

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT IN ROMANS**

G. W. North

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THE REVELATION AND DOCTRINE OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT
IN PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

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The text

This edition is based on the texts of Mr North's books which first appeared on the website of Lanark Christian Fellowship many years ago.

We have exercised as much care as possible in the conversion into this format, but if you are aware of any errors, could you please let us know.

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INTRODUCTION

This doctrine may not be the main theme of this epistle, nor yet the foremost purpose for its composition, nevertheless it is a very important one. It can be no other, for it is part of the whole scripture doctrine of the Holy Spirit. There is no attempt here to set down a theological treatise about the existence and being and person of the Holy Ghost, there is no need; that He is and that He is God and the third person of the trinity is taken for granted. The ignorant or the unbeliever may challenge that, but their opinions will be ignored here; in any case they will not be convinced by argument, though Gabriel himself should attempt it. Except it be for the worse, the state of unregenerate men has not changed one iota since Paul penned his famous description of

them in the opening chapter of this epistle. As he says, men profess themselves to be wise, and know not that, by their very profession, they reveal themselves to be fools. However, before we have read thus far, Paul has already drawn our attention to the Holy Spirit and introduced our chosen theme.

Before addressing ourselves to this initial reference, it may be beneficial first to make one or two general observations. Even to the most casual reader of the epistle it must be obvious that the apostle has placed the bulk of his teaching about the Holy Spirit in the eighth chapter. The whole epistle is comprised of sixteen chapters, which makes this main section on the Holy Spirit central to the book; quite a significant decision as we shall see. It is generally agreed that the epistle is an exposition of the gospel, laying

special emphasis on salvation by faith through the righteousness of God. Paul makes sure we know this by commencing in the first verse with the words, 'the gospel of God', and concluding the epistle with a paragraph which includes the words 'according to my gospel'.

Throughout his writings the apostle communicates many aspects of the gospel, and whatever his approach to the subject he always writes appropriately to it, passing on his own revelation to the churches. In this epistle he does not mention the Church as such, but speaks to 'all that be in Rome' instead. To them he declares himself to be 'separated unto the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ', and then proceeds to advance his reasons for that statement. It is not therefore surprising that in the central eighth chapter the Holy Spirit

is revealed, or that the revelation and image of the Son of God, which lies central to his theme, is also unfolded as nowhere else in scripture. We thereby see that God wants us to understand that only by the Holy Spirit are the Son and His image brought forth in man. By its very composition the book manifests God's Son by the Holy Spirit, and in doing so tells us that without the Holy Spirit there is no Son.

This is true: (1) theologically, (2) scripturally, (3) historically, (4) experimentally.

1. Theologically each member of the trinity, though having life in Himself, depends on the others as much as on Himself for life. No one of them could exist without the others: without the Holy Spirit and the Son there could be no Father, without the Holy Spirit and the Father there could be no Son, without the Father and the Son there could

be no Holy Spirit. God is one being in three persons, each of whom is necessary to the whole Godhead.

2. Scripturally the opening verses of the Bible are clear enough evidence of this; the order revealed in them is as follows: (1) God (the Father); (2) the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit); (3) God said (the Son, the Word).

3. Historically the order of creation implies it; God the Father formed Adam His son, then breathed into his nostrils the breath (the spirit) of life, and man (the son) became a living soul: Father, Holy Spirit, Son. The incarnation further shows the same order: God sent the word, the Holy Spirit came on Mary, the Son was formed and born.

4. Experimentally the Father begets us by the Holy Spirit and calls us sons. The Father speaks the word, the Holy Spirit

overshadows, the Son is formed. The Son cannot be formed in anyone who has not received the Holy Spirit from the Father. Relevant to this, we read in another place that we must be strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in our hearts: but more of this later. Let us start at the beginning. Paul's statements to the Romans about the Holy Spirit occur in this order:

Chapter 1 verse 4 — the Spirit of holiness — governing the nature of the resurrection of Christ, the Son of God.

Chapter 5 verse 5 — the Spirit of love — governing the nature of God's Sons.

Chapter 8 verse 2 — the Spirit of life — governing Christ-likeness, the development of the sons' nature.

Chapter 9 verse 1 — the Spirit of witness — governing intercession, the sphere of the

sons' influence.

Chapter 15 verse 13 — the Spirit of power — governing works, the sphere of the sons' ministry.

Within the greater structure of this epistle this is the framework within which Paul presents his theme.

It ought always to be borne in mind by every expositor, teacher and preacher, whether he be apostle, prophet, evangelist or pastor, that the Bible is primarily about God. It was given by Him chiefly for the purpose of self-revelation, even though in some books of the Old Testament this may not be at once obvious; every other person or theme mentioned therein is quite secondary to that revelation. Therefore, whichever book of the sacred canon be read or analysed or expounded, it ought first to be regarded in that light. Not all the books are cast in the

same mould; their combined beauty and total usefulness lies in part in their variety. Some may seem to have little theological importance or doctrinal content, but that does not detract from their spiritual value; each is necessary, and may not therefore be disregarded, or its revelation of God underestimated. That revelation may not be directly stated, or at first apparent, but such a book is as much a revelation from God about Himself as those books which are more easily recognised as such.

That which lies open upon the surface of a book is not always the best indication of its most valuable content; behind the story told and underneath the events recorded lies the real purpose of God for its inclusion — namely the revelation of Himself. This is especially true of the epistle to the Romans; there is no New Testament book more

designedly written for this purpose. Twenty times the name God appears in the first chapter; the Son is referred to by one or another name or title many times in the book, the comprehensive word 'Godhead' is also included, and as we have seen the Spirit is spoken of again and again.

Reviewing the order of revelation given above can, of itself, be a most instructive exercise; it moves from holiness through love to life and witness, and then to intercession, and lastly to power. Bearing this in mind, if we believe the book was inspired of God by the Holy Spirit we are bound to arrive at an unavoidable conclusion, namely, that the writer is moving from cause to effect. Mankind, because of its limitations, thinks from effect to cause, feeling back, or from ends through means to beginnings. Man is affected and impressed

by phenomena; his heart loves them. The spectacle and the spectacular greatly appeal to him — he is made that way. The trouble with him is that, by his reason he is a slave to his observations. Men love power, and when they see it displayed and exhibited they are attracted to it; sometimes, tragically, the fascination is fatal. No less in the churches than throughout all society, men seek power; they want it for other reasons than their fellows, and for different ends, but in many the desire is ill-founded. Although not specifically written for this reason, this epistle is a corrective from God about this sad mistake. Properly understood and received in a spirit of humility, this epistle will direct our hearts into the way of truth. Its plain statements, as summarised in the outline suggested above, plus the whole

tenor of its teachings, will, under God, lead us into everlasting blessedness.

1. THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS

'... declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead'. Chapter 1 verse 4: this verse is part of an introductory section concerning the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Justified in the Spirit.

The reference to the Spirit is made in direct connection with Christ. He was 'declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead'. It is noticeable that the translators had difficulty with this verse; they thought the Greek word 'pneuma' should not be given a capital 'S' but a small one ('viz, spirit') Their reason for so thinking rests solely upon the fact that there is no

direct mention of the person of the Holy Spirit in the verse. This is a most unfortunate position to adopt, for it could cause uncertainty to spread among the children of God, and perhaps make them suspect that, when writing the letter, Paul was not being led by the Spirit. It further confuses the issue by allowing the suggestion that Paul imputed spirit to abstract things as though they have living being. Holiness is a quality of life — it is abstract; of itself it has no life, and therefore cannot have a spirit. To suggest that Paul was being imprecise and was following poetical fancies instead of dealing in exactitudes on such important subjects is, to say the least, alarming. If this indeed be so, how then shall we be able to trust him on any matter?

It is not uncommon to hear or read of 'the spirit of something or other, (whatever it

may be). By the phrase we understand the person to be referring to something intangible which cannot be explained or properly understood. When used in this manner it does not precisely mean spirit; in fact there is nothing of precision about the word at all when used in such contexts. It can mean 'an air of' or 'an attitude of' or 'general pattern of' or 'likeness to' or 'inner workings of' or 'the drive or force of'; so unclear is its meaning, that in such cases it would be totally impossible to use it with exactitude. Should that have been Paul's intention here, we may well be in some doubt as to its meaning, and ask what is the spirit of holiness? Has holiness a hidden intangible meaning, a kind of inner life and power that may be referred to as spirit? Are virtues themselves a kind of outer clothing of an indwelling spirit? Do abstract virtues

and characteristics have personalities of their own? The answer to that is a resounding 'NO'. To kindly say that we know what is meant by 'the spirit of the race' or 'the spirit of the thing' is no answer; these phrases can be interpreted in too many ways, they are far too general; we need to be specific. This whole matter will be discussed in another chapter later.

There is of course another interpretation of the phrase, which is felt to be more in keeping with the content of the chapter. The main emphasis of this paragraph is upon the person of the Son; as stated, the gospel of God concerns the Son. It could therefore be argued that Paul is speaking exclusively of Him, and is not making reference to the Holy Spirit at all. This position could be briefly presented in two statements as follows:

(1) God, as promised, brought His Son into the world through the royal line of David; (2) He was a holy man in spirit, and was therefore raised from the dead because of His holiness. This position could be amply illustrated and reinforced by many scriptures testifying the same thing, and is perfectly acceptable to all. But somehow this interpretation does not quite seem to do justice to the phrase 'the spirit of holiness', so let us turn elsewhere to find help in interpreting his meaning. Speaking to Timothy of the great 'mystery of godliness', Paul says, 'God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit', and it seems to be agreed by all that he is here referring to the Holy Spirit. Actually there is no more grammatical ground for capitalising the letter S in this phrase than for printing 'spirit' with a small s in the other; it is simply a

matter of opinion and interpretation. If the Holy Spirit is meant in Timothy's letter, then there is no reason for doubting that He is the one spoken of in the Roman epistle.

It is possible to understand, and correct to think, that in His personal spirit (that is in His human spirit), Jesus needed to be justified in the Holy Spirit. Justification in this sense, presumably, is not to be thought of as justification from sin, for He never had any, but of His birth and nature and calling. It means that, while in the flesh, He never once for a moment deviated from a clear life and perfect walk and faultless ministry in the Spirit. If we sought to refer to Jesus' humanity in this context we could speak of His human spirit; if on the other hand we were to speak of His essential self — that is of His Deity — we would speak of Him always as Spirit, for God is Spirit, pure

original Spirit. But Jesus' human spirit and divine Spirit synthesized; in this case the lesser is included in the greater, so that human and divine become one; therefore His spirit was Spirit. We therefore think properly when we think of Him as Spirit, that is God the Spirit; in whatever person or form He is manifest, He is Spirit. It is therefore absolutely respectful, grammatically correct and doctrinally true, as well as theologically sound, to write 'Spirit of holiness'. To whichever person of the Godhead we are referring, He should be called or spoken of as God. There is no such thing as 'a' or 'the' spirit of holiness; holiness is a spiritual virtue, not a virtuous spirit; the virtuous One is the virtuous Spirit. We see then that, right at the beginning of his epistle, Paul has laid down one of the most fundamental truths of the gospel, namely that the human spirit

and the divine Spirit in Jesus remained undivided to the end. Throughout His life, and especially in His death, His spirit corresponded at all times in holiness to the holiness of the Holy Spirit, and therefore earned the right to be raised from the dead. By the Resurrection from the Dead.

Paul was nominated the apostle to the gentiles. When writing to the Romans he was writing to a people without any Jewish traditions; his reference to Jesus' birth was therefore comparatively infinitesimal, certainly minimal: 'Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh' — that is all. Other than this there is no direct mention of the Lord's birth throughout the length of the whole epistle. One of the reasons, if not the greatest reason for this, is that these Romans had never felt the need to have

anything proved to them from the Old Testament scriptures — they had none. This letter from Paul was possibly the very first manuscript of either Old or New Testament scriptures they had ever seen. When they read it they certainly did not know it was to become one of the most important of all New Testament documents. Paul had no need to write a Gospel to them or to anyone else; recording genealogies and seeking to establish claims that Jesus Christ was indeed the seed of David or of Abraham would have been entirely superfluous; to the gentile world those were not vital issues. Further, had they heard that He had been crucified, they would have been no more impressed either; it was quite usual to hear such news — but the resurrection — that was new.

The Roman method of capital punishment was practised wherever Roman law and

justice was applied the world over; nation after nation knew its power, but only at Jerusalem had any of its victims risen from the dead; that became international news. The Romans had certainly heard of that. The Church knew the power and uniqueness of this, and seized on it; this was the most outstanding of all world events, and wherever its heralds went they preached it. From the day of Pentecost onwards the apostles majored on it with power, witnessing to the resurrection at every opportunity; so effective was their testimony that churches soon sprang up all over the middle east. Rome proved no exception to this; there too the gospel was preached, and many hearts responded to God's call. To them the message of the resurrection was good and effective news indeed; it was all the proof they needed that Jesus Christ was

the Son of God with power; no-one else had ever risen from the dead. He was different; there was no other conclusion. For them everything commenced there, and for us, no less than for them, everything commences there also. It was only in retrospect that the power of the cross was seen. Paul himself said 'Jesus was crucified in weakness', and the other apostles themselves, who observed the event, sorrowed beyond measure because of it, and thought it was the end. We now know that, in respect of glory and power, the miracle of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ is the greatest thing that He ever did; it far outshone the resurrection, for death was foreign to His nature. Resurrection was the most logical and natural of events; He was and is the Resurrection and the Life.

It just had to be of course; if there had been no resurrection there would have been no gospel, for there would have been no guarantee of the effectiveness of the cross, or proof that Christ had died, and therefore there would have been no Saviour. Other men besides Jesus have lived and done good things and spoken fine words and died and stayed dead — death had dominion over them. Jesus had to rise from the dead; there was no other way of proving to men that He is the exclusive Son of God and also our Saviour. His birth did not prove it, neither did His life and work as a carpenter; neither did His unparalleled ministry among men, and neither did His death. There were a few that believed on Him in Jewry, to them He appeared to be the Son of God; some even confessed it, but not many. We know also that at least one Roman thought the events

of Calvary proved Him to be the Son of God, that was all. All together they were only a mere handful of people; the world knew nothing of Him. He gained a little fame among His own people as a preacher; He was a great teacher and miracle worker, and He attracted a somewhat wider notoriety at the cross. But it was the resurrection that proved beyond doubt that he was the Son of God with power.

The resurrection was a world-startling miracle. There had been leaders and teachers and miracle workers among the Jews before; some of their number were always looking for a Messiah, someone who would champion their cause, a world conqueror who would deliver them from the Roman yoke. It had never happened though, so the might of Rome continued unchallenged and unchallengeable in all the

earth. Much to the Jews' disappointment Jesus of Nazareth did not ever pose a threat to Rome; the 'powers that be' had never been seriously disturbed by Him. He was not an insurrectionist, far from it; He had always taught the people to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. He was the friend of government, the Romans had nothing to fear from Him. He was a pacifist, completely tolerant of Rome's dominance. Under examination Pilate could find no fault in Him at all, and for this reason was afraid of Him. None the less he acted contrary to justice, and in the end capitulated to the will of the Jews and delivered Him to them to be crucified to death. But Jesus rose from the dead — it was impossible for Him to be held by the grave; the resurrection proved everything. It also demonstrated that Rome's man was wrong, and that he was

party to a Jewish murder-plot, and had been manipulated by unscrupulous men. It might not seem the judicious thing to do, but that is where Paul started with the Romans; it was perfect wisdom and utter fearlessness, but besides being brave logic for Romans, it was perfect righteousness for all men. It was also absolute truth and honesty on God's part; it proved God's trustworthiness — it was the gospel of God of which no sane man can possibly be ashamed.

The resurrection was God's absolute guarantee to all mankind that Jesus of Nazareth was His Son, the Christ of God. It was God's public testimony that, from the manger to the grave, He had kept the man Jesus under surveillance all His life and that beyond anything Pilate had said about His character and activities, He Himself had carefully scrutinized Jesus' person and life

every minute of the day, and had found Him faultless. The greater judge than Pilate, and the greater king than either Herod or Caesar, and the greater priest than both Annas and Caiaphas had examined and found Jesus perfect on every charge on which He had been or could ever possibly be brought to trial. God had tried Him on counts and according to standards unknown to humans, and on every one of them had found Him faultless; men need have no fear, Jesus is God's Son, the gospel is true.

Holy and Righteous All the Days of His Life.

Jesus is declared by God to be the Son of God with power; He strove against sin, was thereby proved fit to bear it away, resisted unto blood, therefore made sin by God and finally died to it. Not only had He kept Himself unspotted from the world for thirty-three years, He had remained unspotted

from sin on the cross also; there He had no power but His own holiness to protect Him, and no foundation on which to stand but upon His own righteousness; all His great power lay within Himself in the life He had lived. The resurrection was a demonstration of the strength He had shown before and during his death. In a single stroke He shattered the power of all-conquering death, but that was as logical as it was inevitable. Death, not Rome, was the unchallengeable power that conquered and carried away all men, but when it came to the test, death was found to be unequal to His great power. The secret of this almighty power over death lay in Christ's righteousness; His holy life and undefeatable strength rose from that. Thirty-three years of perfect living had satisfied the Holy Spirit that He was worthy, and that He deserved to

rise from the dead. There was never any doubt that He would break the bands of death if He was righteous enough to do so; the final test was the 'fitness' test; He had to be fit to die — that was the crucial point. Before He could become the Saviour of the world the man Christ Jesus had to satisfy God that He was the right person with the correct qualifications for the task.

The salvation of God for men is from sin and sinning into righteousness and holiness; this is God's greatest concern for us. He wants men to have His eternal life, a life not affected by or subject to death and corruption. For this, men must receive the Spirit of Holiness; the sacred work of reproducing in us the life of the Son of God is entrusted to the Holy Spirit. The life He produces in us must be powerful enough to exist without sin in all God's sons, as in the

person of Jesus of Nazareth, or we shall not, cannot, be the sons of God. Jesus proved He was able to rise from the dead; He had power to do that; in the sight of God His Father His life was sufficient justification for it. With the coming of the Holy Spirit to a man comes the power to live this holy life of Jesus in flesh also, that God may be justified in raising us from the dead to live with Him too.

Referring back to the earlier discussion about the abstract element or neuter gender of the word spirit used here: if that interpretation of the word is rejected in favour of this personal and masculine definition we may arrive at a more certain conclusion about what Paul meant by his statement. He is surely saying that Christ's resurrection was part of the all-pervasive holiness of God; in this attitude of mind and

condition of spirit the whole plan of redemption was conceived and carried through in its entirety. In this Peter would most heartily concur, for he begins his first letter with a declaration in kind. He opens his message to the elect strangers with the most wonderful news that, according to the foreknowledge of their God and Father, they were chosen in holiness of the Spirit. There is nothing abstract about that; Peter is speaking about the person of the Holy Spirit. Everything about the Spirit's person and activities is absolute holiness, and all He does may be said to be done in the spirit of holiness. The same is true about the Father and the Son; whether in conception or achievement, everything is holiness in every detail. So it is then, that if Paul is not directly speaking of the Spirit of holiness, that is, the Holy Spirit Himself, he is speaking of the

holiness of the spirit which pervades all God's works. According to this spirit of holiness, Christ is the Son of God, and the power of the Son of God is also according to the spirit of holiness; the resurrection proved this.

There is also another factor about the resurrection of Christ, in consideration of which it is possible that Paul may have introduced the abstract form of speech about the Holy Spirit. The apostle had just made reference to the fact that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and we know that this seed was not holy. The virgin Mary, though born of such exalted lineage, was nevertheless a fallen creature, yet when the Seed was born He was holy. This was because the spirit in which all was accomplished was most holy; it was holiness unto the Lord. He was born

of the flesh, He had to be, but it was flesh uniquely sanctified unto the Lord. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and touched the springs of human life in her flesh to generate the babe, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her whole being to protect the child as it was formed within her. It was a miracle most holy and most powerful, absolutely unique. When He was begotten in the flesh Jesus was most holy; when He was raised from the dead He was still most holy. Everything was carried out in the spirit of holiness; every detail had to be according to that spirit.

Grace and Apostleship from the Risen Christ
Something else emerges at this point also, which is very relevant to our study, namely this:— Paul, who wrote this epistle, claims that both he and others received grace and apostleship from the risen Christ. He does

not name the others, but there can be little doubt that he intended his readers to understand that he meant all the apostles then living. This seems the more certain in view of the statement which he made to the Corinthians, in which he embraces all the apostles, including himself, in the all-inclusive word 'us', 'I think God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed unto death'. In the light of these texts Paul's statement to the Romans is very remarkable, for he is saying that all the apostles were given apostleship and the grace for it from the risen Christ. This can only mean that each one of those who were appointed apostles while Christ was on earth was re-appointed by Him when He rose from the dead.

This sets the whole matter of apostleship in a new light altogether. It suggests that there

was a great difference between the state and status of apostles before Christ died and rose again, and their state and status afterwards. It also makes perfectly clear that no calling and instalment in office by the Lord is beyond or impossible of forfeiture. A moment's reflection to consider the case of Judas is sufficient to confirm this. He was a chosen apostle with gifts and graces equal to all the other apostles, yet in the end he was demoted and rejected, and finally took his own life. Perhaps more to the point than this, according to John, when the Lord revealed Himself to His disciples (now called brethren by Him) in the room where they were hiding from the Jews in fear, He first of all very deliberately preached peace to them; He wanted them free from fear. Shortly also He breathed on them, telling them to receive the Holy Spirit, but before

doing so He said, 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you'. Then, and not until then, did He breathe the Holy Spirit upon them and re-commission them.

