

NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.

ROM. viii. 1.

THIS is the corollary of the problem the apostle has just solved, and illustrated: viz.; The complete work of Jesus, the Christ, who assumed the headship of the human race, to lift it from the degradation of sin and death, into which Adam plunged us all; into the glorious righteousness and life procured for us all by his death and resurrection, and the air (Holy Spirit) and food (the gospel) provided for us.

“In Christ Jesus,” is a splendid phrase; and happy is he who understands and experiences what it means. It resembles the parables somewhat; as, not being at once intelligible, but exciting the curiosity of those who catch a glimpse of the truth in them, to seek for more, until they comprehend.

With regard to the figurative expressions of the Scripture, the student should first acquire a clear view of the figure employed. In this case, an abode, or shelter within Christ Jesus. Think of his heart, or any other organ within him. It must be perfect, faultless; not to be thought light of, as unworthy; not to be condemned as unfit; for it is of his nature, and his nature is perfect. Now if one were in Christ Jesus, as a part of him, he could not be condemned, because as Christ is, so he is. Such is the figure. But what does it teach? Certainly, that clear, steady, tenacious faith understands something equivalent to that, in the condition of him “who believeth with the heart unto righteousness.” The sinner believes himself into Christ Jesus. That is,

his faith urges him nearer and nearer to Christ: he cannot at first draw nigh, being, like Paul, blinded by the light, but hearing his voice; groping his way, until, perhaps, Ananias speaks to him in the name of the Lord, the scales fall from his eyes, he sees the wounds in his hands, his feet, then the wound in his side, into which he enters and lays his throbbing head, upon the loving heart of his SAVIOUR.

Better taught, or rather with better perception of the gospel, than at the outset; he learns the true relation he sustains to the Christ of God, the loving Jesus, the wonderful "Second Man who is the Lord from heaven:" who took his position low down into the depths to which Adam had reduced us, with the fearful mass of sin and death overwhelming us; dissolving the mass by his own blood; dying for us, in our stead; living for us, in our stead; having burst the bars of the grave for us, in our stead; and come forth for us, in our stead: everything for us, in our stead. That is, when he died, we died; the penalty was paid: when he rose, we rose: the law having secured its penalty, and having no further claim upon him, who was made sin for us, in our stead; he was righteous for us, in our stead. So the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ," *Gal. ii. 20*; I hang with my substitute on the cross; I suffer with him; there I pay my debt to the violated law: for "we thus judge, that if one died for all (*ei heis huper pantoon apethanen*), then (*ara*, then indeed) the all died (*hoi pantes apethanon*). *II Cor. v. 14*.

He, then, thus believing, identifies himself with Christ; so that his faith perceives, that if Christ was the human race, suffering, dying, rising in righteousness outside the penal claim of the law; then he, as an item of the human race was in Christ, dying and rising, and is now in him risen and righteous.

In this state, his faith sees there can be no *condemnation*: for the penalty having been paid; the old Adamic

life of sin and death cut off; and he, risen with Christ, living the new life of righteousness; it would surely be unjust to condemn him: and as God is now "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus;" *Rom.* iii. 26; he would most assuredly be unjust, in condemning such believer. So he may be ashamed of his not being more exemplary, and useful: bitterly regret that he did not turn to his Redeemer earlier; and grieve that he has not served him more efficiently: but let him never impugn or dishonor the precious blood of the Lamb of God, which washeth away the sin of the world. Let him rejoice, that Christ Jesus was "delivered for our sins, and raised again for our righteousness." *Rom.* iv. 25. That "we are not under the law." *Gal.* v. 18. That, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." *Gal.* iii. 13. How very absurd, then, with all these blessed assurances sounding out so cheerily from the never changing, everlasting gospel; to suppose ourselves under condemnation, and be looking for, expecting, dreading the curse, from which we have been redeemed by our Lord, who suffered in our stead.

