

DEAD BODIES AND QUICKENED BODIES.

"O wretched man that I am: who shall deliver me from this dead body?"

I thank God [for deliverance] through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with my mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." - Rom. 7:24,25.

MUCH PERPLEXITY has been caused to many Christian minds by the statements of the seventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Some have concluded that he here teaches that he lived a life of sin, according to the flesh, but a life of righteousness according to his mind; and yet they are ready to concede that this is rather a perplexing, unreasonable and unsatisfactory view of the matter. Others reach the conclusion that the Apostle must here be describing his condition of heart and mind before conversion, while he was still a sinner; yet these also find difficulties, and confess that many features of such a view are quite inconsistent with the Apostle's language. We submit the following interpretation of the chapter, as proving itself correct by its harmonizing with all the Apostle's statements in this chapter and elsewhere.

The Apostle is addressing believers at Rome, "beloved of God, called saints" (1:7). Some of these were probably converts from amongst the Gentiles, while undoubtedly a considerable proportion were converts from Judaism. This is implied by the fact that the Apostle in this Epistle so particularly explains the Law, not as to Gentiles having no knowledge of the Law, but as to Jews having full knowledge of it. The Epistle is a very comprehensive statement of the entire plan of God. The Apostle begins in the first chapter by showing that God was not responsible for the prevalent degradation, ignorance, sin, etc., throughout the world, and concludes with the crushing of Satan under the feet of the saints during the Millennial reign of the Christ. He explains that at one time God gave to mankind in general

certain knowledge and blessings, but that "when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Confessing themselves to be wise they became fools." He explains that thus gradually men came down to idolatry and bestiality, dishonoring and degrading themselves, and "perverting the truth of God into a lie;" "for which cause God gave them up to vile affections and to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not proper;" and they became filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, dispute, deceit, malignity, etc., etc. Thus he accounts for the various degrees of degradation, ignorance and superstition prevalent throughout the world. – Chap. 1:21,22,25,26,28,29.

Proceeding, he shows that while Israel had received God's Law, under a special covenant, and with special favors at his hands, they had not been *saved* by the Law, any more than the Gentiles had been saved without the Law; and that therefore both Jews and Gentiles needed just such a Savior as God had provided. Answering the supposed argument of the Jews, he declares, "Not the *hearers* of the Law are just before God, but the *doers* of the Law," and he argues that the Jew who rested in the Law, and made his boast of being of God's favored people, and who by reason of these favors knew the will of God more particularly than the Gentiles, would not, by reason of this knowledge and advantage, be justified under the Law, but could only be acquitted by a perfect keeping of that Law; and that since the Jews did not keep the Law perfectly they could not claim the reward promised by the Law, namely, eternal life. Hence, so far as eternal life was concerned, they had no more **[R2719 : page 326]** claim upon it than had the Gentiles, who had less knowledge as well as less outward piety. He asks: "Are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles, living according to the light that they possessed]? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none *righteous*, no, not one."

The Apostle's argument is that none being righteous, none could be acquitted or approved before God, whether they had the Law or did not have it. Thus he proved that the Jews as well as the Gentiles, up to the time of Christ, were all under sin, all under condemnation, and that none of them had any claim upon eternal life, according to divine arrangements thus far made. For "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." – Chap. 2:13,17; 3:9,10,19,20.

Next the Apostle proceeds to show that whoever would be justified before God, whether he had previously been a Jew, favored with the knowledge and advantages of the Law, or a Gentile, in blindness and ignorance doing to the best of his knowledge, God has now provided for both, *one* way to be saved and to come into harmony with him – namely, through Christ. He shows that the Law, so far from justifying the Jews, showed them to be in a condition of sin, by their inability to keep it perfectly. But this Law which had condemned the Jews, because of their failure and inability to keep its conditions perfectly, served the more abundantly to attest God's justice; it became a witness to God's righteousness – that he had been right in his declaration that Israel had not kept the Law, and that all mankind, being in a fallen condition, were unfit to receive his favors; and it witnessed more than this: it witnessed to the justice of God in providing the ransom for sinners, in the person of his Son our Lord – "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto *all* and upon *all* them that believe [whether Jews or Gentiles]: for there is [now] no difference, for all have sinned [and consequently all are unworthy of divine favor upon any basis of works of their own, and must therefore needs be redeemed with the precious blood, and their penalty met for them, ere they could be received back into harmony with God]; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [satisfaction] through faith in his blood." – Chap. 3:19-26.

