

Some New Things

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God in infinite grace, on the ground of accomplished redemption, Romans 3: 24, 25, has transferred us from under the headship of fallen Adam to a NEW STANDING under the headship of the risen Christ, the Last Adam, Romans 5: 12-21. In this new standing we are delivered and free from condemnation for there is nothing to condemn. Romans 6 treats of the manner in which this deliverance has been effected, for sin has been conclusively dealt with, in that Christ has died unto it sacrificially. Having died unto sin once for all He lives unto God, and the believer is enabled to reckon that he has died with Him. Romans 6: 11 exhorts us to "reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

If we have a NEW RACIAL HEAD in Romans 5, we have a NEW MASTER as described in Romans 6: 13. In consequence we are under a NEW RULING PRINCIPLE — grace, not law (v. 14). Thus we are enabled to render a NEW SERVICE (vv. 15-23) for, going back to verse 4, "we should walk in newness of life."

Coming under the power and attraction of a NEW ATTACHMENT — Christ who has died and risen again — we gladly accept that we have died to that in which we were held, and we bear fruit to God. We serve Him as bondman, "in NEWNESS OF SPIRIT, and not in oldness of letter" (Romans 7: 5, 6,).

Coming into Romans 8, we learn that we possess a NEW LIFE with its NEW POWER — "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

Thus our NEW STANDING is not only suitable to us, but also to God. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, (i.e. as a sacrifice for sin) has condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit." So, the believer produces a NEW PRACTICE, Romans 8: 4. N. Trans.

The gift of the Spirit supplying us with needed power is viewed in a variety of ways. Perhaps, before reviewing these ways we might say a word more about the beginning of this unique chapter.

Verse 1 — affords an epitome of Romans 5: 12-21, for "in Christ Jesus" certainly covers the truth of transfer from Adam to Christ.

Chapter 6 is covered by Romans 8: 2, freedom from the law of sin and death.

Chapter 7 with its teaching of freedom from the law is comprehended by Romans 8: 3.

Finally the teaching of the hortatory part of the epistle, Romans 12 onwards, is covered by Romans 8: 4.

To return to the theme of "the Spirit." If we have been given, through grace, a new standing in contrast with our old standing — "in Christ Jesus" as against "in Adam" — we have been given a state which corresponds with our standing, "in Spirit" in contrast with "in flesh," verse 9.

Verses 9 to 11, the Spirit is spoken of as "the Spirit of God;" "the Spirit of Christ;" "the Spirit of Him that has raised up Jesus from among the dead;" finally, "He that has raised up Christ Jesus from among the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies also on account of His Spirit which dwells in you."

As "the Spirit of God" — He forms the saints in the divine nature; as "the Spirit of Christ" — He

forms them after the character of Christ; then as "the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus" — He is the pledge of the ultimate resurrection of the saints who have believed the gospel of their salvation. There is only one Man out of death in Romans — the Man Christ Jesus. As "the Spirit of Him that has raised up Christ" — He is presented in a sufficiently embracing manner to take in also the Old Testament saints (see for this 1 Corinthians 15: 20-23). We grant that the indwelling of saints by the Spirit is the distinguishing feature of the present era. Three times at least is this distinct and distinguishing feature emphasised in Romans 8 — see verse 9 and twice in verse 11.

In view of that which follows in this chapter, is it not more than interesting to observe that the sin which has enslaved man — body, soul and spirit for such is the order in which God has given him up according to Romans 1: 21, 26, 28 — may be comprehended by that statement at the close of Romans 5: 20; "but where sin abounded grace has overabounded."

The Spirit gives us the consciousness of the new position in which God has put us, for He is the Spirit of sonship. The enjoyment of this in its exceeding blessedness finds expression in those precious words, Abba, Father." But the position is not just one of place, for the Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God. Sons by adoption supposes a past history; children by birth brings us as a new generation into the family of God. Being such puts us into heirship with Christ, heirs indeed to that vast inheritance which belongs to God, which He gives to His children in association with Christ. At the same time the children are introduced to suffering with Christ, in view of being glorified together with Him. Surely this is the new hope!

Without attempting the impossible, improving the world around us for the world is doomed, we live in holy separation from it, while awaiting the realisation of the hope. And while we wait we carry on a witness to the Saviour God in the power of the Spirit of God. We do this, not only orally but as living morally changed lives (see Romans 12: 1, 2).

So we wait with longing hearts for the revelation of the glory to us. We know that this shall be at the rapture. If we are waiting to *go in*, creation around us is waiting for us to *come out*, and this shall be at the appearing. Then shall be manifested, in the company which has suffered here with Christ, the glory of creation's Lord. His likeness shall be upon every one of them (Romans 8: 29 and also verse 19). This is our new destiny, for then He shall be wondered at and glorified in all those who, having believed the gospel of God concerning His Son (Romans 1: 16), have proved that it is His power unto salvation.

In the meanwhile creation groans in the travail that the sin of man has caused. The whole creation has been subjected, not of its own will — as was its fallen head — but by reason of Him Who has subjected it. When the Creator subjected it to vanity, He did so in hope of its deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. We who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, have also a link with a groaning creation. Have we not bodies of humiliation (Phil. 3: 20, 21)? As such we share the groan of creation. As to our souls we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and as to our bodies we wait the exercise of His power to redeem them, setting them free from every evidence of the fall. While we wait we are helped by the intercession of the indwelling Spirit. He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. At the same time forming in us exercises which deepen us in the knowledge that all things work together for good to those who — while they are loved by God — love Him in return. Has He not called us, not according to our need, deep and dire though it was, but according to His purpose? And the realisation of that purpose shall make His Son "Firstborn among many brethren," and also paramount in the coming universe of bliss and glory.

No opposing force can thwart the purpose of God! "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who against us? He who, yea, has not spared His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him grant us all things?"

The Spirit helps us here in the presence of the trials and the opposition while Christ at God's right hand helps us there. We face the universe, with its seen and unseen powers, in the confidence of the love of Christ in all its constancy — the Cross has not exhausted it — also in the happy confidence that no malignant foe can touch us.

Nor can we ever lose our place, for God has set us where His love has its rest for evermore — "in Christ Jesus our Lord."