But is not this antinomianism? Do not such views encourage us to carelessness, and excuse us in our sinning? This encourages us: for a clear statement of the redemption in Christ Jesus, ever has to the superficial thinker the appearance of encouraging to sin. Hear the apostle who had just presented this point: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" *Rom.* vi. 1, 2. He saw that a clear, sharp, parallel between the ruin through Adam; and the salvation in Christ Jesus; would look to some like antinomianism; and he guards against it. So must we do. In fact those who are deeply interested in this point, through a keen sense of unworthiness, are they who struggle against wrong-doing, and

labor to do right: and, this, too, under the discouragement of great temptation to despondency, and even to despair; it often seeming to them useless for such as they, so unworthy and so feeble, to make any further effort toward heaven.

Such must learn to distinguish between unworthiness, and condemnation. What merit has the believer? None. What condemnation? None. What merit has the starving beggar, who receives in his wasted hand, the bread given to him to save his life? None. What condemnation does he expect, while eating the bread bestowed by pitying charity? None. Cheer up, then, you that have been "walking in darkness and having no light" Here is plenty of light in this glorious gospel of our compassionate Redeemer, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity (*that* he has accomplished, shedding for the purpose his own blood), and purify to himself a peculiar people (his own property to guard and take care of, which he is doing in his own wise way, by the word, the ordinances, his providence, and perhaps by some of those things we are disposed to be discouraged by)." *Titus* ii. 14. The future will vindicate both his wisdom and his love.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

ROMANS viii. 16.

“FOR ye have not received the spirit of servitude (*douleia*, slavery) again unto (*eis*) fear (i. e. that ye should be afraid of your master); but the spirit of adoption, because (*en hooi*) we exclaim (*krazomen*)

Abba, Father." The spirit of the enlightened Christian, is not slavish; he not regarding his duty as the thankless task of a slave, but as the pleasant employment of an adopted son. He has been taken from a position of slavish drudgery, under a hard master; and has been adopted into a pure and happy family, where his adopting Father has treated him so kindly and generously, as to inspire a spirit becoming his position: as he is treated like a son, he has the spirit of a son; his feelings being filial, he does not address his patron as Master, but Father: and this easy, natural, spontaneous cry, Father, demonstrates that he has the spirit of adoption. It is very clear that he has not received the spirit of slavery, for he does not fear as does the slave. It is equally clear, that he has received the spirit of adoption, for in the very language of that spirit, he says, Father. The spirit is known by the language. The filial spirit, by the filial language.

All this refers to Christian experience; and not to a sinner turning, with an aching heart and a confused mind, from the error of his ways. Not to the beginning, but to the progress of a believer's life. He has entered the family; his adoption is made manifest, not by the witness of the Spirit, but by the cry Abba, Father. When one has a filial spirit toward God, he may be sure that he is a Christian believer; for that fact demonstrates this fact: if it be a fact that he has a filial spirit, it is a fact undeniable that he is a child of God.

What is the witness, the testimony of the Spirit himself, the very Spirit who alone "knoweth the things of God?" *I Cor.* ii. 11. It is not difficult to discover this testimony; "every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." *I John* iv. 7. But is the word of God the testimony of the Spirit? "For the prophecy came not by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and this

prophecy the apostle declares "more sure" than a "voice from heaven." *II Peter* i. 17-21. So, there can be no doubt that the Holy Scripture, written by holy men of God moved by the Holy Ghost, is the witness, the testimony of the Spirit. "The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." *Heb.* x. 15-17. Here is direct proof that the Scripture is the Spirit's testimony; proof that he witnesses by the Word. The Holy Ghost, says the apostle, is a witness to us (*marturei heemin*, beareth witness to us): and then quotes from the writing of Jeremiah (*ch.* xxxi.) the testimony. The proof is clear. What the Spirit "beareth witness" to, is on record; and can be consulted, and reconsulted *ad libitum*, and is by far more sure, steadfast, abiding, *bebaioteron*, than a voice heard from heaven, passing away into silence, as is Peter's testimony, quoted above.

"The Spirit himself (not *itself*, an unfortunate rendering because of mere grammatical gender in the Greek. *It* will not apply in English to a *person*, and the Spirit is a *person*) beareth witness with (*summarturei*) our spirit (each one, the spirit of each of us), that we are the children of God." Each one of us has a spirit in him crying Abba, Father; crying, Abba, which means, Father. Then if it be the prompting of our inner nature to look to, and address God as Father; it is because we have been adopted into his family, after a change of our nature, which formerly felt the impelling of the spirit of slavery, to say, hard Master! Now, this word of our spirit, Father, testifying to our adoption, is corroborated by the accordant testimony of the All Knowing Spirit, by his word which he moved the holy John to write, "every one that loveth is born of God." *I John* iv. 7.

