

Romans 5, 6, 8 & 12.

Readings with G. Davison

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Romans 5: 1-11

In Romans 1 we read, "the just shall live by faith". From that point, the Spirit of God describes the depravity and desperate need of the whole human family as seen in the three sons of Noah — Ham, Japheth and Shem. It is in that order their moral history is brought before us from Romans 1: 18 to Romans 3: 20; all the world guilty and all needing justification, the law having failed to supply it because of the weakness of the flesh. God has set Christ forth as the propitiation through faith in His blood. It is a Person, Christ Himself, Who is set forth by God. Having accepted Him as our Saviour, the One Who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, we now come to a wonderful summing up, in Romans 5, of all the blessings which accrue to those who have trusted Him in faith. It begins with peace as we see, followed by all the blessed results in the pathway along which we are going, and, so far as our section is concerned, ending with boasting in God. We shall see, I hope, something of the wonderful favour in which we stand and the certainty of a place in the glory in the world to come.

I think you were speaking previously about this peace; would you please repeat those remarks?

In Romans 1 we have peace **from** God; in Romans 5, peace **with** God; and in Romans 16, the **God of peace**.

You are referring to the salutation, "grace and peace" from God the Father! That is touched upon here in regard to the company who have trusted Christ as Saviour and who are now justified by faith and have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We note again the importance attached to the Person, not only the gospel, though it is by the gospel the testimony reaches us.

These verses are based upon the concluding verses of Romans 4. Our Lord is brought in there, the great Administrator of the bounty of God.

He was delivered for **our** offences and raised again for **our** justification. That is, the One Who died for us upon the cross has been raised again and is in the glory, an Object for faith to fix upon.

Will you please say what it is to be justified! There are many young ones here today who may not understand what it is to be justified before God.

We have a statement in Romans 8, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?"

Now that word charge, "Who shall lay anything to the CHARGE of God's elect?" shows us what justification deals with. First of all we have forgiveness, God forgives the individual. But in regard to

the charge that was against us, so efficiently has Christ dealt with it, closed that history, that even the devil himself can never again bring a charge against the saints of God. I may forgive a person but God has not only forgiven us personally, He has removed the guilt and the offence in the cross of Christ, so that never again can an accusing finger be pointed at the saints of God.

Could anyone else in the universe justify besides God?

There could not be anyone else.

Does justification involve the resurrection?

The end of Romans 4 says, "Raised again for our justification".

Sometimes the definition of justification is given as, "Just as if I'd never sinned at all", but it rather looks from the concluding remarks in Romans 4 that it goes beyond that. Resurrection brings into being a new order of man on a different platform. The question of our state is not gone into till we come to verse 12, and I think it has to be seen in regard to man's guilt, so far as God is concerned, He has so successfully dealt with it that He can forgive **that** man, justify **that** man who had committed the sins.

So that, while the stain is removed our identity remains.

It is the identity that I am trying to hold to. When we come under the headship of Christ in a new spiritual order, then that is worked out subjectively by the Spirit's work in us. I am the man who needs peace with God.

Would it be right to say we must see that it is God Who is justified first?

Yes! Wisdom is justified of all her children, for we must remember that righteousness and justification are practically the same word. God is justified in all His sayings. Everything God does and says is on a righteous basis. I suppose the blood on the lintel is the type of Romans 3; the power in the Red Sea the type of Romans 4. That brings in the sphere of peace in Romans 5.

It is rather surprising to discover from Romans 4 that those whom God justifies are classed as the "ungodly". "To him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly".

There are three things in this chapter teaching that when we were without strength, ungodly and sinners, God justified us. But this involves that we have accepted Christ as our Saviour and the wonderful result is, we know all that history, so far as God regards us, is ended for ever. That is why we have unqualified peace with God. This is unchangeable, it is not a question of how I might feel. This is a question of conscience here, isn't it? For peace of conscience I need the work of Christ in its complete victory and God's valuation of it. For peace of heart I need the Person of Christ.

If we think of the summing up that has gone before, the greatest test that God ever gave to the sons of men before Christ came was the giving of the law. Think of one labouring under that. Look at the man in Romans 7. What peace had he with God in a struggle like that? The gospel is presented; Christ is accepted in faith; there is peace with God. In this chapter and the following chapters you get several times the full title of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think I begin to understand a little why the full title of the Lord is involved. The transaction was so tremendous and the results are so far-reaching.

Could you differentiate between being, "justified freely by His grace" in Romans 3; "justified by faith" in Romans 5: 1; and "justified by His blood" in verse 9?

Well, justified by His grace shows the wonderful disposition of God toward us. And to bring us into that place of favour God in infinite grace has justified us. Romans 5: 1, is my reception of it, because in faith one has been wise enough to accept Christ as Saviour. As the result of that all the blessings that

accrue from His death become mine, primarily here peace. And then, if I want to know how it is all worked out, it is by the blood of Christ. That is the key to it. God could not have done it; I could never have had it, had it not been for the shedding of the precious blood of Christ.

I have found out, haven't I, that the safest place of all is the presence of God? That is the result of justification. The very place that I avoided is now the safest place for me.

"How excellent is Thy loving-kindness O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings". That is God's salvation alright.

One cannot grow into this!

No, that is what I was just keeping in the back of my mind. You do not grow into this. The point is, this is brought to you immediately, no doubt by the sealing of the Spirit suggested further down. This is the immediate effect of believing the gospel — peace with God.

Would you say that everyone has immediate peace? I mean Godward, conscious peace.

No, it may not happen immediately, but in the reception of the Saviour in faith, as the mind and the heart get clear as to what that transaction really involved, I think it is bound to bring one to peace with God.

The woman in John 4 got the benefit of the teaching without actually knowing the terms of it.

That is right and many saints may have it today who may not know the terms.

It says we **have** peace with God. It doesn't say we always understand it. It depends a good deal on instruction, doesn't it?

She was able to say, "Come see a man, which told me all things that ever I did". So quite evidently she had peace because she was drawing others to the Saviour.

It is not quite by divine teaching. We rightly put great importance on divine teaching, but here it is "by Whom also". We, however, would not know it apart from divine teaching, yet it is through the Person we get it. "By Whom also we have access". We are not dealing with effort yet. It is what faith has brought us into, this grace, this wonderful favour in which we stand and which causes us to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

What is meant by the glory of God here?

I apprehend it to be the divine standard which would take us back to the thought of man made in God's image and likeness. There was a measure of divine glory stamped upon man which has been lost because of man's failure; but now the day is coming when, in relation to all that Christ has done, God is going to be glorified in a Man, Christ Himself, and every one who belongs to Him is going to share in that glory. Therefore we boast in hope of the glory of God. It looks on to the world to come for its display. It is a very blessed thing, that when the glory of God is in display, we can stand in the very presence and centre of it and not one speck that is contrary to God will be discovered in us. That will be the manifestation of the fact we are already justified. Indeed it says later on that God justifies us having in view that we should be glorified.

