

which man should be saved. This condition is repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). God's purpose was that man's inner nature and outward expression should be "conformed to the image of his Son." The word "conformed" renders a Greek word meaning the outward expression of an inward nature. The word "image" translates a word meaning a derived likeness such as the resemblance of a child to his parents. Thus through the new-birth you become a child of God through Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:13). Then through the process of sanctification you gradually become in your outward expression that which the Holy Spirit has worked in your inner nature through regeneration.

Within the boundaries of His redemptive plan God called all men. Those who answered He justified or declared righteous as though they had never sinned. Those whom God declared just, He also glorified. While "glorified" is an aorist tense, as are the other verbs in these verses, with the effect of a definite action of God in past time, it refers to a future realization.

Now applying these somewhat involved thoughts to you we find a very simple program. Knowing beforehand that you would be lost, God in eternity determined a course of action on your behalf. It involved His Son's death for your sin. He predestinated that if you would meet the condition of repentance toward God and

faith toward Jesus Christ, you would be saved. Then through growth in grace and knowledge you would be made like unto the exact likeness of Jesus. In that light He called you and all men. You who answer in faith He will declare righteous as though you had never sinned. Furthermore, He will sanctify you. Now sanctification is a threefold work. It is instantaneous in that the moment you are saved you are dedicated to God. It is a process whereby you grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. It is ultimate in that you will be glorified in Heaven. There you will become the full likeness of God's Son who is the exact image of His Father, that the Son might become the firstborn among many brethren. Thus we ourselves shall ultimately have the family likeness of sons of God.

Now this is what Paul means when he says that God works in all things for good to those who love God and fit themselves into the calling of His eternal redemptive purpose. So you are not in the hands of fate, but in the hands of a loving and purposeful God. Whatever happens to you, therefore, see it in the light of God's purpose. Trust in Him to work in and through you that in the fires of adversity He may fashion you according to His will. Then in the exhilarating waters of His grace let your likeness to sons of God be tempered that you may truly become likened to your elder Brother, even Christ, who is the exact image of God.

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## THE CONQUEST OF FEAR

January 24, 1960

*"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? — Romans 8:31*

One of the most evident elements in modern life is fear. Alongside it is the desire for security. Tensions exist everywhere so that we live in constant fear of a war of utter annihilation. Fear expresses itself in the matter of daily bread,

so that elements within our society constantly war the one against the other. This sense of insecurity exacts its toll in the moral and physical realms. Our fears set us at war within ourselves so that in our unguarded moments every sort of evil invades our lives.

However, when you analyze the above-described situations we believe that you

will discover that they are merely the physical expressions of a greater and more deeply seated spiritual fear. In his sinful nature man, knowing an estrangement from God, is afraid to appear in His presence. Therefore, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, he seeks to hide when he hears the approaching footsteps of God.

But, strange to say, this fear or sense of insecurity is evident even in the lives of many of those of you who have trusted in Jesus as your Saviour. Our religious thinking has become so confused as between salvation by grace and salvation by works until multitudes of Christians never realize the sense of security which should be theirs through their faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, let us look at the conquest of fear as we consider, first, the question; second, the answer; third, the conclusion.

First, note the question. In Romans 8:31 Paul asks a twofold question. It is not hypothetical, but raises a real problem in the life of every Christian. Paul asks, "What shall we then say to these things?" "These things" refer back to Paul's declarations as to our sufferings in relation to our glory (8:17ff.) and to the fact of God's eternal and victorious purpose of love in dealing with His children in their sufferings.

Now he answers this question with another. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Note that the words "be" and "can be" are in italics. They are not in the original Greek text. Literally Paul asks, "If God for us, who against us?" While Paul puts it in the form of an inquiry it is clear that there is no doubt in Paul's mind but that God is for you. Therefore, since God is supreme in power and love, who can successfully oppose God to do you harm? The word "against" suggests the work of Satan, the Adversary. It is his business to oppose God through God's children, either by direct opposition in the spiritual realm or by indirect opposition through human adversaries as we strive to serve the Lord.

The most potent and effective method of Satan is to pervert your God-given powers to his own ends. Doubt and fear are such powers. They are God-given for your protection. But Satan perverts them into methods of destruction. Through doubt running wild he weakens your faith. Through fear that is not grounded in God he destroys your sense of security and nearness to God. In both instances he mars your Christian experience of fellowship with God and service for God. In answer to such Paul asks, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" So

Second, consider the answer. In answer to his own question Paul cites the work of God for your salvation. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (v.32). Thus, Paul says, your faith in God's providential care may be inferred from His redemptive work.

For a clear understanding of this verse we must note four words or phrases. The first is "spared." This translates a Greek verb which in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) refers to the near-sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham at the command of Jehovah. Just at the point where Abraham was about to plunge the knife into his son's heart, God stayed his hand and furnished a ram as a substitute. In Genesis 22:16 God said, ". . . because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son . . ." There follows then God's promise of blessings through Abraham's posterity.

Now the point in Paul's statement is that while God provided a substitute so that Abraham did not need to sacrifice his only son, God "spared not his own Son . . ."

The words "delivered up" render a verb meaning to hand over or deliver up. It is used in John 19:16 of Pilate. "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified." Thus instead of sparing His Son God handed Him over to a sinful world that He might become the

Sacrifice for your sins.