He that loveth God and loveth his brother is a child of God: so the Spirit beareth witness. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." *Gal.* iv. 6.

If we deny the Scripture to be the testimony of the Spirit, then our argument may be laid aside. But, as it is, admitting as we do the inspiration of the Scripture, we hold it forth, maintaining that the Spirit nowhere and in no manner bears any witness, superior to that in the written word. In fact, himself declares that of the written word "more sure," preferable even to his own awful voice "from the excellent glory," which was not abiding, but became silent. The written word is what we are to believe. Our salvation does not depend on the witness of the Spirit, except as to believing the witness, the written word. The witness has been given: the holy men moved by the Holy Ghost have spoken: it remains for us to believe His testimony as we have it on the record.

There is but one condition of justification; faith. "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before (*pros*) God" *Rom.* iv. 2. That is, "but not according to God—" the account God gives of the matter. In *Gal.* ii. 14, *pros* has this meaning: "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according (*pros*) to the truth of the gospel," etc. So, *II Cor.* v. 10; "—that every one may receive the things done in the body, according (*pros*) to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." These instances of this use of *pros* are Pauline. Then one from *Luke* xii. 47; "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not, neither did according (*pros*) to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Therefore we read the passage; "—if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory (exult); but that hypothesis (that he was justified by works) is not according to the account God

gives of Abraham's justification. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Nothing but faith, then, is the divine account of the condition of Abraham's justification. So with Christians; "Therefore being justified by faith (nothing else) *we* (we Christians, also) have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" in this system brought in by the Son of God, the long-expected Christ, faith is the one condition of justification; as it was in the case of our father Abraham, and of all the ancient worthies who "died in faith." *Heb.* xi. 13.

Faith is not sense, not feeling: it produces feeling; for we have "peace in believing:" but itself is not feeling. Nor does it come by feeling: faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God: and that word of God is the testimony (the witness) of the Holy Ghost. Faith reposes upon testimony, and so comes by hearing the witness: this is true, as a general proposition. But our Christian faith comes by hearing the witness, the testimony of God the Holy Ghost, who moved holy men; men separated and accredited to that purpose; to speak to us his word. And what testimony is so reliable as the testimony of God? "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." *I John* v. 9. And what hath God testified of his Son? The Scripture. That is the testimony; that is what he hath testified of his Son. "Search the Scriptures * * * they are they which testify of me." *John* v. 39. "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus * * * for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." *Rev.* xix. 10. The testimony concerning Jesus, as to his being the Christ, and all the logical sequences, is the very spirit, pith, life, substance of the prophecies: leave that out, and there is no mean-

ing left in them. A cordial belief of the word of God, the testimony he gives in the Scripture concerning his Son Jesus, the Christ, is faith ; is believing God ; and is counted to such believer for righteousness. Such believer has peace with God. If he is conscious of a filial spirit, the spirit of adoption, that demonstrates the clearness of his faith in Jesus, the Christ, the Lamb of God who taketh away his sin, and brings him to God to sustain the relation of child, son ; and the now natural cry, Abba, Father, witnesseth the fact of his possessing that spirit of adoption (for that is the meaning of the phrase "whereby we cry ;" *en hooi*, because, inasmuch as, *krazomen*, we cry) : our spirit witnesses by the cry, the word, Father ; and the Holy Spirit, by his word, the Scripture (such as *I John* iv. 7, etc.), says the same thing ; i. e., that we are born of God, he is our Father : every one is such, who loves God, and loves men, especially the brethren. Our spirit and the Holy Spirit witness the same fact ; testifying, each by his word, crying, saying, that we are children of God : and that is the assurance of our inheritance ; for "— if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," etc. *Rom.* viii. 17.