I think it is an axiom of Scripture that God cannot glorify anything that is unrighteous. We see the assembly having the glory of God in Rev. 21, but in Rev. 19 we see she has something before that, a garment which we are told is the righteousness of the saints, and she comes down from heaven from God. She could not have been there had there been a single mark of defilement.

You remember when Stephen was being stoned to death, he looked up steadfastly into heaven, it says he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

That chapter opens with the God of Glory and almost ends with the glory of God, and Jesus comes in between. It is not that the glory of God has been manifested when the chapter quoted starts with the God of glory, but the glory of God is to be manifested and there are to be men in it. The outstanding feature of the section is that it starts with the call of Abraham by the God of glory, and ends with a Man in the glory of God. It is very important to see that what Stephen said is a little different from what he saw. He looked up steadfastly into heaven and said, "I see . . . the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God". That is to say, the One Who suffered, indicating that the only way in which man could be brought into the glory which is manifested, is by the sufferings of Christ. The first comment is by the Spirit, Who tells us that what Stephen saw was the glory of God and Jesus, but the second comment is by Stephen himself who says, "I see . . . the Son of Man".

There is a difference which we ought to note, the saints may have their own personal appreciation which God gives to them; their testimony may be a little different. The servant does not always give expression to everything he sees. There is that which he enjoys in his own soul, and Stephen looking up had his own special portion, but he also had a testimony given to him for others.

It is into this grace we have access **now** while we wait for the glory and, instead of having any fear in relation to it we can make our boast concerning it.

Is it not encouraging, especially to the young people, that there is nothing indefinite in this, it is our standing, and there is something very comforting about it. God gives us a standing where we are firmly established. It is the thought of God that we are brought into something that we can stand on. It is like getting the ankles into the river mentioned in Ezekiel 47; we go on towards the East, towards the coming of Christ, and the river gets deeper, but at the commencement there are waters up to the ankles, "grace in which we stand".

This is a little different from what we get in Ephesians, "taken into favour in the Beloved"? That would be waters to swim in.

It eventuates in that.

These verses altogether shew what we have been brought into. We often say it is better to talk about what the Lord has done than what we do, but it is as well to look at these Scriptures to see what has happened to every one of us through the wonderful power which has come to us through the gospel.

The three things which are mentioned of us here speak of the three ways God has been revealed in the previous chapters. Without strength, we need the power of God; ungodly, we need the righteousness of God; and as sinners, we need the love of God. Those three states have been met by those three revelations of God and they have all come to us through Christ.

This word glory is really boasting.

That is why I mentioned that one could stand in the full blaze of the glory of God without any fear of a single speck of sin being detected. We boast in that; it is God's own work.

Whatever the testings may be which cross our pathway (we often remind ourselves of how little we know of tribulation) yet, however small these may be, we are assured that God is using all for our spiritual education, and so we can boast in them.

Is it normal Christianity to pass through tribulation? I was thinking of the words of our Lord, "In the

world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"

One has light from God about the pathway, and while the world looks at these things as being unfortunate, we know we are in the hands of God and He has control of all. We have peace towards God, and anything that crosses my pathway now only works for good.

Do you think we have an example of it in Acts 16, where the apostle reached his man after being in the prison?

Indeed, a good example.

This is not boasting about tribulations after they are passed, but boasting **in** tribulation at the present time. People of the world boast in experiences they have passed through after they are passed, but the Christian can boast while passing through them.

Is this tribulation only from those who are opposed to Christianity?

Only partly, for God Himself may pass me through it knowing I stand in need of it.

The apostle seems to conclude that this is normal Christianity, normal experience, hence the principles of the kingdom are here brought out.

Do you think there is progression here? Supposing tribulation does not work patience, do you think we could reach the point of joying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Not as a fact. I may believe it as a Scripture, but I fear we know many Scriptures which we do not experience as facts. It seems to me that these first eleven verses are to shew us just where our faith in Christ has brought us, and the wonderful possibilities flowing out from that, while standing in the midst of a hostile scene, with the enjoyment of the blessing of God in our souls.

I suppose one cannot experience these things without knowing something of the deliverance which is worked out in Romans 6 and Romans 7?

We will see how this progression is worked out when we reach those chapters, but it is as well to take note just what is said about us in these verse. The great value of experience is before us here, and when we do get things into our souls experimentally, we have them for good. Then, this begets hope in our souls and gives us to realize more and more that we are not connected with this world at all, but with another world where Christ is all in all. Every **true** experience in the Christian pathway makes this world recede and brings heaven nearer.

Why is it that only now in this progression do we have the love of God mentioned?

We need that to sustain us inwardly in the midst of all the trials we experience in this wilderness journey. Does it shew we cannot appreciate doctrine without appreciating divine love? I suppose we come to the fact that behind all the trials is the love of God. We are assured of this in our hearts.

One cannot shew this, it is in one's heart; but if we see someone going on, increasing in these experiences, we can be assured that it is the love of God in the heart which is sustaining that person.

We are exhorted to keep ourselves in the love of God, and I believe the love of God is the great power which helps us to make progress in this journey. You reminded us some time ago that this word "shed abroad" means **deluged**.

It is the same word used in Acts 10: 45, and translated there, "poured out", in reference to the gift of the Spirit to the Gentiles. It is poured into our hearts like a flood from all the mighty reservoir of the love of God.

It is worth noting that in connection with this great matter the Trinity is brought in. It is the love of God, shed abroad by the Spirit and demonstrated by the death of Christ. And we are told in chapter 8 that nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If oil made the face of man to shine, the love of God in the heart makes our faces shine today.

Then we have one of these "much more" statements. If I have been justified by His **dying** for me, what is there He cannot now do in **living** for me? Surely He will complete this work which has begun and save us every step of the pathway.

Say a little more of being justified in the "power of His blood", as Mr. Darby renders it.

Is it not all that His precious blood speaks of in meeting the righteous claims of God? I say "speaks" as this is what is said of it in Hebrews 12, "speaketh better things than that of Abel". In the power of the blood of that One of Whom already we have read that He was marked by the Spirit of Holiness, offering Himself without spot unto God — it is the blood of such an One that has secured for us justification.

Would you say it is **provided** for us in grace, justified by grace, **procured** for us by the precious blood of Christ, and **possessed** and enjoyed by faith?

A very good way of putting these three things which are all stated in regard to our justification. Rom. 3: 24; Rom. 5: 9; Rom. 5: 1.