This could justify the assumption that, for some reason, perhaps by forsaking the Lord, all those men had either: (1) forfeited their former calling; or (2) had been demoted from it by Him; or (3) had only been called on a temporary basis in the first place. They were never told so by the Lord, but neither at any point had Jesus led them to believe that their calling was permanent. However, when He arose the Lord went specially to them to send them out to the world as the Father had sent Him. He stood among them that day as one re-sent, His calling renewed, His mission expanded; to Him it was a second sending, a re-appointment to an apostleship of greater magnitude, with a

new objective. This being so for Him, surely this must have been so for those men as well; their former apostleship had been so bound up with His own, and just as surely when that terminated so did theirs.

Likewise, when the Lord's apostleship recommenced so did theirs, only this time on a different footing by different means unto different ends.

By this time He had been declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, and those men received their re-commissioning and re-sending from Him in the power and authority of the new position to which He had now attained. This time the vital factor missing from their first calling was available for them and was included in their appointment to fulfil the Lord's purpose. This was entirely new, the first

precious anointing of the Holy Spirit from Him — they had neither received Him nor this anointing when they were first selected three years earlier. Their sending forth upon that occasion was of a quite different character. He sent them out mainly as heralds on a different errand with a far less potent gospel; their business was to prepare the way for the personal coming of Christ who was following in their footsteps. At that time everything was limited by God's intentions, by Christ's instructions, by territorial restrictions, by an incomplete gospel, and by the flesh. That is why the Lord groaned within Himself for the accomplishment of God's purposes with Him; until these were completed He could not go for those 'others' for whom He longed. In order to do this He came to those men in private to link them up with Himself

again, and by them accomplish His Father's will. He re-established them that they should be His apostles indeed.

Apostleship is so distinctly personal; apostles are apostles of Jesus Christ, as each of them who speaks or writes of this in the New Testament so emphatically states; they are not apostles of the Church but of Him. They are set in the body to be members of it, but their devotion is primarily, if not only, to Him; they receive grace and apostleship from Him. It is also of note that, when the Lord breathed on the apostles, they were not baptized in the Spirit into His body (they still awaited that); they were anointed only. They were not yet empowered with the power or ability (Dunamis) of the Spirit as Mary had been to bring forth the life of Jesus in their flesh; Christ was not yet formed in them to any degree or in any

realm; the power they received in that room that day was the power of authority only. This was the reason why Christ so emphatically told them to wait for the power from on high; they were not to go rushing off to fulfil their commission until the great baptism of power and life — the power or ability of the highest — should come upon them. This was the promise of the Father which would clothe them, that is, clothe their spirits with the power of life, enabling them to live His life while still in the flesh of their mortal bodies.

With great skill and wisdom, as well as with deliberate intention, the Lord Jesus separated these two great occasions by fifty days. He had purposed in His heart that the Church He was going to build should be founded upon the apostles and the prophets, Himself being the chief corner

stone, so before He commenced to build it He reinstated and marked out the apostles. There must be no room for mistake about this; what He did must not be assumed to be either His usual way of appointing apostles, or the established order of anointing servants or of baptizing sons. It must be understood that the whole New Testament period before Pentecost and the events thereof were preparation for that day when the baptism of life should be administered to them by Him from on high. Since Pentecost the natural order is first the life baptism or the power, then the anointing or the authorization to serve. But it must be understood that although this may be the apparent logical order, for His own purposes, God may vary it if He pleases, and sometimes He does.

There is no scriptural, spiritual, legal or logical reason why God should not do everything in one all-inclusive experience if He pleases, as in Paul's conversion for instance. There are no grounds for supposing that, following this experience, Paul needed or was granted any further major experience in order to equip him or qualify him for service, or to ordain Him a minister of Christ. Many assumptions have been made and theories advanced, such as the use of prepositions and tenses, or the citation of obscure texts about happenings in Arabia, in order to try to substantiate unprovable assertions, all to no profit, and better left unsaid if the purpose for saying them is to establish a system of doctrine in order to bind men's minds to it. What further purposes and possibilities may lie beyond that, and whatever may be the

outcome, is not our concern here. What is certain is that the apostles of the first generation went out to preach 'the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ' whom He raised from the dead. Those apostles were sent out as sons enslaved, free to serve according to the same spirit of holiness by whom their Lord was conceived and brought to birth, to live and die and rise again. There must and will be then, about all our lives and our preaching, a spirit of holiness, holiness must pervade all.

2. THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

'... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us'. Chapter 5 verse 5.

The Holy Spirit and the Nature of Sonship

In this verse Paul is informing us concerning the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the nature of sonship, and, as before, is still majoring on the fact of the resurrection.

Chapter three has been given up to the great truth of justification, showing that it is: (1) by grace, (2) from sin, (3) free, (4) through redemption, (5) by faith in His blood, (6) to declare His righteousness. Having done this, he then writes a whole chapter illustrating faith from the lives of two patriarchs:

Abraham, Israel's founding father, and David, Israel's greatest king. Paul knew the great

importance of this, for where faith is lacking or weak breakdown always occurs. There is no weakness or shortcoming on God's side; He has done everything He could be expected to do and more besides for our salvation. Salvation is provided for men as a free gift from God upon the condition that they exercise faith to receive it; apart from faith no man can be saved. On God's side it is by grace entirely, on man's side it is by faith alone; it could not be simpler. We must 'believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification'.

This wonderful justification is entirely the work of God. It is the one and only way He can make and declare a man righteous in His holy presence before all the holy angels in heaven. Justification of sinners is a major

event in heaven for many reasons; not the least of these is that a sinful man has believed God and through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ has been changed in disposition from sin to righteousness. Great as is this miracle of love, it could not have been brought to and wrought in any man apart from the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is as vital to the work of experiential salvation as is the Lord Jesus Christ to the provision of it. It is utterly impossible to change a man's disposition without changing his nature, for man is always disposed to do the thing that is natural to him. Nature and behaviour are fundamental to all God's creatures; fundamentally behaviour is determined by nature and nature is determined by species or family. God the Father created and named every family in heaven and earth, and set

the behavioural patterns of each according to His will and according to the kind of life; the kind of life He predetermined is common to the species. Basically nature is decided by parentage, so also is form, and although habits and behavioural patterns may be developed or refined to some extent within the species, the species cannot be fundamentally changed thereby; everything is predetermined by nature.

In common with all other species, human beings need training; whether this training is voluntary or involuntary it is good and necessary for everybody. Whether or not we are aware of it, cultural disciplines affect us all to some extent, but none of these can change the nature of a species. This is specially true in spiritual things; spirits cannot be created, neither do they evolve — they are fathered; spiritually every one of us

is born of a genitive father, and there is no crossing of species; all God's sons are born directly of Him. The gospel Paul preached to the Romans and everyone else was a gospel of sonship. Speaking of himself to the Romans he opened his epistle with these words, 'separated unto the gospel of God concerning His Son'. At the time of writing he was a son of God commissioned to preach that gospel to every creature under heaven that they may become sons of God too. The epistle is particularly about sonship. He therefore refers to the joint nature with Jesus Christ, which all the Sons of God share with Him.

Love — Shed Abroad in Our Hearts.

Without exception all the apostles believed and taught that God is love; Paul, no less than his contemporaries, proclaimed it consistently. His other declarations about it,

especially to the Corinthians, leave us in no doubt about his beliefs; he regarded love to be supreme, and taught them so, virtually saying that without love no man even exists. Since God is love, all His children must be love; love must be nature, life and disposition to every child of God. It is not surprising then that, to the Romans, he should say, 'the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us'. This is a most direct statement about the purpose of the gift of the Holy Spirit by a man who had first proved it. He rejoices in it, linking it with the act of justification, and calling it 'this grace wherein we stand'. With this love shed abroad in our hearts we hope for and anticipate the glory of God. This hope 'maketh not ashamed', he said, because of the fulness of this love and joy and peace. It

was flooding his heart as he spoke, and had been doing so from the moment he had received the gift of the Holy Spirit for regeneration in Damascus.

Ananias' visit to him in his blindness had been directed by God; that dear man had been the vital human factor in the events leading up to his regeneration. Ananias had come to him and called him 'brother', saying he had been sent by the Lord Jesus that he should receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. In obedience to that man's gentle persuasion, and as instructed by him, Saul's heart rose in faith to receive the word of God, and immediately things began to happen. In the space of a very few minutes he received his sight, his sins were washed away, he received the Holy Spirit, he had peace with God, his heart was flooded with love, he was filled with joy. He did not

understand it all at once, but later he wrote of it as follows: 'faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God'. It had happened like that to him at the beginning. He could not have explained what happened, nor could he have taught the doctrine of it straight away, but the seeds of all he ever taught were sown in that experience. It was so comprehensive, amounting to a total change of nature whereby everything within and about him suddenly changed, and from that moment continued to change. With the coming of the Holy Spirit he immediately became a lover of God and of his fellow men. This surely is the greatest personal evidence of the power of Christ that a man can have; what he gained later from his experience that day later became apostolic doctrine.

It is important to notice the juxtaposition of righteousness and love. Their relationship is beyond question; that no one can love with the love of God unless he is first made righteous with His righteousness is not only true, it is also an acceptable and agreeable concept to the mind. There is also a logical connection between the two which, though perhaps not evident at first glance, becomes more obvious upon consideration. It would not be righteous of God to expect us to be loving except He makes us righteous — the two must be as one. Hitherto in the epistle Paul has not spoken of love. Throughout his earlier masterly exposition of justification from sin we have been made aware of all-pervasive grace; it is this undeserved goodness of God alone which leads to repentance. He tells us also that all is based upon the redemption; justification would

have been impossible without that. God first had to purchase us with the blood of His Son — only by that could He justify His actions; what He did He did righteously.

We are familiar with the principles and practice of purchase; they are common factors of life. Purchase is based upon ability, availability, need and desire. The latter two can be operative in any purchase; on the other hand we may need to purchase that which we do not desire and, conversely, desire to purchase what we do not need. It is also possible to desire and need something which is not available to us; this can lead to frustration or fantasy. Ability, that is, purchasing power (or, as we would generally think of it, money) is a necessity we all recognize; it is entirely useless to desire anything, however needful and available it may be, unless ability to

purchase it is within our grasp — only purchasing power brings it within reach. Now, just as we have to weigh up all these things before deciding to purchase anything, so God had to take all these things into consideration before redeeming us.

The Desire of God - for Man.

Except for reasons within Himself, largely undisclosed — self-obligations because of plans He made or desires He felt — God had no need of us at all. We were not necessary to His eternal being or welfare; He was not, nor ever will be, dependent on man for anything. Neither is there any other being superior to or equal to Himself to whom He is responsible or answerable. Except God had willed it, man would never have existed. In the beginning He chose to create man of His own free will, and by that choice alone did man become necessary to God. But back

behind that necessity lay desire; had He not desired us He would not have chosen to make us, and therefore to stand in need of us. God obligated Himself because of His desire. Desire is a most powerful motivating force, attracting and drawing to itself. Choice is a determinative, decisive force; will is the great driving force; but desire is the motivating force. These are all great and wonderful powers, capable of accomplishing much; but, great though they are, they are not the greatest of all forces, for all of them are conditioned by love. God's love is the greatest of all powers, for all His other forces and powers and principles spring from it, and by it are made entirely benevolent. Underlying God's desire for us is His great love. From love arose desire, leading to decision and choice and purpose and will, by all of which we are made necessary to God.

Being conscious of this necessity within Himself, the Lord also just had to provide purchasing power; He had to pay for what He wanted, and He could not find it anywhere else but in Himself, hence the redemption. What sheerest grace this is.

Having all these great powers within Himself, God found it comparatively simple to fulfil His own desires to create salvation for men because it only involved Himself. He required none other to help Him, so He thought through the situation, made plans, and went about His self-imposed task with deliberation. Between them, the members of the trinity speedily fixed aims and means, allocating roles and works to each person according to their natural eternal relationship. God fully realized what the cost of His decision would be; the decisions were not easy, but since the cost was to be borne

by the three alone, they felt justified in what they were doing, and were fully prepared to meet their own demands. They therefore went ahead with the redemption they planned, and in the fullness of time fulfilled their joint will. There was no difficulty on that score; the only difficulty lay in availability; would people want to be purchased? Would fallen creatures wish to be redeemed? How could that be assured? To human minds, even after they have been enlightened, the task God set Himself was vast beyond comprehension or compass, and the conviction grows that solutions and answers could not have been easy to find, even for Him. The further the mind enquires into it, the more the mysteries involved in it mount in number. Paul deals with some of them in the epistle, but by no means all; there are far too many. Those he does deal

with are probably the easiest of them all and are answered from the standpoint of a fully persuaded man, as he confesses, which is an admission that he gave much thought to the problems before he was himself 'persuaded'. He also realized that not all the questions men could ask can be answered. At one point he asks, 'who art thou O man that repliest against God?' and openly rebukes the man who asks such questions as, 'why doth He yet find fault?' and, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' He leaves us in no doubt that he believes men ought not to ask some questions and later makes plain his reason for so saying — everyone needs mental renewal; he also points out the way we all may attain to that blessed state.

The Carnal Mind.

He is, of course, referring primarily to the kind of mind a man has, namely, either

spiritual or carnal; he does not refer to the amount of knowledge acquired by formal education, although he himself had been through the best schools. The mind needs to be stored with the right kind of knowledge — that is one of the reasons for the epistle, but he is more concerned about the condition of the mind than the content of it. The condition of the mind is not changed by its content, but the content of the mind will be changed by its condition. Inevitably there is great interplay, interdependence and interaction between these, but, as with all He does, when dealing with the mind God starts with fundamental states rather than mental accomplishments. Always it is condition before function, for condition determines function. Mind, to be mind, must be functional though; if the mind ceases to function personality ceases to be,

in which case there can be no life. It is therefore essential that if God would change a man He must change his mind; to do this a superior being, having a superior quality of mind, must enter and operate within, for unaided man cannot change his fundamental state of being and thinking.

There are those who blame God for everything; they see themselves as preconditioned creatures of a chance birth, and arguing from this position ask, why then should God find fault with them? They had had no say about their coming into the world: they did not choose to be born, their entrance into the world at a certain time was not planned by them; (sadly enough, in many instances it was completely unwanted). Their parents decided their life for them in advance, and in any case is it not true that God handed the human race over

to sin? 'Why has He made me thus, and why doth He yet find fault?' seems a normal inquiry. 'I cannot help being who and what I am', says the fatalist, 'everything is predetermined, and basic conditions cannot be changed'.

But the apostle will have none of it, for way back beyond all that, before personal parentage or the development of family strains and traits, before the judgement of God, and His decision to abandon the race to sin, before the creation of Adam even, God made choices. In His wisdom He conformed and predestinated persons to be as His sons, and decided and fixed the nature of these to be as His own — God is love. There are mysteries in all this for which God has offered no explanation at all. What He did though, was to send His Son into the world and decree that His gospel should be

preached to every creature. Men are baffled and embittered, they have been broken like potters' vessels, and discarded as unwanted pieces; the whole creation groans and travails in pain until now. What it hopes to bring forth who can guess? And what it will be in the end who is able to foretell? It is Paul himself, speaking in prophetic vein to the Thessalonians, who tells us who and what it shall be — the antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, natural child of satan predestined to hell. He will be king of the majority of the race, and every one of his subjects will be like him, although at present few there are who think so; men generally are too preoccupied with today to think about the future.

This tragic world condition is further complicated by the mystery of Israel; it seems to affect everything. This nation of

destiny, through which God brought salvation into the world, has failed both God and man but, and herein is love, God did not cast it off. Instead, by a new birth, He has brought forth and developed from it a new nation of people drawn from every nation under the sun, a people whose nature, kinship and characteristics are not physical but spiritual. This is God's major concern in this age; He has not entirely suspended operations with Israel, but is working for them in a different way. This has created an ever-present bone of contention to the nations and is a matter of constant speculation; to the carnal mind everything seems in a hopeless mix-up, defying both rationalisation and justification. How then is it possible to explain or justify prevailing universal conditions, or to rationalize national or personal moral states? That is

the overriding question, but Paul does not make any attempt to answer it, neither does God. Therefore it ill becomes us to attempt the impossible: God cannot be justified by pointing to world conditions or human states; they are not as they were originally created. Noting all these anomalies, Paul rejects the temptation to speculate, and presents the Gospel of God concerning His Son.

Justification: of Grace by Faith.

There is no justifying God or man apart from faith, and there is no faith for man apart from the preaching of the word of God. We must take God's word for it. God's plain statements of truth and the preaching of that word alone can bring faith to men's hearts; explanations will not do it. Men's explanations may bring light to minds and, insofar as they are true to God's word, are

good as far as they go; but in order to be saved a man must go beyond that and with all his heart believe God's word and confess Jesus Christ publicly with his mouth. God's word must be answered by man's word — the two given words constitute the making of the bond — both must be confessions of truth; God's word certainly is truth, and so must man's word be. The saving power is not the repetition of true words by the mouth, but the confession of truth from the heart; justification is entirely of grace. On man's part it is entirely of faith; he has nothing to give, he must receive. Indeed man cannot contribute anything to his own salvation, for he is spiritually dead; he is also morally corrupt and mentally confused. Therefore God could not righteously expect man to make any contribution towards his own salvation at all; it would be morally

wrong for Him to expect it anyway. In one splendid passage Paul is at pains to point out that work is work and earns its due reward and that grace is grace, and bestows everything freely as of special favour. God's part is grace, His mind towards us is grace, His attitude is grace, His work is grace; He has everything to give, and expects to do the entire work Himself. This is nothing other than sheer love and utmost generosity, it can be nothing else. We wonder at it but God is love — it is His nature. He can be nothing other and can do nothing other than this.

Paul testifies later that eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord is the gift of God. By this he means to tell us that, far more than that, we can have eternal life because of what Jesus has done. That is true of course; whether they be the pre-historical or the

historical acts and facts of salvation, we are eternally indebted to the Lord Jesus for all of them; they are indispensable to us. But Paul is wanting to take us on beyond that into the present ministry of God through His Son. Eternal life is only presently possible to us because the Holy Spirit is being ministered to us by and through Him. No one can have eternal life except the Holy Spirit be given him. This is why He is called the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Paul gives much space later to developing truth associated with this aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry, and we shall be considering that in due course.

The Mighty Love of God.

Our immediate concern is with this most fundamental work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart, without which no-one can be a son of God, namely, the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart of man. It is

by this alone, (according to the apostle John) that the true sons of God can be distinguished and known. To have made men righteous and holy and not loving would never have satisfied God. He would not have been able to justify Himself in the act of redemption unless thereby He could change the hearts of men from hatred and indifference to love. Men live and do things according to their nature; they form character and act characteristically, therefore if nature be not changed men are not changed. Sons of God are people who share God's nature and develop His character and do His works and show forth His ways as of natural habit; their whole character, disposition and personality is changed. Responsibility to accomplish this in a man is entrusted to the Holy Spirit; that is why He is given us; His special duty is to

ensure that we become the Sons of God in the very image of Christ, so He floods us with God's own love; He could not sufficiently change us by any other means.

What a wonderful inward baptism this is; it is the immersion and saturation of the entire human nature in the divine. The joy of it is unspeakable and the experience indescribable, earth has nothing to compare with it; the like of it is not to be found. This love of God is the love natural to the three persons of God, it is the basic state of life in which they abide together in perfect union and bliss; love is the almighty integrating force which makes this possible. Love seems to be so utterly powerless, yet it is the greatest power of all. Love is so vulnerable, it can be so easily abused or refused or denied, it can be resisted so firmly and constantly that it can be heart-broken, but it

remains tender and enduring and unbreakable and everlasting. This love that is so natural in God is all-transforming when shed abroad in human hearts because it is not natural to them. It is not the love of humans for God, but of God for humans, and what is more it is the love of God for God, enabling a man to love God and man as each should be loved. This miracle of divine transformation is the beginning of wonderful eternal life in the soul of man. By this men can love God for ever with the love wherewith He loves them; it far exceeds the commandment He gave to Israel on the borders of the promised land centuries before, for it fulfils it. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength', God said; the love-filled heart cries a joyous, 'Yes, so I shall, I know I shall, I can now'.

Reconciled to God by Jesus Christ.

This same love is the love wherewith we can love one another too, thereby lifting earth's relationships into the heavenlies where all is divinely natural and ordinary. Paul cannot leave the theme: 'God commends His love toward us', he says, 'while we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly'. Herein lay our weakness — we were without holiness and love, therefore quite ungodly; we were loved but unloving in a world that needs love so much. We had no strength to love men and women as God loves them, and so often had no desire to; we were spiritually incapable of it, yet such is the strength and wonder of His love that He loved us even when we were too dead to know it. We were totally ungodly, yet in all our ungodliness He loved us and reconciled us to Himself, recreating in us something

long since dead and non-existent between man and God. When Adam sinned, the communion between man and God died; God was inconsolable. From that moment man was irreconcilable to God until both natures were united in Jesus. In this perfection He lived all His days and despite every onslaught upon it maintained that unification without sin or rupture, so that He might bear His Godhead and Manhood whole to the cross and through the grave up to heaven. By Him God brought in the age of reconciliation; He could, for in Christ He has created and established it for man and restored him to Himself. God can now righteously do as He wills in man, since Christ has brought reconciliation into being and the Holy Spirit has brought it into human beings.

