

ROMANS IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter Eight

(8:1) Alford sums up the contents of this chapter as follows: “In the case of those who are in Christ Jesus, this divided state ends in the glorious triumph of the Spirit over the flesh: and that (vv. 1-17), though incompletely, not inconsiderably, even in this state, – and (vv. 18-30) completely and gloriously hereafter. And (vv. 31-39) the Christian has no reason to fear, but all reason to hope; for nothing can sever him from God’s love.”

Commenting specifically on verses 1-17, he says; “Although the flesh is still subject to the law of sin, the Christian, serving not the flesh, but walking according to the Spirit, shall not come into condemnation, but to glory with Christ.”

The words “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” are rejected by both Nestle and Westcott and Hort. Paul does not base his assertion of no condemnation to the saint upon the saint’s conduct, but upon his position in Christ. His position in Christ has liberated him from the compelling power of the evil nature and made him a partaker of the divine nature, a new inner condition which produces in every saint a life which has for its motive, obedience to His commandments. In other words, it is what God has made the believing sinner that insures the fact that there is no cause for condemnation in him. This is further explained in verses 2-4.

Translation. *Therefore, now, there is not even one bit of condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.*

(8:2-4) The law here is not a written law but a regulative principle which exercises a control over the life of the believer. This regulative control over his life is exercised with the Holy Spirit. This control is in the form of the energy given the believer both to desire and to do God’s will, this energy coming from the life that God is, which in the believer is given him by reason of his position in Christ Jesus. One could translate, “For the law of the Spirit, of the life in Christ Jesus.” One could interpret, “For the regulative principle of the Spirit, namely, the life which is in Christ Jesus,” this freed me from the regulative principle of sin and death (the evil nature), at the moment I put my trust in the Lord Jesus and was saved. It is Romans 6 in a nutshell. Alford says, “This *law of the Spirit of life* having freed him from the law of sin and death, so that he serves another master, *all claim of sin on him is at an end* – he is acquitted, and there is no condemnation for him.” Denney explains, “It is subjection to the law of sin and death which involves condemnation; emancipation from it leaves no places for condemnation.” The Spirit which brings the believer the life which is in Christ Jesus, brings with it also the divine

law for the believer's life; but it is now, as Paul says in Galatians 3:21, a law which is able to give life, not an impotent law written on tables of stone, and hence righteousness comes by it; and it proves more than a match for the authority exercised over man by the forces of sin and death."

The words, "What the law could not do," could be rendered literally, "*the impossible (thing) of the law*. A nominative absolute in apposition with the divine act-*condemned sin*. God condemned sin, which condemnation was an *impossible thing* on the part of the law. The words stand first in the Greek order for emphasis." (Vincent). God condemned sin in the flesh, a thing which the law could not do in the sense that "Christ by His sinless life in our nature condemned our sinful lives, and left us inexcusable and without hope... God's condemnation of sin is expressed in His sending His Son in our nature, and in connection with sin that He died for it – i.e., took its condemnation upon Himself. Christ's death exhibits God's condemnation of sin in the flesh. The words 'in the flesh' are to be construed with 'condemned': the flesh – that in which sin had reigned – was also that in which God's condemnation of sin was executed. But Paul does not mean that by His sinless life in our nature, Christ had broken the power of sin at one point for the human race; he means that in the death of His own Son, who had come in our nature to make atonement for sin, God had pronounced the doom of sin, and brought its claims and authority over man to an end" (Denney).

As to the words, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," Vincent is helpful; "Literally, *of the flesh of sin*. The choice of words is especially noteworthy. Paul does not say simply, 'He came *in flesh*' (I John 4:2, I Tim. 3:16), for this would have expressed the bond between Christ's manhood and sin. Not *in the flesh of sin*, which would have represented Him as partaking of sin. Not *in the likeness of flesh*, since He was really and intensely human; but *in the likeness of the flesh of sin*: really human, conformed in appearance to the flesh whose characteristic is sin, yet sinless. 'Christ appeared in a body which was like that of other men insofar as it consisted of flesh, and was unlike insofar as the flesh was not *flesh of sin*' (Dickson)."

In the phrase "for sin", the preposition is *peri* which Vincent states, "expresses *the whole relation* of the mission of Christ to sin. The *special* relation is stated in *condemned*. For sin – to atone, to destroy, to save and sanctify its victims." He explains the implications of the word "condemned" in this context as follows: "Deposed from its dominion, a thing impossible to the law, which could pronounce judgment and inflict penalty, but not dethrone Christ's holy character was a condemnation of unholiness. Construe *in the flesh* with *condemned*."

This He did in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, Paul says. "Righteousness" is *dikaiōma*, "Rev., ordinance. Primarily *that which is deemed right*, so as to

have the force of law; hence an ordinance. Here collectively, of the moral precepts of the law: its *righteous requirement*. Compare Luke 1:6; Romans 2:26; Hebrews 9:1” (Vincent).

