

Romans 8 In Poetry

William Hendriksen¹

- 1-4 For those who in Jesus their refuge have found
There's no condemnation. Their blessings abound.
For through what Christ Jesus has done within me
The Spirit from sin and from death set me free.
- For that which the law, by our nature laid low,
Could never achieve and much less could bestow,
God wrought, when, in order to save us from sin,
He sent his own Son our salvation to win.
- God did this in order that Law's just demand
In us might be met, and we righteous might stand,
And show by our conduct from day unto day,
That, shunning the flesh, we his Spirit obey.
- 5-8 For those who have chosen the flesh as their Guide,
In things of the flesh, not the Spirit, take pride.
But those who have chosen the Spirit as Guide
In things of the Spirit, not flesh, do take pride.
- Now those who take pride in the flesh sure should know
That flesh and its fruit, death, together will go.
So, too, those who honor the Spirit will see
That life and deep peace their requital will be.
- For fav'ring the flesh will mean hating the Lord,
Since keeping God's statutes it cannot afford.
And it should be obvious to those in the flesh
That pleasing both God and one's sin do not mesh.
- 9-11 But not in the flesh, my dear brothers, are *y o u*.
The Spirit who's in *y o u* proves this to be true.
If one lacks the Spirit, it sure would be wrong
To say that *this* man could to Jesus belong.
- But if Christ is in *y o u*, then though, due to sin,
The body may die, yet the Spirit within
Is life and brings life, so that *y o u* before God
Stand sinless and pure through the ransom Christ brought.
- And if *y o u 'r e* indwelt by the Spirit of God
Who raised Christ from death, then that Father who brought
To life the dead Jesus will also restore
Y o u r bodies from death. They'll be living once more.
- 12-16 Therefore, my dear brothers, our duty is clear:
To live by the standard of flesh while *y o u 'r e* here
Will lead but to death. It's *y o u r* duty to give
The deathblow to sin's shameful ways. Then *y o u 'l l* live.

¹ William Hendriksen, *Romans*, Baker Book House, 1982. Note this commentary series deliberately uses an expanded spacing printing style to distinguish *y o u* (2nd person plural) from *you* (2nd person singular).

It is by the strength of the Spirit alone
That this is successful and this can be done.
For all God's true children, with him as their Head,
Are by the blest Spirit of God being led.

Y o u 're children indeed, for y o u 've not received
The spirit of slavery when y o u believed.
No longer does sickening dread y o u oppress,
With joy y o u y o u r God as y o u r *Father* address.

The Spirit bears witness, and not from afar,
But from close within us, that children we are,
Confirming the voice of our own heart and mind,
And leaving uncertainty far, far behind.

17-18 And if we are children, then, too, we are heirs
Of God and with Christ, for the person who shares
With Christ in his sufferings must certainly know
That on him indeed God will glory bestow.

For this I consider; of this I am sure!
That sufferings and hardships which now we endure
Are nothing compared with the glory which then
Will shine from within us, ne'er leave us again.

19-22 And this is established that Nature entire
For the revelation of saints does aspire,
For not by its own choice did Nature grow dim.
'tWas man who transgressed, and the Lord punished him

By rendering Nature unable to cope
With enemies many; yet not without hope
That Nature itself, though now bound to despair
One day will the freedom of God's children share.

23-25 Now *all of creation*, all Nature, 'tis known,
In anguish of childbirth does *suffer and groan*.
Not only is this true but we must confess:
We also do groan, who the Spirit possess.

Yes, we also groan, even though we are free,
Enriched by the Spirit, as firm guarantee
That also our bodies the Lord will display
As dear to himself on that glorious day.

In hope we were saved, for its object, though near,
Is hidden from view and does not yet appear.
But when we no longer of it are deprived,
It stops to be object of hope; 't has arrived!

But since for the present we hope for still more,
For fulness of bliss which for us is in store,
We long for these blessings, so rich and so great,
And therefore with patient endurance we wait.

26-27 The Spirit, too, knows that we sinners are weak,
 And often unable to find what we seek,
 Not knowing at certain times just how to pray:
 The words will not come; we don't know what to say.

The Spirit then helps us, for he knows our need.
With unspoken groanings he does intercede.
The Searcher of hearts knows the Spirit's intent;
He'll ever agree, and the Spirit's plea grant.

28-30 Therefore we conclude that to those who love God
 All things, in a sense not restricted but broad.
 Co-operate fully, in line with God's plan
 Established and ordered before time began.

In line with this program or purpose of old
The lovers of God were effectively called.
For whom he foreknew he did also elect
The image of Jesus, his Son, to reflect.

In this way it was that God did foreordain
That Christ should become and forever remain
Close linked to his people, *firstborn* among all,
Yet humble, and willing them *brothers* to call.

Resulting is therefore salvation's firm chain:
Those whom God foreknew he did, too, foreordain,
And those foreordained he did afterward call,
And justify later and glorify all.

31-34 How then shall we answer? How shall we reply?
 If he who is for us is God from on high?
 Who, now, of all creatures against us can be
 When he who is for us is certainly he?

His love is so matchless, so tender his care
That even his own Son he never did spare.
For us, wretched sinners, he gave him to die.
How will he not with him our own needs supply?

Who dares to bring charges against God's elect?
Whom God declares pure, and will ever protect?
Who's really so bold that he dares to condemn
The children of God when he justifies them?

It's Jesus who died, and what's more, who was raised
From death to God's right hand. Let heaven be praised!
Christ Jesus this place of trust occupies thus.
It's he who is now interceding for us.

35-36 Who then can he be who will tear us apart
 From Christ and his love, which was ours from the start?
 Distress, persecution, pain due to the Word?
 Or famine or nakedness, peril or sword?

It is as the Psalmist declared long ago:
"Each day we face death and are being brought low.
As sheep that are led to the slaughter are we,
For doing thy will and for honoring thee."

37-39

And yet it's a fact that by these very things
Which might seem to harm us God victory brings
To us whom he loves, so that conquerors we,
No, rather far better than this, we should be.

For this I know well, and on this I can count
That nothing at all can forever be found
That causes the Savior his own to forsake,
Twixt him and his dear ones division can make.

Not death and not life and not angels above
Can ever exclude us from God's lasting love.
Nor present nor future can ever avail
To cause that great love for his dear ones to fail.

Not demons or powers, not depth and not height
Can weaken its glow or diminish its might
No creature can part us, whatever the sort,
From God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.