The testimony of the Spirit concerning Jesus, is the most momentous that can reach the ear of sinner or of saint. First, he is the Christ ; in him are explained all the types of victims bleeding and dying for sin ; the wondrous type of the two goats, on the same day of atonement ; one bleeding and dying, the other bearing away the sins of the whole people ; all this typical display, though this is but an item or so, to point forward to him, upon whom our sins were laid ; upon whom was the chastisement of our peace ; and by whose stripes we are healed : so to the most severe accusation of Satan, the vilest sinner may reply, True : but JESUS DIED ; and although "it is not possible that the blood

of bulls and of goats should take away sins :” *Heb.* x. 4 ; yet, “—if we walk in the light as he is in the light (if we suffer the light of God’s word to shine into our minds, so that we can see the great facts of redemption) we have fellowship one with another (we shall understand things alike, and be drawn by a communion of mind into a communion of spirit and action: and we will see in this light, for the best eye cannot see without light, of God’s word, that) the blood of Jesus Christ (the great Victim typified by all preceding, in every age) his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” *I John* i. 7. He — “loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” *Rev.* i. 5.

O the blood ! the precious blood !
That Jesus shed for me !

Such is the witness of the Spirit that brings “peace in believing ;” for when the sinner understands that his sins were laid upon Jesus, that he might suffer in his stead ; and that he did suffer ; that he is reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; that God so loved him as to give his only begotten Son to die for his offenses ; that Jesus gave himself for him ; that the holy gospel is sent to tell him all this ; and the Holy Ghost has come to help him understand all this ; and that he does understand it ; is it any wonder that he has peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost ? It would be the wonder of wonders if he had not.

The importance of the passage urges to a further consideration. We notice the order of the testimonies. The testimony of our own spirit, the filial spirit is mentioned first. Our spirit cries, *Abba, Father* : we have been adopted into the family : our faith has saved us : we have accepted cordially the testimony God gives us of his Son : we have trusted in the blood that cleanseth from sin, and in the mercy that endureth forever : we

have heard the voice of Jesus instructing us to say, in our prayer, "Our Father:" we do thus look up to God: we are not of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh; but we are such according to faith; and the filial spirit in our hearts moves our lips to the utterance, Abba, Father.

Next comes the testimony of the Spirit, according with, agreeing with that of our own spirit: demonstrating that our cry, and the spirit inducing it, are right, they agreeing with "the law and the testimony." It is not the order, that the Spirit himself bears witness, and then our spirit becomes filial and we cry, Abba, Father. Not that is the apostle's statement. "For ye are all the children (*huioi*) of God by faith in Christ Jesus." *Gal.* iii. 26. There is no other mode of becoming a child of God, but "by faith in Christ Jesus." The inquirer after God must be pointed to Jesus, as "the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." *John* xiv. 6. Jesus is "the brightness of his (God's) glory, and the express image (*charakteer*) of his person (*hupostaseos*, the invisible, inscrutable nature), etc. *Heb.* i. 3. Jesus, then, is the way to see God, to arrive at God; inscrutable to us, he appears in Jesus, "God was in Christ," showing himself to the world, to men, that we might be "reconciled to him," as we should see nothing in him to be dissatisfied with, and everything to challenge our admiration, confidence and love. Jesus is the truth, concerning God's disposition toward us; his compassion for our miserable, lost condition; dead as we are in trespasses and sins; mere bones lying dispersed in the valley; but he found a ransom for the captives, a word and spirit for the bones; he gave his only begotten Son; sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world; sent him not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; a great groan was heard through the whole

world, "O Ephraim, how can I give thee up?" And he did not give us up; for Jesus is the life, our life; he had life in himself and imparted it to dead humanity: it was not only at the bedside of the ruler's daughter, the bier of the widow's only son, the tomb of Lazarus that he was "a quickening (*zoopoion*) spirit;" *I Cor.* xv. 45; but as "the last Adam," the "second Man," he sent the quickening, life-causing energy, through the whole human race. "The bread of God is he which (who) cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." *John* vi. 33. "And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." *Ib.* 51. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." *Ib.* 47. Yes, he is the life whether we believe in his atoning act and ceaseless intercession, or not; but if we believe he becomes to us the bread, the nutriment of everlasting life: he quickens every man into life, but if he will not receive the bread provided for the sustenance of his life, there is nothing left him but starvation and the second death.