As to the clause, “might be fulfilled in us,” Alford says, “*find its full accomplishment*, not merely, be performed *by us*, for the apostle has a much deeper meaning, namely, that the *aim of God in giving the law* might be *accomplished* in us, in our sanctification, which is the ultimate end of our redemption, Colossians 1:22; Ephesians 2:10. The passive is used, to show that the work is not ours, but that of God by His grace.”

The words “who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit” are descriptive of the Christian, an identifying characteristic. That is true of every child of God. “Walk” is *peripateō*, “to order one’s behavior or conduct.” “Flesh” is the indwelling evil nature. “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit. “After” is *kata*, whose root meaning is “down”, which suggests domination. A Christian is one who orders his behavior in such a way that it is not dominated by the evil nature, but by the Holy Spirit.

Translation. *For the law of the Spirit, of the life in Christ Jesus, freed you once for all from the law of sin and death. For that which is an impossibility for the law, because it was weak through the flesh, God having sent His Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law may be brought to completion in us who, not as dominated by the flesh are ordering our behavior, but as dominated by the Spirit.*

(8:5-8) The Greek has it, “For those who are habitually dominated by the flesh put their mind on the things of the flesh.” The flesh here is the evil nature. “Dominated” is from *kata*, “down”. The present participle is used, the state being continuous. This is an unsaved person, habitually dominated by the indwelling sinful nature. “Mind” is *phroneō*, “to direct the mind to something, to seek or strive for”. The word speaks of a deliberate setting of one’s mind upon a certain thing. The unsaved person is dominated by the evil nature habitually, and as habitually puts his mind on those things that the sinful nature has always welling up within itself, the things of sin.

The words “carnally minded” are *to phronēma tēs sarkos*, literally, “the mind of the flesh”. “Flesh” here refers to the evil nature. It is the genitive of possession. The mind is possessed by, thus controlled or dominated by the evil nature, a description of the unsaved person. That person is dead in trespasses and sins, dead in the sense that he is separated from God and His life, for death is separation, and is on his way to a final and everlasting state of death in eternity. The words “spiritually minded” are *to phronēma tou pneumatos*, literally, “the mind possessed by the Spirit,” thus a mind controlled or dominated by the Holy Spirit. That

person possesses the life that God is, and peace, the Greek word for peace in its verb form meaning “to bind together that which has been separated”, thus, the believing sinner, bound together with God and His life after having been separated by sin.

The reason why the mind dominated by the evil nature represents a state of death in the person so constituted, and results in final death, is that it is at enmity against God. “Subject” is *hupotassō*, a military term meaning “to arrange in order under” a commanding general, for instance. Such a mind is not marshalled under the command of God, but of Satan. Consequently, those who are within the sphere of the evil nature, are not able to please God. There are, of course, the unsaved. Denney explains: “The reason why the mind of the flesh terminates so fatally: it is hostility to God, the fountain of life. Alienation from Him is necessarily fatal. It is the flesh which does not (for indeed it cannot) submit itself to God; as the seat of indwelling sin it is in permanent revolt, and those who are *in* it (a stronger expression, yet substantially identical with those who are *after* it, verse 5), cannot please God.”

Translation. *For those who are habitually dominated by the flesh, put their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are habitually dominated by the Spirit, put their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to have the mind dominated by the flesh, is death, but to have the mind dominated by the Spirit, is life and peace; because the mind dominated by the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not marshal itself under the command of the law of God, neither is it able to. Moreover, those who are in the sphere of the flesh are not able to please God.*

(8:9) The “ye” is emphatic. The Greek verb carries its own person in its ending, and does not need a pronoun to indicate the person acting in the verb. Consequently, when a pronoun is used with a verb, it is used for emphasis or contrast. Paul had just spoken of those who were in the sphere of the flesh, that is, within the grip of the evil nature, namely, the unsaved. Then he says, “But as for you, in contradistinction to the unsaved, you are not in the sphere of the evil nature, if so be.” The last three words are the translation of *eiper*, used of something that is assumed to be, but whether rightly or wrongly, is left in doubt. The word could be translated “provided that”, or “assuming that”. That is, assuming that the Spirit of God dwells in you, that is an indication that you are not in the sphere of the evil nature. The word “dwell” is *oikeō*. The Greek word for “a home” is *oikos*. The verb therefore means “to live or dwell in a certain place as your home”. The Spirit is not only resident in the believer in the sense of position in him, but He is actively at home in him, living in him as His home. He has a ministry to perform in him, namely, to give him victory over sin and produce His own fruit. This, together with the presence of the imparted divine nature in him, and the fact that God has broken the power of the evil nature, puts that person out of the sphere of the evil nature and within the sphere of the Holy Spirit. The saved person is therefore not in the grip of the evil nature but under the control of

the Holy Spirit as he yields himself to Him. But, Paul says, “assuming that a certain individual does not have the Spirit of Christ, this one does not belong to Him.” The words “of His” are genitive of possession, and show ownership. This is an unsaved person. The truth is brought out here that the Holy Spirit is given the believing sinner the moment he puts his faith in the Lord Jesus, and not some time afterwards, as is erroneously taught in some quarters, since that believing sinner becomes the possession of the Lord Jesus the moment he believes and thus must possess the Holy Spirit as an indweller.

