

so that through Him we may be set free.

Law of the Spirit of life, v. 2. We have only to look about us to see cases in which substances are set free from the law of one kingdom and brought under those of another. Here is a bit of soil belonging to the mineral kingdom and subject to all the laws of that kingdom. It is taken up into a plant and so passes into the vegetable kingdom, where new and different laws prevail. This is an illustration of how the soul, once under the power, and yielding itself to the authority, of sin, is set free from the law which then controlled it, to be governed henceforth by a new and higher law.

Law of sin and death, v. 2. Sin and death are one, as the oak is one with the acorn from which it springs, or as a disease in its most advanced stage is one with the germ, of whose presence in the system there was at first scarcely a sign in the outward appearance of its victim. Sin will lose its power over us, if we refuse to be dazzled by its glittering promises, and face fairly and squarely its terrible and inevitable consequences.

God, sending His own Son...condemned sin, v. 3. God cannot but punish sin, for He is infinitely just and holy. But God, at the same time, loves men. The divine determination to punish sin and the divine love to sinners are brought together in the gospel message, John 3:16. Without Christ sinners must "perish." But God provides salvation at the cost of giving His "only begotten Son." They are both seen most clearly in the Cross, for the penalty there endured was that of sin, and there love died for us.

Only the guiltless One can deliver the guilty. v. 1.

Obedience to our rightful Ruler is true freedom. v. 2.

It is useless to show a paralyzed man how to walk. v. 3.

We are delivered from self-will by yielding to the will of God. v. 4.

There can be no fruit of the Spirit without the indwelling of the Spirit. v. 5.

We can choose our path but we cannot change its end. v. 6.

The righteousness of the law, v. 4. There is no encouragement in the gospel to live in sin, because deliverance from it is so easy. It is true that, by a simple act of faith, Christ's righteousness becomes ours, and we are forgiven. But it is also true that obedience to every law of God is binding on the forgiven as well as the unforgiven. Only "he that doeth righteousness", as the apostle John says, "is righteous." For one to put forward forgiveness through Christ's righteousness as an excuse for liberty to sin, is to prove conclusively that he has never been forgiven.

If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you, v. 9. Consider the blessings which are enjoyed by everyone who has the Spirit dwelling in him! (1) He has "life and peace," v. 6. (2) He is able to "please God," v. 8. (3) He has the assurance of a glorious resurrection, v. 11. (4) He has a right to the privileges of God's sons, v. 14. What are the passing pleasures which sin offers in comparison with these priceless spiritual blessings?

The sons of God, v. 14. Have you not been struck with the richness of that "Question" in the Shorter Catechism, "What is adoption?" Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." It breathes the very peace of the Father's house on high. It was in such an atmosphere that the aged John lived when he wrote, "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

Self-surrender, not self-improvement, is the condition of acceptance with God. v. 7.

The righteous alone are heirs of eternal life. v. 10.

Unless we kill sin, it will kill us. v. 13.

God leads us, but does not compel us to follow. v. 14.

"No one can get out of the seventh chapter of Romans into the eighth except by one word, Christ. He who attempts it is like a leaf caught in an eddy of a stream; it whirls round and round, and wants to get down the