Appealing to those who had formerly been Jews, and who had been inclined to boast of themselves as God's favored people, and

inclined to think that in some sense of the word they were still more favored of God than those formerly Gentiles, the Apostle says, in view of the preceding facts, "Where is [the room for] boasting then?" and he answers, "It is excluded." There is no room for boasting; the Jew and the Gentile having come into Christ are on a common level – both have been justified by faith in Christ; neither was benefited or injured by his previous experience, whether under the Law or without the Law, if now by God's grace they had received adoption into his family through Christ. Boasting on the part of those who previously had been Jews would certainly be excluded, for they had not been able to perform the works which their Law Covenant had demanded, and now being exempted of God, under the law of faith, it would hinder them from any boasting as respects [R2720 : page 326] the law of works. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without [necessity for] the deeds of [works demanded by] the Law."

The Apostle proceeds to show that the Lord's operation of favor on account of faith does not make void the Law, with which for centuries he had dealt with Israel, – the Law of Righteousness. On the contrary, the fact that it was necessary to justify the Jews by faith, and the fact that they could not be justified under the Law of Works proves, not that the Law of Works was bad, but that it was good, and that the Jew was imperfect through the fall, so that he was unable to obey the perfect Law given. Thus God's dealings through the new Law of Faith really upholds and magnifies his old Law of Works, for the latter had to be fulfilled by Jesus on behalf of his people, in order that he might be the Redeemer of the world in general, and set free from the Law of Works those who had been under it, that they also, with the remainder of the world, might be accepted of God under the Law of Faith. – Chap. 3:27-31.

Buttressing his argument, the Apostle shows that Abraham was not justified by the Law of Works, the Law Covenant, but by faith; and hence the claim advanced by some that the Mosaic Law was necessary, with faith for justification, was an erroneous one; because

Abraham was called the friend of God, and had his faith counted to him for righteousness, not only long before the Law was given at Mount Sinai, but even before the outward sign of circumcision was given to himself – the latter being given, not as a requirement to his justification, but as a seal or mark of justification and harmony with God, to which he had already attained. – Chap. 4:1-15.

As Abraham was justified by faith, and received into favor with God because of his exercise of faith, so, says the Apostle, it is with us. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And how and why through our Lord? Because, says the Apostle, "He was delivered for our offences [bearing the condemnation which those offences **[R2720 : page 327]** implied and involved – the very offences or weaknesses of the flesh which hindered Jews from keeping the perfect law given at Sinai, and being justified under it by works of obedience to it]." – Chap. 4:25; 5:1.

This justification, which we receive through faith in Christ, becomes to us the basis of our new hopes in him, – of becoming his disciples, and, if faithful, ultimately joint-heirs with him in the Kingdom. This the Apostle expresses in the words, "By whom also [additional to justification and its peace] we have access by faith into *this grace* [the privilege of adoption into God's family] wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God [in the hope of sharing in God's glory and Kingdom with our Lord and Head]." The Apostle proceeds to prove, not only that the death of Christ was necessary as the off-set to Adam's transgression, and the payment of his penalty, but he demonstrates that this penalty was fully paid, and that God has accepted it on behalf of the world in general, and not of the Jews only, and has transferred all to Christ; for as "the judgment was by one to condemnation, the free gift is of many offences unto justification. As one offence resulted in a pronouncement which affected all to condemnation, even so by one righteous act a pronouncement was made [by the same Justice] which affects all men [permitting their attainment] unto justification of life."

And, adds the Apostle, the Law Covenant was introduced, not for the doing away of sin, but that sin might be more distinctly seen to be sin, and in its true colors; not, however, with a view to the injury of the Jews, with whom that Law Covenant was made, for if sin abounded amongst them the more by reason of their greater knowledge through the Law, then God's grace abounded proportionately the more; for as sin hath reigned unto death, even so there is to be a reign of grace unto eternal life under righteous provisions through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Rom. 5:12,17-21.