In referring again to the thought of the precious blood of Christ, I have long been interested in a thought in Heb. 9. We read there about Aaron entering into the holiest with the blood of others. That word "others" is blood of a different kind for it was, as we know, the blood of bulls and goats. We have ventured to call it inferior blood, for it was lower in value than the blood of Aaron himself as a man; the blood of a man is of more value than the blood of a bullock. All its significance lay in its typical character, but intrinsically it was inferior to his own blood. "How much more shall the blood of Christ" etc. Superior blood on our account, the blood of such an One as the spotless Son of God, has cleansed our consciences from dead works to serve the living God.

There is one verse of Scripture which gives a value to the blood of Christ which perhaps no other verse does. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son" (1 John 1: 7). That brings us back to what we began with in these readings, it is the Person; it is the power of the blood of such an One which has cleansed us. We do get a very precious verse also, in Acts 20: 28, "the blood of His Own" (as it ought to read), but that is in relation to the personnel of the Assembly. In general, the great truth is, that cleansing and justification and forgiveness have come in through the power of the blood of such an One — God's Son.

That thought is emphasized again in v. 10, where we are said to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. The greatness of the Person is so much emphasized in these opening chapters.

What is the difference between justification and reconciliation? They are both mentioned in this chapter.

Justification deals with the charge which was against us, Christ has discharged this by His death. But, reconciliation means that as the result of this, we are brought back to God, and as we often say, quite rightly, in suitable conditions. These conditions are seen under the headship of Christ further down, for I believe reconciliation prepares for the further teaching in the second half of this chapter. I think v. 11 is the connecting link between the two parts of this chapter.

Would it be right to say justification has reference to our guilt and reconciliation to our enmity?

That is quite true. Both are seen together in v. 10, enmity and reconciliation.

It is a great thing to be made to feel that we are righteous in the sight of God, but it seems to me to be a more marvellous thing that God can banish that hatred which was in my heart and replace it by love.

In very simple language, is not God beginning to get something here?

We have suggested that the first half of this chapter is what God is to us; now we are beginning to see what we can be for God.

Reconciliation is not developed here, we should have to turn to Eph. 2 and 4, or Col. 1 for that, but we are told here we have received it, no doubt in believing on Christ; it is an objective thought held out in the gospel and we have received it. The subjective result of having it is, we boast in God.

I once listened to an intelligent discourse between two brothers as to whether the younger son was reconciled when his father kissed him, or when he had on the robe, ring and sandals. I was asked at the end as to what I thought about it. I said to the brother who held it was in the kiss — "I think you have been reading Romans", and to the brother who was stressing the robe, "I think you have been reading Colossians". Both are true, in the one reception; in the other fitness. Here we have it on the line of covering him with kisses, all the distance is gone; but in Colossians we see how it did go, it was in the "body of His flesh through death"; and a new state has been brought in. Reconciliation here is more in regard to guilt; in Colossians it is state.

I notice a little word coming here more than once, it is "now". All this, then, is for present enjoyment.

We may ask a person, "Do you know that your state of alienation has been ended in the cross of Christ and new creation brought in for you?" Perhaps they may say, "No, I do not understand that". "Well, is there anything between your soul and God?" "No, thank God". So, however little they may understand the doctrine of it, it is perfectly clear they have received it. That is why we do well to keep each Scripture in its own setting. I knew the blessing of this verse, knew that I had no longer any need to fear God; knew that I was in happy relationship with God, long before I knew anything about a state of alienation.

We had better say that this word "atonement" in v. 11 ought to be "reconciliation", as in the margin. Some might be wondering where we are getting the word from. It is striking that the translators put "atonement" here when it ought to be "reconciliation", and in Heb. 2: 17 they put "reconciliation" where it ought to be "atonement", or rather "propitiation", which is a much better word than "atonement"; as to the correct meaning of the work of Christ.

What is the outcome of all this being worked out?

As you realize the wonderful blessing God has brought you into as the fruit of your receiving the gospel, you will be like the younger son joying in the Father. An old brother used to say that, had we met the younger son after his reconciliation to his father, he would not be talking about his experiences in the far country but rather, what a wonderful man his father was. That is what it leads to.

It has been said that a justified man boasts in hope of the glory of God, which has the world to come in view; but a reconciled man boasts in God and the eternal state is in view. Reconciliation in itself hardly touches the eternal state, but the man who is reconciled is in eternal relationship with God. A justified man can look on to the display of the glory without fear that the work of Christ has sealed that; but in the eternal state God will be all in all and we are brought to God, right home to God Himself. I can now

boast in the blessed Person Who is going to fill the new heaven and the new earth. I am already conscious of nearness to and intimacy with that blessed Person, I cannot imagine anything more wonderful.

So we reach the topstone of this wonderful section beginning with peace with God and ending with boasting in God. It began from our side when we were marked by the "obedience of faith", and this is what we have been brought into as the result. Moving with God in possession of these blessings, and if it does mean great experience born of patience, we have the hope bright in our souls that God has begun a good work in us, and is training us for the place we are to fill in the day of the display of glory in the world to come. We have every encouragement to go on; every support we need, rejoicing in nearness to Him, and His love filling our hearts.

Romans 6.

In the second half of Romans 5, from v. 12 to the end, the question of **sin** is dealt with — not now **sins** only — and our transfer from Adam to Christ. There are three principles which marked us in our standing in Adam and three which answer to them in our standing in Christ. In Adam — sin, condemnation and death (verses 16, 17). In Christ — righteousness, justification and life (v. 18). In our new standing in Christ, we pass out of the one into the other and are now constituted righteous in the presence of God. We repeat, that is our **standing**.

In this chapter we may say, if that is true — and thank God it is true of every one of us — what is the answer to it going to be? In Romans 5 it is not what we do, for there it is all what God has done for us, based upon the work of Christ in this chapter there is much said of what we do, much that we have need to do for here we learn how we can work out practically what we are in our new standing for the pleasure of God. It is following the truth of our standing in chapter 5, that the apostle now says, "What shall we say then?" (v. 1).

Does this chapter divide itself into two parts, the first part referred to, "What shall we say?", and the second from v. 15, "what shall we do?"

It certainly goes on to that, but we may thank God that before our doing comes in, we stand before Him on the ground of what Christ has done.

In these opening verses is it the Christian declaring himself for Christ?

That is a good way to put it. If I apprehend by the power of the Spirit which now dwells in me that I have been so transferred, I realize there are now to come to light in me the features of the Second Man, Christ, and no longer the features of the first man, Adam. It has been pointed out in the language of 1 Cor. 15, that Christ is presented in chapter 5 of this epistle as the Last Adam and in Romans 6 as the Second Man. If the features of the Second Man are to come to light in us, it can only be as we are under the headship of the Last Adam.