Reconciliation is man's restoration by God into the primal state of sinless love from which man fell at the beginning. That original love was the natural condition in which humans lived with God and each other at the first. It preceded the knowledge of righteousness; they were without consciousness of being righteous for they had no knowledge of sin; man and woman did not know personal sin any more than God did. Consequently they were not aware that they were righteous, for they had no means of comparison; they were aware of love though. Morality was nothing other than continuing to live in the state in which they were created, and walking and talking with God in perfect innocence, knowing that evil existed but being themselves unaffected by it.

That we might be made the Righteousness of God.

It is not surprising therefore that Paul commences his references to the Holy Spirit in this epistle by speaking of the Spirit of holiness; for that is how it was in the beginning. The Creator Spirit that brooded over Eden was the Spirit of holiness. Adam and Eve would not have been able to define their glorious feelings or to describe the wonderful atmosphere in which they lived, nor does the scripture precisely do so, but surely it could be no better described than living in the Spirit of holy love. What else could it have been? Holiness in human beings is the effect of living in total separation from known sin; it is the natural state of life revealed in personality, produced by the combination of love and righteousness. This was the miracle of Jesus;

it was also the miracle of Calvary where the mystery of redemption was worked out. The Holy One was made sin there, yet remained so righteous and rendered such loving service to God that the place of the skull became unto Him the holiest spot on earth, even as the Holy of Holies itself. By what was accomplished there we could be made the righteousness of God in Him. Likewise the all-pervading sense of the resurrection is holiness also; it halted John's racing feet at the entrance of the sepulchre, stopping him dead; he could not enter, awe gripped him; it was a holy place. What lay within? His body? Graveclothes? Angels? Him? Was He there? John waited, wondering, sensing ahead, daring to grope through to belief. Peter arrived and led the way into the dark cold shade — no one! Just the clothes. The winding-sheet lay collapsed, still vaguely

outlining the shape of the form that had lately vacated it, in a place by itself. The head-cloth lay neatly folded — it had obviously been untied and placed in the spot where His head had so recently lain. What had actually taken place there? Had He been spirited away? Where was He? Peter was utterly confused. John, following after Peter, swept the place with his eyes, took it all in, and believed; wonder filled his soul; everything was so holy. He was being given evidence of the new creation, the Spirit of holiness was filling his mind with promise of newness of life. He needed no voice commanding him to put off his shoes — he knew he was on holy ground; mysterious holiness, glorious love, were in the air he breathed, illuminating his mind, thrilling his heart; he knew Jesus was alive.

Righteousness had triumphed. The Lord had not been carried out or spirited away, He had walked out of the tomb whole. He had not lived and loved in vain; but what love it was that He should endure such agony to achieve it. It had all been necessary, someone had to do it, and He had said all along that He would be crucified; but even with the resurrection in view it was more than duty or chivalry that made Jesus die. He loved: He loved His Father, He loved His own, He loved His enemies, He loved the world; He loved me, said Paul, and the Spirit of this love is pouring through Him still, to be given to us now. The Spirit of the unconquerable nature of Jesus the Lover, who was born to be the embodiment of the love of God, is given to us to make us lovers too. Being made instantly righteous in order to become immediately holy, we must be

utterly loving and continue in that manner of life for ever.

Paul is very sure about this nature and personality of love. Even though his main doctrinal emphasis in this letter is regarded by many as being righteousness by faith, his great overall thrust is towards the love of God being shed abroad in the heart. He makes this the end of justification by faith, though it is easy to lose sight of his intention when first we read his famous statement in the opening verse of chapter five: 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have (or let us have) peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'. The emphasis on justification by faith is very necessary and very much loved by all who know salvation by grace, especially as they have proved that it brings peace with God. Peace is a most blessed state of life; very few people have it, though

most seek it. Peace with God is the rarest condition of all. By Jesus Christ God created this condition for men by taking of His righteousness and giving it to them, thus making them righteous through faith. But, just as peace is not possible without righteousness, neither is it possible without love, for without love peace cannot exist. Peace with God is not just the absence of a state of war between mansoul and God, it is living in a positive state of love with Him. Peace is one of the three foremost glorious delights of the fruit of the Spirit when He abides in a human heart.

The Reason for Justification — Love.

In another letter Paul says faith, hope and love abide, and unhesitatingly declares that the greatest of these three is love. If we want peace we must have love, for peace, being less than love, cannot exist apart from

it, therefore we must have love. Now, although human beings must know and have this love, it is quite beyond the capability of any human being to create it, for it is not human but divine, and being God's own love it can only be imparted by God Himself; in Himself it is natural, but it must be created in us by personal gift from Him. Since He is all-powerful and such a wonderful giver, there is no reason at all why every one of us should not have God's love. We can have it, but having received it we must beware of thinking love is a once for all gift, it is not. Love is the natural radiation of the Holy Spirit; it is so important to spiritual life that it has to be constantly shed abroad within the heart of man so that he is permanently filled with God's love. Justification is for this reason; Love is the immediate end God had in view for men by justification.

Wonderful and desirable as this was to Him, He knew it was quite impossible for Him to achieve it apart from the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Before the heart of man could be kept flooded with His love, that heart must become the permanent home of the Holy Spirit; there was no other way for it. Justification is a state created by God for man and in man, so that He can justly come and live in man and love him there from within. Eternal life is not only a state of sinlessness, it is also a state of love; sinlessness cannot exist on its own. Justification had to be created for man by God, but love did not; love had always abounded in God, so had righteousness and holiness; like love, they are natural to God. Men fell from this blessed estate; they became neither righteous nor holy nor loving, but they never fell from being loved.

So in love, by Christ, God recreated conditions of righteousness and holiness for man, and by the Holy Spirit has made this known to us. The restoration to original love is the greatest proof to a man that he is made righteous and holy — O the gratitude that fills the heart of every person who knows this in experience; he shouts for joy because the nature of God has come to the heart.

This is the grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. What grace this is — beyond grace of forgiveness and righteousness and holiness — this grace of God's love exceeds all — the glorious gospel is that man has been re-admitted to that knowledge of God's love which Adam and Eve left and recklessly threw away. Yea, and greater still we have been brought into the inter-communication and holy

intercourse of that love as it is known and enjoyed by Father, Son and Holy Spirit between themselves. O how wonderful is our God's grace to us that we should share in this great love as being by nature born to it — sons of His love. Blessed be the name of the glorious Holy Spirit that He should be so willing to dwell in these hearts of ours, nor consider Himself to be demeaned thereby, that He should graciously give us opportunity to know what it feels like to be a son of God. O praise Him, who is so meek and humble that He wants all the glory and praise for it to be given to the Son. It is the Holy One's good pleasure that He should be sent by the Father to follow on after Christ and come in the name of another and not His own to continue all Christ's work in His name. Let all we who benefit from this know and understand that it could never have

been possible for us unless the Holy Spirit, as well as Christ, had been willing to humble Himself to dwell in human beings. True He was never incarnated, nor was He made sin or crucified, but He is even now indwelling men and women for the glory of God. God so loved the world that He gave both His only begotten Son and the Holy Spirit that we should have eternal life, Christ to procure it, the Holy Spirit to bring it. God knew when He gave His Son that He would have to give the Holy Ghost also, for we could not have God's eternal life unless He gave the Holy Spirit. Let us worship Him that all three of them were more than willing for this, and let us rejoice in such unparalleled and undeserved love.

3. THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

'... the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death'. Chapter 8 verse 2.

No Condemnation — in Christ Jesus.

This text is the glorious introduction to a whole chapter of glorious truth about the Holy Spirit which has no parallel anywhere else in scripture. It would be altogether too great a task to undertake to attempt an exposition of the whole chapter, but we will touch on it here and there, finding the truth we seek for our purposes. Paul has just concluded a lengthy passage, in which he describes himself as he discovered himself to be under the law of Moses. What the law did for him was to show him the laws that controlled him; he discovered himself to be

a slave of sin, bound by chains of habit to death. Even the laws of mind and memory, which brought him joy and delight in the law of God, could not liberate him from the law of sin which worked in his members. It overpowered his will. Strong determination of mind and fixity of purpose were together powerless to liberate him; although he loathed and lamented his sin, he could not rid himself of it. It was not so much what he did that troubled him, it was what was working in his members that distressed him so much. It was against him, against his desires, his mind, his will, his beliefs, his prayers, his better knowledge, against his God; it was sinful, exceedingly sinful, and he hated himself for it. At last the battle was too great for him and he cried out to God for deliverance and found it through Jesus Christ.

From that time onwards this was his testimony, 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit) for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death'. It is intensely personal. He was not setting down teaching, he was recounting his experience; 'this is what I have found', he is saying, and O how precious it was to him. We are told that the words in parenthesis above are not in the most ancient and more reliable manuscripts, from which we may infer that they were not in the original epistle. They are an exact copy of Paul's words in verse four, and so the scribes, whoever they were that copied out the sacred text, are not to be thought guilty of inserting thoughts of their own, even if it was their idea to put the phrase higher up in

the text. May we not infer that by doing so those people have revealed to us that they too had discovered the reason for Paul's rejoicing? He found he could walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh, and so had they.

How wonderful this experience is, and how glorious it is to every man who similarly discovers that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death. What light in darkness, especially when it is coupled, as it is here, with the fact that there is therefore no condemnation to him because he really and recognizably is in Christ Jesus. Whenever Paul's doctrine touches upon human experience of salvation it is always based on his own experience, and what glorious doctrine it is; because of this it is the gospel indeed, God's good news and man's good

news in one. If the note of personal testimony is missing from gospel preaching it is a vain hope, for what at first is an enlightening message and liberating hope will die away into darkness and condemnation. That is why Paul spoke about walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit; unless a man can do that, he has no testimony that his beliefs are right, no proof that his doctrine is correct; he is just believing in unworkable theories. The walk in the Spirit is the sole proof that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has indeed set a person free from the law of sin and death. For if there is one thing that is absolutely certain, it is that dead men cannot walk; legs and feet they may have, but life they have not.

Therefore the copyists' gloss may not be a bad thing, for it emphasizes the important

practical part, namely walking after the Spirit, without which all is theoretical belief. Because he was walking after the Spirit, Paul knew he was free from the law of sin and death; if this had not been so he would have walked after the flesh, because he could not have done otherwise; the walk is the test. It is entirely impossible to be free from sin and death unless the law governing it, by which it works, is nullified or countermanded in us. It is not possible to nullify or countermand spiritual and moral law unless it is replaced by another, which works in the very same elements and by the same principles as the one it replaces did. Only the working of' the new law can prevent the old one from reasserting itself and regaining power over us; in the spirit as in nature there cannot be a vacuum. The new law does not break the power of the old one — that is not its

function — but it does prevent it from reasserting itself. The power of the old law of sin is broken experimentally in every believer who knows the experience outlined in chapter six.

Essentially, originally and eventually man is spirit. He is not flesh, neither is he a body; he has a body of flesh in which he dwells on the earth in this world. All the time he dwells in his body man is both spirit and soul; man, by God's choice, is a spirit/soul. God is not spirit/soul, He is Spirit. God acquired a soul when the Son took a body. In God He is now the Spirit/Soul of God, the prototype and forerunner of every spirit/soul son of God by redemption and regeneration. The Lord Jesus became a soul when He was incarnated. Until then He was not a soul. To be a soul a person has to be born in a human body. He had appeared in

bodily form prior to being incarnate, but He was not a soul then, for He had not been born man. He was spirit manifesting Himself in human or angelic form for the purpose in hand at that time only. Spirit was breathed into human form by God. God does not make spirits, He generates them. God is the father of spirits, not of bodies. He formed or made body, He did not generate it; He generated or gave birth to man when He breathed spirit into it. Until then the shapely dust was not man. God did not breathe spirit into man; He breathed it into a form of dust which He intended to be a man, and thus created man. Man is a manifestation of God, as well as a creation of God. God made man in His own image after His own likeness. Animals and all the lower forms of being are not a manifestation of God, they are a creation of God only. They do not bear His

image, they were not patterned upon God's being; their original breath was not directly from God, therefore they are not after His likeness; they were only the work of His hands made to breathe atmospheric air.

Man Became a Living Soul.

Original man was created by direct original breath from the Spirit of God. Animals' breath was gaseous, man's was spiritous. Man, to be man, must be spirit; to be human he must be soul; to have existence on the earth he must have body. Man is spiritual, sensual, physical in being; to be man he cannot be any other, for that is how God made him; God delighted in that original creation, but since then man has undergone a tragic change in spirit and soul. Physically he is the same, but in spirit and soul he is utterly different, so God, when communicating truth to us about ourselves,

has found it necessary to change His form of address. When God created man he was spiritual, that is, his spirit was in a condition of pristine purity, without sin, so was his body; he was fully conscious of his originator, in all its senses the soul alive unto Him; His body also, in all its members and motions, its desires and appetites, its laws and functions, was of one accord with it. Man was entirely spiritual. In every realm of his being man was attuned to God. Nothing in him was out of touch or out of gear. The mind of his spirit, and the operation of the laws of his entire being, in accordance with it, were all directed to do God's will — he was spiritual. Man knew no other than that until he sinned, and when he did so he ceased to be spiritual. He was still basically spirit, but he was no longer spiritual, he was only spiritous, and because his sin was

directed to the satisfying of his flesh in both its appetites and desires, its affections and attractions, he became a carnal soul — man was no longer spiritual but carnal, that is, dead. He was not alive with the life of God and therefore was not alive to God. Being no longer spiritual, that is, no longer able to live in the condition in which he was created, he was no longer allowed to live in the conditions which God had created for him — he was turned out of paradise.

This then is the background to Paul's approach to his teachings about man's life in the Spirit: man must be restored to his original native state. Adam fell from his native state, that is, the condition of his nature, what it was, how it was, where it was, and found himself in another condition, another nature. His native state of spirit had become death, his native condition of soul

became sin, his native state of body became carnal. Paul found out all these things about himself and he was devastated. But he also found out that Christ Jesus lived a life that was exactly what God originally intended for man; He was spiritual. If a man wishes to be spiritual he must have and live the life of Jesus Christ. The section commences on that note, 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus'. The life that Jesus lived and the way He lived it are the law for all God's sons. He lived by the Spirit and developed His own spirit from and in that Spirit. His spirit and mind had control over all His being; He was spiritually-minded. He minded the Spirit and therefore His own spirit, and thereby had life and peace. There was no conflict in Him. There was no sin in Him, not in any realm or member of Him; nothing warred against the law of His mind; what He thought and willed

He was able to do. He did not live in or walk after the flesh but in and after the Spirit. He was subject to the law of God, thoroughly dead to sin and alive unto God, therefore all the righteousness of the law was fulfilled in Him. It is into this life that the baptism in the Spirit is designed to bring us. This baptism is obligatory because it is absolutely necessary, for only thereby are our spirits baptized into Jesus Christ. He is now as He was then in Spirit, and the purpose of God is that, by this baptism we shall receive and for ever have the spirit of Christ, the spiritual man.

It is quite impossible for any man to know the working of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in himself unless he is in Christ Jesus. Life in Christ Jesus is exclusive to Him, and if we are to know His life we must be in Him; we cannot be without Him and expect to have His personal life in us. Therefore

every person who would know the reality of Christ's own life within his or her own self must be in Him, otherwise there can be no end to the life of sin. Condemnation and frustration is the common state of all enlightened men who wish to live Christ's life and find themselves unable to do so. They truly desire to do His will and can never accomplish it. As Paul explains, he was in that state himself once; despite all his prayers and efforts he languished in defeat and wretchedness until the Spirit showed him the way and took him out of himself and his sin into Christ. There and then he discovered the law of the Spirit of life and how it worked. When he went this way he found the dominion of sin was broken in him, for like Christ he died to it.

Baptized into Christ.

It was a marvellous and totally unexpected thing, as undeserved as it was unexpected — he was baptized into Christ. No-one had told him what would happen to him and that is why so much of this man's teaching was so personal. He was not a product of the Church; he had persecuted it. He did not learn the way of salvation from it, nor from the apostles of Christ (he had hated them also); quite the opposite from that, the Church has learned from him. What happened to him, that is to say, what Christ did to him at Damascus first of all and then revealed to him afterwards, became the substance of all Paul's ministry. Quite simply, the Christ he had first met on the Damascus road baptized him in the Spirit in that city three days later. He baptized him into His death and into His resurrection, and via

these into Himself, into His nature, His life and self.

That day Saul of Tarsus passed from death unto life for the first time, and from that moment he was conscious of being kept alive in Christ in whom the law of the Spirit of life is constantly in operation. This is how it must be with everyone. Eternal life is not possible to a man otherwise; it is no use a man trying to walk according to the Spirit unless he is first baptized into Christ. Until this happens to a man the law of sin and death continues to operate, working condemnation in him. No number or manner of assurances to the contrary will ever persuade him that it is not so. To be free from condemnation and guilt a man must be baptized into Christ. There and nowhere else does the law of the Spirit of life make a man free from the law of sin and

death so that he can walk after the Spirit. Doing so he does not then need assuring that he is not under condemnation, because he has the assurance of the Spirit within himself and he knows he is not condemned. Moreover, by his walk he proves this both to himself and also to all other knowledgeable persons who observe him.

The life in Christ Jesus can only be known and lived by this law of the Spirit. Unless this baptism takes place and this spiritual law be realized in experience so that the whole personality is brought into obedience to it, no man can possibly live the eternal life. We may observe how this law operates by reading the events that led up to the birth of Jesus. Unless the Holy Spirit had come upon Mary in the beginning there would have been no human Jesus Christ. His life came from the Holy Spirit and not from her; she

only gave Him His human body. All the biological processes by which a human body is formed were taken over in Mary by the Holy Spirit, who activated and commenced and superintended their function. Thereby Jesus was made of a woman: (1) under the law of Moses (which law was the law of God and very strong against adultery); (2) according to biological law; (3) according to the law of faith; (4) according to the law of the Spirit of life. Biological processes are laws — God's laws — and when He sent His Son into the world He did not work apart from female biological law but through it. Jesus was born as a result of voluntary co-operation between God and a woman. Two laws co-operated and combined; one human and one divine — the law of the body of Mary and the law of the Spirit of God. The

spirit of each co-operated by the law of faith to produce the human Son of Man.

Freedom from the law of Sin and Death

We therefore see that the unique life of Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth and Calvary was produced entirely by the law of the Spirit of life. This is the life which God means us to understand when we read the phrase 'the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus'. This life is not subject to the law of sin and death simply because it is the law of righteousness and life, and all the time we live by it we shall live free from sin as God intends us to. Other laws must operate too, all combining to this end. We must observe John's statement for instance — 'if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin'. We do not ordinarily think of that operation as

law, but it is. When Paul says, 'ye are not under law but under grace', he does not mean that under grace all law is suspended or nullified; he means these two things: (1) we are not now under the Mosaic legal system of blood sacrifices for sin or thank offerings etc., (2) we are not now under the law of sin and death.

We are here being instructed into the law of being and personality; in all moral intelligences these co-exist. In fact, without moral intelligence, personality cannot be. There can be physical that is to say animal existence, but no one ever thinks of speaking of an animal as a person; it may have an intelligence of a sort, but it is not moral, it does not act morally but instinctively according to its nature. A higher will and intelligence may train it to respond to a certain name and to do certain things,

but it will never be thought of as a being, a person. It will remain a creature, an animal; it has being, therefore existence, but without personality. On the other hand, man, in common with angels and God, has moral intelligence; all three have both being and personality. In God's being there is no sin, therefore there is no death in Him because sin is the cause of death. But beyond, far beyond this negative aspect of His being, God is positively righteous. Being always morally right and good He is eternally alive — He is life itself. His nature is love and His personality is grace — that is to say that in His attitude towards us God is always gracious. Apparently this graciousness was the quality of nature and personality which came through most strongly to people of Jesus' acquaintance; 'the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ' certainly made terrific and unforgettable impact on Paul.

Now exactly the same life that was in Christ is in the Holy Spirit, as it is in the Father also; although they share the same life, they embody and express it in three different ways as three distinct yet related persons. We must express this life also, and for this reason must walk in the Spirit and after the Spirit. God has ordained it that way for us, but He did not do so for the sake of it, He did so because there is no other way. It was quite impossible on earth for men to walk in the life of Jesus of Nazareth the human being. They could walk after Him — that is, follow Him — with Him or away from Him, but not in Him. Men could not walk in what He was in the flesh. That was unique, but in the Spirit it is now possible (and O what grace this is) to walk in what Christ is in

spirit. To this end the Holy Spirit is now in charge of all things to do with Christ. We must be in the Spirit and after the Spirit and be led by the Spirit or we cannot have and shall not know the life of Christ. We may have and enjoy some of His benefits, but that is not good enough for God's sons. Beyond all these He wants us to have the privileges of sonship, and enjoy all the benefits of a son and heir of God. Therefore the Spirit is made unto us the Spirit of adoption or sonship, and this He accomplishes by coming into us and witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God.

Made unto Us — All Things.

When Jesus Christ was made in flesh He was made the substance of all the virtuous things we read of in the Old Testament. The people of His day were able to see, hear and

handle in a man, at least in part, what the eternal life really was. He was the personification to them of all spiritual virtues and graces and powers. Though sinless, He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; He came for sin and to be made sin; this was His daring. Being so absolutely perfect He could be made the embodiment of sin and all human imperfection, and not be ruined by it. To that generation He was made everything perfect and glorious and needful and wonderful, then at the end of His life for that generation He was made everything imperfect and shameful and sinful and terrible. What He was made for that generation He was made for every generation before and since; He was made sin for us. Hallelujah! Just as truly as He was made the substance of everything virtuous to that generation, so to

us also He is made the substance of all virtues and graces and powers. Paul lists some of them: 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption', we could add to this list almost ad infinitum if we had power to comprehend what no language can possibly express.

