

Lecture 9 "In Christ".

Romans 8.

"Another Comforter"

Thirteen Lectures on the Operations of the Holy Ghost.

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That indeed is a blessed condition which commences with "no condemnation" and ends with "no separation." That is just what we have in this chapter, and I desire tonight, with the Lord's help, to bring before you a little of the absolute, and positive blessing, which belongs to the one, who through grace is "in Christ." The way in which I am going to look at this chapter is this. Very frequently when we hear of a marriage, the question is put, What is the dowry of the bride? Has she a portion? Now the eighth of Romans is the dowry of the Christian — I do not say exactly of the Bride, because it is the individual aspect of truth here, yet you will find the thought of marriage in connection with the truth in the seventh chapter.

In the three previous chapters, 5, 6, and 7, you have three most important truths unfolded, and these three truths are epitomised, by the Spirit of God, in the first three verses of the chapter which I have now read to you. You see the early part of the epistle to the Romans is occupied with showing how the sinner, guilty, ruined, undone, and lost, can be righteously brought into the presence of God, and be justified before Him. That interesting and most important question, which Job put in the ninth chapter of his book, "How shall man be just with God?" (Job 9) was never answered, till the Spirit of God, by the pen of the apostle Paul, wrote this epistle. But here we learn how man can "be just with God," that is, be justified before God.

Up to verse 11 of chapter 5 the epistle is occupied in telling how man is justified from offences, and it is of deep importance for us to learn how this is? It is by the sovereign grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, works being absolutely excluded on the part of the sinner, and faith taking the place of these works, faith, which is reckoned for righteousness, the moment the soul believes on Him, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. You have in this section of the epistle our sins, our guilt, our transgressions, and our iniquities dealt with, and they are covered, blotted out, and set aside, by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the righteousness of God, that was against the sinner, in his sins, is now *for* the one who trusts in Jesus. God is "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3: 26). justification flows from the grace of God, for that is the sovereign spring and source of it, but it is based on the work of Christ, as the fifth chapter says, "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (ver. 9). Then, further, in the first verse of Romans 5 we read, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus

Christ." Now there are not three ways of being justified, but there are three parties to my justification, and these three parties are God, His Son, and myself. What is God's side? To justify "*freely by His grace*" (Rom. 3: 24). His loving heart is the spring and source of it. What is Christ's side? "Being now justified by *his blood*" (ver. 9). The blood of Jesus is the instrumental means and basis of justification. That is Christ's side; and "justified *by faith*" (ver. 1) is man's side, my side. *Grace* proposes, *blood* secures, and *faith* receives this justification. Faith is the outstretched hand that takes the blessing that the love of God so bounteously presents.

Thus far, in Romans, you have only justification from offences; but then, beginning with Romans 5: 12 we hear of "justification of life," and the Spirit of God takes up another subject altogether. He treats no more of what I have done, of the sins I have committed, but comes to deal with me, the man who committed them. It is no longer, to use a figure, a question of dealing with the fruit of the tree, but with the tree itself, that naturally brought forth such bad, such evil fruit. Then we learn under three relationship similitudes, the manner of the complete, the perfect deliverance, which the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is entitled to. In Romans 5 you will find the Spirit of God brings before us the two *heads*; the two *masters* in Romans 6; and in Romans 7 the two *husbands*. The two heads in chapter 5, I need scarcely say, are Adam and Christ. It is impossible that I can be connected, identified, and linked with two federal heads at once — with Adam and with Christ. If I am in Adam, I am not in Christ. If I am in Christ, I am not in Adam. That is perfectly plain, and it is equally so, that Adam did not become the head of a race, a family, until he was a fallen man, a sinner out of Eden; and Christ did not become the head of a race, or a stock, until He was a risen Man, out of death and judgment, which He bore for those who were under them.