The power for it has been indicated in the previous chapter, where it is stated that the love of God has been shed abroad in the hearts by the Holy Spirit which He has given us. There is no power in ourselves to carry out this moral correspondence to the position into which we are brought in Romans 5, but we have it in the Spirit.

I have long thought that the introducing of the Spirit in Romans 5 underlies all that comes out now, right on to the end of Romans 8 so far as the doctrinal part of this epistle is concerned, and right on to the end so far as the practical details are concerned. I doubt if anyone could go through the experiences

of these chapters without having the power of the Spirit to help him.

In that way it is blessed to see the full way in which the Spirit is referred to in that verse (Rom. 5: 5). There is no stint, for the word really means "deluged" into our hearts. Whatever may be the problems of the exercises which confront us in the doctrinal part of this epistle, the power to act according to God in those exercises has been given to us in the Spirit. I think we ought to make that clear from the outset, otherwise the attempt to carry out the injunctions which face us will bring us in bondage.

Would you say that sin is viewed objectively as the dominating principle in the world?

Yes, as to living in it. There is a system around us which is governed by "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life", but I also find that in me there is something which desires to go after these things which are objectively in the world. The question is, if I am to keep out of it, where am I to get the power to keep this evil within me in subjection? I suppose that is the teaching of this chapter. I have the power to keep away from this manifestation of sin and, consequently, the sinful sphere in which I once walked, for Romans ever regards us as being once alive in sins. There is an interesting feature worth noting about that. In Colossians and Ephesians we are said to be dead in sins and offences, but in Romans we are regarded as being alive in them. In Colossians and Ephesians, where we are said to be dead in sins, God operates towards us on the principle of life — quickened. In Romans, where we are regarded as alive in sins, God operates towards us on the principle of death. That is what immediately comes before us in baptism, the figure of death.

What is it in us which answers to this sinful world?

Sin in the flesh, epitomised further down in the chapter as "our old man".

You have touched upon a very important point when you say God operates towards us on the principle of death. That touches a very valuable matter in this chapter.

It does. You will remember at the end of 1 Cor. 3, we are told — death is ours.

You are referring to v. 6 where it says, "Our old man is crucified with Him".

Yes, not crucified in us otherwise he would never bother us.

I suppose here it is a judicial matter; God has done it at the cross, crucified our old man with Him.

Yes, and now death becomes the avenue of deliverance out of the one state into the other, thus delivering me from the power of the one that I may walk in the other.

There are many revolutionary thoughts in this epistle which we can expect, as moral issues are raised, and this is one of them. Instead of death being a terror, it has become a servant. If we see that, it will greatly help in the understanding of this chapter. Death through the death of Christ has become a servant instead of a bondage to the saints of God.

What is meant by, "baptised into Jesus Christ"?

The preposition is better rendered "unto", and has in view association with Christ. In passing through the waters of baptism we professedly identify ourselves with Christ in death that we might come out in the new character of life. There are two thoughts connected with baptism, association and dissociation. Baptism is the way professedly out of this world by association with Christ in view of walking here in newness of life.

Is it a question of discipleship?

I do not doubt that is in view. We were reminded last night of the two who followed Jesus. If I have

intelligently apprehended that Christ once moved through this world for the pleasure of God then left it by way of the cross, I shall desire to follow Him in this. Water baptism is given us here as a figure in which I can show the Lord I want to join Him where He is and so come out here like Him in the place where He has been.

Do you think this is what the Ethiopian eunuch saw? The life of Christ had been taken away and he said, as it were, I want to be identified with that man whose life has been taken away.

We not only get the power of the Spirit brought in, but all the wealth of attraction brought in by this one Man. I think we need those two points before us in baptism. An attraction in the heart to that one Man Who has brought in all the wealth of the compassions of God, and the power of the Spirit to follow that Man. The eunuch had a Man presented to him — "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"; and then it says, "Philip . . . preached unto him Jesus". It is His preciousness in Manhood that is stressed. A Man Who came into this world in obedience (Heb. 10: 7); a Man Who passed through this world in obedience (John 8: 29); a Man Who left this world in obedience (Phil. 2: 8). It is that blessed Man, unique in His obedience, Who walked in separation through this hostile scene, that attracted the heart of the eunuch and he wanted to be associated with that Man in the realm where He is honoured and not dishonoured. That is the underlying truth of baptism.

Were it not that we have the knowledge of a life in another scene, we should not be prepared to give up life here. Hezekiah was not prepared to surrender his life here as it was the only life he knew of, but we have another sphere before us and are prepared to give up life here, so far as this world is concerned. Life is three times mentioned in Romans 5, and unless we have this in view we shall not be prepared to accept death here.

That would be the new sphere which is the theme of Colossians, where we move in the power of the Spirit as risen with Christ. We have noticed in this epistle that we are not said to be raised. Rather we are given a new life which is marked altogether by new features, so that in the power of the Spirit we may walk in newness of life in the very world where once we only served sin.

I have power, not only to see that and appreciate it, but to live it.

Is being baptized a state of obedience?

It is obedience to the truth. Baptism is never said to be a command; it is a privilege, but surely, when we see it in the Word we bow to it in obedience.

I like the thought of obedience being brought in. That is why I stressed the threefold obedience of the Man Christ Jesus. How can we be here in newness of life which is a life in moral correspondence to the life of Christ, and not be in the path of obedience? I repeat, he came into it in obedience, walked through it in obedience, and left it in obedience. If then, I am to live here in correspondence with such a life, I must be marked by the principle of obedience.

What did you mean by bringing in burial in connection with baptism?

Twice in Scripture we have the statement "buried with Him". Here, and in Colossians 2: 12; and no one is ever said to be buried with Christ till they are baptized. It is sometimes said that baptism is the outward sign of an inward work, but I do not think you will find that borne out by Scripture. We are not buried with Christ till we are baptized, and that is not an inward work. In the thought of God, in purpose, we are viewed as dead, risen and glorified with Christ as Romans 8 assures us, but when it comes to the experience of these things, and the power and enjoyment of them, I am only aware of two

places where the believer is said to be buried, and in both cases it is by baptism, not by faith. Burial means not only that we have died with Christ but that we have left the sphere in which we once lived.

It has often been said that the first time we get an element mentioned in Scripture we get its full meaning. The first time burial is mentioned we read, ". . . that I may bury my dead out of my sight". That is the point we have to come to; we have to go out of sight.

What is it to be true to our baptism?