Now what we have seen to be true of Christ Jesus is also true of the Holy Spirit to the same degree, though not in the same manner. The Holy Spirit is made unto us all the many virtues of God which we so desperately need. Perhaps the simplest illustration of this is in that marvellous section of the Galatian letter wherein Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. Each of the graces mentioned there is nothing other than one of the many precious virtues of Jesus; it is as though the writer had examined His person and had set down an

analysis of His personality and personal qualities. Though not exhaustive, this group of characteristics put together by Paul is a description of the man Jesus, His manner and ways to God and to men - and wonderful He is. More wonderfully, this is what He is made to us by the Spirit so that we may enjoy and display His life. Still more wonderfully He is made that, through us, to God. The fruit of the Spirit is the spiritual substance of the life of Christ which made Him such indestructible Rock, even when He was made sin on the cross, with the result that the attack mounted upon Him there by the devil and his armies was broken upon Him. By the fruit of the same Spirit abiding in us as He did in Christ, the fact that Christ lives in us is proved. There is no other proof that this is so; the Spirit is given to us basically for this purpose.

One of the wonderful things discoverable in the New Testament about God is how greatly the persons of the Godhead love each other. So great is this love that they integrate and identify with each other almost to the point of loss of personal identity, if not of individuality; this they do purely for love's sake, that the overall purposes of God may be unitedly fulfilled. Quite irrespective of the need to preserve their own distinctive personalities and natural roles, they give all their energies to the project in hand, whatever it is, in order to maintain the unity and single-mindedness of the trinity. Paul shows us here how the Holy Spirit identifies with the Son in order to be the Spirit of sonship in us; 'Father', He cries, and in so doing fulfils His other purpose of identifying Himself with our spirits also. He does this by and through the

urgent immediacy of need within us because of regeneration; first He creates it, then he fulfils it; it is this need which makes the Holy Spirit so indispensable to each of us. Just as Christ did this same thing over a period of time when He identified with humanity as a whole by incarnation, so the Holy Spirit does it with individuals in order to certify that they are regenerate. Christ did this so that He may identify with us humanly, that is, in human nature and form; the Holy Spirit does it so that we may identify with Christ spiritually, that is, in spiritual nature and manner. As we shall see, this is not the only way or the only reason for which He does it; another instance in this same section affords us a further insight into His versatility and activities. Paul speaks of 'the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead'; without question, the person who raised Him from

the dead was the Father, for Paul says so in chapter six.

The Self-effacing Spirit.

Plainly the Holy Spirit is determined not to take to Himself any of the glory or credit which belongs to the Son or the Father; He intends that either the Son or the Father must have that. This characteristic humility is displayed almost unobtrusively throughout, as when He refers to Himself as the Spirit of God. This phrase is generally taken to mean the whole being of God under the headship of the Father, which is proper and natural, for the Father is the highest expression of authority in any family or society. Given His full title, the Holy Spirit should be spoken of as 'The God, The Holy, The Spirit'. This being recognized, He is at once seen to be a person most profound and august, totally beyond our powers of

comprehension. Whether we call Him God the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, or just the Spirit, it is all the same (and all are quite proper expressions to use). He is quite happy with them. As long as He is fulfilling the work of the Father towards Jesus the Son, or fulfilling the role of the Son in us towards the Father, He is content. The Holy Spirit is a glorious person, adapting His own wonderful self to the wishes and requirements of God to us according to our need, and so magnifying Him. Whatever the office He must fill in order to do this, whether Comforter, Teacher, Leader, Empowerer or any of His other functionary offices, the blessed Holy Spirit is content as long as thereby the Father and the Son may be glorified; He is the ever-present self-sacrificing workman of God. What a wonderful person He is.

It is very noticeable that, in this lengthy passage about the person and work of the Holy Spirit, He is not called by His full name or given His full title. This is not a mark of disrespect; Paul would no more be disrespectful to the Blessed One than he would ignore or blaspheme Him. The apostle loved and honoured Him. This use of the shortened form of the name of the third person of God is not confined to references to the Holy spirit alone. In scripture the practice is more regularly used when referring to the Lord Jesus Christ than when speaking of the Holy Spirit. With either person, the general reason for this is to draw attention to, or lay emphasis upon, the particular position which that person is then occupying or the specific work or the nature of the work He is doing. It is the apostle's purpose throughout this entire section to

emphasize the intensely spiritual nature of all he is saying. From the commencement of chapter eight and throughout, he uses the word spirit in various ways and connections many times (once with reference to man) and the full title, the Holy Spirit, once only. The insistence here is that everything is of spirit, whether of the Spirit of God or the spirit of man. That it is absolutely holy also must be unconditionally accepted; that goes without saying. The apostle's unshakable resolve here though is to make sure that everybody understands that nothing of what he is saying is addressed to the flesh; it is not of the flesh, or for the flesh, or in the flesh; everything is of, in and by spirit. God is Spirit, man is spirit; Paul is teaching things of spirit, whether they be things of God or things of man. He deals with things, powers, works and desires of the flesh in chapter

seven, and leaves the subject there, showing his determination to do so by switching from flesh to body when speaking of human physical being in this section. He does this so as to eliminate from our minds all thoughts (whether they be suppositions or calculations) that anything other than spirit can possibly engage in what he now has to say.

How full of precious instruction is this chapter. Paul wrote it to enlighten us as to some of the more basic offices and ministrations of the Spirit: in it He is called the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; the Spirit of Him (the Father) that raised up Christ from the dead: the Spirit of leadership: the Spirit of adoption: the Spirit of witness: the Spirit of fruitfulness: the Spirit of intercession. He comes to men to enable them to walk after Him and not after the flesh. He has created

such a variety of possibilities, and opened up such prospects for us — joint-heirship with Christ, glory, love, power — that we are almost overwhelmed by them. So great are the blessings, that for evermore we are indebted to God to refuse to live after the flesh any more. It is true that this is a negative commitment, but it is a very necessary one indeed. This is a personal debt we owe Him, which, if we fail to discharge on this earth in this life, we can never discharge hereafter. We can only discharge this by living positively for Him; until we do this we shall not be able to have and enjoy our inheritance as we ought. By the law of the Spirit of God we have to live by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus to such effect that the spirit of Jesus shall be reproduced in us — then we shall not be

held and motivated in any way by the law of sin and death.

The Holy Spirit has come for the whole man — spirit, soul and body; not for a third, or two thirds of him, but for all of him, and the direct purpose of His coming is the reproduction of the life of Christ in every man bought with His blood. But, although He is so powerful, He cannot do this without our co-operation, and this must be total. We must be very attentive to Him and obey Him willingly and lovingly, for He will not force us to do so. Firstly it is necessary for us to recognize what God has in mind, namely that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. Everything else, whatever it may be, is subordinate to that. All the Holy Spirit's energies are directed to this end in every man; He has it always in mind, and all the time He is thinking how best to

accomplish it. He was there in conference with Father and Son when it was decided that all God's sons should be predestinated, having already, in God's heart, been conformed to the image of the Son. That was the original determination, and it must have first place in every man's thinking. God's design is not to make us equal to the Son; that could never be. He is God and in His sonship He is unique; but that uniqueness apart, the Spirit is come to conform each one of us to Him in the likeness of His glorious humanity — the nature in which the Son subsisted as a man on earth.

This the Spirit cannot do unless He receives one hundred percent co-operation from us; He has to change and adjust spirit, mind and body totally and progressively to the end in view. Unless we allow the power of God to

affect us in every realm of our being, His task is impossible; not even God can accomplish it. There is nothing else for it. Man is so utterly degenerate; his need so great and his case so hopeless, that apart from total re-making he is lost. Hope for man lies in God alone, and the Spirit of holiness and love has come to bring it. He is equipped with all the power of God, backed up by and enhanced with the redemption in Christ Jesus, with the fixed intention of re-making us entirely thereby. He (1) brings believing men the spirit of Christ to identify us with Himself; (2) imparts the mind of Christ that He may teach us; (3) develops (in us) the soul of Christ that He may fellowship with us; (4) quickens our mortal body that He may walk and work with us. The result is that our entire life, our whole human nature is renewed. This is the degree to which God

will save men on this earth; Jesus came to justify us, Father comes to own us, the Holy Ghost comes to glorify us. God expects all our minds to be instinct with this and all our thoughts to be ablaze with it.

Let This Mind be in You.

The part the mind plays in it all is a very important one and this cannot be overlooked or neglected without dreadful loss. Paul sets out the mental position like this: 'they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; ... to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace ... the carnal mind is enmity against God'. The phrases 'carnally minded' and 'spiritually minded' may be thought of as 'the minding, or the mind of, the flesh' and 'the minding, or mind of, the Spirit'. Fleshly thinking or thinking only or generally for the satisfaction of the flesh

with purpose to fulfil its desires apart from the will of God is sin and death. Thinking from the viewpoint of the promotion, comfort and advancement of life in and for the flesh is anti-God; He calls that carnal. By contrast, spiritual thinking, or thinking by the Spirit is to use the same mental powers and processes for the purpose of fulfilling the will of God, while in the body and with the same flesh. The Holy Spirit gives this enabling, which will be rewarded by the blessing of seeing things from the viewpoint of the Holy Spirit. This will enable Him to promote and advance the life of Christ in us for the glory of all concerned. This is not possible unless the mind of Christ, that is, His thinking and His way of thinking becomes ours. Only the Holy Spirit can bring Christ's power and process and practice of thinking into us. Unless this ability becomes

ours He cannot make us what He wants; it cannot be done by external forces working upon us; they may do, but without a change of mind we cannot be changed people. If we were mindless, inanimate objects, His power could perform miracles on and with us, but could not reproduce the likeness of Christ in us, for that consists in and develops from changing states of thought. We are human beings, having reflexes which are not under the control of the conscious mind; we have wills capable of response or of rejection; we have imaginations also and memories, and can frame and speak words, formulate plans and decide actions. To do all this is part of life, a major part, and God is very concerned about it. He insists that we be Christ-like, and to be that we must think, and think with the right kind of mind, the spiritual mind. A person's mind is as

important to him as his heart. It is exceedingly difficult to assess the relative importance of mind and heart in the life of man.

There can be little doubt that right from the very beginning, in the formation and development of a human body within the womb, the heart and the brain come into being simultaneously. This is of necessity, for between them heart and brain constitute the twin indispensable basic functional mechanisms of human beings; they are interdependent — one cannot be without the other. At that stage their functions and capacity are limited, though their potential is great. Each is so dependent upon the other, that to destroy either would be to destroy both. This is so at every stage of life, but for that which we seek it is only necessary to perceive life's beginnings, so that nature

itself should teach us. In its earliest stages the natural impulses of the heart are received from the brain as they are to this day in the body of everyone now reading this. These messages that command the heart to beat are not consciously generated by the intellectual mind; they function from the brain by means not yet known, from a part not yet discovered. The function of the heart and the function of the brain are of equal importance; between them, together with the blood of the mother, they produce a living body. We must therefore take extreme care when pondering these verses lest we miss vital truth, which to ignore could mean spiritual death. We must have a spiritual mind or we cannot have a spiritual heart; if one is carnal so is the other. They are twinned by God and cannot be put asunder, nor can their state be made

different from each other; they must both be life or both be death. This must inevitably lead to a similar and even more basic point than this; it concerns the cause or origins of life within us. None of this would be possible unless the Spirit of Christ were given us. The mind of the Spirit and the Spirit of Christ are as it were twins; we must have both.

Without either there could be no life, they cannot exist apart from each other; they exist together as one. This also is the Holy One's ministry in man. It is His charge to quicken our spirits within us, raising each man's spirit from its death, regenerating it thereby into a spirit like Christ's, that is, like the spirit that was in the body of the man called Jesus. The Spirit of God has to come into us, and He does so in order to generate a Christ-like spirit in us. Not until this happens is Christ indwelling us.

Now this miracle besides being most wonderful is also most necessary. In order to sensibly believe we have the life of Christ, we must be living, thinking spirits; to think otherwise than this is plainly illogical. By command and provision of God, having been regenerated, we have so to live in these bodies of ours on this earth that the glorious image of the Son may be seen and unmistakably recognized in us in this world. The Spirit of the Lord is very aware of that. His commission from the Father is to complete the triumph of redemption in every realm of every human being who has received Him. This He does by bringing the salvation of God into us, causing it to work in our mortal body, as well as in our spirit and mind. In Paul's language this is how it happens, 'if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because

of righteousness. 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'. Though often misunderstood and all too frequently misinterpreted, these are nevertheless some of the most precious words in scripture. By some they are thought to be an assurance of the ultimate resurrection of the body, and doubtless they may have that meaning and be quoted in that connection. Others have applied them to physical healing, and interpreted them to mean that; but although both of these interpretations may be given to the text, it can only be done dubiously, for they are not what Paul meant by it.

The Death by which We Live.

When Paul introduces the bodily resurrection of Christ into his teaching he

does not always do so in relation to our mortal bodies, nor is he always thinking of the resurrection at the end of the age. This text is a prime example of the use to which he puts the fact and power of the resurrection throughout the whole of this section, as also in the sixth chapter. What he is saying here is that the Spirit dwelling in our mortal bodies will quicken them here and now — the end of the age is not in view. Paul is not here saying God will raise our bodies from the dead at the last trump, but that He will quicken them at this moment while they are still alive on this earth. The message is that constant bodily quickening is definitely and graciously included in God's eternal life-plan for man. This is all part of the process which He perfected in Christ and demonstrated by His resurrection for us; apart from this it is not possible for any man

to enjoy salvation in all its fulness. The death of which Paul is here speaking is not physical death. This is what he says, 'if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness'. Quite obviously this death is a death which takes place in the mortal flesh, but is not of the flesh; it does not to any degree destroy the body; it is a spiritual death, not a physical one. Paul is continuing the teaching he commenced when writing earlier with great penetration about his own experience prior to his deliverance by Christ. His contention is that by the death of Christ he was delivered: (1) from the unconscious spiritual death in which he was born and lived in until he was rejuvenated; (2) from the conscious death he died, when the law came to him personally, that is when it was applied to his condition and he realized what life was; (3)

into the conscious death which reigned in him from the moment when Christ came into him. Not one of these deaths is a physical one.

Any confusion which may reign in any heart over this matter may have arisen because the death of Christ of which we speak is associated with His physical death. Christ's physical death was necessary for our salvation: that was entirely by choice of God. It was most natural and fitting that the greater spiritual death which Christ died to sin should coincide with His lesser physical death inflicted upon Him by the cross. His physical death was vital, but though absolutely necessary for our redemption, the greater death, that is, the death to sin, was not that of the body. 'He bore our sins in His body on the tree', this is the reason why a body was prepared for Him; He needed

one so that He could live in it dead to sin, and then, while still in it, finally die to the sin, our sin, which was placed upon Him on the cross for our sakes. God did not will an eternity of physical sacrifice, He did not want bodies to be offered to Him for sin on altars constantly streaming with blood. He wanted someone, a man, perfectly sinless, and willing and able to take sin upon himself and be made sin, a God-man obviously, a person strong enough to bear it and bear it away and defeat it by dying to it in toto in a human body. When Christ was incarnated He became a true man, like all other men; His person and His body were not the same. He, the real person, that is, His soul, though resident in His body, must not be confused with His body.

Man is a living soul. God made him so originally; He inspirited with His own breath

the body He had previously formed of dust. He made the body for the soul, not the soul for the body. So important is this that he called man Soul, not Body. The soul is of spirit, it is spiritous and could best be thought of jointly with spirit, thus spirit/soul. It is true that the spirit/soul can only have human identity by the body, but it must always be recognized as distinct from it. Before the Lord Jesus dismissed His spirit from His body on the cross, He shouted out 'it is finished'; this was the indication that He had met, accepted and been made sin, and had conquered and ended it before He died. In the process of dying physically He had died to sin also, and this accomplished He was willing for expiry, but not until then. Christ had to deal with sin while in the flesh before He left His body; while bearing the world's sin He had to keep His spirit/soul

pure from personal sin all the while His blood was being shed, or He could not have redeemed us. He had to be shown to be dead to sin before His death to sin could be, or there could have been no justification for God or sinners. He had to die to sin all the while He was dying for sin and because of sin, and He did this in order that God may be justified in all He had done, especially in taking this step. Because He did accomplish this greatest of miracles concurrently with the death He died to sin, He was able also to shed from His body the blood that should inevitably redeem us from sin. That perfect Man would not release His spirit from His body till all forms and powers of sin had been comprehensively dealt with.

This is the death Paul was talking about, this rigid refusal to become personally interested in and involved with sin, except as far as it

was necessary to destroy its power over humanity and remove it. That this death was demonstrated and gloriously effected at the time of Christ's physical death was absolutely right according to the nature of things, making that death all the more wonderful and infinitely more powerful and effective. The subtlety of sin is that it has created in mankind a state of unconscious death, with the result that people physically alive are quite unaware that they are dead with a death more terrible than physical decease or the diseases that cause it. This death is existence in a state of death towards God, (of being unaware of Him, and not knowing Him or that He even exists), as being opposed to eternal life, which consists in knowing God. When God gave the law to Israel He did so in order to convince them of sin by making them aware of Himself and

what He wanted and did not want and would not have. Paul says the law enhanced sin, that is, it focussed attention upon sin, lighting it up and making it appear what it was; with customary frankness he illustrated this from his own life and experience. Like us all, he was born fallen and dead by the sin of Adam. He was in sin, though not consciously; he did not know what sin was. Not understanding it, he was quite unaware of it, so he lived happily with it, and felt really alive. Then came the time when, by some means or other, (possibly at Bar-mitzvah when the law came to him, as to every boy) sin came to him; when that happened it was enhanced to him personally. He instanced this enhancement by referring to his inward struggle with sin in relation to the tenth commandment, 'thou shalt not covet'. He had coveted many a

time without knowing that it was covetousness, or lust. Then one day he realized the meaning of the law, and it dawned on him what he was doing and had always been doing. He had been existing in sin, totally dead to God, very much alive to self, and he knew he was a sinner.

As every other 'normal' person, he had been living in the grip of lust, wanting this or that or him or her for one purpose or another. In total ignorance of true spiritual life, he had lived only to satisfy his own physical, mental, aesthetic, or religious desires; he had certainly not known this was sin. But when this realization dawned on him, and he recognized that all his behaviour and everything associated with it was sin, he died. All his enjoyment had been self-indulgence, and it turned sour on him; his former life passed away. In desperation he

turned wholeheartedly to religion for help and became a Pharisee. He adamantly refused to do anything that broke the ten commandments, or in any way infringed the ordinances of God as the Jews interpreted them; he treasured the law and delighted in it in his mind. As touching the righteousness that was in the law he was blameless, excelling just about everybody in the country, but he was dead, he could not live what he believed; he was one great mass of inward contradiction and corruption and he knew it. He found that nothing could halt or reverse what was going on in him; he discovered that sin was governed by law, that a spiritual process was at work in his members and he was its slave. Neither law nor will, nor religion, nor good works, nor circumcision, nor anything else could stop him from sinning, or take sin out of him. A

power was dominating his mind so that he sinned as by law; it was inbred in him, he did it naturally. Sin, he discovered, was his nature, his lord, his custodian, his predestination. He was conformed by it and to it, an unwilling slave of a tyrant master. Sin had slain him, he was dead, in death; it was in him. First it had been a death he did not know, now it was a death he did know, or thought he did, but how to get rid of it or get out of it he did not know. O what a death.

In this conscious state of death he existed for many years, groaning over his wretchedness and crying out for a deliverer, thinking there was no way out and becoming harder and harder as time went on. When he met the Church he found a company of men and women who had discovered the secret that had eluded him, and he hated

them for it. Brooding over his condition and refusing to believe the gospel, his zeal reached fanatical proportions, and he sinned yet more; breathing out threatenings and slaughter, full of bigotry, blasphemy and blood lust, he worked out a plan to destroy all the Christians and stamp out Christianity in his lifetime. Fanatically he threw himself into a frenzied extermination programme. He was so convinced he was right, that he actually achieved the remarkable distinction of living with a clear conscience towards God, at the same time being a murderer of men and a hater of Jesus Christ, so dead was he. But in various ways the Lord began to deal with him, gradually goading him along, till, in his wretchedness, he cried out within himself for deliverance from himself. Conflicts and contradictions raged within him, confusing all his thoughts, but all to no

avail. He was the embodiment of sin and hated himself for it; but he had committed himself and, filled with pride, he went rushing blindly on in total ignorance of salvation and what it was about. But Christ loved him none the less, and one day came in mercy to him and shone upon him. He was blinded, the light was so intense. He fell to the ground, his body was laid in the dust, he could eat no food, he was incarcerated in darkness, he was brought to death. It was a terrible experience. Physically he was still alive, but he did not know what was happening to him or when it might end; all he could do was pray and cry out to God. His state was dreadful, unforgettable, so were his prayers; they were heart cries, that was all. He had no difficulty in recalling them, they were all much about the same, pitifully full of ignorance and despair. To him it

seemed his body was full of death; he knew he was a dead man. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' he cried; perhaps he was still saying it when the Lord delivered him.

