

**Sermon preached by Mr. L. R. Broome
at Brixton Tabernacle, London,
on Lord's Day evening, 24th June, 1962**

Text: *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8. 6).*

With the Lord's help this evening, we will come to the remedy, following on from that of which we were speaking this morning. The truth in this text is understood as clearly by the people of God as is the fact that they have to breathe the natural air to live. It certainly is not a palatable truth, seeing that human nature desires and believes in its own capability. The words of Christ Himself are upon this point, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth." And who is prepared or able to do this, other than men or women taught by the Spirit of God? Whatever man may say, he is not his own saviour; however long he may say it, he deceives himself, and will ultimately prove that it is a lie. Salvation is all of God and of grace.

And this salvation clearly sets forth an experience, called in this chapter a walk. So that as we have our own pathways which are known to us individually, so in the things of God there is a "walk" or a "way." And in that way, there are waymarks, evidences, things that are very clear, though contested. And among the evidences of the people of God, there is the possession of two natures, and these natures cannot be reconciled. We read it this morning in Paul's account of his own struggles (Romans 7). Thus in this way the people of God are called to endure the tribulation of the conflict between two natures within themselves. That new nature which is taught of God cannot sin. He that is born of God sinneth not. It is pure in every point. But side by

side with it, but in no way connected or related is the old man of sin. And that is what this text speaks of.

There is no such thing as “progressive sanctification.” Sufficient proof of this is in the confession of Paul, who will admittedly by all be regarded as one of God’s people. His last utterance upon this point was that “Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” A few years previous to that (in 1 Corinthians 15) he says that he was not meet to be called an apostle. And a little after that, in Ephesians 3 he said, “Less than the least of all saints,” and he speaks in the present tense in each case. So there is no progressing in righteousness there, but rather worsening of the conflict,

“The old man struggles hard to gain
The conquest over grace.”

(Gadsby’s 678)

So whatever our profession may be, if we know not the conflict, we may well wonder, as we mentioned this morning, how we came into the way, what our hope is founded upon, and what it will lead us to.

But to come to the second part of the text. It is a lively, living, blessed part, to be spiritually minded. Tremendous thought! You may quail under it. But if we take a close look at it, and compare the minding of the flesh and the minding of the Spirit, as the margin has it, we shall see how blessed it is, that there should be such a thing as minding the things of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. In the same way as sinful flesh minds earthly things, so the new man of grace minds spiritual things which are under the control of the blessed Spirit of truth. This chapter will furnish us with

sufficient examples of the reality and nature of this minding the things of the Spirit.

The first one we would mention is in the 13th verse. “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” What a blessed minding the things of the Spirit! From my own experience, my first introduction to this blessed text was now many years ago. The Lord began to deal with me, and I struggled with sin, and I came across that word similar to this which is in Colossians chapter 3, “Mortify therefore your members,” and I was stunned by it. I thought, I cannot possibly do that. And I was brought to a stand by it, until in searching through in reading, I came to this: “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” There I saw a ray of light; a new way; a direction that was plain. This is the way to the Spirit – through the Spirit. Take your besetting sins and all that you desire to be mortified to the Holy Spirit for Him to deal with. What a sweet relief I felt; and how thankful for such a ray of light.

“If ye through the Spirit.” This is not just a going to chapel once or twice, or a casual peep at the Word of God. It is minding the Person of the Spirit, the work of the Spirit. It is dwelling upon it. It is being spiritually minded. If any of you have attempted to mortify any of your own sins, it may be that this will be a word of hope to you, because it is the way of life. We can recommend it with the utmost confidence and authority of the Word of God.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to take of the things of Christ. And one thing that will subdue and mortify sin is the atonement of Christ. Some understanding of the sufferings of Christ will make sin detestable to you. However much you may have argued before, and excused yourself before, you will soon see that here

there is no trifling with any, and upon this point the Spirit will be helpful and instructive.

How sweet is the experience of the mortification of the flesh by the help of the Spirit! How much liberty there is! It is "sold under sin," but there is liberty under the Spirit. He is granted complete deliverance. The law is not now his master or his rule of life. He is brought to see much more clearly and decisively that the law is fulfilled. The earlier part of the chapter tells us that. He sees another way of liberty, a happier way, a far better way, and unto that way he desires to go. But it is not flesh-exalting. He takes no credit to cleaning his own slate, to wiping off all the account that he has run up, to paying the debt that he owes. But he is minding the Spirit.