Again, in chapter 6, you have two masters — Sin and God. If I am under the domination and mastery of sin, I am not "alive unto God," nor "become a servant to God;" but I there learn most blessedly that "he that is *dead* is justified (*margin*) from sin" (ver. 7). "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him (Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (ver. 6). Christ has died, and "in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (ver. 10). Thereupon we are thus enjoined, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (ver. 11). The way in which I pass from the headship of Adam, to the headship of Christ, is by Christ's death made true by faith to me as my death — not now His death for my sins, but my death with Him to sin! And how can a believer learn that he is no longer under the domination of sin? In chapter 6: 8, we read, "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. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." In Christ Jesus the believer who has been brought to bow to the necessary condemnation of the flesh, as nothing but evil, finds that such condemnation has taken place in the death of Him who is his life. Thus he is entitled to take all that happened to Christ, as having happened to him, and knows that his old man has been crucified with Christ. By faith he participates in the death of Jesus for himself, and thus escapes from the condemnation, and power of sin, and is free to live to God. God is the new Master.

When you come on to Romans 7 you have the Law, and Christ, as the two husbands. The argument is that a woman cannot have two husbands. The first must be dead ere she can have a

second. What is the first husband? The law. The apostle puts it so. "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 the woman which hath an husband is bound by 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." Now mark, the apostle does not say, the law is dead, for verse 6, which seems to say so, really reads, "having died to (or in) that wherein we were held." The death of one of the parties has dissolved the bond, according to the illustration. What he says is this. You are dead, but have new life, if you are in Him who is risen from the dead. You are "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 sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, *having died to that* wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (vers. 1-6). I repeat, the law is not dead, but the man to whom the law applied, and vainly sought to govern, is dead, and now you see his life is in another. The life of the Christian is Christ's life. The life in which the Christian lives before God is Christ's life. And if he has Christ's life, he counts himself to live no longer before God in Adam's life, nor ministers to it. He lives in the new life which is his in Christ Jesus. What is the result? Liberty, peace, joy, and blessing, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

If we get the two husbands in chapter 7, we have the power and blessing which the believer has in connection with the new husband — the Lord Jesus Christ — in Romans 8, and, in the first three verses, we have epitomised, what I have been bringing before you briefly, from these three preceding chapters. Chapter 8 unfolds the new position, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in* Christ Jesus." Nothing could be more absolute. It does not say there is no condemnation to them that believe in Christ Jesus. It is perfectly true one must believe in Christ Jesus, but that is not the way in which the apostle puts it. The whole point is that the believer is *in* Christ Jesus, and if I be in Christ Jesus, then I must be in Christ Jesus where Christ Jesus is; and where is that? On the other side of death — in life, in righteousness, in resurrection, in acceptance. Have you ever got hold of the wonderful truth of being "in Christ Jesus"? for "there is, therefore, now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus." Why? Because there is nothing left to condemn. Well, you say that is a bold statement. I do not deny it, for I know the blessedness and joy of it! There is nothing left to condemn. Nothing in me to condemn? Nothing, if you are *in* Christ Jesus.

The truth of the Gospel is this, that when the Lord Jesus was upon the cross, not only was He bearing our sins, but He was there made sin by God, and stood identified with all that the first man was, and underwent the judgment of God upon the first man; and thus, you see the end under the judgment of God of the first man. The history of the first man, terminated before God and for faith, in the death of the second Man. Everything was condemned in the cross, and now there is no condemnation left, nothing left to condemn, as Paul puts it here, "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." God has not made light of sin. Christ has

borne our *sins*, and put them away, but more, He has been made *sin*, and gone down into the depths of the judgment due to sin, and risen up from those depths. He has become my life, and the only measure of my new place before God. I am in Him, and therefore in all the impossibility of condemnation for Him. Sin in the flesh has not been forgiven. God condemned it. God never forgives *sin*. He forgives sinners, and pardons sins, blotting them out in Christ's blood, but the evil principle of sin, sin in the flesh — an intolerable and incurable principle of opposition to Himself, God can only end in judgment, either in the lake of fire for the impenitent sinner, or in the cross of the Saviour, for the one, who through grace, believes in Him.