"If we receive the witness (*marturian*) of men, the witness of God (*hee marturia tou Theou*, the testimony of God) is greater: [and the fair inference is, that God's testimony is more worthy of being received by us, than is the testimony of men] for this (statement that the apostle John had just made concerning Jesus, the Christ) is the witness (*marturia*, testimony) of God which he hath testified (*memartureeken*) of his Son (*peri tou huiou autou*, concerning his Son). He that believeth on the Son, hath the witness in himself; (*echei teen marturian en heautooi*, hath the testimony within him, hath received the testimony of God, the truth concerning Jesus is in his mind and heart): he that believeth not God (does not receive his testimony) hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record (*marturian*, testimony) that God gave (*memartureeken*) of (*peri*, concerning) his Son. And this is the

record (*marturia*), that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I John v. 9-12. Such is the blessed, cheering, lucid, glōrious witness, testimony of the Spirit, addressed through our minds to our hearts.

Not a sensation, a blaze of light, an impression on the sense of feeling: sensation is the avenue of knowledge: knowledge is not "the *hupostasis*, the *substans*, the *support*, of things hoped for;" that being the function of faith, the faith that comes by hearing the word, the testimony, of God. Faith rests upon testimony; the testimony that God hath testified of his Son. Therefore says the same apostle John, "— it is the Spirit that beareth witness (*marturoun*, that testifieth) because the Spirit is truth (*to pneuma estin hee aleetheia*, the Spirit is the truth, the truth is the Spirit ." I John v. 6. Nothing is the object of faith but truth. Unless we believe in the truth concerning God, as communicated to us by the word of God, the Scriptures, we cannot believe in God: we might by believing fables, lies, believe in gods many; but only by believing the Scriptures can we believe in God. The same is exactly true as to believing in Christ; we can only believe by the testimony of the Spirit, as we have it recorded in the Scripture, "the word of the Lord (which) endureth forever. And THIS is the word which by THE GOSPEL is preached unto you." I Peter i. 25. Not that we "limit the Holy One of Israel;" omnipotence is something too great to be weighed in our insignificant balance. But, unless we be "holy men," men separated unto the divine use, for that purpose of being the recipients of the direct, immediate communications of the Spirit; we are shut up to the testimony that he has communicated through the agency of those "holy men of old," which testimony, Peter declares "more sure" (*bebaioteron*, better founded, more steadfast, better adjusted for permanence, abiding) than a

special voice from heaven, sounding on the air and sinking into a silence, never again to be similarly broken. *II Peter* i. 19. To this precious word (*propheetikou logon*, prophetic word) he advises us to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark (*auchmeerooi*, desert, dreary, gloomy) place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts. The written word does not sound in our dreary hearts, and then sink into silence. But there it is; abiding; a written testimony; made under oath, God who could find no greater, having sworn by himself, *Heb.* vi. 17; that we may take heed to it; read it; read it again; hear it preached, expounded; until at last the bright morning star, Jesus, is seen by the understanding, and the pure and peaceful light is shed through our heart: the testimony of God has been received, and the same mighty voice which stilled the wind and waves, that were sinking the ship in the roaring depths of Galilee; has stilled into sweetest composure, the commotion of the believer's heart: he has peace in believing. *Rom.* xv. 13.

We can conceive of no form or manner of testimony superior to the written word of God. If a voice from heaven were heard, it would supply nothing more, nothing less, than this blessed written word of God. Woe to the man who adds to, or takes away from the words of this Book! *Rev.* xxii. 18, 19. Woe to the man who believes anything but what is written in this Book, as something to teach him the way of life! *Gal.* i. 6-9. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." *Luke* xv. 31.

It is the farthest from our thoughts to intimate, that the Spirit, the gracious paraclete, has no direct presence and influence in the conversion of the sinner: that he cannot enter our being except by the word, coming into our minds and hearts. How, we know not. But, it is

not more certain, that the warm spirit of the spring-time, sweeps over and through the frozen surface of the earth, melting the ice, drying and warming the softened soil, preparing it for the plough and the seed; than that the Spirit enters, thaws, warming and drying our death frosted nature; preparing it for the seed of life, the testimony that God gives us concerning his Son. The Spirit is the atmosphere of life; we must breathe that heavenly air or die. The spiritual life is as really a matter of consciousness, as is the natural life. The "joy in the Holy Ghost" is very distinct and distinguishable from natural joys. We are exhorted to "walk with the Spirit;" to be "filled with the Spirit;" to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" etc.

