

## Sailing With Paul

### Simple Papers for Young Christians

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## Chapter 8

### Standing and State

No believer is likely to be clear on other lines, whose mind is in confusion as to the scriptural distinction between standing and state. If those who sail with Paul would but carefully consult his inspired letters on this, as on all other subjects, they would see that the two terms are very different in their application.

Standing refers to our ability to appear before GOD uncondemned; state has to do with our actual condition of soul. Standing speaks of privilege, and contemplates what GOD, in His rich grace, has done for each believer. State is the measure in which one answers to this in his own experience. State is variable and depends on how one goes on with GOD.

Paul is not the first or only Biblical writer to use the term standing. Several examples from other Scriptures may help to make clear its application. "**The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment**" (Psalm 1:4). "**The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight**" (Psalm 5:5). "**They told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand**" (Esther 3:4). "**For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**" (Revelation 6:17). To these one might add many more, but enough are before us to show how the word is used. To stand is practically synonymous with the ability to face the throne of judgment, proving that there is no condemnation.

Now compare with these verses Romans 5:1,2: "**Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**" Note also I Corinthians

15:1, **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and *wherein ye stand.*"**

The wicked cannot stand, but every believer has a standing that is unassailable. What is the ground of his standing? Is it his good experience, his enjoyment of divine things, his energy in service, his happy state? Not at all! He stands in grace - the grace revealed in the Gospel.

Our standing then is a most comprehensive term, embracing all that GOD has done for us in the work of His Son. In previous papers we have considered our forgiveness, our justification, our positional sanctification, our acceptance in CHRIST: all these blessings are connected with our standing. We cannot add to, nor take away from, what GOD has made us in CHRIST. Consequently we have for eternity a perfect and unassailable standing before GOD. Worlds may be wrecked and the heavens pass away, but the believer in the Lord JESUS CHRIST stands in absolute security, free of all condemnation.

Is this then to say that each believer's state of soul is all that could be desired? Far from it. If it were, where would be the need for all the exhortations to godly living found in the epistles and other parts of the Word of GOD? Observe, for instance, the anxiety of the apostle that the state of his beloved Philippians might in measure answer to their standing.

He had no question whatever as to their standing. That, he knew, could never be altered. So he tells them he is confident that He who hath begun a good work in them will perform it unto the day of JESUS CHRIST. But he hoped to send Timothy unto them that he (Paul) might be of good comfort when he knew their *state*. Not all professed laborers in word and doctrine would naturally care for their *state*, but he knew this pastoral concern was characteristic of Timothy: **"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour"** (II Timothy 2:19, 20).

Were Paul and Timothy concerned as to whether these saints were "keeping saved," - to use an ignorant expression common with some to-day? No, indeed. They knew GOD had settled forever the question of their salvation. But they desired to see fruit for GOD manifested in the lives of the saints. They wished to have them going on happily together as a company of redeemed ones should. And this is what *state* has reference to. It is experience; but experience and standing are two very different things. When GOD addresses believers as "saints," that is, separated or holy ones, He is speaking of their standing. When He exhorts them to be holy, even as He is holy, He refers to the state of their souls, as manifested in their outward ways.

We might think no one should be called a saint till he becomes perfectly holy in experience. But that is not GOD's way. He calls us saints from the first moment of our faith in CHRIST, and then bids us live as saints should live. He calls us His children, and then exhorts us to be obedient children. He sanctifies us by the blood of His Son, and then washes us with the Word that we may be practically sanctified.

He forgives us all our sins and justifies us from all things when we first trust in His Son. We are then eternally forgiven. This is our standing. Yet as our actual state is often poor, there is a

forgiveness we may have need of every day. That is the Father's forgiveness, as dealing with the state of His family.

The moment you trusted CHRIST, your responsibility as a sinner having to do with the GOD of judgment was ended for ever. From that moment your standing has been perfect. But at that same instant your responsibility as a *child*, having to do with your *FATHER*, began.

If you fail in this, if your state is low and your FATHER is dishonored thereby, do not fall back upon the truth of your standing and say, "I have no sins to confess," but go at once to your loving FATHER and own all the failure, judge the low state and seek His grace to rise to a higher and better condition of soul in which He will be glorified by your life. Let it always be your aim to have your state come up to your standing, that grace may be magnified in all your ways.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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