If a believer, you are in Christ before God, and hence there is, and can be, no condemnation, because your very place is in the One who has come out of, and left behind, in the judgment He came out of, all that pertained to your sins and you. That is the argument at the close of the chapter, "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" (ver. 34). And is He going to condemn those for whom He died, for whom He agonised, and for whom He Himself was condemned? Never! Blessed be His peerless name. We may well say, Hallelujah! "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The latter clause of verse 1, it is important to note, is an interpolation, and is omitted by all competent editors, as the expression, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," comes, in its right place, in verse 4. Evidently some monk, copying the Scriptures, thought the grace of verse 1 far too free, so qualified it by putting in this clause, which robs it of all its force, for if I am only "in Christ" if I walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," my being in Christ is made conditional, and not absolute, which, thank God, it is. All the older manuscripts have it, not in verse 1 but, in verse 4, where it comes in rightly.

But now we come to another reason why there is "no condemnation." "For the law of the 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." The law never could produce righteousness. It could dictate God's claims on the sinner, and condemn him for not doing what it demanded, but it could never produce righteousness. The law never gave life, power, or an object. But the Gospel gives all three. It gives you life in the Son of God, an object in the Person of Christ, and power in the Holy Ghost, who comes, and dwells in the believer, to set him in the true Christian state. Hence we read, "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." The history of the first man, and sin in the flesh, which describes his state before God, are terminated by the cross. To what end? "That the righteousness (the righteous requirement) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." You have here a new order of being. You have a new life, a new nature, and a new power. You have an order of being with a new nature that is of God, and that orderly being delights in what suits God. The law could never produce what the Gospel immediately, instinctively, and naturally produces, for it says, we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and now you will find every verse bringing in the truth about the Spirit of God, either as life, nature, or power.

This latter is what is characteristic of this chapter, and I may repeat at this point, for the sake of helping souls, that the first eleven verses of the chapter present the Spirit of God in life,

or as the power of the life we have in Christ. It is the Spirit of God, viewed as life (see ver. 9), which the believer possesses. From verse 12 you have the Holy Ghost personally indwelling the believer. In the first eleven verses you have the characteristics, or moral features of life in the Spirit, or, as it is put here, of those "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. For to be carnally minded (or the minding of the flesh) is death; but to be spiritually minded (or the minding of the Spirit) is "what? — "life and peace." That is the true Christian state — life and peace. Many a dear child of God is in doubt, and uncertainty, and trouble, just because he does not know what this blessed truth of deliverance, and of being in Christ, before God, is. But God exercises these souls, to bring them out of bondage into liberty, and to realise the position, before Him, in which they stand, in Christ.

How blessed is it to learn that "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. So then they that are in the flesh" — the flesh is flesh, it cannot be anything else — "cannot please God." What does he mean by saying "they that are in the flesh"? My being "in the flesh" is my condition, and state, before God, as in Adam — a responsible being, going on to death and judgment. That is being "in the flesh." The flesh being in us is perfectly different. We have still the flesh in us, and it is apt to break out, unless we are walking in the Spirit. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Now it is absolutely true that the believer is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," if the Spirit of God dwell in him. It is equally true that the flesh, the principle of evil, is in him, and it is apt to break out, unless he walk in self-judgment before God. But it is deliverance from the flesh to learn the truth that I am not "in the flesh," as I am entitled to reckon myself dead with Christ, and that I only live before God now in the life of Christ.

Ponder these words, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." I do not doubt that there is many a Christian who has learned distinctly that the Spirit of God dwells in him, and yet, if you were to ask that person, Are you in the Spirit? and is that your condition before God? he would have difficulty in saying Yes, because, in himself, he is conscious that he has sin, and faults, and these would almost lead him to say, I am not in the Spirit. Now mark, "in the Spirit" is opposed to being "in the flesh." When I speak of being "in Christ," I think of the place where Christ is, as the Man who is alive from the dead. If I be "in the Spirit," I think instinctively of my state as alive down here, inseparable from that place. "In the Spirit" is that which really expresses the true state of the Christian now. When I think of "in the Spirit," I bear in mind that I am viewed as being in a state, or standing, or existence, or condition before God, marked by the Spirit's indwelling, and characterised by Him, as on the ground of redemption, and it is the complement of the previous expression, "in Christ." If I look heavenwards, I am "in Christ"; if earthwards, I am "in the Spirit if so be the Spirit of God dwell in me."

