Jesus, which has almighty, irresistible power.

11. *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Romans Chapter 8. Verse 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,—*

Observe that Paul writes “There is therefore,” for he is stating a truth which is founded upon solid argument. “There is therefore *now*”—at this very day, at this very moment—“no condemnation”—none of any sort—none that will lie in the Court of Conscience or in the Court of King’s Bench above, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Our forefathers used to read this verse, “There is therefore now no damnation.” One of the martyrs, being brought before a Popish bishop, the bishop said to him, “Dying in thy heresy, thou wilt be damned.” “That I never shall be,” answered the good man, ““for ‘there is therefore now no damnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.’” He had caught the very spirit of the text, for there is nothing that can condemn the man who is in Christ Jesus.

1. *Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

This is the distinctive mark of a man in Christ Jesus. He does not let the flesh govern him, but the Spirit. The spiritual nature has come to the front, and the flesh must go to the back. The Spirit of the living God has entered into him, and become the master-power of his life. He walks “not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

2. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

And nothing else can do that. Every man is, by nature, under bondage to that which Paul describes as “the law of sin and death.” There is a law in our nature, which is so powerful that even when we would do good, evil is present with us, and we cannot get away from that law, except by introducing another, which is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

Dr. Chalmers has a remarkable sermon upon “The Expulsive Power of a New Affection,” and it is this new affection for Christ, which is the accompaniment of the new life in Christ, which expels the old forces that used to hold us under bondage to sin and death.

3-4. *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.*

The law never made anybody holy, and it never will do so. The law says to a man, “This is what you ought to do, and you will be condemned if you do not do it.” That is quite true, but the law supplies no power to enable us to do this. It says to the lame man, “You must walk,” and to the blind man, “You must see,” but it does not enable them either to walk or to see.

On the contrary, our nature is such that when the law issues its commands, there is a tendency in us at once to disobey them. There are some sins, which we never should have thought of committing if we had not been commanded not to do them, so that the law—not because of its own nature, but because of the wickedness of our nature, is weak and ineffectual for the producing of righteousness. But the Lord Jesus Christ has come, has lived, and has died—died for us who are His people, and has put away our sin.

Now we love Him, now, being delivered from all condemnation, we love Him who has delivered us, and this becomes the force by which we are inclined to holiness, and led on further and further in a course, not merely of morality, but of holiness before God. What a blessed system this is, which saves the sinner from the love of sin, delivers a man from sinning, gives him a new nature, and puts a right spirit within him!

5. *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;*

Flesh cares for flesh. The man who is all body cares only for the body. The man whose mind is under subjection to his body, minds “the things of the flesh.”

5. *But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

Where the Holy Ghost is supreme, where the spiritual world has become predominant over the heart and life. There, men live for something nobler than the worldly man’s trinity, “What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?” The carnal life is only becoming to a beast,

or a bird, or an insect. But when a man cares for his immortal spirit, and lives for divine and spiritual things, he has attained to the life that is life indeed.

6-7. *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.*

As long as a man lives only for this present evil world, lives for self, lives under the domination of the flesh, he cannot really know God, or truly serve Him. Such a mind as his “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

8. *So then they that are in the flesh—*

That is, those who are under its condemnation and power—

8-10. *Cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells 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.*

So that, although Christ dwells in a man, he must not reckon that he will be free from suffering, and pain, and sickness, for the body has not yet risen from the dead, and does not yet feel the full effect of regeneration. The soul is risen from the dead by regeneration, and it therefore “is life because of righteousness,” and the body will, in due time, also share in the power of Christ’s Spirit. The day draweth near when we “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

11-12. *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

We have got nothing good out of the flesh at present, for it is not yet “delivered from the bondage of corruption,” though it is to be delivered.

13. *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:*

For the flesh is to die.

13. *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify—*

Or kill—

13. *The deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

Shall a dying body, then, be my master? Shall the appetite for eating and drinking, or anything else that comes of the flesh, dominate my spirit? God forbid! Let death go to death, and the flesh is such, but the newly-given Spirit of God, the Spirit who has quickened us with immortal life, shall rule and reign in us evermore.

14-21. *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. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 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 the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Son 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 children of God.*

We are part and parcel of creation, and we shall draw it along with us. There shall be new heavens and a new earth. The curse shall be taken from the garden, thorns and thistles shall no longer grow there, and there shall be no killing or devouring in all God’s holy mountain. The galling yoke, which we have laid on the whole of creation by our sin, shall be taken off from by our Redeemer.

22-23. *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.*

We groan in unison with a groaning creation, and we shall not at present get rid of our aches, and pains, and sicknesses altogether.

24-32. 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 what 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 itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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?

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—757, 729

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