

God's Desire for Us, and His Work in Us

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"Behold You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom." [Psalm 51:6](#).

WHAT a contrast is here and I think intended to be here! In the verse before this one, David describes human nature as it is in its original. He was shaped in iniquity and in sin did his mother conceive him. So that throughout his entire nature from the very first there was iniquity and sin. But God desires the very opposite, so that he felt that he was the very opposite of what God would have him to be. God desires truth and his heart had been false to God. God would have him to be wise and he was, from his very birth, as foolish as a wild donkey's colt. Observe, then, that wide as the Poles are asunder is human nature—and what God would have human nature to be! It would be right to tell you that the older translators and commentators have been accustomed to read this verse somewhat differently from our own version, though I believe our own version to be correct. Calvin and others that preceded him thought that David here said, "You desire truth in the inward part, and in the hidden part you have made me to know wisdom," putting it in the past tense. They thought that David said this to show how very inexcusable was his sin—"I am not an untaught one—an unin-structed person. I have not been left without knowledge of Your Law, of what sin is and of what holiness is. You have made me to know wisdom. I have felt Your power within my heart. I have been taught in my most secret places to know You, and yet for all that, I have revolted and gone aside, and committed this foul sin of adultery and murder." If so—if that is the correct translation (and there is no reason why that should not be correct, as well as the one we have here), it teaches us that it is a great aggravation to sin when sin is committed by a Christian. Never say that because a man is a Believer his sin is less! No, but if it is the same sin as in another, it is far worse in him than it would be in another! A stranger may say of me what my child must not say without being guilty of great ingratitude and much unkindness. It was you, a man, my friend, my acquaintance—this made the treachery of Judas to become so cutting to the Savior. The nearer a man is to God's heart, the more detestable is the sin in him! You cannot bear to see an evil in one you love. If one you love has a toothache, you think more of the pain of that beloved one than of some far greater sickness of one in whom you take no concern. So sin is a disease which, when God sees in His own beloved child, He perceives it with sorrow and He is quick to remove it and to heal it. Never trifle with sin because you are a Christian! Rather be the more careful to watch against it—

"Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make! Awake, my Soul, when sin is near And keep it still awake."

But now we will go to the text as it stands in our own most admirable and never equaled, and I think never to be excelled, version of Holy Scripture. We have here two things. First, we have God's desire. And secondly, we have God's work "You desire truth in the inward parts." Then next, "In the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom." Let us consider first—

I. THE LORD'S DESIRE FOR US.

That which is desirable to God must be exceedingly and essentially desirable. All wise men will desire that which the Infinitely wise God may desire! We are quite certain that there must be something exceedingly precious in that which God thinks fit to be an object for His Infinite desires.

Now observe what this desire is. And the first remark shall be, it has to do with inward things. "You desire truth in the inward parts." God had made man not only outward, but man inward—not merely these outward members, but the conscious, thoughtful, commanding spirit that rules these members of flesh and blood. God looks, therefore, in all that is done by us that we should do it with our spiritual nature, and He estimates all our actions not merely by what they apparently are, but by what they spring from—He measures them by the motive, by the spirit, by the ruling desire in them. Having made our inward parts, He keeps His eyes fixed upon the complicated spiritual machinery within us, understanding it all, knowing when any cog of any wheel is out of order, when any of the machinery is disarranged. Nothing is hid from His Presence and knowledge! He searches the hearts, and tries the reins of the children of men. And His desire, as here expressed, is not so much anything with regard to the outward act or the tongue, or to any ceremonial performances, whatever, but, first of all, it has to do with the inward parts.

Dear Hearer, learn from this that there is nothing in religion that is so desirable as the inward part of it. Your first and chief business with your God has to do with your innermost self—your real self. You shall come to keep your outward rightly enough if you will begin to cleanse the inside of the platter first. The outside of the house shall be whitewashed and cleansed afterward—but your first work must be to look into the secret chamber of your spirit and discover what is there. True religion does not begin outside, and then go within, but it begins within and then works outside. The candle is not outside the lantern, but it is first inside the lantern—and then it sheds light all around. Let your inward part be, then, the first part of your care! The mass of even religious mankind do not think so. Do they not go to their place of worship on Sunday? Do they not occasionally read their Bibles? Have they not a form of prayer at the very tip of their tongue? Have they not given up swearing? Are they not strictly sober? Are they not honest? There are all outward and external things—and sometimes a few ceremonies are added to complete them, such as Baptism and

the Eucharist, and many more things—and the man thinks himself perfectly complete, whereas he has not even begun yet, for all this is but a thing of nothing unless the heart has, first of all, been purged and made right inside by God! Dear Hearer, whatever you shall omit, see to it that you look to your heart! "My son, give Me your heart"—see to it that you love your God with heart and soul, and that your religion is a thing that has to do with your vital, your inward, your very essential self, for God's desire is here—let your anxiety be in the same direction!