I was saying last Lord's Day evening, that the great truth of the Acts of the Apostles was, that the Holy Ghost fell upon the believer. It was the privilege of all those who believed, and received the forgiveness of their sins through the Lord Jesus Christ, to receive the Holy Ghost, and there we found also that they were to know if they had received the Holy Ghost. Here again the apostle adds a somewhat similar statement. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he

is none of his" (ver. 9). This statement some people are afraid of Why should they be? If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His. It is what is characteristic of the man who has Christ. If I am in Christ, as my place before God, the Spirit is in me as the power of it, and I am in the Spirit, and it is indeed the Spirit of Christ, He, in the power of whom Christ lived, acted, spoke, yea, offered Himself, and by whom also He was raised from the dead. His whole life was the expression of the Spirit. If any one has not the Spirit of Christ — has not the energy of spiritual life which was manifested in Him, and which was by the Holy Ghost, he is none of His, is not characteristically of Christ. But "if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." What a wonderful thing! The Christian now has his life before God "in Christ." Again, as being "in the Spirit," he has the Spirit as the power of life. What is characteristic of him now? He is in the Spirit, and the Spirit is in him, indwelling that nature in which he now lives before God.

And now see what glorious consequences accrue to the believer. "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." I do not think there is anything more beautiful than this — that the possession of the Holy Ghost is the pledge of resurrection. You will find that what marked the Lord Jesus, is that which marks the believer. The Lord Jesus, as a Man, was filled with the Holy Ghost. He lived in the Spirit. He acted in the Spirit, and walked in the Spirit. He cast out devils by the Spirit. He offered Himself "through the Eternal Spirit, without spot to God." He died, and was buried, and was quickened by the Spirit, as it is written, "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3: 18). The resurrection of His body was but the answer in power to all He was characteristically in His path here according to the Spirit of holiness, for I read that He was "declared to be the Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1: 4). I need not say, He Himself was God, and as God could lay down His life, and take it again, and did so, but, viewed as a Man, it was by the Spirit that He was taken out of death. So also will it be with the saint, if he die. I do not know that I am to die, for I look for the Lord to come, and change this body, but if God, in His sovereign wisdom, allows me to go down into the grave, I shall rise again, because the Holy Ghost is in me now. "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." Quickening, in Scripture, is almost always used in connection with the body, and not the soul. It is the raising of the body of the believer out of death, and the domain of death.

What glorious fruit flows from the death and resurrection of Christ! The Holy Ghost comes down, and indwells the believer. Yes, the humblest, the feeblest believer, no matter how little the faith. If you believe in Jesus, and in the work which He has done, not only are your sins forgiven, but you receive the Holy Ghost — the seal of your faith; and that the Holy Ghost, dwelling in your body, is the pledge on the part of God, that if you go where Jesus went — into the grave — out of that grave, like Jesus, you will rise. It is noticeable that we here have the Spirit spoken of in three ways: the Spirit of *God*, in contrast with natural man — sinful flesh; the Spirit of *Christ*, the formal character of the life which is the expression of His power; and the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead, as connected with the resurrection of the body that completes our deliverance.

We pass now, in verse 12, to the truth of the personality of the Spirit, actually dwelling in the believer, as power. In the first eleven verses of the chapter we have had the Spirit of life, and liberty, in connection with Christ. Beginning at verse 12 we have the Holy Ghost, as power, in the Christian, and what do we find — "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh"? We owe the flesh nothing. "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." Are we debtors to the Spirit? Not so! That would be to bring in the thought of legal bondage, whereas all here is the atmosphere of grace. "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." This is one of those solemn finger-posts in Scripture which are so useful. If you go on in the flesh, the end is the lake of fire. If you go on in the Spirit, the end is everlasting life. Each principle of living bears its natural fruit. We see this in the sixth of Galatians, "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (ver. 8). Do not be afraid to look at scriptures like these. You know what a finger-post is, and when you are on a journey, and come to cross roads, you are uncommonly glad of it. It is an upright post, with two or more arms pointing in different directions. The arms bear the names of the towns to which they respectively point. If doubtful of your road you look, are guided, and I should suppose are also thankful to those who erected the finger-post. This is one of God's finger-posts (ver. 13) — "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." I know where I am going by it. If I am living after the flesh, I know the end of that road is the lake of fire; but if I, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, I shall live. I do not object to the finger-posts of Scripture, and I will tell you more, the man who does object to them is, usually, the man who needs them most of all men — he is almost certainly on the wrong road. The man who is afraid of a scripture like this is the man who is living in sin. The godlier the believer is, the more he welcomes a scripture such as this, because it pulls him up, and makes him say, "I must take care how I walk."