Two other words worthy of note are "with him" and "freely." The former phrase simply means that God with Christ gives us all things. The latter word is a derivative of the word for "grace." Thus through the work of Christ God is able to impart His grace in the giving to us of all things. Thus the gift of God's Son and His saving work is your proof that God works in all things for your good, if you are found in His purpose. Now

Third, note the conclusion. In the light of the foregoing, Paul asks another question. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (v.33). The verb used is a future tense of the verb meaning to come forward as an accuser in court, to impeach. The word "impeach" means to remove from office. The word "elect" means the called out ones. So Paul asks, "Who shall come forward in court to accuse for impeachment one of those who has responded to God's call to salvation?" Furthermore Paul inquires, "Who is he that condemneth?" The word "condemneth" means to judge down.

Paul then proceeds to answer these questions with two additional ones. This does not appear in the Authorized Version. But note that even there the words "it is" in verses 33-34 are in italics. This means that they are not a part of the Greek text, but were added to give a smooth translation. So in the Greek text we have two questions. "God that justifieth?" (v.33). "Christ that died . . . ?" (v.34). Thus the passage reads, "Who shall bring charges of impeachment against those who have responded to the call of God to salvation? God, the One justifying? Who the one condemning? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yes, rather who has been raised, who is on the right hand of God, who also is constantly holding intercession for us?"

The point of this passage is that God cannot both justify and impeach you at the same time. Nor can Christ both save and condemn you at the same time.

These words have reference to one who is a Christian. Incidentally this is a very strong passage regarding the eternal security of the believer in Christ. God has justified you on the basis, not of what you do, but on the basis of what Christ did for you. And what did He do?

He died for you (v.34). Because of your sinful nature you were under the condemnation of God. On the cross Christ Jesus took your condemnation upon Himself. For you to be condemned again Christ would have to be condemned which is impossible. The author of Hebrews tells us that His was a once-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 10:10). He can never be condemned or sacrificed again. And since you are in Christ neither can you.

Furthermore, Christ was raised from the dead for you (v.34). So your hope is not in a Christ on a crucifix. It is in a living Christ who has the reins of the government of the universe in His hands.

Again, He is at the right hand of God (v.34). The right hand is the position of power and privilege. You are kept by His power, and enjoy the privilege of being a child of God.

Finally, Christ makes intercession for you (v.34). Instead of condemning you, He is making intercession before the Heavenly Father on your behalf. In I John 2:1 the apostle writes to Christian people, "And if any man [Christian] sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Thus Christ's intercession does not mean that God is praying to God. It means that the evidence of Jesus' atoning death for you is ever before the Father. Should Satan accuse you before God, that evidence is there to show that your sin has already been condemned in Christ. Nevermore can the wrath of God against sin be lowered upon you.

So as a child of God you should become the victor over fear as to the wrath of God. "If God be for you, who can be

against you?" In Colossians 3:3 Paul says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Literally, "For ye died . . ." When you trusted in Jesus you died to your sinful nature. Therefore, the penalty for sin can have no more power over you. As the result "your life [resurrected life] is hid with Christ in God." The words "is hid" are a per-

fect tense, denoting a finished work, of a verb meaning to be under the protection of a lock. When Satan comes to steal your soul he finds that it is protected by a double lock — "with Christ in God." Before he can get your soul he must overcome both Christ and God: a double lock — and no one can break those locks.

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## THE INDISSOLUBLE BOND

January 31, 1960

*"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ . . . ?"* — Romans 8:35

In these closing words of Romans 8 (vv.35-39) Paul reaches the climax of his letter. Henceforth he will apply the doctrines set forth to special problems. His theme has been the God-kind of righteousness whereby God picks a lost man up out of the wrong and places him down in the right as though he had never been in the wrong. His argument has been that we are completely justified by grace through faith apart from works. From justification on through sanctification he has shown that God not only saves us from sin, but that He works in all of life's problems to make us to conform in our inner natures to the exact likeness of God which is in Christ Jesus. He has seemingly exhausted his vocabulary to set forth the security of the believer in Christ.

Now he rises to one new and final height to declare it. In his usual manner he asks a question, and then gives to it the most exhaustive answer possible. So let us examine this declaration about the indissoluble bond between Christ and your soul as we consider, first, the question; second, the answer; third, the conviction.

First, note the question. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The word "separate" implies space. In short, can anyone put a distance between Christ's love and us? The word "who"

implies a person. We may assume that that person is Satan as he works through various means at his disposal. Satan does all that he can to keep you from trusting in Christ as your Saviour. But once you have done so, he then endeavors to destroy the joy and usefulness of your Christian life.

Satan's most effective method in this regard is to convince you that the bond between you and Christ is dissoluble. Though he knows better, if he can convince you then his purpose has succeeded. This he does by suggesting that your salvation is due not to the love of Christ by the grace of God, but that it is achieved by your good works apart from God's grace in Christ. Thus your salvation is not a gift but is your due on the basis of your keeping God's law. It naturally follows that your bond with Christ is only as strong as your continued good works.

The result is twofold. In the first place, you lose the joy of liberty in Christ and become a slave to rites and ceremonies designed, so Satan says, to keep you bound to Christ in salvation. In the second place, all of your spiritual energy is engaged in your keeping saved rather than in declaring God's saving grace to others. So Paul's question is of the most vital importance.

Now having asked the question as to "who shall separate us from the love of Christ," he proceeds to list the "what,"