Next, I observe in the text that God cares for truth—He looks for truth—by which, I think, we are to understand here, truth as opposed to hypocrisy. Hypocrisy in the heart is a mortal disease. If your religion is only a pretense. If your heart is black, though your face is bright. If you have filthiness in the well, though in the bucket there may be a little clean water, you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity! The pure, truthful, holy God abhors hypocrisy! There can hardly be conceived anything more detestable in the sight of the Most High than to mock Him with words of seeming while our hearts and the reality of our nature are at enmity to Him. God desires truth in opposition to mere semblance. There are some who have no intention to be hypocrites, but still, all the Grace they have is but sham grace! All the knowledge of God they have is but theoretical. All the experience they have ever had is fanciful—all the communion with God they have ever had is mere delusion! The whole thing is but a bubble. Fair are its colors, but it will soon vanish—it is not stable and substantial—it is a mere outward shadow and there is no substance in it. God desires "truth in the inward parts," real repentance, real faith, vital godliness, real communion with God! Everything there must be what it professes to be, for God desires truth—that is, substance—in the inward parts.

Does not this yet mean a third thing, that God desires truth as opposed to falsehood or lies? Some persons very sincerely hold lies in their inward hearts. I do not doubt but what there is many a man who believes a false religion and is as sincere in it as any man is in a true one! But his being sincere in believing a lie does not transform the lie into a truth! And if he follows a wrong way, that wrong way will lead to a wrong end—however sincerely it may be followed! God desires that there may be truth in your heart, not error. Even if it is your heart that holds the error, that shall make no difference! He desires truth to be there—truth about Himself, truth about His Son, truth about His Spirit, truth about yourself, your sin, the way of your salvation—truth about what He has revealed. He desires truth—"truth in the inward parts."

Now put the two things together—God desires truth and He desires truth in the inward parts. Now does not this mean that He desires truth to affect all the powers of our mind, and all the powers of our mind to be conformable to Divine Truth? This is what I mean—we know we have knowledge—God would have us truly know. There is much know-

ledge that is not true knowledge. A man knows Christ, it may be, by what he has heard, what he has seen of others, but he does not truly know Christ in his own soul! Beware of the letter only! Beware of mere theoretical knowledge! God desires that what you know about His Son should be true, real knowledge. There is a great danger when we live with Christian people to pick up a second-hand experience. They have their sorrows—we hear them speak of them. We, perhaps, think we know something about those sorrows. We talk as they do. We hear of their joy and oh, it is so easy to dream that we have enjoyed the same! We use their language. This is how cant comes into the world—and it has not quite gone yet—it is all too common. But a borrowed experience and the language that comes of it—these are very loathsome to true minds, and very loathsome to God! God would not have your brains stuffed with mere words, nor would He have you seduce yourself into confidence with mere doctrines! He would have you know in your heart the guilt of sin by bitterly lamenting it—know in your heart the power of the precious blood by receiving the cleansing which it brings—knowing the sorrows and the joys of being a Christian by being a Christian yourself! He desires truth in the inward parts, wherein our knowledge is stored up.

So would the Lord have truth in our desires. We desire to be saved, all of us, I suppose, but oh, how many of these desires have no truth in them! "Yes," says a man. "I would gladly be saved," but then he will not give up his sin. He would gladly be saved and he commences to pray, but his goodness soon vanishes. Prayer is irksome to him—he has not learned prayer. He desires, he says, to be taught of God, but he does not give a willing ear. He desires to be resigned to God's will, he says, and he continues to kick and rebel against it! It is vain to say, "My desire is this" and, "that," when my course of action is clean contrary to it. I certainly do not desire to go North if I voluntarily steer towards the South. God would have our desires to be all true. Oh, delude not yourselves with the thought that you have holy desires unless you truly have them! Do not think your desires are true towards God unless they are really so—He desires truth in our desires.