Like Unto His Glorious Image

When Ananias laid his hands on him, all the raging turbulence within Paul ceased at once and for ever. He received into himself the Holy Spirit and, by Him, the spirit of Christ, which could not be imparted by Him in the days of His flesh. Thereby He brought His death, the complete works and effects of it, to Paul, to his whole spirit, soul and body. It was profound. Paul became a new man. The Lord did not bring His bodily death to him, He brought and applied the effects and accomplishments of it to him: the man Paul still lived. Christ brought in to him that death which He accomplished for him while yet

breathing in the body of His flesh on the cross, His own personal death to sin on behalf of man. To Paul it was as final in the spirit/soul realm as physical death is in the bodily realm, and more permanent. Short of physical death it was as the commencement of a new life to Paul. Christ's death was a great personal triumph, but not just for Himself, He died for others also: for everyone who was to be a partner with Him of His life and a member of His spiritual body. That death therefore had to be made available to them. For this, God sent the Holy Spirit, for He is the Spirit of the life which was in Christ Jesus while here in the flesh (as well as in eternity) enabling Him to live on earth dead to sin. He came because He had to, there was no other way we could be made members of the same body (in which He wrought the miracle) and live and

walk in the same element in which He lived and walked. Jesus was the man of the Spirit, He lived entirely in the Spirit, physically and spiritually, and His physical body was the medium in which He wrought the miracle for His spiritual body of many human members. If any man saw the truth of identification and unification with Christ it was Paul. He saw the fundamental necessity of it, both for God and for man. He also fully realized that, apart from these things, the whole plan of redemption would not have been proposed, for it could not have worked; redemption is set upon and proceeds from identification and unification of Christ's people with Himself. The whole idea of substitution, necessary as it was, had to resolve itself into identification or all would fail. Substitution teaches 'instead of me', identification declares 'as me'. Paul saw, that as Christ had

accomplished everything as a whole and at once, every basic thing had to be done in him as a whole and at once also — not piecemeal. He understood why human beings were made as they were, and fully grasped the deeper meanings and desires of God which underlay the words of God spoken in the beginning, 'let us make man in our image after our likeness'. Everyone, and everything to do with each one's salvation throughout the whole of life here and hereafter was proposed, conformed and predestinated by one person and one act in eternity and we all were justified into that pre-arranged and prepared position.

Paul's failure had lain in the fact that, being unregenerate, laws contrary to the law of his mind were working in his members, warring against him. He had thought and wished and willed good, but the members of his body

did otherwise; they seemed to have a will of their own. Powers not under the control of his mind were working in him, in his mind, in his body, throughout his whole system, in his mind particularly; all nature was under sin's dominion. There was a law operating in all his members which he could neither change nor control; he was corrupt through lust. He realized that the body must be brought to a death. For this reason, and to do this thing, Christ comes into us. He broke the power of the law of sin and death, which would have dominated over his will in His own body, and because He wants our bodies to be conformed to His body He comes into us to bring all those contrary powers and activities in our members to death. In love and holiness He makes us partake of His essential death, the greater one, so that

being planted together in the likeness of His death, we should be also of His resurrection.

The Great Man that He was, He had to become as mere man and be raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; the Spirit of life quickened His dead body because of His and the Father's righteousness. He had to be raised because He had conquered sin. It would have been sin if He had not been raised — He deserved it. In us the death of Christ and the quickening of the Spirit work together. Christ's death to sin must permanently abide and work in us; if that death did not operate in us sin would work in our members instead. In the same way, because of righteousness, the Spirit must abide in us also, for it is He who brings to us the Spirit of Christ who operates in us this same law of liberty from sin and death. It is only right that all who will have the death to

work in them should have the life too, otherwise it is impossible to be and to do righteousness. This is the only way a person can be kept free from sin; this is that death into which we are baptized and buried and planted. Like everything else of major significance in spiritual life it is a two-way experience — we are baptized into it and it is baptized into us.

4 THE SPIRIT OF WITNESS

'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost'. Chapter 9 verse 1.

God is Spirit.

Paul continues 'that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren ...'. These are the words of a true intercessor. Paul was a man called to highest office, (walking in the Spirit and after the Spirit as he said) a man who had the spirit of Christ and was full of assurance. Earlier he had spoken of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and O what a vital ministry of the Spirit this is; without it none can know that he or she is born again. But here he is

speaking from the opposite point of view, that is, from the viewpoint of the Spirit. Life eternal for every individual derives from two positions, man's life in God and God's life in men. Every one must be able to speak in both terms — saying 'the Spirit is in me and I am in the Spirit'. Both these positions and consciousnesses are equally important, one is God's, the other is mine. A man's conscience must have witness in the Holy Spirit as well as the Spirit's conscience bearing witness in him. The conscience of the Spirit rings true when He cries 'Abba Father' in a man. He does so with clearest of conscience when that man is made a righteous and holy child of God, in other words regenerate. The Spirit's conscience is exercised in this matter; He has to be absolutely right and true about it in view of and in full knowledge of the standard

demanded by the work and agony and sacrifice of Christ on the cross by the Father; the Spirit must be absolutely right. If His conscience is right He will witness with(in) a man's spirit that he is truly a son of God. Corresponding to that, a man's conscience must bear him witness with(in) the Holy Spirit on every matter. Unless a man's conscience is right his spirit is not right — something is wrong and unless corrected will go radically wrong.

At this point Paul is drawing attention to a ministry of the highest importance, though perhaps not always recognized as such. We are being presented here with the true relationship which exists between the Holy Spirit and the sons of God. The consciousness of the Spirit in me and the consciousness of I myself in the Spirit is another way of saying, 'in the mouth of two

witnesses every word may be established'. Here Paul is facing us with it at highest levels of spiritual life and function. Here then is the position: The spirit crying in me bears witness to me that I am a son (and that is wonderful beyond words) and the Spirit groaning in me is preparing me to be an intercessor: if possible that is a more wonderful thing still. What a wonderful thing it would be if every man's conscience bore him witness in the Spirit that he was an intercessor. If this is so in any man he is a son of God in very truth, ministering in the very Spirit of God at the highest possible level of spiritual life and function. Half way through chapter eight Paul begins to prepare his readers for the introduction of these things, revealing the reason why God makes us His sons, sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts crying out unto Him. The whole

creation is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Paul was groaning too. He realised that with all that he had, he had only the firstfruits of the Spirit and he groaned for that which he did not yet have; he wanted the full harvest. But he did not want only that — he was not so selfish, he wanted God to have His full harvest. Paul wanted the fulness of the gentiles to be brought in, he wanted his kinsmen according to the flesh to be saved — all Israel. He realised why he had been saved; he lived for this, worked for it, felt for it — crying out and groaning within himself to God he became an intercessor. He realised that both the Son and the Spirit are intercessors and he became one with them.

Intercession — the Most Vital Ministry.

It is most arresting that this passage on the person and work of the Spirit should end with this emphasis, but it is not strange. There is no mistaking the implications of all his teaching thus far; there is no escaping the feeling that all of it was with purpose to this end. The soul that has attained to this place has reached the highest peak of human possibility; this is none other than the very summit of spiritual life and ministry to which Christ Himself has attained. Surely it must be regarded by everyone who knows it that this is the most wonderful thing of all — that a human being's experience should be paralleled with the heavenly ministry of Christ. Can there be anything as great as this? Certainly there can be nothing greater: this is the zenith of Paul's revelations of God's will for us in Christ, and he exults at the prospect; 'If God be for us who can be

against us?' He says. Here there are no possible enemies; there can be no opposition from anyone to the soul who enters into the ministry of an intercessor. Paul is utterly convinced of this, and goes on to say that, having not spared His own Son but having delivered Him up for us all, God cannot help but freely give us all things with Him. There is no reason why He should not do so, having justified us; no one can charge us with sin, nor can we be condemned, for Christ who died and rose again is even now at the right hand of God making intercession for us; moreover, He loves us with a love so strong and true that we cannot be separated from it. What wonderful news this is, and how reassuring. It not only assures our hearts of Christ's faithfulness; it also prepares us for this real business of life, viz. intercession. It is one thing to stand before

God uncondemned without being charged with one single sin and to know what it is to be loved with such love and feel absolutely secure, it is quite another thing to possess all the things possible to men by God's generosity, and to seek to ensure that others possess them also.

Paul put it very finely when he wrote these words, 'that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God'. By virtue of our new birth we are heirs of God, which means that, to some degree, we cannot fail to have some sort of inheritance from Him; but we need to remind ourselves that we are not only heirs; we are joint-heirs with Christ, a far greater and more astonishing concept altogether. Surely this indicates God's free provision of all things for us in the same degree of love and fulness in which He gave them to His Son Jesus Christ. He being

the firstborn of the family inherits the double portion, but, unlike the practice common to human families, in God's family the double portion is not allocated solely upon that condition; it cannot be. Among humans the double portion was given to the firstborn because he needed it: upon the decease of his father, to him fell the honour and responsibility of providing for his mother and other dependants, hence the double portion. From his father therefore he received both his own portion and the portion of certain specified others; this constituted the double portion. However, if his mother was dead, or if there were no other dependants, he was that much more wealthy. But quite obviously this could not be so with Christ, for neither his father nor his mother died. Strangely enough to the human mind, and as if to deliberately break

the human pattern, it was Christ who died, not the Father or the Holy Spirit, through whose ministry the Father begat the Son into humanity. The allocation of the double portion was therefore made upon different grounds from those that applied among men; it had to be.

Jesus Christ, God's heir, rose from the dead because He was perfect. It was absolutely impossible for death to hold Him; death could not have dominion over Him because He was sinless and righteous. When He died, He did so for mankind in order to destroy mankind's father — the devil. Having secured that for all God's family, He received the double portion from God His Father as a reward of merit. He was the firstborn of all His Father's children which were to be born from the dead in His wake. He therefore earned the double portion by the

perfections of all He was and did, (chiefly because of the uniqueness of His combined manhood and Godhead); fittingly He received the portion of God and the portion of man — He is worthy. Already He has entered into the abundance into which we cannot enter until the great adoption takes place. Yet by grace, being glorified with Him, we are made joint-heirs with Him also.

Joint Heirs With Christ.

This joint heirship, shared by all the sons with Him, is not only by generosity of God, it is the portion as of right due to their birth. It cannot be overstressed that regeneration is the key factor in everything to do with man's relationship to God. All depends upon that; everything, absolutely everything, flows from it. To be born of God is the most critical, as well as the most wonderful event that can ever happen to a man; there is

nothing else equal to it in all eternity, whether it be in the experience of God the begetter or of man the begotten.

A person's regeneration is the most poignant experience to God; whenever it takes place He is reminded of His own greatest heartbreak. It cannot fail to do this, because it is a reminder almost amounting to a re-enactment of the death and resurrection of His Son, and there has been nothing throughout the length of time or of eternity that has ever equalled the intensity of suffering God endured then. Both Father and Son found Golgotha almost beyond possibility. Because of sin, Jesus had to go so far out and away from His God and Father at Golgotha; He became so changed and estranged from Him that God had to beget Him again from the dead. Father had to raise Him by His own spirit; all His powers and

energies, the almightiness of the Eternal, were all concentrated there; they had to be or it would have been the end; it was the crisis of the ages. Golgotha — all the events that surrounded it — cost God everything, but it bought for us the opportunity of personal redemption and regeneration, and for Him the ability to beget sons; that is why He did it: He commenced by begetting His own. When Christ was raised from the dead it was as if a mighty baptism of spirit had taken place. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; it was a mighty visitation and operation by the Spirit of God: He called it generation. It was by God's spirit and of God's spirit and in God's spirit; that is the only way spiritual generation can be achieved. Generation is not accomplished by God's wish or thought or desire or will or power, it is accomplished according to all

these and only in accordance with them, but not by them. Generation is actually achieved only by God's action; God Himself, all of Him, has to do it. All He is, all three persons, and all He has, must be engaged for the act of generation; it requires total involvement.

The inclusive pronoun used by God of Himself when about to generate man in the beginning is indicative of this all-inclusiveness: 'Let us make man'. No less for the generation of the Son of Golgotha, or the sons of Golgotha later — God in His entirety is involved and in this; joint-heirship with Christ begins. By the blessed baptism which baptizes men and women into Christ, into His death and burial and resurrection, they are constituted joint-heirs with Christ in that — by this and this alone — they share with Him in His dual nature. Like Christ, though to a much lesser degree, each one so

baptized becomes a son of God, being born of God a dual spirit, he has the spirit of God and the spirit of man. Though distinct and distinguishable within him, those two spirits are fused into one, generating (in this case regenerating) him a new man from the dead. This is the spiritual baptism that makes a dead man a living man, a sinful man a holy man, a carnal man a spiritual man, a son of man a son of God, because it is the baptism in the Spirit of God. Such a man is both earthly and heavenly, of human nature and partaking of divine nature, because he is one spirit with God. It is by this duality of being, nature and person that he becomes a joint-heir with Christ. This is the beginning of his glorification. Just as Jesus, the Son of Man and of God, was glorified on earth, so is every other man who is born a son of God changed from glory to glory on the earth.

Even so, we shall never have the measure of glory and honour that He has, nor do we wish to have it, for it is His alone; we are only very grateful that He should share it with us; we want Him to be honoured and glorified and magnified above all, and by all the determination of our hearts, as well as by the will of God, He shall be, for ever.

The Spirit of Adoption.

In anticipation of this we already have the Spirit of adoption in us, given to us by God, that we human beings may have a spirit of adoption, that is to say a spirit which is looking forward in an attitude of expectancy to being manifested as sons of God in the future. At that time the redemption of the body, which miracle we and the whole creation now groans for and awaits, will take place. The early Church had the opportunity of much clearer understanding of this than

we have today, for the earliest followers of Christ had a very plain demonstration of it, namely the ascension of Christ. Faithfully those saints who witnessed this carried it forward with them and laid it in the foundation of faith for all the churches. The revelation of Jesus Christ to them, and all the truth they had learned, would have been incomplete without this; even as the crucifixion and burial of Christ would not have been sufficient unless there had been a resurrection, so the resurrection would have been incomplete without the ascension. The ascension completed that which God began with the annunciation to Mary of the Lord's birth. The human form He assumed then, He took back to heaven and God, from whence it originally came, having been formed from God's seed via the virgin by the Spirit. It was logical and right that Christ should do this,

for that body was God's; it was the body of God the Son. Besides this, to a degree the observers of the event could not have imagined, it was basic in the plan of redemption that He should do so. Unless that body had been 'adopted' from earth to heaven, we could never have believed or have entertained any possibility of hope that the bodies of other men could be adopted. The hearts of those disciples who watched Him ascend from the Mount of Olives into the clouds must have been filled with an amazement as unexpected as it was unpredicted. Nothing that they had previously witnessed led them to expect this. Would there ever be an end to the stream of wonders and miracles associated with Him? They knew His body had undergone an amazing change through death and resurrection, and was now

capable of things previously impossible to Him, and certainly beyond the powers of ordinary mortals. But visible bodily ascension! What next? Upon reflection later, when understanding had dawned upon them, and being in possession of greater revelation, they saw much more wonderful and exciting truth associated with the miracle than they had been able to grasp that day. That body, which had been brought into the world and given up to God for sin and the redemption of mankind, had itself been redeemed by God. God did not allow His Holy One to see corruption; He raised that glorious man from the tomb and received ('adopted') Him, spirit, soul and body, back to Himself in heaven and enthroned Him there. He is the ever-living Man, established at God's right hand to make intercession for every other man who

comes to God by Him. The salvation He mediates is uttermost. That which He has entered into is limitless in its fulness; it lies beyond the last veil. The Spirit of adoption within all God's children, witnessing with their spirits, crying Abba Father within each one, is the earnest of uttermost redemption. When the time has come and the trumpet blows and Jesus shall descend from heaven with a shout, the great adoption shall take place. Men and women of Christ's election will ascend from wherever they are on earth to heaven just as He did from the Mount of Olives. Their bodies will be changed to resurrection bodies and adopted straight to heaven without passing through the grave. Those saints whose bodies have passed into the grave or into the flames, or have been eaten by men or beasts or some other creature, or have vapourised, as the case

may be, will be given new resurrection bodies, and immediately caught up in the air, but those who remain to the Lord's coming will know the wonder of adoption. They will not know resurrection, for they will not die, but their bodies will be changed into resurrection bodies as Christ's was, and they will be adopted as He was. All this is yet in the future for us, but as a bodily experience it is in the past for Him; spiritually though it is in the present, He is still the same Jesus, and it is in this spiritual truth and power and life that He now intercedes for us in heaven, ministering to His Father and to us on earth.

The Spirit Maketh Intercession.

The Lord wants us to enjoy to the full that degree of inheritance which is possible to us down here on earth; joint-heirship with Christ in heaven entitles us to it. The fulness of it lies beyond the adoption, but, having

the Spirit of adoption, we enter into a great measure of it here and now. This is why He is now interceding. He intercedes for us so that He may mediate to us the things for which He intercedes. At the beginning of our new life these things may be entirely different from the things for which we ask, because we do not understand very much about spiritual life and are entirely ignorant of how to pray. We are frankly told here that we know not what we should pray for as we ought; we know we ought to pray, but for what or about what we should pray nothing is said. Many voices press in upon us, giving us much advice or showing us many duties in this realm, but these are not always correct — sometimes but not often. In view of obvious personal need, the tendency of beginners is to be self-centred in prayer, and the more so as realization of great

discrepancies between ourselves and others, and what we are and what we ought to be, becomes apparent to us. This is why the kindly Lord tells us that, to them that love God and are called according to His purpose, all things work together for good. This does not always appear to be true; so often prayers go unanswered, many of the things and situations and people about which folk pray seem not to alter, although much prayer-effort be expended upon them. It is wonderfully comforting then to be cast back upon the thought that we do love God, and be assured that all things do work together for good because of that. We all have to learn that our good does not depend upon our prayer success, but upon God's love and power and understanding and provision. This is not to suggest that God does not want us to be effective in prayer, He does; it

really does matter that we pray, but in the Holy Spirit we must learn to pray according to the Spirit of intercession within.

Every child of God must believe and learn first of all that prayer is a spiritual exercise. Prayer must be of the spirit and mind of man in the Holy Spirit of God. When a man first prays he says prayers he has either learned from someone else or has made up himself. Such prayers, however good and beautiful, however nicely put together and reverently said and sincerely meant, are only words, they are not prayer. Everyone must learn prayer before they say prayers of any sort, whether these be extempore and spontaneous or ritualistic or repeated from a book, even if that book is the Bible; prayer does not consist in words, it is the engagement of the spirit of man with God. Prayer is communion, prayers are

communication; that they may go together is both true and possible, even probable, but by no means certain. Prayer is exchange of feeling according to spiritual knowledge between man and God, it is based upon the relationship which exists between them and the sense of compulsion felt by that man — he knows he ought to pray. If a man spontaneously responds to that urge and sense of duty within him, he will soon learn prayer, for these twin feelings or sensings of the soul are the conscious recognition of needs and abilities generated by the Spirit in his spirit. This feeling in the soul of God's child is a spiritual awareness which is one of the firstfruits of the Spirit, an indication of His presence and working in the life; it must be treasured and allowed to develop. It must also be obeyed, that is, responded to, or else prayer will never be learned or properly

exercised. Paul, in his usual masterly way, has the right word for this, 'yield', 'yield yourselves', 'yield your members'; prayer can only be learned by the person who is yielded.

Yieldedness in an intelligent human is an attitude arising from the correct spiritual condition of that man's spirit. Between man and God it is a fixed attitude of love and trust; it presupposes total response, utter given-ness and eager spontaneous co-operation with Him for the sheer delight of it. Only as this is recognized and welcomed will the Spirit believe He is wanted, and feel free to continue His work of conforming us to the image of Christ. Prayer is absolutely essential to this; just saying prayers can hinder it. Who among us can tell what are the right requests to make, or what form of address should be used or what particular

details ought to be mentioned concerning conformity to God's Son? Not the educated mind, but the feeling, groaning inner self brought to spiritual awareness, is the only source of prayer recognized by God in the human being; God's Son, the greatest of all human beings, is the perfect example of this. In the greatest prayer-battle of His life He said very few words at all, and none of them were learned from the writings or teachings of men. He did not despise the words or literary works of others, He read them and learned them and sometimes quoted them, but never in prayer; prayer, to be prayer, must be original to the person who is praying at the time he is praying.

So it was with Jesus in Gethsemane; He had one thing on His heart, He was under compulsion and had no illusions about it. He expressed it in words, but it would not have

mattered if He had not; His prayer was His entire involvement in and identity with the will of God. The proof of this was the total presentation and prostration of Himself to the Father, and His concentration of self without distraction upon the inward awareness of God's will for Him. The feelings of His soul, combining with that knowledge, culminated in groanings and agonisings that affected His whole body, so that sweat dropped from Him like blood falling to the ground; this was so exhausting that, at the end, angels had to come and minister to Him. His prayers were uttered with the barest minimum of words, thrice repeated into the ground. But He prayed! O how He prayed. His spirit prayed, His soul prayed, His body was taken over for prayer - HE prayed. God said that of Paul - 'Behold he prayeth'. Paul knew prayer right from the beginning of

his spiritual life, and what he learned then became fundamental to everything in his life and ministry. When he wrote much later to those Ephesians who were faithful in Christ, he included two prayers in his epistle; both are gems. They are also almost the briefest examples of prayer possible to imagine: undoubtedly ensamples of his method, as well as marvellous utterances of truth. They could not be better described than by some of his own words to the Romans: 'My heart's desire and prayer ...'. They are certainly that. All his prayers are the desires of his earnest heart, mightily affected by and wrought upon by the Spirit.

