

## The Christian.

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## EDITORIAL.

## THE BONDAGE AND LIBERATION OF THE CREATURE.

In Romans 8th chapter from the 14th to the 23rd verses, is a sublime description of the creature from his fall till his final victory. What Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have written is very properly called the gospel, because it is the history of the Son of God, which is glad tidings of great joy to all people. So may the Book of Acts, written by Luke, be called the gospel of the Holy Spirit, as it is the history of the Spirit telling how he leads men to Christ and through him to glory.

In considering this beautiful passage let us keep in mind its marked distinction between "the creature" and "the whole creation" or every creature, which many theologians failing to do have sunk into miry difficulties.

We are by nature and practice very far from God and on the certain road to ruin, too blind to find our way to God. To trust to others to lead us would be but to fall into the ditch. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to save us. He also sent his Spirit to invite us to his Son that we might be saved. On the very day the Spirit came from heaven he led 3,000 souls to Christ and has been leading many ever since. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, so that Paul could tell his brethren at Rome, some of whom before their conversion were plunged in the dread and darkness of idolatry, and others who were under the Jewish system of legal bondage, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear but . . . the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." This blessed union expels fear and excites the cry, Father, Father. Because God is Jesus' Father he is also their Father and they are the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, willing to suffer with him and shall share his glory. They reckon the sufferings of this present time unworthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them. God has promised the creature that great exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and has given him as a foretaste the earnest of the Spirit in his heart, so that the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. The Spirit bears witness with his own spirit that he is a son of God and he waits to see its glorious manifestation.

At the 20th verse the Apostle describes the creature's fall and hope and final triumph. He was made subject not to sin but to vanity, or to a vain life which had nothing certain in it but death which was liable to occur at any moment. Before he sinned he had the prospect of eating of the tree of life and living on forever. But now he was driven from Eden to die but not without the hope kindled by the gracious promise of him who ordered his expulsion, that through the suffering seed

of the woman the enemy's seed should be vanquished, his head bruised and his power destroyed. Thus was the creature subjected in hope. Because of this promise and this hope the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Though the grave binds him until his flesh corrupts and returns to dust, yet will he be delivered directly from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Paul next speaks of "the whole creation" but says not a word of them that would indicate waiting or hoping or anything intelligent, they merely groan and travail in pain together until now, and he passes on thus, "And not only they but ourselves also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Thus while the creature who is led by the Spirit groans and travails in pain with the whole creation he alone hopes and waits for the redemption of our body. Not of our bodies but of "our body," the whole company of redeemed saints. Of that body God will be the Father, Christ will be the head, and the Holy Spirit the heart, and heaven the eternal home. The apostle and his brethren at Rome and all who like them are led by the Spirit shall then have passed through three births: 1st. When born of mother and father; 2nd. When born of water and the Spirit; 3rd. When born of the grave and the voice of the Son of God. The manifestation of that body the sons of God is too glorious now for eye to see or ear to hear or to enter into the heart of man, but no faithful follower of the Lamb will be missing.

We sometimes are inclined to feel that the plea for a return to primitive Christianity does not make the progress in our provinces that it ought; sometimes we may be inclined to feel that our work is to some extent in vain in the Lord. But ought we to feel so? We think not. The circumstances in the Provinces have been peculiar and have not been conducive to our making large gain in numbers. But the work of the Disciples of Christ here has been effectual and far-reaching; and he who would estimate it at anything near its real worth, must have a field of vision on which the sun never sets. There is hardly one of our congregations in the New England States but what has among its workers men and women who have identified themselves with the Church of Christ here in the Provinces. Some of these congregations are fully half made up of people who were active workers with us here. They have united with our sister congregations in the States not singly but by whole families. Not only members but ministers; in almost every state of the Union from Maine to California you can find them, preachers of the gospel who here became Christians. Not only members and ministers, but missionary workers, editors, and teachers. The Disciples of Christ in the Provinces have done much, but he who would see it must not only look here but must follow the many workers into the many distant fields. Our work has not been in vain in the Lord.

How very apt is the figure in our Sunday-school lesson for February 18, where Christ calls the gospel that he came to bring "living water." In asking a Sunday-school class for some of the characteristic properties of "living water," we received among other answers the following: It moves. It is fresh. It is purifying. It is powerful. It cannot be confined. How accurately do these characteristics of "living water" describe the religion of Jesus Christ. *It moves.* The Christian religion is activity; and the position of the Christian at present is not so much a place of rest as a place of work. *It is fresh.* Does not grow old and insipid; does not stagnate; and when taken from the fountain head is as fresh today as when the Master offered it to the woman of Samaria eighteen hundred years ago. *It is purifying.* The Christian religion is by far the greatest purifying agent the world has ever known. By comparing our present time with the time when the Christian Church was established, we may gain some idea as to how much of earth's filth and uncleanness has disappeared under the purifying power of the gospel. *It is powerful.* All the years from Pentecost to the present testify to the power of Christianity. It has out-worked, out-lastened, out-grown every other organization. Its accomplishments were supposed to be impossible. *It cannot be confined.* It will overflow. We need the over-flowing life. It was not long after Christ began to talk to one woman until he was talking to a city and many believed. How is it with you, dear reader? Does it move? Is it fresh? Is it purifying? Is it powerful? Does it overflow?

Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., through its President, Charles William Eliott, has invited a thousand Cuban school teachers to attend the summer school for teachers this year. These teachers will be at no expense as they will be brought to the United States in transport vessels of the government, and while at Cambridge will be entirely provided for by the University. Much has been done in these last two years for the oppressed and tax-ridden island of Cuba. The President has acted and advised wisely; congress has appropriated large sums of money; the American soldier has done his work and done it well; but "Peace hath her victories," and if we mistake not few indeed are the things that in the civilization of Cuba will have a more lasting effect or give a greater return than this act on the part of the oldest university on the continent. Indeed, to us it seems the grandest of all that has been done. What an education to these thousand men and women will be the privilege of sitting under the teaching of the instructors of a great university! What a lesson will be the mingling with the very cream of their profession from all over the country! In what way could the rising generation of Cuba be reached so efficiently and peacefully as through its school-teachers? With what inspiration will these teachers return to their work from the very intellectual center of that country which is for the present their guardian? This is not altogether new. It has been the policy of the Anglo-Saxon race. Enlightenment. Education. In India; in Africa; in the Philippines; in Cuba. In every place where goes the Anglo-Saxon and the English language.

"Though they terribly carpet the earth with their dead,  
Yet before their cannon cool,  
They walk unarmed by twos and threes,  
And call the living to school."