Translation. *But, as for you, you are not in the sphere of the flesh but in the sphere of the Spirit, provided that the Spirit of God is in residence in you. But, assuming that a person does not have the Spirit of Christ, this one does not belong to Him.*

(8:10) The body here is the believer’s human body. The word here refers, not to the Holy Spirit which is not a logical contrast to the human body, but to the human spirit, that part of man which gives him God-consciousness and enables him when that spirit is made alive by the Holy Spirit, to worship God. The believer’s human body is dead in the sense that it has death in it because of sin, Adam’s sin which brought both spiritual and physical death to each member of the race. The believer’s spirit is alive (*zōē*) in that the Holy Spirit energizes it with divine life which is righteous in its quality. Eternal life is not only unending in its nature, but also ethical and spiritual in its content.

Translation. *But, assuming that Christ is in you, on the one hand, the body is dead on account of sin, and on the other hand, the spirit is alive on account of righteousness.*

(8:11) “Quicken” is *zōoporeō*, “to cause to live, make alive, give life”. The future resurrection of the believer’s body is in view here, as the context and the word “also” indicate. Our Lord was raised out from among the dead. This is physical resurrection. The dead saints will be raised out from among the dead at the time of the Rapture through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.

Translation. *And assuming that the Spirit of the One who raised up Jesus out from among the dead is in residence in you, He who raised out from among the dead Christ Jesus, will also make alive your mortal bodies through the agency of the Spirit who is resident in you.*

(8:12, 13) “Debtors” is *opheiletēs*, “one held by some obligation, bound to some duty.” “Therefore” is *ara oun*, “so then”. Paul’s thought is, “So then, since the saint is not within the sphere of evil nature, the power of the latter having been broken, and since he is within the sphere of the Holy Spirit, he is under no obligation to the evil nature to live under its dominion.”

Assuming that a person lives habitually under the dominion of the evil nature, Paul says, that person is about to be dying. The verb is present in tense, and therefore durative in

meaning, indicating habitual action. The individual who lives habitually under the dominion of the evil nature is an unsaved person. That one is on the way to final death in the Lake of Fire. But the person who by the Holy Spirit habitually puts to death the deeds of the body, will live. That person is a saved person.

Translation. *So then, brethren, we are those under obligation, not to the flesh, to live habitually under the dominion of the flesh. For, assuming that you are living habitually under the dominion of the flesh, you are on the way to dying. But, assuming that by the Spirit you are habitually putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

(8:14-17) “Sons” is *huios*, used in Galatians 4:5 of a mature child of God in a legal standing as against a child of God (*teknon*) in his minority (4:1-3). When receiving the Holy Spirit at the moment of believing in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, Paul says, the saints did not receive a spirit of bondage resulting in fear. The word “spirit” here refers to a disposition or attitude. We use the word in this way for instance, “The spirit of that man is wonderful.”

Denney explains; “It was not the spirit proper to slaves, leading them again to shrink from God in fear as they had done when under the law of sin and death, but a Spirit of adoption, a Spirit proper to those who were being translated from the servile to the filial relation to God.” “Adoption” is *huiothesis*, made up of “son” and “to place.” Thus, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit who places children of God (*teknon* born ones) as adult sons in a legal standing before God and in relation to Him. Vincent quotes a Mr. Merivale, “The process of legal adoption by which the chosen heir became entitled not only to the reversion of the property but to the civil status, to the burdens as well as the rights of the adopter – became, as it were, his other self, one with him... this too is a Roman principle, peculiar at this time to the Romans, unknown, I believe, to the Greeks, unknown, to all appearance, to the Jews, as it certainly is not found in the legislation of Moses, nor mentioned anywhere as a usage among the children of the covenant. We have but a faint conception of the force with which such an illustration would speak to one familiar with the Roman practice; how it would serve to impress upon him the assurance that the adopted son of God becomes, in a peculiar and intimate sense, one with the heavenly Father.” “Cry” is *krazō*, and speaks of a loud cry or vociferation, expressing deep emotion (Vincent). The word “Abba” is a Syrian term which Paul translates in Greek “The Father.” Our Lord used the term “Abba” in His Gethsemane prayer (Mk. 14:36) which Mark translates into Greek. Robertson, Denney, and Alford say however, that the Greek word is not meant to be a mere translation of the Syriac, but that the name “Father” is repeated. Robertson says it is a child’s privilege to repeat the name. Vincent suggests that it probably is from a liturgical formula which may have originated among the Hellenistic Jews who retained the consecrated word *Abba*.

Alford says that it is a form of address, expressing, probably the idea, “my father.” Luther translates, “dear Father.” The Holy Spirit enables the child of God to call God, Father.