Paul was such a mighty intercessor because he felt with God for men. To be a pray-er, the man must be the prayer. He, his whole self, must be in the Spirit waiting upon God, for prayer is God in a man praying to God in

heaven. Surprising as this may seem, this is precisely true. Until this is understood, the right conditions of prayer have never been established in the life of a man, and he can never be an intercessor. Prayer, intercessory prayer, is intensely spiritual, it is wholly of spirit. The Spirit maketh intercession for us — that is, He intercedes as in our name as well as for our needs, and does so by identifying with our spirit. Christ completes the work by making intercession at the right hand of God for us. These two intercessors in the Godhead engage with each other in the joint business of making us true sons of God according to the pattern Son, that we may be presented at last to the Father, perfectly conformed to the image in His heart. That image He holds there is of ideal sons, dearly beloved and longed for, and it was for these that He sacrificed His only

begotten and well beloved Son. Now these many sons are sons of His love, of His own Spirit begotten, and every one of them is born of the agonies of God in the Son, which actual agonies we cannot enter into — they were exclusively His. Yet, for the birth and perfecting of His other sons, it seems that God wishes to share something of His pains with those who will bear with Him.

Not every one who is born of God understands this, or believes this is possible; these further reaches of prayer are unknown to them. They want the joys of salvation, the pleasures and praises of grace; they enjoy being in the kingdom of heaven, and exult in the benefits and luxuries which abound in God's realm, but they do not enter into the more private experiences of God, or know the purposes and exercises of His Spirit. This is a great tragedy, and an utterly

irreplaceable loss, both in the individual and to the Church. Such persons can never become intercessors unless they become aware of this and take steps to remedy their mistake. Every one must allow himself or herself to be led by the Spirit into this truth of intercession in the Spirit; they must discover what this is and what it is for. Before we examine this, it will be of great use, even if it is not an absolute necessity, to trace the steps whereby a man or a woman is led to intercession, remembering that intercession is a purely voluntary ministry. No person will ever be forced into it. Even though it is the will of God for all His children, unless a person wholeheartedly cooperated with the Spirit of it, God cannot and does not make him an intercessor. Intercession has to be made, it does not automatically take place; it will spring up

spontaneously though, in the heart of every one who will yield to God for the purpose. That settled, everything else will follow as of law; the important thing to remember is that we must be led by the Spirit, otherwise it is unattainable. He will lead us into intercession as truly as He led Christ all the way to the place of intercession, which place He has filled to this day.

The Way to a Life of Intercession.

The steps by which a man becomes an intercessor are these:

1. He must be born of God Himself. The proof that this has taken place is that he will have received into his heart the Spirit of adoption, crying 'Abba, Father' within him. This is very necessary and fundamental to all the Spirit's future works or ministries in a man.

2. He must have the spirit of Christ; the only proof of this is that the man has a Christ-like spirit. Other than that, the fundamental change of spirit necessary to sonship has not taken place, and except this has happened no man can live the life of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will not cry 'Abba, Father' unless the Son of the Father has come, lest a man copy and repeat the cry, and it be false.

3. He must live by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in order to be free from the law of sin and death. The new son of God has to live and walk in this world according to human / divine law, and he cannot do that if he is the victim of warring elements; it is not possible to live a divided life and be an intercessor. If a man is constantly struggling against his own bondage to sin he is not able to intercede for others, despite the fact that he may wish otherwise; he will

be, because he must be, concerned about himself.

4. He must be after (Gr. 'down to') that is, concentrated upon, the Spirit. The walk in the Spirit requires all a man's attention; he must observe the Spirit's movings and ways; for this he must have the mind of the Spirit so that he may give his mind to this. No man can go after the Spirit if he is in two minds about it. The intercessor must be spiritually-minded and not carnally-minded. If a man minds his flesh and not the Spirit, his spirit will become concerned with and give its energies to the satisfying of his flesh; he cannot do otherwise.

5. He must know the effectiveness of the death of Christ in his mortal body so that it is brought to death; that is, rendered unresponsive to sin. Because of Christ's righteousness a man's spirit is alive, but it is

not the source of that life; the Spirit of Christ in his spirit is the source of his life. He is not Christ, he has the spirit of Christ and in consequence is the image of Christ in spirit. By reason of this his body must be put to death; he must die very personally to the law and principles and workings of sin. The law of sin must be broken and replaced by the law of the life of Christ; the principle of sin must be neutralized and replaced by the principle of righteousness; the workings of sin must be stopped and expurgated from the body, and its members re-energized by the power of God. This is the mortal body's resurrection, called here quickening, which is to say, life-giving. This is the body's original purging, the initial death and resurrection by which men are made sons of God. This is the way God makes men free from sin, free from its dominion, free from

its law, free from its principle and free from its workings in spirit, soul and body. By this a man is initiated into the life that, in the heart of God, is begotten unto intercession. Each one granted this experience is a possible intercessor, and if he perpetuates his freedom he will speedily become one.

This regeneration is completely comprehensive; it encompasses the whole man throughout the whole of his life on this earth in his present human estate, for it is entirely of God. But a man must not rely upon an initial experience to keep him in the state to which that experience brought him. The death by which sin was brought to an end in him was the death of Christ; this must be followed up by his own dying to sin constantly. Christ was dead to sin in all states of His existence on earth. He did not die to end sin in Himself, He died to bring it to an

end in others. He died to sin once; as far as He was concerned He did not need to keep on dying to sin as do others, for He was dead to it all the time. The death He died was the death of sin for us; on our behalf He rendered it powerless, that is, as dead, so that it should not have part with us or have dominion over us. Having appropriated this to himself, a man must then know the continuing death of Christ; he must, through the Spirit, mortify (that is bring into death) the deeds of the body. Unless this is done he cannot live the life into which he was brought. In order to live the life that God calls life, that is, to be alive unto God, a man must be alive in spirit and in mind and in body.

6. He must be led by the Spirit. Granted that these first five steps have been taken, this one should not be difficult. The phrasing of

this verse surely indicates that the viewpoint here is chiefly retrospective. Although it implies following, this word is not used because its true emphasis is 'having followed' up till now, to this point. It embraces the past, 'having been led', it includes the present, 'being led', it indicates the future, 'being continually led'. In terms of the exposition so far, Paul is saying this is how the Spirit leads, by these steps, and if you have followed Him, this is the kind of life you have; in spirit, mind and body you are free from sin and the flesh; you are spiritual, not merely spiritous. With unmistakable voice and undeniable intention he is telling us that only he who is led by the Spirit in this way, with these results, is a son of God.

7. He must be led in the liberty of the nobility into which all God's sons are born, and be without fear. The Spirit leads by

impulsion rather than by compulsion. For the sons of God the 'must' of God is within a man's spirit; it is 'I must', not 'you must'; each son must know glorious liberty, or he will never be an intercessor. Unless he has liberty to choose, he cannot be an intercessor as Christ is an intercessor; everything must be voluntary, even though at times to do God's will may cost him sweat like drops of blood. Being granted ability, a man must know liberty also; men who are slavish in mind, because they are bondslaves in spirit and habit-bound in body, cannot take position as intercessors. Although a man may know of it, and desire it, being aware of its fruits and rewards and coveting its power, no soul in bondage is free enough to intercede. Pray in hope it may and ought, but intercede it may not, because it cannot. A man must know he is neither in

sin nor in death, nor in the flesh nor in debt to the flesh, nor in any way in bondage to the flesh, nor in fear about any of these things or their power — he is God's free man. This is what the advent of the Spirit of adoption into his heart testified unto when He came crying His cry, authorizing the spirit of the man into whose body He came to cry it also.

These are the seven steps of the way along which the Holy Spirit leads to that highest and most blessed ministry unto which He Himself has been sent from the Father. Like Christ, on whose heels He has followed and with whom He is one, He has come to this earth under commission from the Father; He is the great helper. Primarily His present work is that of co-operation. He is here to assist the Father to bring forth His sons; the Father begets them, the Spirit bears them.

Everyone of God's children must know and be able to say, as Christ the Son knew and was able to say, that he has come from God and goes to God.

It is not the intention of God to debar His sons from having some share in the bringing forth of His children. They cannot take part in their own birth, nor can they have any part in the actual birth process of others; each one has to be born from on high directly from God, as Jesus said.

Nevertheless God grants all His children who will accept the privilege, the honour of sharing in the exercises of His Spirit as the hour of another's birth approaches. There is no birth without travail; there must be labour pains or birth pangs; no child has ever been born without causing sorrow to its mother. Jesus said a woman when she is in travail has sorrow, and as it is in the flesh, so

it is in the Spirit. This is law in nature, whether it be human or divine, and it is in association with this law that the ministry of intercession has come into being.

Intercession, in its highest form, is travail, the labour pains which precede birth. To have this knowledge is vital and instructive to the would-be intercessor. It is most impressive for any man to enter into an understanding of why the Spirit of God has led him this way, and to realize that his own personal blessing was not the only thing God had in mind.

When the craving for self-benefit dies in a man, he has reached a place of usefulness to God which he may never have dreamed of, save in his moments of most daring hope. One of the most wonderful things and highest compliments ever spoken about Christ was said by someone standing by His

cross, 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save'. Nothing truer was ever spoken of Him. Others: always He thought of others. Others must be saved; it did not matter about Himself. He didn't care what happened to Him in the immediate. He was safe, and in His security He spent Himself entirely for others. The Holy Spirit can never forget that. He came from the Father through Jesus Christ, bent upon doing the Father's will, with this same concern and purpose of the spirit of Jesus Christ about Him — others; and when He enters the spirits of men to be the Spirit of sonship in them, He speedily imbues them with this desire, and sets about educating and leading them on to the fulfilment of it within themselves.

All Creation Subject to the Yoke of Bondage
For a long, long time before He came to earth the Lord Jesus had looked upon the

condition of creation and had heard the cries of God's creatures; He felt their pain and knew their travail. They did not know this, nor were they aware of Him or of the reason why they travailed, and when He came, and left, rejected, the condition continued, and does so to this day. The whole creation (those that have the firstfruits of the Spirit and those who do not) is in pain, travailing night and day, groaning to be delivered. The deliverance is different in each case; in that of the sons of God, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, the deliverance is bound up with the redemption of the body, the adoption timed by God to take place then. In the second case, the creation is set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. When the day of adoption arrives God will manifest His

sons by raising them from earth to heaven; the expectation of deliverance for which creation groans and travails lies beyond this. All it will be and what it will mean for the creation we do not know. At present it is subject to vanity because Adam handed the authority over it to satan in the deadly transaction in Eden. Through the vanity of purpose for which he did it, the curse of God came on the whole creation and as a result satan's dominion over it became, and still is, vainglorious. The reason why God did this was to foil satan's purposes and make his victory hollow. Adam had been given dominion over the whole of the creation; God had made all His works with the purpose of putting everything under Adam's lordship, and had put everything under his feet as planned. It seems very likely that, after creating the first Adam, God's intention

may have been to bring in the last Adam, though how He would have done this we do not know — perhaps by a miracle something like or analogous to the virgin birth, by which ultimately He had to be conceived and born.

All must be speculative at this point, but God had both a reason and a hope for subjecting the creation to Adam, and it is certain that His original intentions were frustrated by Adam's fall, but He stepped in with the declaration to satan that the woman's seed should bruise his head. That curse, spoken in the presence of Adam and Eve, though ominous to the serpent, became to them a promise which generated hope in their hearts. Although, by reason of sin, they and all that was subject to them became subject to satan because of Adam's abdication from office, God's determination to redeem the

situation and restore everything to conformity to His original purpose remained unchanged — the second man was to be the redeemer, and all God's hopes were fixed on Him; eventually so were the hopes of every pious man and woman on the face of the earth.

Meanwhile sin and death passed to all men, and corruption upon all creation.

Somewhere buried deep down in the unconscious realms of being, there lurk unknown, un-nameable powers, shadows of former glories, hopes not recognized as hopes, disappointments, frustrations, desires not known as such, pains, groans, travail for things not known, all of them comprehended and interpreted by God as longings for deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and as a cry for the manifestation of the sons of God. There is a

mysterious link between those who are the new creatures of God and the creation. We who consciously recognize our hope wait for the redemption of our bodies according to the Spirit of adoption, who came into our hearts at birth crying to Father for that reason. Those who do not recognize it are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, though they do not know that even, and cannot be told it. So it is that a great universal groan ascends to God, and the pain of His creation is in His ears continually as this old earth travails its way through to the regeneration and the restoration of all things spoken of by the prophets. The Lord God made this creation that it should be the place where the sons of God should be manifested.

We do not know all the reasons why God made the earth, but we do know that it was

not made for the manifestation of the sons of satan. The great delay in God's plan to manifest His sons is for purposes of His own, but, until that day dawns, God has provided that His sons should, in some measure, hopefully in large measure, be in glorious liberty from the bondage of corruption with which the whole creation is held as by law. To be born or to be planted anywhere as anyone or anything in this whole creation is to be subject at least to the bondage of corruption, or at worst to the law of sin and death, plus the bondage of corruption, which latter came into the creation through sin, and because of death. To some degree everything and everybody in creation is affected by this; everything physical or material is subject to it, including the sons of God, that is, they who are born of the Spirit of God having physical bodies.

All flesh is affected by sin (whether that flesh is human, animal, fish, fowl, vermin or reptile) but not all flesh is infected by sin, for not all animate things are moral intelligences. Those which are not, being amoral, and thus not infected by sin, could not be classified as 'sinners'. Nevertheless all these are affected by it and its results, and are subject to the bondage of corruption which passed upon all things as a logical consequence of Adam's sin. The whole creation, having been placed under the curse, is fallen into this and is subject to it. They did not will to sin, neither did they desire it, there is therefore no condemnation upon them or their activities, but, death having passed upon them, corruption is bound to happen to them. Throughout the centuries since Adam despised and left his sonship, these

creatures have awaited the manifestation of the sons of God. They had no choice in their abasement, but if they had the ability to choose at present, these would prefer above all to be ruled over by God's sons and, though in ignorance still, groan for their manifestation and all the blessings that it will bring to them.

How wonderful it will be for them when the curse is lifted and the bondage of corruption shall be broken and death itself shall be banished and never-ending life be brought in. But what of those who are presently the sons of God on earth? Is it possible to distinguish them here and now? Is it plainly manifest now who these persons are, and that they truly are the sons of God, and if so, by what means? These are important questions, needing plain answers. Many things, all of them true and good, could be

advanced as being answers or part answers to these questions, but we will not concern ourselves with these, (sound though they may be theologically, doctrinally and evangelically). Instead we will look for the answer which alone might be acceptable to an inquiring universe, if its multitude of voices could only ask us in language we could understand. Although they cannot do that, the substance of the matter over which they are concerned, and which would almost certainly be posed as a question if it were possible, is written down for everyone to read — corruption. Seeing that all want to be free from the bondage of corruption the question would undoubtedly be, 'is anyone in this universe free from the bondage of corruption?'

That is the ultimate test, and to pass it successfully would satisfy every inquiry that

could be made from any quarter. To declare justification by faith in the ears or before the eyes or in the presence of things that have no moral faculties and no intelligence is of no use whatsoever; likewise to speak of sanctification or regeneration or the witness of the Spirit would be as fruitless; but to demonstrate liberty from the yoke of bondage would be most convincing. Indeed, if this could be manifested to everyone's and everything's satisfaction, it would be proof to them that all the other things had been achieved for them in this world — the only valid proof. When the bondage of corruption has been broken in a man, and its spread has been stopped in him, he can testify that he is a son of God and expect his testimony to be accepted. When he has been set free from sin and is no longer under its dominion, and sin's deceitful workings have

come to an end in him, he is no longer under the bondage of corruption, nor subject to old Adam or his master the devil.

That would be about the only proof this groaning, travailing creation would accept; all creatures would accept that as the final answer; it is as far beyond doubt as is possible to be, for corruption is the one thing that all other intelligent beings share in common with humankind. The state of freedom from sin in a man is not beyond challenge by any other man, but it is not beyond manifestation for all to see and hear and taste and feel and know; and to all who know God it is very wonderful. Freedom from sin and death and corruption is a glorious liberty. But glorious liberty that it is, it is not of equal power or effect in every realm of a man's being. In himself as a whole, that is in spirit, soul and 'moral body',

a man can be free from sin and death and corruption, but in his mortal body he cannot be free from the presence and process of death and corruption all the time he is in this world.

Every part, realm or member of the new spiritual being a man becomes by new birth is likened in scripture to its physical counterpart, but should not be thought of too rigidly as only being that. Mind is a member and may be thought of as a part of the inward spiritous or spiritual man (as the case may be) but must not be mistaken for the brain, which is a part of the physical man. Mind operates with spirit in being in a human body to develop soul or personality, having as many members as the body itself, each of them capable of behaving in similar manner spiritually as the bodily counterpart does physically, but without its limitations.

This is why the spiritual and mental sins of the human soul are so much more terrible and infinitely worse than anything a man may do in his mortal body.

The Glorious Liberty of the Sons of God.

It is with this in view that the term 'moral body' is here used. In that realm of being, as well as in both spirit and soul, and altogether as being an integrated whole, a man can be free from sin and death and corruption, but not in his physical body. For the total spiritual body there is perfect redemption, but for the mortal flesh itself redemption has not yet been put into effect; for that, we, in common with all creatures, must wait. To those lower orders of being or existence the sons of God are not manifest at all; they cannot enjoy the firstfruits of the Spirit which incorporate freedom from sin and its effects in the soul of man; but before

God and among men they should be both manifest and enjoyed to the full. This is the liberty of the glory of the sons of God, whom He glorified as being part of the process of' our predestiny, and is clearly pointed out to us as being part of the wonder and fulness of the provision of God's love for us. While still on this earth among all the creatures and things of His creation, even if these are now only a shadow of what they originally were, though they are all ill-conducive to this or actually hostile to us and His purpose in us, we must know and live in this liberty of glory, because this liberty is utterly glorious, and this glory is liberating to the uttermost.

This glory and liberty cannot be known in all its fulness to any earthborn and earthbound man until the mortal body or body of our mortality is redeemed; then we shall be

glorified together with Christ, and be given the spiritual bodies it pleases God to bestow upon His sons. Until then, and even after then, we must walk in the likeness of the newness of life with which Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. This glory was the end which God had in view when He purposed and planned and predestinated His Sons long before He set in motion on earth the process by which He should regenerate them. Because He did this through the nature and life and person and blood and death and resurrection of His Son, and by the same Spirit as that by which the Son was born, all those regenerated are regenerated into sonship; it cannot be any other, they are and have to be sons, the very image of Him. It is because of all these things that the Spirit of intercession has come.

The Spirit leads all God's sons this way, and those who will go with Him shall become intercessors. It must surely be that those first churches of Christ knew and moved in far greater knowledge and understanding of truth and God's will than is commonly found in the churches today. 'We know', says Paul, thereby asserting that what he has to say is not knowledge peculiar to him alone — 'we know'. They all knew of the groaning and travailing of the whole creation, but how many individuals, to say nothing of whole churches, really know this, or have any understanding of its meaning? No wonder there is so little intercession going on, and therefore so few sons being born to God. Who can bear them, save those who know travail? The Spirit is the Spirit of travail; He is the one who came on Mary with power that she may both originally conceive and finally

travail to bring forth God's Son. Her spirit conceived and her body travailed; she conceived with joy, she travailed with sorrow and pain, and the Son was born; it was a miracle.

The Spirit has come to prepare us all for this, and does so by making us aware of the state of creation. It is absolutely essential that we let the Spirit of God get hold of our spirits for this, for, unless He does so, we shall live in the world in this age and pass from it having been dead and insensitive to its need. O how essential it is that we should be men of the Spirit, having the spirit of Christ, being spiritually alive, and living in the Spirit, that Spirit having borne us and being in us, within our spirit, so that we are in the Spirit and the Spirit is in us. Everything is of and in and by the Spirit, that we thereby should be able to enter into the spirit of things. We

must be alive unto God and alive unto the things of spirit. Behind and permeating all this vast creation of visible, material things there is a spirit. It is not a personal spirit as with man, but as surely as all substance has (a) nature, so it has (a) spirit, not individual, not having personality as with spirits of men, but nevertheless real and, en masse, has (a) spiritual impact. Men who speak of the call of the sea, or have sensed that 'something' of the great mountains which defies explanation but is nevertheless very real to them, are aware of spirit-power, though they may not know what it is that affects them. Basically everything is spirit, as shall one day be shown when everything material of this creation, and the elements also, shall be destroyed, and God shall create new heavens and new earth, starting from Spirit again as in the beginning. There must be an

identifying of spirit with the Spirit as scripture says; joined to God men become one Spirit with Him, and when the Spirit comes to join with our spirit He becomes one spirit with us and bears witness with our spirit about our sonship.

The Predicament of Translators

Sometimes when reading the scripture and the word spirit is being used, as in this section, it is very difficult to decide to which spirit the text is referring. For this reason the translators of the Authorised Version, though very reliable, obviously found it difficult to interpret the text aright in all cases. Sometimes, where they could not be sure, they drew their own conclusions, in which instances we are left in a measure of uncertainty. In verse sixteen the distinction between the two uses of the word spirit is clear, so the first is correctly given a capital

and the second a diminutive first letter, for the first is the Spirit of God and the second is the spirit of man. But in verse ten the word spirit is wrongly given a capital. The translators, and evidently the publishers and printers, all thought that the word referred to the Spirit of God, and therefore capitalized it; but the word surely refers to the spirit of man made righteous, and therefore alive. As the incoming of Christ by the Spirit renders the body of a man dead in the sense of being freed from the dominion of sinful compulsions and habits, so the spirit of that man is made life or alive from the spirit of death which it formerly was by reason of sin.