Again, we read in a later verse, "Not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." This is what you call experimental preaching. "For we ourselves," says this experimental preacher, Paul, we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, the beginnings, the first evidences in the church of God; and these firstfruits bring us to a very strange, if not astonishing, condition, that is, we groan. Now, this cannot be palatable; this cannot suit carnal nature. This will raise up all the enmity it can muster. This may make you smart. I hope it does. The Word of God may very well be a word of condemnation to you. You may say, That is strange preaching. The truth is strange, but it is true. The day of judgment will give testimony to it

We do not like to keep on referring to the 7th of Romans that we read this morning but it scarcely seems inseparable. There is a groaning. Have you ever groaned about your religion? Has it

cost you a groan? Or do you think that is rather out of date? Is that narrowminded? Astonishing thing, is it not, that people who feel and believe such things should be called narrow-minded as if they were quite unaware of the modern age in which we live? One of the advantages, though a painful one, of having to deal with the world every day of our lives, is that we are up-to-date. We know what is going on in the world; we are not isolationists – though we would be more separate.

Now, this unpalatable truth, a groaning religion, is something which you need to listen to. If you come down to the day of your death with a smile on your face, it will be removed then. Perhaps you have seen it. People then have sat under the truth all their lives, come down to the hour of death, and make the hospital ward, perhaps, ring with cries for mercy, having no hope. Very solemn! So that to be a groaner and a mourner now is a worthwhile thing, though you may be laughed to scorn. You may shut your eyes and ears to it now; but O may God bring you into a knowledge of your state, and make you spiritually minded! You will be thankful to possess the firstfruits and to have these marks and evidences of being spiritually minded.

To associate with this, is another unpalatable thing as far as the flesh is concerned, that the Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities. And listen to this: "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought." That is bringing it nigh the people of God. They are the very ones who know not how they should pray. There is such a people as that upon earth. If you find any, you have found those who are spiritually minded, who mind the Spirit, who dwell upon the work of the Spirit, who feel that He can help their infirmities.

So here you have two things which are bound up with being spiritually minded; very distinct and clear, so that you cannot

gainsay them. But to those of you who are in this way, they are a comfort. That is one of the purposes for which they are recorded; for your comfort. They stand as the truth is in Jesus. "The Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities." To go to the throne of grace and to feel really and truly that you cannot pray does not exalt you very much, does it? When you come among the Lord's people, that comes with you. You hear one and another talk, and you admire the grace of God in them, but you cannot admire in yourself a hobbling gait, a lame leg. You feel you are very barren. You feel a good way behind.

"To be carnally minded is death." Is this being carnally minded, to feel that the very air you want to breathe – the spiritual air, I mean – is not forthcoming, and you cannot explain your longings before God? You cannot open your mouth.

"My guilt and sin have stopped my mouth;
I sigh, but dare not talk."

(Gadsby's 675)

"But to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

In taking these three things then, how true it is. Mortification through the Spirit. There is activity here. Here are works; here is the work of faith taking your case to the Lord, to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to subdue what you want subdued, and yet cannot subdue. Here is life. But not only so – here is peace. This is spoken of under different names; a great calm, for example: "Peace be still, and there was a great calm." The storm abates. As we ventured to give you a page out of our own little experience, when we were young, there was a peace. We did not need anybody to come and tell us there was peace. And that peace still stands. No one has told us any different, and the Word of

God certainly has not. And we faintly hope to come to the end of our life in this peace. But it is only through the Spirit that we can mortify the deeds of the body.

"But to be spiritually minded," and to mind these things, "is life." And it is peace. To look again at the second case, the groanings. Paul speaks of this in one of his Epistles. "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.... For we that are in this body do groan, being burdened." Now, in the knowledge of this there is life. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness." It proves they have life, spiritual life, not the life of one who expects to find life in himself, or thinks he can live in his own strength, but a life from God. Says this one then, "There is hope for me."

And the Spirit Himself groaneth also. That is an astonishing thing! And the law of life brings with it life and it brings peace. There is no looking round for something other than this. Now to bring again the third point, our infirmities. A poor man goes to the prayer meeting feeling he cannot pray, and greatly hopes that he won't have to, because he is persuaded of his solemn inability. So with you in your private life. But the Word of God says quite categorically, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought"; not only the words but the manner and temper in which we say them. When you are brought to this aright, you say, This is indeed true, Lord; O help Thou my unbelief. It does not need anyone to come with another doctrine then. You feel fully satisfied within your own mind that this is indeed life and light. And there is a great promise, too. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask?"

Now, you know whether you have been taught of God to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit, and this is to be spiritually minded. You may say when you get home, I never thought the preacher would convince me that I am spiritually minded. I hope I have, poor thing. It won't make you proud, but it will comfort you. You may have thought, the last thing I can ever attach to myself is this divine honour. But it is peace, perfect peace, to find in your breast the characteristic of one who is spiritually minded. And the knowledge of this will do you good, moderate your spirit, and encourage you to go on.