But there is another side of the subject, viz., the relationship which this presence, and operation of the Spirit, gives us to God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God." That is, God introduces them into the position, and dignity, and glory of the sons of God. What was Jesus in this scene? The Son of God, as Man; and the Holy Ghost gives you the sense now, that you are a son of God. You have the place and dignity of a son of God, because the Son of God, who had it ever, has sent the Spirit now to bring you into it, on the ground of redemption. The Holy Ghost has come down, and indwells the believer, to let him know, not only that Christ brought salvation, and that he is pardoned, and his sins all washed away, but that he is even now a son of God. I grant you the world may think men who take that ground presumptuous; but let us listen to Scripture: "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" (ver. 15).

Now, going on, the apostle adds, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (ver. 16). The Holy Ghost is in us, a Spirit of adoption, for He sets us in the truth, according to the mind of God, and according to the relationship in which we are placed in His grace, in Christ. He produces in our souls all that pertains to that relationship. He becomes the source of our being, our thoughts, our feelings. He acts in us, producing affections, and actions, suited to Himself, as He instils Himself into our whole moral being. The Spirit is thus,

practically, a Spirit of adoption. Our position before God is that of *sons*, in contrast with servants under law: our proper relationship is that of *children*, implying intimacy with the Father. The Spirit leads us to enjoy both. The law never brought anything into man's heart but fear. What does the Holy Ghost bring? In Romans 5 we read "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (ver. 5). What is it that gives me the sense of the love of God? The Holy Ghost! When the Holy Ghost comes in, and sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, then fear goes out. "We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Only the child of God can say that truly. It is the language of the child. You may hear a man talking to his neighbours, and though a Christian, he may talk so uncertainly about his relationship to God, that you would not know, from the way he speaks, whether he be a child of God or not, but if you were to hear him, alone upon his knees, and he prayed, "Oh! my Father," then you know that he is all right; his prayer shows his real state before God. He has received the Spirit of adoption, whereby he is able to cry, "Abba, Father."

It is indeed a wonderfully blessed thing to be a Christian, for a Christian is a man "in Christ" — he is "in the Spirit," and has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. The Spirit is in him who believes in Jesus, and gives him an experimental sense of that which is now his, and what will be his. Nay more, the Spirit being in him, the next thing is his mouth is opened, and he cries, "Abba, Father." But more than that, the Holy Ghost ministers to us, and shows the things of Christ to us, and brings us into the enjoyment of the Lord's love, and the Father's love, and ministers to us the comfort of the fact that we are the children of God. More still — "If children," then we are "heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (ver. 17). Co-heirs — co-sufferers — co-glorified with Christ — that is really the word here. We are side by side with Christ. We are sons of God, even as He is the Son of God — not in His eternal Sonship, but — in the place he took in grace as Man, and which He brings those into who believe in Him; as He said to Mary, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God." The Holy Ghost comes down, to give us the sense, and knowledge, that we are co-heirs, co-sufferers, and that we shall be co-glorified with Him.