The A. V., translation, “the Spirit itself” is explained as follows: The Greek word “spirit” (*pneuma*), is neuter in gender; the personal pronoun according to the rules of Greek grammar must agree with its antecedent in gender, therefore, the translation “itself”. The translators followed a slavish, idiomatic method of translation here instead of translating according to sense. The Holy Spirit is a Person. The pronoun should be rendered “Himself.” “Beareth witness with” is *summartureō*, “to bear joint witness with” some other person, “to bear joint-testimony with” some other person. “Our spirit” refers to the saint’s human spirit energized by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit bears testimony to our human spirit that we are children of God (*teknon*, without article, thus, children of God by nature), and our Spirit-energized spirit thus joins the Holy Spirit in a joint-testimony to that fact. Alford translates, “testifies to our spirit,” saying that the prefixed preposition to the verb *sun*, meaning “with,” does not refer to the words “the Spirit,” but to “agreement in that fact.” Denny says; ‘The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit.’ Our own spirit tells us we are God’s children, but the voice with which it speaks is, as we know, prompted and inspired by the divine Spirit itself.” Robertson identifies the verb as used with the associative-instrumental case, which gives us the translation, “with our spirit.”

Alford’s note is helpful: “What is this *witness of the Spirit itself*? All have agreed, and indeed this verse is decisive for it, that it is *something separate from and higher than all subjective inferences and conclusions*. But on the other hand, it does *not consist in mere indefinite feeling*, but in a *certitude of the Spirit’s presence and work continually within us*. It is manifested, as Olshausen beautifully says, ‘in His comforting us, His stirring us up to prayer, His reproof of our sins, His drawing us to works of love, to bear testimony before the world, etc.’ And he adds, with equal truth, ‘On this direct testimony of the Holy Ghost rests, *ultimately*, all the regenerate man’s conviction respecting Christ and His work.’”

“If” (v. 17) is *ei*, introducing a fulfilled condition. That is, the Spirit constantly bears testimony in company with our spirit that we are children of God, and since children, also heirs, on the one hand, heirs of God, on the other hand, joint-heirs with Christ, the identifying mark of heirship, suffering together in Christ in order that we, the believer and Christ, may be glorified together. Vincent says; “Roman law made all children including adopted ones, equal inheritors. Jewish law gave a double portion to the eldest son. The Roman law was naturally in Paul’s mind, and suits the context, where adoption is the basis of inheritance.” On the phrase, “suffer with Him,” Vincent says, “*Mere suffering does not fulfill the condition. It is suffering with Christ.*”

Denney says; “The inheritance attached to divine sonship is attained only on the condition expressed in the clause, ‘if so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.’ ...Paul was sure of it in his own case, and took it for granted in that of others. Those who share Christ’s sufferings now will share His glory hereafter; and in order to share His glory hereafter, it is necessary to begin by sharing His sufferings here.”

Translation. *For as many as are being constantly led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again with resulting fear, but you received the Spirit who places you as adopted sons, by whom we cry out with deep emotion, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself is constantly bearing joint-testimony with our spirit that we are God’s children, and since children, also heirs; on the one hand, heirs of God, on the other, joint-heirs with Christ, provided that we are suffering with Him in order that we may be glorified together.*

(8:18) “Reckon” is *logizomai*, “to compute, calculate.” The word implies reasoning (Vincent). “I judge after calculation made (Godet). The word refers to a process of reasoning which results in the arriving at a conclusion. The present sufferings are nothing to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in the saints at the second advent of the Lord Jesus (II Thess. 1:5-10, I Pet. 1:7, 4:13). “Worthy” is *axios*, “weighing as much as, of like value, worth as much.” “In” is *eis*, “to, towards,” “ ‘to usward.’ We shall be included in the radiance of the coming glory which will put in the shadow the present sufferings” (Robertson). Denney says, “toward us and upon us.” It will be a reflected glory, reflected from our Lord in His glory, that will make the saints radiant when they return to earth with the Lord Jesus at second Advent.

Translation. *For I have come to a reasoned conclusion to the effect that the sufferings of the present season are of no weight in comparison to the glory which is about to be revealed upon us.*

(8:19-21) The words “earnest expectation” are *apokaradokia*, “only here and in Philippians 1:20. From *apo* away, *kara* the head, *dokein* to watch. A watching with the head erect and outstretched. Hence *a waiting in suspense*. *Apo* from, implies abstraction, the attention turned from other objects. The classical student will recall the watchmen in the opening of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon, awaiting the beacon which is to announce the capture of Troy” (Vincent). “Creature” is *ktiseos*, “the non-rational creation viewed collectively, animate and inanimate. Equivalent to *all nature*” (Vincent). “Waiteth” is *apodechomai*, “assiduously and patiently to wait for.”

Denney comments; “first testimony to this glorious future: creation sighs for it. In some sense the hope and promise of it is involved in the present constitution of the world.... In Paul, however, the spirit of the passage is rather poetic than philosophical. Its affinities are with Genesis 3:17, where the ground is cursed for man’s sake: he conceives of all creation as involved

in the fortunes of humanity. But this, if creation be personified, naturally leads to the idea of a mysterious sympathy between the world and man, and this is what the apostle expresses. Creation is not inert, utterly unspiritual, alien to our life and its hopes. It is the natural ally of our souls. What rises from it is the music *of humanity* – not apparently so still and sad to Paul as to Wordsworth, but with a note of hope in it rising triumphantly above all the pain of conflict.” “Manifestation” is *apokalupsis*, “an uncovering, a laying bare.” That is, the non-rational creation, subject to the curse put upon it because of man’s sin, is expectantly waiting for the glorification of the saints, that it also may be delivered from the curse under which it now exists.