The next point is, If God's grace will be caused to abound in proportion to the sentence, so that he who has many and deep sins can be as fully and completely forgiven and released as he who has fewer and smaller sins, shall we then argue that we may as well delve deeply into sin, assured that God's grace will be that much the more abundantly provided for us? No, says the Apostle; those who have come into the position to *see* and comprehend this much of divine mercy and favor must first have made a consecration of themselves to God, otherwise their eyes of understanding would not be opened widely enough to grasp the subject with clearness and definiteness; and if one had made a consecration of himself, and immersed his will into the will of God in Christ, and thus reckoned himself dead to the world and to sin, how could such persons live lives of sin or take pleasure therein? So surely as they have received the holy spirit, the new mind, that surely that new mind would be out of harmony with sin, craving, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, truth, etc.

We are therefore to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ; and we are not to let sin reign in us, because we, as new creatures, are begotten of a different spirit, that is at warfare with sin, as sin is at warfare against righteousness. Instead, therefore, of continuing to be servants of sin, and yielding our bodies to that service, we are to recognize ourselves as "*new* creatures in Christ," servants of God, his ambassadors and representatives; and are to seek to use our members, our bodies and their talents, in the new service of

righteousness, – remembering our past experience in sin, that its wages are degradation and ultimate death, and that this privilege which we have now entered upon as new creatures, redeemed by the precious blood, is God's covenant through Jesus Christ our Lord, and means to us eternal life, if we maintain it. – Chap. 6.

Having reached this climax of the argument, and having demonstrated the process of our justification and our subsequent adoption into the divine family; and having shown the necessity for maintaining our standing as new creatures, and gaining victory over the weaknesses of the flesh; and that all these privileges, nevertheless, are not of the Law but of grace and of faith – the Apostle next turns his attention to another phase of the subject in Chapter 7. He has in mind, and is specially addressing the Christian brethren at Rome who were formerly Jews, as he says, "I write unto you who know the Law." He wishes to demonstrate to them logically that altho the Jews previously, through the Law Covenant, had "much advantage every way," yet now since the introduction of the New Covenant they were to some extent at a disadvantage – hindered or bound by the old dead covenant, unless they recognized it as dead, and cut loose from it. They were tightly bound by the Law given at Sinai; because as a nation they entered into a positive covenant with God, through Moses, the mediator of their covenant. St. Paul represents this as a marriage contract between that people and the Law Covenant; picturing the Jews as the wife, and the Law Covenant as the husband. He shows an incompatibility between them, but that nevertheless the Jews would be bound by their covenant, as a woman would be *bound* by her marriage contract, so long as the husband would live.

Hence the Jews, as a people, were less at liberty to enter into a New Covenant with Christ than were the Gentiles, because they were already *bound* to the [R2720 : page 328] Law Covenant through Moses. The Apostle proceeds to prove three things:

(1) That the Law Covenant, or husband of Israel, had not been abrogated, had not been executed, as a bad law, but had died a natural death, through the fulfilment of the purpose of its creation; and that hence,

(2) Every Jew might properly consider himself as released from all obligation to the (dead) Law Covenant, and might properly be united or married to another, Christ, accepting the terms of the New Covenant, with its grace, mercy and peace through believing, now offered to them.

(3) It was proper that they all should see how much better was the New Covenant, into which they would enter by becoming united with Christ, than was the old covenant, which, he declared, had died a natural death.

However, he would not have them think evil of the first husband, the Law Covenant. On the contrary, he assures them that it was a good husband to them – "The Law is holy and just and good," all must speak well of the Jews' first husband. Nevertheless, argues the Apostle, we all realize that we did not receive from the Law Covenant the blessings we so earnestly coveted; we did not receive an actual cancellation of our sins, but merely a temporary covering of them, which required to be renewed and made mention of year by year continually (Heb. 10:1), nor did we obtain the longed for everlasting life. As Jews, we cannot blame the Law Covenant; we must only blame ourselves; – nor can we blame ourselves (for I may consider myself a representative, in thought and conduct, of all true Jews, and may speak for them, says the Apostle); and I can truly say that while living under this Law Covenant I approved it with my mind, with my heart, and I endeavored to serve it accordingly, but when I came to perform its requirements I found another law, a law of sin working in my members, which hindered me from rendering the obedience I desired to render to that Law Covenant.