So would the Lord have truth in all our affections. We think we love God, but I venture to ask the question of my-self—I would raise it and I would have you raise it with yourselves—do you really love the Lord? Do you really love Him? Were He here and your soul spoke the honest truth, and it were put, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?" what would the answer be? And, indeed, it will be put to you tonight—when you get home it will probably be put to you in some new shape. You will be tried in your patience. If you love Him, keep His commandments, then, and be patient towards all men. You may be tried tonight by some loss or cross—if you love Him, you will take up His Cross and cheerfully follow Him. See how your love may be! "Examine yourselves whether you are in the faith—prove your own selves." Where are your affections? Are they where the moth and rust corrupt, or are they yonder where eternity shall never see corrosion or robbery to deprive you of your possessions? "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be, also." God desires

not that you should say, "I love," if you do not, or that you should say, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace, and give a traitorous kiss. He desires truth in your affection! Is your heart right? Ah, this question is easy to ask, but to answer it is not so easy—but it may be easy to answer it if it is hurried without consideration—and probably untruthfully! But if you would be grounded on the Rock, truly bottomed on a sure foundation, you will say, "Search me, O God! And try me, and know my ways: and see if there are any wicked ways in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Help me to keep my heart with all diligence, for I know that out of it are the issues of life." May there be truth in the inward parts of my affections.

So the Lord would have truth in our emotions. The emotion of fear, for instance, should not be excited as it is in some by foolish, frivolous things. This is a false fear which ought not to come across the Christian's mind. There are some, too, who say they have a fear of God. Others who say they have a joy of God! Some that speak of sweet peace in God. Others that talk of holy delight in God. But it is one thing to talk about these things, and another to possess them! He desires that all your emotions, when you are in His Presence (and you are always there), should be truthful! Too often we say in prayer, I fear, more than our heart says, and perhaps the preacher, in talking to you tonight, may say more than he, himself, knows. We are apt to do this. We have, therefore, good need to be very, very watchful, for all that there is within us that is untruthful is unacceptable. Only that which is of the truth, that comes of the truth that is in Christ Jesus, who is The Truth—only that can be pleasing to the Lord our God! Thus might I mention the understanding. God would have us have truth there, and not put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. I might mention the will. The will should truly be surrendered to God and cheerfully obedient to Him. He desires truth there. But whatever there may be within man, whatever faculty, power, or talent he possesses, the whole should be truthfully laid at His feet, and the whole experience of the little world within us should be conformed to the truth as it is in Jesus! To live with truthfulness within is a great thing, for we often talk lies in our hearts. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." We may tell lies in our own hearts—we may thief, rob, steal and murder in our own hearts. Yes, our own hearts may be a shamble in which we may murder all the world, though we never laid a finger on any man! And in our hearts we may destroy the very Throne of Deity, yes, and God, Himself, for we do that in our heart when we wish there were no God. I know not what there may be in our heart—a very pandemonium, a little Hell—a great Hell in a little heart! Oh God, look You on us and put out all false things, and let truth be in our inward parts!

Now mark, before I turn from this first head of the subject, that when we say that the great desire of God is that we should have truth in our inward parts, we are not to suppose that, therefore, He is indifferent to our outward actions—our words and so on! On the contrary, it is because He is a lover of holiness and purity that He thinks most of our hearts, because a true-hearted man must be a truth-speaking man and a truth-loving man! You

have made the fountain clean— well then, there cannot be foul water come out of it! If once you have been made all clean within by Sovereign Grace, then the outcome must be from what there is within. You may have the devil within and hang out the angel outside, but you cannot have the angel within and the devil outside—it cannot be so. Where Jesus Christ reigns in the interior, the Glory of His Presence will glow in the exterior, too! You may be to your neighbors and friends an upright man, towards your enemies, a forgiving and gentle man, towards your God a manifestly devout man if in all things you are upright within, and devout within! May God grant, then, that we may be what He would have us be—that we may have truth in the inward parts. Now for the second part of the text.