“Was made subject” is *hupotassō*, “to arrange under, to subject, put in subjection.” “Vanity” is *mataios*, “idle, resultless, futile, aimless.” It describes something that does not measure up to that for which it is intended. Here the creation is viewed as originally created, a perfect creation to glorify God. When the curse was put upon it, that purpose was interfered with in that a perishing and decaying creation cannot perfectly glorify Him. It was rendered relatively futile in that respect.

This cursing of the creation, Paul says, was not done willingly, but “by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope.” Vincent says, “God, not Adam nor Satan. Paul does not use the grammatical form which would express the direct agency of God, *by Him* who hath subjected, but that which makes God’s will *the occasion* rather than *the worker* – *on account of Him*. Adam’s sin and not God’s will was the direct and special cause of the subjection to vanity. The supreme will of God is thus removed ‘to a wider distance from corruption and vanity’ (Alford).”

Denney explains, “It was on account of Him – His righteousness might be shown in the punishment of sin – that the sentence fell upon man, carrying consequences which extended to the whole realm intended originally for his dominion. The sentence on man, however, was not hopeless, and creation shared in his hope as in his doom. When the curse is completely removed from man, as it will be when the sons of God are revealed, it will pass from creation also; and for this, creation sighs. It was made subject to vanity on the footing of this hope; the hope is latent, so to speak, in the constitution of nature, and comes out, in its sighing, to a sympathetic ear.”

“In hope” is literally, “upon the basis of hope.” Nestle construes it with the contents of verse 21. “Because” is *dioti*, which is also translated “that”. Vincent suggests, “the creation was subjected in the hope that also the creation itself will be liberated from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” He says, “the hope is that of the

subjected, not the *subjector*. Nature ‘possesses in the feeling for her unmerited suffering, a sort of presentiment of her future deliverance’ (Godet).”

As to the translation, “liberty of the glory,” Vincent says, “Liberty is one of the elements of the glorious state and is dependent upon it. The glory is that of verse 18.”

Translation. *For the concentrated and undivided expectation of creation is assiduously and patiently awaiting the revelation of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not voluntarily, but on account of the One who subjected it, upon the basis of the hope that the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.*

(8:22, 23) The word “for” introduces the proof of *the hope*, not of the bondage. *Together* refers to the common longing of all the elements of the creation, not to its longing in common with God’s children (Vincent).

Regarding the adoption, Denney says; “They have already received adoption, and as led by the Spirit are sons of God; but only when their mortal bodies have been quickened, and the corruptible has put on incorruption, will they possess all that sonship involves. For this they wait and sigh, and the inextinguishable hope, born of the Spirit dwelling in them, guarantees its own fulfillment.

Translation. *For we know that the whole creation groans and travails together up to this moment, and not only, but we ourselves also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, we ourselves also are groaning within ourselves, assiduously and patiently waiting son-placing, the redemption of our body.*

(8:24, 25) Denney explains; “This sentence explains why Paul can speak of Christians as *waiting* for adoption, while they are nevertheless in the enjoyment of sonship. It is because salvation is essentially related to the future. ‘We wait for it: for we were saved *in hope*.’ ...Hope, the apostle argues, is an essential characteristic for our salvation; but hope turned sight is hope no more, for who hopes for what he sees? We do *not* see all the gospel held out to us, but it is the object of our Christian hope nevertheless; it is as true and sure as the love of God which in Christ Jesus reconciled us to Himself and gave us the Spirit of adoption, and therefore we wait for it in patience.”

Translation. *For we were saved in the sphere of hope. But hope that has been seen is not hope, for that which a person sees, why does he hope? But if that which we do not see, we hope for, through patience we expectantly wait for it.*

(8:26, 27) “Helpeth” is *sunantilambanō*, made up of *sun*, “together with”, *anti* “over against”, and *lambanō*, “to take”. The word speaks of the action of a person coming to another’s aid by taking hold over against that person, of the load he is carrying. The person helping does not take the entire load, but helps the other person in his endeavor. The word is used where Martha says to the Lord Jesus concerning Mary, “Bid her therefore that she help me” (Luke 11:40). One could translate, “Bid her lend me a helping hand”, the idea being that Martha would continue preparing the meal but needed Mary to help her. Just so, the Holy Spirit indwelling the saint, comes to the aid of that saint in his spiritual problems and difficulties, not by taking over the responsibility for them and giving the saint an automatic deliverance without any effort on his part, but by lending a helping hand, allowing him to work out his problems and overcome his difficulties, with His help. The word “infirmities is *astheneia*, “want of strength, weakness”. The weakness spoken of here is defined by the context which speaks of prayer, one of the things in the spiritual realm in which our weakness needs His power. The infirmities here therefore are, not physical, but spiritual.