Not that it hindered me entirely, for I certainly succeeded in some degree in conforming life and conduct to its requirements; but since I could not render perfect obedience to its every requirement I necessarily failed, because in that Law Covenant no provision was made for my weaknesses and imperfections which I had inherited, and which were my share of the fall [R2721 : page 328] of our race. I found, on the contrary, that even tho I had been able to perform the requirements of the Law in nine points out of ten, and had failed in the tenth point, and even tho that failure were properly attributable to inherited weaknesses, and was entirely contrary to my desires of heart, nevertheless it was *failure*, and my efforts as a whole were branded *failure*, and the great prize of eternal life was denied me under that covenant.

Thus I found myself in a terrible predicament: my heart crying out for God and for righteousness, and earnestly desiring to fulfil the requirements of my covenant and to gain life everlasting, but I found myself wholly unable to fully obey its requirements; I found them entirely beyond my reach. Not that they were beyond the reach of my mind, for with my mind I grasped them and enjoyed them and appreciated them; nor that they would have been beyond the reach of obedience of my body, had my body been perfect; but, O wretched man! I find that my body is a dead body, that sin has gained such a power over it and so chained it down to things that are evil, in fact and in intention, that I cannot do the things that I would, – that when I would do good and keep the perfect law, sin is present with me, and hinders, – being an integral part of my body; so that the good that I would do, the perfect life that I would live, I am unable to perform, and the evil things that I would not do, which my mind, my will, rejects, and which I strive against, those things to some extent I find myself unable to resist; and here was my helpless condition as bound to the Law Covenant. I realized that I never could gain, through its assistance and offers, the glorious perfections that I desired, and the eternal life which could accompany only these perfections.

What shall I do? How can I escape this condition of things? I thank God that a way of escape has been provided; I thank God that in his due time he has sent Jesus, as a great Redeemer, and that through his death the world of mankind has been redeemed from the original sentence, and additionally that all we who were Jews and under the Law Covenant are *set at liberty from that covenant* – that the death of Jesus on our behalf means the death of our Covenant, which, tho in some respects an advantage, was very unfavorable to us because of our inherited weaknesses. I thank God that now I am at liberty to become united to Christ, at liberty to consider my union with Moses and the Law Covenant as at an end, at liberty to take on me the vows and covenants required of all called to be the Bride of Christ. Thanks be unto God for this deliverance from the bondage of the Law of Works into the liberty of the Law of Faith in Christ Jesus!

The advantage of this new position in Christ over the old position in Moses is that now God accepts my new mind, my heart desires, accompanied by my best endeavors; and under this New Covenant, through the merits of the *ransom*, he justly ignores and hides from his sight the imperfections of the flesh, which are contrary to my wish, and against which I am striving. [R2721 : page 329] It may be said of me, then, and of all such, that it is with our minds, with our hearts, that we are serving God – even if, to some extent, contrary to our wish and endeavor, our flesh should, either through weakness or ignorance, serve the law of sin at times. – Romans 7.

THE NEW CREATURE ALIVE, THE OLD DEAD.

– ROM. 8:1-11. –

Under the covenant through which we are united to Christ, our mortal bodies are reckoned as dead, as sacrificed, as no longer us, and our minds are reckoned as the new creature adopted into the family of God, and seeking to serve God and to grow into his likeness, by being conformed to the image of his dear Son. It is therefore according to the standpoint from which we view the matter that we could say of

these new creatures that they are holy, and that the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in them, and that the wicked one toucheth them not. – 1 John 5:18.

In such expressions we are referring exclusively to the reckoned "*new*" creatures, and are ignoring entirely, as dead, their mortal bodies. But if we should speak from another standpoint, and attempt to say that we are actually perfect in the flesh, it would be untrue, and not only so but would be an ignoring of the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and our continued need (while in the fallen flesh) of a share in the justification which it provides. Those who would thus speak of their flesh as perfect, would hear the Apostle speaking to the reverse, saying, "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing," – no perfection; and all imperfection is un-right, and all unright-eousness is sin. Hence, says the Apostle John, "If we say [speaking of our flesh, and ignoring the justification provided in Christ to cover its blemishes] that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." – 1 John 1:8.