II. GOD'S WORK IN US.

I am very thankful that the second sentence comes after the first, for surely we might all tremble if it were not so. "Behold You desire truth in the inward parts." "Yes," we might say, "but, Lord, how shall we ever get it there? How shall we who are unclean be purged? You may say, 'You shall be clean,' but, Lord, we cannot bring it to You! How shall we who are polluted cleanse ourselves?" Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? But now comes this, joined on with an, "and"—a blessed rivet that can never be driven out—"and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom." Now let us go over this blessed word of encouragement—"and in the hidden part"—the secret part—"You shall make me to know wisdom." Observe that where there is all fallen within us, there will God work! He does not disdain to begin even with us, though all is out of order, though all is stained and all polluted! When He made the world, truly there was nothing to help Him, but there was nothing to oppose Him. Darkness was on the face of the deep, and disorder ruled—but those were rather negative than positive and they disappeared at once at His bidding. But in the fallen heart there is much to oppose, and to oppose vigorously! With a fierce determination to ruin himself, man resists the Grace of God, and were it not that He who created the world puts His hand a second time to the work, to create in us a new heart, we would continue in our destruction, in our guilt and enmity to the Most High! Now what a comfort it is that God will deal with our secret part—our hidden part! He does not disdain to come and touch the wheel and the machinery within, though it is all polluted. If we were to think of touching a running sore, or to put our hand upon a leper, we would shudder at it—but what must it be for a holy God to come and deal with an unholy heart, with corrupt affections—with a depraved will? We think of some poor men that are, for their livelihood, compelled to work in loathsomeness in our common sewers, but oh, what is all that compared with the heart! Yet the Infinite Mercy, condescension and Omnipotent Grace of God stooped down to deal with our inward parts! Admire the condescension of God and have hope for yourself, poor lost one, because God will deal with your inward parts!

But now notice that in my inward part, "You will make me to know wisdom." See the grandeur of that word! No one else can make a man really wise—spiritually, internally and

eternally wise—but God Himself. Here, again, I must remark upon the condescension of God. In one verse I find Him asked to be a washer, in another place I find Him asked to heal us, and here I find Him asked to come and teach us! Shall He be schoolmaster to us? Shall He take such as we are in hand, and our inward parts in hand, to teach our inward parts His Wisdom? Yes, He will do it! Means are used, I know—His ministers, His Word, His Providence—but we never learn by these till He teaches us to profit. These are school books, the apparatus of the school house. The Master must come and explain them and bring His Truth home, or else we learn not. It is His prerogative, His sole prerogative, to speak to the heart so as to make us foolish ones wise! The

Holy Spirit will do it. "In the inward parts You will make me to know wisdom." Oh, blessed Spirit, You will show me of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come—You will take of the things of Christ and reveal them to me—You will not disdain me, poor scholar as I am. You will make me to know wisdom! And great Son of God—so will You also teach—You will condescend by Your example, by Your Sacrifice and by Your precept, to make me to know wisdom! And You, great Father, even You shall not disdain to deal with us as with sons—and by Your chastening still to teach us until we know wisdom. See, then, how God deals with the inward parts and, remember, it is God who does it!

Well, next, "In the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom"—me! It is David who speaks, but he speaks, I trust, for you. "Make me to know wisdom." Now who was he that used those words? It was David, a great sinner—to put it plainly, an adulterer and a murderer—but, "You will make me," he says, "to know wisdom." This is a bad scholar to begin with—a rough block for the great Sculptor to carve, but David says, "You will make me to know wisdom." A sinner, I said, but he was a sinner publicly disgraced. Men knew of his sin—he was the song of the drunkard and the mark of the blasphemer! His character for a while was gone—men spoke of David's sin. Ah, but You will make me—the biggest fool in Israel (for I doubt not he felt he was)—You will make me to know wisdom—me, from my disgrace and dishonor, You will yet lift me up! He that said this, mark you, was a penitent, bitterly penitent for what he had done. How can you know wisdom till you have hated sin? God has not introduced you to the school, yet, until He has made you smart under His rod on account of sin. This is the very beginning of wisdom, to know the bitterness and mischief of sin, and to turn from it!