The weakness spoken of here is the inability of the saint to know what to pray for. We do know what the general objects of prayer are. But we do not know what the specific, detailed objects of prayer in any given emergency or situation are. The definite article is used before the word “what”. Paul says, “We do not know *the* what we should pray for, the particular what.” The words “as we ought” are in the Greek text *katho dei*, namely, just what is necessary in the nature of the case to pray for. Denney says, “Broadly speaking, we do know what we are to pray for – the perfecting of salvation, but we do not know what we are to pray for according to what is necessary – according as the need is at the moment; we know the end, which is common to all prayers, but not what is necessary at each crisis of need in order to enable us to attain this end.”

The Spirit Himself makes intercession. The words “makes intercession” are *huperentugchanō*, “to intercede for one.” Robertson says, “It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who ‘happens on’ (*entugchanō*) one who is in trouble, and ‘in his behalf’ (*huper*) pleads ‘with unuttered groanings’ (instrumental case) or with ‘sighs that baffle words’ (Denney).” Thayer says, “Although we have no very definite conception of what we desire, and cannot state it in fit language (as we ought) in our prayer but only disclose it by inarticulate groanings, yet God receives these groanings as acceptable prayers inasmuch as they come from a soul full of the Holy Spirit.” Alford says, “The Holy Spirit of God dwelling in us, knowing our wants better than we, Himself pleads in our prayers, raising us to higher and holier desires than we can express in words, which can only find utterance in sighings and aspirations.”

Alford is helpful; “He who searcheth the hearts (God) knoweth what is the mind (*intent or bent*, as hidden in those sighs) of the Spirit.” That is, God the Father who searches the hearts of

His saints, understands the intent or bent of our unutterable prayers, unutterable because we do not know the particular things we should pray for in connection with a certain circumstance, for He knows the mind of the Holy Spirit praying for us and in our stead in our prayers in the case of the above-mentioned items for prayer, the Holy Spirit praying according to the plan of God for our lives.

Translation. *And in like manner also, the Spirit lends us a helping hand with reference to our weakness, for the particular thing that we should pray for according to what is necessary in the nature of the case, we do not know with an absolute knowledge; but the Spirit Himself comes to our rescue by interceding with unutterable groanings. Moreover, He who is constantly searching our hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because according to God He continually makes intercession on behalf of the saints.*

(8:28) The text reads, “And we know with an absolute knowledge that all things are constantly working together, resulting in good for those who are loving God, for those who are called ones according to His purpose.” Alford comments, “In this further description, the apostle designates the believers as not merely loving God, but *being beloved by God*. The divine side of their security from harm is brought out, as combining with and ensuring the other. They are sure that all things work for their good, not only because *they love Him who worketh all things* but also because *He who worketh all things hath loved and chosen them*, and carried them through the successive steps of their spiritual life. The *calling* here and elsewhere spoken of by the apostle is the working, in men, of ‘the everlasting purpose of God whereby before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation.’”

The Eberhard Nestle text puts *ho theos* (God) in the apparatus and has “All things work together for good.” The Irwin Nestle and Westcott and Hort texts include the *ho theos* in brackets in their text. Robertson says the words are found in two prominent manuscripts A and B, which read “God works all things together for good.” He says, “That is the idea anyhow. It is God who makes ‘all things work together’ in our lives ‘for good’, ultimate good.... Paul accepts fully human free agency, but behind it all and through it all runs God’s sovereignty as here and on its gracious side.”

Translation. *And we know with an absolute knowledge that for those who are loving God, all things are working together resulting in good, for those who are called ones according to His purpose.*

(8:29, 30) Paul now proceeds to explain how this calling of the saints out from their lost estate (v 28) came about. The first step God took was to “foreknow” them. The word is

proginōskō, which in its verb and noun forms is used seven times in the New Testament, two of those times of man where it means “previous knowledge based upon circumstances” (Acts 26:5, II Peter 3:17), and five of those times of God (Acts 2:23, Rom. 8:29, 11:2, I Pet.1:2, 20). In Acts 2:23 it is used in the statement “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” The words “determinate counsel” are the translation of a perfect participle and a noun. The latter is *boulē*, used in classical Greek of a council convened for the purpose of administering the affairs of government, such as the Roman Senate, or of the camp-fire council of Xenophon and his officers on their march back to Greece. Out from the deliberations of this latter council, for instance, would come counsel, a pre-determined course of action that would best meet the circumstances they had to face on the march.

Here we have the Triune God in council convened, the purpose of which was to select out from the three Persons of the Godhead, the Lamb for sacrifice who would pay the penalty for man’s sin. The result of the deliberations of this council, namely, the counsel that came from these deliberations was that the Son of God was to die on Calvary’s Cross. The word *boulē* (counsel) is described by the perfect participle of *horizō*, “to mark out the boundaries or limits” of any place or thing, “to determine or appoint.” This verb tells us that these deliberations were for the purpose of determining something, and the fact that it is in the perfect tense shows that these deliberations had reached a successful conclusion and the counsel of the council was fixed and unchangeable.