Later on in this chapter we read of the whole creation groaning, while waiting for the liberty of the children of God (verses 19-23). There is also a groan in the Christian's heart, in fellowship with creation. It is in every one who is Christ's. You could not be a Christian without suffering with Christ. just as Christ felt what ravages sin had produced in this Satan-ruled, and death-governed scene, you and I must feel as we go through it. The Spirit of Christ in us will be the source of the sentiments that filled the bosom of Jesus. Possessing a moral nature that is opposed to all that is around us in the world, we are pained by it and groan. Therefore we read, "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 feel the misery, and sin of creation. You see, the Christian is still linked to the old creation, and the link with it is his body. Alas! he is often governed by it. It is a sad thing how oftentimes we are governed by our body. What, then, is the Christian's link with the new creation — with heaven? It is the Holy Ghost. Consequently Paul says, "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." You must not understand by "firstfruits" that we receive a little bit of the Spirit, and then have to expect more to follow. We have the "first-fruits" of the scene, and land, to which we are going, before we get there. We know the atmosphere of the country,

the colour, the taste, the goodness of the fruit that grows there, long before we reach it. We are like the Israelites in the wilderness, when the two men returned with the grapes of Eshcol. It was a wonderful bunch that needed two men to carry it. The grapes of Eshcol are the enjoyment of heavenly things, the "firstfruits" of that land, which the Holy Ghost gives us to know, while we are here in this scene, yet on our way to glory, and waiting for the redemption of our body.

Elsewhere we read, "Now he which *stablisheth* us with you *in Christ*, and hath *anointed* us, is God; who hath also *sealed* us, and given the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 21, 22). This is a very full presentation of the result of the reception of the *Spirit* — *established* for power, *anointed* for intelligence (see John 2: 20, 27), *sealed* for security, and having the *earnest* for enjoyment. In Eph. 1: 14 also, we find the Spirit by which we are sealed is the "*earnest* of our inheritance." He is the "arles," to use a Scotch word. This illustrates the point. When a farm-servant is hired at a fixed wage, his employer gives him a silver piece, as the foretaste of what is to come, and the bargain is concluded.

But furthermore we read, "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" (Rom. 8: 26). There is a very great difference between the groan of the man in the seventh chapter, who is not delivered, and of this one who groans because he is delivered. One is groaning in bondage, the other is groaning in grace. The latter is in this position, "I wish everybody else was as happy as I am," and he groans because people are not in the enjoyment of that which he has. There is the greatest difference possible between the groaning in bondage, "O wretched man that I am!" recorded in the seventh chapter, and the groaning in the eighth chapter. And why is the man of Romans 7 so wretched? Because he talks forty times about himself, and never once about Christ. He has a good right to be wretched, and this very self-occupation is the source of the unhappiness of hosts of believers, yet is the needed experience by which the flesh is learned out in its hopeless evil, and its judgment in the death of Christ bowed to, in order to enter by faith, into our place in Christ, with all its liberty and power. When a man gets to Christ, however, he is perfectly free and happy, and wants others to know what he has, for the Spirit of God gives him now the enjoyment of what is his for eternity, and ministers to him in this life, of the things of Jesus. These first-fruits are most sweet to the taste of the soul that has enjoyed them. If you say that you have not got them, then all I can say is, that you have missed a great deal of blessing, and I hope you will be stimulated from this hour, to desire to know what these "first-fruits" really are.

Let us now turn to the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6: 19), where the fact of the Spirit of God dwelling in the believer, is developed for very practical purposes as regards the use of the body. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." The indwelling of the Spirit is here given as the reason why we should consecrate ourselves to the Lord, and keep the body pure as being His temple. Passing to the fourth chapter of Galatians, you find that which we have had in the eighth of Romans, presented from another point of view. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a

son, then an heir of God through Christ." The point is this, that being no longer in bondage, but being in the liberty of sonship, the Holy Ghost leads the heart to take that place of enjoyment, and full relationship before God. In the same epistle we are exhorted thus, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Again, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." And further, "The *fruit* of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5: 16, 18, 22, 23).

Let us now glance, for a moment, at Ephesians, and see how a golden line runs through that epistle, in connection with the Spirit of God, which is of the deepest importance for each Christian to trace. In every chapter the Spirit of God is spoken of. In the first chapter, at the twelfth verse, we read, "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 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 that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. 1: 12) The Holy Ghost is the seal of the faith which the believer has in Christ, when he has received the glad tidings of his salvation, "and is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." You see it is the blood of Christ that cleanses the temple. It is the blood of Christ that purchases the soul, and the Holy Ghost comes as the seal of that purchase. To use a figure, I may buy a hundred sheep at two pounds a head. I lay down the two hundred pounds, but I do not at once drive my sheep away. No, I put my mark upon them. The mark does not *make* them mine. It *shows* to me, and others, that they are mine. My own peculiar marks are known to me. It was the money that bought them, it is the mark that shows them to be mine. It is the blood of Christ that redeemed, cleansed, and brought me to God. It is the Holy Ghost that makes it manifest that I am the Lord's.