But we are seeking the exposition of *Rom.* viii. 16; and it is, that what the Spirit witnesses is recorded in the WRITTEN WORD. It is not by might, not by any other might, we mean, than by the Holy Ghost, that the process of conversion begins, and is conducted to completion. The Divine Agent opens the ears, softens the heart, supplies the truth, and brings every aid to the sinner, that is needful to enlighten and invite him: and if he will only yield his will in hearty, real acceptance of the truth; casting himself for time and eternity upon the clear, blessed, changeless truth of the gospel; that the atoning blood was shed, shed for him, washing away his sins—that God is reconciled to him by the death of his Son—that the ambassadors are sent to entreat him, the sinner, to be reconciled to God—of course, he has "peace in believing;" the scales have fallen from his eyes; he sees now his relation to Christ his Saviour, to be that of a redeemed sinner; and he has "joy in the Holy Ghost." He is happy enough in this blessed faith, to which he has been led every step by the gracious impulses of the Holy Ghost, among the secret machinery of his wonderful nature, while the plain words of the

Holy Ghost were entering his ear from the preached gospel, or entering the springs of his will from the chambers of his memory. To him, it has seemed to be the working of his own powers of perception, understanding, decision, will; involving great confusion of thought, distress of sensibility, penitence, inquiry, prayer; little dreaming of the mercy that has been shown him, in the piercing convictions that have filled him with shame and anguish, and the kind urgency toward the belief of the truth, vouchsafed to him by the Holy Ghost.

What is the result? He has entered the rest and joy of faith. He has believed the gospel, and has peace in believing. He rejoices in hope of the glory of God. But why should this happy experience be called "the witness (the testimony) of the spirit?" The experience witnesses, testifies that he has believed the Spirit; has believed the testimony given by the Spirit in the gospel; the blessed testimony concerning Jesus, the merciful and mighty Saviour of sinners, that he suffered in the sinner's stead; was delivered for his offenses, and raised again for his justification. But the experience so peaceful, so happy, so joyous, is a condition, an unspeakably happy condition, into which the subject has been brought, by the pervading power of the Holy Ghost, aiding and urging him to believe the glorious truths of the gospel, that testimony of the Holy Ghost, concerning the shedding and power of the blood of Jesus, for the cleansing the sinner from his sins. He has believed the testimony of God, the Holy Ghost, as recorded in the gospel. Nothing has been said to him but the words of the gospel. He has believed and is saved. The impenitent sinner has believed so much of the gospel, the witnessing of the Spirit, as relates to sin, and has been convicted, and has taken one step, in becoming penitent: and now he has received the

gospel, the witnessing of the Spirit, as to the cleansing blood of Jesus, the Christ, and has taken the other step into assured justification and conscious peace.

But it is not to such persons, at such times, that the Scripture under consideration refers. The context demonstrates that the Apostle alludes to the normal experience of believers, all believers, at any point of their progress: persons who are in the Spirit, and the Spirit of God in them; who are led by the Spirit of God, and are the sons of God; who have received the spirit of adoption, inducing the language of children, Father. To be sure our translators decide, that the "spirit of adoption" refers to the Holy Spirit: but it is more likely that the phrase is antithetical to "the spirit of bondage," just preceding; and is to be understood as in *Luke* ix. 55, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Christians, the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, in a filial spirit, say Father; and are so taught by their divine teacher, and elder brother, to say, "Our Father."

We turn our attention, now, to a special examination of the phraseology, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit:" *auto to Pneuma summarturei tooi pneumati hemoon*. Which we render, The Spirit himself witnesses with our spirit: confirms the testimony of our spirit: our spirit says something, and the Holy Spirit says something in confirmation thereof: the two testimonies AGREE: by the mouth of the two witnesses the thing is established; Christians are the children of God, and then, heirs. The phrase is not The Spirit himself witnesses TO, but WITH, our spirit: in accord, agreement: our spirit utters the word Father; because our spirit is filial, and Father is the proper word to be used, when we address God: we do not address that word to ourselves but to God; and it witnesses that we have a filial spirit. And in strict accordance therewith,

“the Spirit himself” has recorded his testimony, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power (authority) to become (be) the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” *John* i. 12; “— every one that loveth is born of God.” *I John* iv. 7.