St. Paul proceeds to clearly mark the distinction between the *new* mind, which consecrated in Christ is accepted as the "new creature," holy and acceptable to God, and our mortal bodies, which he calls "this dead body" – originally dead, under divine sentence, because of sin, but redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and justified, and then included in our sacrifice, when we gave our little all in consecration to the Lord, as living sacrifices – to be dead with Christ, to suffer with him even unto death. He declares that it is to those who are walking *after* the spirit, seeking to serve the Lord in spirit and in truth, from the heart, that are freed from the condemnation; and that this includes the thought that they do not now walk *after* the flesh, desiring to fulfil its desires. And here we are to closely distinguish between the walking *up to* the spirit, and walking *after* the spirit. We should of course follow as closely to the spirit of truth and righteousness as possible, and yet we cannot hope, so long as we are in the imperfect flesh, that we could ever walk *up to* the spirit of the divine requirements, tho we are to strive in this

direction continually. One thing is positive, however, – we must not walk *after* the flesh. To do so would imply that we had lost the new mind, the new disposition, the new will, – that we had become dead to those hopes and covenants which had led to our consecration.

Any who get into this condition of walking after the flesh, – seeking to serve the flesh, therein have the evidence that their minds had become "carnal," that they had lost much, if not all, of the *new* mind, the *new* disposition. All such should know most unequivocally that the carnal mind is at enmity against God, and hence that God could not fellowship it or favor it in any sense or degree. The Apostle urges, then, that all remember that they who are in the flesh, who live in harmony with their fallen propensities, serving their fallen fleshly natures, are not pleasing God and that such an inclination or course leads toward, and, if persisted in, would end in death.

He proceeds to reason that if the spirit [mind, disposition] of God [the spirit of holiness] dwell in us we cannot be in sympathetic accord with the fallen fleshly nature and its appetites and ambitions. We may know, on the contrary, that if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is not of the body of Christ at all, and not to be considered as identified with the elect Church, – and Christ's spirit is not a spirit of harmony with sin, but of opposition to sin, for did he not lay down his life to vanquish sin, and to deliver us from its power and dominion? Whoever, therefore, claims to have the spirit of Christ, but loves and *wilfully* practices sin, and with *his mind* serves sin, such an one deceives himself, for he has neither part nor lot in Christ.

The Apostle proceeds further along the same line, arguing that our adoption into God's family, our begetting to newness of heart and mind, and our acceptance thus as members of the body of Christ, while it means, first of all, that the body is ignored and reckoned as *dead*, because of sin, and only our spirits or minds are reckoned righteous and alive, the beginning of our eternal existence, nevertheless this good condition is not to be considered the limit of our ambition and

attainment in Christ-likeness. On the contrary, we are to remember that the spirit of God is powerful: that in the case of our Lord Jesus it was powerful enough to raise him from the dead; and as we become more and more imbued with and controlled by the holy spirit of God in our hearts, in our minds, divine power will come gradually to us through this channel of the holy spirit, which will permit a figurative raising [R2721 : page 330] of our mortal bodies from their death-state into activities of spiritual life, in the service of the Lord. "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you [in sufficient measure, abounding], he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [energize] your *mortal bodies* [not your immortal resurrection bodies] by his spirit that dwelleth in you."

It is our hope that in due time the Lord by his spirit will give us new bodies in the resurrection; and that those new bodies will be immortal, perfect in every respect; and that then not only our minds, but our bodies also will be fully in harmony with God and his every law and work of righteousness. That will be glorious – it is already a glorious prospect; but the Apostle holds before us the thought that even our present mortal bodies, sentenced, then justified, then reckoned dead because of sin, consecrated, may be so quickened or energized now, that instead of being any longer servants of sin, or even merely *dead to it*, they may, under the careful watchfulness of the new mind, be used as servants of righteousness, of truth. This means, of course, a high Christian development, a large attainment of "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is the measure or attainment, nevertheless, which every one of the Lord's people must continually strive after, and their success will be proportioned to their attainment of the mind [disposition] [R2722 : page 330] of Christ, holy conformity to the Father's will in all things. And how comforting, in this connection, is the promise of our Lord, that our heavenly Father is more willing to give the holy spirit [spirit of holiness] to them that ask him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts unto their children! – Luke 11:13.