He that spoke this was a praying man. The whole Psalm is a prayer. God will teach the praying one. He who teaches you to pray will teach you everything else! This is one of the early lessons of the Christian, to learn to pray. "Behold, he prays," was said of Saul of Tarsus. You shall learn to sing as angels do if you begin with these bass notes of prayer. He that said this was a believing man. He was a great sinner, but he was a great Believer! It was a great faith, as we said in the exposition, that made him say, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Now, Sinner, disgraced Sinner, but penitent, prayerful, believing Sinner, God will

yet make you wise—make you wise! Man, do you see this, that He desires it? He will give you that, but He will give you more! He will give you wisdom—that is more than truth! You know that truth is one thing, but wisdom is better than knowledge, for wisdom is the right way of using knowledge! Many a know-ingman is a fool. A wise man is a "knowing" man, although "a knowing man" is not always wise. He desires you to have truth, and wherever truth is, he that follows her is wise. He will put truth within you—that is the doctrine. You shall have wisdom, that is the practice. Truth shall be the gem, but wisdom shall be the flashing rays which come from it, the brilliance thereof. He will make you to know wisdom.

Let me say very briefly, and in two or three sentences, what it is to know wisdom. Suppose you know the truth about sin. Well, if you know it truthfully, then your wisdom will be to hate that sin! If you know the reality of sin, your wisdom will be to lay it upon Christ by faith where God has laid it in the Old Covenant and in the Covenant of Grace—and then having had your sin forgiven, if you know sin aright, and will be wise concerning it—you will watch against it, knowing its damnable character and how apt you are to fall into it! And so, knowing the truth in your heart about sin, in your heart you will be wise towards sin, lamenting it, confessing it, carrying it to Christ—watching against it, abhorring it, protesting against it all your days!

So taking another subject, a blessed subject, the Savior, if you have truth in your inward parts about the Savior, you know Him to be the one and only Savior, but an all-sufficient and perfect one! Well then, your wisdom is to live upon Him! To live with Him, to live like He and the God that desires you to have the truth about Christ in your heart will teach you how to act wisely concerning Christ! In your heart and in your life you will worship Him, you will adore Him so as to spend yourself for Him—for this is wisdom towards the truth as it is in Jesus!

So take but one other subject. If you have learned the truth about service, and God would have that truth in your heart, for you are His servant bought with His blood, why, then, He will teach you wisdom in service. He will show you how to deny yourself, how to consecrate yourself, how to pour out your whole strength at His feet, how to meet your enemies, how to surmount your difficulties, how to fight His battles, how to win the crown! He desires you to have truth in your heart about this matter and He will give you wisdom in your heart concerning it all. So observe that what God requires of us in one place, God gives us in another! He deals with sinners very honestly—He tells them what He wants. He then deals with them very generously, for He gives them what they need! He does not lower the Law, or diminish its spirituality to suit the sinner—He tells him the truth, that He desires that he should have truth in his inward parts—but when He has set out the Law, He sets out an equally broad Gospel. He works in the sinner what His gracious Law demands! There are the tablets of stone—God does not take one out of the Ten Commands away—He puts the Mercy Seat on the top of the whole—covers the whole—and so He does not diminish

from the Christian anything of what should be in him, or tell him to rest content with inferior holiness, or with a second-rate obedience! He tells him that He desires truth, even in his inward parts! He comes to him and He says, "That which I expect from you I will give you. that which I require I will bestow upon you."

"In the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom." Now turn my text into a prayer. "O God! I confess my inward part is not what it should be, nor can I make it so. You might well sweep me away because my heart is depraved, but oh, take me—wash me in the Savior's blood! Send Your Spirit to create me new and make me in my inward part to know wisdom," for Your mercy's sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 8:1-34.

The words we are about to read follow a passage in which the Apostle describes the conflict of his soul. It is rather singular that it should be so. To catch the contrast, let us begin at the end of the 7th Chapter, 22nd verse.

[Romans 7:22-25](#) For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

[Romans 8:1](#) . There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit Some simpletons have said that Paul was not a converted man when he wrote the closing verses of that 7th Chapter. I venture to assert that nobody but an advanced Christian, enjoying the highest degree of sanctification could ever have written it! It is not a man that is dead in sin that calls himself, "wretched," because he finds sin within him—it is a man made pure by the Grace of God, who, because of that very purity, feels more the comparatively lesser force of sin than he would have done when he had less Grace and more sin. I believe that the nearer we get to absolute perfection, the more fit to enter the gates of Heaven—the more detestable will sin become to us, and the more conflict will there be in our souls to tread out the last spark of sin. Bless God, Beloved, if you feel a conflict. Bless Him and ask Him who it may rage more terrible, still, for that shall be one evidence to you that you are, indeed, out of all condemnation because you are struggling against the evil!