Another instance occurs in verse eleven, where the word spirit is capitalized upon both occasions, whereas it is dubious whether it should be rendered so in either.

The first refers to him who raised up Jesus from the dead, and that person is the Father, as is made clear in chapter six. It might therefore be more proper or deferential to capitalize the pronoun thus: 'Him', and not the word referring to His spirit. By the same principle, if the word Christ be capitalized, then the pronoun referring to Christ later in the verse should be capitalized also - 'His' - and the word referring to that which is His, written with the diminutive, thus: 'spirit'. This may be a matter of opinion, but it finely illustrates the difficulty facing translators when the word 'pneuma' recurring in the text refers to different individuals, or perhaps even things. Sometimes it plainly refers to the different persons of God, and should therefore be given the capital; sometimes it does not, and occasionally it is difficult to decide to which person or thing it

refers, or how to interpret Paul's thinking at that point.

A typical instance of this latter occurs in verse fifteen: 'the spirit of bondage'. In verse fourteen the word *pneuma* obviously refers to 'the Spirit of God', which is none other than He who is 'the Holy Spirit'; there is no difficulty about that; but turning to the next verse the interpretation of the word is not so clearly arrived at. Twice it is used in the verse; upon the second occasion it is undoubtedly capitalized correctly, but what of the first? It seems easily resolvable that the word does not refer to the Holy Spirit, and should be given the diminutive, but in the light of its use in verse ten, where it indicates the spirit of a man.

From the beginning of the section he has moved into the realm of spirit, God's Spirit and man's spirit; more, he is speaking of the

conjoining of these live spirits so that they become one. It is precisely here that grammar fails us, for we have no word to describe this union other than spirit, but whether or not the word should be capitalized, who can say? Should that union be called Spirit or spirit? If it were a union only, the difficulty might more easily be overcome, but more than joining or unifying, this union is unto oneness, 'he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit'. Spirit has power of combination, mixing and integrating and impregnating spirit with spirit — in this case Spirit with spirit. It is this precious unification of spirit so that we can be in and move in the realm of spirit for purposes of intercession.

The Whole Creation Groans.

Intercession is beyond the power of any man who is not in the Spirit; he must be (a) holy

spirit in (the) Holy Spirit, and in that holy spiritual union in the Spirit true intercession is made. This spiritual life brings an awareness of things of spirit, a sense of things not in themselves material or physical, yet associated with these things as though they are the spirit of them, so that we speak of the spirit of the world or the spirit of the age. Such expressions as 'the team spirit' are well known among us and mean that, in some cases, the individual spirits of eleven men seem to blend into one for a common purpose. Yet it is not possible for eleven personal spirits to become one personal spirit; there is no such individual person as the spirit of that team.

Undoubtedly though, it is possible to sense the spirit of a team, and become aware, not only of its presence but also of its features and manifestations. Whatever they may be,

we become impressed by them because they appeal to our thoughts and feelings and imaginations. We are in, as being part of, this creation, and even though we are in it as new spirit-creatures, aware of a new spiritual creation and part of it, we cannot but be aware of the spirit of this creation; it is inescapable. The importance of this to the son of God cannot be exaggerated; it is crucial to the would-be intercessor, but what is of greater importance is the impression which this spirit makes upon us, and how we interpret it to ourselves. What do we hear, and if we hear, how do we feel about what we hear? Do we hear creation's pain as God hears it? Do we know that it is in travail, and that it is paining to be delivered to this day? It seems we can never be intercessors until we do, for how shall any man intercede for that of which he knows nothing?

Stripped of its glamour, the world of men is striving to produce super-men, a race of godlike men who shall live in peace and luxury on an earth from which war and famine and disease and poverty are banished, one world in which all men are equal. This seems admirable enough, and man's many efforts towards that end — the setbacks they endure, the problems they overcome, the pains they feel, the travails of scientists, politicians, whole countries, the cries of the oppressed and the exploited — to many seem to be hopeful signs of the birth of the new society, so badly needed, shortly to be created by an educated race of new and enlightened men. This, if it came into existence, would be an entirely humanist society, peopled by fools who say that there is no God, sons of men but not sons of God, for He would have been

banished from the planet. Men who are given over to this idea hear the groanings of the world, and strive for the golden era, and look for the manifestation of these godlike sons of men; it is the product of the evolution theory they hold so dear.

But the creation, being a creation, cannot groan and travail for an evolutionary myth; it is groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God, not the sons of men. Would that the sons of God heard the cry and interpreted it aright. The cry of the Spirit within, and the cry of the creation without, should be matched by the groans of the new creature in the new creation within himself, so that from the grounds of knowledge and feeling, though not at first with understanding, intercession may spring forth. The new intercessor must learn his art. He must know that intercession is not a matter primarily of

words; words may be used, but only as accompanying and expressing spirit. A saying of Jesus will greatly help to enlighten us at this point — 'The words that I speak (unto you), they are spirit, and they are life'. The parenthesis is not in the scripture, but is here inserted to emphasize the truth we need to know. Words, when used in prayer of any description, but especially with intercession, must be with the power of the spirit and the feelings of the soul of the person using them.

It must never be forgotten that, in man, intercession is made by the Spirit of God, with the spirit of man. The Spirit is aware of the groans of the creation, and is in tune with its aims, but before intercession can be made about these in a man, that man's spirit must also be aware of, and in tune with, these groans and aims. Intercession is a joint

ministry — firstly between the Spirit and Christ, secondly between the Spirit and Christ's men, that is, men who have the spirit of Christ. As the Spirit of God is the Spirit of intercession, so must the spirit of men be a spirit of intercession, or they shall never be properly joined in one. When the feelings of God and the feelings of man about the cries of the creation are the same, even though understanding may be at different levels, the main qualification has been gained. So essentially is this a ministry of spirit, that the groanings of this travail are never heard, for they cannot be uttered. There are pains of all kinds in the earth, and groans because of them, but the groans for sons are only audible in heaven. They are beyond the grasp of the mind, being more instinctive than intellectual, and known only by the mind of a man's spirit and not

understood by the mind of his intellect, that is, the soul-mind, which is educatable by man.

Intercession - According to the Will of God.

There is another factor which, if not quite so fundamental to this ministry, is also of great importance: all intercession must be made according to the will of God and the mind of the Spirit of God. The Spirit only makes intercession for man according to God, that is, He does not make intercession according to man's ideas or concepts of himself, even if these be in relation to himself and God; these may be far from correct, and totally unrelated to reality. Of himself, a man cannot know what to pray for; that he ought to pray he is fully aware, but for what? There are vast things outside a man's consciousness of which he has no knowledge; he does not even know that

they exist, therefore he has no intellectual grasp of them at all. In his own universe man is a babe; he does not know from whence he came and whither he is going. The Spirit has come forth from God with the knowledge he ought to know, that, being taught of God, man should not spend his time, or waste his life, on eternally useless objects and vain and unattainable objectives.

The Spirit knows that the important thing for every man is to be concerned with God's purpose to conform him to the image of His Son. We are to be saints according to God, not according to anything or anyone else, and it is to this objective that the Spirit has come to inspire and conform us. He knows the end in view; He also knows the beginning from which God commenced, from which beginning and end God has never moved. The intercessor must know

this too, and move with the Spirit to this end. Man's regeneration is nothing other than the means whereby he is born into this; he must learn that he was predestinated to this by Father, who knew him before he had conscious being or power of choice. Before man knew himself, or what he wanted to be; before he knew God, or to what he was being called, and what God wanted him to be, God decided what he should be, conformed him to it and predestinated him to that end.

This is why God created the earth and formed the universe around it. Whether or not the earth was placed central to it originally, and has been moved off centre now by the will of God because of sin, we do not know. What is certain is that it is at the centre of God's plan for a new creation; it is also the sphere of the Spirit's present

operation and activities to bring forth sons of God in this age of its existence. With this purpose God has called men, both to justify them and glorify them, so that His Son should be the firstborn of many sons. When this has been finally accomplished to His satisfaction, His purposes with this earth will be finished. What God did by His own power and will before He called us He did according to His foreknowledge. When He began He already had the end before Him; He needed neither time nor events to instruct Him or force Him to make decisions, or to alter His plans. He was able to plan with full knowledge of everything that would happen, so that nothing should thwart His original purpose. That mysterious conforming power, so little understood by God's sons, became pre-destiny in them when it began to work in them by the Spirit

making them first cry 'Abba, Father', and later groan and travail in intercession.

The intercessor must be cast utterly upon the will of God the Father as was God the Son when here on earth. When facing arrest and the death He knew would so quickly follow, the Lord went to the garden with His remaining disciples to teach them the way of sonship. We do not know whether His prayer was heard by the select three who accompanied Him to the point where He left them and went furthest out to the place from which there was no return, but it is recorded for us by the Spirit, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt'. In His heart Abba, Father, and Father's will were linked — He was a true son. 'Being in an agony He prayed the more earnestly'. The word agony used to

describe the Lord's terrible pains, which caused His sweat to drop from Him like spots of blood, is better translated 'the agonies', which could hardly be better interpreted than as being pains, groans, travail, birth-pangs. So, by our great Exemplar Himself, the pattern is set — the cry — the will — the groans. He who searched His Son's heart knew the mind of the Spirit, as well as His own will according to the eternal purpose set from the beginning. There can be no changing the pattern — it was not only fixed in eternity in God, it was also set in humanity when God became flesh.

Intercession is costly. Sons of God cannot be brought forth without pain and groans of the same order, though not of the same intensity as those which the Lord bore and uttered. So great were the Lord's agonies that our spiritual exercises are not worthy,

indeed cannot and ought not, to be compared with them; but God, having graciously allowed us, in measure, to partake of these things, draws us on to this most excellent ministry, the highest degree of fellowship of sonship. Intercession is a privilege, it is the handing over of self in co-operation with God for the achievement of His purpose in the begetting and perfecting of sons.

This is the greatest confirmation and highest degree of God's love towards us and our love towards Him, the fulfilment of the marriage spoken of so wonderfully by Paul earlier. By the body of Christ the sons of God have been made dead to the 'body' of law and the body of sin and the body of the flesh and the body of death, so that we should be married to Him who was raised from the dead. The purpose of this marriage is for the

fulfilment of love in bringing forth fruit unto God, in the realm of personal holiness, and personal reproduction. Every one thus joined to Him will bring forth after his own kind and in His own image by the same Spirit. This is consummation, personal consummation in this life, leading on and contributing to the consummation of God's purposes at the consummation of the age. Christ wants us to enter into and enjoy all God has to give us in Himself, mediating to us all He has Himself entered into and presently enjoys, that we may share in it with Him. That is the purpose of intercession.

The Spirit Maketh Intercession with Groanings.

Having already mediated to men the Holy Spirit, that by Him He may dwell in us, the Lord Jesus is also able to minister to us all

the fruits of His indwelling. Although only the firstfruits of that abundant harvest which we shall later reap, they are ours, and providing we allow the two intercessors to have their way with us, they will be very wonderful. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit are intercessors by nature and appointment, Christ in heaven and the Holy Spirit in our hearts. All intercession is carried on between these two; apart from them intercession is quite impossible. The Spirit has been given us so that we may be brought into God's purposes in the Church and in the world through intercession. These purposes lie beyond and are in addition to the glorious things inwrought by the Spirit in us when He first came to our hearts. These first things the Spirit has to do in us are to create within us the right conditions for intercession, that He may initiate us into the ministry. Besides

the basic things already considered, He does this by creating great longings within us for total Christ-likeness. The Holy Spirit cannot be content with having given birth to a Christ-like spirit in us, wonderful as that is; He must develop this into an individual soul in whom God can see and recognize His Son — the very image of Him. This is God's great initial and overall purpose to which we have been called; it can be ours if we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. Even then it cannot be accomplished unless He who first cried 'Abba, Father' in us, commences also to groan in us.

These inward groanings are as much the result of our ignorance as of our knowledge, they are the living spring of all prayer. By the Spirit's working and crying within we know that we are children of God, and although we may not know it we have been

introduced to the prayer-life — it has commenced. This we know, but our knowledge is very limited. Despite all that He has done in us we do not know what we should pray for as we ought. The Spirit's work within us is to create a sense of need and of obligation. We know we can pray and that we both need and ought to pray, but what to pray for specifically we have no knowledge. By this method the Spirit deliberately teaches us that prayer is not words but basic, heartfelt power. Becoming scripturally informed, we learn what God wants us to know, namely that we were both conformed and predestinated by Him before time was, to be born at a certain point in time and formed in the image of the Son. The realization that this is why we were born of His Spirit, and that this is why He cried His first birth-cry in our hearts, is a marvellous

thing. However, although this general knowledge is common to all the sons, we do not generally know that this is related to the future ministry of intercession to which we are predestined, and which is based upon it. Intercession can only become vital in us as the substance of these things is revealed to us step by step as we walk on in the Spirit. The fact that He groans over intercession proves that it is of great importance to Him, as it also must be to us. Groans are a confession, an expression of things baffling to the mind; of feelings that arise from deep concern and inward mental pain for which we can find no words — there are none. Even the blessed Spirit, who knows the glorious Son and the ultimate image of the Son which He hopes to reproduce in each one of us, cannot put it into words. Jesus is glorified, and because the Son is glorified,

God has glorified all His sons; it is this wonder of glory in our lives that the blessed Spirit concerns Himself with. The glorious sons are a people liberated from the bondage of corruption which grips the whole creation; it is the privilege of every son of God to be free from it. But being delivered from that does not mean that we have no weaknesses; we have. Many of them are legacies from the past, all of which must be eliminated, so the blessed Spirit applies Himself to the task to which He has been called and sent to accomplish.

The Spirit knows every one of our weaknesses, and to what degree they prevent our lives from being full of glory; step by step He leads us on, progressively dealing with everything, until the ultimate glory be reached. He also protects us from the potential destruction relating to the

particular weakness the next step will expose in us; He makes us face up to what that step may uncover, dealing with it thoroughly as we trust Him to do so. What relief and joy it is to remember at all times that there is no condemnation in Christ, and that there is no need to groan on that account, but simply to rest in the assurance that he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit who groans in us. We do not know what the Spirit thinks about the various weaknesses we have; we just have to trust Him as He makes intercession for us according to His knowledge of us and of the will of God for us, which is complete Christ-conformity. He in heaven and the Spirit in our hearts are joint intercessors, and both are concerned with the same thing, namely perfecting us in the image of God. Jesus left heaven to become conformed to the

likeness and image of man; to do this completely He went to the cross and, having accomplished it, He finally dismissed His spirit into His Father's hands. In a way similar to this, we who have the spirit of Christ must now be conformed to the image of God, and must in heart leave this world and be conformed to the revelation of that image as revealed in the man Christ Jesus.

The glory and the groans in our hearts are akin to the glory and the groans of Jesus' heart as He lay on His face in the garden before His Father, and are evidence that the two intercessors are moving and working together to achieve God's ends in us.

Prostrating Himself at God's throne that night He groaned His way through His agony to do God's will, and rose to hang on the cross finally for its perfect accomplishment. His own dreadful agonies apart, as it was

with Him so it must be with us, and He intercedes for us because we are so ignorant of the way our perfecting shall be accomplished. It is planned on our behalf that, if we will go on with the Spirit and allow Him to work out this purpose of God in us, all things will work together for good in our lives; for this reason we have been called, and this is the way it must work out, for there is no alternative.

Ever Living to Make Intercession.

This constant ministry of intercession in us on God's behalf is for our own personal blessing; parallel with it there is also another branch of ministry to which the Spirit is committed and which ought to be fully functional in each of us, namely intercession for others. This ministry will develop in scope and strength in each of God's children alongside and in accordance with that

person's development in conformity to the Son. We may all be sure of one thing, namely that this power of intercession is the surest indication of Christlike-ness; it is the result of growth into His image, 'He ever liveth to make intercession', and because this is so with Him it must be so with us. What a reason for living! Intercession is among the chiefest, if not the very chiefest and most indispensable of the everlasting ministries to which the sons of God are committed. There are many reasons given in scripture (some plainly stated, some obviously implied and others not even referred to at all) why Christ is now living in glory; each of these is vital and necessary, but of them all none is more important than this. We are privileged to be incorporated into it, for it is a highly secret ministry, maintained solely between Jesus Himself

with the Father and the Spirit and us. It is absolutely certain that no-one can be conformed to Christ's image if he or she refuses to conform to His present desires by engaging in the ministry for which He lives and to which He is dedicated. He ascended to heaven for this; everything He did on earth prior to His ascension, and His ascension itself also, led Him to this place; intercession is the logical end-time occupation and function to which all His previous work led.

We must be gripped afresh with the knowledge of this: salvation is no more possible apart from His intercession than it is possible without His death and resurrection. Everything He did led to what He is doing, and everything He is doing depends upon what He did; they are a whole. Every function of His, and all His work, is of vital

importance to God's overall purpose; each step was carefully planned and executed, and in all of them He was without fault or weakness. How important then is intercession for us as well as for Him; we must not be found at fault or weak in this area. If we stop short of this we fail to conform to His image. Conformity is not cosmetic; we must not seek false beauty by trying to look like Him outwardly. Christ-likeness is not a mask or an outfit (how can we know what He looks like outwardly?); it is by first being as He is and then doing what He is doing, because, with Him, we share God's identical love for others.

The power of the Spirit to resurrect the spirit of man into holiness, and the love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus are the indispensable means of intercession in

any man; they prepare and qualify the heart for intercession; let these depart from the heart and life, and intercession, if it had ever begun, will soon cease. Without holiness a man is disqualified from intercession, and without love he has no disposition for it.

Love which feels for others with the love and feelings wherewith God loves and feels for them, love which understands and knows that there is little or nothing else that can be done, and realizes that, unless someone intervenes, souls will go to hell, drives many to intercede. Intercession is the outcome of spiritual tuition and intuition, it owes little or nothing to formal education, being less of mind and letter than of heart and love and knowledge of God's will. Contemplation of ultimate alternative destinies is sufficient to fill the heart of sensitive persons with fear or wonder; hell and heaven are inescapable

realities to the intercessor. He knows that God commends His love to men and women because they are sinners, and he knows also that, while we were yet sinners and without strength to do anything for ourselves, Christ died for us.

Love is intense feeling, the sovereign virtuous feeling of the heart that makes a person commit the whole being to someone else for that person's good. It is nothing other than the nature and spirit of the God whose heart-feelings for others pour out of Him ceaselessly, evoking words like these, 'He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?' Love can hold nothing back; 'God is for us', all of God is for us, God is all for us, He is for us; what unqualified wonder grips the soul that knows this! No charges can be brought

against the soul for whom intercession is made, accusation and intercession cannot live together. Intercession is made for the elect in the purposes of God who has both justified and glorified them; how then can they be condemned? Christ intercedes for them, He died for them, He loves them; love to the death is the love that intercedes. O God give us all that love. When that love grips the heart it becomes the reason for all intercession; the life that is gladly given over to it, opening up to God for all that it means, shall indeed reign in life with Christ.

As in all the precious things he preached and sought to impart to others, Paul was an example of all he taught about intercession. He never sought to impress others with his knowledge, nor did he constantly boast of his experiences, great as they were; he simply lived the life of Christ, and sought to

impart that (life) to everybody. So truly did he enter into the Spirit and live in Christ there, that he could speak all those things about which his conscience bore him witness in the Holy Spirit, whether on this matter or that; specially about the great ministry of intercession. How tremendously great it would be if every one of us could, in all honesty, do the same thing. The immensity of need in the world is so great, all around us the creation is groaning in pain, waiting for this manifestation of sonship. Things would change so radically if only the sons of God grew up to become intercessors after the image and example of Christ. But to those not in the Spirit this is quite impossible. Intercession is an entirely spiritual ministry, it cannot be engaged in outside of Him for it only exists in that realm. Although it may affect both bodily

and material conditions (as for instance when it is accompanied by fastings) it only functions in the spirit of a man abiding in the Spirit of God. Seeing that it consists basically in the groanings of the Spirit, they who engage in it must live in the same state of spiritual holiness and love and power as He, and share like feelings of heart with Him.

Intercession — God's High Calling.

Paul, an experienced intercessor, mentions some of these here: great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart; so powerful and real were these to him that he was able to enter into the sense of terror that would grip souls when, perhaps too late, they realized that they were being cut off for ever from God. This man found himself bordering on a wish to be accursed from Christ for the sake of those for whom he prayed. He completely identified with these people,

many of them dear to him, and he prayed for them knowing their needs, and feeling pain to which, most likely, they were dead; feeling God's pains for them too. He knew heart desire, not for himself but for others. To intercede properly the heart of the intercessor must understand, that is to say it must be brought into this state of realization of the heart-needs of others; it must be quite unconcerned about itself to the point of self-forgetfulness. Being assured of his own eternal security in God's love and that he cannot be separated from it, the intercessor can venture out into the further reaches of Gethsemane and Golgotha, where it seems that he himself is threatened with eternal loss.