It is not correct to take *summarturei* as referring to agreement in time, as though the two testimonies are uttered at the same time. Dr. Parkhurst defines it, “*To bear witness also, together, or at the same time:*” but, certainly, there is nothing in the word to signify time: the agreement is not as to time, but to testimony: *sugchronos*, where the *g* corresponds to the first *m* in our *summarturei* (the *g* and *m* being put for *n*, for the sake of euphony) means agreement as to *time*; but *summarturei* signifies only agreement as to testimony. Liddell & Scott define it, “*To bear witness with or in accordance with another;*” and give among other cited proofs, *Xen. Hell.* 7, 1, 35: which passage is in an account of a Grecian embassy to the Persian court, where Pelopidas of Thebes having recited certain exploits of his countrymen; Xenophon says that Timagoras, the Athenian, testified, *sunemarturei*, that all the statements of Pelopidas were true. The two agreed in their statements: but did not testify at the same time: the king would scarcely have allowed them, to testify at the same time. Pelopidas had given in his testimony, before Timagoras had opened his mouth. And so, the testimony of the Spirit, as in our passage, was given and recorded before we were born; but it agrees precisely with the testimony of our spirit, when it prompts us to address God as our Father. Greater weight is given to this quotation from Xenophon, by the fact, that, while many Greek words in the N. T. are modified from their strictly classical meaning; this is not the case with *summartureoo*: and on that account, Professor Cremer omits it entirely from his *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*.

We have already cited *Heb. x. 15*. "Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us: for after that he hath said before, This is the covenant," etc. The words of Paul are, *marturei de heemin kai to Pneuma to hagion*, The Holy Spirit witnesseth to us: and what the Holy Spirit witnesses, or testifies, is a passage of Scripture, *Jerem. xxxi. 33, 34*: demonstrating that the Scripture is the witness, the testimony, of the Spirit: and as the canon of the Scripture is concluded, the testimony of the Spirit is concluded; remaining on record in the sacred volume; and every word being there, that is necessary to salvation; we need to look for none other; nor is any other given. To believe the record God hath given of his Son, is sufficient: he that believeth shall be saved.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, which new and living way through the veil, that is, his flesh, he hath consecrated for us; and (having) a high priest over the house (the dispensation, plan) of God; let us draw near with a true (sincere) heart, in full assurance of faith, etc. * * * let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." *Heb. x. 19-23*. Here, in this very clear and instructive passage, the Apostle, at v. 15, having referred to the witnessing of the Holy Ghost, as recorded in the Scripture, exhorts us to make the nearest possible approach to God (into the HOLIEST) by the blood of Jesus, the new way, consecrated by our High Priest, who directs us to enter "in full assurance of faith;" our highest qualification, for the highest privileges of the saints. Faith in the atoning blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, the proof of the love of the Father; faith in the record, the testimony, the witness which the Holy Ghost hath borne of these great facts; this faith fills the soul with assurance, comfort, joy.

When the Spirit bears witness by the mouth of John, *I John* iii., that "we are the sons (children) of God," he but repeats the witness by the prophets, the holy men of old, that in the day of Christ, we gentiles should have equal privileges with the Jews, and be the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel, the witness of the Spirit comes to us, and he that believes it, to his delighted astonishment, looks up to God as his Father; to Jesus as dying for his sins and rising for his righteousness; to the Spirit as his inspirer and leader; and the spirit of bondage flees, vanishes from his heart, filled now with the spirit of adoption, as is demonstrated by the language of his lips crying, Father.

In The Acts, that inspired history of the simplest, purest days of Christianity in motion, the uniform statement of conversion is by faith, cordial belief of the gospel. After the first proclamation of the gospel, the record is, *Acts* ii. 41, "Then they that gladly received his WORD were baptized: and the same day there were added about three thousand souls." And this is a fair specimen of the facts of conversion. The gospel was preached, and they that believed were saved. This was the unvarying process. The gospel was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed. The preachers delivered the testimony of the Spirit, who brought all things to their remembrance, and thus were they enabled to preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, inspiring them, and inspiring their hearers: they preached and heard the gospel, the words, the witness of the Holy Ghost.