To walk in newness of life. Here a beautiful expression comes in, which we touched upon a little yesterday. Immediately preceding those words that we should walk in newness of life, we have "the glory of the Father". It seems to me to suggest that there is a realm in which everything is according to the glory of the Father. That is the realm in which Christ is. He has been raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father; obviously, God taking account of a Man Who would fill a realm that is according to His glory. It suggests to me that if I am walking in newness of life, the objective before me is the glory of the Father.

I thought you had that in mind when you spoke of that life which Christ lived, altogether for the glory of the Father, being approved when He was raised by the glory of the Father. As though God would say, That life which has been lived for My glory is to go on.

Our Lord said, "I do always those things that please Him".

That is why it is brought in here. When in this world Christ ever lived for the glory of the Father; and if we are planted together with Him, growing up with him, the same thing is bound to come out in us. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15: 8).

The very idea of testimony is that men see it and glorify the Father.

The chapter gives our side of it, reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God. Paul in 2 Cor. 4 gives the practical answer to it when he says "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body".

That is the only way the glory can come out.

We have the doctrine here, "our old man is crucified", but in Galatians Paul takes it up experimentally and says, "I am crucified" (Gal. 2: 20). That is where the power lies, when we are able to take that which is doctrinal and apply it practically to ourselves.

Ruth gives us a nice picture of this, "Where thou diest will I die" etc..

We have another one in Ittai who said, "As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be" (2 Sam. 15: 21). It is not a question of, Is this right or, is that right? but, Where is my Lord the King? His place determines my place. What is His place in relation to this world? Rejection! Then that is my place in the world. Where is He in regard to the Father's glory? In acceptance! Then that is my place also. Death comes first in Ittai's committal, I cannot enjoy the one unless I accept the other.

That, then, is what is meant here by "in the likeness of His death" and, "we shall be of (His) resurrection"; the two go on together?

Yes! "we shall be of (His) resurrection" (New Trans.). Resurrection is future, as we said, for we are still on the earth. We are going to lose the full teaching of Romans if we do not.

God has ended the old man once for all judicially in the cross of Christ. It is in order that the body of

sin might be annulled in me. God has said His last word to it and now gives me the power to annul it in myself.

It is all with this objective in view "that henceforth we should not serve sin" (v. 6). Not sins this time but sin. It is the state of man here, not guilt.

Say a word on the difference.

Sins have been forgiven as the earlier part of this epistle shows. **Sin**, the evil principle, abides in every one of us, but thank God we have the power to keep it in the place of death. That is the "reckoning".

We have, then, that rather abstract statement, "For he that has died is justified from sin" (New Trans.). That is the real meaning of the word "freed".

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him". It is as well to consider these two things, that resurrection and living with Him, while looking on to the future, are in view. What would be the use of giving up life in this world and walking in this path, were it not that we know that this newness of life, which we have now, really does belong to another sphere into which we are going at the appearing of Christ?

If that were not so, it would only be misery for us and defeat for God.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15: 19). Identification with Christ is what we need to press in this meeting. Surely affection will put us in the same place as Christ has.

We want to get rid of these ideas — Is there any harm in this? The standard is Christ. We do not find people devoted to Christ and seeking to please Him daily ever asking questions like that. Accepting association with Christ frees one at once from these things.

One has been interested in noting in verses 10 and 11, we have the Feast of the Passover fulfilled when Christ "died unto sin once". "In that He liveth" would be the answer to the Feast of Firstfruits. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin", would be the Feast of Unleavened Bread. "Alive unto God through Jesus Christ" would be the New Meat Offering. The wonderful thing today is, the value and gain of all these things are made good to us in the power of the Spirit of God. Seen in Christ first, and then in ourselves. In Leviticus 23, from which we are quoting, the Feast of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread come under the same heading, i.e. "The LORD spake unto Moses". They are co-relative; the one is the outcome of the other, in Christ first and then in us. Along with this is the thought of being true to our baptism. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the normal outcome of the Feast of the Passover, that is, the outcome of the death of Christ for me, He having died to sin. It does not say in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, put leaven out of your houses but, "eat unleavened bread". It is not a matter of what I expel or keep away from, but that I eat unleavened bread, which now means, Christ is my food. It was for a complete period.

We may try to keep a fast instead of a feast.

Yes, no one can live in a vacuum. It is not much use my talking of giving up this and that if I am not feeding upon Christ. Going on in communion with Him is the way to do it.

That brings us to our second leading word, "Reckon". If, then, we have been identified together with Him, the One Who died unto sin and now lives unto God, what else can we do but reckon ourselves to be in exactly the same sphere, dead here and living to God!

Alive to God **in** Christ Jesus, as it should read, ought to be an attractive proposition to every one of us

here. We who once were alienated from the life of God are now alive to Him, in Christ Jesus.

What is there for God in this?

Fruit. As we manifest this newness of life, the features of Christ come to light in us and that is ever fruit for God.

We are reaching on now to the third word, "Yield". I notice, from a footnote in the New Trans., that the word has two different senses. In the first, it is moment by moment, and in the second it is done once for all (v. 13). "neither be ye yielding" is the sense in the first instance, and "yield" as an accomplished act is the second. The first clearly refers to our members and the other to ourselves. This we shall see more fully if allowed to reach Romans 12.

Sin reigning means that sin has the upper hand, has dominion. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof". "Neither be yielding", as it should read. If we begin with this definite movement to yield ourselves to God, that will solve these other matters, for if I have yielded myself to God I shall not be yielding my members as instruments of unrighteousness.

These members are not members of a congregation but the members of my body, my hands, my feet, my ears.

In the sanctification of the priests and the cleansing of the leper, the ear, the thumb and the toe were all cleansed by blood then anointed with oil, thus securing them for the service of God.

That is a great help in explaining what is meant here by yielding our members in the service of God. The ears come first, so let us take care what we hear. We sometimes think it does not matter what we listen to — but it does, hearing can soon defile us.

The anointed ear is prepared to take in what God wants to say and to keep closed to other things.

Would the answer to the oil be seen more in Romans 8?

In its fulness, yes, but as we have said, the Spirit is underlying all these chapters as the power by which we take these things in. We began with that; there is not power for any of these things apart from the Spirit.

The complete marks of the new spiritual race do come out fully in Romans 8, but all these chapters are leading up to that.

Romans 8: 14-30

We have seen in the earlier part of this chapter something of the accumulated benefits of all that has accrued in the three previous chapters, in the work which has been effected both **for** us and **in** us by the Holy Spirit of God. We have seen how we are able to move in this world for the pleasure of God as walking no more according to flesh, but according to Spirit. In the section now before us we have some ten marks of the new spiritual race to which we all belong as being no longer in flesh but in Spirit.

In regard to the statement, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God", I would like to ask, is that co-extensive with those mentioned in v. 1, "in Christ Jesus"?