The words *boulē* (counsel) and *prognōsis* (foreknowledge) are in a construction called Granville Sharps rule, where two nouns are in the same case, connected by *kai* (and), the first noun preceded by the article, the second noun without the article. The rule states that in this construction the second noun refers to the same thing to which the first noun does, and is a further description of it. That means that *boulē* and *prognōsis* refer to the same thing, the act of selecting the One out of the Persons of the Godhead who would be the Lamb slain as the Sacrifice for sin. The word *prognōsis* therefore means more here than mere previous knowledge, even though that knowledge be part of the omniscience of God. It partakes of the nature of *boulē* and is part and parcel of the same act. It means “foreordination”. The A. V. translators have so rendered it in I Peter 1:20 where they speak of Christ as “the Lamb who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world”. The word should also be so translated in Romans 8:29 and 11:2 in connection with Israel as the people foreordained of God, and in I Peter 1:2, with relation to the saints being foreordained, as well as in our present verse, where the translation should read, “for whom He did foreordain.” It speaks of the sovereign act of God foreordaining certain from among mankind to be saved. It is only fair that the author inform the reader that Vincent, Denney, Robertson, and Alford all translate *prognōsis* by the

word “foreknowledge” and understand it to refer to the *prescience* of God, as Vincent puts it, not to the idea of pre-election.

After foreordaining the sinner to salvation, God predestinates him to be conformed to the image of His Son, also to be placed as an adult son (Eph. 1:5). The word is *proorizō*. The simple verb *horizō* means “to mark out the boundaries or limits” of a place or thing, “to determine or appoint.” The prefixed preposition *pro* means “before.” Thus, the compound verb means “to put limits or boundaries upon beforehand,” thus, “to pre-determine.” Those foreordained to be saved now have special limitations put upon them provided within the scope of the salvation which they are to receive, namely, to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, and to be placed as adult sons. Thus, predestination is the effective carrying out of God’s will in the case of those who are foreordained to salvation. This conformation to the image of the Lord Jesus is the work of the Holy Spirit in the process which is called sanctification, a process which begins the moment the sinner is saved, and which continues throughout eternity, the saint always approaching the likeness of the Lord Jesus but never equaling it, since finiteness can never equal infinity.

The word “conformed” is *summorphōō*, “to bring to the same form with” some other person or thing, “to render like.” The noun *morphē* refers to the outward expression of an inward essence or nature. Thus, in the process of sanctification, the saint is transformed in his inner heart life to resemble the Lord Jesus, which inner change results in a change of outward expression that reflects the beauty of the Lord Jesus. The word “image” is *eikōn*, a derived likeness. Trench, defining the word says, “The monarch’s head on the coin is *eikōn* (Rev.13:14): and coming nearer to the heart of the matter than by any of these illustrations we have done, the child is the *eikōn* of his parents.” There is another Greek word meaning “an image,” *homoioōma*. Of that, Trench says, “But in the *homoioōma*, while there is a resemblance, it by no means follows that it has been acquired in this way, that is *derived*: it may be accidental, as one egg is like another, as there may exist a resemblance between two men in no way akin to one another.” The image of the Lord Jesus in the saint is not accidental but derived, as the likeness of a child is derived from its parents. Through the new birth we become children of Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:13) and thus inherit His image. This image, indistinct in the new convert, becomes progressively clearer and distinct as that believer grows in the Christian life.

This conformation of the saints to the image of the Lord Jesus was for the purpose that He, the Lord Jesus “might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Alford says: “that He might be shown, acknowledged to be, and glorified as, *the Son of God*, preeminent among those who are by adoption through Him sons of God. This is the further end of our election, *as regards Christ*: His glorification in us, as our elder Brother and Head.”

Those foreordained to salvation and marked out to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, God called. Alford says, “in making the decree, He left it not barren, but provided for those circumstances, all at His disposal, by which such decree should be made effectual in them.” Denney says: “The eternal foreordination appears in time as ‘calling’, of course effectual calling: where salvation is contemplated as the work of God alone (as here), there can be no break-down in its processes.’ Peter in his first epistle speaks of this in the words, “through sanctification of the Spirit” (I Peter 1:2), where the Greek reads, “Chosen-out ones, this choice dominated by the foreordination of God the Father within the sphere of the setting-apart work of the Spirit, resulting in obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The setting-apart work of the Spirit is His pre-salvation work of bringing the sinner, foreordained to salvation, to the place where he becomes obedient to the Faith (Acts 6:7), namely, puts his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour. This is the effectual call of which Paul speaks here.

Those God called into salvation, He justified, that is, He takes away the guilt and penalty of their sins, and bestows upon them a positive righteousness, even Jesus Christ Himself, in whom the believer stands forever, innocent, uncondemned, and righteous in point of law.

Those whom He justified, He glorified. Glorification refers to the act of God transforming the believer’s body at the Rapture into a body like the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus. This is a future event. Yet the apostle puts it in the past tense. Denney, commenting upon that fact says, “The whole argument of chapters 6-8 has been that justification and the new life of holiness in the Spirit are inseparable experiences. Hence Paul can take one step to the end, and write, ‘but whom He justified, these also He glorified.’ Yet the tense in the last word is amazing. It is the most daring anticipation of faith that even the N. T. contains: the life is not to be taken out of it by the philosophical consideration that with God there is neither before nor after.” Robertson says; “The glorification is stated as already consummated (constative aorists, all of them), though still future in the fullest sense. ‘The step implied in *He glorified* is both complete and certain in the divine counsels’ (Sunday and Headlam).” Alford comments, “He did not merely, in His premundane decree, acquit them of sin, but also *clothe them with glory*: the aorist being used, as the other aorists, to imply the completion in the divine counsel of all these, which are to us, in the state of time, so many successive steps, – simultaneously and irrevocably.”