Again, in chapter 2, at the eighteenth verse, we have, "For through him we both have *access* by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. 2: 18) The first thing the Holy Ghost does is to lead the believer into the enjoyment of the Father's love. The humblest child in the family of God knows the Father. "I have written unto you, little children," says the apostle John. Why? "Because ye have known the Father." Through Jesus, then, we, both Jews and Gentiles, have access "by one Spirit unto the Father."

Again, the apostle prays, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be *strengthened* with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3: 16-18). The Christian is a complex being. He has the old nature in him, the old object, the world, without him, and the old power, the devil, at his back. What has he besides? He has a new nature, the inner man; a new object, Christ in glory, with all that new sphere of which He is the centre; and a new power, the Holy Ghost within him. That we may be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," is the apostle's prayer. That is our source of strength.

Passing on to chapter 4, at the twenty-ninth verse, we have, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And *grieve not* the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. 4: 29) This last is our deliverance out of this scene — our being

conformed to Christ in glory. If we walk carelessly, letting corrupt communication come out of our mouth, to wit, we shall thereby grieve the Holy Ghost. If we do so, then He in His infinite mercy brings a cloud upon us, and gives us a sense of our folly and sin, with distress of conscience as a result. The normal work of the Spirit is to unfold the beauty of Christ to us, occupying our hearts with Him, but if we grieve that Spirit, then He must occupy us with ourselves, and our sin, till confession leads to restoration.

Now look at the fifth chapter and the eighteenth verse, "Be not drunk with wine" — mere natural excitement — "wherein is excess; but be *filled* with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God, and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. 5: 18) Filled with the Holy Ghost! What a privilege! Then it is that you find a man always rejoicing. You may say, That was instruction given to Christians in early days. True, but equally is it for us in these days. If you read in the Acts, you will repeatedly hear of individuals being "filled with the Holy Ghost" (see Acts 2: 4, Acts 4: 8, Acts 6: 5, Acts 7: 55, Acts 9: 17, Acts 11: 24, Acts 13: 9-52); and what was the result? You may be sure they were bright and happy. You remember when Paul and Silas were cast, bruised and bleeding, into the jail at Philippi, what they were about. "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16: 25). joy is ever the fruit of being filled with the Spirit.

Now coming to the last chapter of Ephesians I find, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." That which really fully furnishes the Christian — fills up the total of his armour — is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Scripture does not say, that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. It says, "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Satan knows how to use Scripture against the truth, and many a saint has been kept in bondage, sorely pressed, and wounded, by some bit of Scripture taken out of its connection. That is not the sword of the Spirit. The Word of God is therefore not necessarily the sword of the Spirit, but the sword of the Spirit must ever and only be the Word of God, and if the Word of God is used as the sword in the power of the Spirit, then Satan will be always defeated. Our only weapon in the contest, in these days of infidelity, is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. May the Lord give us to know more how to use it.

The apostle closes his instruction by urging us to buckle on the armour in the prayer, "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication *in the Spirit*, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." There are other operations of the Spirit, did time permit me to touch on them, but enough surely has been said to suffice, and to lead out our hearts in thankfulness to God, for the possession of that blessed Spirit, which gives us the sense of the joys which now are ours, and yet lie before us, all the results of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we have grace, each and all of us, to walk in the Spirit, and be filled with the Spirit, that so the fruit of the Spirit may come out — that true fruit which God looks for, in us who believe. If this be so, we shall understand what is said of the Churches in early days, viz., that "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in *the comfort* of the Holy Ghost," they "were multiplied." Jesus called Him, "Another Comforter." The saints then, and since, have proved Him to be such.