Surely it must be. Someone has used the phrase "Under a divine tutelage". It is the Spirit of God regarded as a tutor to all who stand in this dignified position of sons of God, teaching us, controlling us, that we might come out rightly in our conduct as sons of God.

Some have thought that v. 14 is only true of an advanced company. Do you think that?

No! I am sure it is true of all who are in Christ Jesus. We do not grow into sons of God, we are that from the moment we receive the Spirit; the fruit of being in Christ Jesus. The Spirit is the liberating power to lead us forward into the enjoyment of the purpose of God.

Not only are we said to be sons of God here, but also children. The Spirit in taking up this new line not only liberates us from all that held us in bondage, but as already said, leads us on into the purpose of God.

Sonship in Galatians stands in contrast to a former position of bondage, but here it seems to be the thought of dignity in those who have been liberated from the flesh and are able to walk for God.

In Galatians the inheritance is connected with sonship, while here it is connected with children. There, sonship is looked at as an advance from infancy, but here it is looked at in the light of the dignity which goes with it and the inheritance secured for those who stand now in this relationship to God.

Would the children of God set forth those who have the nature to enjoy the love of God?

We are children by birth and sons by adoption.

Underlying the enjoyment of divine love is the knowledge of the dignity which that love has brought us into.

I am still thinking of our brother's remark about liberation, and as liberated we are led on to that which characterizes the sons of God, and the result is, "we cry, Abba, Father". Obviously, that must necessitate the possession of the Holy Spirit.

It is good to note that the Spirit is not only regarded as operating in a negative way, liberating us, but in a most positive way as leading into all the benefits outlined in this chapter.

We see the Spirit as a distinct entity in v. 16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God". Note the word "spirit" is in the singular. Had it said "spirits", it would have meant the company, but, being in the singular means it is true of every one of us individually.

Does it mean "along with our spirit" or rather "to our spirit"? Some have interpreted this as a double witness.

No! I think it is the witness of the Spirit to us, innately, and no matter where we are we never lose the consciousness that we are children of God.

It is on the line of confirmation. It is not possible to have the consciousness that we are children apart from the Spirit of God.

As children we are born of God and have life by the Spirit, but "our spirit" is the individual who is the subject of that work, for though we are born of God and thus have part in the divine nature, we do not lose our individuality.

Would you say a word on the cry, "Abba, Father"?

I have never fully understood what those two words imply. They appear to be untranslatable words. I believe they come from two languages. One has heard quite a few suggestions as to their meaning, but seeing that the Lord Himself used them both in the garden, one is baffled as to just what they convey.

This may be said about it: we are given to address the Father in precisely the same way as that in which the Son did. We do, of course, understand the term Father. It is this double cry that has one baffled as

to why they are both used together. It does seem to be a special term of endearment.

If it is true, why do we not use the word "Abba"?

I do not know why we should not. Perhaps one has not exercised oneself enough about it. I do not see why we should not, seeing it is a cry of endearment. It is perhaps more for individual use than collective. It may do good to have called attention to it.

I notice all these relationships are spoken of in a collective way — sons, children, heirs. We do not have them in a singular way, do we?

No! We share them in the company. Some have got into the habit of speaking of a child of God or a son of God, but these terms do not appear in Scripture. The nearest we have to that is in Galatians, "So thou art no longer bondman, but son; but if son, heir also through God" (Gal. 4: 7 New Trans). But it is obvious these terms are used in a characteristic way, and not merely as relationship. I think it is important to keep in mind that while the Son had these relationships with the Father individually as Son and Heir, we only share them in the company. Yet, while that is the way Scripture speaks of them, we do realize them individually as having the Spirit dwelling in our hearts.

So we read that we are joint-heirs with Christ. This involves suffering with Him that we may be also glorified together. It is remarkable that while we are sons in the favour of God and bound thus for glory, we are said to be suffering in the very place where Christ has suffered. Not suffering **for** Him but **with** Him. There is a wonderful balance of truth here. If we are brought alongside the Son into this intimate address to the Father, "Abba, Father", which are the very words which He Himself used, we are also introduced into a realm of suffering more intimate than any other aspect of suffering in Scripture. It is not suffering for Him; I have long enjoyed seeing that these two intimacies are brought together. We have this wonderful approach to the Father, but we are called into a pathway of suffering with Christ.

It would appear to involve having the ability to enter into His own feelings, always remembering the fact that He is perfect. Yet it is His own feelings in approach to the Father, and it is also given to us to enter into His own feelings in relation to conditions around.

Are these sufferings here what the Lord suffered in Person?

His groaning in spirit, and His suffering in His pathway were all in relation to the distress which sin had brought upon the creature. We get so hardened to these things that often they fail to affect us as they ought to.

When Jesus groaned in spirit, no one would see that; but when He wept, all could see it. So that outward expression sprang from that inward feeling.

It seems as though this is connected with v. 18, "the sufferings of this present time", and the apostle contrasts this suffering with the glory which shall be revealed. We feel things as sharing with Him an outside place so far as this world is concerned.

What is this "waiting for the adoption" in v. 23 ?

That is when we receive our glorified bodies. We have the Spirit of adoption now, but it means we are to be glorified, conformed to the image of Christ.

So what we really have here is first the Spirit of sonship, and then the expectation of sonship.

Yes! and we may add we get the experience of sonship in the midst of this groaning creation.

I think I see three things here. First, **dignity**; then **intimacy**; then **suffering**. We first realize the dignity of the position of those whom God had in mind to conform to the image of His Son. Then, as we experience the wonderful intimacy of approach, knowing God as Father, we begin to have kindred feelings as to things here which are contrary to the mind of God, and we suffer with Him.

You suggest, then, that the more we experience the privilege of this wonderful position, the more we shall be prepared to suffer with Him? Yes!

I see here what is objective, then that which is subjective, then that which is practical. That is the order and you cannot reverse these things.

We have but to read the Gospels to learn how much of this marked the Lord while here. Not that which He suffered on account of sin, in the garden and on the cross; but all He endured in His pathway as ever seeking to do that which was for the pleasure of the Father. In this chapter, having the Spirit, we too can feel things that are opposed to God and can in a sympathetic way suffer, in measure, as Christ suffered. You may remember Peter in his epistle speaks of this.

Then, we have what is within, as well as what may be without. Twice in the chapter we are said to groan. It is interesting to note that twice in John 11, Jesus is said to groan; twice in 2 Cor. 5 Paul said he groaned; and twice here we are said to groan. I do think that we need to apprehend something of the glory and groan for it, if we are to groan intelligently as to the state of things around.

Then we have the help of the Spirit in our prayers. There are times, we read, when we know not what to pray for as we ought. Perhaps the fact of having the Spirit makes us more conscious of the weakness within, and it is just there the Spirit comes in to help.