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. I am not the bondsman of it—I am the enemy of it. I am free from it, fighting against it, struggling like a free man against one who would bring him into captivity, but even though I sometime feel as if I were a captive, I know I am not, I am free!

3, 4. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not in the flesh, but after the

Spirit. This is our victory, that let the flesh lust as it may, we do not walk after it—we are kept by God's Grace! We are preserved so that the bent and tenor of our life is after the rule of the Spirit of God.

5, 6. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Oh, what a death it is to us if ever the flesh gets the mastery! And if it had the mastery in us, we should know that we were still in death, but oh, what a joy, what life, what peace it is to have the Spirit ruling in us so that we are spiritually minded. God give us this to the fullest!

7, 8. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. We must be born-again, then. It is no use improving the flesh. The taking away of the filth of the flesh was the old law but the burying of the flesh, that is the new. The plunging of it into the death of Christ is the very sign of the New Covenant. Oh, to know the full the power of the life of God for the death of the flesh!

9, 10. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. That is why we have aches and pains, and infirmities—because the body is dead—that is, doomed to die, must die. It must see corruption unless the Lord comes and even in that case it must undergo a wondrous change—so we regard our body as dead. No wonder, then, that all those aches and pains and troubles of body come upon us. The day shall come however, when even it shall be delivered from the power of death! Meanwhile, blessed be God, "the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

11. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you. The blessing of life is to come to the body, too—it shall be immortal, by-and-by, delivered from all the infirmities and sorrows which sin and death have brought upon it.

12, 13. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. It is a live thing and a quickening thing, for you shall live.

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. God has not a dead child—never had one. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

15. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father First, love, and then sonship. He rises in his strain.

16. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. It is first a quickening Spirit, and then a witnessing Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. Now up again.

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if we suffer with Him. Up again—

17. That we may be also glorified together. Oh, what a rise is this from groaning under, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—up to this point—"That we may be also glorified together"!

18, 19. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. It is not merely that the Spirit will bless the body, but that spiritual men will bless the whole creation! Materialism, which is like the body inhabited by the spirits of saints, is to share in the bliss which Christ has come to bring.

20-22. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. Just as our body is, so to speak, the world, the earth in which our spirit dwells, so this big earth is the body in which the Church dwells. And this body has its pains, so this creation has its pains, but as this body is to rise again, so this creation, also, though it "groans and travails," is to be brought into the "glorious liberty of the children of God." And what a world it will be when the curse that fell on it through the sin of Eden shall be removed by the glorious Atonement of Calvary! And when the blood of Christ which fell to the ground, which you will remember has never gone away from the earth, but is still somewhere, shall have fully redeemed the world, the whole world shall be a trophy of the Redeemer's power!

23. And not only they, but we also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Of course we groan within ourselves! Who said we didn't? And those brethren who say they never groan, I wish they would learn better. It is one of the signs of Grace and marks of a child of God that he is not perfect and does not think he is, but groans after it, cries after it. "We groan without ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." For this poor body still lies, in measure, under a curse, still with its pains, still with its carnal appetites and fleshly tendencies to hamper and to trouble it! But this we groan after—that this flesh of ours, and the whole creation in which we dwell, shall yet have a joyous deliverance!

24-30. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray

for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. He speaks as if it were all done, because the major part of it is done in the saints, and it will only be a wink of the eye and it will all be done in everyone of us who are Believers! Let us look at it as quite fully done, even now, by hope that we are already glorified together.

31, 32. What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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? What, indeed, what can we say? We are lost in wonder, love and praise! Thus much, however, we can say, for it concerns our struggles while we are here below. Paul has got that shadow still over him—of struggling against the flesh. What shall we say in the view of these blessed things concerning that struggle? Why, this: "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

33, 34. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Equally impossible—and if neither God nor Christ will condemn, what judge have we to fear? The Judge of all the earth, and the Judge of the quick and the dead—if neither of these condemn, condemn away who likes!