What greater privilege can be granted a man than this? And what more sure ground can he stand upon? Christ, the heavenly

intercessor, was elected for this, and trod this way Himself. Although it would be more than foolish to judge with any degree of finality on this matter, it would seem that in these things Paul went further than any other man. Two of the three men who, at a later date, Paul regarded as pillars of the church at Jerusalem, were chosen to accompany their Lord to Gethsemane's place of prayer, but could go no further than they could drive their weak flesh that day. Jesus went there to become accursed from God for their sakes, while they went to sleep. They did not know of course, nor did He tell them, He only complimented them; their spirit was willing. Perhaps in the great afterwards, of which He had earlier spoken to them, they reached the place of intercession — almost certainly they did — but Paul is the only one who speaks of

intercession in the language of one who understood and entered into it. This is the reason why he took such pains to set down the details of the way of life in the Spirit, and to explain the truth. We must come to grips with it. Every man must perfectly understand this, and clearly see the reason why Christ in God, and the Spirit in us, ceaselessly intercede.

How wisely are we led up to this by the Spirit of God. The man who enters into the death and resurrection of Christ by the Spirit of holiness, and is flooded with the love of God, is led by the Spirit to this place of intercession. The heart that knows the constant miracle of death and resurrection working in him becomes aware of a sense of indebtedness to God for this; the Spirit creates it in him. The very working of the law of the Spirit of life within him is the

greatest contributory factor to and the surest guarantee of reaching this high calling, for this law sets a man free from tyrant self and base self-interest, liberating us for the ministry. Except this should be so, no man can exercise an intercessory ministry. Intercession is as far removed from thought of self and self-benefit as is east from west. Intercession arises from identification with the redemptive purposes of God and the need of His creatures around us, ruined by sin and groaning under it. These seem so far removed from each other that it is almost impossible to think that there could ever be any relationship between them. However, the person who has been brought from the groanings of the sin-cursed world into the glorious liberty of the sons of God knows that the relationship between them is a very real one. The

suffering, groaning Christ bridged the gulf between God and man, and man and man, with His redeeming blood. God loves His creation, and cries out for those who will love it with Him enough to give themselves over to intercession for it, entering into its sufferings and groans. But let all His sons know that no man can enter into this ministry with God unless he is prepared to suffer for it with Christ.

Glory — the Result of Intercession

The great glory to which Christ is now exalted for this ministry awaits the yet further, greater fulness of glory resulting from the ministry. This may at first seem impossible, for He is now glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; but although this is so, yet further glories are laid up in store for Him. This exceeding great and eternal weight of

glory, which shall be upon Him when He comes to be glorified in the saints, will then be seen to be the fruit of His intercession. When the saints are presented in His presence at the throne of His glory what exceeding great and eternal joy will flood all the universe, glory upon glory extending on and on into the ages to come. What will the creatures presently groaning under the bondage of corruption think then? Much that is now thought to be and preached by some as the manifestation of the sons of God may appear far from the truth and utterly irrelevant to their situation; they still have no relief. Yet for their sakes there does need to be a present manifestation of the sons of God, as well as a future one — when Jesus was on earth there was. John was one who saw the earthly manifestation of sonship and said, 'We beheld His glory, the

glory as of an only begotten (son) with a father, full of grace and truth'. It was a wonderful manifestation, but it was so limited; the Lord confined Himself to Palestine only. Nevertheless God's creation, in part, saw and felt that manifestation, and men witnessed and attested to that glory, even though at the time few recognized it for what it was and that it meant that He was the Son of God. As it was with Him in His day, so it ought to be with us in measure in our day. Although we may be unrecognized by the world as the sons of God, His creatures ought to be able to see and feel the glory already in us through grace.

God has said that He is willing to make His power known, but unless we identify with the agonies of the creatures that fill the whole creation with groans, we shall never

get close enough to their heart-need to be able to help. If we wish to help men and women we must feel with their feelings and groan with their groans. When God of old came down at last to deliver Israel from Egypt it was as much because He was moved by their cries and groans as by His determination to keep His promise to their father Abraham. His was a given heart, as well as a given word; He loved the people, and pitied them and came to their rescue.

The nature of the ministry demands that the intercessor must be, in himself, a very secure person in Christ. It is essential that he be fully persuaded that nothing and no-one can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus his Lord; this assured he is a free man. This freedom from fear concerning his own present and future standing is essential for the intercessor, for intercession can only

spring from spiritual identification with a world of afflictions. Intercession must be answered by God on behalf of others, not the intercessor, and it must be successful; for this it must be upon very sure ground. Fixed in that, a heart can be reckless with regard to itself, so that it no longer seeks to retain its own well-being and comfort, but seeks these blessings for others. The assured heart does not desire lightness and happiness, but is willing for heaviness and sorrow. These are very sobering thoughts, for such feelings are not generally wanted, rather they are shunned, perhaps even denied.

The Cry of the Intercessor — Abba Father.

The introduction of 'Abba, Father', into the passage ought to have alerted us to what was to come. It is a rare phrase in the New Testament, associated exclusively with Jesus

and the Holy Spirit. This association is very distinctive because it is peculiar to Jesus and the Spirit in two extremes of emotion in the experience of God. By the first cry the mind is carried back to that awful moment in Gethsemane when the Lord began to be sore amazed and very heavy, saying, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death'. With that statement He left His three apostles and went away to lie before His Father alone, wrestling with the problem of sin and the cup of wrath He must drink because of it. It was one of the most dreadful, if not the most dreadful of all decisions He ever had to make. From that time onwards the cry 'Abba, Father' could not but be associated in the minds of the apostles with great wrestlings, agony, bloody sweat, darkness, heaviness and profound sorrow. Jesus the Son of God cried that cry

when He was departing from this world, and the Holy Spirit cries it when He comes into the heart of a man to bear witness that he is a son of God. So the cry is placed at two extremes, the first one at departure, the second one at arrival; the first with sorrow and the second with joy, the first at death, the second at birth; both ending and beginning is in the cry; it is the cry of God.

Is intercession associated with Gethsemane? Is it a garden of sorrows under the shade of olive trees, the place where fruit is gathered to be beaten and bruised and crushed, until at last the oil runs out? Is it the place where finally the will of the Father is agreed to and done with the heart first, before the body is yielded for its accomplishment? Abba, Father, lies at the heart of the relationship between Jesus and the Father. It is not strange then that intercession should be so

powerful; it is firmly linked with both Gethsemane and Generation; what is more, by Paul's heart-wish, it is closely linked with Calvary also. It surely is a most dreadful cry that a man should wish almost to be cut off from Christ if only other people could be saved. It is wonderful also, for that is precisely the place that the Lord Himself had to reach before He could save us. Intercession has to do with needs that cannot be met by anointed preaching or gifted touch; it has to do with destinies and destinations, heaven and hell; it hears the cries of the doomed and the damned, and of God. It enters into God's heart for the sake of the souls of men, wanting their salvation at whatever cost to itself. It is understanding of God to a degree not otherwise attainable, it is fellowship with Christ, union with the Spirit and oneness with the Father. The Spirit

of intercession makes intercessors of sons who want nothing other or more than to be conformed to the image of the Son in the likeness of His present ministry.

5 THE SPIRIT OF POWER

'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost'. Chapter 15 verse 13.

Power and Sanctification.

In this final reference to the Holy Spirit in the epistle, Paul wishes us to think of power. The phrases he uses are 'the power of the Holy Ghost' and 'the power of the Spirit of God'. Probably in some people's minds this word power is mostly, if not exclusively, thought of in terms of the baptism of the Spirit, as in the texts, 'ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:' and 'tarry ye in ... Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high'. Usually this power is connected exclusively with miraculous

demonstration by the gifts of the Spirit. It is a mistake to think this way, as Paul makes clear to the Roman church: in this passage he uses the word power once with reference to works and once with reference to condition of life. These two quotations are not the only allusions to the Holy Spirit at this point either: His name appears again also. This time, in course of a pungent statement relating to his own apostleship and ministry, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit in connection with sanctification — 'the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ ... ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost'. So the apostle takes us back to the beginning, where, as we know, he started his epistle on this very note, 'Jesus Christ our Lord ... declared to be

the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead'.

Although in this fifteenth chapter Paul does not use the word power in connection with sanctification as he did in the first chapter, it would have been quite correct if he had done so. Without in any way infringing God's commandments or interfering with truth, we may make the insertion, and could read the text thus: 'being sanctified by the (power of) the Holy Ghost'. Even better though, we could read it:- 'being sanctified by (the presence of) the Holy Ghost'. Perhaps best of all we could link all three insertions together and think of this phrase, 'being sanctified by (the person and the presence and the power of) the Holy Ghost'. If we did this it would be perfectly right and proper, for that is exactly how we are sanctified —

by the person and presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The blessed Holy Spirit sent to us by God is more concerned about sanctifying our lives than about giving us power to do special works, yet sanctification is not the Holy Spirit's exclusive speciality, as we have seen. Paul therefore draws attention to other things and speaks of mighty signs and wonders done by the power of the Spirit of God. Lest over-emphasis brings about our own undoing it is vital to keep all truth in perspective. This statement leaves all honest people with no doubt in the mind that the gospel is not being fully presented unless signs and wonders are taking place. The apostle is quite clear that, in order to make the gentiles obedient to God, the gospel is to be declared by both word and deed. He does not mean that every preacher of the gospel

is to be a Paul, or should expect to accomplish all he accomplished, but he does mean that someone ought to be showing the signs and doing wonders.

Signs and Wonders

Long before the invention of cursive writing or ethnic script in this world, and long before formal education was given or print was known, when men could not read or write, they communicated with each other by spoken word or signs. There was no alphabet and no written language, so certain signs which had set meanings were invented, and by these messages were recorded. These signs were called hieroglyphics or cuneiform. To people of those days signs held great meaning, perhaps greater meaning than words do for us today; they were primitive but they were precise, and they exercised great power.

Evidence of this is with us to this day. The ancient sign-language of the Chinese people is still being used, and it is most expressive. It is not surprising therefore, but utterly consistent with God's loving care and complete understanding of men, that he should grant signs and wonders to be done by the power of the Spirit throughout the age. Miracles are God's sign-language to men who exist in ignorance of His grace and love, and therefore do not understand Him. He wants to speak to the spiritually uneducated by signs and wonders, for these indicate to their minds power associated with a supernatural being who must be God. The logic of it is that if: (1) a thing is wonderful it must have been done by a wonderful person, and (2) a given sign must be proof that someone is wishing to communicate with them.

The second of these assumptions is certainly true, but the first is by no means to be taken for granted. Signs and wonders are not the sole prerogative of good persons. Great care should be exercised when miraculous power is at work. Because the end result is beneficial, it does not necessarily mean that the person operating the power is God or of God. The test is not the work (has he or she power to do miracles?), nor is it the result of it (is it beneficial to the person upon whom the work is wrought?), nor does the decision rest upon whether or not the person is considered to be nice. The test is this, is the power being shown and the work done as being an integral part of the gospel of the Son of God? If a man is a servant of Jesus Christ, and speaks the kind of things that Paul speaks in this letter, the work is good and the person is good. This is one of the

reasons why Paul placed signs and wonders last and not first in this epistle. To the ignorant the miracles may need to be shown first; (it may be the only way to reach him) but in the order of exposition, power to perform miracles comes last. It is hard to escape the conviction that this is done so that readers may understand the ground from which power operates and works are done, and to ensure that all miracle-workers must be tested by the truth. Given this, two other reasonable facts emerge: (1) to be able to do such amazing things, that person must be very powerful, and (2) since those things are good and beneficial, that person must be good also, and a benefactor of the race. Miracles performed by the power of God may be said to be through grace, even though people may not understand grace and mercy, and may know nothing of

righteousness. In some cases they may never have heard of Christ and the cross or listened to the gospel, but they can interpret signs and wonders with a certain amount of accuracy.

Signs and wonders are most arresting and sensational, and God uses them to impart His wondrous grace to mankind; but to be genuine they must be gospel works. Through no fault of their own the vast majority of men have no knowledge of God beyond what is available to them through nature, but that is sufficient to reveal Him. Heathen and pagan, civilized and uncivilized, educated and uneducated, all alike have equal access to sources of knowledge which uniformly testify that there is a God, and that He is good and powerful. Paul very strongly insists upon this; quoting from David he says that the sound of God's

heavenly creation goes into all the earth, and that the words of those heavenly bodies are carried to the ends of the world. 'There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard', says the psalmist. Men 'hear' things that the ear does not hear; they 'see' things beyond the power of human sight, and 'know' more than the mind can tell them. As shown before, man is a spiritual being; he is far greater than the combined 'machinery' of his body and the faculties of his soul and the possibilities of his mind; because this is so, before God he is also a responsible being. He cannot exist without accumulating knowledge, and is capable of response according to that knowledge; God holds him accountable to Himself for this. In chapter one Paul makes it unmistakably clear that all mankind is without excuse before God on at least two counts: (1) the

eternal power of God; (2) the eternal Godhead of God. In other words God holds that men know He is and that He is God. Although at this present time much of the world is unevangelized, all mankind is being held responsible by God for its present state in relationship to its degree of knowledge on these two points. But whatever the amount of opportunity or knowledge men may have, all must know this, 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (down) the truth in unrighteousness'. Whether men choose to be religious or irreligious is immaterial; whether they have heard the gospel or not makes no difference; primitive or civilized, who or whatever a man may be, to repress or deny truth for the sake of sin is to incur God's wrath.

'God commends His love toward us', says Paul; to complete the sentence as written would be to add 'in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us'. But that is not all; God would also commend His love to mankind in that while they are yet sinners He would perform signs and wonders for them to see and hear and experience. This is all part of His grace, and Paul sought always to preach the gospel this way; anything other than this he would have regarded as being less than the full truth, and he had no intention of repressing the truth; he very much regarded himself as being accountable to God for the gospel. When he said he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ and that he gloried in it, among the many reasons he gave for this was the fact that God gave him power to perform signs and wonders. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; it

is not words about the facts of salvation, though we need that information. The gospel is the power revealed in the person of Christ and of what God did by Christ in the past reaching men now in the present: if the power be absent, preaching is in vain; Paul is very definite about the power. That power is now being both willed and brought to men by the Spirit of God through the person of Christ; that is why He must be formed in us. We, having His Spirit, must develop in His life to the point where we can minister in His name by the power of the Spirit of God as He Himself did.

The ministry of Jesus Christ is, without question, a ministry of power to men, which includes signs and wonders as well as preaching. Even a cursory reading of the Gospels is sufficient to convince the mind that wherever Jesus Christ went to preach,

signs and wonders accompanied all He said. Only occasionally did He give people the bare word and leave it at that; all powerful as it was, He generally accompanied His word with actions. Even on the occasion when He said 'except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe', He did not refuse to give a sign, but went on to perform the miracle. He did not think He was endangering true faith in the man by giving the sign, but healed the servant as requested. However, the miracles He performed were never done as an end in themselves — they were always intended by Him to lead men on to salvation. Paul takes this line also. Signs and wonders are important; the Holy Spirit who worked them through Jesus will work them today. They are vital; but, although so important, Paul only ever saw them as means to an end,

namely 'that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost'.

The High Calling — Priesthood.

All he meant by these words is not easy to assess. Did he mean that he was offering up people of gentile origin to God? Did he mean that gentiles were offering up themselves to God? Or was he just saying that gentiles were making offerings to God? Perhaps he wants us to believe that all three things were happening; or perhaps, after all, he was only referring to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. There is no doubt that this truth was very dear to him, for he had referred to it (though not directly) earlier in his famous plea, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your

reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world'. Quite plainly the gentiles were being exhorted to offer themselves to God rather than to bring an offering to Him. It is quite important to notice that, although the sacrifice is mentioned, the word altar is not in the text. He is not saying come and lay yourselves on the altar for God, as though thinking of some act of sacrifice akin to the typical sacrifices of the Old Testament. That surely is a noble thought, but he was not meaning that; he was thinking of something far greater than that, something which logically precedes it, namely the self-presentation of a man for the priesthood. It is a prayer directed to men, exhorting them to fulfil grace, realize their birthright and respond to the calling of God.

Although God commanded all Israel to bring sacrifices to Him, no man among them could

offer even one sacrifice on God's altar unless he was a priest. Everybody could bring his offerings to God; there was no restriction on that; indeed each man was expected to do so: on the appropriate occasion everyone had to present himself with his offering at the entrance of the tabernacle before God. All men were accepted thus far, but no man could go any further or do more than that; he could approach with his gift to the altar, but there he must stop; from that point onwards he and his gift were entirely in the hands of others. At the entrance every other man but a Levite had to hand his sacrifice to a man of that tribe, but even he could not make the sacrifice if he was not of the house of Aaron; nobody but a priest made contact with the altar. In his turn therefore the Levite had to bring the sacrifice to a priest, who then finally offered it to God; sacrifice

and offering was the priests' exclusive ministry.

It is to this placing and function as a priest that the apostle is calling us. In Israel when a young man of the Aaronic family attained to the age of twenty he was eligible for the ministry; his responsibility then was to present himself to the high priest for examination. If he was found to be a fit man he was then prepared by the high priest for consecration to God and instalment into office. He was not allowed to make the final decision about personal fitness; the high priest, who in the case of Aaron's own sons was their own father, did that. Although by birthright he was predestined from the moment of his birth to become a priest, when the time came he could only actually be a priest if he was acceptable to God and his father. The grounds of acceptability were

carefully laid down by God for all, without prejudice or favour; the standard was nothing less than physical perfection. That proved, he also had to be made holy, and thereby acceptable to God for service. Every son of Aaron was born for this elect office; he was chosen for it in Aaron before he was born; it was a high honour. Although he did not know it until he was acquainted with the fact, he was born to fulfil this calling and purpose (perhaps from the foundation of the world. Who can tell?) For twenty years he lived, first as an ordinary baby, then as a boy and a youth, doubtless doing the same sorts of things as his companions; but as soon as he came of age he had to enter into joint-heirship with his father and older brothers who had preceded him in office. Everything else had to be left behind so that he could be made in the new likeness and be

conformed to the new image; priests were not allowed any eccentricities or choices or fashions of their own; with little difference all priests had to look alike. Except for the high priest, his father and brother in office, no-one wore outstanding clothes; Aaron alone was different. For the rest, except facially and in stature and peculiarity of bearing or something distinctive in their walk, all the priests looked and did exactly the same. It was considered by everybody in Israel that this was the reasonable service of the sons of Aaron; they were expected to do it. So it was that, when the time came, these men presented their bodies a living sacrifice to God with this understanding. From that time forward they became a body of men under one head, with whom they lived and functioned in the tabernacle for God and the people.

In a very meaningful way, from the moment those priests offered themselves to God in this manner they ceased to walk after the flesh and began to walk after the Spirit. Even though beforehand they had kept the commandments and had loved the Lord their God with all their heart, if they had refused to present themselves to God at the right time they could not have fulfilled their birthright and lived according to their predestination. They would have grown fruit and vegetables and corn and made wine and raised flocks and herds like everybody else, but they would have missed their calling, prejudiced the future of Israel and earned the wrath of God besides. For the same kind of reasons Paul first pleaded with the Romans to present themselves to God, and later spoke of the offering up of the gentiles being acceptable. As far as he was

concerned his duty in the matter was clear, and so was his intention: if he could get his hands on them they were going on the altar. He saw everyone as a potential voluntary sacrifice to God, that he in turn should offer as living sacrifices to God also. Paul first offered them to Him that they in turn should offer themselves to Him. In Paul's view anything less than this was world-conformity, but conformity to this would result in transformation by mental renewal; then sacrifice and offering would become the habit of life.

The priest is the living sacrifice; he is the vital link between man and God. In his office he is the intercessor; he lives to make intercession for men and women. All priests are intercessors and mediators, just as our Lord Jesus is High Priest, Mediator and Intercessor. Priests are established in their

order and position to live in it to maintain the link between God and man; in their measure they must ever live to make intercession. This is the sacrifice they must make, and, having made it, they must live it out continuously all the rest of their days. Having made this initial sacrifice they can then make all other kinds of offerings to God as Paul did, for they are sanctified to God for that purpose.

This is how the apostle viewed his ministry. He saw it as Jesus Christ saw His ministry on earth. By the power of the Spirit of God He went about showing all the signs and doing wonders for three or so years, and people were healed and blessed and amazed by it all. But in His heart it was all for one purpose, namely that the people so blessed should in the end be sanctified to God. This is why the cross came at the close of His life;

the Holy Ghost has no other or greater power than the power to sanctify souls. Speaking comparatively, it is far easier to show a wonder which is but for a moment than to sanctify a soul for all eternity. One is an event, albeit spectacular, but the other is a constant work, a ministry. This is what Paul was so quick to show when he began his epistle, 'Jesus Christ our Lord ... declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead'. He finishes in the same elements as he begins — power and holiness; only at the beginning it is rather holiness and power, and all by the Spirit.

This is that Holy One who is now come forth from the Father in Jesus' name; He lives and works in holiness and power in the Church, that everything in the Church may be done in power according to the spirit of holiness.

He has come to create and sustain a spirit of holiness among us, that is to impart a constant, continuing inner power, an energy promoting a life and attitude of holiness in us. This is to be the dynamic of the Church, the spirit in which all is done; it is the air and atmosphere of all our living and working; it is the result of being in the Spirit, it is having the spirit of Christ. When this is so, the life moves on the same lines in exactly the same way as His. This Holy Spirit governs everything in the church, directing all things for the glory of God in Jesus' name; but He needs our co-operation. If we respond to the call we shall be declared sons of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, and the love of God will be shed abroad in our hearts. The Spirit and our spirit will be one, so that men will be hard put to distinguish the difference, and that is just

how God wants it. He in us and we in Him will manifest such unification and likeness that whether to speak of the Spirit or of the spirit we shall not know; in fact at times it will be almost impossible, for they shall be the same, identified for the purpose of God.