Going back a moment, was it Adam or God who subjected the creation to vanity?

It was God. One has said it would have been unthinkable for the head to have fallen and the creature to be above him; so, when Adam fell, God subjected the creature to the same vanity as its fallen head. It will be liberated publicly when the sons of God are manifested in glory and must wait till that time.

Meanwhile, here we are in the midst of a groaning creation and, at times, we know not what to pray for. I gather this word "intercession" means "entreaty" (v. 26) for, if we do not know what to ask for as not knowing the need, the Spirit knows and makes entreaty accordingly.

The New Translation renders it, "the Spirit joins also its help".

There is only one other place this word "joins" is used, and that is in Luke 10, where Martha says, "bid her therefore that she help me". The word really means, "take hold of the other side". How wonderful that the Spirit will "take hold of the other side". It involves that we take up the matter in prayer, however perplexed we may be, and the Spirit helps by "taking hold of the other side". How can the Spirit take hold of the one side if I am not taking hold of my side? It is when we pray that He joins His help, and thus the matter is rightly presented to God in spite of my inability to do it of myself.

There may be a slight difference between the word "intercession" in v. 26 and that in v. 27. In v. 27 it is more the thought of one coming in between. So as I pray, at times in much perplexity, the Spirit joins, entreating for me, and now God who knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit — note that, not my mind in all its perplexity, but the mind of the Spirit — gives an answer. It seems in v. 27 as though the Spirit interposes His mind between my perplexed mind and God, and the Searcher of hearts answers accordingly. What a comfort and an encouragement to go on for God!

So this Divine Person, the Holy Spirit, is with us all the journey to see us through till we are glorified.

We have, then, in this chapter the wonderful advantages which are ours as having part in this new spiritual race, in order that we may move through this world as those who are beyond condemnation before God in Christ Jesus, and can come out for the pleasure of God as being "in the Spirit". One is the outcome of the other, and it will be seen that we are a new spiritual race as we are walking no more according to flesh but according to Spirit.

Romans 12.

We come now to the thought of a definite committal in answer to the movements which God has made towards us, and to that which He has effected in us to secure us for His pleasure and His glory. This movement comes from our side as willingly presenting ourselves a living sacrifice, devoted to the will of God for His pleasure.

Do you think it is more dedication here than consecration?

I am sure that is right! I do not doubt we have that which answers to consecration further down, but the first two verses are dedication — "given up to" — the service of God.

Would you give us a word on the three things often mentioned in our meetings — sanctification, dedication and consecration?

So far as I understand them I think SANCTIFICATION means "set apart to the service of God". DEDICATION means "given up to the service of God". CONSECRATION means "filling of the hands". That is the order in which they come. We must begin as sanctified by God as the fruit of the work of Christ. Then comes a moment like the one in this chapter, when we have the privilege of giving ourselves up to the service of God, and this in turn necessitates that we should be equipped for this service — the filling of the hand. The truth of sanctification has been before us in the first eight chapters of this epistle. At the beginning of this chapter we have the privilege of dedication, followed lower down by the distribution of gift, which answers to consecration.

It is our **intelligent** service!

Yes! The assumption being that we have intelligently understood the preceding chapters up to Romans 8. We have often noticed that Romans 12 links on to Romans 8. The other three are parenthetical.

It is an axiom of Scripture that exhortations are based upon preceding doctrine; and one of the things which has been so blessedly seen in the doctrine of this epistle is that behind it all is the love of God, and it is by the compassions of God that we are besought. Any service which flows from obligation is bondage, but this service flows from an appreciation of, and response to, love.

There must be an answer on our part to these wonderful things which the love of God has brought use into; redemption, righteousness, life, deliverance, peace, and above all, the gift of the Holy Spirit. These speak of the compassions of God, for in His love He has provided them all for us and we may say in the light of this, "If God has done all this for me, what else can I do but yield myself to Him for His service?" Hence the motive of this service is the **love** of God, while the power is the **Spirit of God**. This decision which may be quite unobserved by anyone else but God, must precede any active service.

Will you say something about a living sacrifice?

The clearest type of this in the Old Testament is seen in the sanctification of the Levites in Numbers 8. They represent the rights of God in redemption. They are given up to God in place of the firstborn, and were offered unto God to accomplish the work of the tabernacle. They stand thus as a manifestation of

a living sacrifice. It is interesting to note in that chapter that neither **blood** nor **oil** was used. Water only is used, which typifies the cleansing of the Word. We have noted both blood and the gift of the Spirit in the earlier chapters of Romans, but for living sacrifices it is the Word which sanctifies.

A living sacrifice is going to involve cost. A brother was raising yesterday the matter of the difference between a gift and a sacrifice. There are gifts which are not sacrifices, as Hebrews says, "Both gifts and sacrifices". For instance, the children of Israel dedicated much of their substance to the construction of the tabernacle; but I do think sacrifice suggests an element of suffering and the giving up of something which appeals, in order that God may be served. It may be losing one's life, losing it in one sphere to find it in another. It is a preparedness for loss as regards ambition and outlook or anything personal which would hinder devoted service to God.

Once we have offered our bodies, I suppose they cannot be retracted?

I think that ought to be pressed. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools". The element of sacrifice does not enter into anything which betokens compromise. A sacrifice is something which is offered absolutely once for all, and if it is a sacrifice it cannot be retracted. It must be free of all entanglements.

A young man some years ago drew me to one side after a meeting and said, "I am going to devote myself absolutely to the service of God". My reply was, "Look out for trouble, for God will take you on and test you". I received a letter from him the following week; he was in hospital after an accident. He thought of those words in hospital and said to himself, "This is it", but he added, "I am just as determined in my resolve"; and I need hardly add, he is going on well today.

It is important to see that before the various gifts are itemised this underlying resolution must take place. From this move flows every service if it is to be acceptable to God.

It would seem that because it is "your bodies" it would involve suffering.

It is worth noting that the body is never said to be sinful in Scripture. If it were so God could not use it in His service. I have been interested in noting how much value is placed upon our human body by Divine Persons. In this chapter, it is for the accomplishment of the will of **God**. In 1 Cor. 6, it is a vessel for the **Spirit**, "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit". In Phil. 1 it is for the display of **Christ**, "For me to live is Christ".

I have often connected this with Heb. 10. You remember how our Lord puts two things together there, the will of God and a body. Here is our side in line with that, the will of God and a body presented to God. Christ came to do God's will; now it is our privilege to do God's will.

I am glad of the reference to Heb. 10 for it illustrates what has often been said, that there is nothing enjoined upon us but what came out in perfect example in the Lord Himself. He was devoted absolutely to the will of God.