The apostle speaks again of "as many as are led by the Spirit of God." The things of which we have just spoken constitute this leading. As many as are led to put their feet in the footprints of the flock, they are the children of God; they are spiritually minded. The footprints they have heard so much about, the old paths, they really want to walk in them, but how can they? Who can go in such a path as this? Who can even understand it? Why; as many as are led by the Spirit of God. But a further side of this blessed Spirit and His work, is His "raising up." "But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," in other words, the glorious doctrine of the resurrection, life from the dead. Dead, mark you! Resurrection does not apply if a thing is not dead. If you have a plant in your garden and it is nearly dead, and it revives again when you water it, the word resurrection does not apply. It only applies to bringing life out of death.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit. And it applies most beautifully to this text. "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded" – to be brought to see the sacred work of the Holy Ghost in every branch of the gospel, and to see that it is He, and He alone, who works by His own power in conjunction with the Father and the Son, this is a resurrection. You look at

this blessed truth, then, as regards being spiritually minded. Look at it with regard to the quickening of sinners. No preacher can ever raise one soul to life. Preach and pray as he may, he can never raise a sinner out of his grave. That is the work of God. But using the minister as an instrument, as He often does, the Holy Ghost is able by the most simple word spoken, to raise the dead.

We mentioned this morning or this afternoon, the anxiety that some feel with regard to the beginning. And rightly so! O how much we need to be very careful and try not to set a standard where there is none in the Scriptures! But a new birth is a quickening. In nature, there is only one person who knows anything about that precise moment. In a spiritual way there is only one person who knows anything about the beginning of a work of grace.

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." What a burden this is to some of you who see others clearly wrought upon, and you yourselves cannot feel the power of the resurrection, and the power to bring life from the dead. But, O, the carnality of our heart! Before the sun sets this evening, we may be plunged into a very carnal state. The Lord may withdraw from us our evidences. He did mine last Sunday night; a dreadful state, cold and dark – painful to the last degree. Why we do not know, only to teach us that there is the possibility. This carnal mindedness is death. And it feels like death, too! I felt that the Lord had a controversy with me, and I wondered what it was, and I did not know. "But to be spiritually minded," to come to the Spirit, to turn to Him who is able to bring life, to raise up again.

What kind of faith have you got? Do you ever have any trouble with it? If so, in what direction does the trouble lie? Do you feel that you have not got any? Do you feel it is indeed a precious grace of which you have none? Do you want any of it? There is one Person to go to for it. But you have got to ask for it. This is to be spiritually minded – believing in the purpose, promise and power of God to increase your faith.

Another grace is hope. Is your hope always constant? How sad it is when hope gets dashed! How cold it makes the heart! Is your hope perished from the Lord? Jeremiah said his was. That was how it seemed to the poor man, though the issue proved that it was not. But there are times when you may well have said in all sincerity, My hope is gone. Who is going to bring it back again? Why, the Spirit of truth, that raised up Jesus from the dead. No less than a mighty power like this can do it. One said,

“Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?”

(Gadsby’s 958)

But these graces are not like flowers in the garden; they bear fruit: There is something to be done when love and peace flow into the soul. There is work and labour as a necessary adjunct to them. You cannot separate the two. In this way, therefore, the truth of this text is verified, and you may see it in other texts for yourselves. “The Spirit beareth witness,” a very desirable witness. How does it bear witness? What is it to bear witness? What is it in everyday life? It is a witness that says, Yes; I saw that happen; and gives a description of what they saw. The great witness is before us here, “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

O to be spiritually minded, to wait upon the blessed Spirit for this witness! But it goes further than that. “Children, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” But it comes back to the walk again: “If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” The witness of the Spirit is in the suffering. We have already spoken of the suffering, of the mortification of the flesh, and there is a suffering that Paul refers to here, that is, a reproach; a reproach that will be yours if following in the footsteps of Christ, the reproach of being a believer in such strange things as these; the reproach that will be bound to follow a separation from the world and a worldly religion.

“To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” This reproach which we bear. What is it? Do you sometimes feel that you do not bear half enough reproach because you are too conformed to the world? Have you ever welcomed reproach? Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God? “Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp.” Such is the witness of the Spirit; and it is borne in upon the heart with life and light and peace. It brings with it settlement, a desire to continue in this way, a willingness to endure for Christ’s sake what the pathway may contain. To be settled, for the Spirit to bear witness, to raise up hope and faith and obedience and submission and all abounding grace in your heart – it will be life and peace, and you will find that there is nothing but death in the flesh, and in the Spirit nothing but life.

Amen.