"But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of God, to correct, to soften, or strengthen the expression), the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given

himself for me ; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

“8. That this testimony of the Spirit of God must needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration : we must be holy of heart, and holy in life, before we can be conscious that we are so ; before we can have the testimony of our spirits that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God, before we can be holy at all ; this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. ‘We love him, because he first loved us.’ And we cannot know his pardoning love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Since, therefore, this testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the testimony of our spirit concerning them.” *Wesley's Works*, Vol. I. 87.

It would be very unjust, to suppose the writer wanting in respect or veneration, for this great leader in the Church, whose influence is likely to go down upon all generations. Yet it is evident, that his mind was not clear upon this subject : “but perhaps one might say,” is not his manner of expression, upon theological points in definite accordance with Scripture : “desiring any who are taught of God, to correct,” etc., is equally significant of confused definition. The indistinctness of the teaching, is occasioned by a commingling the two ideas of the direct influences of the Holy Spirit, and his teaching by the gospel : his mysterious influence upon us, enabling us to understand and accept the truth as it is in Jesus ; and his influence upon the holy men, his scribes, who wrote that truth as it is in Jesus, that we might read it, have it preached to us, believe it, rejoice in it, obey it, and be saved. The truth as it is in Jesus is what the inquirer is to understand, believe, and stay

himself upon; conforming to it as the rule of his life, the authority for his hope. But, our sainted leader puts it, that the Spirit must make an "inward impression on the soul, whereby the spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit (*summarturei* does not signify witnesses *to*, but witnesses *with* : of the *two* witnesses the Spirit is *one*. A. W.) that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God:" and this must occur before our spirit can give its utterance, Abba, Father. Now if our venerated father meant that we are to feel the impression, and therefore believe; that would not be faith, but knowledge: what we feel, see, smell etc., we do not believe; we know: we believe what is reported to us by a creditable witness, although we neither see, nor by any sense attain to what he reports. And as to this unintelligible impression testifying, that we are the children of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us; and that all our sins are blotted out, and we, even we, are reconciled to God; there is not one word or sentiment here stated, that is not sparkling on the written record of the Spirit's testimony, the Scripture, the recorded gospel. Sense is not faith; nor is joy; nor is anything other than a cordial belief of the truth as it is in Jesus. But such a belief brings feeling; the feeling of peace, trust, joy; of which the soul is quite conscious; and this belief, this faith, with its blessed results, is because of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, without whose gracious aid, we cannot hear understandingly and gladly the gospel of Jesus, the Christ; and, therefore, this great Agent comes to us, we write it most reverently and thankfully, as a divine Factor, indispensable in the glorious plan of salvation. But the

testimony, the witness, the word, it is written, recorded, unvarying, clear, so that "he that runs may read."

The gospel assures us, that God is reconciled to us by the death of his Son, who bare our sins in his own body on the tree; washed us from our sins in his own blood; rejects no one that comes to him; shows us the Father in his own amazing love and care for us; prepares us a place in the heavenly rest; instructs us to trust in his blood as the expiation of our sins, in his upholding hand in our weakness; and in the blessed leading of the Spirit by his recorded word; and to honor Father, Son, and Holy Ghost by a hearty, loving faith in all this glorious truth, the gospel. He that believes this, is certainly conscious of the fact; conscious of the peace it brings; conscious that his faith in Jesus is a fountain within him from which flows rivers of living water. The gospel that he has believed, unfolded to him the fact that God first loved him, with such overwhelming facts attesting it, that he now loves God; and, of course, he is conscious of that love. And he will try to live in conformity with his obligations to the Father who loved him; to the Son who loved him; to the Holy Spirit who loved him; and the Father, Son, and Spirit will take up their abode with him, and make him useful and happy. When the filial spirit inspired by the story of so much love speaks out from his heart the blessed word, Father; the cry testifies his sonship: and there is the recorded testimony of the Spirit, corroborating his right to, and the propriety of, such an utterance. Nothing can be more warranted by Scripture, than the right of him who believes the truth as it is in Jesus, to look up with an eye sparkling through tears of gratitude, and cry, Abba, Father.