I suppose that word in 1 Cor. 6 is in line with this, "glorify God in your body" — the result of being bought with a price.

Being a living sacrifice involves the body being used in the world for the pleasure of God. The word acceptable means well-pleasing to God.

It is wonderful to think that, after all God has said about us in the opening chapters of this epistle in relation to our sinful state, He can now, through His own work and the work of Christ and in the power of the Spirit, cause men in their bodies to come before Him in the way Christ did. He was the Man in

whom God was well-pleased and the possibility is that I can be here, in my body, well-pleasing to God. We have two prefixes in verse 2, "con" and "trans". **Con**, as a prefix means "together with"; **trans**, "apart from". Hence, I am not to be together with this world but wholly apart from it, if I want to accomplish the will of God.

Does the word "conformed" refer to what is outward?

The idea of the word is "fashioned", of the same mould. It is a form of the word used of the ministers of Satan in 2 Cor. 11: 15 and called there, "transformed". This is metamorphosis, a change of form or habit, while the word translated in 2 Cor. 11 as "transformed" means **a change of face**. Such are the ministers of Satan. So we have not to be of the outward appearance, of the same **face** as the world, but altogether different from it in form and habit.

This world is used three times. On the mount of transfiguration; in 2 Cor. 3: 18, translated "changed", and here, translated "transformed". Perhaps transfigured gives the clearest meaning of it. If my service is to be right it can only be in relation to the truth, hence it is "intelligent service". The more I learn what God has done for me, the more able I shall be to serve Him intelligently, and God does not ask us to do something we are not able to do. The commendation of Mary was, "she hath done what she could". If I have taken in the doctrine of the previous chapters, the greater will be my scope for intelligent service.

Transformation then does appear to be some **exterior** change, while the renewing of your mind would be the **interior** motive.

So long as we keep in mind that any exterior change should spring from some interior change, all is well. Putting on the garb of a monk is hardly it; but if I put on the character of Christ as the result of the Spirit's working within, that is true transformation. The various circles we are bound to touch ought to be touched in a way which shows some interior change, for we are to come out as saints.

It is well to call attention to that. It is easy for me to say, "Oh well, my heart is all right"; but my outward movements ought to appear all right and so transformation become evident.

I understand this "renewing of the mind" means a new way of thinking; a completely new way of looking at things. There are two words for "new" in the New Testament, one which means a renewing, and the other word used here, involving an entirely new way of looking at things, and entirely new motives.

I suppose the first thing we prove is "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God". Is not that will seen in our movements with one another?

It is, for the truth of the body comes in lower down, not so much in its corporate character but in its collective bearing. It is not the body **of** Christ here but the one body **in** Christ.

We need to learn then intelligently what our place is in relation to all believers. The will of God may sound a very abstract term. We need to see what it really means, for if I do not learn these things I shall have a distorted idea of what my place is.

In v. 1, we learn that the presented body is acceptable to **God**. In v. 2, the will of God now becomes acceptable to **me**. I do not doubt the will is acceptable in itself but the wonder is, it becomes acceptable to me; but only after I have devoted my body to Him for service.

When the will of God is **acceptable** to us it makes a tremendous difference to our outlook. If we merely **accept** that will, that is another point entirely. We **have** to accept the will of God, for we cannot

do anything else; but when the will of God is acceptable to us, it means we love the will of God, which is very much more than merely bowing to it.

We now have the details of this service as outlined in the distribution of gift. We are warned not to think too highly of ourselves, but we are exhorted to think soberly. Do not let us be found **not** thinking at all.

There seems to be two principles connected with this service, **grace** and **faith**. If I am to move for the will of God there must be an appreciation of grace; and faith would mean I have God distinctively before me in all that I do. Faith would give us confidence that we are in our right place. It would mean that I am assured that this is the service which God has given me to do.

That is why the different gifts are brought in. It has often been pointed out that we have first seven **distinctive** marks, then that which is **general** or constitutional, which ought to mark each one additionally to any special gift.

There are two things which we all ought to avoid in this exercise of the faith which we have been given — over-estimation and under-estimation. In the first, it is thinking too highly; in the second, not thinking wisely. We do not want to have an inflated opinion of our ability, neither do we want to under-value what God has given us for His service.

Is not the great point here that we cannot do without one another?

The distinction between this list and that in 1 Cor. 12 is, here it is to check **independency**; there, it is to check **clericalism**.

The word office here would mean function, not position.

Indeed it does. All are needed, small and great, if the company is to move rightly for the pleasure of God.

What does prophecy mean? It seems to be distinct from teaching.

Perhaps our Bible readings are on the line of teaching, and the open meetings more for prophecy. A prophetic word is a direct word from the Lord to meet some immediate need and I am sure we have heard that this week. It is the mind of God for the moment, not so much foretelling as forth-telling. The Old Testament prophets and the book of Revelation were all given originally to have an effect at that moment. John wrote originally to the seven assemblies to affect them at that time. We may be very well taught in most of the outlines of truth yet be rather slack in our movements here for God. The prophetic word keeps us consciously in touch with God, and would stir us up as Paul said to Timothy, "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee" (2 Tim. 1: 6). We must not separate these unduly, as one could be contained in the other, but they are stated to be distinct gifts in this list.

That is why in relation to prophecy "faith" is mentioned again. It confirms what has been said, that faith is the ability to keep God Himself distinctively before one in the service. You have not so much the brethren before you in this service but God, and that would give you the ability to bring the mind of God before them at the moment.

That would preserve us from holding back a word when, perhaps, we see someone in the company whom we fear might take offence. It is a great difficulty at times. It looks as though one is throwing stones, as we say, and had we not the confidence which faith gives us, we might be tempted to give it up instead of giving it out. On the other hand, to stand up and see someone there and then give them a word that I think they need is equally wrong. That would not be according to the proportion of faith but

according to one's mental deduction, which is quite wrong.

Does the proportion of faith go along with the grace?

They must run together. Grace would be the impression, and faith is needed to express it according to God. Grace means "free favour" and all gift is free favour, but I also need a proportion of faith to use it helpfully for God and for my brethren. My supply of faith will only be to the limit of my gift, and I shall not have confidence for more.

The word "ministry" means waiting upon. It is used first of the angels ministering to our Lord in the wilderness. Standing by to help is the idea.

Exhortation really means **encouragement**. It does not mean, "give a lecture to", which may rather tend to **discourage**. The word means **encouragement**; let us, beloved, "encourage one another", as we are exhorted to do in another Scripture.

This, then, is the way in which we are to be helpers one of another, each with our measure of grace and supply of faith. We need the help of each other, so let us present our bodies to God, that He may use us for His glory in the effecting of His will. This is bound to work out for the blessing of the saints, as we serve Him by serving one another.