Translation. *Because, whom He foreordained, He also marked out before hand – conformed ones to the derived image of His Son – resulting in He being firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He thus marked out, these He also called. And whom He called, these He also justified. Moreover, whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

(8:31, 32) The “these things” Denney enumerates as follows: “The idea underlying all that precedes is that of the suffering to be endured by those who would share Christ’s glory

(v. 17). The apostle has disparaged the suffering in comparison with the glory (v. 18); he has interpreted it (vv. 19-27) as in a manner prophetic of the glory; he has in these last verses asserted the presence through all the Christian's life of an eternal victorious purpose of love: all this is included in 'these things.' "

The "if" is *ei*, the conditional particle of a fulfilled condition. The words "be" and "can be" are in italics, which means that they are not in the Greek text, but were supplied by the translators in an effort to fill out the thought. The thought of Paul is not in the form of a hypothetical condition, as if it were a question whether God was for us or not. His thought is, "In view of the fact that God is for us, who is or could be against us, so as to do us harm? That is, since God is for the saints, on their side, who can harm them?" Denney explains, "The Christian's faith in providence is an inference from redemption. The same God who did not spare His own Son will freely give us all things... It vivifies the impression of God's love through the sense of the sacrifice it made. ...He who has done so much, is certain to do much more."

"His own" is *idios*, "one's own peculiar, private possession." Our Lord is the Father's very own, private possession, infinitely dear to Him.

Translation. *What then shall we say to these things? In view of the fact that God is on our behalf, who could be against us? Indeed, He who His own Son did not spare, but on behalf of us all delivered Him up, how is it possible that He shall not with Him in grace give us all things?*

(8:33, 34) "Elect" is *eklektos*, "the chosen out ones." Paul's argument is, "Who shall prefer any charge or accusation against the chosen-out ones of God? God, the one who justifies? Even He cannot do both, accuse and justify at the same time. And since our justification resides in a Person, the Lord Jesus our righteousness, in whom we stand as uncondemned and unchargeable as the Son Himself, it is impossible, after having been justified, that we be again accused – and brought under condemnation."

Again, Paul's argument is, "Who is he that condemns? Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us?" Paul asks, "Can Christ who is always making intercession on behalf of us, at the same time condemn us?" Even He cannot do both. While interceding on our behalf, He cannot condemn.

Vincent says, " 'Our faith should rest on Christ's death, but it should *rather* also so far progress as to lean on His resurrection, dominion, and second coming' (Bengel). 'From the representations of the dead Christ, the early believers *shrank* as from an impiety. To them He was the living, not the dead Christ – the triumphant, the glorified, the infinite – not the agonized

Christ in that one brief hour and power of darkness which was but the spasm of an eternal glorification (Farrar).”

Translation. *Who shall bring a charge against God’s chosen-out ones? God, the One who justifies? Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus, the One who died, yes, rather, who has been raised, who is on the right hand of God, who also is constantly interceding on our behalf?*

(8:35-39) Alford asks the question, “is this (1) our love to Christ, or (2) Christ’s love to us, or (3) our sense of Christ’s love to us?” He suggests the second, Christ’s love to us, saying that “having shown that God’s great love to us is such that none can accuse nor harm us, the apostle now *asserts the permanence of that love under all adverse circumstances* – that none such can affect it, – nay more, that it is by that love that we are enabled to obtain the victory over all such adversities. And finally he expresses his persuasion that no creating thing shall ever separate us from that love, i.e., shall ever be able to pluck us out of the Father’s hand.”

The phrase, “more than conquerors” is *hupernikaō*, made up of *nikaō*, “to conquer, to carry off the victory, come off victorious,” and *huper* which means “above,” thus, “to come off more than victorious, to gain a surpassing victory.” Meyer says, “A holy arrogance of victory in the might of Christ.” Denney says, “Perhaps it is a mistake to define in what the ‘more’ consists; but if we do, the answer must be sought on the line indicated in the note on ‘for thy sake we were killed all the day long’; these trials not only do not cut us off from Christ’s love, they actually give us more intimate and thrilling experience of it.” Angels can only mean fallen angels, of whom Satan is one. Principalities are the demons inhabiting the atmosphere of this earth (Eph. 2:2, 6:12). As to “things present,” Bengel says, “Things are not mentioned, not even sins, for they have passed away.” “I am persuaded” is *peithō*, perfect in tense, “I have come through a process of persuasion to a settled conclusion.” “Creature is “created thing.”

Translation. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Even as it stands written, For your sake we are being put to death all the day long. We were accounted as sheep destined for slaughter. But in these things, all of them, we are coming off constantly with more than the victory through the One who loved us. For I have come through a process of persuasion to the settled conclusion that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things about to come, nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*